

# Are You AWARE?

Newsletter

[www.VisionAWARE.org](http://www.VisionAWARE.org)Don't let vision loss keep you in the dark. **Become AWARE.**

## WHAT'S NEW AT VISIONAWARE.ORG?

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### VisionAWARE Highlights

#### Featured Content:

**[My Story - Pratik Patel's Passion for Knowledge](#)**: Pratik is Director of Information Technology Access for the City University of New York and member of the Governor's Advisory Council to the New York State Department of Education. He is also the owner of Patel EZFire Enterprises LLC, which consults on a variety of technology projects, including accessibility to web sites for people with disabilities, business development, nonprofit management, and training and development.

Pratik (right) poses with the "Blues Brothers" during a student exercise at the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD)



**[A Coma and Then Blindness - the Story of Jeff Pledger](#)**: Jeff Pledger, a Senior Financial Analyst with Verizon, lives in Maryland with his wife, Suzanne, and daughter Caroline. As President of Verizon's Disabilities Issues Awareness Leaders (DIAL), he's frequently on the road advocating for employees with disabilities in Verizon's workforce. A humorous, fast-straight talker and a self-proclaimed "gentleman," he's a man who's ready and waiting for his next "never say quit" life challenge!



### NEW ONLINE EDUCATION COURSES

Enroll in our new **[AWARE Online Education Center](#)**. Courses generally take 2–3 hours but 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 4 contact hours. Fees vary from \$35 to \$75 per course.

**Prerequisite knowledge level:** All are beginner-level/entry-level courses. No prior knowledge is required.

Quotes from prior course participants:

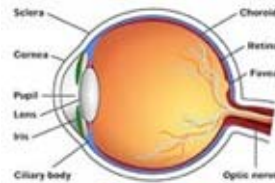
*I enjoyed the easy-to-read-and-understand format and the clear examples that were used.*

*The course covered a wide range of issues that opened the door for deeper investigation. This is a class I would recommend to all friends and family members of the visually impaired.*

**See Our Featured Courses and Register Today!**

**The Eye and Vision**

- » How widespread are vision problems?
- » The eye and how it works
- » Normal vision changes that occur as we get older
- » The four major eye diseases: cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy



**Low Vision and Optical Devices**

- » A definition of low vision
- » The difference between low vision and legal blindness
- » What happens during a low vision evaluation?
- » Low vision optical and non-optical devices



**Vision Rehabilitation Services and Coping with Vision Loss**

- » The benefits of life experience: How adults learn best
- » An overview of vision rehabilitation: What it is, what it does, and how to locate services
- » Types of rehabilitation professionals: Low vision therapists; orientation & mobility



**How to Cope with Daily Living Tasks**

- » Pouring liquids
- » Telephone adaptations
- » Medication organizers
- » Marking & labeling
- » Telling time



specialists; vision rehabilitation therapists

» Coping with vision loss: Locate support groups and self-help resources

» Money identification & organization

## January is Glaucoma Awareness and World Braille Day Month

And here are some great ways to honor them:

- Read [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.
- Learn the [difference between a vision screening and a full eye examination](#).
- Learn about the [components of a comprehensive low vision examination](#)
- For **World Braille Day** and Louis Braille's birthday (January 4), learn more [about braille and learning braille as an adult](#).



## Meeting the Challenge

Your generous support in 2009 helped VisionAWARE get closer to ***Meeting the Challenge*** — so far, we've raised over \$30,000! We thank you for help in 2009 and look forward to a strong showing in 2010. So tell your friends, **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 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](#), AWARE's Editorial Director.

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