



Sightless
Children
Club

Important Reminders:

This Month's highlights:

- Club Meeting: April 19th, 7:00 on Helke Rd.
- Remember to share amazon smile with your friends and family



* Remember to save your bottle caps for Randy's charity



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Sightless Children Club News

April 2021

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

These words, spoken by Anne Bradstreet long ago seem so appropriate this year. After the "long winter of COVID", spring...and the new beginnings it offers, seems especially sweet. Spring is the time to start new projects, make new plans, learn new things, make new friends, and have new adventures!

Spring is also the time for IEP meetings, so we will have **special speakers** at this month's meeting to help parents prepare for these crucial conferences. Please



take a moment to consider friends who have vision impaired children who would like to learn more about the IEP process and invite them to this month's meeting.

Here at SCC, the **pending sale of the building on Helke Rd.** provides SCC the opportunity to begin afresh in its mission of support for blind and visually impaired children and their families in the Miami Valley. Don't miss this month's meeting and the chance to help SCC step into a bright new springtime of service and support!



Last month at SCC...

The theme of last month's SCC meeting was, "We love technology". We enjoyed a video presentation about **OrCam MyEye**, a voice activated device that attaches to eyeglasses and can read text from a book, smartphone screen or any other surface, recognize faces, help the visually impaired shop on their own, work more efficiently, and live a more independent life.

Then, our own **Abby Edwards** demonstrated **Aira**, a "visual interpreter for the blind," that connects its users to a network of live certified agents who assist the user remotely in real-time. The result is an augmented reality experience in which users can access helpful information in a friendly, efficient manner to improve their mobility and independence. Thanks, Abby!

Blind and Visually Impaired Teens Adapt to Zoom for Social Activities

Zoom Meeting



When nearly everything went virtual and the term "lockdown" was newly abuzz last

spring, Stephanie Hurd and Ryan Menter began asking how they would modify their teen programming for Future in Sight, a nonprofit that provides education, rehabilitation and social services to those who are blind or visually impaired.

Hurd, whose vision loss progresses over time due to a rare degenerative eye condition, began working at Future in Sight as a coordinator of volunteer services. She went on to provide one-on-one trainings to teach people how to navigate technology while blind or visually impaired. She started informally organizing activities for adults, then teens, which eventually turned into consistent programming. She's now an assistive technology and activities specialist for the group.

Before the pandemic, Hurd would host one or two in-person activities per month in various locations across New Hampshire for teens.

A wide array of activities were available, including pottery, fencing, baseball, horseback riding, hiking, rock climbing and ice skating. For blind and visually impaired youths, these programs hosted by Hurd were "something to look forward to," a chance to meet and befriend other teens who share similar experiences, said Menter, a 16-year-old

from Lebanon, Maine, who serves as a volunteer co-coordinator for Future in Sight.

"We used to look forward to these events, and we would all be texting back and forth a couple days before, 'Don't forget, I'm so excited!'" Covid restrictions meant that the group would have to "go virtual".

The virtual activities, although not ideal, brought new opportunity for expansion to the organization, which plans to continue a hybrid of virtual and in-person programming after the pandemic, Hurd said.

The programming is now more reachable for people involved coming from communities throughout New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and even New York, Hurd said.

"It takes down those barriers of logistics, trying to get everybody together," she added. "Not everybody gets the opportunity to get to a location."

Up next, Hurd is looking forward to a "Cupcake Wars"-style bakeoff — when they can reunite in-person again, hopefully soon.





The Blind Explorer Who Trekked To The South Pole

Meet former Royal Navy sailor **Alan Lock**. Growing up, Lock dreamed of becoming a submarine officer, but during training, he lost his eyesight in six short weeks to macular degeneration. Lock views the world through “frosted glass with blind spots” dotting his vision, but he wasn’t going to let a little thing like blindness bring him down. Inspired by his disability, Lock set out to conquer the world. Between 2003 and 2012, he competed in 18 marathons, climbed Mount Elbrus, and became the first blind person to row across the Atlantic Ocean.

Still not satisfied with his list of awesome achievements, Lock decided to try something even cooler—literally. With the help of two sighted friends and a guide, the 31-year-old set off from the Antarctic coast, determined to ski to the South Pole. Hauling a 60-kilogram (130 lb) sled around his waist and battling freezing winds, Lock and his companions traveled 960 kilometers (600 mi) over 39 days, snacking on dehydrated foods and chunks of butter. Not only did he become the first blind person to reach the South Pole, he earned over \$25,000 for charities that help the visually challenged.



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Sightless Children Club News Screen Reader Edition: “If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”

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Blind Teens adapt to Zoom Meetings: When nearly everything went virtual and the term "lockdown" was newly abuzz last spring, Stephanie Hurd and Ryan Menter began asking how they would modify their teen programming for Future in Sight, a nonprofit that provides education, rehabilitation and social services to those who are blind or visually impaired. Hurd, whose vision loss progresses over time due to a rare degenerative eye condition, began working at Future in Sight as a coordinator of volunteer services. She went on to provide one-on-one trainings to teach people how to navigate technology while blind or visually impaired. She started informally organizing activities for adults, then teens, which eventually turned into consistent programming. She's now an assistive technology and activities specialist for the group. Before the pandemic, Hurd would host one or two in-person activities per month in various locations across New Hampshire for teens. A wide array of activities were available, including pottery, fencing, baseball, horseback riding, hiking, rock climbing and ice skating. For blind and visually impaired youths, these programs hosted by Hurd were "something to look forward to," a chance to meet and befriend other teens who share similar experiences, said Menter, a 16-year-old from Lebanon, Maine, who serves as a volunteer co-coordinator for Future in Sight. "We used to look forward to these events, and we would all be texting back and forth a couple days before, 'Don't forget, I'm so excited!'" Covid restrictions meant that the group would have to “go virtual”. The virtual activities, although not ideal, brought new opportunity for expansion to the organization, which plans to continue a hybrid of virtual and in-person programming after the pandemic, Hurd said. The programming is now more reachable for people involved coming from communities throughout New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and even New York, Hurd said. "It takes down those barriers of logistics, trying to get everybody together," she added. "Not everybody gets the opportunity to get to a location." Up next, Hurd is looking forward to a "Cupcake Wars"-style bakeoff — when they can reunite in-person again, hopefully soon.

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