Vision loss is isolating. Our services keep people connected.

Last year, we hosted more than 300 social and recreational activities to build community among people living with vision loss.

While we are proud of statistics like these, the real impact happens behind the numbers, in the stories that unfold when our clients come together. Our peer mentors are people with vision loss who connect with those new to the vision loss journey. Joyce, a peer mentor, discovered that she and her new client Allie shared a passion for knitting. Joyce invited Allie to our weekly knitting group, where Allie quickly discovered a new circle of friends who could understand exactly what she is going through. Allie said this about Joyce:

“It was like talking with a long-lost friend who understands me completely.”

This is one of countless stories of support sparked by our community-building activities, from Peer Mentorship to Support Groups to informal activities like card games and movie nights. In this way, Vision Loss Resources brings people together to navigate this new stage in their lives.
Independent-Living Training:
We help people adapt to blindness or vision impairment through rehabilitation services and skills training. More than 350 people received in-home assessments, and we hosted 36 independent-living skills sessions and 47 technology training sessions.

- 56 working-age adults attended well over 19,000 hours of vision rehabilitation classes to adapt to their vision loss and prepare to return to school or the workplace.
- 845 individual clients received 4,289 total services.
- 13 blind attendees practiced social networking skills to gain a competitive edge in the workplace through a workshop, “Blind & Socially Savvy,” in partnership with State Services for the Blind.

Community-Building and Outreach:
We brought people with vision loss together for social and emotional support and taught the wider community about the services we offer.

- We hosted 224 support groups and 339 social activities, and engaged 120 volunteers.
- We provided 72 trainings or presentations throughout the Twin Cities metro area. In 2018, we gave 61 informational presentations to seniors and professionals, and 11 hands-on trainings for professionals who work with people with vision loss. 985 individuals attended, a 57% increase over 2017.

DeafBlind Services Minnesota
The only program of its kind in the country bringing one-to-one support to deafblind individuals of all ages.

- 78 deafblind adults received 10,764 hours of direct services from Service Support Providers to help them communicate with others and access information.
- 56 deafblind children and youth were served with 6,717 hours of direct service from interveners to learn communication strategies and integrate into their community.
Looking Ahead

A continuing priority is to serve a more culturally diverse client base that reflects the Twin Cities community that we serve. In order to improve our cultural sensitivity when providing one-on-one services as well as when speaking to groups, Community Specialists participated in trainings focused on cultural diversity and LGBT seniors. Both sessions emphasized simple yet innovative tactics that our Community Services staff now practice when listening to, empathizing with, and providing resources to individual clients with vision loss.

To serve a diverse clientele, we must also diversify our funding sources. While Contract Production Services offers a base of support, we must develop a long-term fundraising strategy to expand services and secure our future. Accordingly, in 2018 we began working with a development, marketing and communications consulting group. Outcomes included an annual campaign to raise money from individual donors, who we reached through mail, email, and social media. In 2019, we will build relationships with foundations and corporate funders, to pursue support for Vision Loss Resources programs.