



Earle Baum Center
Serving People with Sight Loss

LIMITLESS



Life is a Work in Progress

Vicki Martin grew up in Covelo in Mendocino County. Surrounded by a loving family which included three older sisters, she rarely went anywhere by herself. She knew her vision was impaired, but it wasn't until she moved away at 18 that she realized how bad it had become.

"You get used to your surroundings. My vision deteriorated so gradually, it was almost imperceptible," she said. When she moved to a new city, she needed to learn her way around. "I

actually had a driver's license, but driving at night was horrendous!"

After she moved to Santa Rosa, married her husband and had a daughter, "I didn't ever go anywhere by myself. I always went with my husband or daughter," she said. It was when she decided to re-enter the workforce, that she realized she needed to upgrade her skills.

"I wanted a job, and to get to the job, I wanted a guide dog. To get the guide dog, I needed to get

mobility training. I got that from the Earle Baum Center," she said.

She's been back several times. "It's a work in progress," she said. "The more tools you get, the more freedom you get, and you feel more confident. EBC changes people's lives! You meet other people who are going through what you're going through, and it makes you feel you're not alone. They really understand where you're coming from and know how to give you support. They know the skills that you need."

In addition to mobility training, she's taken independent living skills classes as well as technology classes to learn to use an iPad. She's also enjoyed EBC's yoga classes, and is now taking ukulele.

As her vision continues to deteriorate, she's very grateful she has an organization like EBC to turn to. "Every time, it's an adjustment," she said. "I have to work through it. Then, once I get adjusted to my new level of vision, I do okay. But now, I go to the store and get groceries by myself. I go get a pedicure by myself. I go walk by myself. I have more confidence."



"We are big Giant's fans, and love to go out on McCovey Cove during games."

Message from the CEO



Dear Friend,

Thank you for being a member of our community here at the Earle Baum Center. Your generosity is changing the lives of people throughout the North Bay, and we appreciate it!

In this issue of our newsletter, you'll read about three people who are connected in various ways to our mission. I hope their stories inspire you to get more involved with the Earle Baum Center. We value our relationship with you.

Already, you and your neighbors have made it possible for EBC to serve thousands of people with sight loss. You've helped them to: travel safely, live independently, and have access to information. You've helped them to: lead healthier lives, succeed in their jobs, enjoy hobbies, and be active in their families and communities. Most of these are people who live right here in Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino Counties.

You are helping people who are just starting to have problems with their vision, as well as those who have been blind or visually impaired throughout their lives. You are helping older people stay in their homes by learning safe ways to live independently. And you are helping their families, too.

In the past, EBC has depended on the government for a portion of our expenses. That government support is shrinking, and may never return. We need individuals, companies, and organizations to help more than ever. It is up to all of us to come together and fill in the gaps.

With your help, we can strengthen our community, and focus on doing things that really matter. You have changed someone's life with your past gift, and we sincerely thank you. There is more to be done, and we very much need you. You are important to us. Thank you for helping us spread the word about the Earle Baum Center.

With gratitude,

Dan

Dan Needham, CEO

P.S. I'm sending my personal invitation to you to come visit our campus and bring your friends. Get involved. Come to our fundraising events and enjoy life with us. Volunteer. And please, be generous.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for our annual **EarleFest** Saturday, Sept. 23rd



earlefest.com

Please join our Legacy Society!

Become a member! Help the Earle Baum Center continue serving people with sight loss by including us in your will and estate plan. Gifts may include cash, stocks, IRAs, real estate, life insurance, charitable trusts and automobiles—all may become the means to help others in the way you or your loved ones have received assistance. Please call Bob Sonnenberg at **707-284-1088**, or email sonnenberg@earlebaum.org for more information or questions. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration.



Why Aren't You Dancing?

“Life can be very challenging, and there are times when we need help to go forward,” said Dr. Janet Caddell. “Losing one’s vision can be particularly scary. All of us at the Earle Baum Center want people with vision loss to know, they do not need to face this challenge alone.”

In addition to her private practice, Dr. Caddell sees low vision clients at the Earle Baum Center every week. Through her years of experience, she’s seen people respond to change in a variety of ways. Fears and misperceptions about blindness, family dynamics, and limiting beliefs also play a big role.

“Helping someone who is losing their vision is a lot different than doing a general eye exam,” she said. “It takes

time to figure out exactly what they are able to see right now, and want help with today. You meet them where they are and assist them in reaching their goals.

“I’ve always been interested in rehabilitative care,” she said. “I really enjoy working as part of a multidisciplinary team. At EBC, we have an amazing team approach to help people attain their goals. Everything that’s necessary for someone who is struggling with their sight is right here. People get an opportunity to work with all types of vision aides to find out what best suits their visual needs.

Anyone can lose vision at any stage of life: from birth, eye disease, or accidents. Many of Dr. Caddell’s clients have

age-related macular degeneration. It’s the leading cause of vision loss in the United States. “When people are diagnosed with it, they are often scared that they’re going to go blind,” she said. “But that’s not true. I tell them that it will affect their central vision. But they’ll maintain their peripheral ‘get-around’ vision.”

Dr. Caddell believes it’s important to have a client’s family member in the room when she’s doing a low vision exam. “I want them to hear what’s going on. Often, there’s a lack of understanding from the family. I always begin the exam by asking my client, ‘How do you feel you’re doing visually on a day-to-day basis?’ This gives them an opening to talk about what they’re seeing as well as what they’re feeling and frustrated about. Once I got a letter from a family member: ‘My mother never voiced those things before. We never knew that was what she was dealing with.’ They were thankful she felt comfortable enough to express her feelings, so they now understood how to help.”

The diagnosis of vision loss can cause some to believe they have to stop doing things they love to do. “One gentleman loved to dance, but told me he stopped because he couldn’t see well,” Dr. Caddell said. “I asked him, ‘Why? Why aren’t you dancing?’ I tell my clients: I want you to do as much as you can — especially the things you like to do. These are your goals. Let’s see what we can do to help you get there.”



Dr. Caddell works with an EBC client.



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Why I Give: Retired Superior Court Judge Patricia Herron

“If you have the choice of either laughing or crying, for god-sakes, laugh,” said retired Superior Court Judge Patricia Herron of Sonoma. Having a good attitude about life is a very useful strategy. And it’s been working well for her over the past 90 years. She has had ups and downs throughout her life, but on balance, feels very fortunate. “It’s been a wonderful romp. All I want now is a new set of eyes.”

Born with no depth perception, she learned to adjust. She cringed when, at 12, she was prescribed glasses, and her mother exclaimed, “Dear, they make you look so intelligent!” “No 12-year-old wants to hear that they look intelligent!” she said.

Nine years ago, when she was a resident at Spring Lake Village, she went to a presentation by the Earle Baum Center. “I was glad to know there was a place nearby that helped people who have impaired eyesight,” she said. “They fill a totally unmet need, especially for the elderly, who are already very isolated in our society. Losing vision makes it even harder. I believe strongly that people need other people. And people who are losing their vision can learn so much from others who have similar conditions and have found things that work for them.”

“If I’m honest about it, my eyes have had weakness for a long time,” she said. “Friends who know me well say that through denial, I’m able to do more than one would expect. So, to this day, unfortunately, I have not integrated or accepted the fact that I have very little sight. I just expect that in 6-9 months, there will be a medical breakthrough and I’ll be able to see again.”

Pat has a laundry list of eye conditions from wet macular degeneration and glaucoma to surface wrinkling retinal pathology. “I need to have a list in front of me because I tend to block out things I really don’t like,” she said. But she has begun receiving services from EBC. She supports the organization for many reasons, and encourages others to get involved.

“There are so many things out there in addition to the techniques and technology and devices. There is so much going on with research and medical treatments. It’s impossible for one individual to amass all that information and track what is out there, what’s working, and what we can expect.

That’s why places like EBC are absolutely invaluable,” she said. “EBC is local, so it’s easier for me to get involved and see the impact of my donation. I can have a better understanding of how they handle their finances.”

Pat is also concerned on a deeper level about what will happen to people with disabilities if government funding and programs are cut. “People need to care about other people. I’m heartened by those who have become inspired to take action. We need to do all we can to make sure that organizations like EBC are there when we need them.”



Pat Herron

There are many giving options to explore. You might enjoy the convenience of setting up automatic monthly donations. You may realize tax savings by giving to EBC through IRA disbursements, or from the sale of appreciated stocks or securities. Consider leaving a legacy of kindness and light for someone in need of our training and care by including EBC in your estate plans.