

Spectrios Institute for Low Vision

# *The Brightside*

2018, Volume 3



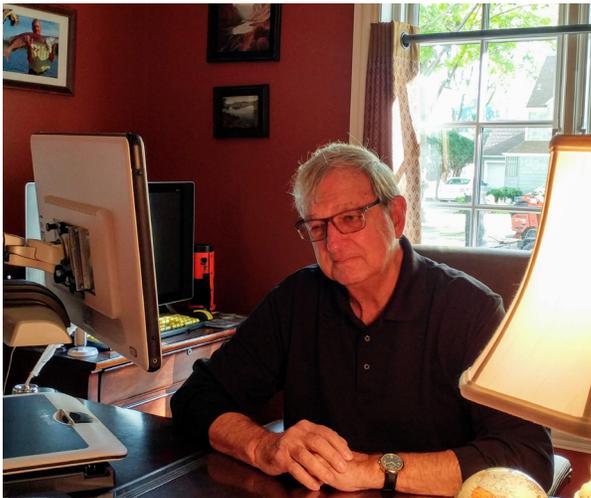
***“When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.”***

Maya Angelou

## **Wayne's World, A Blend Of Technology & Traditional**

In March 2003, Wayne Thomas retired after 40 years at Harris Bank, where he was a senior manager. After cataract surgery in October 2008, he recognized that his left eye was having a problem. He went back to his ophthalmologist and was diagnosed with wet macular degeneration. His first visit with a retinal specialist was mentally painful. He left the office with the understanding that he would develop macular degeneration in both eyes, and eventually become legally blind.

**How did you feel when you were first told you had permanent vision loss?**



Wayne Thomas discussing the initial shock of his diagnosis

***“I am a strong person. This was the first time in my life I couldn’t handle it.”***

In 2010, my right eye hemorrhaged. They had to detach the retina, remove the blood and reattach it. Over the next nine months, I had three more surgeries. For two of the three surgeries I had to be face down for two weeks. In the end, the doctor had to laser my retina down so I wouldn’t lose my eye. It was at that point I hit rock bottom. I was in a dark place. I actually suffered a physical reaction. I ended up in the emergency room because I thought I was having a heart attack.

**Your Support Keeps Our Programs Running.**

*Please read Wayne's inspiring story and donate to our 2018 Annual Appeal Today!*

Continued on page 4

# Table of contents:

Annual Appeal	Cover Story
New Faces	Page 3
Annual Appeal, cont.	Page 4-7
Pardon Our Dust!	Page 8
Golf Wrap Up	Page 9
In Honor/ Memory	Page 10
The Last Word	Page 11



## *Consider an IRA Rollover Gift!*

If you currently take the standard deduction, you will no longer be able to receive an additional tax break for contributions to qualified charities. However...if you are at least 70 ½ and have an IRA, you can use a special section in the tax code that allows for a qualified charitable distribution, or QCD to donate up to \$100,000 annually to a public charity without counting the amount as taxable income!

The limit is per taxpayer, which means married couples can each give up to \$100,000 from their account. **In order to receive this significant tax break, the distribution must be made payable directly to the charity.** Since the distribution is not included in your taxable income, there's no need to withhold income tax!

## ≈Support Group≈

### **Every Second Thursday of the month!**

**Call in Support Group. Mr. Conference, 712-432-5610 code 660.**

Topic: Getting ready for the holidays. Learn coping strategies and get some fresh holiday ideas. *Topics Vary.*



# ~ New Staff, Shelly Marello ~



Spectrios Institute's new Access Technology Coordinator, Shelly Marello.

**Shelly McIntyre Marello** is the new access technology coordinator at Spectrios Institute for Low Vision. In this position, she assists our patients by offering a range of helpful services, assistive and access technology training and goal driven guidance.

At the age of 9, Shelly was deemed legally blind after being diagnosed with Stargardts Macular Dystrophy, a retinal disease commonly compared to juvenile macular degeneration.

Shelly was born and raised in nearby Warrenville, Illinois. She graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School in 2003 and later received her B.A. in business administration from Loyola University Chicago in 2008.

After working as a senior level executive assistant in sales management and office management, Shelly began working for the Chicago Lighthouse, in Chicago. There she was the national sales manager for their VA supply chain department. It was there that Shelly found her true calling, helping others. Shelly is a wife, mother, and young professional. At Spectrios, Shelly strives to help patients grow personally and independently, learn realistic expectations and never be defined by disability.

If you have questions about Access Technology Training contact Patient Services:  
630-690-7115 ext 124



# Annual Appeal

Wayne's World, cont.

## **What did you grieve the most?**

It was hard to give up driving. I had to ask people to take me wherever I wanted to go. The lack of freedom was difficult. Every Thursday 18 guys from my church get together for lunch. We call ourselves ROMEOS, which stands for retired old men eating out. At first it was hard to ask someone to come and pick me up. I used to be the guy who picked up everyone else! But I have good friends. They don't mind coming to get me.

## **Did anyone give you any hope?**

There's no easy way to tell someone they are going to lose their vision. I am not critical of my doctors, they are fabulous doctors, but neither my ophthalmologist nor my retinal specialist gave me the slightest bit of hope. They had no recommendations on next steps or who I could talk to.

## **How did you end up at Spectrios?**

I started seeing a counselor. It was very expensive, and not helpful. He had no experience with vision issues and didn't understand the things I was faced with. After a few visits I stopped going. At that point I floundered. I didn't know where to turn. My brother-in-law's law partner was serving on the Board of Directors at Spectrios during that time. He was the one who suggested I make an appointment.

## **What was different about Spectrios?**

Dr. Williams gave me my first low vision exam. He was the person who really took the time to explain what wet macular degeneration was. I was happy because I had finally found a group of professionals in an organization who offered a variety of services for people with vision loss. I couldn't believe there were people on staff who had vision worse than mine—and they were accomplishing so much!

***“All I had to do was look around and I could see my vision loss wasn't the end of the world.”***

# Annual Appeal

Wayne's World, cont.



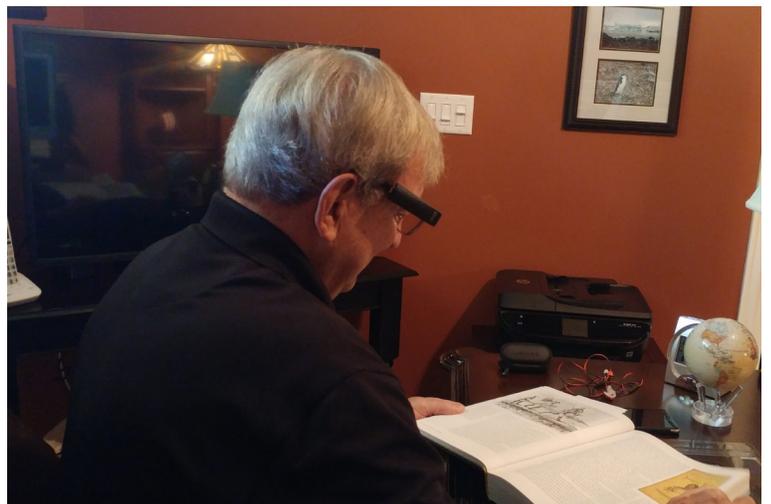
Wayne demonstrates how he uses binoculars to spot things at a distance

## What services and devices helped the most?

I wish I had known about Spectrios counseling services. Boy that would have helped! Having an occupational therapist come out to my house to set up my home office was right on the money. I didn't know there was anybody who could do that!

Before Spectrios, I had no idea what a CCTV was. It is my "go to" device. I keep it on most of the day. With my handheld magnifier and a flashlight I can do about 80% of the things that need to be done around the house. I also use a pair of binoculars to see things at a distance. My iPhone is set to use voice-over for texting and calling and I use my Orcam to read. With all of these different tools, I don't feel limited much at all.

Wayne recently purchased the Orcam MyEye 2.0 for sustained reading. The small, wireless device attaches to the temple of his glasses.



# Annual Appeal

Wayne's World, cont.

## What are you still able to do that would surprise people?

Believe it or not, I still play golf. I can see the ball, and after years of play, my swing is automatic. The only trouble is, I can't see where the ball goes. I have a good friend who acts as a spotter. With one eye that sees 20/200 I can shoot a better score than 70% of the golfers in this country. I also still enjoy fishing. My guide strings my rod and changes lures for me, but other than that I'm good to go. There's no reason to give up the things you enjoyed before you had vision loss. You just need to find ways to work around your limitations.

## What would you tell seniors who are afraid of technology?

I would suggest that rather than saying they can't learn it, they try it and use what they like. I try everything Spectrios has to offer. I have a list of 13 different tools, and some of them are simple to use. Technology is more than iPhones and iPads, its large button phones, handheld magnifiers and good lighting. Low tech items are equally important.

***"I would also tell them, "Don't wait!" Embrace technology early, when your vision is still good. Take advantage of the training Spectrios offers."***



Wayne uses a blend of high tech and low tech low vision aides in his home office where he spends about 75% of his time.

## Why should people support Spectrios Institute's mission and programs?

I recommend supporting Spectrios because of the professionals who work there. They clearly understand the complex issues of people with vision loss. I would add that patients of Spectrios need to educate their doctors. I have an appointment with my doctor later today. I plan to bring my Orcam to show him what it is and what it can do for someone with vision loss.

# Annual Appeal

Wayne's World, cont.

## Wayne's Toolbox of Technology

All of the items listed below are items in Wayne's home office that have improved his quality of life.

- CCTV (pictured below)
- Lighted, Hand Held Magnifier
- Computer with Large Monitor
- Large Screen TV
- iPhone
- Large Button Phone
- Talking Clock
- Monocular
- Binoculars
- Amazon Echo
- Ott Lite
- Small Flashlight
- Orcam MyEye2



Wayne and his wife Judy review the plans for the new Access Technology Center on his CCTV. Wayne and Judy provided seed money for the project, which will feature low vision training stations.

Wayne's home office was the inspiration for one of the stations, which will feature a blend of technology and paper.

### Your Donation Matters!

Help us reach our goal to raise \$100,000 by December 31st.

Spectrios Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that relies on donations to provide high quality services and programs.

On Average, each of our patients receive \$100.00 worth of low vision care not covered by Medicare or insurance. Your generosity helps us continue our mission and programs.

To make a donation, use the enclosed envelope, or visit our website and click DONATE NOW on our homepage.

[www.spectrios.org](http://www.spectrios.org)

# Pardon Our Dust!

## *Access Technology Renovation Update*

Thanks to a generous grant from Lions International, and seed money from Wayne and Judy Thomas and Charlie and Pam Smith, Spectrios Institute is revamping its Access Technology Center. The planning stages are almost complete. Next up, construction, followed by a Grand Opening in the first quarter of 2019.

With help from KDI Design, Inc, Geneva, and Architectural Planning Services, LTD, Wheaton, the newly designed space is open, modern and fresh. Don't worry- we didn't let fashion get in the way of function. From start to finish, every nook and cranny was planned to address the unique challenges someone with vision loss faces every day. From lighting fixtures to contrast, glare reduction and safety, each piece was scrutinized for functionality.

When we wrote our grant request, we asked ourselves what would make our Access Technology Center the best in the nation. One top priority was creating an environment that would help patients visualize different pieces of technology in their home or office. In order to make this happen, we created a flexible training center where items can be mixed and matched according to an individual's needs. There will be a kitchen training area, a conference space for webinars, a kid's tech/homework hangout and an area to practice with head-borne devices like IrisVision and Orcam MyEye. A small private room will be available for counseling.

The new Access Technology Center will be shared by occupational therapy, access technology, support groups and counseling. It will also be open to local businesses and organizations who wish to learn more about Spectrios Institute's mission, how to support someone with vision loss on the job, or provide staff training on technology, apps and conduct cutting edge research in low vision rehabilitation.

Leah Gerlach and Diane Levine spent time at The Merchandise Mart, testing out some of the proposed furniture and finishes.



# Golf Wrap Up

## 2018 Annual Golf Classic Sponsors



*Many thanks to the folks who helped make the 2018 Annual Golf Classic a success!*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our Condor \$10,000 sponsor, **Terrace Supply Company**, as well as our Double Eagle \$5,000 sponsors, **Northwestern Medicine and TC Wealth Partners!**



**Rain, Rain,  
Go Away!**  
In spite of a rainy morning, our  
golfers were in great spirits.



# ≈ In Honor & Memory ≈

A donation has been made in memory or honor of the following persons:  
(Name in bold print, donor name in regular print)

**Joan Copeland**

Mark & Traci Holsteen

**Mary E. Evans**

Jane Robertson

**Philip & James R. Gates**

Elizabeth Toombs

**Helen LaBarbera**

Pamela Scudder

**Maureen & Gary Lichtenheld**

James Cain

**Louise Smith**

Charles P. Smith

**Dorothy Troyer**

Barry & Georgianna Cobb, Denise Duzlak, Reba Harker, Janet Dowell, Mr. & Mrs. David Gieser, Mr. & Mrs. William Davis, Debra & Robert Gregorash, Karen & Herbert Brigham, Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Kincaid, Sidney & Needra Troyer, Joy Troyer, Lara Levine

**Robert Williams Sr.**

Illinois Retina Assoc., Gerald Topel, Gil Pearson, David Baczewski, Dale Kato

**George Wirth**

Geraldine Winston

**Ruth Zugar**

Ann Gorgola

**The following doctors from the Wheaton Eye Clinic  
made donations in memory of their patients:**

Dr. Anderson-Nelson, Dr. Andreoli, Dr. Brazis, Dr. Daily, Dr. Fenton, Dr. David Gieser, Dr. Jon Gieser, Dr. Stephen Gieser, Dr. Haag, Dr. Jin, Dr. Kaushal, Dr. Kietzman, Dr. Kipp, Dr. Lafayette, Dr. Lee, Dr. Mehaffey, Dr. Michelson, Dr. Pak, Dr. Park, Dr. Sacher, Dr. Sandor, Dr. Setlur, Dr. Sims, Dr. Sung, Dr. Voirin, Dr. Williams, Dr. Wingard

## Honoring Others

Donations in honor of friends, family members, and/or special occasions are a unique, thoughtful way to celebrate the ones you love.

To make a donation use the enclosed envelope, or go to our website and click **DONATE NOW** on the homepage.

## 2018 Gala Premiere Partners



WHEATON LIONS CLUB  
Serving the Sight and Hearing Impaired



# The Last Word

## Put a Little Love in Your Heart

I like to remind my mother when Lawrence Welk Shows from the past are being aired on PBS. She is a big fan and frankly, I enjoy watching the performers and the music which dates back to late 1950's. The dress, hair styles, songs, and dancing are very different from today. The people were very talented, seemed so happy and worked together to produce a show that ran 31 years. I liked the show as a child (a very, very young child) because it made me feel good.

For some of you reading this who don't know Lawrence Welk, I am referring to a popular TV show watched by your grandparents, or maybe great-grandparents! Yikes!

The most recently broadcasted rerun-show featured songs about "love" including a favorite song of mine composed by Jackie DeShannon, her brother Randy Myers and Jimmy Holiday. The song is called, "Put a Little Love in Your Heart." It begins: "Think of your fellow man, lend him a helping hand. Put a little love in your heart. You see it's getting late, oh, please don't hesitate. Put a little love in your heart."

As I listen, I think about how this applies to me. Is this my approach in life? Am I a sharing, generous, and a kind person? Do I care about others less fortunate? Do I reach out to those who need help when I can help? Can my example make a difference? Can I make the world a better place?

## With so many good causes over the holidays to support, how do you choose?

I hope you will add our mission that helps children and adults with vision loss to your giving list. We could really use your support because our program is popular and has been running 32 years! There are many exciting things happening at "The Deicke House of Hope" including the completion of our new high-tech Access Technology Center in 2019. The Spectrios Institute lends a helping hand to those in need, but even we need a helping hand, from generous folks like you to sustain our programs!

After a great performance, Lawrence Welk would often say "that's a Wunaful, Wunaful!" That's exactly how I feel about the people we serve and our supporters.

By the way, Jackie DeShannon made another song popular years ago that applies today. It's called "What the World Needs Now is Love, Sweet Love..."

Many blessings and happiness to you and your family over the Holidays!





## Make sure we have your email!

Our email blasts give you more patient stories, workshop news, & advances in low vision technology, in real time.



## Let's Be Friends!

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Share our stories, videos and events with your friends and family!

Spectrios Institute  
for Low Vision  
at Deicke House  
219 E. Cole Avenue  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
630-690-7115  
[www.spectrios.org](http://www.spectrios.org)



## Brick Campaign

Looking for a unique gift for the person who has everything?

Consider buying a commemorative brick! Single patio bricks are \$125.00 and include 14 characters/3 lines and are placed in our beautiful garden.

Double patio bricks are \$500.00, can include an image (cross, flower, heart, etc) and are placed in our front walkway.



**Spectrios Institute**  
is accredited by the National  
Accreditation Council for Blind  
and Low Vision Services