From Joe and Carol

As we look back on the past year, we are grateful for the thousands of friends who have supported us, whether it was sending in a donation, volunteering on a committee, providing an internship to a client, or helping to make the world more accessible to people. We couldn’t do our important work without your help!

At The Carroll Center for the Blind our goal is to help our clients regain their independence – reading the morning newspaper; traveling to school or work; using a computer to do homework, pay bills or keep in touch with friends; and cooking dinner for their family are just a few of the daily tasks that build self-confidence and lead to independence.

The goal for our children is success in school, while the goal for senior citizens is to be safe and happy in their home and the community. For our adults, the goal is returning to the work world.

Not only does employment provide financial independence, but also a sense of self-worth and self-respect. Today, more than 70% of working age blind or visually impaired adults across the U.S. are unemployed. Fortunately, advances in adaptive technology are opening new doors for blind and visually impaired individuals.

In this report, you will read 3 stories of former clients who are wonderful examples of the life-changing work that happens here at The Carroll Center.

Thank you for making these stories, and thousands of others, possible.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Abely
President

Carol S. Parks
Chairman
MISSION STATEMENT
The Carroll Center for the Blind serves the needs of blind and visually impaired persons by providing rehabilitation, skills training and educational opportunities to achieve independence, self-sufficiency and self-fulfillment and by educating the public regarding the potential of persons who are blind and visually impaired.

VISION STATEMENT
The Carroll Center for the Blind gives children, adults and senior citizens the skills and confidence to be successful in school, at work, and at home.
Sarah Wiles spent many summers participating in Carroll Center programs. Last year, she entered Boston College Law School.

Sarah began learning braille in pre-K, and participated in The Braille Challenge every year from third grade on. Her Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) held her to high standards. Sarah even learned to read music in braille.

“The intensive computer training I got really solidified my confidence in using screen reading software. I wouldn’t be able to go to college if I couldn’t use my computer,” she said.

The Carroll Center built her confidence in other ways: “They were always pushing our boundaries,” she said. “My friends and I went on a new adventure every year — surfing and rock climbing. My first plane ride was a trip to the National Braille Challenge in California. That’s where I discovered I love to travel. It was an experience I’ll never forget.”

“I’m a go-getter, and I’m open to trying new things,” Sarah said. “All my friends go to summer camp; a lot of them do sports. So, when I heard about the activities at The Carroll Center, I thought it was the perfect opportunity, and I had to take it. I never think about failing or winning. I go for the experience. I tell people that no matter what it is, you have to at least try it and get the experience.”

Sarah made lasting friendships at The Carroll Center with people from all over the Northeast. This helped her feel comfortable applying to colleges out of state. And the social skills she learned through her experiences at The Carroll Center have given her a winning sense of self-confidence that shows.
During the school year, licensed Teachers of the Visually Impaired provided assessment, instruction, consultation, and adapted materials to hundreds of children in MA and NH.

We loaned braille writers, literacy kits, tactile tools, raised lined maps, standardized assessment tests, and other materials to thousands of public school teachers.

In the summer, students sharpened skills in technology, braille, orientation and mobility and communication skills during our overnight programs, while also developing important peer connections, increased self-awareness and confidence.
Timothy Vernon doesn’t let blindness interfere with success. He’s one of the top customer service representatives for NSTAR. He credits that success with a belief in hard work, perseverance, and the training he received from The Carroll Center for the Blind.

“The Carroll Center provided orientation and mobility training for me that was thorough and specific to my needs. Beginning in high school, Orientation & Mobility Specialists helped me develop confidence in traveling independently with a white cane. When I went to college, they gave me an orientation to the campus that was invaluable, and stayed in touch throughout my college years. When NSTAR hired me, Carroll Center staff gave me an orientation to the route to get to work, and took me around both inside and outside the commuter rail station, which is a very large station.

“It takes me an hour and 15-20 minutes each way, every day to commute to my job. My colleagues are amazed when I tell them the amount of planning and coordination that goes into my daily commute. I take a van from my house to the commuter train, and then from the train, another van to my job. It’s a three-pronged approach that requires organization to get from point A to point B.”

The Carroll Center is also where Tim learned to use a program that allows him to read his computer screen via text-to-speech output. “Technology has made so many things accessible and attainable for people who are blind. When I was young, The Carroll Center sent a teacher to my home so that I could learn to use a screen reader. This training helped prepare me for college and work.”

“I also use braille at work. Sometimes we are required to use specific scripts when responding to customers’ concerns. I keep mine in braille in a 3-ring-binder on my desk. In meetings I take notes in braille, and then I can refer back to them.”

When NSTAR changed their email platform, they contracted with The Carroll Center to provide Tim with training. “Thanks to The Carroll Center, I’m on an equal playing field with my colleagues,” says Tim.
Hundreds of clients in the Independent Living Program learned to manage everyday tasks such as cooking, laundry, managing medications and reading mail. Developing these skills is critical to living independently and being successful on the job.

Clients learned how to use a white cane during orientation and mobility training. Here, they learned to move in a straight line, use the cane to feel changes in the walking surface and strengthen their sense of hearing. All of these skills are key so that clients can travel independently whether it is crossing the street, riding the bus, maneuvering the grocery store or walking from one meeting to another.

The majority of the adult clients we serve are looking to return to work. Assistive technology helps make this possible. Clients participated in a range of programs to help them master assistive technology including enlarged text, screen readers, refreshable braille displays, smartphones and more.

Clients also worked with our Workforce Development Specialist to review work interests, arrange internships, and sharpen job search skills.

During the summer, teens explored future career options, visited job sites, and held down internships, part-time jobs, or full-time jobs. Many of the teens were thrilled to receive their first paycheck!
Peggy Green could be anyone’s grandmother, aunt, or next door neighbor. She has a shock of white hair, and a smile on her face that belies the fact that she has been legally blind since 1996. After taking prednisone for more than 18 years, all of a sudden, her eyes felt like they had needles in them – a result of scar tissue that developed over the years.

Not wanting to be a burden on her husband or twin sons, Peggy came to The Carroll Center for a two-week Essential Skills course. Some of these skills include correct use of the cane, making the kitchen more user friendly and learning to make better use of the closet for putting outfits together. Most importantly, Peggy learned how to cook again as a blind person, using the stove, measuring, cutting, and the like.

“This was such a wonderful experience. It opened up so many things. My first day was overwhelming, but every day got better. I realized I needed help with organization and learned some tricks on how I might remember to put everything back in the same place and to remind my husband to do the same!”

“I couldn’t believe that I had the wrong sized cane when I came here. But now, with a cane that’s just perfect for me, I can move all over the place. Nothing stops me.”

“This whole experience is very rewarding. The teachers have such caring hearts. They want you to do things yourself, experience success and failure. They are there to help you and to pick you up if you falter. For me, it was so nice to meet people I could relate to and talk to. So many doors have opened for me and I’ve learned so much. I am in awe. How blessed we are to be able to come here.”

“I love these people so. I really hate to leave. But, I know I can walk with my perfect cane and be as independent as the next person.”
Hundreds of senior citizens came to The Carroll Center to have their vision evaluated and to learn about the best devices for using their remaining vision, including magnifiers, lamps, and other adaptive aids. Our store offers these and other devices including canes, talking clocks and watches, sunglasses, writing guides, magnifiers, and other household items.

Mobility instructors taught clients how to travel safely using special tinted glasses, long white canes, or support canes.

Safe Home instructors installed railings, grab bars, and other adaptive aids in the homes of senior citizens, while nurses taught seniors how to better manage their diabetes independently.
## REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT:

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Program revenue</td>
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<td>Donations and bequests</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>Total revenue</strong></td>
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## EXPENSES:

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<td>Educational Services</td>
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<td>Accessible Instructional Materials Library</td>
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<td>Community &amp; Mobility Services</td>
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<td>Other Programs</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
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## CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

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<td><strong>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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## NET ASSETS

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<th>Fiscal Year End JUNE</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td><strong>$8,234,000</strong></td>
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LEADERSHIP GIVING GUILDS

Friends who gave more than $1,000 were enrolled in the 2014 Gateway to Independence Society, while friends who gave more than $2,500 were enrolled in the 2014 Thomas J. Carroll Guild.

Members of both Leadership Giving Guilds were invited to dedicate a bell on The Gateway to Independence sculpture in our courtyard.

Years ago, Nancy Schön, the artist who designed the Make Way for Ducklings sculpture, created The Gateway to Independence sculpture for her good friend, Father Carroll.

The twenty stepping stones represent the 20 losses Father Carroll often wrote about. The pillars are ringed with bells which produce a soft jingle in the wind. Globes atop the pillars “light up the world” for those whose lights are dimming.

Plaques which are inscribed are permanently affixed to the sculpture and serve to inspire clients along their journey to independence.

We are grateful to the hundreds of donors who supported us this year. Because of you, 4,000 children, adults and senior citizens gained the skills and confidence they needed to be successful and safe in school, work, and at home. Thank You.

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

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Estate of Peter Cazale
Estate of Elizabeth Ferrarini
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Maryann and Tim Sullivan
Michael Urso
Dorothy Davis Zimmering and the Zimmering Family Memorial Fund

$500 - $999
Alkon Family Charitable Fund
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