

## History of Future In Sight

### **2010 – Present**

March 2017 the Association announced that it has transitioned to a new name - Future In Sight. The new name offers a better representation of how the organization has grown and adapted to changing needs and demographics. The new name more accurately reflects the larger community we seek to serve. Over a period of three months the Association worked with Proportion Design of Medford, Mass. on a re-branding effort to develop a strong memorable and effective brand. Altos Agency of Bedford, NH worked on the Agency's website re-designs as a result of the re-branding.

For the first time the Association begins serving infants and toddlers as well as providing support to families. Association implements services using Occupational Therapists which provides covered services for Medicare Part B subscribers.

Association partners with League of NH Craftsmen to bring a tactile art exhibit to libraries across the state. Exhibits included braille story time for children and hands on activities for families. The exhibit culminated in a welcome home reception at the McGreal Sight Center with several of the artists in attendance to discuss their work.

The Board of Directors announced the hiring of new President and CEO, David S. Morgan. David replaced long-term President & CEO, George Theriault (1996-2015.)

The Board of Directors addresses governance issues and planned giving becomes the focus of the Development Department. The Association continues to enhance its social media presence with website redesign, launch of a Facebook and Twitter pages along with community outreach efforts to local retirement communities and senior centers statewide.

The Association celebrated its 100th anniversary of services to NH residents living with blindness and vision loss. A celebratory picnic with clients, friends, staff and supporters held at a NH State Park.

The Association collaborated with the NH Arts Association and local NH galleries to bring tactile art to the blind and visually impaired. Great success was had with these events in Portsmouth, Peterborough and Dover. Also introduced statewide were “Dinners in the Dark” at local restaurants to educate and increase awareness. These are primarily organized by regional advisory committees, which are made up of volunteers looking to get involved in their community.

### **2000 - 2010**

The Association continues strong renewal of service programs supported by the generosity of New Hampshire residents, corporations, service clubs and foundations. Partnerships continue to be strengthened and expanded.

90th Anniversary celebrated with multiple events including a Concord Chamber Business After Hours event and the first employment conference sponsored by the Association to address barriers to employment. A plaque honoring Emma Coolidge Weston was presented to the Town of Hancock, NH.

Education services for blind and visually impaired children are added to the Association's core services. Providing services was a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and a dedicated Orientation and Mobility Specialist (O&M) with funding provided by the Gibney Family Foundation. This service has grown tremendously; currently serving more than 70 students in 25 school districts statewide.

In an effort to build awareness, recruit volunteers and raise money special events were added – Spooky Silent Auction (4 years), 3K Walk for Sight (11 years), various concerts and comedy shows held in various parts of the state.

### **1970s – 1990s**

Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation was formed to honor the thoughtful and generous legacy of Mr. George Grimshaw and Ms. Irene Gudewicz. George and Irene were great friends of William and Elizabeth McGreal. Later in his life, George developed a visual impairment, as a result, he received low vision and independent living services from the Association. Thereafter, he and Irene became major contributors of charitable support, out of appreciation for the services he received.

Gale Stickler was hired to fill the role of Executive Director and remains in this position from 1964 - 1994.

Low vision services are introduced for the first time in New Hampshire including a satellite office in the North Country following a 3-year outreach effort.

The Association became one of the first agencies nationwide to gain full accreditation by the newly formed National Accreditation Council (NAC) for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Following a successful \$1M Focus on the Future capital building and endowment campaign the Association moved to its new and still today, headquarters at 25 Walker Street. The building is named The McGreal Sight Center after William and Elizabeth Yates McGreal.

The Association formulated a strategic plan to meet the growing needs of the state's aging population facing blindness and vision loss. A restructuring of the Association successfully streamlined services to maintain a balanced budget and enhance the effectiveness of service programs.

The William and Elizabeth Yates McGreal Society was formed to recognize individuals who have uniquely supported the Association with bequests and planned gifts.

Following the death of the Association's first executive director, William McGreal; Mrs. Elizabeth Yates McGreal was elected to the Board of Directors where she served continually until 1988.

Subsequently, the Elizabeth Yates McGreal Fund was created in her honor to continue to set an example for others to follow, and to receive additional gifts into the Association's second century and beyond.

### **1940s – 1960s**

Mildred Oliver succeeds McGreal as Executive Director from 1955 - 1960.

The Association was instrumental in helping to establish the State of NH Division of Blind Services under the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Association hired its first Executive Director, William McGreal, who served in this role from 1947 - 1955.

A focus on advocacy helped to establish the State of NH Bureau of Blind Services under the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Social work counseling was provided by volunteers from the Association's Home-craft and Recreation Programs along with untrained workers. A statewide public education and support mail program was initiated along with the launch of a statewide prevention of blindness campaign.

Gale Stickler succeeds William McGreal as Executive Director in the 1960's. Services were professionalized with social work becoming the core service that coordinates the Orientation & Mobility Training and Daily Living Skills Services. A building in Concord, NH was acquired to become the statewide headquarters.

Products made by visually impaired clients in the Home Crafts and Home Industry Program are showcased and sold as Lamplighter Products with locations in Hooksett and Crawford Notch State Park.

### **1912 - 1933**

By 1933 the group saw the need to broaden the circle of friends to the whole state and reorganized as a non-profit corporation under the name New Hampshire Association for the Blind.

The early months of 1912 plans were made for a fair in Hancock. The purpose was twofold - to raise money toward the proposed shop and to educate the public about the needs and abilities of the blind. The fair raised \$150.

In the winter of 1911 - 1912 the New Hampshire Association for the Blind was informally organized by a letter written by Mrs. Emma Coolidge Weston and friends of Hancock, NH. As a result, the Hancock Branch of the New Hampshire Association for the Blind was formally organized with officers elected. Emma's goal for starting the organization was to provide encouragement and training for blind and visually impaired people throughout the Granite State.