



Pathways – Back In Person !

After two years of conducting our Pathways Youth Summer Program virtually, BSA Youth Program Coordinator Dustin Cather brought it back in person for the 2022 summer session. What made this year's Program unique were a number of exciting activities that pushed the boundaries of extreme. Thirteen blind and low vision students, ages 10 to 17 from Chicago and surrounding suburbs, embarked on an adventurous shared journey during the six weeks they were together. From June 27 through August 5, participants enjoyed outings and events that were educational, challenging, and fun!

The independent living skills that have been a staple since the Program's inception made a big return this summer. Competencies learned included cooking, cleaning, self-advocacy, budgeting, shopping, and orientation and mobility.

These newly acquired abilities helped establish the foundation needed for lifelong independent living.

Students also had the opportunity to participate in endeavors that were new to Pathways, including indoor skydiving at iFly, kayaking on the Skokie Lagoon, a golf clinic in partnership with the United States Adaptive Golf Association, recorded a demo tape at 35th Street Studios, a law symposium with a mock trial, improv lessons with the world famous Second City Training Center, adaptive archery, and chess! The summer concluded with a trip to Six Flags Great America where the students enjoyed riding roller coasters and reveling in extreme thrills! One of our participants remarked, "Pathways was very enjoyable. I enjoyed all the field trips and meeting all the nice kids."

Pathways includes opportunities for BSA volunteers to work with youth. This year we are especially grateful for the efforts of Sabiha Vohra and Dottie Gibson, whose contributions were invaluable. We'd also like to thank the members of our BSA NextGen Board – Sophia Gresko, Morgan Rothstein, and George Holland – who offered their time this summer to assist. It's not too early to think about next year's Pathways Program. If you have ideas about what our participants might enjoy, contact Dustin Cather at dcather@blindserviceassociation.org.

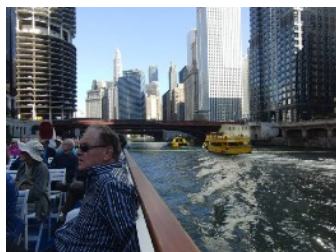
"The overall goal of Pathways, was not only to provide students with a memorable summer, but to build a foundation that they can utilize in every phase of their life."

*- Dustin Cather,
Youth Program Coordinator*

Volunteer Corner

Upcoming Opportunities for the Fall

✦ **Chicago River Architectural Cruise:** August 30th, 2022, volunteers are needed from 10:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. to meet and assist during embarkation, cruise and disembarkation.



✦ **Walkabout Wednesdays:** Accompany a BSA client around the loop, Millennium, and Grant Park for fresh air and gentle exercise Wednesdays through mid-October, 9:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

✦ **Daley Plaza Farmer's Market:** Accompany a client to the Daley Plaza Farmer's Market from BSA office between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. One hour each client, as many sessions as you like.

✦ **In-Person Reading:** Volunteers are needed for in-person reading, especially Thursday evenings — 4:00–6:00 p.m. or 5:00–7:00 p.m. We have also returned to in-person reading appointments at BSA on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

BSA's Newest Volunteers

Welcome to the team:

Patricia Carey, Addie Auyeung, Bertina Power, Vicky Baraldi!
We thank you for your dedication and commitment!



New volunteer Vicky Baraldi (r) helps out at Knitting Club on Friday mornings.

Volunteer Self-Care & Training

Refresh Opportunity: Since the beginning of the pandemic, BSA has been conducting Training & Orientation via Zoom. If you would like to attend one of these sessions as a refresher, or to learn something new, let Marty Kummetz know.

Blast from the Past...

In 2024, BSA will celebrate 100 years of service to the Blind and Low Vision community. As we delve into the archives we will be including stories and photographs of some of the treasures we uncover.



While in 2022, masks are required, the dress code in the above photo is clearly not! Photo from the BSA archives shows volunteer reader in dress, hat, and jewelry, alongside client in suit and tie.

In Memoriam:

Longtime volunteer and BSA friend Lenore Cecelia Murphy passed away June 19, 2022.

George Hedges, longtime BSA client and friend, passed away August 2022.



Volunteer Spotlight

Janice Rosenberg



Prior to Covid-19, Janice Rosenberg came to the BSA office to work with clients. At the outset of the pandemic she joined other volunteers to help over the phone where she could. She takes on tasks such as helping with online shopping to more challenging assignments, all with a cheerful attitude. Her assistance has been invaluable!

“I find all the people who come to Blind Service fun to work with. There’s always something to laugh about.”

– Janice Rosenberg

In her own words, Janice writes about her volunteer experience at BSA:

“I’d tried a few volunteer jobs and hadn’t discovered one that was really satisfying in that I could see how it directly helped people. I tried the zoo and the Anti-Cruelty Society but neither worked out. I consulted with an AARP office and someone showed me places that were currently looking for help. I’d enjoyed volunteering at CRIS radio in the early 1990s, so Blind Service Association seemed like a good fit.

Volunteering at Blind Service and working one-on-one with another person allows me to see the direct results of the time I spend. I like that. I’ve always enjoyed reading aloud so that’s another good fit. I find all the people who come to Blind Service fun to work with. There’s always something to laugh about.

I’ve learned a lot while assisting people at Blind Service, especially from the books that I read aloud. Whether the book is a mystery that I jump into in the middle where the last person left off, sci-fi about aliens landing on Earth, Barak Obama’s memoir or a self-help diet manual based on a book from the Bible, I’m taken out of my usual reading sphere.

I’m married and have two grown sons, two daughters-in-law, two grandsons and one granddaughter, all of whom I love spending time with. I’ve lived in Chicago all of my life. I like to read, knit, cook, bake, and go for walks. Earlier in my life I worked as a freelance writer publishing articles on many subjects, writing about a range of topics from weddings to real estate to pets. Besides volunteering at Blind Service Association, I’m a volunteer Chicago Greeter giving tours downtown. I also volunteer as an usher at many plays and musical events.”



Janice Rosenberg works with longtime client Val Jordan in BSA reading room.

Volunteer Spotlight

James Rogers



Each week on Wednesday afternoon, James Rogers cheerfully steps through the doors at BSA for not one but two reading sessions. Whether working directly with a client helping to sort mail, complete forms and applications of all kinds, pay bills, or record books, Jim happily takes on whatever tasks are presented to him.

“These clients are some of the most interesting people I’ve ever met, and I’m happy that I can help make a difference for someone in a positive way. Plus I get so much satisfaction from that too.”

- James Rogers

In April 2011, while watching Classic ME TV, Jim saw our ad recruiting volunteer readers on the Community Calendar. He’s been a regular at BSA ever since.

Jim Rogers and BSA are a perfect fit, as he has had a great deal of experience tutoring English for several organizations and literacy programs. These include The Albany Park Community Center, The Laubach Literacy Program at Lakeview Presbyterian Church, and Jewish Vocational Services. He also assists at Malcolm X College as a note-taker and test proctor. He simply enjoys reading and helping others!

In addition to reading for clients and recording books, Jim especially enjoys working with fellow volunteer Mr. Eastline, to record the monthly WFMT listener guide. “It’s so nice to do this, and I’m good at pronouncing all the musical selections and composer’s names.”

BSA clients and staff agree that Jim has a strict commitment to detail. After a recording session, he carefully reviews his work to ensure accuracy. When reading to a client he is just as thorough. “So much of the material is important, and when helping with correspondence and that sort of thing, there can’t be any errors. It’s critical,” says Jim.

Notes Volunteer Manager, Marty Kummetz, “Jim is so humble, intelligent, and articulate. His gentle nature and consistent dedication to service is a great asset for BSA.”

When asked about his hobbies and interests, he replies, “I love to walk! In the past I’ve gone on 20–40 mile hikes. Now, I walk all over my neighborhood – Jefferson Park, and I take public transportation everywhere I go.” Jim is a history buff and enjoys watching shows and documentaries about history, science, and biography. He has a great appreciation for classical music, and attends concerts as much as possible, especially the Grant Park Symphony on Wednesday evenings.

Jim is also a veteran, having served in the U.S. Army.

Happenings at BSA

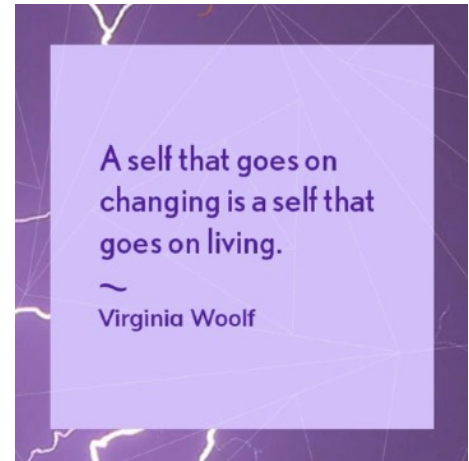
Stress Management LIVE!

To celebrate the 100th meeting of BSA's weekly Stress Management workshop, we hosted "Stress Management Live", getting the group together in person, some members meeting for the very first time! This program is led by BSA volunteer and psychologist, Dr. Don Baird, who has also written a book on how he's learned to use humor to cope with life's challenges called "Suffering is Highly Overrated". The group enjoyed lunch, Dr. Don's words of wisdom, and a reading from his book, plus musical interludes and entertainment. Taking pleasure in music is one of the key stress relief tactics that the group discusses weekly, so the playlist of the afternoon included all the past songs that had been discussed. All participants received a BSA tote bag filled with Dr. Don's book on digital cartridge, two gratitude stones (one to keep and one to give to someone else), a stress ball, and a delicious cookie!

The regular Stress Management class meets every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. Central via teleconference.



BSA clients enjoy the program; BSA tote bag with goodies; Dr. Don presents at the podium, accompanied by musician & BSA client Chris Foreman.



BSA Awards Scholarships

Blind Service Association awarded \$30,000 in scholarships — from \$500 to \$2500 — during our Annual Meeting this past June, to students who are legally blind and attending an accredited degree program this fall.



Past and current BSA scholarship beneficiary, Justin Pierce, gives an inspiring introduction to the 2022 recipients.

Kindness of Community

A Day at the Lincoln Park Zoo

BSA clients received a wonderful treat this past June: a visit to the Lincoln Park Zoo! Lincoln Park Zoo's Accessibility and Inclusion Manager Bill Green led our group through a multi-sensory experience of exhibits with tactile features at the newly renovated Pepper Family Wildlife Center. Special thanks to the Lincoln Park Zoo, Bill Green, and BSA volunteers for making this special excursion possible! The zoo offers other accessibility features such as sensory-friendly mornings (next one is September 18th), American Sign Language interpreters, and open-captioning.

www.lpzoo.org/visit/accessibility



Client Jonathan Butler checks out a life size tactile exhibit of a lion.



Bill Green welcomes BSA for a wonderful multi-sensory tour at the Lincoln Park Zoo.



Volunteer Roberta Karper looks on as clients have an opportunity to examine a lion skull.

NextGen Board: A Year of Action

Our youth-led, volunteer NextGen Board are high schoolers from the Chicagoland area, committed to the mission of BSA and serving their community. This special group of young leaders learn about philanthropy and board service. They also advocate for the blind and low vision community and bring awareness of BSA's services and programs through fundraising and outreach efforts.

Here are some of their accomplishments over the past year:

- ◆ Planned and executed a 5K walk to benefit Youth Programs, raising \$3276.
- ◆ Actively joined the BSA Technology Committee.
- ◆ Assisted clients with projects and out of office excursions.
- ◆ Delivered food boxes to clients.

Know a young person that would like to join? Let BSA know!



Inspiration Page

Client Testimonials



Carrie Foreman first learned about BSA when she was attending classes at the City Colleges of Chicago. “The readers at Blind Service Association were instrumental in helping me complete my courses and earn my degree,” says Carrie. “They helped with my studies, preparing for exams, completing homework assignments, and reading the many textbooks that were required.”

After retiring from DCFS as a receptionist, Carrie continued to work with volunteer readers. During the pandemic, she has had Jack Piliponis and Lynn Harrington read over the phone to her on a weekly basis.

Carrie also puts her skills to use for BSA, volunteering to help at the office with reception duties. “BSA has been such a vital resource and a great organization for me to belong to since 1974. 1974! That’s nearly fifty years!” says Carrie.

Marcia Trawinski has been a client of BSA since 1992, utilizing the reading program as well as participating in many of the other activities offered. She appreciates the way that volunteers help to make so many services possible. “These dedicated individuals have been a key to my independence!” says Marcia.

In addition to reading, she says that they have helped her pay bills, answer correspondence, complete forms and applications of all kinds, both in print and online, and accompany her around the loop for shopping. “Shopping!” she states, “I can benefit from all the Internet offers with their help!”

Marcia recalls one instance at the outset of the pandemic, when in-person assistance was not available. A dedicated volunteer came to the lobby of her building, picked up her mail-in ballot, called her from home to fill it out over the phone and then took it to the post office. “That was such an incredible thing for that person to do,” says Marcia.



BSA Bulletin Board

Message from the Executive Director

Greetings all!

Hard to imagine summer is on the wane – why does the time from Memorial Day to Labor Day always seem to go so fast? It's great to be back in the BSA office following the accident with my ankle and foot. I'm moving slower, but at least I'm mobile!

There are several exciting things on the horizon for BSA, including adding to our staff. We have lots of ideas about outings for our clients and new program offerings as we move toward fall and winter. Stay tuned!

Sending warm wishes and gratitude to all our wonderful clients and volunteers.

Laura

BSA Info and Office Hours

17 N. State Street, Suite #1050
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Mondays: 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

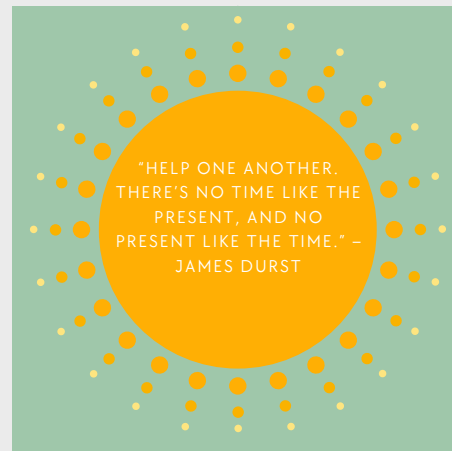
Tuesdays: 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Wednesdays: 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursdays: 10 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Fridays: 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Third Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



BSA Staff Directory

Interim Executive Director:

Laura Stokes-Gray
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Administrative Assistant:

Brian Oleszczuk
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Youth Program:

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Support & Communications:

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Braille Instruction:

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BSA Board Directors

President: Lyle Hamrick Harlow

Vice-President: John Casey

Secretary: Thomas Loftus

Treasurer: John Powen