

insights

Spring 2026

VisionCorps

News for donors and friends of VisionCorps

For more information on services for you or someone you know, please call 866-876-6550.

*Serving Adams, Chester, Lancaster,
Lebanon and York Counties*

"UP" FOR A CHALLENGE!

When Harold Shenk of Mount Joy watched news coverage of VisionCorps' Eye Drop Event a couple of years ago, he imagined what it would be like to rappel off the side of a building. "I'm 85 now, and I'm not getting any younger; I should probably do it. I'm up for a challenge!" It would be a good way to support an organization that has helped him through difficult transitions.

It's been 13 years since Harold became seriously ill and lost a portion of his vision. He and his wife Mary Grace had recently retired from pastoral work in Maryland, and they decided to move to his brother's retirement house in Mount Joy. Through VisionCorps' support group, he has been able to connect with others who are learning to adjust to living with vision loss. The group shares emotional support, helpful independent living tips, and education about blindness.

In addition to connecting him with a low-vision doctor and a neuro-ophthalmologist, VisionCorps provided mobility training. "I learned how to navigate curbs and obstructions safely. Although I usually only use my white folding cane when I'm going through airports, it communicates to others that I have low vision," Harold said. "VisionCorps also helped me get a used CCTV. And they continue to provide me with adaptive devices and technology support." Harold uses VoiceOver on his iPhone, Microsoft Narrator screen-reading software on his computer, and is learning to use the NonVisual Desktop Access (NVDA) screen reader as well. He especially values getting connected with the National Library Service and an audio news service. "I must have 'read' several hundred audiobooks over the years," he shared.

Harold grew up on a farm, and enjoys working with his hands. "I'm still riding a lawnmower, and using my woodshop tools. My son and I have taken down several black walnut and ash trees. After carefully stacking and air-drying them for at least two years, I processed them into straight boards and planed them for building furniture." Losing one's vision requires learning different ways to safely master life's challenges, but as Harold knows, it can be done.



Harold and Mary Grace on a garden bench that Harold completely rebuilt with hardwood from a dead tree cut down since vision loss.

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SPRING INTO ACTION!

Despite having seasonal allergies, I'm always energized by the arrival of spring. It symbolizes hope, resilience, and positive change. As does VisionCorps. Every day we witness people learning to navigate the world in a new way, and it's exciting!



For this "new growth," we have YOU to thank! Since 1926, VisionCorps (under a myriad of different names in different counties) has made a significant impact on the lives of those who are blind or experiencing vision loss. We always share personal stories in this quarterly newsletter with the hope that our clients' journeys may inspire others to reach out should they find themselves experiencing vision loss. Folks like Harold and Ron, who are highlighted in this issue and are an absolute joy to work with!

There are so many ways for you to be involved in this transformative mission as well, the most exciting of which involves rappelling down a 120-ft building! **The Eye Drop will take place**



on June 5 in Lancaster and welcomes thrill-seekers from across southcentral Pennsylvania to go *Over the Edge!* Check out EyeDrop2026.org to learn more about this truly unique annual event. And thank you to our presenting sponsor, Team Wendy, our partner in manufacturing helmet pads for the U.S. military.

Also coming this year – **The Centennial Soirée, our 100th Anniversary Gala slated for Friday, October 2.** We will celebrate how far we've come collectively as an organization and look towards the future. With a 1920s theme, it's certain to be a roaring good time! Please mark your calendars and watch for more information coming your way this summer.

Finally, we would appreciate it if you spread the word about VisionCorps! Let others know that vision loss is not the end, but a new beginning – like spring. That our services are both easy to access and free of charge. Just call us at 866-876-6550 to get started or make a referral. So easy!

Thanks once more for your ongoing support of VisionCorps! It truly makes a world of difference.

Gratefully,

Crystal

Crystal Mills
Vice President of Development, VisionCorps

WHY I GIVE

RONALD CARPENTER

“When VisionCorps asks me for a donation, I say, ‘What’s next? What big thing are you working on?’ I like to see whether there’s some way I can fit into it.” For Ronald Carpenter, giving to VisionCorps is personal. He has macular degeneration.

The Carpenters were living in Oswego, NY when Ronald’s employer, Armstrong World Industries, transferred him to Lancaster in 1974. His wife, Marlene, began volunteering for VisionCorps’ daycare program. In later years, she developed dementia and Alzheimer’s, and the couple moved to Homestead Village so she could receive memory care. She passed away in 2023.

“In the early 2000s, macular degeneration caught up with me,” Ronald said. “My father had it and so did his sister. Four years ago, my eye doctor said, ‘We’ve done all we can do for your vision; it’s stable.’ They referred me to VisionCorps.”

VisionCorps introduced him to adaptive devices and techniques: a Zoomax portable digital magnifier, handheld magnifiers, glare and magnifier glasses, computer screen-reading software, and special lighting. He has a wifi-enabled microwave oven that takes voice commands. He calls family members through a private phone network by selecting their photo on a GrandPad tablet.

Ronald educates other Homestead residents about useful devices and services. “I urge people to take advantage of the help that’s right here in Lancaster. You don’t have to drive 40 to 60 miles between vision care and Alzheimer’s care, for example. The hospitals and healthcare professionals are nearby and they work together. That’s not always true in other communities.”

In June, Ronald will turn 97. “I tell people I’ve never retired. I want more! I’m still going! I did not come here to Homestead to die – I plan to live to 106!” He was driving a bus at age 85. He had to give up driving 6 years ago, and still misses it. One way he stays active is by volunteering with the nearby Schreiber Center for Pediatric Development, where he is known as “Mr. Ron the Sticker Man.” He delights in greeting young patients as they enter for their appointments by offering them colorful stickers that bring a smile to their faces.

Ronald’s zest for life is admirable. He’s a problem-solver who believes in setting goals for himself and in giving back. His approach is pragmatic: “It doesn’t matter if you’re a business, like Armstrong, or a nonprofit fulfilling federal contracts, like VisionCorps. You need to know how to get the best value out of your financial expenditures. So, I always ask: what’s the plan? How’s it going to be done? Who’s going to do it?” He has recently funded VisionCorps’ quality control inspection of military helmet pads. He also donates to children’s programs, and to Jackson Laboratories’ research on macular degeneration and Alzheimer’s disease.



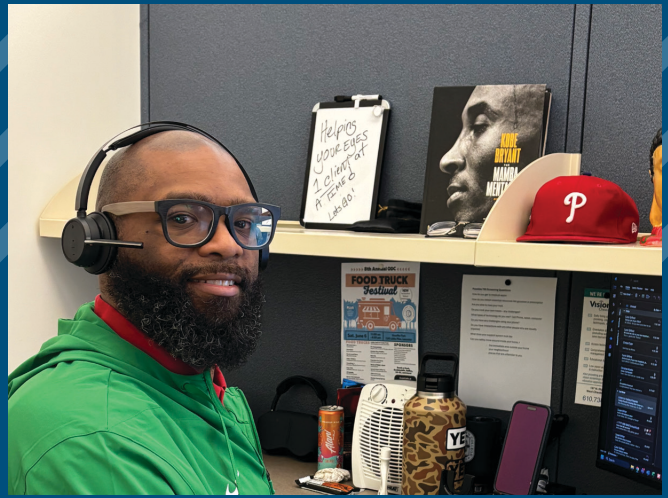
*Ronald Carpenter and his daughter
Suzanne Landis*

THE WORLD KEEPS SPINNING

If you reach out to VisionCorps about rehabilitation services, chances are you'll speak with Clinton Tyler, the new Intake and Support Specialist. Clinton is the first individual to serve in this role, and he's truly happy to be doing so.

"I'm proud to have the opportunity to contribute to VisionCorps in this new way," Clinton shared. He helps individuals navigate access to VisionCorps support. To start, potential clients sign a release form allowing the team to contact their eye doctor for records and then schedule them for an initial evaluation. During this part of the intake process, people learn about the services available to them, such as safe mobility training, occupational therapy, assistance with daily living skills, education about technology that can help them navigate the sighted world, support groups, case management, and much more.

Clinton finds he can empathize with those adjusting to vision loss because of his own first-hand experience. He was diagnosed with glaucoma at age 14 followed by declining vision for the next several years. Eventually, when he could no longer see objects below or to the side of him, he had to change jobs. He was referred to VisionCorps for services, but also ended up working full-time in the organization's manufacturing facility as a production supervisor. Down the road, he began studying Human Services at Elizabethtown College, and will graduate with a degree from there this spring.



"By sharing my personal journey of becoming legally blind, I can help clients feel more at ease," said Clinton. "Building personal connections allows them to feel comfortable opening up about their vision loss. And those who are struggling often find reassurance in hearing from someone who has navigated a similar path and found success."

Clinton appreciates the opportunity to help people who are blind or vision impaired regain their independence.

"Just because you are losing or have lost your vision does not mean the world stops spinning," he said.

"You have to find ways to stay motivated and achieve your goals, regardless of your vision," said Clinton. "The best thing that ever happened to me was finding a support system that keeps pushing me forward. I have that at home, and I have that here at VisionCorps."

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Insights is a publication of VisionCorps
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