

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*

THANKS TO YOU, THE RODRIGUEZ FAMILY IS GETTING THE HELP THEY NEED!

You are making a difference for families dealing with the challenges of vision impairment. Just ask the Rodriguez family of York: Maria, her brother Hector, and young son Abraham all have low vision due to congenital cataracts. They've turned to VisionCorps for support, training and opportunities.

Maria (40) is from Puerto Rico. Through VisionCorps' monthly conference calls, she connects with other Spanish speakers who are blind or vision impaired for friendship and support. "Sin Limites" (Without Limits) includes local people who moved here from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Peru, and the Dominican Republic.

The Rodriguez family has a history of vision impairment. Maria's mother, who died recently, was born with hydrocephalus. When fluid was drained from her brain, it damaged her optic nerves. Hector and his late father had congenital cataracts and retinal detachment. Maria also has glaucoma and macular degeneration.

"Although my mother was blind, she successfully raised four children," Maria said. "Her life inspires me. I graduated college, speak several languages, and know braille and shorthand. Now, I want to learn to use computer screen-reading software. I'm proud of what I've accomplished and I want the same for my son." Maria reads large print through a CCTV, and uses apps and adaptive technology.

Abraham (8) has made friends with other vision impaired children through VisionCorps. He enjoys going on field trips to farms, museums and parks, and doing activities like fishing and pottery. He reads large print and is learning to use a white cane.

Hector (41) works with VisionCorps' Enterprise Group on a contract with the National Library Service, swiping data from audiobook cartridges. He uses a white cane to get around safely.

Maria said, "When I was 10, I went to a school for the blind. There were children there with very serious disabilities. So now, when I feel like complaining, I remind myself that there are people worse off than me. I'm grateful for the vision I have, and for the help and opportunities that VisionCorps provides."



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To our valued donors,

Happy New Year! I am not often in this newsletter, but I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing support of VisionCorps. As the president and CEO of VisionCorps, and having been with the company for over 30 years, I have seen my fair share of change and growth. But, I can't say I've ever seen VisionCorps – or the community – transition to living and working during a pandemic!



Nearly two years ago when Covid-19 changed the globe, we weren't sure how we'd respond – we just knew that we would respond, and it would be in a way that we could continue to serve our clients and the community. I am proud to say that, with the continued financial support from our donors, we were able to maintain rehabilitation services for all clients, as well as maintain essential operations in our employment program for our employees who are blind.

While these challenges tested VisionCorps, I cannot stress enough the support of the community making it possible for us to barely skip a beat and continue helping your friends and neighbors living with vision loss – just in a different way than we had before. During a time when many organizations are struggling to keep programs going, VisionCorps was able to expand programming to add more support and social groups for clients, held a fantastic fundraising event – the Eye Drop Rappelling Event – in July, and maintained contract work in the Enterprise Group.

So, thank you. Thank you for your unwavering support – in good times and challenging times – to keep VisionCorps thriving and able to serve. As the number of individuals who are blind will continue to grow at a rapid pace over the next decade with the aging baby boomer population, we are hopeful you'll continue to trust VisionCorps to provide the best services possible to your community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Steiner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "S".

Dennis Steiner
President & CEO

WHY WE GIVE

JENNIFER AND STEVE MUSSER

Jennifer and Steve Musser of Lititz enjoy finding creative ways to help attract awareness and financial support for VisionCorps. It's their way of giving back. "Ever since he was 6 months old, VisionCorps has been helping our son," Jennifer said. "Chase is 7 now, and he's learning the skills he needs to be independent and safe. We want to ensure that all children who are vision impaired throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania have access to these vital services."

The Musser's have raised funds by showcasing a drag racing car at car shows, through birthday fundraisers on Facebook, and by securing event sponsorships from Del Toyota, where Steve works.

Last year, Jennifer added a new activity – she joined VisionCorps' 2021 Eye Drop event. If she could raise \$1,000, she could rappel over the edge of the Holiday Inn Hotel in Downtown Lancaster. She and her team of three co-workers from her practice at Rivera Physical Therapy were able to raise more than \$2,500.

Emcees created a festive atmosphere with music and announced a play-by-play of each rappeler's movements, to the delight of onlookers.

Experts from event sponsor, Over the Edge, ensured the safety of the 70+ participants, some of whom were dressed in costumes. Once on the roof, Jennifer was fitted into a full-body harness that went around her legs

and shoulders. She was given a helmet and gloves. There was a place on the roof to practice what it would feel like to hang by the harness and rappel.

While participating in Eye Drop was safe, it was still a challenge.



"As I've gotten older, I'm more afraid of heights," Jennifer admitted. "I had planned to not look down, and just keep my eyes on the wall. But I was wearing a GoPro, and that would have made for a very boring video for my husband, college roommates and some friends who were watching me descend live online from home." Meanwhile, her parents, son Jack, and her bosses were rooting for her at the base of the building. "It was scary, exciting and exhilarating!" she said, "And I absolutely would do it again!"

Helping to raise awareness and support for VisionCorps is something the Musser family will do without having to be asked. "VisionCorps has made such a difference in Chase's life," Jennifer said. "He's made friends with other kids who have visual impairments, and that's so important. And he's learning skills that will help him be successful throughout his life. We are lucky to have these services and activities right here in our community, and we really appreciate it."



VOUCHER SERVICES FOR INSIGHT

January 2022

The new year is a time when many people review and evaluate their health and activities. It's also a good time to pay attention to your eyes and think about keeping them healthy.

You may recognize that you are having trouble seeing print material up close or at a distance in books or online. You or your children may notice eye strain after working at a computer or spending long periods on screen time. It may be harder for you to see in the dark. You may experience eye discomfort at night. All these symptoms point to the need for an eye exam to check out your eyes and talk to an eye care professional.

As part of its mission to provide eye care education and preventative care, VisionCorps partners with the Pennsylvania Vision Foundation to provide free eye exams and eyeglasses to qualified individuals in Southcentral Pennsylvania.

The program is available to individuals in our community who may not be able to afford to get their eyes checked and purchase glasses. VisionCorps, through this partnership program, connects low-income families in Adams, Chester, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York counties to free vision examinations and basic frames and lenses. To see if you qualify for the service, please call VisionCorps at 717-205-4141.

Individuals may be introduced to the program through KidSight, an annual program where VisionCorps staff visit preschool educational and childcare centers and



provide free vision screenings for children ages 6 months through six-years-old.

Early detection and correction of poor vision is key to helping children succeed socially and educationally. Nearly 10 percent of all preschoolers have a vision-related problem that often goes undiagnosed, and occasionally those undiagnosed problems can result in permanent loss of vision. Because more than 80 percent of all learning is visual, good eyesight is important for school success.

VisionCorps provides almost 7,500 free vision screenings to children through KidSight each year. If a possible problem is detected, a referral will be made for a full eye exam with an optometrist or ophthalmologist—and information about the free eye exam and eyeglasses program is provided.

insights

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Insights is a publication of VisionCorps Foundation
Dennis Steiner, President

Questions?

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