

For Immediate Release  
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**VISTA CENTER PARTNERS WITH SOURCEWISE FOR COUNTY RESEARCH PROJECT**  
ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF SMART TECHNOLOGY ON THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED COMMUNITY

San Jose, CA May 18, 2021 – Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired – a leading nonprofit in evaluation, counseling, education and training services for the blind and visually impaired – was selected to support [Sourcewise](#) on a research project. This initiative was developed to analyze the many consequences of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, including declining mental health and isolation, and how smart technology can be used to combat them.

Elizabeth Brown, Director of Information and Awareness at Sourcewise, expressed, *“Through our dedicated network of grantees and community partners, Sourcewise is working towards introducing technology that helps older adults, caregivers and adults with disabilities feel confident using devices in their home, bringing joy by enhancing their quality of life and safety. The Google Home Smart Speaker donation project overcomes boundaries surrounding access to technology and support by enabling clients to connect remotely with their loved ones or trusted support system of care safely. The experience from this project will assist with further informing both Sourcewise and our partners further respond to the digital divide and better serve our community.”*

Vista Center Chief Operations Officer, Sharon Hudson shared, *“The pandemic intensified feelings of loneliness and social isolation for our clients, while creating a number of new obstacles, like social distancing and loss of support services in the home. Many seniors rely on volunteers, family and friends to read mail, take them shopping and provide companionship. COVID took away much of that support system. This initiative with Sourcewise and Santa Clara County will provide important research on senior wellbeing and how people with disabilities can take advantage of in-home smart technology. For clients at Vista Center, these devices can be the difference between a trip to the grocery store and picking up delivered produce off their front porch.”*

Sourcewise distributed 100 Google Home Smart Speakers to Vista Center participants and arranged for basic training on how to use them. This six-month study aims to address the disconnection and isolation reported by members of the community, especially for people with disabilities and seniors.

Elizabeth Brown added, *“Establishing a partnership with Vista Center to support the agency’s mission through this unique opportunity is a no-brainer. Vista Center provides essential supportive services to blind and visually impaired Santa Clara County residents. Sourcewise has a long-standing relationship with Vista Center by partnering to provide informational presentation pre-COVID with Information & Awareness and look forward to learning more about their members experience with the device as continue.”*

Vista Center remains at the forefront of new technology for people who are blind or visually impaired by supporting research testing and creating collaborative platforms, like Sight Tech Global. Visit [www.sighttechglobal.com](http://www.sighttechglobal.com) to pre-register or learn more about the world-wide, virtual conference on emerging technologies created for a more accessible world for people with blindness and visual impairments.

#### About Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired

For over 80 years, Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired has empowered individuals who are blind or visually impaired to embrace life to the fullest through evaluation, counseling, education and training. Headquartered in Palo Alto, Vista Center is able to offer life-changing services and programs due to the generous support of the community - including financial contributions from grantors, foundations, and individuals; in-kind donations; and volunteerism.

More information about Vista Center's services and programs can be found at [www.vistacenter.org](http://www.vistacenter.org)

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