



# Low Vision Resources To Better Serve Your Patrons

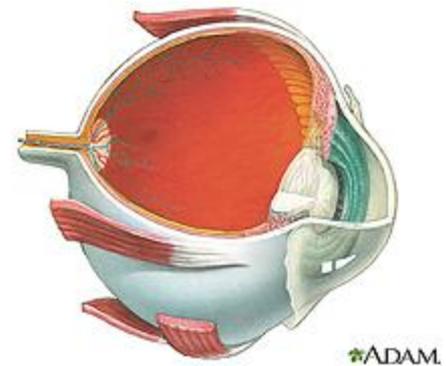
The Talking Book Program's  
Disability Information & Referral  
Center (DIRC) is here to help!

# Today's Objectives

- A brief primer on eye diseases
- Learn about national, state, and local resources related to low vision and blindness
- Touch on technology – Mark your calendars for an assistive technology webinar in 2015!
- Etiquette tips
- Become informed about the many ways the DIRC can help both librarians and patrons.

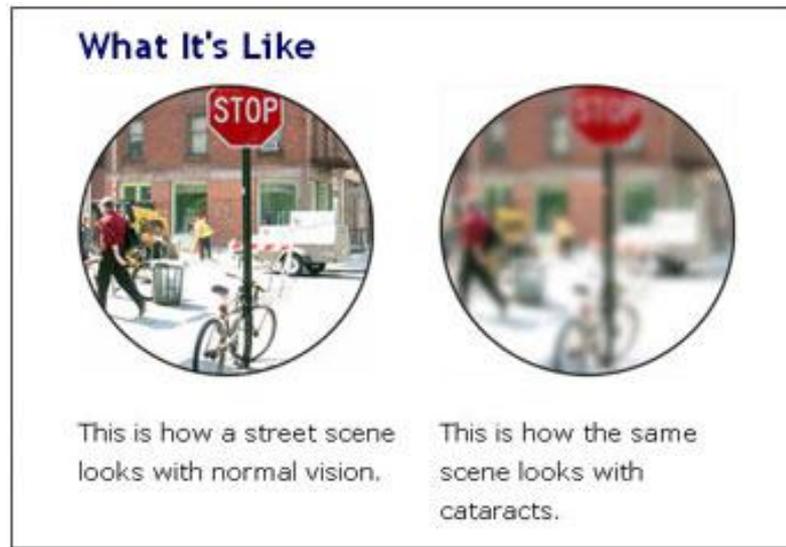
# Eye Diseases

- Cataracts
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma
- Macular Degeneration
- Retinitis Pigmentosa



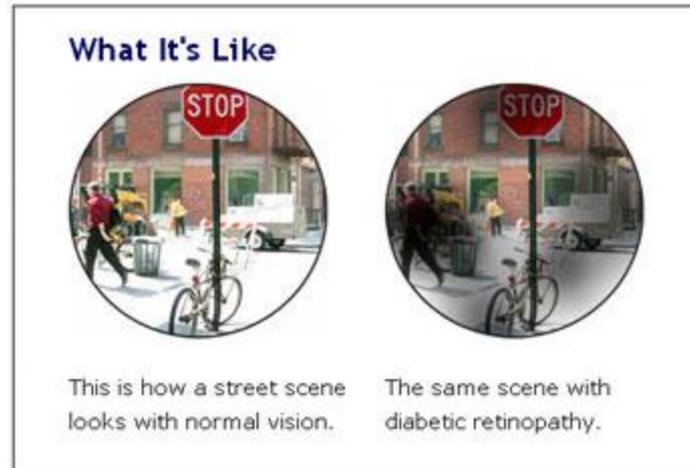
# Cataract

- Clouding of the lens of the eye
- Usually, but not always, age-related
- Relatively minor surgery can eradicate cataracts



# Diabetic Retinopathy

- Serious complication of diabetes
- Leading cause of blindness in the U.S.
- Weight control, proper diet, exercise, and medication can reduce the risk



# Glaucoma

- Caused by excessive fluid pressure within the eyeball
- Treatment can include oral medications, eye drops, and surgery



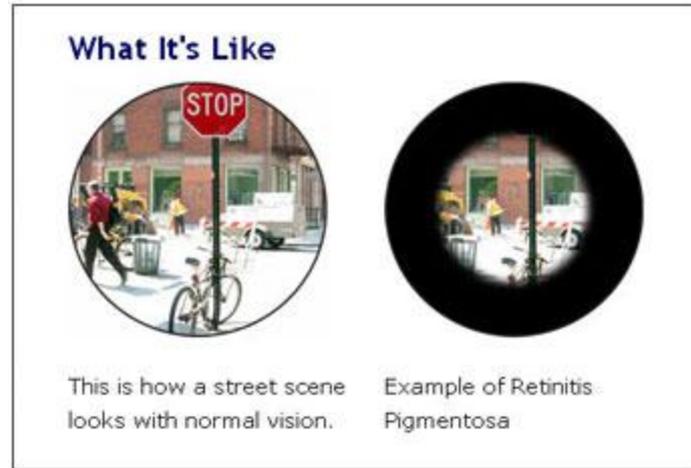
# Macular Degeneration

- Gradually destroys central vision
- Usually is age-related
- No smoking, good nutrition, and exercise can reduce the risk



# Retinitis Pigmentosa

- Hereditary and progressive
- Usually diagnosed in childhood
- No treatment or cure





# National Resources

- American Foundation for the Blind (AFB):  
[www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)
- National Federation of the Blind (NFB):  
[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)
- American Council of the Blind (ACB):  
[www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)
- Lighthouse International: [www.lighthouse.org](http://www.lighthouse.org)
- Medline Plus: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/)

# AFB

- Center on Vision Loss in Dallas
- AccessWorld
- Journal of Vision Impairment and Blindness
- Family sites

Braille Bug

Career Connect

Vision Aware



# NFB

- Newslines
- Free cane program
- White Cane Safety Day /  
Blind Americans Equality Day
- International Braille and  
Technology Center
- State and local groups
- Divisions and Committees



# ACB

- State and local chapters
- Library Users of America affiliate
- Braille Revival League affiliate
- Diabetics In Action



# Lighthouse

- Provides assistance for New York residents
- Web site has a wealth of information
- Publications and tip sheets available for download



**LIGHTHOUSE**<sup>®</sup>  
INTERNATIONAL

Maximizing Your Vision for Life

# Medline Plus

- A service of the National Library of Medicine
- Health topics A – Z
- Comprehensive information on drugs and supplements
- Videos, quizzes, and games



# State Resources

- Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) – Division for Blind Services (DBS): [www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs](http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs)
- Department of State Health Services (DSHS): [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)
- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI): [www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu)

# DBS

- Independent living program
- Vocational rehab program
- Blind children's program
- Transition assistance
- Offices throughout the state
- Criss Cole Rehab in Austin – intensive training for adults, onsite housing available



# Department of State Health Services

- Audiovisual library: lending library of disability-related books and audiovisual materials: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/avlib/](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/avlib/)

888-963-7111 ext 7260 / 512-776-7260



# Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)

- For children and teens
- Offers on-campus housing
- Provides outreach and transition programs
- [www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu) / 800-872-7253 / 512-454-8631



# Local Resources

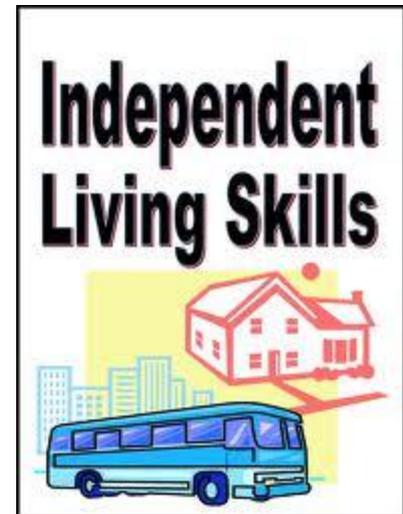
- Lighthouses for the Blind
- Independent Living Centers
- ACB and NFB groups
- Support Groups

# Lighthouses for the Blind

- Austin: [www.austinlighthouse.org](http://www.austinlighthouse.org)
- Dallas: [www.dallaslighthouse.org](http://www.dallaslighthouse.org)
- East Texas (Tyler): [www.etlb.org](http://www.etlb.org)
- El Paso: [www.lighthouse-elpaso.com](http://www.lighthouse-elpaso.com)
- Fort Worth: [www.lighthousefw.org](http://www.lighthousefw.org)
- Houston: [www.houstonlighthouse.org](http://www.houstonlighthouse.org)
- San Antonio: [www.salighthouse.org](http://www.salighthouse.org)
- South Texas (Corpus Christi): [www.stlb.net](http://www.stlb.net)

# Independent Living Centers

- Currently 27 centers in Texas
- Offer services for a variety of disabilities
- Provide I&R, Braille and technology classes, support groups, etc
- [www.txsilc.org](http://www.txsilc.org) / 512-371-7353



# ACB and NFB Groups

- Include state offices and local groups
- Both groups have particular areas of focus and often disagree on topics. Ex: accessibility of currency
- Both groups have yearly state conferences.



# Support Groups

- Some are connected to lighthouses, ILC's, and blind groups, while others are independent.
- Provide information and support at monthly meetings, and social/recreational activities
- Some offer yearly or bi-yearly low vision expos.





# Technology Types

- Low vision aids
- Video magnifiers
- Computer hardware and software
- Reading machines
- Digital audio book players and voice recorders
- Braille devices

# Low Vision Aids

- Talking or big number clocks / watches
- Big button telephones
- Tactile dots for labeling
- Talking thermometers



# Video Magnifiers

- Also called CCTV's
- Magnifies print
- Desktop and handheld (portable) models



# Computer Hardware and Software

- Screen enlarger
- Magnification software
- Speech software
- Voice recognition software



# Reading Machines

- Scans print and reads it aloud
- Usually expensive
- Most are desktop models



# Audio Book Players and Voice Recorders

- Talking Book Program has its own player
- Several of the commercial players are compatible
- Phone and tablet apps also available
- Recorders assist with organization



# Braille Devices

- Braille writers
- Notetakers
- Embossers



# Technology Sources

- National Manufacturers
- National catalog companies
- State / local distributors
- Low cost / free / funding sources

# National Manufacturers

- Dolphin: [www.yourdolphin.com](http://www.yourdolphin.com)
- Freedom Scientific: [www.freedomscientific.com](http://www.freedomscientific.com)
- HIMS: [www.hims-inc.com](http://www.hims-inc.com)
- Humanware: [www.humanware.com](http://www.humanware.com)
- Kurzweil: [www.kurzweiledu.com](http://www.kurzweiledu.com)
- Perkins: [www.perkinsproducts.org](http://www.perkinsproducts.org)
- Telesensory: [www.telesensory.com](http://www.telesensory.com)

# National Catalog Companies

- Enablemart: [www.enablemart.com](http://www.enablemart.com)
- Independent Living Aids:  
[www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com)
- LS&S: [www.lssproducts.com](http://www.lssproducts.com)
- Maxi Aids: [www.maxiaids.com](http://www.maxiaids.com)
- Magnifying Aids: [www.magnifyingaids.com](http://www.magnifyingaids.com)

# State / Local Distributors

- Audio Optical Systems of Texas:  
[www.kurzweilaustin.com](http://www.kurzweilaustin.com)
- Christal Vision: [www.christal-vision.com](http://www.christal-vision.com)
- HIMS: [www.hims-inc.com](http://www.hims-inc.com)
- Kewing: [www.kewing.com](http://www.kewing.com)
- Lighthouse of Houston:  
[www.houstonlighthouse.org](http://www.houstonlighthouse.org)
- Magnifiers & More / Northwest Hills Eye Care:  
<http://nwhillseyecare.pecaa-sites.com/>

# Low Cost / Free / Funding

- Downloadable low cost / free magnification and speech software programs
- Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services – will pay for small items, also provides vouchers for telephones through the STAP program
- Texas Assistive Technology Program (TATP) – “try before you buy” 6 week device loans
- Foundation Center – information on grants
- Other resources



# Etiquette

- Speak in a clear, normal tone of voice
- Offer your arm, shoulder or elbow
- Give clear directions
- Understand there are different levels and types of vision
- Do not flirt with a dog guide



# What the DIRC Can Provide

- Contact information for national, state, and local agencies and organizations
- Low vision catalogs
- In-house created guides and fact sheets
- City lists for major cities in Texas
- Technology resources, training, and funding information
- A small circulating collection of books and DVD's
- Mail applications for other vision-related services



# My Information

- Dina Abramson, DIRC Coordinator
- 512-463-2831 – direct number
- 800-252-9605 – TBP call center, toll free in Texas
- [dabramsn@tsl.texas.gov](mailto:dabramsn@tsl.texas.gov)
- Assistive Technology webinar on March 12, 2015!



**Thanks for listening! Have a great day!**