



SHARED VISIONS

SPRING 2016

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING AT VISTA CENTER – A PATH TO INDEPENDENCE

Do you struggle with using your smartphone? Is it difficult to read print? Have you heard the term “assistive technology” and don’t know what it is and how it can help you? Vista Center can help answer these questions and more!

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is a modification or enhancement to a device that allows people with a visual impairment to perform tasks independently. Learning a new topic or skill can be daunting. Vista Center offers simple step-by-step instructions and a Technology Specialist to guide you in a supportive environment. We offer a variety of solutions to fit your specific needs.

Technology Lab Days (Palo Alto Office Only)

Free one hour session

Explore the newest devices: So many new devices on the market, such as smartphones, tablets and e-readers, are available with assistive technology installed. Try out the scanning tools that will allow you to either hear what is on your screen or enlarge the text on your screen.

The Tech Lab is a free one-on-one session designed to demonstrate a variety of devices and help you make decisions about selecting the best option in a supportive setting.

Individual Assistive Training Sessions

\$85.00 per hour

You may prefer a one-on-one training session at our Vista Center office with our Technology Specialist to learn exactly what you need to know. Topics include using your personal computer with the latest assistive software including ZoomText, Magic, JAWS, MS Office with Assistive Technology and Internet Explorer with Assistive Technology. Individual instruction on the latest Apple IOS and Android devices is also available.

Group Assistive Training Workshops

\$25.00 per session

We offer periodic training workshops designed to teach beginning, intermediate and advanced skills for Android and Apple IOS devices, including iPhone, iTouch, iPad and iPod. Learn in step-by-step format how to get the most out of the built-in assistive technology features.

Concierge Training at Your Home

\$175.00 per hour

If you are a busy professional, or prefer individualized instruction in your home, we offer a premier option that will include personalized assessment of your training needs and equipment, one-on-one instruction on your personal computer using assistive technology software, and teaching you how to use other devices effectively. We will help you to select applications that suit your needs and offer training on

them. Follow-up services are offered to verify you have mastered the skills you need.

Technology User Group

Free

Are you interested in meeting with others who are learning about current assistive technology options? Do you enjoy discussing tips and tricks with like-minded people? Then join our free Tech User Group. Meetings are scheduled once a month in our Palo Alto office. Learn from speakers from assistive tech companies and be in the know about what is new.

To discuss your needs, schedule training, or to join our Technology User Group, please call our Technology Department at (650) 858-0202 ext. 123. Let the learning begin!

IN OUR OWN WORDS

In our last issue of Shared Visions, we invited clients and others connected with Vista Center to share your stories. The following article was submitted by Abby Tamara, an active community volunteer and advocate. Thank you, Abby, for sharing your story and we invite others to send short articles to Alice McGrath at amcgrath@vistacenter.org.

Dealing With Life Challenges by Abby Tamara

At least 10 years ago I was diagnosed with Macular Degeneration. I received an Amsler Grid to put on my refrigerator to check my sight. As my condition did not affect my sight, I didn't pay too much attention to it. A couple of years ago, while looking at the grid, I realized that there was something drastically wrong with what I was

seeing. I immediately scheduled an eye appointment and was diagnosed with a macular hole. I had surgery, and then the vision in the middle of that eye became blurred.

I have faced numerous challenges in my life, including having surgery as a child. I have always welcomed therapeutic interventions and various forms of therapy throughout my life to teach me how to deal with challenges.

I have a mobility disability. After three back surgeries with sufficient hardware in my back, I contacted Canine Partners For Life in Cochranville, PA and was partnered with my service dog, Inglis, who provides me with balance and support.

When my Macular Degeneration became active in one of my eyes, I again used my problem solving skills to find the best way to deal with loss of vision. I have become involved with Vista Center and the wonderful opportunities it provides the blind and visually impaired community. I have joined organizations, volunteered and made friends with others who have dealt with visual limitations. I am an artist and have spent much of my life making images. With sight loss I have adjusted to a new way to experience this aspect of my life. Dealing with change is extremely hard. I have known many individuals who hold on to anger about their situations. I have learned to experience the feelings, anger, grief, disappointment, or whatever, and move on and put my energy into finding creative ways to deal with whatever challenges life presents. I have learned to overcome isolation and withdrawal. My greatest pleasures have been to develop relationships and share information about the important things in one's life.

YOGA FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED – CLASS LAUNCHING AT VISTA CENTER!

Have you ever wanted to learn yoga but failed to do so because you could not see what the instructor was doing? Are you interested in learning in a relaxing and comfortable environment?

As a part of our Safe and Healthy Living Program, we are offering a free yoga class specifically designed for individuals with limited or no vision. Vista Center will be hosting a 90 minute yoga class in our conference room at 3200 Hillview Avenue, Suite 120, in Palo Alto. The class will be taught by Mandy Elorduy, who is a certified yoga instructor and has a private health coaching practice in Silicon Valley. No previous experience with yoga is needed.

We will meet the fourth Friday of the month from 10:30 am to noon beginning April 29th. We will skip May due to instructor availability and then continue for June 24th, July 29th and August 26th. We will plan future classes once we move into our new building in the Fall. Please wear comfortable clothes that allow movement and bring a yoga mat.

If you would like to register, please send an e-mail to Alice McGrath at amcgrath@vistacenter.org or call 650-388-0095 to register. Space is limited to ten students, so do not delay in registering!

UPDATE FROM OUR HEALTH LIBRARY

The Health Library currently has a supply of our Resource Guide - BIRD 2016 in large print. Please contact us with your

mailing address if you would like to receive a copy. We can also e-mail it to you.

Sign-ups are open to receive our Free Research Updates (formerly named Research Lists) by e-mail only. Tell us your e-mail address and whether you want the AMD-Retina, the Diabetes, the Glaucoma version, or any combination. Starting soon they will be sent monthly from thl@vistacenter.org.

You can continue using dewilcox@pacbell.net for questions about content or requests for health info searches. Now that the e-mail list has grown to over 500, Vista Center on-site staff will handle the email list management. Roger and Dawn will continue staffing the library in person on Wednesday mornings. Roger Petersen, retired professor, and Dawn Wilcox, RN.

THE STORE AT VISTA CENTER

Come visit The Store at Vista Center to learn about and try a wide variety of products for low vision and blind consumers. Just to name a few, we have talking keychains, talking clocks, dome magnifiers, hand held magnifiers, pocket lighted magnifiers, kitchen aids, mobility aids and organizational aids, which are all very useful in your daily life.

If you are into technology, our Store in Palo Alto also has a wide range of portable video magnifiers to choose from that have a variety of screen sizes and magnification levels. They are light weight and easy to take with you wherever you go. Come in and try them for yourself!

The Store in our Palo Alto office is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. For more information call 650-858-0202 ext. 135. The Store in our Santa Cruz office is open Monday-Wednesday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. For more information call 831-458-9766.

DO YOU LIVE IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND WANT TO KNOW WHICH LOW VISION AIDS CAN ASSIST YOU?

Our Low Vision Specialist, Jill Fajardo, O.D., is a graduate of Berkeley School of Optometry and completed a low vision residency at the Veterans' Affairs Hospital in Palo Alto. She will evaluate your functional vision and recommend low vision aids that are best for you. This evaluation is covered by Medicare and many insurances. Speak with your ophthalmologist to see if a Low Vision Evaluation would be appropriate for you, then call our Santa Cruz office at 1-831-458-9766 and schedule your appointment today.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST VISTA CENTER STAFF MEMBERS

Vista Center is very fortunate to have added seven new staff members. They are: Hannah Bisgyer, Associate Clinical Social Worker; Bethany Walton, Teacher for the Visually Impaired; Liz Hom, who is a returning staff member and Daily Living Skills Instructor; Valerie Campos-Hopkins, Ashley Broussard, and Alisa Stegmaier, our Orientation and Mobility Instructors; and last but not least, Amy Kiernan, Bookkeeper. Welcome to all of you and we are very excited to have you join our Vista Center team!



for the blind and visually impaired

**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND**

**3200 Hillview Avenue,
Suite 120
Palo Alto, CA 94304
www.vistacenter.org
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

How to Contact Us

**Vista Center, Palo Alto
3200 Hillview Avenue
Suite 120
Palo Alto, CA 94304
650-858-0202**

800-660-2009

**Vista Center, Santa Cruz
Ray Westman Branch
413 Laurel Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-458-9766**

**Website:
www.vistacenter.org**