

Are You AWARE? Newsletter

www.VisionAWARE.org



Don't let vision loss keep you in the dark. **Become AWARE.**

WHAT'S NEW AT VISIONAWARE.ORG?

Vol 2, Issue 2, February 10, 2010

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VisionAWARE's Twitter-versary!

On Thursday, February 11, VisionAWARE will celebrate its first Twitter-versary! Sounds funny, we know, but for the past year, Twitter has brought thousands of people to our website, giving them a window into our abundant world of online resources. We're especially proud of our Twitter following, which last week **broke the 1,000 mark** - and yes, they are real people, many of whom stand with us when we say *Don't let vision loss keep you in the dark. Become AWARE!*



We'd like to take this opportunity to shine the spotlight on Twitter followers we admire:

- [Patricia Dudek](#) is an attorney and advocate for people with disabilities.
- [Christopher Burgess](#) is on the board of directors of a blindness agency.
- [Deven Black](#) is a special education teacher in the Bronx, NY.
- [The American Printing House for the Blind](#) provides tips and resources for and by blind or visually impaired people.

Our hats are off to everyone who tweets to raise AWAREness around vision loss and other disabilities! [And don't forget to follow us on Twitter.](#)

NEW ONLINE EDUCATION COURSE

VisionAWARE's [AWARE Online Education Center](#) is proud to announce a new course: [Environmental Assessment and Modification](#). Once registered, you may work at a time and pace that's convenient for you. You'll have 30 days to complete the course once you start. After completion, you'll receive a Certificate of Completion for **15 contact hours**. The fee for this

course is \$100.

What you will learn:

- Definitions of environmental assessment and environmental modification
- The role of vision in exploring and interpreting the environment
- Lighting
- Color and contrast
- Distance and time factors
- Signage and lettering
- Principles of universal design
- Assessment checklists and materials

[**Register Today!**](#)

February is Macular Degeneration Month

Lylas G. Mogk, MD is the founding director of the Visual Rehabilitation and Research Center of Michigan, part of [Henry Ford Eye Care Services](#) and co-author (with her daughter Marja Mogk, Ph.D.) of [Macular Degeneration: The Complete Guide to Saving and Maximizing Your Sight with low vision optometrist](#). Dr. Mogk also provides us with a concise breakdown of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), [which you can read by selecting this link](#). Here are some additional AMD resources:



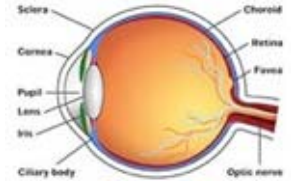
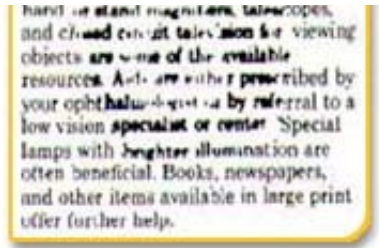
- "AMD is currently understood to be caused by a combination of individual factors and environmental exposures." Learn more about what causes AMD [by selecting this link](#).
- Blurred or "fuzzy" vision; a blank, blurred, gray, or "blind" spot in the center of vision; straight lines, such as sentences on a page, appear wavy or distorted; difficulty reading or seeing details in low light levels. These are some of the symptoms of AMD. [Select this link, or the picture to the right, to learn more.](#)
- "Your relative or friend with AMD may not be able to see your eyes, but still makes eye contact because they can see at least the outline of your face and knows where your eyes are." [Learn more about how AMD affects vision by selecting this link.](#)
- **What is the difference between wet and dry AMD?** [Select this link to learn all about it.](#) And what treatments are available for the two? [Select this link to find out about treatments for wet AMD](#), and [this one to find out about treatments for dry AMD](#).
- VisionAWARE has compiled a **comprehensive list of macular degeneration information and resources**, which you can peruse by [selecting this link](#).

Low vision optical aids help improve vision for people with macular degeneration. Many different types of magnifying devices are available. Spectacles,

- The National Eye Institute sponsored a major clinical trial called the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS). AREDS was tasked with learning more about the **history of, and risk factors for, AMD and cataract**, and to evaluate the **effect of high doses of antioxidants and zinc** on the progression of AMD and cataract. [Learn more about AREDS by selecting this link.](#)

- **Want to learn about clinical trials for AMD?** [Select this link to learn about the various types](#), and for a link to a searchable list of all current clinical trials related to AMD.

- Finally, don't forget that VisionAWARE offers **an online educational course on the Eye and Vision**, which tackles issues like how widespread vision problems are, and what are considered normal vision changes that come with aging.

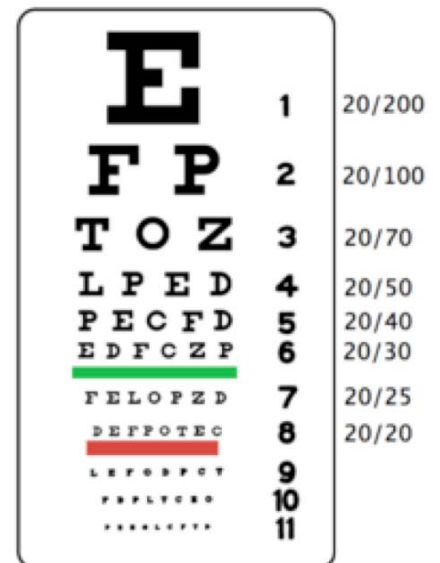


February is also Low Vision Awareness Month

Read & share our interview with low vision optometrist (and banjo player) Benjamin M. Freed, OD. Dr. Freed currently serves as a faculty member at the SUNY College of Optometry in Manhattan, where he conducts the College's Homebound Eye Care Program. The program provides high-quality eye care for people who are confined to their homes in Manhattan and Queens. Here are some more resources to use and share in observance of Low Vision Awareness month:



- What's the difference between light perception and light projection? Legal blindness and total blindness? Learn more low vision terminology [by selecting this link.](#)
- If an individual has one or more eye disorders, such as **glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, or diabetic retinopathy**, it's important to have a low vision examination to determine whether special low vision optical devices, better lighting, or other types of training can help the person with low vision to use his or her functional vision more effectively. [Select this link, or the picture to the right, to learn more.](#)
- Should you determine, based on your eye examination, that you need low vision optical devices, our [online section on Using Low Vision Optical Devices](#) is a great primer for getting started and selecting the devices that best suit your needs.
- VisionAWARE also offers **an online educational course on Low Vision and Optical Devices**, which will expand your knowledge on the fundamentals of low vision.



- Finally, VisionAWARE illustrates a wide array of low vision optical devices like **Acetate filters, absorptive sunglasses and closed circuit televisions** (pictured below). [Select this link to learn all about them.](#)



New Articles and Resources

- [ECO: On Blindness and the Arts](#): Provides research resources, information, and a gallery about blindness in the arts.
- [Blind Artists Society](#): An online resource and support group for artists with visual impairments, their family members, caregivers, and eye care providers.
- [Lighthouse of Collier, Inc.](#): Promotes the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of programs and services that foster independence and enhance the quality of life for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and their caregivers.
- [U.S. Blind Tandem Cycling Connection](#): Endeavors to increase the participation of individuals who are visually impaired or blind in the sport of tandem cycling.
- [OttLite Technology](#): Provides full spectrum lighting and natural daylight reading lamps that provide a balance of contrast and brightness and minimize glare, distortion, and fatigue.
- [InfoEyes](#): A question and answer service for people with visual impairments or other print limitations.
- [Southeastern Guide Dogs](#): Their Paws for Patriots Program provides guide dogs to blinded soldiers and places therapy dogs at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.
- [TravelEyes](#): Provides holidays for both blind/visually impaired and sighted travellers, journeying together in a spirit of mutual independence. Destinations include Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Americas, and vary from the unique and exploratory to relaxing sunshine breaks.

- [Helen Keller International](#): Among the oldest international nonprofit organizations devoted to preventing blindness and reducing malnutrition in the world.

Meeting the Challenge

We're in the final stretch of the first phase of the Challenge Grant. **February 26 is your last day to have your donation matched 150%!**

Our goal is to raise \$167,000, and every \$1.00 gift is matched with \$1.50 from the Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation. [So tell your friends or Donate Now to help us reach that goal!](#)

About Us

Associates for World Action in Rehabilitation & Education (AWARE) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit social service organization. [VisionAWARE](#) is a "Self-Help for Vision Loss" web site that includes Questions & Answers on a wide range of topics, including eye diseases and disorders, home management, home modification, reading and writing, personal care and grooming, recreational activities, crafts, braille, computers and technology, and helpful services and resources.

For more information, [e-mail Maureen A. Duffy, Editorial Director, or Anne Yeadon, Executive Director](#)

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