

Sight Conservation and work with the Blind

Human needs exist from conception to death. However, just as each individual differs from all others, so do one's need vary from infancy through old age. To the sensitive observer, the presence within the community of many people having different needs is a reality that cannot be ignored.

The Committee on Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind:

- Studies needs of the community and what is being done to meet those needs.
- Proposes one or more service activities to the club board of directors.
- Assumes responsibility, as directed by the board, for performance of the activities adopted.
- Cooperates with other committees whose work might be closely related.

Organizational Meeting

1. Chairman checks first with the president about goals for the year and budget considerations and with the vice president, under whose responsibility the committee operates about committee duties. An invitation to both officers to attend is extended for all meetings.
2. Chairman sets date, time and place for meeting, notifies committee members at east one week in advance.
3. The first meeting is very important. Here achievements or any unfinished plans of the previous year's committee are discussed; ideas and goals for the year are revealed, and ways of promoting and ensuring the success of these goals, are discussed.
4. Chairman reads a list of suggested activities from this source and leads discussion of needs, emphasizing the club's role.
5. Goes over those activities in which committee members have shown interest.
 - a) Type of activity.
 - b) What will be the reaction of the community to this activity?
 - c) What will be the reaction of club member?
 - d) How greatly will the community or the individual benefit?
 - e) How long will it take to complete this activity?
 - f) How much will it cost, and how will it be financed?
6. After thorough discussion, committee narrows choice to two or three activities, long-range or short-range as seem best for club plans.
7. With assistance of committee members, chairman prepares a written report for the board of directors. It should include project recommendations and project cost estimates.

Suggested activities :

Examination and Detection

1. Provide eye examinations individually or by public mass screening. This is done for school age children in cooperation with school authorities, and for pre-school children and adults through public health authorities and local prevention-of-blindness agencies. Always consult first with local eye doctors and professional societies.
2. Establish or help equip an existing eye care clinic at a local hospital.
3. Provide vision testing equipment for schools clinics, etc.
4. Consider purchase of and support for a mobile eye unit for testing and/or treatment.

Medical Surgical Services

Provide services of qualified professional in vision care for follow-up eye glasses, eye medication and/or surgery. (Underwrite cost of transportation to treatment center when necessary.)

Eye Banks

Support your district Lions eye bank (perhaps in conjunction with local hospital or university research center) for collecting eye tissue to enable corneal transplants. Or assists your local Eye Bank Association affiliate by financing eye research, securing eye will forms and recruiting donors.

Eye Research

Contribute to eye research institutions and facilities. Help professionals and students. (This is often through participation in Lions district or multiple district programs.)

Services to the Partially Seeing

1. Furnish, repair and/or replace eyeglass lenses and frames for needy recipients and provide professionally approved optical reading aids for partially seeing children and adults.
2. Assist partially seeing children with placement into special school classes and furnish classroom teaching aids to their instructors.
3. Provide large print editions of books, newspapers and magazines to visually handicapped students (in cooperation with school authorities) and to senior citizen homes and public libraries. (NOTE: Consult first with school and library officials as to magnifiers and television-type reading aids now available that allow severely handicapped people to read and perform various functions.)

Public Information

1. Cooperate with a local prevention-of-blindness agency in conducting public education programs.
2. Promote educational weeks for the blind, "Helen Keller Day", June 1 and educational campaigns on significance of white canes and dog guides to the blind.

Other

1. Assist schools in equipping classrooms with proper lighting.
2. Conduct collections for used eyeglasses for subsequent distribution through qualified Lions sight conservation groups in needy areas. Write to Lions Clubs International for activity guide on used eyeglasses.

Work with the Blind

1. Provide typewriters, tape recorders and magnetic tapes to blind students and professional adults.
2. Provide print-reading devices for the blind and arrange for instruction in their use.
3. Assist blind students in securing the services of sighted readers, including Lions club members, and support voluntary student reading programs.
4. Provide scholarships to become instructors of the blind.

Library Services

1. Furnish other Braille books and periodicals for blind persons of all ages.
2. Assist blind in receiving board of education special programs for the visually handicapped or through a school for the blind.

Rehabilitation

1. Provide or arrange for repair or replacement of aids and devices needed by visually handicapped persons such as:
 - a) Braille typewriters, writing and labeling equipment and supplies.
 - b) Braille watches and clocks.
 - c) Homemaking, kitchen and sewing aids.
 - d) Special workshops, tools and instruments, for job or home.
2. Assist blind children and adults in obtaining training at rehabilitation (adjustment to living) centers. If possible, help vocational rehabilitation training. (Both of these services are often available through either government or private professional agencies.)

Orientation and Mobility Services

- 1) Provide white canes for blind persons and arrange for professional mobility training in cane usage.
- 2) Make dog guides available to blind persons and arrange for professional mobility training.
- 3) Help obtain adoption of up-to-date city, country, state and country-wide traffic ordinances to protect white cane and dog users when traveling.

Vocational and Employment Services

- 1) Sponsor sheltered workshops for the blind. Supply materials for workshops and conduct sales and exhibits of items manufactured by the blind.
- 2) Assist in finding industrial, professional and business employment for the visually handicapped.

Social and Recreational Services

- 1) Provide eye surgery and assist with medical bills. (Underwrite cost of transportation to treatment center when necessary.)
- 2) Work with Boys and Girl Scouts who help visually handicapped boys and girls.
- 3) Assist aged blind persons in nursing homes or those who are homebound by providing reading services and special equipment.
- 4) Assist eligible blind persons to secure blind allowances and pensions.
- 5) Initiate and support joint social activities for visually handicapped and sighted persons; furnish transportation where necessary.
- 6) Provide recreational activities for the blind; camping, swimming, baseball, hiking, volleyball, handicrafts, boating, fishing, storytelling, talent shows, bowling, ice skating, dancing, field trips, golfing, picnics.

When Meeting a Blind Person, Please Remember -

- 1) Always be natural with a blind person; speak to him, not to his companion.
- 2) Use his name so he will know you are talking to him.
- 3) Don't push, poke or prod; he prefers to take your arm when moving about.
- 4) Place his hand on the chair, he will seat himself. When leaving him, tell him.
- 5) As your houseguest, show him the guest room, its furniture, electrical outlets and light switch, and the bathroom.
- 6) When at a table, ask if he wishes help. If so, describe the location of the place setting and food on the plate according to the numbers on a clock face: meat at 12:00, vegetables at 6:00.
- 7) Don't pity him or talk about "wonderful compensations" of blindness. He has quite likely worked harder to develop his other senses than you have.
- 8) He will discuss blindness with you if you wish, but it is an old story to him. Remember, he has other interests, for he is a man who just happens to be blind.