

Massachusetts Reading Network

in association with the Talking Information Center Network February 2017

Monthly Impact Report

Director's Corner

In the past year I have had the opportunity to go around to various towns and speak to senior, low vision and community healthcare groups. It appeared to me there was a huge need in the South Shore for a similar group right at T.I.C. We currently have over 200 volunteer readers and over 26,000 listeners. If we were to host our own groups with timely topics, we can record and share those sessions statewide!

So.... Continued at [DIRECTOR](#)

Inclusion in MA

On March 6th Governor [Charlie Baker](#), acknowledging Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders, proclaimed the state of Massachusetts is to become the national model for blind inclusion. Why is this important?

Continued at [INCLUSION](#)



These 24 incredible individuals rode to raise money for Team With A Vision. They raised \$910 and got a great workout!

Team With A Vision

Do you believe that with the right support anything is possible? Well Team With A Vision does! For the last 24 years members of this group have toed the starting line at the Boston Marathon and have shown the world that anything is possible, even running the Boston Marathon with a disability. Team With A Vision's international group of blind and sighted runners race to support individuals throughout Massachusetts living with vision loss. Their efforts allow the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired to deliver professional, peer and volunteer support to over 1,100 individuals each year, giving them the support they need to live with dignity and independence.

Continued at [TEAM](#)

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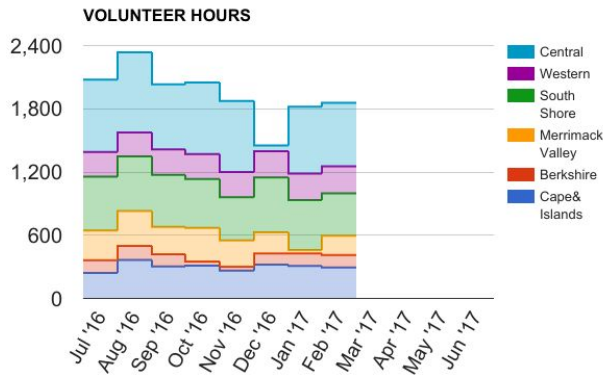
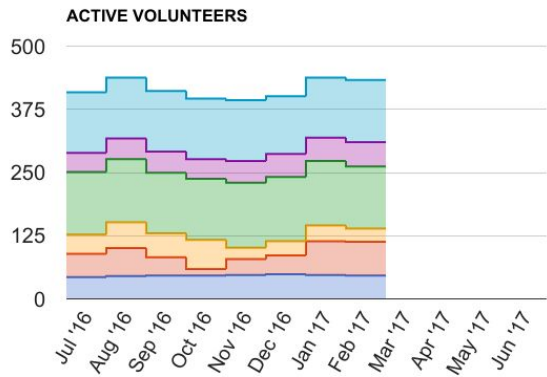
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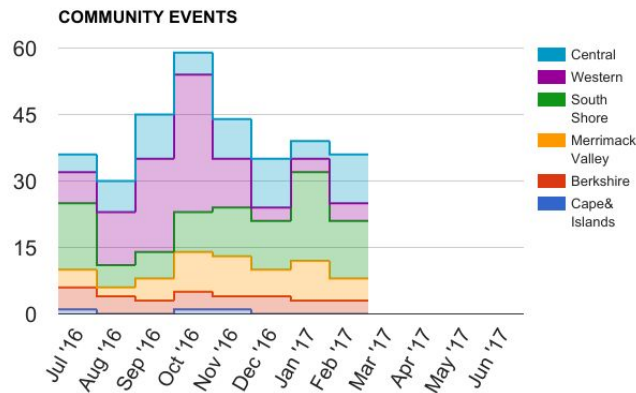
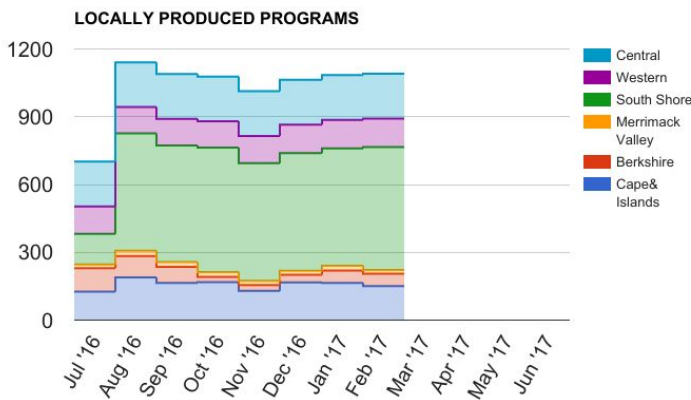
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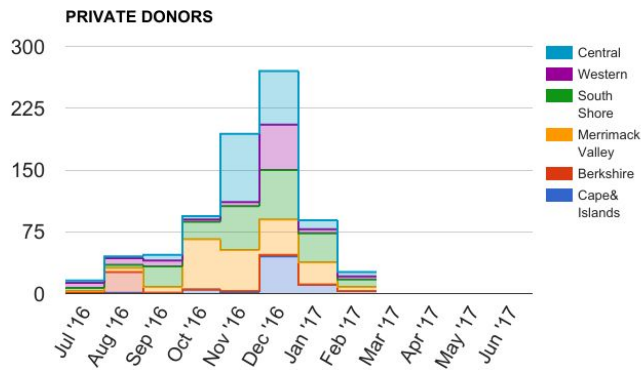
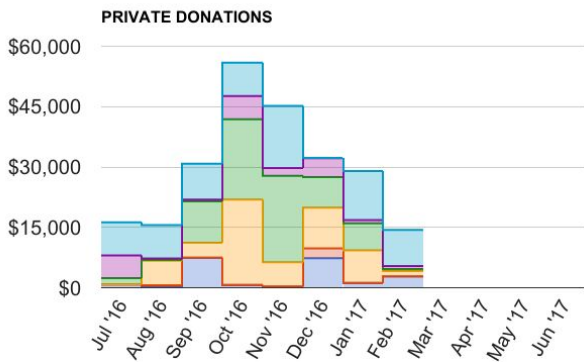
Volunteers Extend Funding and Mission



Programming and Outreach Support Independence



Diversified Development Amplifies Impact



DIRECTOR - [continued from page 1]

T.I.C. Network in Marshfield is planning to establish a new low vision education, training and support group. The purpose will be to invite individuals who are visually impaired and learning to cope with all the new adaptations and challenges that come with losing your sight. Similar groups address a range of topics from practical skills, such as orientation and mobility, to softer skills, such as dealing with a setback. T.I.C. will host, facilitate and invite guest speakers, trainers and other professionals to work with our South of Boston communities to engage folks and their caretakers with some impactful information that will help them to continue to live healthy and independent lives.

In addition, T.I.C. will use this space to invite other non-profit organizations, human service professionals and vocational trainers to film, broadcast and inform participants with a variety of programs that assist individuals with disabilities and our fast growing senior population. Our hope is to have experts, providing practical solutions to address the challenges people face, providing the support, education and training that will help people reach their goals—whatever those may be. We will welcome experts to address major topics: Learning to Live with Vision Loss, Support Services, Technology Solutions and Training, Community-Based Support Group Leaders, Demonstrations of Daily Living Products as well as Information and Referral. T.I.C will reach out to other Massachusetts organizations for best practices and for help making the T.I.C. center the best it can be!

T.I.C. is currently looking for financial support to upgrade (paint, carpet) and equip (technology systems) to support this initiative. If interested in helping please contact: Jim Bunnell; jbunnell@ticnetwork.org or call **781.834.4400**.
Jim Bunnell, Executive Director, Talking Information Center Network

INCLUSION [continued from page 1]

Physical barriers, or lack of access, has kept able bodied and disabled people apart for generations. Important changes to make public spaces and workplaces more physically accessible for the disabled continue so this separation becomes less over time. Technological advances are rapidly making virtual spaces, like television and the internet, more accessible and will, one day, make mobility more accessible (think driverless cars and virtual reality goggles). These changes make it urgent to demystify blindness and other disabilities. After all, as access for the disabled increases, there will be a new, better reality right in front of us and we all need to be naturally and comfortably included in that reality.

6 WAYS TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU SEE

✓ SHARE

✓ EMPLOY

✓ INNOVATE

✓ CONTRIBUTE

✓ INVITE

✓ BLIND DATE



#BLINDNEWWORLD

"Right now there's about zero awareness, so the benchmark is low," said Corinne Grousbeck, chair of the Board of Trustees for the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Mass. Corinne is working to improve awareness and demystify blindness with a campaign sponsored by the Perkins School, [BlindNewWorld](#).

BlindNewWorld is creating tools and awareness to help everyone be inclusive. On March 11, BlindNewWorld invited visually impaired folks to invite a sighted buddy out for lunch and an afternoon at a museum. They want the sighted to take a visually impaired pal out for a movie and a makeover. Various restaurants, museums and other venues offered attractive discounts for the "blind date" couples. What makes this date different? Well, it's all about inclusion and breaking down barriers.

TIC and the Massachusetts Reading Network also support inclusion. First by making news and information available in people's homes. For example, TIC coordinated with the Massachusetts Undersecretary for the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation (OCABR) who, on March 10 spoke about the Top Consumer Trends for 2017 and shared the latest important information on consumer trends, scams and protection. TIC sponsored this event and broadcast the briefing LIVE from the State House. A podcast of it is also available on the [TIC website](#). TIC also partnered with the [Department of Developmental Services Statewide Vision and Vision Loss Services](#) by recording the 12th Annual "FOCUS" on Vision Impairment & Blindness Conference, held March 8th. The "Focus on Vision and Vision Loss" website is a resource of the MCB/DDS Partnership Project for Orientation & Mobility/Low Vision Services, a cooperative effort between the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Partnered since January of 2000, their common goals are to promote healthy vision for all individuals with intellectual disability, raise awareness of needs for those

with vision loss, and provide services, resources, training materials and events to help. MCB and DDS work with not-for-profit organizations creating meaningful collaborations to address the unique needs of individuals. Listen to the event's opening remarks, keynote address and six sessions on the TIC website under "[Special Programming](#)". TIC is excited about its new partnership with Lisa DiBonaventura, Statewide Director for Vision and Vision Loss Services for DDS, who joined TIC's John Shea and Jim Bunnell on Mission Possible a few weeks ago. [Click here](#) to listen to the broadcast and learn more about the wonderful work Lisa and her division are doing.

TIC and the Massachusetts Reading Network also promote inclusion by holding community events like the Blindfold Challenge and by training and organizing hundreds of volunteers.

The group [visionaustralia.org](#) suggests these common sense tips when speaking with a person who is blind or has low vision:

- Be yourself and act naturally
- Identify yourself - don't assume the person will recognise you by your voice
- Speak naturally and clearly. Loss of eyesight does not mean loss of hearing
- Continue to use body language. This will affect the tone of your voice and give a lot of extra information to the person who is vision impaired
- Use everyday language. Don't avoid words like "see" or "look" or talking about everyday activities such as watching TV or videos
- Name the person when introducing yourself or when directing conversation to them in a group situation
- Never channel conversation through a third person
- In a group situation, introduce the other people present
- Never leave a conversation with a person without saying so
- Use accurate and specific language when giving directions
- For example, "the door is on your left", rather than "the door is over there"
- Avoid situations where there is competing noise
- Always ask first to check if help is needed
- Relax and be yourself.

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**TEAM** - [continued from page 1]

Team With A Vision is proud to be one of only six organizations chosen to be a new Boston Athletic Association Official Charity for the Boston Marathon. TIC's executive team, Jim Bunnell and Anna Dunbar, are running the Boston Marathon 2017 as a part of Team With A Vision to raise awareness for the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI). Jim will be guiding a visually impaired runner and this is the first time Anna will run the 26.2 mile Boston Marathon! Anna is fundraising for MABVI and you can sponsor her (right) by going to this link: [teamwithavision/annadunbar](#). On March 19th, Anna will guide Brian Switzer, Team With A Vision Deaf Blind ultra runner, in the 2017 New Bedford Half Marathon.



**OFFICIAL  
CHARITY**

All funds raised by Team With A Vision support Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired's statewide network of vision rehabilitation services, which include 14 low vision clinics, 34 low vision support groups, and 300 volunteers matched 1:1 with blind individuals. These efforts allow MABVI to deliver professional, peer, and volunteer



support to over 1,200 individuals each year, giving them the support they need to live with dignity and independence.

Founded as the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, MABVI is the oldest social service organization in the country that serves adults and elders who are blind or visually impaired. After more than a century in the field, we know that vision loss doesn't have to mean the end of a full life. But many people losing their vision don't know how to get help. MABVI's vision rehabilitation services help people with low vision maximize their remaining sight and learn to use adaptive strategies for completing daily tasks. Their trained specialists can help make a home safer and recommend simple devices to make life with low vision easier.

Elders are the fastest-growing and most vulnerable population of persons with sight loss. The majority of individuals experiencing vision loss are elders living with eye diseases such as macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma, or diabetic retinopathy. One in six people over the age of sixty-five has vision loss, and that number rises to half of elders over eighty. MABVI partners with respected community and medical groups to create high impact, cost effective services.

According to data published by the Commission for the Blind and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, there are an estimated 105,000 elders in Massachusetts with serious sight loss who cannot receive state-funded services because they are not "legally blind." Nevertheless, their vision impairment is serious, and without appropriate intervention, can have a devastating impact on their independence. Low vision makes it difficult to complete activities of daily living, putting elders at increased risk for falls and complicating health care compliance. There is a pressing need for low vision services today more than ever, to ensure people with vision loss can continue to live the lives they want.

With more than a 110 years of experience, the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired is a leader in the field of vision rehabilitation. MABVI partners with optometrists, occupational therapists, peer support group leaders and 1:1 community volunteers helped more than 1,100 Massachusetts residents live with dignity and independence this year. MABVI's impact is impressive:



Jim Bunnell and Anna Dunbar with Sarah Robertson (left) after a practice run

- 837 in-home vision rehabilitation visits helped adults and elders learn new strategies for living safely with low vision and learn how to use adaptive technology.
- 285 patients attended 302 appointments at MABVI-operated low vision centers. Low vision centers increase access to low vision magnification devices and to vital training about learning to use your remaining sight.
- In addition to MABVI-operated clinics, they partner with affiliated practices in the community to ensure that comprehensive low vision rehabilitation services are available across the state.
- MABVI's Peer Support Groups helped 424 adults and seniors cope with the fears and frustrations of vision loss. Group members attended meetings 2,229 times at 34 locations across the state.
- 142 individuals received 1:1 assistance with grocery shopping, errands, reading mail and other clerical tasks. Volunteers are a cost-effective, confidential source of support who help reduce a visually impaired person's need to rely on family or friends for tasks that require sight.
- Their medical transportation volunteers escorted 49 patients to 375 medical

appointments, filling a critical transportation gap for visually impaired individuals and increasing access to health care.

Want to run with Team With A Vision and support the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired at the same time? Here is a link: [team-with-a-vision/upcoming-events](https://team-with-a-vision.org/upcoming-events)



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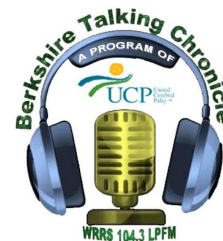




**Audible Local Ledger**

### Listen to Audible Local Ledger

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**AUDIO JOURNAL**

### Listen to Audio Journal

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### Listen to Valley Eye Radio

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