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THE HCB DIFFERENCE

The most important point of difference between the Hatlen Program and other programs is that our students are not living in a simulated real-life setting—they are living independently in apartments among sighted neighbors in the real world with guidance from our highly trained staff of professionals.

To learn more, apply, or donate, visit www.hcblind.org or call (510) 234-4984

WE HAVE CHANGED OUR NAME!

I am so pleased to announce that the **LIVING SKILLS CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED** has recently gone through an exciting and extensive rebranding process. Our Board of Directors has unanimously voted to change our name to The Hatlen Center for the Blind (HCB). This name not only honors our founder, Dr. Philip Hatlen, but also identifies the agency with Phil's philosophy for the education of blind children. Early on, Phil realized two things: The first was that the forces of pity, over protection, and low expectations were debilitating and totally counter productive. The second was that, to avoid gaps in learning, hands-on experience needed to occur at every level of a child's life, not just in the realm of academics. Ninety percent of what sighted people learn is simply through observance. A blind child, on the other hand, must hear, touch, smell, and experience a thing for it to be learned. Sighted children have one curriculum, but that curriculum needs to be expanded in order for blind children to succeed in this world.

Always a positive thinker, Phil decided to create an agency to address this need. In 1972 we became the first transition agency ever founded, and for 36 years we have been helping our students fill in the gaps. At the time of our founding Phil's idea was not only considered to be innovative, it was radical. The thought of expecting students to succeed at living in real apartments out in the community, paying their own bills, cooking their own food, and traveling to meet their own needs was met with skepticism by many. But with the support of young, dedicated and enthusiastic teachers, all trained by Phil in his role as professor at San Francisco State University's teacher preparation program, our graduates began to prove to the world that Phil's



vision made perfect sense. Over the years the staff has changed, but the mission and the dedication have not. We have continued to hone our curriculum, change with the times, and get constantly better and better at what we do. Phil didn't stop moving forward either. He authored "The Expanded Core Curriculum," one of the ten goals of the National Agenda for Education. The Hatlen Center for the Blind embodies that goal.

We are thrilled that Dr. Hatlen's outstanding service delivery model is now growing beyond its California borders and is available to blind people nationwide. This growth is yet another testament to Dr. Hatlen's profound insight and constant forward thinking.

Phil, I always said that creating this agency was the best idea you ever had. The proof, as they say, is in the pudding. You have won many awards, but the stories that follow are your true legacy. Each story is an accolade to your vision and determination. Each story is living proof that, with the proper information and training, people who are blind can choose their own lifestyles, command dignity and respect, and live independently. Know that there are hundreds of other stories that we don't have the space to print.

-Patricia Williams, *Executive Director*

STORIES OF TRIUMPH

Before coming to HCB, most of our congenitally blind (blind from birth) students had never experienced independence; and those who were recently blinded never thought they would have control over their own lives again. However, after completing the HCB program, our students triumph over obstacles to independence. Here are some of their stories.

MEET TOM LAKE

“Before coming to HCB, I did not think I could go live on my own. However, I have always strived to be independent. HCB is great because of the individualized training and working in my own apartment. I have to live there and when I cook, I have to clean it up or live with the mess. Another thing I experienced at HCB is freedom to make my own choices. The staff goes home in the evening and on the weekend. Students are allowed to make their own decisions about what they want to do and do not have to ask permission. It’s an incredible freedom I never dreamed I would



have. I also never thought I would be crossing busy streets with lots of cars. Even with the audible signals they have here, you have to think about what you are doing as you

cross. Now I can travel on my own! Regarding financial management, I thought the \$1,000.00 per month I get from Social Security would be a lot of money; I thought “Man I’m rich!” Then I began to pay bills and over half of my money was gone before buying groceries. I learned to budget! Looking back at my one year at HCB, I know that I am ready to take on the challenges of living on my own. **This experience had a great impact on my life. I am now ready to move forward in my life and live independently.**”

Tom has recently moved to an apartment in Sacramento

MEET BECCA REINIER

“When I arrived at HCB, I was pretty depressed because I had just broken up with a long-term boyfriend. It took awhile for me to come out of my shell. All of the staff was really patient with me in dealing with my emotional issues. When you live with someone you think you are independent, but you are depending on the people you live with more than you realize. **When**

I started living on my own at HCB, making my own food and having to do things on my own, I realized how dependent I had been on others before coming to HCB. I feel like I have become a lot more outgoing, I’ve become a people person and I have a lot more confidence about who I am.”

Becca is living in Hayward with her roommates and works at Opaque (Dining in the Dark) as a waitress.



MEET VANIA KLEE

When Vania Klee came to The Hatlen Center, she was the first to admit that she was angry and sarcastic to the core. Vania had had a hard life, and she felt that bad luck dogged her. She always assumed the worst. During the course of her stay at HCB, we have never seen a bigger change in anyone. She wrote us a letter when she graduated: “Well, I cannot believe my time

is up and I thought I should say a few words to all of you. All of you have completely changed my life. You guys are such an amazing organization and wonderful individuals. **You all proved to me that with help and effort we can achieve the impossible.** With much love and care from your former student and friend, Vania Azalea Klee.”

Vania lives independently in Elk Grove, CA and attends college full time.



MEET DON KATZ

“After becoming ill with meningitis, spending 3 weeks in a coma, and six months in acute rehabilitation, my primary mode of transportation was still a wheelchair. I was still learning to walk, and I still had to hold on to someone for balance. Then I arrived at the Hatlen Center. From the first moment, I knew I would learn the skills I needed to be my own person again. I remember being very nervous when Nancy told me that she had taken me to the grocery store twice, and that now I would be going on my own. Nancy always told me I already know how to do it, I just need to figure out how to do it as a blind man. I want to thank her for giving me the faith in myself. When the Hatlen Center says you are going to be doing everything on your own, they mean everything! I had never really worked on cane skills before arriving at HCB, I didn't know I had the stamina for it. At first I was very exhausted, I wasn't used to

being on my feet that much. Meggie suggested I use a support cane to help with my balance. I didn't realize how much safer I would feel and how much it would help. Since being at the Hatlen Center, I have greatly improved my stamina and mobility skills. I am so very happy I came to the Hatlen Center. Now that I have graduated, I am actually going to be moving to my own one bedroom apartment! **With the skills I have learned I feel confident now that I can be independent and that I can problem solve anything that comes my way.**”

Don is returning to Irvine, where he will once again take over the operation of his wine tasting bar, Symposium.



MEET DION LEWIS



“Before coming to HCB, my life was pretty boring. I never got to explore my neighborhood or community. I had no idea where things were outside of my home. I didn't know how to cook anything or even how to clean my own room. **Everything changed when I came to HCB. I started experiencing independence right away.** For the first time I had a place I could call my own. I met new people and learned that I liked to be challenged. My mobility skills improved drastically. I went from being scared to go out to really enjoying being out on my own. I feel more confident doing things such as grocery shopping, preparing my own food, and even causing a little trouble! If you think you need to be more confident going places and doing things on your own, HCB is the place to go. I'm almost done with the program and already have an apartment lined up to move into. I am taking classes and working on getting my diploma - HCB showed me how much fun learning is, and my goal now is to learn as much as possible.”

An Ode of Thanks

by Acacia Cappello

Thank you. All of you.
For guiding me on this journey,
Of descriptions, demonstrations, discoveries.
Of which there were so many.
Washing windows,
Counting coins,
Techniques of travel and technology.
All will assist and aide me,
As I start along the path of possibility,
Toward the intersections of independence.
Gratitude engulfs me.
The knowledge you have given,
Will greatly enable me.
To venture forward,
To press onward.
And I smile as I step forth,
From the darkness of uncertainty,
Into sunlight and success.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We have shared a few Stories of Triumph written by recent graduates. Following are updates on students we have featured in the past. It's amazing to witness first hand the transformation that takes place while they are with us, and it is especially heart-warming when we hear about the long lasting effects of our program on their lives.



Philip Kum lives in San Francisco and works at the Lighthouse. Philip also attends SFSU full time, finishing his degree in Biology. Philip also sails, cycles, and plays goal ball.

Mary Beltran is living with her roommates in El Cerrito. She has almost completed a very intense year of coursework at the Lighthouse in San Francisco to become a Medical Transcriber.



Christen Sessom runs her own pet sitting business with 8 clients (11 dogs and 2 cats) and attends Berkeley City College full time. She lives with her roommates in an apartment in El Cerrito.



Brendan Wright is living in an apartment with his roommates in Sierra Madre. Brendan is pleased to be employed as a Weight Room Monitor at Occidental College.



Recently named Alaskan of the Year, **Dan Bigley** is living in Alaska with his wife and son. He is studying for a Masters in social work, working at Anchorage Community Mental Health, Inc., and writing a book.

"It has been my philosophy of life that difficulties vanish when faced boldly"

-Isaac Asimov

ABOUT OUR FOUNDER

Dr. Philip H. Hatlen received his undergraduate and Master's degrees at San Francisco State University (SFSU), majoring in elementary education and special education, with an emphasis in the education of students with visual impairments. He subsequently earned a doctorate in education at the University of California, Berkeley.

In the mid-1950s Dr. Hatlen began his career as a teacher of students with visual impairments who were included in regular classrooms. He served as principal of the California School for the Blind from 1962 until 1966. At that time he accepted a position as professor at SFSU. During his twenty-four year tenure at this university, which hosts one of the leading personnel preparation programs in the U. S., he prepared students and orientation and mobility instructors for work with blind and visually impaired students. In 1990 he left SFSU to become Superintendent at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Dr. Hatlen has been active in several professional organizations. He has



served as president of the Division on Visual Impairments of the Council for Exceptional Children; and as president of the Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped (AEVH) during the last two years this organization was in existence. He was very active in the formation of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER). Dr. Hatlen founded the Hatlen Center for the Blind, and he has also served as Executive Director of the Blind Babies Foundation. He has served as co-chair of the National

Agenda and is the author of the Expanded Core Curriculum. In addition, he is past-president of the Council of Schools for the Blind.

During his career he has been actively involved in guiding legislation and setting policy which is beneficial to blind and visually impaired individuals. He has written extensively on curriculum for students with visual impairments and on education placement issues.

Division 17, AER, awarded Dr. Hatlen the Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Award in 1994. In 1997 Dr. Hatlen was the recipient of the prestigious Migel Medal by the American Foundation for the Blind. In 2000, the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired awarded Dr. Hatlen the Mary K. Bauman Award, its highest award for an educator. In 2003, the Division on Visual Impairments, Council for Exceptional Children, honored Dr. Hatlen with its Distinguished Service Award. In 2004, CEC awarded Dr. Hatlen with its Outstanding Leadership Award.

TAPROOT FOUNDATION

Many thanks to the **Taproot Foundation** for two grants designed to help us with the branding process. Taproot Foundation pairs teams of volunteers from private industry with teams from nonprofit agencies, enabling business professionals to donate their skills to help nonprofits strengthen their infrastructure. We deeply appreciate the expertise, enthusiasm, and many volunteer hours put in by these pro bono Taproot teams. We had such a wonderful time together that we were all sad to say good bye! For the "Key Messages and Brand Strategy" grant we want to thank Account Director Lynne Leaf, Project Manager Mary Russell, Brand Strategist Luciana Zung, Marketing Manager Sandra Hadlock, and Copy Editor/Writer Angela Penny. For the "Naming and Visual Identity" grant we are grateful to Account Director Cynthia Chiarappa, Project Manager Susan Rosenberg, Brand Strategist Marci Sherman, Copywriter Mark Welte, and graphic designer Julio Martinez, who created the simple and elegant rendition of our new name.

Our own team of Board member Bob Barnett, Development Associate Arif Syed, Program Director Patti Maffei, and Executive Director Patty Williams hopes that you will continue to help other nonprofits with your knowledge and skills. You guys are just the best!



THE DEAN AND MARGARET LESHER FOUNDATION

Our Living Skills Curriculum (cooking, cleaning, care of clothing) is a key component of our program. For years, the equipment we had on hand to teach these skills was a hodge-podge of pots, pans, brooms, etc. that were in far from perfect condition. Thanks to the Dean and Margaret Leshar Foundation, HCB was able to purchase standardized kitchen equipment for every apartment. Teachers no longer have to spend valuable teaching time tracking down equipment before each lesson as the students now have all the tools they need in their own apartments. HCB is both very grateful and fortunate to have the continued support of the Dean and Margaret Leshar Foundation, which has been significantly improving the quality of life and services provided in Contra Costa County since 1994. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



SUPPORT AN IMPORTANT AND GROWING NON-PROFIT

The Hatlen Center for the Blind is in the middle of a major transitional stage. Our vision for the future includes plans to enhance our core program and modernize our operations. Progress is being made on both fronts thanks in large part to the continued support of our friends, old and new. HCB wouldn't be where it is now without your help and support – thank you.

Maintaining and enhancing our program is a never-ending pursuit. Our recreation program is a vital, albeit costly, component of our program—most students cite the field trips as the highlight of their stay with us. Adaptive technologies for the blind are constantly evolving, and the costs associated with keeping our tech lab up-to-date are staggering. Part of our strategy to defray these costs is to continue seeking grants from foundations in sync with our vision; however, we still rely heavily on the support of individual donors. As you think of your year-end donations, please consider supporting the work of The Hatlen Center for the Blind.

[DONATE NOW](#)

E-NEWSLETTER

For those of you who would prefer to receive an e-newsletter, we ask that you provide your email address on the pledge envelope. Alternatively, you can simply shoot an email to asyed@hcbblind.org and we will update our database. We promise that your email will not be used for any purpose other than sending you a couple of newsletters a year. This will help the environment, reduce printing and paper costs, and free up a little space in your mailbox. We look forward to debuting our first e-newsletter next year!

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

In addition to our name change and new web address, we also have new email addresses:

Patricia Williams, Executive Director—pwilliams@hcbblind.org

Patricia Maffei, Program Director—pmaffei@hcbblind.org

TECH TALK

HCB's Access Technology Computer Lab is where our students learn to use adaptive technologies that enable them to access computers and printed materials. Computer skills are essential for college success and employment. There are a wide variety of adaptive technologies available, and our tech instructor, Ronald Hideshima (rhideshima@hcbblind.org), is tasked with introducing each student to the technologies available and subsequently training them on those that will benefit them the most. Following are a few of the newest additions to our line of adaptive technologies.

NoteTaker



The **Braille Sense Plus** is the world's most functional NoteTaker. The Braille Sense Plus has: Bluetooth capabilities, wireless internet, a word processor, email, an mp3 player, and menu structure similar to Microsoft Windows. In addition, it is GPS compatible and is powerful enough to perform seven tasks simultaneously—talk about multi-tasking!

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Scanning Hardware

The **Patriot Voice System** is one of the most advanced reading machines on the market, yet is also one of the easiest to use. The user simply places any printed material on the scanner and only needs to utilize two buttons to navigate the entire document.



Braille Embosser



Thanks to a generous grant from the Soroptimists International of Richmond, HCB was able to purchase the **Juliet Pro**, the most advanced Braille Embosser available. The Juliet Pro can print Braille on both sides of a page, provides speech feedback, and can print up to 55 Braille characters per second! We are very grateful to the Soroptimists for their continued support of HCB and our Access Technology Computer Lab.

StreetTalk GPS

The **StreetTalk GPS**, used in conjunction with the PACMate NoteTaker, provides the user with walking directions in Braille and via speech. It also will tell you when you're off course, and automatically recalculates how to get to where you want to go. The StreetTalk GPS is one of the most user friendly GPS devices available. GPS technology has significantly increased self-reliance for blind people, and our students enjoy the freedom of exploring the community on their own. Current student Kevin Chao (pictured) demonstrates how to use StreetTalk GPS.

