



visibility

Winter 2007 / 2008

Welcome to our Winter 2007 - 2008 Newsletter!

In this edition you will find news about two exciting new projects – Echolocation and Sealladh. You can also read about Visibility's first ever challenge event on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond!

You may not be aware that the newsletter is available in electronic or tape form. If you would like your newsletter in a different format, please contact us and let us know. You can also download it from our website www.visibility.org.uk.

If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter on a regular basis, please e-mail info@visibility.org.uk or telephone us on 0141 332 4632.

Visibility Opening Times

Visibility will be closed from 1pm on Friday 21st of December and we will reopen at 9am on Thursday 3rd January 2008. Our Patient Support Service at Gartnavel is also closed during this time.

Visibility's Home Support service will not be available on 25th and 26th December or 1st and 2nd of January, however other than those days it will operate as agreed with individuals.

Should anyone experience any unusual eye problems or feel their eyes have suddenly become worse please remember that there is an Eye Casualty based at Gartnavel Hospital. The department is open 365 days a year from 8.30am – 4.30pm.

Corporate Challengers help raise over £10,000 for Visibility

There was something for everyone at our first Corporate Challenge event - even the sun shone on Loch Lomond creating the most wonderful backdrop for our challengers. From canoeing, raft building and tossing the caber; to learning to play bagpipes (a lot harder than it looks!) and performing some energetic Highland dance moves; to discovering what it's like to lose your sight in a blindfolded sensory trail. Everyone had a fantastic time and well done to the Hamilton Harriers (Dawn Construction) for being our first ever champion!

We would like to thank all the companies who participated including BT, Dawn Construction, Gerrard, Polaroid, Virgin Media Group and Vision Call. Thanks also to all the companies who supported Visibility by donating prizes and goods.

Next year's challenge will be bigger and better. If you're interested in getting involved, contact us on 0141 332 4632 to register your interest.



Sealladh

Sealladh is Gaelic for sight and is pronounced Shallach (with the 'ch' as in 'loch'!)

Visibility's new Sealladh project offers ex service men and woman who may have acquired a brain injury as a result of their service, an opportunity to access and utilise a pioneering service initially within the West Dunbartonshire area. This project with combat veterans is the first of its kind in the UK – although our colleagues in Fife use the model with stroke patients. It is used in America and Australia and we are working with international colleagues to develop our project.

Research suggests there is a common link between sight loss and head injury. Often people that have acquired a brain injury may not be aware that their sight could have been affected. Sealladh aims to support individuals who have acquired a brain injury by using pioneering new technology developed in Australia. This equipment helps us assess the persons visual abilities and if suitable, we can offer support and rehabilitation advice. We can work with people to develop and enhance their mobility, communication and life skills.

This innovative and creative service is a unique opportunity for ex service members to access a service that will support them to achieve their desired level of independence.

Thanks to the Scottish National Institution for the War Blinded who are funding Visibility to develop and deliver this exciting new project.

For further information, please contact Laura Campbell, Visibility's new Rehabilitation Practitioner.

Information Event for People with a Visual Impairment

Following on from the success of Visibility's information sessions held recently in Milngavie and Kirkintilloch, the first Ayrshire information session was held during November at the Palace and Grand Hall in Kilmarnock. The session provided the opportunity for participants to receive information about topics relating to visual impairment and to meet with other visually impaired people in their area in a relaxed and friendly environment. Friends and family were also welcome. Another session has been arranged for the 12th December at the same venue with a further session being planned for some time early in 2008.

If you would like to attend or would like further information on the sessions please contact us on 0141 332 4632. As places will be limited, we would ask that places be pre booked in advance.

Leave a legacy and help transform lives

Visibility will soon celebrate its 150th Anniversary and, as we look back at our history, we get a sense of how the charity was established through pioneering missionary work and the outstanding generosity of businesses and the wider Glasgow and the West of Scotland community. Much has changed in terms of how blind and partially sighted people are viewed and assisted but providing on-going support is as vital today as it was all those years ago.

Legacies are an important source of income to Visibility and come to us in different ways and sizes. Quite often a legacy has been left by someone we have supported in the past, others we cannot trace, but we know that visual impairment and/or our charity has touched them in some way and their support makes us feel incredibly special.

This year, we were honoured to be recognised in Mr Black's will. Mr Black contacted us in 1996 – his sight was deteriorating and he was concerned about his ability to cope on his own. Through our welfare rights service, an attendance allowance was obtained and other complementary support was provided to ensure Mr Black could continue living independently. Mr Black told us that initially he was apprehensive about letting a stranger into his home to discuss his most private fears and concerns. However, he said that his fears and concerns were soon laid to rest because he had been treated with the utmost dignity and respect at all times. He said he would never forget the charity and indeed true to his word he did not.

Making a will is the only way you can ensure that the people and causes you care about most will benefit. By leaving a legacy, you can ensure that visually impaired people continue to be treated with dignity and respect and receive much needed help and support. You can help to transform lives and give a lasting memorial. For further details, please contact Fiona Sandford, Chief Executive on 0141 572 0741.

Echolocation in the spotlight!

Echolocation – or ‘seeing with sound’ - involves making a series of clicking sounds with the tongue. This is how bats and dolphins navigate. Sound bounces off an object just as light does, and the ears can learn to interpret it. With skill, a blind or vision-impaired person can identify the height, density, form and shape of objects, essentially allowing them to “see” with their ears.

Visibility recently invited Daniel Kish of World Access for the Blind to visit Glasgow and work with us to train Visibility staff to become the UK’s first echolocation trainers. The work generated a huge amount of interest and for a few days it seemed as if Visibility’s name was everywhere! As well as various newspapers we were featured on BBC news, Newsnight Scotland, Radio Scotland and Scottish Television. Glasgow’s own Lord Provost – Bob Winter visited us and met with everyone. Bob was impressed with Visibility saying ‘this is a technique with considerable potential. It says a great deal for Visibility that the first application of echolocation is here in Glasgow!’



Following the wonderful success of the week and feedback from people, Visibility is now actively seeking funding to develop the project further and make this exciting new project available to more people. Contact us for information on how you can help raise funds to make ‘seeing with sound’ a reality for children and adults!

In the meantime, we are working with the children and teachers at Knowetop Primary School Visual Impairment Unit in Motherwell. We are also working with a small number of children in our offices. For further information, please contact us or look out for news on our website.



Alex's story

Alex Campbell was one of Visibility's echolocation trainees – this is what he said about the experience:

'Every now and again something comes along in life that shifts your view of it. A new job or a new home or partner all have the power to focus the mind. This summer I had a simple but great experience when I met Daniel Kish and Brian Bushway at Visibility for a week of echolocation training.

I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to take part in echolocation training at Visibility. It was a fun experience and I have made some great friends in the process. It has now been several months since I received the training and it has been an interesting and ever evolving process in my day to day life.

After the initial intense period of training at Visibility, I must admit that I took my foot off the throttle for a few days and only had the occasional experiment with echolocation, preferring to use the little sight I have to its maximum effect.

However, I soon began to find it interesting to try out new echoes and their responses, using differing objects and slowly appreciating all the dynamics of the environment that Daniel and Brian were so keen for us to experience. I was discovering a whole new world, full of different locations to compare and investigate.

I started out by using echolocation to navigate back and forth to work and in social situations. As I began to realize that I could detect objects around me, I slowly gained in confidence. I was gradually realizing that it would indeed be possible for me to pass on these skills to other people, which had been the initial aim of the training.

When the training ended, it was early September and the sun was still high in the sky. This is the type of thing that you notice when you have RP, as it makes a dramatic difference to the amount of useful sight that you have. As the nights have drawn in and the clocks have moved back, this as usual has led to a dramatic restriction in my mobility. This encouraged me to change my use of echolocation from an experimental interest to more of a deliberate tool to be used alongside my long cane to gain extra freedom.

It's not until you are in this situation that you can appreciate how many obstacles we all dodge on a day to day basis on our footpaths. I know because I hit most of them! Today though, I have a new skill to help avoid some of them. Most of all I have the confidence to go and find them instead of my previous position of restricting my life to what I knew was comfortable and non-challenging which was not my nature. My mobility is now more outgoing and natural. Thanks so much to Visibility for giving me this fantastic opportunity'.

Staffing Update

Sadly, Nuala Boyle our wonderful fundraiser is leaving us to move on to pastures new. Nuala is joining Strathclyde University for an exciting new post raising funds for a new building.

We are delighted that Audrey Ward is going to become our corporate and events fundraiser. Audrey is known to many of our Visibility friends as she is also our visual impairment awareness trainer. Audrey is going to continue to work in this role but is also taking on the fundraising work.

Jenny Jamieson will join us in early January. Jenny will focus on our trusts and foundations fundraising.'

GO! Adult Classes January – March 2008

For further information on any of the Go activities, please call us on 0141 332 4632

Day	Class	Time	Tutor	Cost
Mondays from 14 th January	Creative Writing	10am - 12pm	Collette Paul	£2.50
	Singing	11am – 12:30pm	Sandra Haxton	£2.50
	Yoga	2:00pm – 3:30pm	Margaret Sutherland	£2.50
Tuesdays from 15 th January	Guitar and Banjo	10:30am -12:30pm	Billy Stewart	£2.50
Wednesdays from 16 th January	Arts and Crafts	10:30am-12:30pm	Luci Ransome	£2.50
	Braille	6:00pm - 7:30pm	Kerrie Brown	£2.50
Thursdays from 17 th January	Beginners Keyboard	10am-12pm	Emma Sinclair	£2.50
Fridays from 18 th January	Intermediate Keyboard	10am-12pm	Emma Sinclair	£2.50
	Braille	10am-12pm	Margaret Rodgers	£1.00

SUPPORTING VISIBILITY

With your help Visibility can make positive changes to the lives of visually impaired people living in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. If you are an individual, organisation or company and would like to support the work of Visibility visit our web-site www.visibility.org.uk or contact us by phone 0141 332 4632.

By donating £5 per month, you can provide:

- A person to be a sighted guide on an outing
- A trip to ice-skating, wall climbing or playground for a visually impaired child

By donating £10 per month, you can provide:

- An opportunity for a person to learn Braille
- A regular visitor to a blind older person living on their own

By donating £15 per month, you can provide:

- A place for someone to learn to use their eyesight in a different way so that they can read again
- An opportunity for people who have recently lost their sight to meet with other visually impaired people for information and support Whatever way you choose to support us, on behalf of blind and partially sighted people in the West of Scotland – thank you!



For more details on any aspect of Visibility please contact 0141 332 4632 or write to Visibility, 2 Queens Crescent, Glasgow G4 9BW

Visibility is the trading name of GWSSB (formerly Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for the Blind). GWSSB is a company, registered in Scotland limited by guarantee with its registered office at 2 Queens Crescent, Glasgow, G4 9BW. Registration Number: SC116522 Scottish Charity Number: SCO 09738