



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

HKS  Helen Keller
SERVICES

HKNC  Helen Keller
NATIONAL CENTER
for DeafBlind Youths and Adults

HKSB  Helen Keller
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND



The mission of **Helen Keller Services** (HKS) is to enable individuals who are blind, visually impaired, DeafBlind or have combined hearing and vision loss to live, work and thrive in the communities of their choice. HKS offers services and programs through two divisions: Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults (HKNC) and Helen Keller Services for the Blind (HKSB).



Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults (HKNC) is the only national Comprehensive Vocational and Rehabilitation Program that provides information, referral, support and training exclusively to youths and adults who have a combined hearing and vision loss, their families and the professionals who work with them.

Helen Keller Services for the Blind (HKSB) is a comprehensive rehabilitation program serving individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired and who may have additional disabilities, living in the New York metropolitan area.



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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

In February 2021, the Board of Directors of Helen Keller Services (HKS) named Dr. Susan Ruzenski chief executive officer of Helen Keller Services. Sue has been at Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults in a variety of leadership positions for 40 plus years including serving as its executive director since 2014. She received her Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Leadership from Columbia University, Teacher's College, New York in 2019.

From the Desk of Dr. Susan Ruzenski, Chief Executive Officer of Helen Keller Services

Without a doubt, the year 2021 has been a challenging one as we continue to live with the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we could not have predicted the length and intensity of this pandemic, we could never have envisioned how this period of adversity would challenge us to discover new possibilities and opportunities for service. I am happy to report, Helen Keller Services (HKS), and its two divisions, Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults (HKNC) and Helen Keller Services for the Blind (HKSB), has met the challenge with resiliency, innovation and discernment of our mission. We owe our success to the dedicated, team-oriented and innovative staff who have stepped up to the plate in every way possible. We also appreciate the trust and partnership of each and every participant and family member who engaged in our services throughout this difficult year. A significant step in our ability to continue to provide quality services to the people we work with every day has been the exemplary dedication of the HKS Leadership Team. As the saying goes, "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." This team has been going strong all year.

This past May 2021, we were pleased to welcome the appointment of Deborah Harlin as the new executive director of HKNC. Debbie began her career at HKNC in 1985 and has held various supervisory positions over the years. Her most recent position was director of the Information, Research and Professional Development Department, where she supported the development of HKNC's online courses and established and facilitated the DeafBlind National Community of Practice. Debbie has enriched our organization with the collaborative work she has performed with the DeafBlind community and national stakeholders through her strong leadership and rich knowledge.

During most of 2021, virtual training using today's technology was the critical component of continuing to provide services safely and effectively. Remote classes using adaptive devices such as refreshable braille displays, video phones, Zoom, screen-readers, Voiceover and other software programs made it possible for participants to learn skills in mobility, braille, independent living, technology and so much more right in their own homes. Vocational training for teens and adults continued and participants gained successful employment despite the workforce challenges thrust upon us during the pandemic. For example, in California, 35 individuals received an array of services including adaptive technology, orientation and mobility, employment services and independent living training. Ten participants who received employment services are now successfully employed. Our national services for youth and adults who are DeafBlind continued to expand with the addition of several new DeafBlind employment specialists and one Youth Services coordinator. As a result of our expansion, 49 DeafBlind youths and adults participated in training available to them in their local communities by HKNC in 13 states.

This summer, the HKNC New York Community Services program provided services to 95 DeafBlind individuals. A summer highlight for nine youth was participating in a community summer work experience with support from HKS.

In-person services continued at HKSB's preschool. The Children's Learning Center in Brooklyn provided educational services to 41 pre-schoolers and celebrated the graduation of 22 students moving on to kindergarten. Our summer camp at Long Island University was a true oasis of fun for 35 campers. HKSB's services have been far-reaching in the New York downstate area making an impact on many lives from young adults to seniors. The team has offered 411 services to seniors. The vocational rehabilitation team of HKSB has provided over 800 services including orientation and mobility and independent living and a much demand service of adaptive technology training with 255 services completed.

Perseverance and due diligence resulted in a positive outcome. After months of intense planning, the first group of DeafBlind students arrived in November for their in-person training program at HKNC's campus! We were so excited to reunite with the students who had left back in March of 2020 and now returned to complete their training. In addition, the opportunity to open our doors to others from across the country was like crossing a major threshold and strengthened our commitment to ensure the provision of the highest quality of person-centered services.

The HKSB Day Habilitation Program was suspended from March 2020 through August 2020. Since re-opening in September, the staff has gone above and beyond to ensure safety while advancing the daily experiences for individuals with developmental disabilities and vision loss.

The hidden gem in all of this is that across the HKS organization, regardless of the program, we learned that it is not only about providing learning opportunities; it is so much about the human spirit and how teamwork is the secret ingredient to success. We at HKS learned we have the expertise to figure it out and the confidence to engage with the best of our abilities and intentions to make a difference in the lives of the people we work with every day.

We hope you enjoy this Annual Report, which highlights some of the remarkable activities, achievements and success stories that have taken place at HKNC and HKSB.

Thanks to our dedicated staff, supporters and friends, we have made it through another trying year. As a result, we are more optimistic than ever in our commitment to continue learning new and creative ways to provide services with an emphasis on diversity, equality, inclusion and accessibility. We've faced hard times before and we'll no doubt face hard times in the future, but now we know that WE CAN DO IT! "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

Dr. Sue Ruzenski



THE TERM DeafBlind BECOMES STANDARDIZED AT HKNC

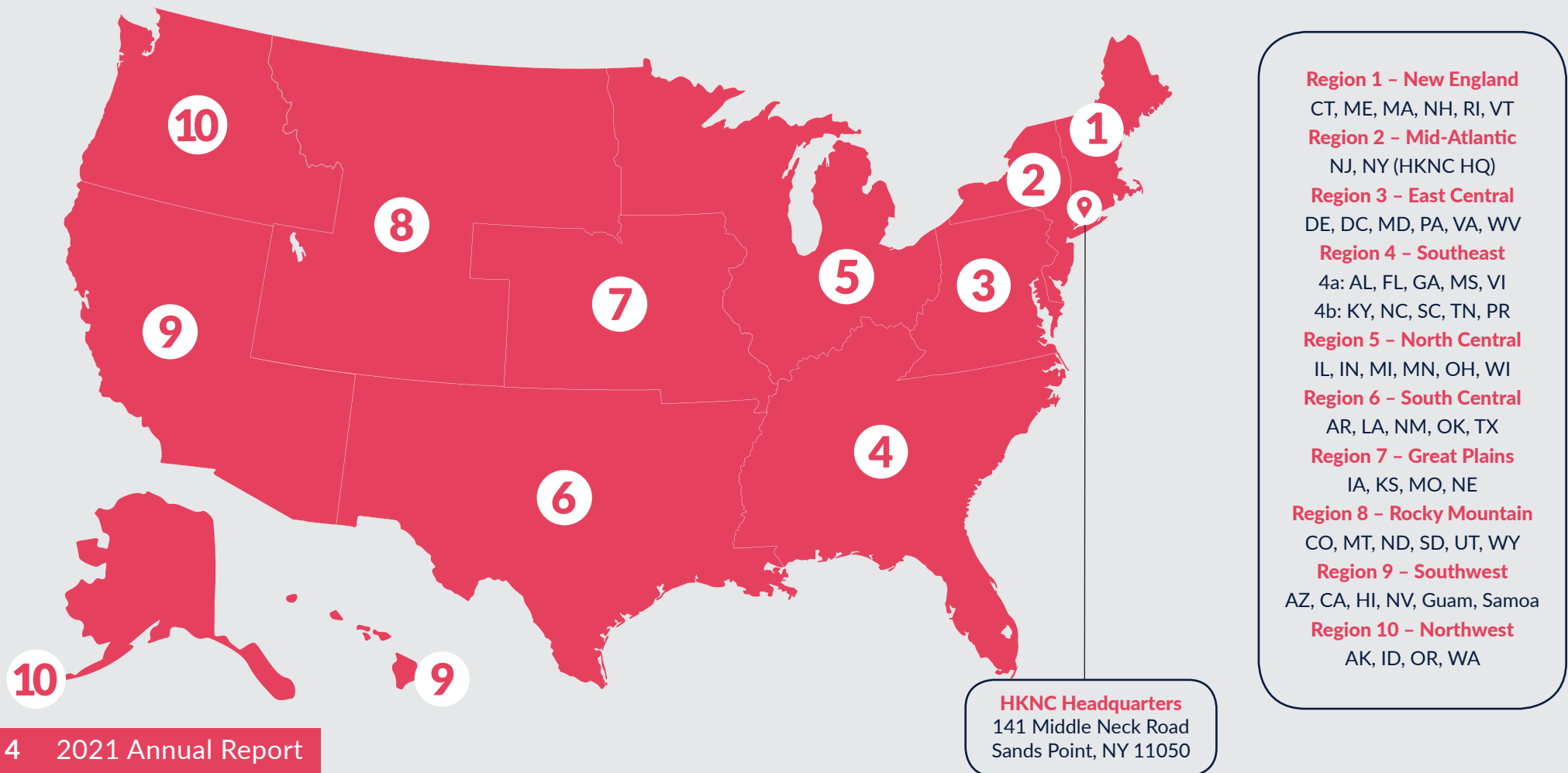
Helen Keller National Center recently made the decision to replace the term "deaf-blind" with "DeafBlind" - language that is more consistent with that used by other national organizations and the DeafBlind community. This decision was made as a result of an anonymous survey of current DeafBlind staff, consumers and the HKNC Consumer Advisory Council. HKNC recognizes the value behind the term DeafBlind: That each person's experience is unique and includes much more than his or her vision and hearing loss. HKNC continues to align its philosophy and services with this meaning and recognizes the community's preference for the term DeafBlind.

HKNC's Reach

In addition to the residential training facility in Sands Point, HKNC also offers services through its 10 regional offices across the country. These offices serve as the gateway to all that HKNC has to offer — consultation, advocacy, assessment, training, referrals and more throughout the country!

Learn more about HKNC's regional offices by visiting:

www.helenkeller.org/hknc/locations



The Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults (HKNC) is the only national Comprehensive and Vocational Rehabilitation Program exclusively for youths and adults with a combined hearing and vision loss.

Note: The programs and services listed below are being conducted both in-person on HKNC's campus as well as remotely for those who prefer this type of training.

The residential-based training program, located at its Long Island headquarters in Sands Point, NY, provides vocational training and assistance to consumers in locating employment and community resources in their community of choice. HKNC also provides training in assistive technology, communication, orientation and mobility, independent living and apartment living experiences. On-campus support services include audiology, low vision, case management, creative arts, medical, interpreting and information services. The adult learning environment promotes peer-to-peer learning and self-advocacy skills to maximize learning and enhance self-empowerment.

Field Services, located throughout the United States, include 10 regional offices with 11 regional representatives and one associate, 10 DeafBlind specialists, 3 youth services coordinators and 4 staff members in the California Community Services Program.

The regional offices offer:

- Job development
- Consumer advocacy
- Consultation and technical assistance to schools and agencies
- Assistance in developing local services
- Consumer support as needed
- Information and referral
- Coordination of referrals to HKNC
- Professional development and in-service training
- Public education and awareness
- Maintenance of a National Registry of Persons Who Are DeafBlind
- National DeafBlind Equipment Distribution Program

Additional programs include:

- Three different **Summer Youth Programs** offer transition age youth opportunities to explore college and career goals and to gain self-awareness, confidence and skills through experiential learning and group discussion with peers.
- A **Senior Adult Program** provides consultation, training and technical assistance to seniors 55 years and older who want to maintain their independence.
- Two **Community Services Programs (CSP)** offer job development and coaching, training in skills of daily living, low vision and orientation and mobility in the greater metropolitan areas of New York City and San Diego, CA.
- The **Information, Research and Professional Development (IRPD)** department develops DeafBlind specific training materials and curricula for professionals and produces fully accessible online courses. They also disseminate information to consumers, families and professionals through seminars, online newsletters and social media.
- The **DeafBlind Immersion Experience (DBIE)** is a 5-day program for individuals who are DeafBlind with intellectual disabilities and their home support team.
- The **Professional Learning and Leadership Institute (PLLI)** offers 3-6 month paid internships for DeafBlind individuals who want to work in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

HKNC's mission is to enable each person who is DeafBlind to live, work and thrive in the community of their choice.



THE NEW TRAINING, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER AT HKNC

HKNC's new Training, Research and Innovation Center (TRIC) located in Sands Point, NY officially opened this year. TRIC has been created to provide short term training for individuals who are DeafBlind, typically lasting for one or two months; offer Train-The-Trainers Seminars to professionals working with individuals who are DeafBlind; establish relationships with companies to support their development of accessible technologies/programs; review and evaluate products such as braille displays; educate staff within HKNC to promote further awareness of trends and information concerning technologies in use within the DeafBlind community.

The new coordinator of TRIC, Scott Davert, has a long history with HKNC as a former student and then staff member in the Communications Learning Center and the Adaptive Technology Center. He served as regional representative in Colorado and a program coordinator for the New York Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program. Outside of HKNC, Scott worked for the state of North Carolina as a DeafBlind services specialist, and as a customer relationship manager for Sprint and then T-Mobile Accessibility. In addition, he assists in the running of AppleVis on-line resources. He has been publishing articles in various publications since 2008 on technology as it relates to the DeafBlind community.

CHRISTINE'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS



A very experienced and accomplished financial analyst, Christine is proud of her past achievements however, over a period of two years, she had been unable to find new employment due to her gradual loss of vision and hearing. Although she interviewed for numerous jobs she was either not getting feedback from the interviews or was turned down for the job. She became very frustrated.

It was during a meeting with her team consisting of Tara Brown-Ogilvie, HKNC regional rep; Joe Melillo, HKNC national employment and business relations specialist and Christine's vocational rehabilitation counselor that it became clear that Christine was allowing her

DeafBlindness to become a self-limiting belief. She focused on what she couldn't do and perceived herself as being too "disabled" to perform well in a job.

With the encouragement of her team Christine became inspired to "flip the switch" and realize that she was "uniquely abled." She strengthened and developed new abilities and soft skills that are attractive to all hiring officials such as perseverance, creativity, ability to deal with failure and press on, provide different perspectives, overcome challenges, etc. Christine was able to become more confident during her interviews and was able to openly discuss her unique abilities and strong soft skills. The interviewers were very impressed and she received three offers and accepted one. She was confident enough in herself to negotiate a 10% increase in the initial salary offer!

Christine is thriving in her new position and has even joined her company's disability employee resource group.

VIRTUAL TRAINING

HKNC teachers play a critical role in training consumers who are DeafBlind. This year of COVID-19 shut-downs has been particularly challenging but, without missing a beat, our instructors picked up the ball and continued training virtually.

One example of how successful our instructors have been working with our current students virtually is Terry D's experience. Terry, working with her HKNC Adaptive Technology instructor Don, has learned how to use her new keyboard and the Print Screen key to send the screenshot as an attachment to her email. Don commented, "This skill will be helpful when Terry gets a pop-up message from HP and she is unsure of what to do. She can take a screenshot and email it to her instructor to provide a visual of what is happening on her screen. Terry has also learned how to orient herself in a program by recognizing the JAWS computer screen reader program abbreviations which tells her where she is on the screen when performing different actions in a program." Amanda H., another student learning virtually commented: "Distance learning has enabled me to learn new skills while being able to remain home. I would never had been able to leave home and my usual responsibilities to study at the HKNC, so this has been a real godsend for me. I am always amazed how HKNC is able to constantly adapt to the many and varied needs of students."





SUCCESS STORIES

Meet *Haley* from Utah! Haley has been participating in the HKNC Pre-Employment Transition Services training this summer. She has CHARGE syndrome, a loss of both hearing and vision, but dreams of becoming a veterinarian. In working with HKNC's Utah youth services coordinator, Haley has been learning more about being a vet, developing goals and a plan for her future. Dr. Wynn Palmer with Animal Care West shared what it takes to be a vet during an informational interview. He gave Haley some tips and goals to work towards during her next 2 years of high school. During her job shadow with Dr. Wynn, Haley observed various surgeries on dogs and cats. She even got to pull a few teeth from a cat! Haley is forever grateful for this experience and is even more determined now to become a vet!



Kelvin at the potter's wheel

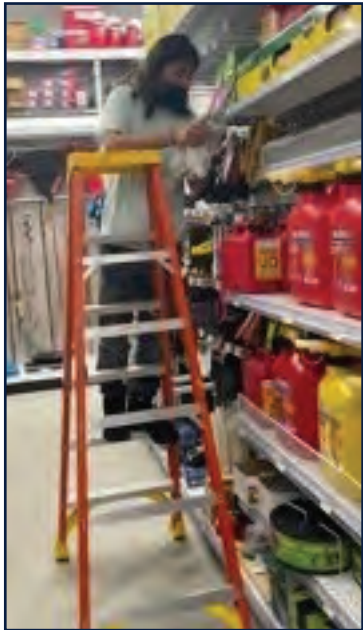
DeafBlind Potter

Kelvin C. is the founder of DeafBlind Potter, a California based company which specializes in hand made mugs, bowls and vases. Kelvin lives with Usher II and has used the pottery wheel over the years to help him through the various stages of his vision loss. The company's mission is to build a ceramics studio that will support individuals with disabilities through pottery. In a letter to Kelvin's HKNC regional representative he said "Thank you for helping me through my DeafBlindness journey. I would not be here unless it was for you helping me get to HKNC." Check out Kelvin's website at <https://www.deafblindpotter.com/>

Work Experience Training (WET) Program:

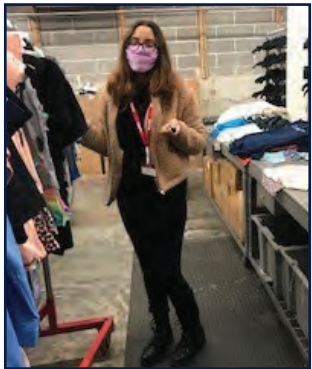
A BUSY SUMMMER FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Students in the summer youth Work Experience Training (WET), supported by the HKNC NY Community Services Program, participate in work experiences in and around their home community. Here are a few of their stories:



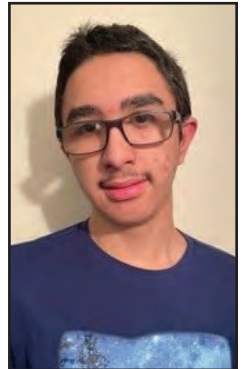
Alan F. did his work experience at Ace Hardware in Staten Island. He is 16 years old and took to his job very quickly, and independently developed an effective and organized system in his position as a retail stock associate. The store manager at Ace commented on Alan's performance: "Alan is excellent. He is a very conscientious and diligent worker. I never have to watch over him." Alan, who is a native ASL user, independently communicates with customers and coworkers through note writing on his phone app. He also travels independently to work 3 days per week from 10-5 each day. Alan does whatever it takes to get the job done!

Madeline D., 19, spent her summer working at Adventureland Amusement Park on Long Island as a dining room attendant. Madeline, a native ASL user, communicates with co-workers and customers using pre-made communication cards and note writing. Working at Adventureland is a "dream come true" for Madeline. She loved the experience so much; she applied for employment and was offered a position as a seasonal employee through the end of October when the amusement park closes for the season.



Meet *Alyah U.* Alyah has been successfully employed at TJ Maxx in the Bronx since December 2020. Alyah works as a retail stock associate and is responsible for organizing, sizing and security tagging new clothes items. Alyah is a fluent ASL user and communicates with co-workers and customers through a combination of lip reading, gestures and note writing. While working at TJ Maxx, Alyah completed her first semester at Gallaudet University where she is majoring in Biology. Alyah is anticipating living on the Gallaudet campus this fall and will request a transfer to a TJ Maxx store location in the DC area to continue this successful employment experience!

Jose worked for 4 weeks this summer as a stock associate intern at CVS Pharmacy. Only 16, this was Jose's very first work experience. He honed his skills with organizing, stocking and quality assurance. Jose really stepped out of his comfort zone this summer and showed his natural tendency toward an excellent work ethic!





Manuel P. did his 8-week work experience training at Party City in the Bronx. He was responsible for stocking new inventory, down stocking and maintaining store displays and the overall store appearance. In just one-week's time, Manny's boss Troy commented "Manny is great, I really like his energy." Manny also is a customer magnet! He is still learning the store layout, but will go out of his way to help a customer find what they need! Manny is currently working 3 days per week for 5 hours each day. He has two cochlear implants that assist him with hearing and interacting with customers on the sales floor despite the mask!



Meet *Blandina F.* and her manager, Rosa. Blandina, who is 16 years old, completed an 8-week work experience training at the Real Deal Dollar store in Harlem, NY, where she assisted with organizing and stocking the sales floor and helping customers find items. Rosa had the

following comment: "Blandina is wonderful! She is such a good worker and is so helpful. If she were older, I would offer her a job today!"

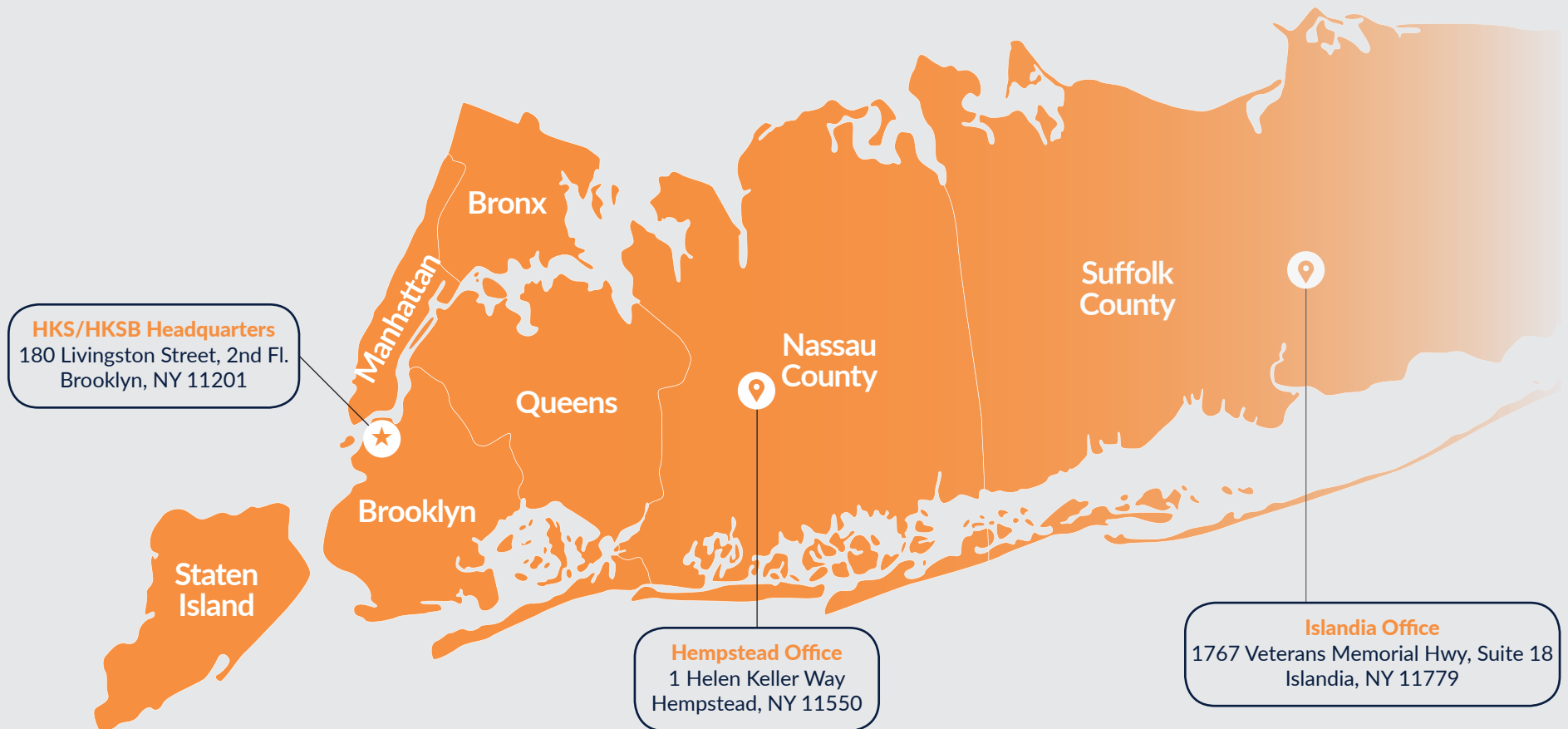
Julia M. worked on Fire Island, Long Island, this summer as a Village of Saltaire intern. She assisted with the summer day camp programs as an assistant Yoga instructor, assistant ASL instructor and also worked in the Village Library. In addition to modeling the Yoga poses for the young campers, Julia also taught them the ASL signs for the poses.



HKSB's Reach

Serving the five boroughs of New York City and Long Island, HKSB operates training facilities in Brooklyn, Hempstead and Islandia, and offers low vision services in Sands Point. Field services expand HKSB's reach, bringing resources to your neighborhood!

Visit www.helenkeller.org to learn more about our locations.



Established in 1893 as the Industrial Home for the Blind, Helen Keller Services for the Blind (HKSB) enables individuals who are blind or visually impaired and reside in the New York metropolitan area to live, work and thrive in the communities of their choice. Through office locations in Brooklyn, Hempstead and Islandia, in addition to community-based field services, the HKSB team works with consumers to achieve their educational, vocational and/or personal goals so they can live as independently as possible. Programs at HKSB include the following:

General Services

- **Low Vision Services** – Optometrists provide eye examinations and teach consumers how to maximize any residual vision by using specialized lighting, lenses and magnifiers at Low Vision Centers in Brooklyn, Hempstead, Islandia and Sands Point.
- **Employment Services** – A full spectrum of employment services for working-age youth and adults, including vocational assessment and guidance, job-skills training, work experience internships and job placement.
- **Assistive Technology Centers** – Offers assessment and training in the use of adaptive computer equipment and accessible technologies, including one-on-one and group courses, which enables individuals to perform their job and/or academic studies independently.
- **Orientation & Mobility** – Instruction in safe and independent travel with the help of tools such as a white cane, guide dogs and/or portable devices.
- **Social Casework Services** – Certified social workers provide one-on-one counseling and other resources to help consumers adjust to blindness or vision loss.
- **Vision Rehabilitation Training** – Instruction in daily living skills (cooking, medication management, budgeting, etc.) to assist consumers to live independently.

Specialized Programs

- **Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities** – Includes a Day Habilitation Program, Community Habilitation, a community residence located in Wantagh, NY, and a respite service for caregivers.
- **Adaptive Living Program** – Provides rehabilitation teaching, instruction in daily living skills, orientation and mobility training, social casework services and low vision services to older adults ages 55 and older that help them regain their self-sufficiency and live safely in their homes.

Services for Children and Young Adults

- **Children's Learning Center** – Provides educational, therapeutic and early intervention services for young children, birth to age five, who are blind and/or have multiple disabilities, including a full-day pre-school with a parent resource center for families and/or caregivers.
- **Camp Helen Keller** – A five-week summer day camp that offers physical activities, field trips, and socialization opportunities for children and youth ages 4-16.
- **Pre-vocational Training** – A five-day job exploration program for students ages 10-14.
- **Orientation to Work** – A twelve-week summer program that prepares students ages 15-21 for the world of work through part-time internships.

Additional Services for Teens and Young Adults

- **Health/Wellness Program** – Provides free physical fitness activities and mental health support groups, both in-person and virtually, to low-income New York State residents who are blind or DeafBlind.
- **College Bound and Beyond Program** – A new college-readiness program that offers SAT testing prep services, in addition to 9th and 10th grade transition programming, to Brooklyn-based high school students.

Day Habilitation



Health/Wellness Program:

HKSB once again expanded its Health/Wellness Program this year thanks to generous renewed funding from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation. Operating both virtually and in-person, the program served 34 New York State residents who are blind or DeafBlind this year by providing free mental and physical health activities designed to promote a healthy lifestyle and alleviate social isolation. Specific activities that participants engaged in include the following:

- Dance/movement therapy: Weekly dance/movement therapy group sessions to explore creative expression using movement, music, and mindfulness.
- Fitness and yoga instruction: Monthly yoga and fitness group sessions utilizing breathing and stretching exercises to alleviate stressors and exploring the use of mindfulness and movement in order to live a physically healthy lifestyle.
- Nutrition education: Bi-monthly nutrition groups provided nutritional and dietary information on healthy, mindful eating habits.
- Creative arts therapy: Bi-weekly creative arts therapy sessions to explore creative and emotional expression through different art materials and mediums.
- Support groups: Social workers oversee support groups to promote mental, emotional wellness and foster connections among peers in order to discuss hardships and/or personal stressors.
- Gardening: Monthly gardening sessions over the course of three months to help promote healthy eating habits, including gardening-related field trips.

Additionally, participants of the Health/Wellness Program organized the first annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk.



Camp Helen Keller

Campers were overjoyed this summer to reunite with one another in-person for Camp Helen Keller, HKSB's free summer day camp for children and youths with vision loss. This year, 35 campers enjoyed arts and crafts, music and dance, outdoor sports, indoor swimming, and socialization opportunities at Long Island University Post. As is tradition, Camp Helen Keller concluded with the annual camp finale show wherein campers sang and performed songs for their parents and loved ones. Additionally, a large number of local government officials visited the camp this summer, including the following:

- New York State Senator Anna Kaplan
- New York State Senator James Gaughran
- New York State Assemblyman Charles Lavine
- New York State Assemblywoman Gina Sillitti
- New York State Assemblyman Edward Ra
- New York State Assemblywoman Melissa Miller

HKSB would like to acknowledge the following donors for generously funding this year's in-person Camp Helen Keller: Esther and Harold Mertz Foundation, Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation, J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation, Bannerot-Lappe Foundation, Lily Palmer Fry Memorial Trust, New York Grand Lodge Foundation Inc. Order Sons of Italy in America, and Joseph Leroy and Ann C. Warner Fund.



The Children's Learning Center



The Children's Learning Center preschool class of 2021 experienced quite the unique school year, as many students participated in remote learning while others went to school in-person due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the preschool celebrated their annual graduation on August 11, as 24 students walked with teachers and staff to get their diplomas and move on to public schools throughout New York City. The preschool serves special education preschool children who are visually impaired, multiply disabled, medically fragile and/or children on the autism spectrum. Its mission is to give them the academic, social, and therapeutic supports to prepare them to achieve their highest potential when they enter the school-age environment. To ensure that each child is ready to enter kindergarten and succeed academically, socially, and physically in developmentally appropriate programs, staff at the Children's Learning Center utilizes the New York City "PreK for All Curriculum." This curriculum is fully aligned with New York State's PreK Foundation for the Common Core and drives academic unit and lesson planning in order to focus on each child's individual goals.

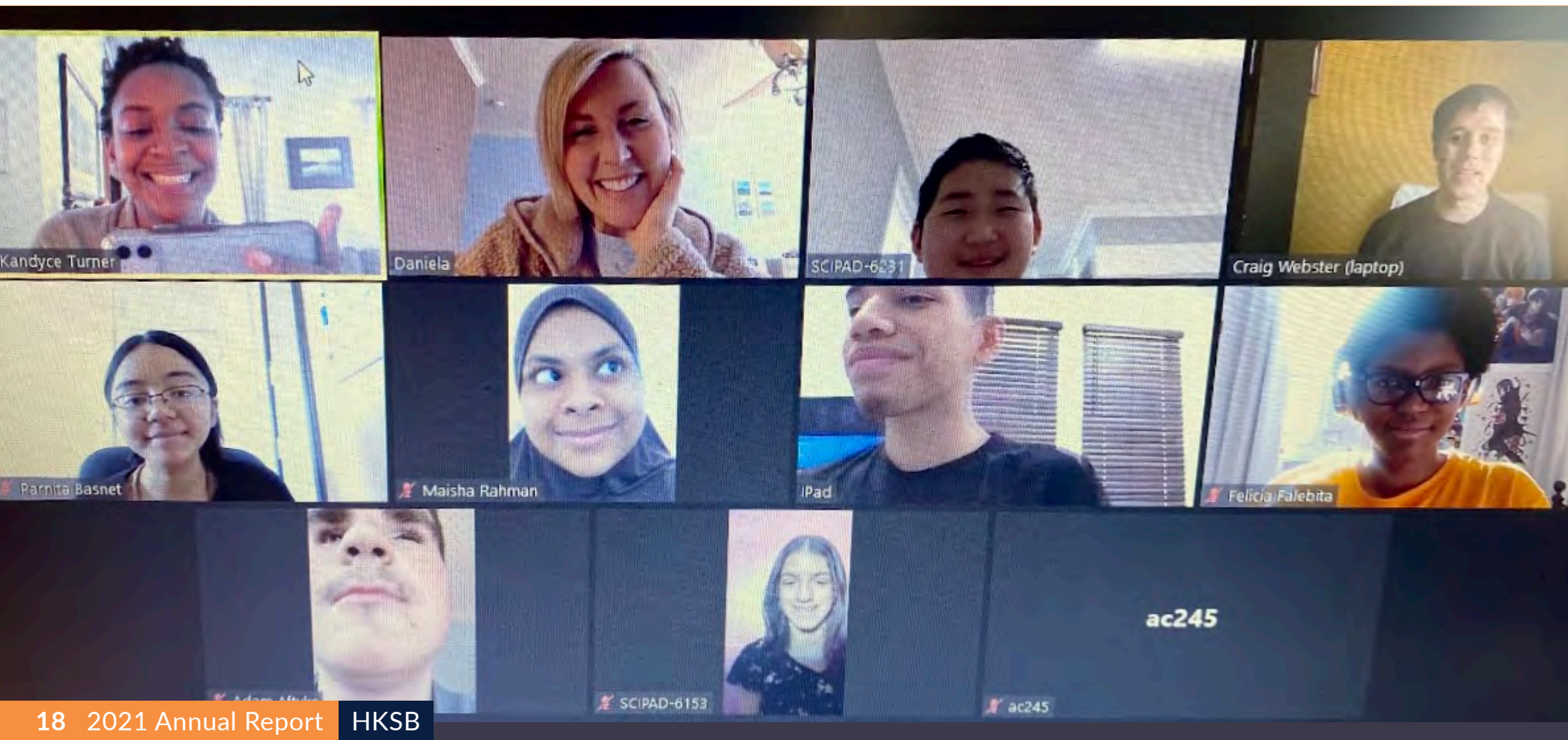


James graduated in 2020 from HKSB's Children Learning Center, and his mother, Alona Kimble, recently published a book called "Mommy, what do you see?". She donated copies to all of our students for the holidays. www.jameswiththecane.com

The College Bound and Beyond Program

The College Bound and Beyond Program is a new after-school, college-readiness program that provides SAT testing prep courses, in addition to 9th and 10th grade transition programming. Beginning as a pilot program in the 2020-21 academic school year, the program ran virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and served 7 Brooklyn-based high school students with vision loss. Currently, the program is serving 9 students both in-person and virtually through the agency's Brooklyn office by providing SAT testing preparation and transition programming and workshops. The primary goal of this new program is to assist high school students with vision loss to achieve academic success in high school and increase their college readiness. HKSB would like to acknowledge the following funders for their generous support of this new initiative:

- New York Community Trust
- National Grid Foundation
- William G. and Helen C. Hoffman Foundation
- Achelis and Bodman Foundation
- Lavelle Fund for the Blind



HELEN'S RUN.WALK.RIDE.

It was another year of virtual this and virtual that. So it was no surprise that Helen's Run.Walk.Ride 2021 could not take place in person in Sands Point as it has since June 1994. In spite of that, the event turned out to be quite successful thanks to participants like Laurie M. HKNC's DeafBlind specialist in Iowa and her wife, Kim who rode their fat tire bikes on part of a road trail that includes a wooden covered bridge. Then there was Tara B. in Boston, HKNC's regional representative in the Northeast region. Tara walked on the Freedom Trail starting at the Boston Commons with a greeting from a colonial gentleman! Our new HKNC Director Deb H. and her husband, Paul, rode their bikes from Sayville to Blue Point here on Long Island – about a 3 mile ride. Others as far away as California also participated – some riding their stationary bikes the 3.5 miles. Prizes were awarded to the top fundraising individual and team. We are grateful to everyone who participated and look forward to Run.Walk.Ride with you again next year.



HKS' GOLF OUTING

Helen Keller Services' 30th Annual Golf Classic was held at the Village Club of Lake Success on September 13th. Staff and attendees were proud to honor **Christopher D. Maher**, former chairman and long-time trustee of Helen Keller Services, and Chairman & CEO of OceanFirst Bank.

Due to COVID-19, this event was the **FIRST** in-person event since July of 2019. Attendees were delighted to see one another after such a long hiatus and enjoy a great game of golf, cocktails and dinner.

SAVE THE DATE: 2022 HKS' Golf Classic will be on **June 20th** at the Village Club of Lake Success. We look forward to seeing you then!



DEAFBLIND AWARENESS WEEK 2021

In recognition of the achievements of people who are DeafBlind, the Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults celebrated the last week in June as "Helen Keller DeafBlind Awareness Week." This national advocacy campaign has been held each year since 1984 when President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation in recognition of this special week.

In 2021, we celebrated Helen Keller DeafBlind Awareness Week from June 27th to July 3rd. The theme this year is: DeafBlind Employees Can Help Businesses Grow with Unique Insights and Perspectives.

The essence of the message is that 2020 was a landmark year for improvements in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and people with disabilities have seen benefits of this progress. Talented employees who are DeafBlind are more than doing their part to assist companies grow. A recent study provided by Accenture, *Getting Equal 2018: The Disability Inclusion Advantage*, found that businesses employing individuals with disabilities achieved, on average, 28% higher revenue, 30% greater economic profit margins and twice the net income of their industry peers.

TRAILBLAZER BIGTHINKER GOGETTER DEAFBLIND

DeafBlind employees can help businesses grow with unique insights and perspectives.

2020 was a landmark year for improvements in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I), and disabled individuals have seen benefits of this progress. However, there is still a long way to go! Employees who are DeafBlind are more than doing their part to help companies grow. A recent study found that businesses employing individuals with disabilities achieved higher revenue, greater economic profit margins and twice the net income of their industry peers.¹

Learn how talented employees who are DeafBlind are changing industries and perceptions at helenkeller.org/HKNC



¹ Accenture, Getting to Equal 2018: The Disability Inclusion Advantage

DEAFBLIND
AWARENESS
WEEK

JUNE 27-JULY 3
2021



Pro Bono poster designed by Wunderman Thompson

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM)



Nationwide NDEAM Event



Milt Wright
Milt Wright & Associates, Inc.
Panel Facilitator

Dr. Richard Pimentel
Milt Wright & Associates, Inc.
Keynote Speaker

Kathy West-Evans
NET / CSAVR
Panelist

Luke Mann
Northrop Grumman
Panelist

Dawn Simmons & Elizabeth Vidas
Sunrise Credit Services, Inc.
Panelist

Oct 13 2PM EST

HKNC FOCUSES ON EMPLOYMENT

With employment very much on the forefront of the HKNC Comprehensive Vocational and Rehabilitation Program, HKNC sponsored its second nationwide Webinar, “National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)” in October 2021 with an audience of close to 100.

This year’s program, coordinated by Joe Melillo, HKNC’s National Employment & Business Relations specialist, provided cutting edge information on how employers can handle the return to work, retention on the job and accommodations for those experiencing disabilities after recovering from COVID-19. Best practices on disability inclusion, hiring programs and more were also discussed with a distinguished panel from various sectors of the employment field:

RICHARD PIMENTEL, senior partner at Milt Wright & Associates, facilitated the discussion. Richard is one of the leading experts in North America on practical issues in leadership, disability inclusion, disability management, and more. He was a strong advocate for the passage of the ADA.

KATHY WEST-EVANS, director Business Relations, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)/National Employment Team (NET).

LUKE MANN, manager (University Relations and Recruiting) and head of the Disability Resource Group at Northrop Grumman Corporation, which has been recognized as the number 1 company for its disability inclusion and hiring program.

ELIZABETH VIDAS, assistant vice president of Training and Quality Assurance and **DAWN SIMMONS**, vice president of Training and Quality Assurance at Sunrise Credit Services, Inc. The Sunrise Family of Companies is widely recognized for their outstanding disability inclusion and hiring program.

ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS PRESENTATION

In June 2021, the first annual Helen Keller Services AccessAbility Awards were presented virtually to 5 organizations who are using their talents and resources to support individuals who are DeafBlind, blind or have low vision. These organizations have made the society more accessible and inclusive through their services, practices, products and workforce diversity efforts. The recipients of the inaugural set of awards are:

- Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, for its outstanding work in providing accessible accommodations to first-time casted DeafBlind actor Robert Tarango in the Oscar®-nominated film *Feeling Through* during the 93rd Oscars® ceremony
- Microsoft, for its exceptional commitment towards accessibility when developing products and services, and by doubling down on disability inclusion throughout the company and empowering others to adopt similar best practices
- UsableNet, for its work in improving website accessibility and its commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Sunrise Credit Services, for making diversity and inclusivity a priority by providing training and employment opportunities to people who are blind, DeafBlind and have low vision
- Be My Eyes, for its exceptional services in making the world more accessible for people who are blind through its network of volunteers



FEELING THROUGH - RUNNER-UP FOR AN OSCAR

“Feeling Through” is a short film featuring, for the first time ever, a DeafBlind actor in a leading role. Former HKNC student and employee, Robert Tarango co-stars in this ground breaking inclusionary film written and directed by Doug Roland. It tells the true story of an unlikely encounter on the streets of New York City between a sighted hearing man and a man who is DeafBlind.

The film has been shown across the country along with a fully accessible, unique and engaging screening event called “The FeelingThrough Experience” which was developed in conjunction with HKNC. The “experience” includes a screening of “Feeling Through” and a supporting documentary film about the making of the short film and the search for the DeafBlind man who inspired it.

“Feeling Through” was one of the 5 finalists for an Academy Award for best Live Action Short Film. Although “Feeling Through” didn’t receive the Oscar, the nomination was a remarkable accomplishment. Being one of the Oscar nominations brought accessibility and inclusion into light. Robert Tarango is a trailblazer and hopefully, his remarkable performance will be the catalyst for others, DeafBlind or otherwise, to chase their dreams. You can view “Feeling Through” free on YouTube at <https://www.feelingthrough.com/>



L-R: Erin Quinn, Sue Ruzenski, Doug Roland, guest of Doug Roland and Angela Piteris

Financial Statements

Helen Keller Services

Summarized Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2021 (with comparative of 2020)

ASSETS	2021	2020	2019
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,619,184	\$5,850,173	\$1,938,610
Grants receivable	\$3,692,584	\$1,033,298	\$247,632
Program fees and accounts receivable	\$2,545,079	\$2,850,353	\$3,136,710
Pledges receivable, net	\$85,090	\$202,649	\$277,477
Due from other funds	\$346,497	\$207,455	\$207,474
Investments, at fair value	\$99,438,781	\$87,016,783	\$91,234,865
Property and equipment, net	\$9,470,106	\$10,082,755	\$9,894,206
Other assets	\$737,947	\$676,919	\$776,219
Total Assets	\$124,201,527	\$107,920,385	\$107,713,193
LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS (Including PPP Loan)			
Liabilities			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$3,152,547	\$8,397,050	\$4,236,723
Deferred income		\$481,696	\$480,632
Refundable deposits	\$165,977	\$165,977	\$165,827
Due to other funds	\$347,601	\$207,455	\$207,474
Deferred rent	\$5,433,472	\$5,341,849	\$5,808,462
Other liabilities	\$62,968	\$69,159	\$67,995
Accrued pension liability	\$6,505,446	\$19,286,614	\$16,388,723
Total Liabilities	\$20,408,011	\$33,949,800	\$27,355,836
Net Assets			
Without donor restrictions	\$99,302,394	\$70,343,658	\$76,465,786
With donor restrictions			
Time/purpose restricted	\$1,298,635	\$918,043	\$1,182,687
Endowment funds	\$451,345	\$451,345	\$451,345
Perpetual in nautre	\$2,741,142	\$2,257,539	\$2,257,539
Total Net Assets	\$103,793,516	\$73,970,585	\$80,357,357
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$124,201,527	\$107,920,385	\$107,713,193

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2021	2020	2019
Contributions and grants	\$897,994	\$1,278,970	\$1,183,456
Legacies	\$316,782	\$431,476	\$188,714
Special events: Gross Receipts	\$40,911	\$196,701	\$337,616
Less direct donor benefits	(\$3,575)	(\$129,922)	(\$216,971)
Total Public Support	\$1,252,112	\$1,777,225	\$1,492,815
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind			
Youths and Adults – Grant income	\$19,748,486	\$17,840,165	\$15,720,764
Helen Keller Services for the Blind – Grant income	\$374,640	\$389,950	\$513,850
Training fees and allowances	\$8,305,551	\$10,668,083	\$10,640,560
Total Fees and Grants from Government Agencies	\$28,428,677	\$28,898,198	\$26,875,174
Investment income	\$2,195,487	\$2,817,085	\$3,346,259
Rental Income: Gross Receipts	\$649,635	\$381,789	\$351,253
Less direct costs	(\$193,362)	(\$519,864)	(\$599,718)
Net gain on investments	(\$21,786,663)	(\$1,575,760)	\$1,003,058
Other	\$786,233	\$177,206	\$113,226
Total Other Revenue	\$25,224,656	\$1,280,456	\$4,214,078
Net of Net assets released from restrictions/ contributions with donor restrictions		\$264,644	
Total Support and Revenue	\$54,905,445	\$32,220,523	\$32,582,067
Expenses			
Assistive Technology	\$1,038,133	\$555,747	\$548,831
Low Vision	\$391,179	\$474,567	\$448,305
Comprehensive Services	\$3,303,979	\$3,286,254	\$3,366,192
Supported Employment Services	\$42,620	\$39,744	\$45,161
Day Habilitation Services	\$1,963,997	\$2,533,588	\$2,724,261
Blind Children Program	\$3,480,930	\$3,457,618	\$3,643,483
Summer Camp	\$64,004	\$218,744	\$207,993
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind			
Youths and Adults	\$16,066,634	\$17,715,641	\$16,387,364
Residential	\$722,605	\$771,516	\$659,798
Total Program Services	\$27,074,081	\$29,053,419	\$28,031,388
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind			
Youths and Adults		\$1,519,239	\$1,695,338
Helen Keller Services for the Blind		\$3,602,913	\$3,737,192
Total Supporting Services	\$5,103,884	\$5,122,152	\$5,432,530
Total Expenses	\$32,177,965	\$34,175,571	\$33,463,918
Change in net assets, before (increase) decrease in unfunded pension obligation	(\$22,727,480)	(\$2,218,492)	(\$881,851)
(Increase) Decrease in unfunded pension obligation	(\$7,095,451)	(\$4,168,280)	(\$2,862,572)
Change in net assets	(\$29,822,931)	(\$6,386,772)	(\$3,744,423)
Net assets, beginning of year	\$73,970,585	\$80,357,357	\$84,101,780
Net assets, end of year	\$103,793,516	\$73,970,585	\$80,357,357

This information shown herein has been summarized by Helen Keller Services from its 2021 audited financial statements.

A copy of the complete financial statements and auditor's report is available upon request.

Email us at info@helenkeller.org or write us at HKS, 180 Livingston Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201, Attention: CFO

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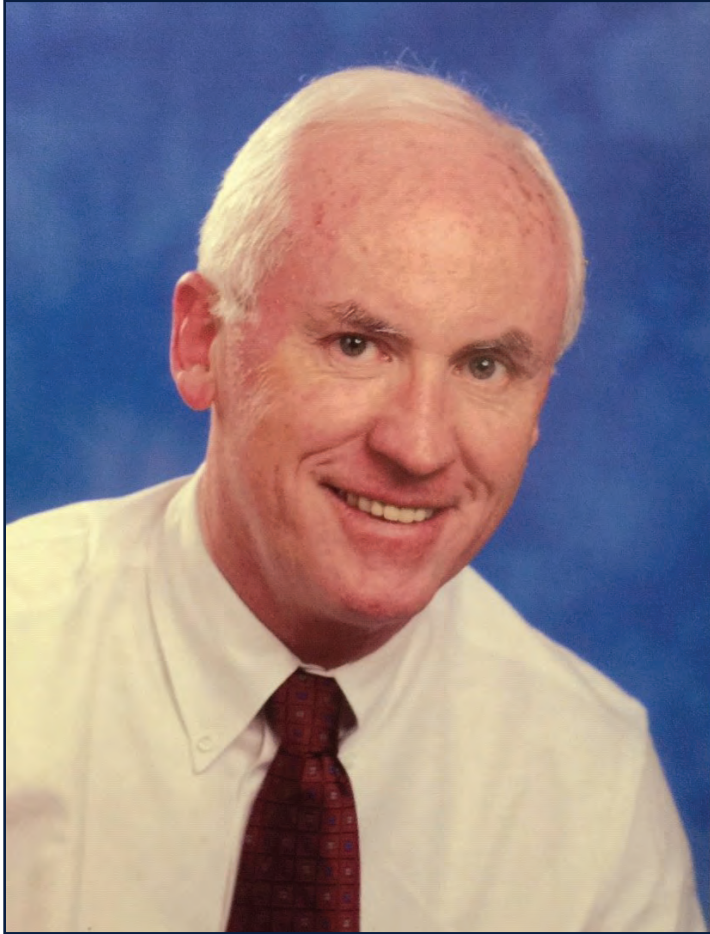
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IN MEMORIAM – JOSEPH J. McNULTY



It is with the heaviest of hearts that we remember and honor Joseph J. McNulty, long time staff member at Helen Keller National Center including serving as the executive director for 23 years. Joe passed away suddenly on June 14, 2021, while on vacation with the one he loved best, his wife Kathy. He is also survived by his two children and two grandchildren.

It's hard to put into words the impact Joe had on those of us at HKNC. It all began in 1979 when he was hired as a mobility instructor transferring from the old Industrial Home for the Blind (now HKSB). Over the years, Joe advanced into several positions including Residence director, Affiliate coordinator, assistant director of Field Services and, finally in 1990, he became the executive director of HKNC. Joe retired in 2013 to spend time with his family.

Among the many accomplishments of Joe's tenure as executive director was his securing the funds to build the Leona and Harry B. Helmsley Conference Center on HKNC's campus in Sands Point and providing the impetus for the establishment of the National Family Association of the Deaf-Blind. Under his leadership, HKNC was named "the gold standard for provision of services to deaf-blind individuals" by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. In addition to his long time commitment to providing students at HKNC quality training, Joe was dedicated to providing services to people who were DeafBlind on a national level and earned the utmost respect from the DeafBlind community, professionals in the field and the parent organizations with whom he

collaborated. In 2003, he was the recipient of the prestigious Anne Sullivan Macy Medal at the 13th Deafblind International World Conference on Deafblindness.

Joe was blessed with the "Irish gift of gab." He had the ability to speak easily and confidently in front of every audience or individual. His well-documented sense of humor made every encounter with Joe interesting and alive. He was a people person, gregarious and sociable, and, oh, could he tell stories! Let us be thankful for our special memories of Joe's warmth, joy and friendship and for the example of a life well lived.

If you would like to make a contribution in Joe McNulty's Honor, please support the Joseph J. McNulty HKNC Student Fund.

Naming Opportunities

A Contribution Today — A Legacy That Lasts a Lifetime

Whether it is your family name front and center in HKS' Downtown Brooklyn location, sponsorship of a classroom in our Children's Learning Center (CLC), or naming the Training Center that will help those we serve gain independence for years to come, there are many places you can leave a lifetime legacy today. Where will you leave yours? For more information on naming opportunities, please contact Mary Fu, by email: mfu@helenkeller.org or by phone at 516-393-7992.



Help us Grow the Future!

Your contribution to Helen Keller Services makes it possible for us to give people who are blind, have low vision or DeafBlind access to the training, technology and support that can help them live their best lives.

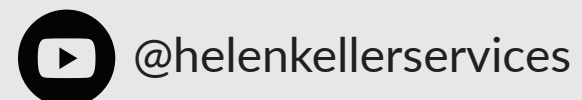
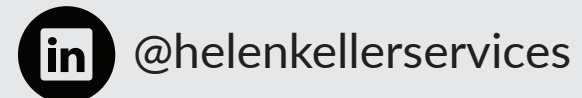
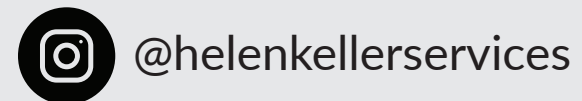
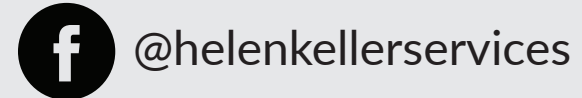
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