



**GREATER LONDON FUND FOR THE BLIND**

*—The Geranium – symbol of caring for people with a visual impairment—*

## **Greater London Fund for the Blind**

### ***Insight* Newsletter**

Autumn 2017

**Dear GLFB Supporter,**

Welcome to your Autumn edition of *Insight*.

I want to say *thank you* for making a difference. Your support is a lifeline for many people with sight loss in London.

It is only through your contributions that we can make a greater impact for a more inclusive future.

**Cass Edwards**  
CEO

#### **1. GLFB-funded community projects** **Spotlight on: BlindAid**

#### **What are BlindAid's Community Projects about?**

- Free classes offered in Information Technology (IT), cooking and healthy eating, keep fit, yoga, art and craft, and creative writing

## **Where are they based?**

- At three centres in Southwark, Kensington and Chelsea and Tower Hamlets with a fourth project set to open in 2018

## **Who attends?**

- Blind and partially sighted adults from the 12 inner London boroughs

## **What are the main benefits?**

- To learn new skills and/or to refresh old ones
- To meet people and make new friends
- To promote confidence, independence and wellbeing.

**Quote from Clarissa Ferguson, BlindAid Community Project Leader:** “When people first join they can be very shy and quiet, but by the fourth or fifth class you can see personalities and friendships happening. You can see the effect these community projects have on people every day”

## **2. Case study**

### **Living with limited vision: Michael's story**

Michael was born six weeks prematurely and was placed in an incubator to keep him alive. But, there was an excessive amount of oxygen, which resulted in him becoming partially sighted. He was diagnosed with Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP).

Although the vision in his right eye was very poor, his left eye was always “the good eye”, which enabled him to manage on his own.

However, aged 17 years, Michael’s retina detached in his right eye. After two unsuccessful operations, he was sent to a rehabilitation centre for 18 months to learn to adjust to his new life with limited vision and to become independent again.

His right eye was already bad, but it is getting worse now. In addition to the problems connected to premature birth, Michael was diagnosed with glaucoma 20 years ago and he has to frequently apply eye drops and have regular check-ups.

Michael used to work for a local authority making furniture. During his time there, he went to college to study to become a supervisor. After successfully completing the course, he progressed in his career and became a warehouse supervisor overseeing a team of 20 staff.

Unfortunately, following an economic downturn, Michael was made redundant. Although he had over 35 years’ experience to offer, Michael felt that the combination of his sight loss and advancing age meant that it would

take a lot to convince a new employer of his worth to their company.

However, within a few months, Michael's prospects changed completely when his application to work with CLARITY, a GLFB-funded member charity, succeeded. Michael says that he was in a bad place emotionally after the shock of the redundancy but he is very happy now at CLARITY and really enjoys what he does. It has given him much more confidence and he is grateful for the opportunity.

In addition to his work at CLARITY, Michael volunteers at a charity that helps people with sight loss lead independent lives. He offers support to patients who are newly diagnosed with eye conditions. He interacts with people and talks with them about the available support within their borough and across the country. Michael says that some of the people are very lonely, so they really appreciate a chat. He won the Volunteer of the Year Award in recognition of his efforts.

### **3. Innovative online housing guide launched**

Searching for a new home is about to become a more positive experience for visually impaired people.

An innovative online housing guide developed with funding from Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) has

brought together a raft of information and advice in one easy-to-access location.

The housing guide for people with sight loss covers a wide range of topics including support for living independently, the moving process, living in a shared house and assistive technology.

For further information on the guide, please visit TPT's website [www.pocklington-trust.org.uk](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk)

#### **4. Help us build a brighter future**

As a loyal supporter of the GLFB you have helped us achieve so much over the years, and together we've helped improve the lives of blind and partially sighted people of all ages in the community.

Were you aware that it was a gift from our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson that made the establishment of the GLFB possible in the first place?

Although some of the charity's supporters may have passed on, just like Sir Arthur, their foresight in leaving a legacy is making a real and lasting difference to visually impaired children and adults today. This is because gifts left in Wills are helping to provide services that reduce the isolation sight loss so often brings, enabling people to live much happier, more fulfilling and independent

lives. Isn't that the kind of legacy we would all love to leave? Please accept our deepest thanks if you have already included the GLFB in your Will.

## **Order your free legacy booklet**

If you are considering leaving a gift to help safeguard the GLFB's vital work in the decades ahead and would like more information, we would be happy to send you a personal copy of our legacy information booklet.

If you would like the booklet, please call us on telephone number 020 7620 4918 or use the form attached to the cover letter to indicate you would like a copy and send your request to us in the Freepost envelope.

The information pack contains practical guidance on the different types of gifts you can choose to leave and explains how it will be put to good use to improve the lives of visually impaired people. It also includes a section that addresses some frequently asked questions.

## **5. Contact us**

It's always a pleasure to hear from you! Get in touch with our Supporter Care team in the following ways:

Call us: **020 7620 2066**

Email us: **fundraising@glfb.org.uk**

Visit us online: [www.glfb.org.uk](http://www.glfb.org.uk)

Follow us: [twitter.com/londonblind](https://twitter.com/londonblind),  
[facebook.com/londonblind](https://facebook.com/londonblind)

Postal address:

Greater London Fund for the Blind

Sir John Mills House

12 Whitehorse Mews

37 Westminster Bridge Road

London SE1 7QD

End of Newsletter.