Dancing Through Life

Kadence Wood’s interests are similar to most 14-year-old girls. She loves to dance, draw and watch movies. Unlike most teenaged girls, however, Kadence has a rare disorder that causes her optic nerves to deteriorate.

Kadence received a Type 1 Diabetes diagnosis at age 8, but Kadence and her mother Kimberly didn’t know at the time that her diabetes was a symptom of the same disorder that would eventually affect her sight. Over the past year and a half, Kimberly noticed Kadence holding the phone close to her face and mixing up her colors. After visiting numerous clinics in search of answers, Kadence landed at Dean McGee Eye Institute, where the doctors diagnosed her with Wolfram syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that causes childhood-onset diabetes, optic atrophy, and deafness, among other potential health problems.

The diagnosis was alarming to Kimberly, and she expected that Kadence would have to forgo her driver’s license and possibly shorten her school days. That was before the doctors at Dean McGee referred Kadence to NewView Oklahoma’s Low Vision Center in Tulsa.

The optometrist and specialists at NewView prescribed a number of vision modifications, including red-lensed glasses and telescope lenses, all with the hope of returning Kadence to life as a normal teenager. Now, with the help of these corrective lenses, Kadence can do the things she loves to do again.

“With her glasses, Kadence will be legally able to drive and attend school full-time. None of this could have happened without NewView,” Kadence’s mother Kimberly said.

Kimberly was happy to learn that, after these small modifications, Kadence could read road signs without trouble. And she could even see details again when watching movies, thanks to the movie glasses NewView provided—and a little help from her younger brother, Braden, who describes colors and details to Kadence when needed.

“It’s been a miraculous thing,” Kimberly continued. “She’s been able to get back to normal life.”

And that normal life? For Kadence, it means involvement with her local Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter, dancing in the hallways before her eye appointments, creating artistic pencil sketches, and living her life to the fullest.

For more information on our services for children, visit NVOklahoma.org or call (855) 811-9699 to speak with one of our low-vision specialists.
Celebration at Tulsa Low Vision Center

On June 13th, NewView hosted a ribbon cutting and open house at our newly renovated Low Vision Center at Tulsa’s Legacy Plaza. We are excited to share this space with Hearts for Hearing, whose mission and services complement those of NewView.

The CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber and the president of the Assistance League spoke at the VIP event and ribbon cutting, alongside NewView and Hearts for Hearing CEOs, Lauren Branch and Joanna T. Smith. We were thrilled to host many members of the Tulsa community throughout the evening and provide tours of our state-of-the-art facility.

The Tulsa Low Vision Center provides additional space to serve our Tulsa-area clients in two low vision exam lanes, a dedicated pediatric therapy room, and an adaptive teaching kitchen and is located at 5350 E. 31st Street, #302.

To tour our Tulsa Low Vision Center, contact Sarah Frey at Sfrey@newviewoklahoma.org.

NewView Travels to D.C.

Six NewView senior staff and employees attended the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) 2019 Symposium in Washington, D.C., alongside NewView president and CEO Lauren Branch. They spent a full day at the U.S. Capitol Building speaking with Oklahoma’s elected officials about advocacy and employment for people who are blind and visually impaired and met in person with Congressmen Cole, Mullin, Hern and Congresswoman Horn.

NewView employees Ronita Jones and Karen Cole were recognized as NIB Employees of the Year during the annual awards banquet on May 1st.

As an NIB affiliated agency and Ability One partner and as the leading employer of Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired, NewView is committed to helping people live independent lives through meaningful employment.

Congratulations to Ronita and Karen, and thank you to all the elected officials and staff who met with us!
Eighteen Graduate from Keys to Work

From June 2-15, eighteen young adults who are blind or visually impaired learned an array of valuable independence skills at our Keys to Work Transitions Institute in Oklahoma City. Participants stayed at the Staybridge Suites hotel for the entire two-week program, where they had the opportunity to practice independent living skills and receive training in the areas of assistive technology, orientation and mobility, cooking, and more.

As a part of the job-readiness component of the program, participants were required to schedule and attend mock job interviews with members of the business community, shop for interview outfits, and prepare their resumes.

One highlight of the program was the volunteering day on Monday, June 10. All participants traveled to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to prepare meals for children who typically receive free meals during the school year but may experience food insecurity in the summer months. Our Keys to Work participants prepared over 5,000 meals in one day!

This year’s Keys to Work program differed from previous years, in that each individual was entirely responsible for his or her schedule for the two weeks. This allowed participants to gain new levels of independence as they took full responsibility for their own schedules and appointments. Many young adults ordered Ubers or Lyfts for the first time, and all participants had the opportunity to cook a side dish for a community meal.

On Friday, June 14, the Keys to Work participants attended a graduation ceremony and celebratory dinner at NewView’s community room in the new Oklahoma City Low Vision Center. Congratulations to all 2019 graduates!

To learn more about our Keys to Work program, visit nvoklahoma.org/community-programs/keys-to-work.

To find out how you can help support Keys to Work in 2020 either through volunteerism, donations or sponsorships, please contact Sarah Frey at Sfrey@newviewoklahoma.org.
Upcoming Activities and Events

**OWL Camp Tulsa (ages 15-18)**

**July 19-22, 2019**
NewView/Globe Life Lodge, Lake Tenkiller

OWL (Oklahomans Without Limits) Camp is NewView Oklahoma’s free summer camp for kids ages 8-18 who are blind and visually impaired. Camp activities are carefully designed to encourage collaboration, improve confidence, and challenge societal and self-imposed limits through a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.

**NewView Open House**

**August 27, 2019**
NewView OKC Low Vision Center
4301 North Classen Blvd.

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an open house at our newly renovated OKC low vision center and offices. Guests will have the chance to tour our state-of-the-art facility and learn about the products and services NewView offers.

This event is free and open to the public!

**Eyes Just Talking**

**July 24, 2019**
NewView Headquarters
501 North Douglas Ave.

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**August 28, 2019**
TBD

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**September 25, 2019**
NewView OKC Low Vision Center
4301 North Classen Blvd.

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**October 23, 2019**
Halloween Party
NewView Headquarters
501 North Douglas Ave.

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Eyes Just Talking is a peer-run activities group for visually impaired and blind individuals as well as their families and friends in the Oklahoma City metro area. Come enjoy refreshments, topic discussions, camaraderie, and exchange information and resources.

If you have any questions, please contact Katy Ng at kng@newviewoklahoma.org

**Envision the Future Tulsa Luncheon**

**October 2, 2019**
DoubleTree by Hilton in Downtown Tulsa

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

More than 58,700 Oklahomans are affected by significant, uncorrectable vision loss. Please join us at our Tulsa ENVISION THE FUTURE luncheon to learn how you can support our life-changing programs.

Luncheon is hosted by co-chairs Stuart Sullivan and Kirk Hayes.

To RSVP or if you are interested in hosting a table or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Tiffany Henley at thenley@newviewoklahoma.org or by phone at 918-933-4075.

**VITAL Monthly Meetings (September – May only)**

**September 18, 2019**
NewView OKC Low Vision Center
4301 North Classen Blvd.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

VITAL gives social support to vision-impaired servicemen, women and their families by providing opportunities to build community, share stories, and access helpful resources. The VITAL group includes men and women who have served in every major war since World War II. Attendees enjoy a catered meal and guest speakers, and the group takes quarterly outings to military bases, museums and other venues.

Email info@newviewoklahoma.org for more information.
Summer Eye Safety

By Byron Bonner, O.D.
Vision Rehabilitation Optometrist
OKC Low Vision Center

The summer months are upon us, and that means that the potential for eye injuries increases. Children play outside more often in summer, and adults take on more home projects and yard work. The majority of eye injuries actually occur in or around the home, and a large percentage of those injuries come from home repairs, simple yard work, cooking and cleaning, or sports and recreational activities. Since home projects and outdoor activities are common in the summer, it’s important to think about how to properly protect your eyes.

There’s one simple solution: wear eye protection during any activity that may result in any projectile or chemical invading the eye. It’s said that 90% of eye injuries can be avoided with proper safety measures and eye protection. Protective devices include ANSI-approved safety glasses, face shields, goggles and welding helmets. When choosing a safety device, opt for one that’s made of impact-resistant material like polycarbonate. And when dealing with chemicals, it’s safest to shield your entire face. If that’s not an option, goggles are a safer choice than glasses, as they seal around the eyes and offer more complete protection from fumes and chemicals.

And let’s not forget about protection from UV rays! Despite warnings, many people look directly at the sun or wear goggles with the wrong tint while skiing, but sun exposure is just as dangerous as any other eye threat. It’s essential to wear the appropriate UV-protective goggles or sunglasses when participating in outdoor activities.

Further, if you are a person who only has one eye, or if one eye functions far better than the other, you should wear protective eye wear all the time. Even with 20/20 vision, a person with one functioning eye should always have a protective barrier on. There is no room for error, because if something happens to the better eye, there will be a drastic change in your daily activities.

Have a safe and fun summer, and don’t forget to protect your eyes!

Find out more helpful tips at NVOklahoma.org/rehabilitation.

Stay at the Lodge!

Whether you’re planning your next business retreat, friends’ weekend or family reunion, the NewView/Globe Life Lodge is the perfect destination for gatherings of all kinds.

Situated on beautiful Lake Tenkiller, the Lodge offers private dock access, tennis court and game room, putting green, private outdoor space with grill, a large chefs kitchen and enough space to accommodate up to 22 guests. The main living area is spacious and is ideal for holding large business meetings or simply relaxing.

Don’t wait to book this gorgeous property for your next gathering! To learn more about the Lodge, visit nvoklahoma.org/lodge. And to reserve the Lodge today, contact Margaret Godsy at mgodsy@newviewoklahoma.org.

Thank you to the generosity of Globe Life for donating the Lodge to NewView in January.
Why I Give

Some of NewView’s best work happens when members of the business community connect with members of the community who are visually impaired. And often, one connection is all it takes to form a bond that lasts for years. That’s exactly what happened with Doug VanMeter, who was first exposed to NewView’s mission about 5 years ago.

After hearing about NewView from a friend and meeting president and CEO Lauren Branch, VanMeter toured the manufacturing facility in OKC to see NewView employees in action. What struck him about the tour was how inspiring it was to see individuals with visual impairments working in a happy environment. Like so many sighted people, VanMeter had never given much thought to how difficult it may be for a person who is blind or visually impaired to find a job.

During his tour, VanMeter says he saw firsthand how NewView connects the dots for people who are visually impaired, offering employment, clinical services, and community programs. “NewView offers jobs that are purposeful and meaningful,” VanMeter said. “I saw how beneficial and how impactful NewView is for the visually impaired community.”

One specific example of NewView’s positive impact, he mentioned, was seeing employees produce hoses to fight the wildfires in California.

Beyond his financial and community support for NewView, VanMeter provides professional assistance for NewView as a part of his role as partner at BKD CPAs and Advisors. Several of his employees have also volunteered at our summer OWL Camps, which he says was “a very positive experience for BKD.”

When asked about VanMeter’s impact, NewView president and CEO Lauren Branch said, “Doug is extremely generous, and he has a heart for what we do.” We are so deeply grateful for Doug VanMeter’s support and involvement with NewView’s mission, and we are excited to see the connection deepen over time.

To tour the NewView manufacturing facility in OKC, email Mark Ivy at Mivy@newviewoklahoma.org.

Gifts in Action

NewView works diligently year-round to increase literacy for blind youth in Northwest Oklahoma. NewView’s certified staff provides specialized therapy services, including Braille instruction and the translation of books and learning materials into Braille, for blind students in seven schools in Northwest Oklahoma. To meet the academic needs of these students, NewView needed to be able to produce more learning materials in Braille. However, our production capacity was limited due to the lack of financial resources to purchase the equipment.

The Cherokee Strip Foundation, located in Enid, helped NewView meet the need. The foundation awarded NewView a grant of $6,775 to purchase a Braille embosser and software, a noise blocking acoustic hood for the Braille embosser, and a portable Braille writer to serve blind students in Northwest Oklahoma.

NewView is grateful to the Cherokee Strip Foundation and other generous donors for their continuing support of our low vision rehabilitation services. We extend our sincere thanks to the following organizations who have recently made gifts to support our life-changing services and programs:

- Maxine and Jack Zarrow Foundation
- Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation
- Inasmuch Foundation

To learn about giving opportunities, contact Sarah Frey at Sfrey@newviewoklahoma.org.