

FY2023

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 - AUGUST 31, 2023





HOW TO HELP



DONATE

Your support helps us further our mission. Donate securely online at futureinsight.org/donate or mail your check to **Future In Sight** at 25 Walker Street - Concord, NH 03301

Future In Sight is a 501(c)(3) | EIN: 02-0223606



VOLUNTEER

We are in need of volunteers to drive our clients to essential appointments and errands, conduct in-home visits, provide administrative support, and assist with special events. Interested? Visit futureinsight.org/volunteer



SIGN UP FOR OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

Our monthly e-newsletter includes helpful information, insights and updates. Sign up at futureinsight.org/signupfornews and forward it to your friends!



ENGAGE WITH US ON SOCIAL

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT/CEO

Dear Partners,

I marvel at the dedication with which my Guide Dog Swirl guides my every step. Even more astounding is the myriad of ways that your generosity provides the essential training, tools and services to children, adults and the elderly in New Hampshire who are experiencing profound sight loss – many of whom are considered low income as a result of their vision disability and/or aging out of the workforce. The evidence of this life-changing work is found in the unsolicited notes of gratitude we receive, the feedback given during our completion-of-service surveys, the testimonial videos that we share on our website: futureinsight.org/testimonials, and the stories contained in this Annual Report. When one of our clients is thanking us for giving them a renewed sense of hope, they are truly thanking YOU, our valued partner, for making this possible.

Per our organizational values, we are constantly evaluating our operations and seeking enhanced ways to serve our clients. After completing an internal analysis, we were able to expand the amount of time that we spend with each client to ensure that we are fully meeting their individual needs. We have also introduced additional programming to better serve two often-missed groups: seniors 55+ who are experiencing profound sight loss and transition-aged youth, ages 14-21. Our highly acclaimed Silver Retreats and Real World Skill-Building Workshops provide a communal setting in which these individuals learn together how to live with confidence and dignity. Understanding the tremendous psychological impact of losing one's vision, we have also been increasing the number of Peer Support Groups we offer across the state.

Additionally, we have been working to revitalize our Volunteer Driver Program. Our volunteer drivers provide essential rides to medical appointments and help our clients run necessary errands. These volunteers also provide transportation to enrichment opportunities like our aforementioned Peer Support Groups and our Accessible Voting Trainings. Our number of volunteers has doubled but we are still in need of drivers throughout the state, particularly in rural areas where public transportation and taxis/Ubers are limited. If you are interested in being a volunteer driver, visit futureinsight.org/volunteer.

Although all of this news is wonderful to share, one scary reality is that for every person whom we've served, there's another 2.5 who we have yet to provide the transformative gift of our

charitable mission. I'm proud that Future In Sight has served over 11,000 individuals and am personally determined, with your support, to serve the additional 17,000 people in NH who continue to face the isolation and uncertainty of losing one's vision. There are a number of ways you can continue to help, which are outlined on the adjacent page.

(continued on next page)



Randy Pierce is available to speak at your next event. All speaking fees are donated to Future In Sight. Learn more about Randy at futureinsight.org/randypierce.



As Swirl guides me everywhere I need to be, your generosity helps guide individuals who are experiencing profound sight loss due to trauma, disease, and the natural progression of age through this frightening time. I cannot thank you enough for your support – as both *President & CEO* of this organization and as a member of the community it serves.

Be Well,



Dr. Randy Pierce

President & CEO, Future In Sight

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

Vision loss is one of the most difficult challenges that a person can face over the course of their life's journey. It is a frightening time for people and their families when it can be easy to be consumed by worry and isolation. Future In Sight is proud to have been there to offer support, services and community to those facing vision loss in New Hampshire for more than one hundred years. We have built a legacy of caring and commitment to those that we serve by providing the resources that help them to lead impactful lives.

Several things have made a lasting impression on me during my association with our organization. The first is the professionalism and dedication of our staff and volunteers. This has been a recurring theme at Future In Sight over the years as clients and family members share their experiences often singling out one of our colleagues that went “above and beyond” to make a difference. It is especially gratifying to see how many family members have continued to be involved in supporting our work because of what those interactions meant for their loved one. From my perspective, there can be no better endorsement. One former client, Randy Pierce, went so far as to become our chief executive with the goal of carrying on this wonderful tradition.

There are thousands of people with vision loss living in New Hampshire with the baby boomer demographic increasing that number every day. The need is greater than ever and Future In Sight does not receive full reimbursement for the cost of the services we provide.

We have never failed to offer services because of a person's ability to pay and we never will. Our mission depends on the generosity of your financial support. On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and clients, thank you for all that you do to help us in our life changing work.

Gratefully,



Charlie Mathews


Board Chair, Future In Sight





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FISCAL YEAR

5,833 Lives Impacted



98% of clients

surveyed during FY2023 stated that they feel **more independent** as a result of receiving our services

136



Group Meetings, Activities, & Workshops

2,079

Participants Total

106



Youth Clients Served

2,743



Hours of Service Provided To Youth Clients

37



Schools We Partner With

SERVICE IMPACT

742 Adult Clients Served

3 Silver Retreats For Adults 55+

2,479

Hours Of Service Provided To Adult Clients



47,990

Miles Driven By Staff To Provide Service



2,566

Volunteer Hours



1,560

Rides Provided By Volunteers To Essential Appointments

35,514

Miles Driven By Volunteers To Assist Clients

AN ADULT CLIENT STORY

Melissa Abbott is someone who believes in the power of words. She asks clients of her wellness business, Resilient RootZ Wellness, LLC, to pick their word of the year. Melissa's word for 2024 is: worth.

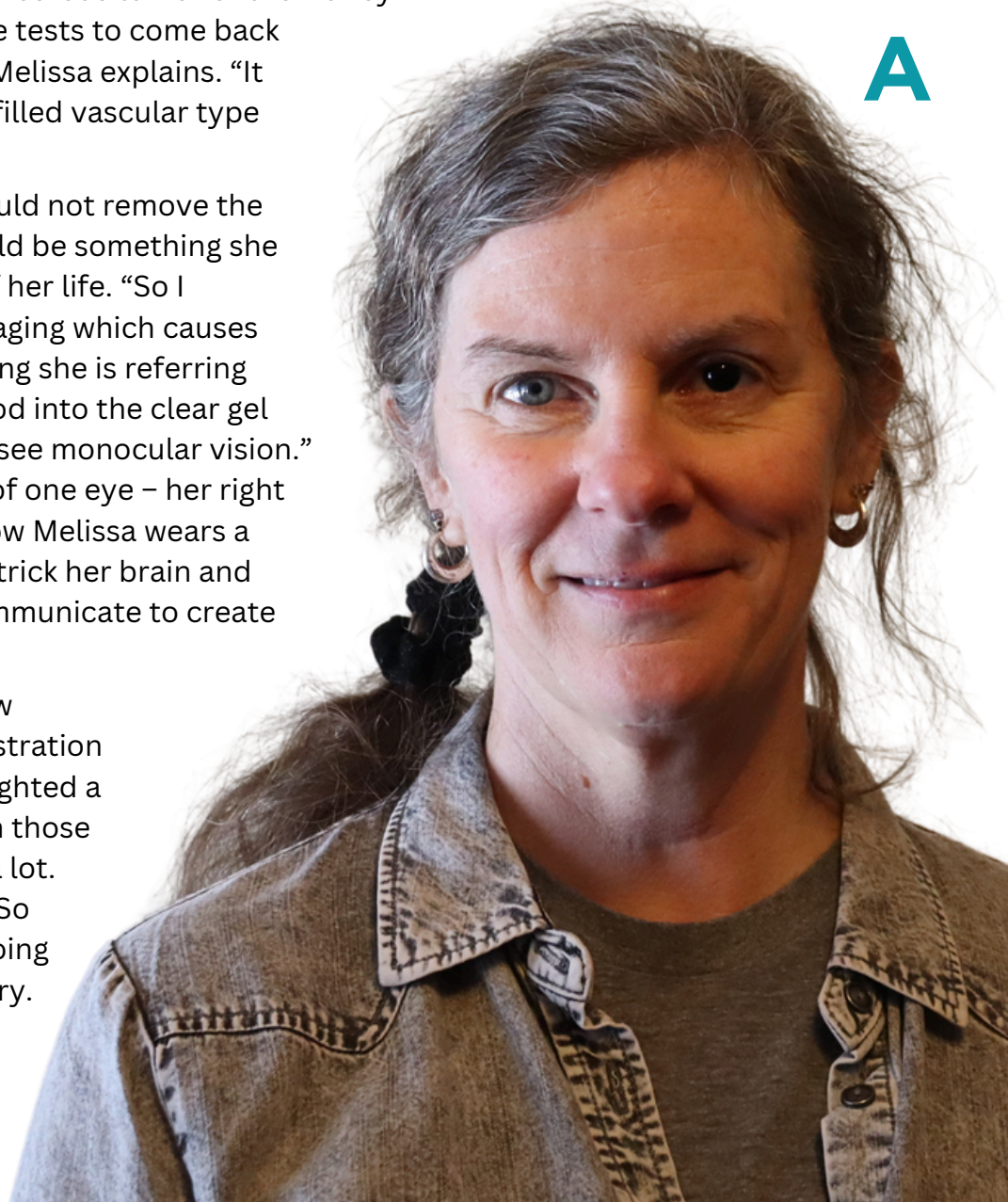
Melissa lost her vision suddenly while working as a personal trainer at a local gym. She was 42 years old and in the best shape of her life. "Six pack [abs], cut, ripped, body builder doing triathlons, running marathons, doing all kinds of crazy athletic things that made me feel so good." Then, as she stood up from a bent-over position to put some wipes in a dispenser, everything went dark. Well, not exactly... dark. "I got dizzy and all I could see was, like, red," she says while recognizing that the story still makes her skin tingle even after over a decade. With arms stretched out and resorting to crawling at one point, Melissa made her way to her boss' office. Panic began to sink in as she told her boss, "I can't see."

Melissa's boss brought her to a local eye care facility where an ophthalmologist ran some tests before delivering the news. "She's like, you have a tumor and you need to go to the emergency room." Melissa called her husband who rushed her to Mass General in Boston. She stayed at the hospital for a week while doctors ran tests in order to provide a formal diagnosis. Melissa's tumor was a kind that is often associated with Von Hippel-Lindau syndrome (VHL). VHL can result in renal cell carcinomas or a cancerous tumor of the kidney.

"It took about four or five days for the tests to come back [showing] that I didn't have cancer," Melissa explains. "It was a hemangioma, which is a blood-filled vascular type of tumor."

Because of its placement, doctors could not remove the tumor behind Melissa's eye. This would be something she would have to live with for the rest of her life. "So I periodically go through this hemorrhaging which causes immense head pain." The hemorrhaging she is referring to is a result of the tumor leaking blood into the clear gel that fills the eye. As for her vision? "I see monocular vision." This means Melissa can only see out of one eye – her right eye. "I have no depth perception." Now Melissa wears a prosthetic over her retina; this helps trick her brain and her eye as they continue to try to communicate to create vision where none exists.

When Melissa returned home, her new circumstances resulted in a lot of frustration and a number of instances that highlighted a need for help. Melissa explains that in those early days of her vision loss, she fell a lot. "I endured quite a few concussions." So many, in fact, that she is now undergoing testing for a mild traumatic brain injury. Recognizing that she could not do it on her own, Melissa acted as her own advocate and found a team of professionals that could help.



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“Future In Sight not only helped with the physical things,” Melissa explains, “they also helped with understanding how to, you know, kind of find myself again. They helped teach me how to walk with my [white cane], how to get around objects.” This support proved more important than ever as Melissa’s tumor and coinciding vision loss set off a chain of medical reactions within her body. Melissa had been previously diagnosed with Epilepsy and Meniere’s Disease, an inner ear disorder that causes hearing loss and vertigo. Both conditions had been in remission prior but the recent trauma her body had endured had brought both disorders back. “So I went from this healthy 42-year-old woman to an 89-pound woman on my couch in [the] fetal position. It was awful. I didn’t know if I was going to make it.”

Melissa goes on to explain one of the most profound ways in which Future In Sight helped her. “They asked, what is it that we can do to help you find yourself, what can we do to help you find that worth?”

Melissa began to believe that she could actually have hopes and dreams for her future. When the gym she had been working for let her go after her vision loss, instead of accepting the situation as the end of her career, Melissa used it as an opportunity to do something she had always dreamed of doing: going back to school. She credits her commitment to this new chapter in her life to what she calls her resilient factors – variables that, when present, correspond to better outcomes. What are her resilient factors? “My aunt and Future In Sight.”

As Melissa worked through her Master's Degree, Future In Sight was there to support her needs and goals. “I got more magnifiers than I think anybody,” she says laughing. “It was like there wasn’t anything they couldn’t give me.” Melissa grows somber for a moment and then laughs a little before adding, “except my vision.” Melissa has learned that despite all of the advancements being made, there is no way she will ever see as she did before; the damage caused to her retina is irreparable.

“When you go through these traumatic experiences, it really shows you that you can pull yourself out of that and that you do have resilience.” With this mindset fueling her, Melissa has continued a journey of life-long learning. However, despite receiving her Graduate Degree, becoming Board Certified, and also becoming a minister through the Universal Life Church, Melissa still finds herself struggling with her worth. “I’m [going to] lose my hearing and I have this limited vision. How is that [going to] play into my value, my worth, my function?”

At age 54, Melissa’s journey is far from over. As she navigates her self-worth, Future In Sight will continue to be there to support her. At the same time, Melissa helps Future In Sight support others like her by donating her expertise to teach **Stronger Bones for a Stronger You**, a virtual class that focuses on bone fortification to increase muscle strength, coordination and balance, which she believes leads to personal growth, power and vitality. “I’m helping people heal because of what Future In Sight did for me.”

Future In Sight’s calendar of year-round group meetings, activities, and workshops is available to individuals of all ages and abilities, with nearly every event offered at no cost.

Join Melissa in her next virtual class by signing up at futureinsight.org/calendar.



A wooden sign and a glass heart sit on Melissa’s desk as a reminder of her bravery and self worth

T H E V E N T O L A S

A FAMILY STORY

The Ventola's home feels warm and inviting. It is four days before Christmas and within moments of entering the home, you can feel the excitement of a young child in the air. As we follow Kym, Dan and Manny into their library, Kym casually says to Manny, "Trail the wall. Can you show [our friends] into the Christmas Tree room?"

Manny brushes the tips of his fingers along the wall to his right and guides us into this new space. Within minutes of settling in, Manny is ready to move on, the excitement of new friends now a thing of the past. It is a swift reminder that despite everything he has been through in his six short years of life, he is in many ways a typical six-year-old, spirited and rambunctious and very focused on the holidays ahead. Dan brings Manny into the other room and for the foreseeable future, Manny plays Christmas music on the stereo in the background.

The Ventola's moved to New Hampshire a little over five years ago. Originally from Arizona, they liked the idea of raising their family here. They had a 10-year-old son at the time, but within three months of moving to the state they were introduced to Manny.

"He was about eight months old and he was in the foster care system and the minute we met him we just fell in love," explains Kym.

Kym and Dan immediately applied to be Manny's foster parents. They officially adopted him into the Ventola Family a little over a year later.

Adopting a child requires every family to adapt but in Manny's case, there were additional circumstances. "The technical diagnosis is Bilateral Anophthalmia. At birth, he was born without eyes. He has no light perception, no vision, and ultimately no chance of repairing [his vision]."

When The Ventola's are asked what has changed since adopting Manny, laughter fills the air. It is the heartfelt kind of laughter that signifies a complete understanding of the depth of this question.

"Everything."

Kym begins explaining life with Manny, "it's no secret that we are older parents, so there's the physical challenges. We're a little exhausted because he's got a lot of energy. He is so much fun. He's got a great imagination. He's got a lot of energy."

Kym admits they owe much of their success to their support system, but it is obvious that both Kym and Dan have taken Manny's disability as a positive opportunity to learn. "Learning about visual impairment and blindness in the beginning was huge for us. [We] hadn't personally known anybody [who] was blind, so learning through Future In Sight how we could adapt our home, adapt our lives to accommodate Manny has worked out really well."

Kym credits Future In Sight for helping them discover the tools they have used over the years to empower Manny so that he is comfortable exploring. "He is a kid who loves taking risks. I think that can be a little scary for some parents, but for us, we love seeing his fearlessness."



It's at this point Dan chimes in. "He loves cars. He loves his tire swing at school. He loves to use his imagination." He goes on to describe Manny putting on a captain's hat and a fireman suit that very morning. "It's hard to understand [sometimes] how [his imagination] can be so deep and rich in spite of his blindness." Kym equates this to the adults in his life. She explains the details they go into when describing things to Manny, linking sounds he hears back to images they help paint for him in his mind. She uses a chair as an example, explaining the time they took to describe the legs, the seat, and how a chair is used. She credits Manny's first foster Moms for instilling this in them when they began fostering Manny. "I think that really plays into his imagination. The real world, like the world as we know it visually is a privilege for us to [see]. Manny doesn't have that privilege. At the same time, I love the way he sees the world. He uses his hands and his ears. I think that translates really well into his imagination."

When we ask Kym and Dan what they want the world to know about Manny, they say, "We want the world to know he's a pretty typical child in a lot of ways. He's so much more than the blindness."

Kym and Dan hope that the world can see Manny as they do. "I want people to really see this sweet boy who has so many abilities and strengths and not just to see his deficits." Kym elaborates, "I encourage people to be mindful about how they interact with someone who has [a] visual impairment or is blind. They do feel it."

The Ventola stockings hang on their mantel, labeled with chalk tags and braille



The "it" she is referring to is the sympathy that new people who meet Manny often feel. She describes people asking what happened or apologizing for their circumstances. "It's dehumanizing. I do hope that people can understand to look past that, look beyond that, and just engage with him like we do [with everyone else] because you'll see he's a very typical child."

In 2020, Manny entered the public school sector as a pre-schooler. Although the Ventola's had been receiving Early Support Services – services specifically for birth through the age of 2 which are designed to help develop sensory and compensatory skills they need for a successful start – Manny's introduction to public school meant that both he and his parents needed additional support from Future In Sight. "There have been some challenges," she says, explaining the circumstances that led to them deciding to move forward with testing Manny for neurological deficits. Kym believes that the support that her family has have received from Future In Sight as Manny moves through school, both physically and scholastically, is invaluable.

"Rhonda!" Kym says enthusiastically. "She is a gem."

Kym is referring to one of Future In Sight's COMS (Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists). She explains that the support they have received from Rhonda and her colleagues on our Youth Services team has gone far beyond Manny's classroom.

"They gave him his first white cane and introduced orientation and mobility services to us. That was something I was completely unaware of," Kym says regarding the ways Manny could be taught to navigate his environments safely and confidently. "I don't think that we would be where we are today and I don't think Manny would be as successful as he is if it were not for Rhonda."

To learn more about The Ventola's and what they are doing to help Manny embrace his independence not only in their home but in their community, visit futureinsight.org/blog/ventolafamily.



CLIFF

A VOLUNTEER STORY

Clifford “Cliff” Smith is sitting in Future In Sight’s board room, a large coffee steaming in front of him, dressed in a blue plaid shirt and his Future In Sight baseball cap. His speech is thick, that of an older man, but his mind is sharp. Despite everyone in the room knowing Cliff, he begins with an introduction.

“My name is Clifford Smith. I like to be called Cliff.”

Cliff has been a volunteer driver for Future In Sight for over eight years. He is 91.

“I like volunteering because of the people that I drive.” Cliff’s journey as a volunteer began after he lost his wife. He was attending an information session on our Volunteer Driver Program when he heard about Future In Sight. “After [the session] was over I knew I wanted to volunteer. I thought, I can do that.”

As an older individual, Cliff wasn’t sure if he was exactly what Future In Sight was looking for but he reached out to inquire anyway. “They said, ‘Yeah, we could use you,’ and I felt good that they needed me.”

Before volunteering with Future In Sight, Cliff had never encountered someone who was blind or visually impaired. “I wasn’t sure if I would be good at this,” he explains. Recognizing that many of our volunteers do not come to us with a background in working with the blind and visually impaired community, Future In Sight provides training and resources to all of our volunteers during a comprehensive orientation process.

“I didn’t know [how to work with the blind and visually impaired]. Now that I know, I am very glad to be volunteering for Future In Sight.”

Cliff has become a sought-after volunteer for Future In Sight, taking on multiple matched clients – a client that is paired with a specific volunteer based on proximity and personality, as well as their personal preferences for a specific volunteer.

“I like volunteering because of the people that I drive. I make people happy. It also makes me happy.”

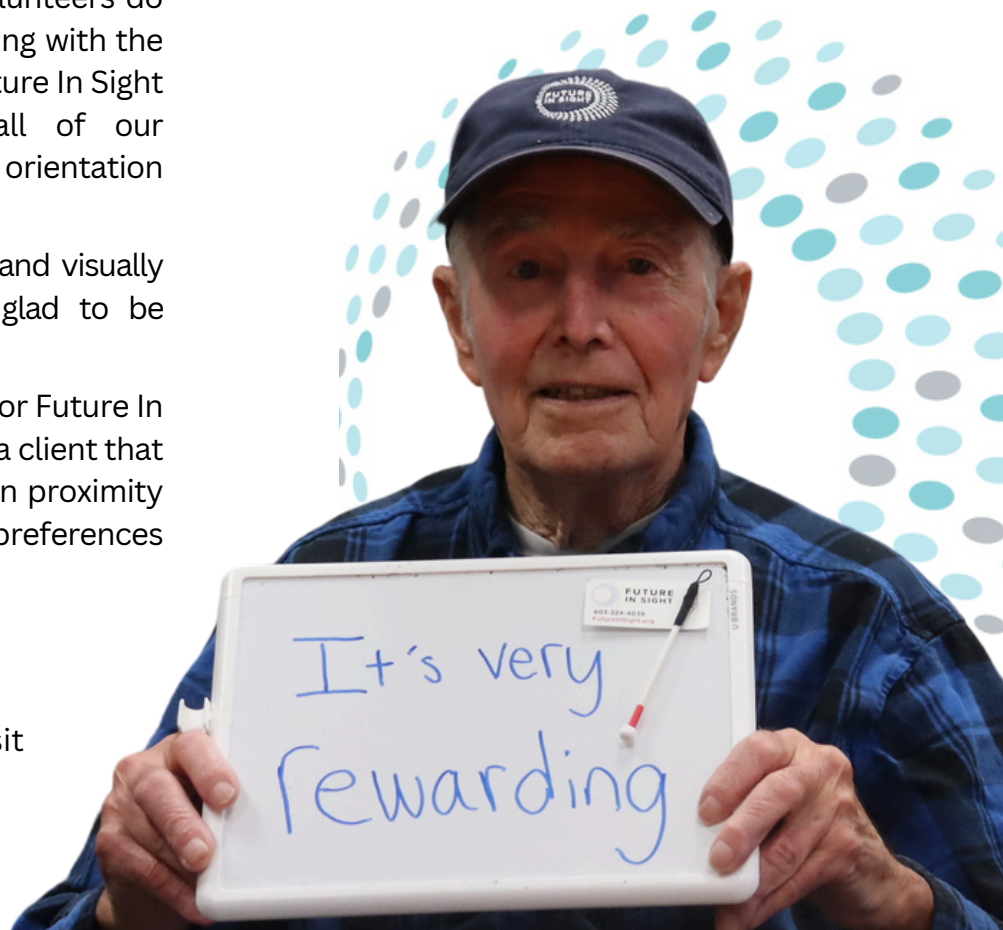
Cliff was honored at the Spirit of New Hampshire awards at the beginning of the 2023 fiscal year, winning Outstanding Awardee in the Senior Category. When we ask him about the award he says, “I didn’t know I was really affecting people. I’ve learned a lot about volunteering. I’ve learned that I have a great effect on people, and that makes me [want to get] more involved.”

Cliff believes everyone should volunteer throughout their life. As a volunteer driver, he recognizes that the transportation he provides is so much more than a simple ride to an appointment. Cliff offers kindness and respect, allowing him to assist individuals in need without compromising their dignity or independence. He knows how scary the experience can be for a client meeting him for the first time, but as Cliff says, “The next time I [drive] them they’re more relaxed and it’s just like we’ve been buddies for a long time.”

We are in need of volunteer drivers all over the state of New Hampshire. Our drivers provide essential transportation to our clients. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a volunteer driver, visit futureinsight.org/volunteer.



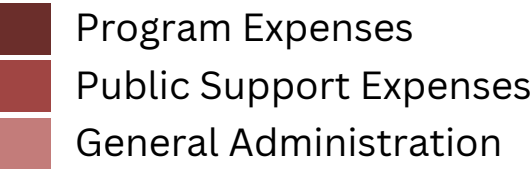
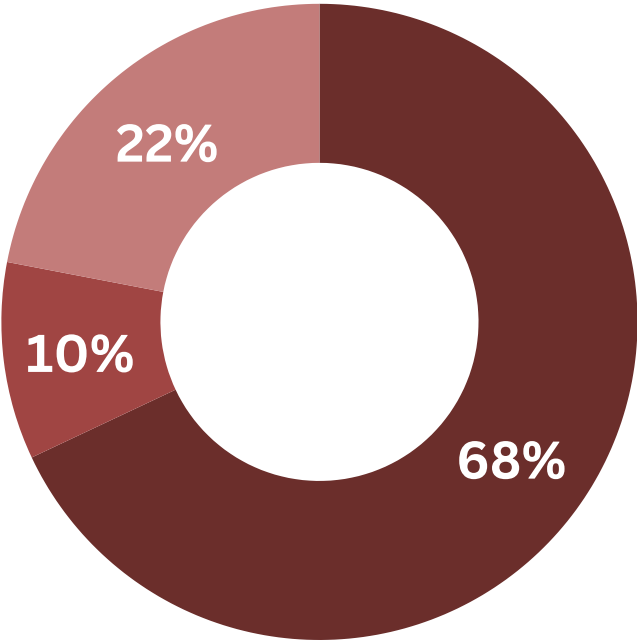
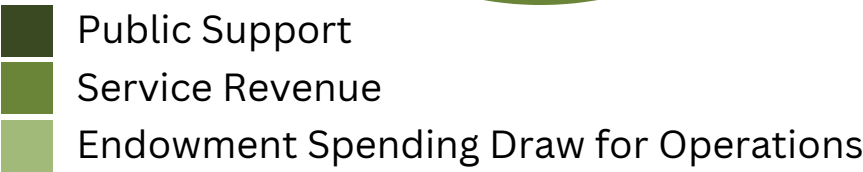
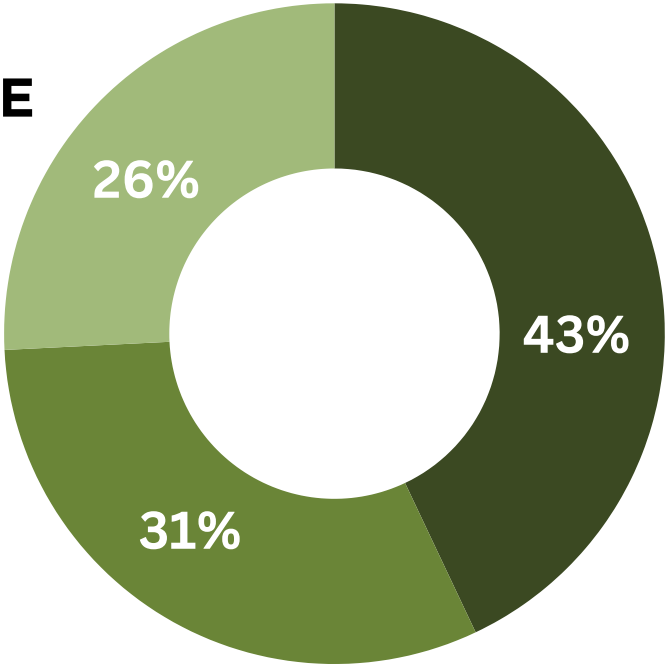
To learn more about our Volunteer Driver Program, visit futureinsight.org/volunteer.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY2023 SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Public Support | \$1,314,727 |
| Service Revenue | \$955,975 |
| Endowment Spending | \$788,932 |
| Draw for Operations | |
| <hr/> | |
| TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE | \$3,059,634 |



FY2023 FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Program Expenses | \$1,887,161 |
| Public Support Expenses | \$278,247 |
| General Administration | \$610,180 |

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$2,775,588 |
|----------------|-------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| REVENUE less EXPENSES | \$284,046 |
|-----------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| NET RETURN ON INVESTMENTS | \$(23,748) |
|---------------------------|------------|

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | \$(260,298) |
|----------------------|-------------|

OUR KEY PARTNERS

FY2023 GRANT AWARDS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Grimshaw-Gudewicz | \$150,000 |
| The Mary Gale Foundation, Inc. | \$60,000 |
| The Gibney Family Foundation | \$50,000 |
| Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation | \$50,000 |
| Sarah K. de Coizart Perpetual Charitable Trust | \$50,000 |
| County of Merrimack | \$20,000 |
| The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, Inc. | \$20,000 |
| New Hampshire Charitable Foundation's Unrestricted Grants Single State Program | \$20,000 |
| The Roger R. and Theresa A. Thompson Endowment Fund | \$20,000 |
| Couch Family Foundation | \$10,000 |
| Benjamin Couch Trust | \$10,000 |
| New Hampshire Charitable Foundation Community Fund | \$10,000 |
| Oleonda Jameson Trust | \$10,000 |
| DCU for Kids | \$5,000 |
| Ann De Nicola Trust | \$4,500 |
| Bishop's Charitable Assistance Fund | \$2,500 |
| Mary Louise Billings Trust | \$2,500 |
| Ella F. Anderson Trust | \$2,500 |

For a full list of donors from FY2023, visit futureinsight.org/supporters



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THE FUTURE IN SIGHT BOARD OF DIRECTORS



OUR MISSION:

To advance the independence of persons who are blind and visually impaired.



OUR VISION:

"We imagine an inclusive world where every person who is blind and visually impaired lives with confidence and dignity."

