

SHARED VISIONS

SUMMER 2016

NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE AND PLACES FROM VISTA CENTER

New locations for Palo Alto and Santa Cruz offices of Vista Center are on the horizon. The new building at 2500 El Camino Real in Palo Alto is scheduled to be completed by the end of October 2016. In Santa Cruz, we are searching for a new location and hope to have news about that within the upcoming weeks.

In Palo Alto, our two year temporary residency at our 3200 Hillview Avenue location has flown by. Although we have enjoyed our temporary home, we are all looking forward to moving back to our brand new building at 2500 El Camino Real between Page Mill and California Avenue. Our office will be on the first floor of the property and 70 affordable apartments will be located on the three floors above us. Once again we will be close to all public transportation, including VTA busses and the California Avenue stop for CalTrain. The new building will be beautiful and our Palo Alto staff is looking forward to settling into our permanent new home. When the time comes, we will post updates about the move and any office closures on our web site at www.vistacenter.org.

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We have been actively looking for a new location for our Santa Cruz office and hope to have news in the upcoming weeks. We are looking for a location more centrally located in Santa Cruz County and nearer to Dominican Hospital. Once a location is finalized we will notify our Santa Cruz clients of the address and planned dates for moving. We anticipate we will be moving sometime in September 2016.

We also welcome new staff members to both our Palo Alto and Santa Cruz teams. Alisa Stegmaier, Orientation and Mobility Specialist, joined our team within the past few months. Alisa has a master's degree in Special Education (emphasis in Orientation and Mobility) and Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential from San Francisco State University. Alisa is busy meeting and working with her clients and was introduced to Vista Center when she volunteered in our Client Partner Program when she was completing her master's degree at SF State.

Valerie Campos, Orientation and Mobility Specialist, also joined the teaching staff a few months ago. Valerie also completed her master's degree with an emphasis on Orientation and Mobility from San Francisco State University. Valerie completed her internship at the Western Blind Rehabilitation Center of the Veterans Administration. Valerie also served as a volunteer in our Client Partner Program when she was completing her degree.

Bethany Walton joined our teaching staff as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Bethany completed her bachelor's degree in Visual Disability from Florida State University and previously worked for San Diego Unified School District for three years.

Bethany joined the Vista Center Team a few months ago and we are thrilled that she moved to the Bay Area. In addition, Liz Hom has returned to Vista Center as a Daily Living Skills Specialist. We are so happy to have Liz back and she is busy meeting with our clients to assist them in adjusting to their vision loss.

In Santa Cruz, we welcome two new team members. Alexandra Glass, known as Alex, is our new Program Assistant. Alex educates the community about the services we offer at our Santa Cruz location through outreach activities, in addition to supporting the office. Alex has worked for the Santa Cruz Public Library system for four years and brings enthusiasm and community knowledge to her work at Vista Center. Randy Chelsea retired after a long career assisting our clients at Vista Center. Randy is now enjoying a well-deserved retirement. Ana Ortega Bedingfeld joined the Santa Cruz team in June as our new Social Worker. Ana speaks Spanish and has her Master in Social Work (M.S.W.) degree from San Jose State University. Ana previously worked for the County of Santa Cruz in Child Welfare for twenty-two years. Ana brings compassion and competency to her new position. Chris Perry is our very dedicated, long time Santa Cruz team member. She keeps our office running smoothly and continues her paraprofessional responsibilities as well.

We welcome our new team members and look forward to moving into our new locations in Palo Alto and Santa Cruz this coming Fall. Look to our web site www.vistacenter.org for updates about both moves.

WHAT OTHER SERVICES COULD VISTA CENTER OFFER?

Vista Center is interested in continually improving our services and making sure we are meeting the consumers' needs. We are also interested in knowing what other services you would like to see offered by Vista Center. It would be helpful if you would participate in our anonymous survey which is on the removable insert between pages 4 and 5.

The survey has two sections. The first section asks you to rate each service that you have received on a scale from 1 (least helpful) to 5 (most helpful). Below is a description of each of our services. The second section provides a list of possible new services you would like to see at Vista Center. Please rate each service on a scale from 1 (no at all interested) to 5 (very interested). After you have completed the survey, please fold it and staple or tape it closed and mail it to Vista Center. It is already pre-addressed and stamped Free Matter for the Blind (so no postage is necessary).

Here is the description of our current services to assist you with rating them on the survey.

- Intake Our Social Worker has met with you to inform you about Vista Center services and other services offered in the community.
- 2. Daily Living Skills Our teacher shows you how to manage tasks in your home such as cooking, cleaning, lighting, etc.
- 3. Orientation and Mobility Our teacher shows you how to get around safely in your home and/or neighborhood, and possibly teaches you how to use a white cane.

- 4. Support Group Attend meetings with other blind and visually impaired individuals to discuss the challenges of vision loss and learn coping skills.
- 5. Low Vision Exam Our Low Vision Optometrist has met with you and recommended low vision aids (magnifiers, sunglasses, etc.) to assist you with reading, watching TV, reducing glare outdoors, etc.
- 6. Assistive Technology Attend Tech User Groups, Tech Lab Days, or receive Individual Training.
- 7. Social Recreation Participate in hiking, yoga or the Book Club.

SAVE THE DATE: LOW VISION EXPO IN SANTA CRUZ

Are you interested in hearing about the latest treatments for Macular Degeneration? Diabetic Retinopathy? Other eye diseases? Do you want to learn more about the resources available to assist you? Would you like to see and try the latest assistive technology equipment? Yes? Then don't miss Vista Center's Low Vision Expo! Attendance is FREE!

When: Saturday, September 24th, 2016

Time: 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM

(Registration begins at 10:00 AM)

Where: Louden Nelson Community Center

301 Center Street

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Steve Sanislo with Byers Eye Institute at Stanford. His presentation is *Update on Agerelated Macular Degeneration and Other Eye Diseases*.

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We will also have a panel discussion titled *Adventures in Low Vision* – *Living Each Day to the Fullest* where we will discuss the social/emotional impacts of vision loss, factors in deciding to have guide dog, an overview of Assistive Technology, and how to maintain an active recreational lifestyle. Professor Roberto Manduchi, from the Computer Engineering Department at UC Santa Cruz, will give a presentation titled *Making Computers Work For You*.

Pre-register by September 17, 2016 and receive a free lunch! Please register by calling Vista Center in Santa Cruz on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday at 1-831-458-9766. Parking is available on the street and in the corner parking lot on Laurel Street and Center Street (3 hour time limit). For more information about our Expo, please visit our web site at www.vistacenter.org for updates on the presenters and exhibitors.

UPDATE FROM THE HEALTH LIBRARY AT VISTA CENTER

The new system of sending our free monthly Research Updates: AMD-Retina, Glaucoma, and Diabetes via our email thl@vistacenter is in effect. If you wish to be added to the mailing list please contact us.

Eye strain is common when using smart phones, tablets or desktops with visual impairments. Below are excerpts from a Kaiser publication about eye strain.

4 Tips for Relief from Digital Eye Strain, March 9, 2016
One thing is clear: more people than ever are putting themselves at risk for digital eye strain. On average, people look at their mobile devices more than 100 times a day. In

fact, a recent survey found 65% of Americans reported symptoms of digital eye strain such as blurred vision, dry eyes, eye fatigue, headaches, and neck and shoulder pain. "Whether you're continually looking at a smart phone, computer or tablet, you will likely experience some sort of eye strain, especially as you age," says Danny Ngo, OD, Chief of Optometry at Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park, Southern California. Dr. Ngo warns that eye fatigue and other symptoms from digital overexposure will only continue or get worse, if nothing is done to correct these problems. He offers 4 tips to help protect your vision.

- 1. Get eye exams annually. Find out if you need to correct your vision. Eye exams also can identify other problems such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, hypertension or diabetes.
- 2. Blink it out. Studies show that on average, people blink 20 times a minute. When using a digital screen, people blink 4-5 times a minute. Be more conscious about blinking!
- 3. Use the 20-20-20 rule. Rest your eyes after every 20 minutes of continuous digital/computer screen use by closing your eyes or looking at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- 4. Check your work area. Make sure your work station has proper lighting, computer screen angles and viewing distances. As a rule of thumb, your computer screen should be at arm's length distance. There are special glasses made just for your work space. Certain color tints and anti-reflective lenses can cut down glare.

For questions or advice about a specific condition, talk with your physician. © 2016 Kaiser Permanente // kp.org/share.





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