

Update

BUILDING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVES



What Our Students Want You To Know

NJFFB serves adults who have become vision impaired or blind. The numbers are growing at an alarming rate due to the diabetes epidemic and the aging population. Through comprehensive classes in assistive technology, orientation and mobility, home management, and wellness activities our students are learning to enjoy what life has to offer. Meet four of our students who want to share their stories with you:



After teaching for six years, Lori's diabetic retinopathy took most of her sight. She continued to teach over the years, but was plagued with other traumatic vision issues. She now has prosthetic eyes and is on her third dog guide. When Lori first made up her mind to hold onto the teaching job she loved, she came to NJFFB for professional development. "I was afraid and nervous," recalls Lori, "but the Foundation urged me out of my comfort zone. They are fine-tuned at helping people like me do for themselves." Lori's teaching career continues to this day, a total of 31 years in the Paterson School District. Lori admits she prays for the Foundation. According to Lori, "It means everything to me."



In 1972, Ed had the disastrous misfortune of having his arm scratched by a cat. This resulted in an infection that took most of his sight in both eyes. Every day he must follow a difficult regime to keep his eye pressure under control. But that doesn't seem to dampen his spirit. Ed manages still to take care of his mother and they often enjoy cooking together. He plants his own garden and uses the ingredients in his recipes. "When I first had my problem, I could not leave my mother alone to go into a residential rehabilitation program. I was lucky enough to find help at NJFFB. If it wasn't for them, I'd still be sitting around twiddling my thumbs."



Susanne was working as a Registered Nurse when she began to lose her vision due to glaucoma. Declared legally blind, she could no longer continue nursing and literally sat at home for a year. It was by chance that Susanne heard about NJFFB and finally worked up the courage to call. "I have to say the Foundation saved my life," says Susanne. "I discovered my life was not over due to my vision impairment. Now I want to give back." And she is. Susanne recently taught a Nutrition class to other NJFFB students, and volunteers helping students in any way she can. Susanne has enrolled as a part-time student at William Paterson College, majoring in Public Health. She has set her sights on becoming a Health Coach, and we have no doubt she will succeed.



Robbie was the consummate athlete, playing strong safety on his high school football team, wrestling, even becoming an expert at martial arts. For reasons still unknown, he completely lost vision in his right eye in 2003, and gradually lost peripheral vision in his left. He has been taking classes at NJFFB improving his cane skills and cooking abilities, and learning new ways to stay independent. "NJFFB is a beautiful program for me. I enjoy the atmosphere. I have my ups and downs, but I just keep going. I just want to be happy." Robbie is making plans to become a martial arts instructor in the near future. Knowing Robbie, that will surely make him happy.

NJFFB is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization, supported by people like you. You can help by donating online at www.njffb.org or by mail.

Low Vision Program

Because Help Can't Wait...

NJFFB Created a One Day Low Vision Program

We developed this innovative one day approach in order to provide immediate assistance and essential knowledge to those coping with the new challenge of vision loss. This program is open to both low vision participants and their family caregivers. Funders of this program include the Grotta Fund for Senior Care, The Community Foundation of New Jersey and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. The One Day Essential Low Vision Program is only available at NJFFB.



"The One Day Program made me realize that I am not alone, and that I can still lead an active life."

– Quote from a One Day Program participant.



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Joy of Life

Teaching The Joy of Life

It's no surprise adults who lose vision are at increased risk of depression. We are deeply committed to bringing more joy and opportunities for socialization into our students' lives. Here are the newest additions to our Wellness classes:

Can you guess the most popular new class? See reverse side bottom for the answer.

- African Drum Circle**
for healing and a sense of community
- Art Therapy**
promotes stress reduction and conflict resolution
- Chorus**
builds listening skills and personal accomplishment
- Nutrition**
offers simple guidelines for optimum health
- Tai Chi**
fosters stability and flexibility



"Teen Vision" Comes to the Aid of NJFFB

A group of local teenagers who call themselves Teen Vision have been volunteering at NJFFB, including decorating both our street entrance and the building interior for the changing seasons. The group underwent sensitivity training to gain a real understanding of vision issues. Pictured are two volunteers learning the "human guide technique."

New Computers Making a Difference

Thanks to funding from The Hyde and Watson Foundation, we have completely updated our computer lab with computers and widescreen monitors customized to the special requirements of running both screen magnification and speech output software.