



## WEIGEL WILLIAMSON CENTER FOR VISUAL REHABILITATION

# Visionary

Making a difference through your generosity

WINTER 2009

## LOW VISION SUCCESS STORY

Lisa Spellman, Publications/Media Specialist, UNMC Public Relations



Mullin Using CCTV

Just three credits shy of realizing her lifelong dream, the unthinkable happened

to Harriet Mullin. A stroke in the optic nerve of her left eye left Mullin unable to see. Already struggling with the vision in her right eye, the result of a childhood injury, Mullin was devastated.

How would she finish the three-week summer art history class and graduate if she couldn't read the material, write the term paper or watch the films?

Fortunately for Mullin the experts at the Weigel Williamson Center had the answers.

"I was elated when my neuro-ophthalmologist told me about the Weigel Williamson Center and said they could help me learn coping strategies to handle my low vision problems," she said.

Mullin, who began pursuing her college degree after raising seven children, spent three months this summer working with Evy Katz, an occupational therapist at the Center.

"When I first met Harriet, she was so devastated by her vision loss," Katz said. "After our first session she was thrilled to learn how to read the newspaper using the powerful hand-held magnifier prescribed by Dr. John Shepherd, Director of the Center."

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## Lions Give Major Gift to Weigel Williamson

Lions Clubs of Nebraska and Iowa joined forces to support a cause significant to the Lion's organization worldwide—service to people with vision loss.

The result—a \$328,000 combined gift to the Weigel Williamson Center by the Lions Clubs and Foundations of Nebraska and Iowa and the Lions Clubs International Foundation.

This gift has allowed the Center to purchase the Dynavision 2000, a device used to evaluate and treat visual field loss in stroke patients, as well as outfit an exam room, provide support for medical services and fund marketing projects.

"We are so thankful to the Lions," Dr. Shepherd said.

"We wouldn't be able to provide our services without private donor support."



The Lions Clubs present a portion of their generous grant to the Center. Pictured are Dr. John Shepherd, Allen Darrell, Jim May, Dale Shenefelt, Roger Bublitz, Rick Meyers, Dave Stouffer

## Dear Friends,

May I express to you my gratitude and appreciation for helping to make our first full year of operation a great success. We more than doubled the number of patients that were being seen in the pre-existing low vision center. We have enjoyed being able to offer a greater depth and variety of services in our new home.

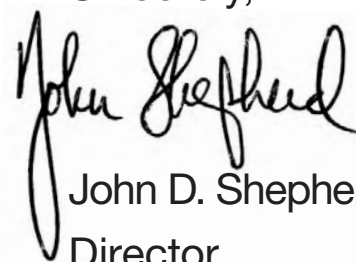
In the next year, we anticipate expanding our program to include neurovisual rehabilitation. This service will be offered to individuals with vision difficulty related to traumatic brain injury and stroke. Thanks to funding support from the Lions (see story on front cover), we have new state-of-the-art equipment that will enable us to better care for these individuals.

I am also pleased to announce the creation of the Dinsdale Endowment Fund in memory

of our good friend, Dr. Howard Dinsdale (see story on back page.) Such funding will assist us in our efforts to continue to provide the time-intensive, in-depth clinical services necessary to meet the needs of those who are struggling with visual impairment.

As we look forward to another rewarding year of service, we wish you all a wonderful New Year.

Sincerely,



John D. Shepherd, M.D.  
Director



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## Low Vision Storytelling Workshop

### Presented at Weigel Williamson Center

Thirteen people came together with nationally-known actress /storyteller Rita Paskowitz at the Weigel Williamson Center this spring to share their experiences of vision loss, frustrations and triumphs.

The Center's occupational therapist, Evy Katz, asked Paskowitz to develop the workshop. Paskowitz's father had macular degeneration, so the project had special meaning for her.

The workshop offered people a way to share, process and transform their experience of vision loss into individual stories giving family members, friends and others insight into what it's like to live with low vision.

Participant ages ranged from 24 to 89, with vision loss ranging from total blindness to moderate impairment. One participant treated the group to a guitar performance of music he had written. Some of his music is featured in the DVD made of the performances.

Katie Blesner, videographer for the project, taped the final performances. The program was funded by the Lions Clubs and Foundations of Nebraska and Iowa, and the Lions Clubs International Foundation.

**Low Vision  
STORE**  
**10% off**  
**ENTIRE PURCHASE**

expiration date 6/30/2010

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST CORNER

# Shopping With Low Vision

Have you given up on shopping because of your vision loss? Do you miss bargain hunting or being able to select that special gift for someone? Here are some tips:

- Shop with a friend or ask for help from salespeople if you can't find what you need; most are delighted to help.
- Bring your spectacles, magnifier or flashlight with you to see price tags & details.
- A hand-held monocular telescope can help you see signage on walls or above aisles.
- Fit-over filters in light plum, yellow, light grey or light amber can reduce glare inside stores.
- Shop by phone or catalog. Many stores offer a personal shopper service & free shipping.
- Carry a signature guide. Check-writing guides and large print checks are also available.

If you don't like to shop, hire a personal shopper.

Now you're armed with tips, so go forth and shop! Don't forget to stop by the Low Vision Store at the Center. We're open from 8:00 to 4:30 Monday-Friday.

## ASK DR. SHEPHERD

I've been told that stronger lenses in my prescription glasses will not help me read better. Can you explain why this is so?

Stronger glasses may help you to read better, but they would require you to hold your reading material much closer to your eyes to see the print clearly. This is not a very comfortable way to read for most people. There are likely other better and more comfortable ways to address your reading problem.

Such other options could be considered during a low vision evaluation at the Weigel Williamson Center. Just give us a call and we would be happy to set up an appointment for you.

## HOW TO MAKE A GIFT

To make a donation to the endowment fund of the Weigel Williamson Center, contact Karen Levin at the University of Nebraska Foundation (402) 502-4921, or [klevin@nufoundation.org](mailto:klevin@nufoundation.org). Gifts may also be made at [www.unmc.edu/lowvision](http://www.unmc.edu/lowvision).

## LOW VISION SUCCESS STORY Continued from Page 1

Katz helped Mullin to better use her remaining vision by teaching her eccentric viewing, which for Mullin is to look up and to the right of what she wants to see. She also trained her in how to use a CCTV, a machine that can magnify text, pictures and graphics up to 75 times.

Using Katz' tips and the CCTV, Mullin was able to write a six-page term paper for her class and take the final exam.

"The staff at the Weigel Williamson Center were instrumental in helping me continue my education. Getting those three credits was really important for me to be able to graduate," said Mullin, who will graduate in December from Creighton University with a major in art history.



# A Place for Renewed Hope and Help for Those with Low Vision

THE STAFF OF THE WEIGEL WILLIAMSON CENTER FOR VISUAL REHABILITATION

**John D. Shepherd, M.D.**  
Director of the Weigel Williamson Center

**Frank Graf, O.D.**  
Optometrist on Staff

**Patti Fries, O.D.**  
Optometrist on Staff

**Evy Katz, OTR/L**  
Low Vision Occupational Therapist

**Kathy VonDollen, R.N.**  
Coordinator

**Pat Jones, R.N., B.A.N.**  
Assistant Coordinator

The Weigel Williamson Center is a service of the UNMC Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. It relies on the generosity of donor support in order to fulfill its mission of hope and help for those with low vision.

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Medical Center

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## DONOR PROFILE: **Howard Dinsdale, M.D.**



A devoted provider of low vision services, Howard Dinsdale, M.D., came to the assistance of the Weigel Williamson Center, formerly the University Low Vision Clinic, on more than one occasion.

In 1987, Dinsdale first assisted the Clinic by assuming the director's position, which meant weekly drives to Omaha from Lincoln where he practiced ophthalmology at the time. Later when the Clinic faced closure due to lack of funds for staffing, he secured a grant that kept the Clinic operating.

While returning home from the Clinic in May 1989, Dinsdale was involved in a car accident that left him paralyzed. Yet he remained committed to the center and, after months of rehabilitation, resumed his position as director and his weekly trips to the Clinic. Dinsdale retired in 1999 but remained a supporter of the Center until his death in 2008.

In his honor, the Howard A. Dinsdale, M.D. Low Vision Rehabilitation Endowment Fund was established at the University of Nebraska Foundation to help further the mission of the Weigel Williamson Center. The fund will support the Center's educational, research and patient care programs.

Philanthropic gifts, like those that established the Dinsdale fund, remain critical to the Center which serves more than 350 persons with low vision annually.

"Private support helps to ensure our continued success in providing valuable services to a rapidly increasing population," said John Shepherd, M.D., Director of the Weigel Williamson Center. "The growth of endowment funds is vital to our ability to make a difference in the lives of those with low vision."