

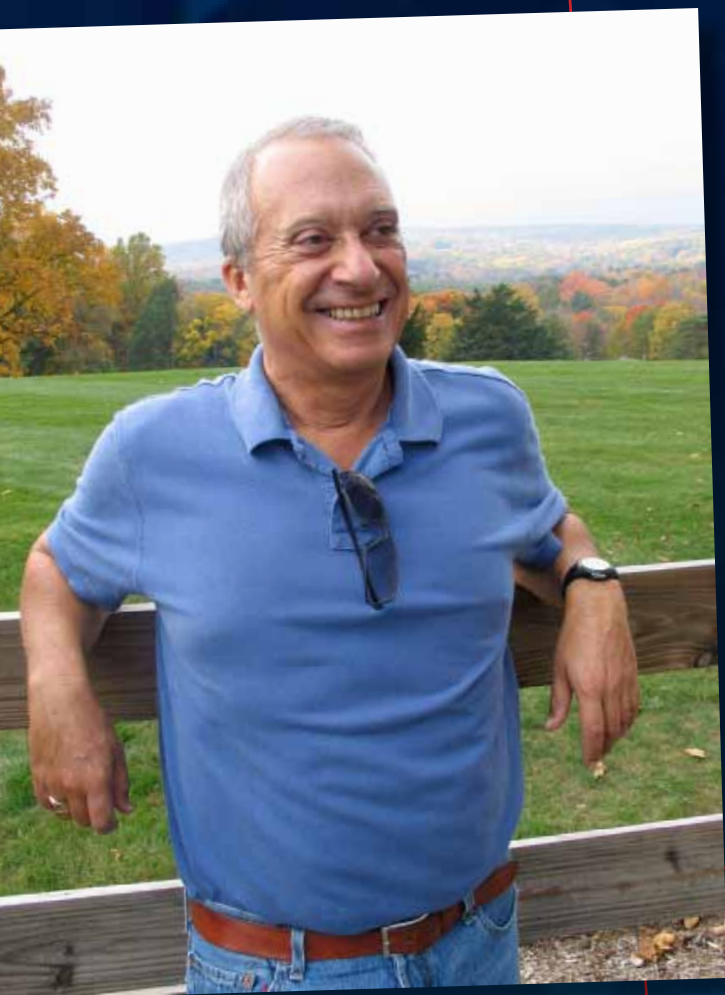


GOING BLIND AND GOING FORWARD

HOW TO USE:

GOING
BLIND

OUTREACH TOOLKIT



GOING BLIND

COMING OUT OF THE DARK ABOUT VISION LOSS

Dear Colleagues,

Saturday, October 13, 2012 is **World Sight Day**, an event, that presents the rare opportunity to bring the many issues surrounding vision loss to the public's attention. A joint program of the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), Vision 2020 and World Sight Day will shine a light on low vision and blindness.

To celebrate World Sight Day, join us and participate in **Going Blind and Going Forward: a forum on vision loss and blindness** helping to raise awareness around the country through local communities.

Our highly praised film, **Going Blind**, about vision loss (how to prevent it, detect it early, treat it properly and learn to cope with it) is available for screenings and discussions. The goal is to capture the public's imagination in addressing the many issues facing the blind and visually impaired.

These film screenings also provide professionals from different fields the opportunity to talk about how earlier referral to low vision therapy, new technology and better coordination among professionals vastly improves the quality of people's lives.

You can have your screenings at any time, but having it near **World Sight Day** may improve your chances of achieving focused news coverage of the issues. The following pages in this toolkit are a step-by-step guide to help you set up successful screenings and discussions of **Going Blind** and the issues it raises.

Sincerely,

Joe Lovett



CONTENTS

- ~ INTRODUCTION TO OUTREACH TOOLKIT FOR GOING BLIND - **PAGE 4**
- ~ SAMPLE INVITATIONS YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE - **PAGE 5**
- ~ HOW TO ORGANIZE A DISCUSSION PANEL TO FOLLOW YOUR SCREENINGS - **PAGE 6**
- ~ **HOW TO FIND PANEL PARTICIPANTS: PAGE 7**
 - ~ NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS - **PAGE 8**
 - ~ ORGANIZATIONS BY REGION: NORTHEAST - **PAGE 9**
 - ~ ORGANIZATIONS BY REGION: SOUTH - **PAGE 10**
 - ~ ORGANIZATIONS BY REGION: MIDWEST - **PAGE 11**
 - ~ ORGANIZATIONS BY REGION: WEST - **PAGE 12**
- ~ VISION CHECK-UPS AND REFERRALS AT YOUR SCREENING - **PAGE 13**
- ~ PUBLICITY FOR YOUR SCREENING - **PAGE 14**
- ~ SALIENT FACTS ABOUT VISION LOSS - **PAGE 15 - 16**
- ~ HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA - **PAGE 17**
- ~ OTHER ACTIVITIES - **PAGE 18**
- ~ FILM SYNOPSIS + CHARACTER BIOS - **PAGE 19 - 21**
- ~ WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT GOING BLIND - **PAGE 22**
- ~ CONTACT - **PAGE 23**

Going Blind was made possible by major support from Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation, Pfizer Ophthalmics, the Allergan Foundation, the National Eye Institute and other generous funders

INTRODUCTION TO OUTREACH TOOLKIT FOR GOING BLIND

What is Going Blind?

Going Blind is a documentary film by Peabody Award-winning producer/director Joseph Lovett, that looks at each aspect of vision loss: detecting, treating and coping.

Joe Lovett has glaucoma, a disease that robs 4.5 million people worldwide of their vision. After years of slowly losing his sight, Joe decides to take action: to investigate how people all over the country respond to vision loss. His search begins in his home of New York City, with people Joe meets on the streets, and gradually leads him to places and people around the country, of all different ages and backgrounds. Each has a fascinating story about dealing with the vision loss caused by sight-robbing diseases, infection and accidents.



How to Use “Going Blind and Going Forward”

“Going Blind and Going Forward” is an Outreach Toolkit created to help you expand on your experience after viewing Going Blind.

This free booklet will assist you to:

- organize a screening
- hold a panel discussion
- foster change in the low vision and blind community



**SAMPLE INVITATIONS YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE
FOR COLLEAGUES, ORGANIZATIONAL
PARTNERS AND GUESTS:**



You are invited to a special screening of *Going Blind*

(Place) on (Date) at (time).

We have room for (XXXX) people and hope you will ask your membership to join us – or have a screening of your own.

A panel will follow our screening, including (X, X,X and X) who will answer questions about sight preservation, sight loss and coping with it.

We'd appreciate your help in finding ophthalmologists, optometrists, low vision therapists, mobility trainers and people using dogs and canes to be on our panel.

Sample Invite

Dear Colleagues,

It's time to come out of the dark about vision loss.

Join us and others and participate in **Going Blind and Going Forward**: a forum on vision loss and blindness raising awareness around the country with the help of local communities.

We'd like your help in organizing screenings of the highly praised new film **Going Blind** about vision loss (how to prevent it, detect it early, treat it properly and learn to cope with it) is available for screenings and discussions. Our goal is to address the many issues facing the blind and visually impaired and let people know how early detection can save their vision.

The film screenings also provide professionals from different fields the opportunity to talk about how better coordination of professional services and earlier referrals to **low vision therapy** and **new technology** can vastly improve the quality of people's lives.

Please call or email me at (your email) within the next 2 days and let's share ideas on who in our communities can benefit from learning about vision loss and what to do about it. Churches, Synagogues, schools, retirement homes, hospitals and corporate conference rooms are all great places for us to host screenings. Let's have your ideas!

1 http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/world_sight_day/en/index.html

2 <http://www.who.int/en/>

3 <http://www.iapb.org/>

4 <http://www.v2020.org/>



HOW TO ORGANIZE A SCREENING

An invitational screening of **Going Blind**, sponsored by local organizations, can **raise funds** and **awareness** of the different issues surrounding vision loss.

Screenings are suitable at a variety of locations:

- ~ Local Theatres (speak to the manager about donating space)
- ~ Community Halls
- ~ School Auditoriums
- ~ Libraries
- ~ Homes

To raise funds for one's organization, tickets can be sold and local businesses/institutions can be solicited for sponsorship. Additionally, ads can be sold inside the printed program.

Around the country, **Lions Clubs**⁵ work extensively to raise money for the visually impaired. **Lions Clubs International** hosted two screenings of **Going Blind** on July 5 & 7, 2011 in Seattle at their 94th annual convention. Local **Lions Clubs** may be able to offer their members to volunteer for screenings. They may also suggest a venue for the screening and help with the catering of the event.

Obtain a DVD screener of **Going Blind** at the institutional price of \$295 plus shipping and handling.

Go to **www.GoingBlindMovie.com** to order.

⁵ <http://www.lionsclubs.org/>



HOW TO ORGANIZE A PANEL

Follow the film with a **panel discussion** to ensure the issues can be explored further. We suggest you invite a **local newscaster** to MC the event and moderate the panel. Such a person can be enlisted to publicize the event with stories about coping with blindness in your community. Possible panel participants include:

- ~ Ophthalmologists
- ~ Optometrists
- ~ Low Vision Therapists (LVT)
- ~ Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT)
- ~ Orientation and Mobility Therapists
- ~ Representative from Local Advocacy Groups
- ~ Blind or Visually Impaired people with Guide Dog or Cane

By putting a face to blindness we can remove the veil of prejudice and ignorance.

HOW TO FIND PARTICIPANTS: NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



American Academy of Ophthalmology

www.aao.org
Siobhan Buanes:
415-447-0338

American Council of the Blind

www.acb.org
202-467-5081

American Foundation for the Blind

www.afb.org
212-502-7600

American Optometric Association

www.aoa.org
Susan Thomas:
314-983-4263

Lions Clubs International

www.lionsclubs.org
Marilee Kadar:
630-468-6867

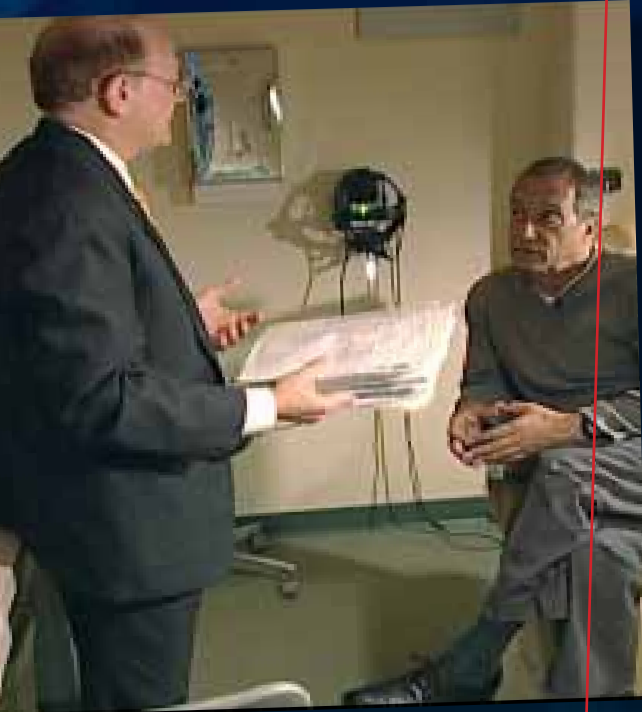
National Federation of the Blind

www.nfb.org
410-659-9314

The Veterans Administration/ Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center

www.hines.va.gov/
Jerry Schutter:
708-202-2112

HOW TO FIND PARTICIPANTS BY REGION: NORTHEAST



Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary

Boston, MA
www.masseyeandear.org
617-573-4199

New England Eye Institute

Boston, MA
www.newenglandeye.org
617-262-2020

New Hampshire Association for the Blind

Concord, NH
Guy Woodland:
603-856-7615

New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

New York, NY
www.nyee.edu
212-979-4000

SUNY College of Optometry

New York, NY
www.sunyopt.edu
212-938-4000

Lighthouse International

New York, NY
www.lighthouse.org
212-821-9200

Eye Institute of Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA
www.teivision.com
Peggy Shelly: 215-276-6000

Wills Eye Hospital

Philadelphia, PA
www.willseye.org
215-928-3000

HOW TO FIND PARTICIPANTS BY REGION: SOUTH



Richard E. Hoover Rehabilitation Services for Low Vision and Blindness at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center

Baltimore, MD
www.gbmc.org
443-849-2658
sgarber@gbmc.org

Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins

Baltimore, MD
www.hopkinsmedicine.org/wilmer
410-955-5080

Maryland Optometric Association

Baltimore, MD
www.marylandeyese.org
410-727-7800

Low Vision Center

Bethesda, MD
www.lowvisioninfo.org
Terry Eason: 310-951-4444

North Carolina Board of Optometry

Wallace, NC
www.ncoptometry.org
910-285-3160

Florida Society of Ophthalmology

Jacksonville, FL
www.mdeye.org
904-998-0819

Texas Optometric Association

Austin, TX
www.texas.aoa.org
512-707-2020

HOW TO FIND PARTICIPANTS BY REGION: MIDWEST



Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Chicago

Chicago, IL
www.eyechicago.com
773-525-8700

The Chicago Lighthouse

www.chicagolighthouse.org
Dominic Calabrese:
312-666-1331

Envision

Wichita, KS
www.envisionus.com
316-440-1500

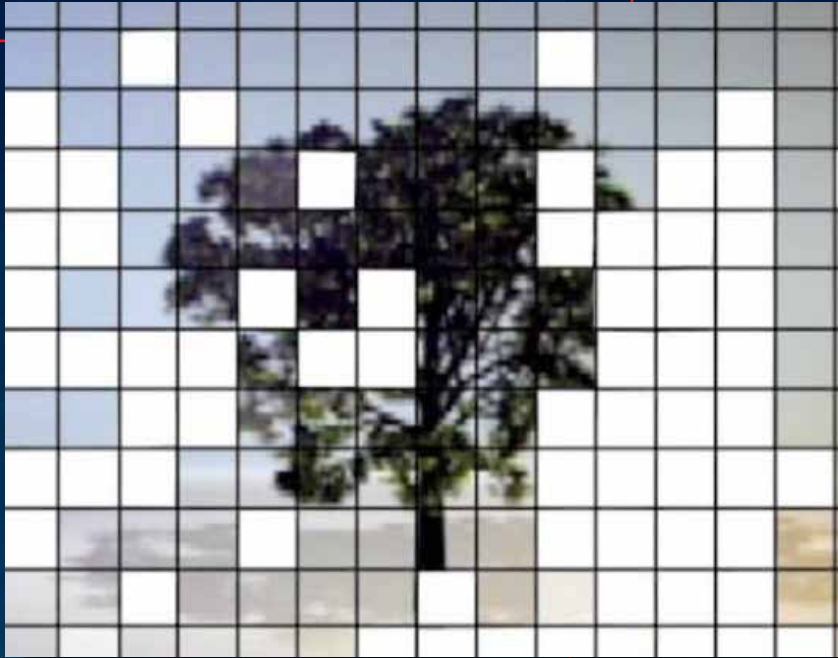
Minnesota Low Vision Store at the Phillips Eye Institute

Minneapolis, MN
www.mnlowvision.com
612-775-8967

Alphapointe Association for the Blind

Kansas City, MO
www.alphapointe.org
816-421-5848

HOW TO FIND PARTICIPANTS BY REGION: WEST



Low Vision Services of Southern Colorado

Colorado Springs, CO

www.lowvision.org/lvs_sc.htm

Dr. Theune: 719-471-3200

New Mexico Optometric Association

Taos, NM

www.newmexicooptometry.org

575-751-7242

Low Vision Resource Center

Mesa, AZ

www.viewfinderlowvision.com

Dr. Lynn Noone: 480-924-8755

Greater Eastside Lions Low Vision Clinic

www.lowvision.org/greater_eastside_lions_low_vision.htm

425-558-4228

M.V.T. Visual Rehabilitation Center

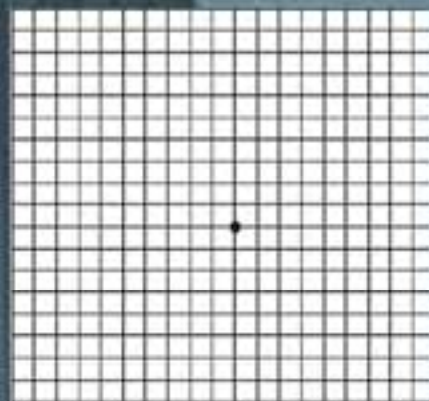
Sacramento, CA

www.lowvision.org/mvt.htm

Dr. Ronald Cole:

916-731-5503

VISION CHECK-UPS AT THE SCREENING



Amsler grid

Ophthalmologists and optometrists at the screenings can offer quick exams for the audience.

Amsler grids to spot macular degeneration can be handed out at the entrance. You just might get someone into treatment early!!!

You can provide an **informational sheet** with what signs and symptoms should send someone to an eye care professional.

The screening can be supplemented with a list of local eye care professionals and their contact information.

Local **radio and television** stations along with newspapers are essential to get the word out about **Going Blind** and the issues of vision impairment.

The **health, science and lifestyle editors** at local news outlets are great sources to aid the film's promotion. The screening will greatly benefit from press involvement.

Below is the template of a letter for a local newspaper or radio and TV station.

Dear Editor,

*I'm writing to alert you that **Going Blind**, a documentary film by Peabody-award winning producer/director Joseph Lovett is now available for educational use. The film is a hopeful look at the world of vision loss and blindness.*

*Did you know that 45 million people are blind and 269 million have some form of low vision? Yet, **80% of blindness is avoidable and therefore readily treatable and/or preventable.**¹*

*Aging populations and lifestyle changes mean that chronic blinding conditions such as diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration are projected to rise exponentially. One problem is that **without effective, major intervention, the number of blind people is projected to increase to 76 million by 2020.**² Also, an estimated 70% of visually impaired people are not being referred to **Low Vision Therapy and Rehabilitative training that can give them their lives back.**³*

*To help people in our community understand what they can do, on (date, time and place) our organization is having a community screening of **Going Blind**. We hope you can let your readership (or viewers) know about the film, which raises important questions about the sighted world's perception of sight loss.*

There are additional publicity materials such as a downloadable press kit available on www.goingblindmovie.com. Many of the inspiring characters from the film are willing to speak to the press.

Thank you for your time.

¹ Source: The Vision Company: Issue 4, 2009

² Source: Vision 2020: Joint program of the World Health Organization and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

³ American Foundation for the Blind

SALIENT FACTS ABOUT VISION LOSS



1) Though most vision loss cannot be replaced, visually impaired people can improve the quality of their lives substantially through **LOW VISION THERAPY**, a term most people have never heard of.

2) There are numerous available technologies such as JAWS and KURZWEIL that will read out loud what is on the computer screen. And, there are computer pads that provide Braille translations of what is on the screen!

3) 70% of visually impaired people who could be working are not because they do not know what help is available to them.⁹

4) The Veterans Administration is one of the leaders in vision rehabilitation – Providing services to eye wounded soldiers as well as aging veterans.

5) More than 4 times as many veterans are coming home with significant eye injuries than with lost limbs.¹⁰

6) Only one third of blinded veterans take advantage of vision rehabilitation. Only **49,000** of **160,000** Blind vets use the system.¹¹

*Going Blind profiles **Steve Baskis, a young Iraq War vet**, following him from rehabilitation to the beginning of independently living. Now Steve is married, mountain climbing, training for the Paralympics and lecturing around the country.*

7) The majority of guide dogs are provided for free. Despite how much they may improve one's quality of life, only 1 to 2% of people who are visually impaired use a guide dog.¹²

⁹ National Center for Health Statistics (1998), National Health Interview Survey--Disability Supplement, 1994-95

¹⁰ The Blinded Veterans Association

¹¹ Source: VeteransEyeCare.com, interview with Tom Zampieri, director of government relations for the Blinded Veterans Association

¹² The Seeing Eye: <http://www.theseeingeye.org>

SALIENT FACTS ABOUT VISION LOSS



8) The word **BLIND** is a misleading term. It suggests that someone sees nothing at all, when in fact, the vision loss spectrum is vast. Most people fall somewhere in between.

9) As you will see in the film, it can be difficult to know if you have lost vision since your brain fills in where you don't see. It also makes it difficult for a person with vision loss to report further loss to the doctor.

10) Blindness is often preventable. **EARLY DETECTION** can prevent or slow down vision loss from glaucoma. There are treatments now for wet age-related macular degeneration. This stresses why we need to have our eyes examined regularly.



11) **The first successful gene therapy** trials are underway to treat a form of retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic condition and the leading cause of blindness. The therapy was first tried on Briards, a French sheepdog, a few years ago and is now restoring sight to patients in clinical trials.

12) **Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS)** is a condition most often seen in elderly patients with macular degeneration where these patients experience visual hallucinations. For years, many people describing these symptoms were written off as mentally ill. Now we understand that CBS is just another part in the ongoing conversation about vision loss.

Prejudice faced by the visually impaired, ignorance of the general public towards blindness and the perseverance of the blind are also worthwhile subjects to bring to light.


*These topics can serve as possible news stories in the lead up to a screening in your area.

STAY UP TO DATE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND GOING BLIND WEBSITE

GOING BLIND BUY FILM | ACCESSIBILITY | DONATE  

COMING OUT OF THE DARK ABOUT VISION LOSS

News Film Outreach Stream Film Videos Screenings Resources Funders Contact



GOING BLIND
WATCH THE TRAILER

CALL TO ACTION
OUTREACH TOOLKIT
EVALUATION REPORTS
BUY FILM

Great Review from Library Journal

Watch Now! Going Blind Available for Streaming for Individuals

Now Available Audio Described DVD for Educational Distribution

DIY: Check Yourself for AMD

Salient Facts About Vision Loss

NEWS

- Joseph Lovett Receives the Kitty Carlisle Hart Award
- January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

"Encourages and Inspires"
—The Washington Post

"Uplifting documentary... instills inspiration"
—British Journal of Ophthalmology

"Effectively demystifies the process of going blind"
—Variety

www.goingblindmovie.com

facebook

Going Blind

Watch

Write something...

Going Blind

Did you know? In 2007, 17 million people in the United States were blind or visually impaired. That's more than 20 million people who are blind or visually impaired.

511 Tweets 1,977 Followers

Similar to you

Lighthouse Fighting Blindness

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BLIND Lovett Productions

@GoingBlindMovie New York, NY

Going Blind is a documentary film that increases public awareness of sight loss issues profoundly affecting more and more people and those who love them.

<http://www.goingblindmovie.com>

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www.twitter.com/goingblindmovie



OTHER ACTIVITIES

SCHOOL VISITATIONS with people using guide dogs or canes are always informative. There they can answer school children's questions on how one navigates without sight. The Seeing Eye in Morristown, NY (973-539-4425, info@seeingeye.org) has a database of guide dog users in communities throughout the country.

"MEET AND GREETs" are great events where sighted adults and blind and visually impaired people can come together. It gives sighted individuals the opportunity to finally ask blind people questions that they have always wondered about but were too afraid to ask. It is an enlightening way to reinforce how much we all really share and eliminate the prejudices many of us unknowingly hold.

DINING IN THE DARK¹⁵ is a great way to understand firsthand what it's like to live with visual impairment. Ask a local restaurant to serve guests blindfolded with a visually impaired person hosting each table.

¹⁵ <http://www.darkdiningprojects.com/>

ABOUT GOING BLIND

Peabody Award-winning producer/director Joseph Lovett of Lovett Productions, Stories & Strategies has been losing vision to glaucoma. In an attempt to gain a better understanding of how to deal with further vision loss, he spent 5 years meeting and talking with people who had already gone through the process. Through their generosity and insight, Joe comes to understand that losing vision is not the end of the world. The film straightforwardly confronts the fears and prejudices about the blind that are so subtly a part of our every day lives– noticed only by someone who is losing his or her vision. Here are brief bios of the characters of **Going Blind**.



Atlanta born **Jessica Jones** and Joe met on the street when Jessica was training her seeing-eye dog Chef. A young, beautiful and talented artist who had been teaching in the New York City public school system, Jessica was distraught over the lack of encouragement and opportunities after, at 32, she lost her sight to diabetic retinopathy in just 8 months. During the filming process Jessica secured a job teaching art at a school in the Bronx for blind children with multiple disabilities.



Emmet Teran is an eleven year old (when filmed) with low vision from albinism, a condition he inherited from his father. Emmet works with a comedy troupe after school in Manhattan and uses humor to dismiss some of the hurts a child encounters from his peers.



Ray Kornman, at age 29, discovered he had retinitis pigmentosa, an incurable eye disease that would leave him blind by the age of 40. After learning there were many services for the blind, Ray's life changed when he got his guide dog at the Seeing Eye in Morristown. Now, secure in his condition and content with his life, Ray's mission is to spread the message about the power of guide dogs.



Peter D'Elia, a New Jersey architect, had lost vision in his left eye to macular degeneration. His career was in jeopardy when he noticed that he could not see out of his good right eye. In his eighties, Peter was diagnosed again with age-related macular degeneration. Peter's passion for architecture gives him the drive to continue working and new medication for wet macular degeneration restored his sight.



Pat Williams is a legally blind woman still struggling with her place in the sighted world as well as in the visually impaired community. She works as a program support assistant at the VA center in New York City. The enlarged type on her computer screen has helped her flourish in her job. While at times she needs some help getting around, Pat is a fiercely independent woman who does not let her disability define her.



Texas native **Steve Baskis** was 22 and Private First Class in the Army when a roadside bomb north of Baghdad hit his vehicle. Steve was injured from shrapnel all over his body and nerve damage left him blind. He spent weeks rehabbing at Hines Rehabilitation Center outside of Chicago having orientation and mobility training. He now looks to move forward despite his condition and start a new life.



Dr. Robert Ritch is a Surgeon Director and the Chief of Glaucoma Services at New York's Eye and Ear Infirmary and a Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology at the New York Medical College. Dr. Ritch, a leading voice on glaucoma, has authored several major books on the disease as well as hundreds of scientific papers. The film documents four years Dr. Ritch and Joe worked together treating the latter's glaucoma.



Dr. Dong Feng Chen is an Associate Scientist at the Schepens Eye Research Institute as well as an Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School. Much of her work focuses on the optic nerves of mammals. During a meeting at Schepens Dr. Chen explains to Joe that her research is aimed at gaining a better understanding of the effect of and permanence disease and/or damage has on the optic nerve.



Gerald Schuffer is the Service Chief at the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center at the Hines VA hospital in Oak Park, Illinois. He has worked at Hines since the Vietnam War and works closely and passionately with the veterans that come through the center. The film highlights Jerry's relationship with Steve Baskis as well as all the veterans at Hines.



Dr. Bruce Rosenthal is an Adjunct Professor at Mt. Sinai Hospital and State College of New York College of Optometry. He is also the Chief of Low Vision Programs at Lighthouse International. Dr. Rosenthal has worked with the Lighthouse for over 35 years. He has written seven books on an array of vision related topics and still lectures internationally. Dr. Rosenthal helps Joe grapple with his vision loss and take advantage of the many resources in the low vision community.



Dr. Michael Fischer is a Low Vision certified Optometrist working at Lighthouse International. He is also the Chief of Optometry Service and the Department of Veterans Medical Affairs in Northport, New York. From 1992 until 2006, Dr. Fischer was the Director of Low Vision Services at the Lighthouse. In the film, he treats Emmet and enlightens Joe by demonstrating the positive effect of Low Vision therapy. Dr. Fischer specializes in pediatric optometry and is a fellow at the American Academy of Optometry.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT GOING BLIND



"I wish every medical school in the country would have this film."

~ Thomas Zampieri, Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association

"As ophthalmologists, our overriding goal is to treat, prevent and cure vision loss. Despite best efforts, we cannot always prevent vision loss or sadly, blindness. Your film helps patients understand the options and opportunities for those blind or with severely limited vision, allowing them to lead productive and happy lives. It's an uplifting story.....We will happily promote the documentary and your efforts to our Eye M.D.s through our SmartSight program and to the public via the Academy's EyeSmart Campaign (www.geteyesmart.org)."

~ David W. Parke II, MD, CEO, American Academy of Ophthalmology

*"It is a rare occurrence when one project brings together so many of the issues that individuals who are visually impaired and their families face each day. That is what you have achieved with your new film entitled **Going Blind**"*

~ Peter Williamson, The Jewish Guild for the Blind

*"**Going Blind**" covers every concern about losing vision, but it also offers important information and hope...It reinforces the concept that knowledge is power."*

~ Dan Roberts, Director of Macular Degeneration Support

*"**Going Blind** is truly needed to educate the medical community and the general public ... Your film not only informs, but gives hope to the millions of people who could benefit, if only they knew where to turn."*

~ Nancy Miller, Executive Director of VISIONS Services for the Blind

"The majority of individuals, in the early stages of vision loss, are simply unaware of the specialists, services and resources available to help them. This is one reason why a very small percentage of individuals with vision loss reach out for vision rehabilitation services -- your film provides incentive to change that!"

~ Anne Yeadon, Executive Director, AWARE & VisionAWARE.org



CONTACTS

Outreach Coordinators

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