

Update

BUILDING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVES



NJFFB Helps Adults Live with Vision Loss

Diamond Spring Vision Rehabilitation Programs New Program starting Spring 2009!

NJFFB's mission is to enable adults with vision loss or blindness to lead independent and productive lives through training in orientation and mobility, activities of daily living, assistive technologies, individual and caregiver support, and elective programs. NJFFB offers a 20-Day Comprehensive course as well as a 1-Day Essential Low Vision Program that includes support for family caregivers.

The Arts at Diamond Spring Arts Program of the Year!

The Arts at Diamond Spring offers arts education classes, including painting, sculpture, pottery, textile arts, yoga and fitness, and music. Students focus on building hand strength, tactile sensitivity, balance, and other sensory skills which help compensate for loss of vision. The Arts at Diamond Spring is also a venue for visually impaired artists and performers which builds community awareness of the talents of visually impaired adults. The Arts Council of the Morris Area has recognized NJFFB as the Outstanding Arts Organization of 2009.

Diamond Spring Vision Store Open Most Weekdays!

The public is welcome to shop in the NJFFB store, where simple and high-tech solutions to vision challenges can be purchased. There is no substitute for "trying out" products like magnifiers and talking products. There is a wide selection of low vision products, as well as CCTVs and other assistive technologies and devices. Eyeglasses are not available at the store. Expert guidance is also available for placing catalog orders for products not typically in stock. We recommend calling 973-627-0055 to verify the store will be open, or to make an appointment.

Changing your Lifestyle Can Reduce Your Risk of Cataracts

Developing cataracts may seem synonymous with aging. Small wonder, since half of Americans between 65 and 74 develop cataracts, and the prevalence increases dramatically among those over 75. You may ask, "what exactly are cataracts and can I prevent them?" A cataract is a cloudy area in the lens of the eye that results in blurred vision. Cataracts begin to develop when proteins clump together and cloud a small portion of the lens. You may experience hazy vision, reduced intensity of colors, and increased sensitivity to glare, especially when night driving.

There are no guarantees, but you can take some steps to reduce risk and slow the progression of cataracts. For example, protect your eyes from ultraviolet rays by wearing sunglasses, stop smoking, and reduce alcohol consumption.

Of course, there is no substitute for having a comprehensive eye exam. Treatment can be recommended if cataracts are detected, including cataract surgery in which the natural lens of the eye is replaced with an artificial lens. It is said cataract surgery is one of the safest and most effective types of surgery performed in the United States today. Approximately 90 percent of cataract surgery patients report better vision following the surgery.

The National Eye Institute is presently involved in research that has shown that including or increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables eaten on a daily basis may reduce the risk of cataracts. Vitamin supplements have also shown to slow the progression of cataracts.



Normal vision.



Scene viewed by a person with a cataract.



Scene viewed by a person with glaucoma.

"Sneak Thief" Will Steal Vision from Older Adults

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damages the optic nerve causing "tunnel vision" and possibly blindness. It is often known as the "silent thief" or "sneak thief" because side vision is gradually lost while central or straight ahead vision is preserved. Consequently, the effects of glaucoma go unnoticed until considerable damage to the nerve has occurred.

It is predicted that the prevalence of glaucoma will increase from 2.2 million Americans over age 40 to 3.3 million by the year 2020. Although anyone can develop glaucoma, people in higher risk groups include African Americans and people over age 60.

Glaucoma cannot be prevented, but if it is detected early through regular, comprehensive eye examinations and the treatment plan prescribed by the physician is followed, then vision loss can be controlled.

A change in lifestyle may also reduce risks through regular exercise, a healthy diet, low stress levels, and not smoking.

Once glaucoma has been diagnosed, eye drops are usually prescribed. If eye drops are not effective, then other medications and/or surgery may be necessary. There are possible surgical procedures, which vary according to the type and severity of glaucoma.

The Glaucoma Research Foundation is studying ways to protect and restore the optic nerve. Determining the gene that causes glaucoma will help researchers develop new ways to test individuals at risk.

This information on eye health has been compiled from published reports from the American Health Assistance Foundation, American Optometric Association, Glaucoma Research Foundation, Lighthouse, Lighthouse International, National Eye Institute, and Prevent Blindness America, and should not be construed as expert medical opinion.

Make an Appointment With Your Eye Doctor Today.



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**NJ FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND AT
DIAMOND SPRING**

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The mission of the NJ Foundation for the Blind is to enable adults who are blind or visually impaired to lead independent lives through individual and family support and intensive training in adaptive living skills, technology, and orientation and mobility.

Se habla Español
This publication is available in audio format on request.

Donate Online at www.njffb.org

Save the Date!
**You Are Invited To
The Third Annual Founders' Day
Featuring The Arts at Diamond Spring**

Saturday, June 27, 2009 • 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM

Ticket Contribution in Advance: \$20 per Person

Featuring Works of the NJFFB's Visually Impaired Artists and Musicians and Recognition of NJFFB's Special Friends of 2009. Light Refreshments and Wine & Cheese



SPONSOR

Arts Council of the Morris Area

Directions at www.njffb.org • Sponsorships available

Founders' Day proceeds support NJFFB. NJFFB is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization and contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

**New! One-Day ESSENTIAL
Low Vision Program**

If you or someone you know is living with vision loss, spending just one day at NJFFB with a friend or family member may be all you need to live a safer, more active and enjoyable life. The One-Day Essential Low Vision Program will start Spring 2009. For information, call David Feinhals, Program Director, at 973-627-0055. Ext. 333, or email dfeinhals@njffb.org.

The One-Day Essential Low Vision Program covers about 40 different techniques, strategies and products, including:

- magnifiers
- monocular lenses
- filtered sunglasses
- talking and tactile products
- writing guides
- money identification
- labeling methods
- various recorders
- how family members can help
- self-protective techniques
- high-tech mobility aids
- pouring liquids
- cutting foods
- measuring ingredients
- eating neatly
- transportation options
- resources and services
- accessing reading materials

One Student's Story

Dear NJFFB,
I want to thank you again for everything you and the staff have done for me. It was truly a life changing experience from the major lessons such as mobility and computers to all the "little lessons" learned from other students' experiences and triumphs. I learned and grew so much in that 11 week period. I thought that I was grasping and accepting being visually impaired on my own before I attended the Foundation but I learned there that I am capable of so much more. Through the knowledge and confidence I gained there, I am ready to show this to the world.
– Nicole

Note: Nicole, age 34, is a recent graduate of NJFFB's Comprehensive Program. A pseudo-tumor led to a build-up of pressure that damaged her optic nerve, resulting in "tunnel vision." She came to NJFFB not only to learn Orientation and Mobility Skills and Assistive Technology, but to build her confidence and maintain her independence. Says Nicole, "It worked!"