



Earle Baum Center

Transforming the Lives
of People with Sight Loss

LIMITLESS



A New Point of View

Some of the most memorable stories and myths involve a person who goes on an adventure, faces a crisis, overcomes challenges, and returns home transformed. One might say that Santa Rosa movie dialog and picture editor Vivien Hillgrove is on such a journey.

The popular movies she has worked on as a dialogue

editor include: *Amadeus*, *One From the Heart*, *Blue Velvet*, *The Mosquito Coast*, *Never Cry Wolf*, and *The Right Stuff*. As picture editor, she worked on: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, and *Henry and June*. For the last two decades, Vivien has been drawn to editing documentaries. Her 50-year journey has offered her the adventure of working with incredible directors and teams.

But when macular degeneration began to rob the letters in the subtitles she was editing, it was a personal crisis for her. She credits the remarkable team at the Earle Baum Center for helping her face her challenges and return home transformed.

EBC Assistive Technology Specialist Cathy Mulhern and Vision Rehabilitation Counselor Denise Vancil introduced Vivien to assistive technology techniques so that she had the tools and skills she needed to battle frustration. "Being in film, I love equipment. I have a lot of technology at my place, but I was having a terribly difficult time operating it with low vision," Vivien said. "It blew my mind that there are all these aids for people who are blind. I'm also learning how to use the accessibility functions on my iPhone; I know more about it now than I ever did when I was fully sighted! I have an optical scanner with speech to help me read text. And I have talking labels on the binders that contain my writing! I'm beginning to integrate all of these tools into my profession. This is huge for me!"



Vivien using assistive technology in her work.

Message from the Director of Development



In every issue, people who are blind or visually impaired share their stories about how the Earle Baum Center has helped transform their lives by restoring confidence, independence and joy! It is good to be reminded that when we join together for a positive purpose, we can improve the quality of life for our visually impaired friends and their loved ones.

Today, I'm offering you another opportunity to join together in positive purpose so that we can sustain service to our community well into the future. As our

population ages, more and more seniors will be facing vision loss due to macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. We must be prepared to meet their needs.

I want to invite you to help us create a vibrant Legacy Society for the Earle Baum Center and join the many kind and generous people who have remembered EBC in their estate plans. These caring people deserve to be honored and recognized by our community at an annual event. I would be very interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas

about creating a Legacy Society, so please, give me a call.

If you haven't been to our website recently, you're in for a big surprise. And we've only just begun! We will be expanding the "Wills, Bequests, and Trusts" section to give you even more options to invest in a cause you care about, so stay tuned.

Warm Regards,

Bob Sonnenberg
EBC Director of Development

A New Point of View *(continued from page 1)*

"My mobility and cane trainer Maura Wong-Cooper has given me confidence to explore outside my editing room," Vivien continued. "This is so necessary for leading a full life and feeding the imagination that the craft of editing demands."

Vivien was grateful for the guidance of EBC Counselor Susan Hirshfield in helping her deal with the emotional adjustment to losing sight. "Susan was a godsend! She is like a collaborator in life," Vivien said. "She asks me fabulous questions that allow me to deeply explore my feelings, resolve issues, and feel okay about myself. She helped me realize there was another kind of vision: my imagination, and there are many ways to communicate."

Armed with new tools and a different way of looking at the world, Vivien embarked on a fresh adventure. "I started writing down the feelings and images I had in my mind and heart," she said. "It gave me the motivation to get to work on my memoir."

Vivien's story brought together a group of six women filmmakers (versed in cinematography, sound, directing, and interviewing) to assist in making a documentary about her life. "There have been so few women in the film business, so this is a wonderful opportunity for everyone," she said. "It would never have happened without EBC giving me the guts to think that I could be able to direct a film without my full sight!"



Vivien now adds author to her list of accomplishments.

Living a Good Life

Laurie Horn was driving to town one day, as she had done so many times before. But on this day, the 20 mile-an-hour speed limit sign read: 2020. “I said to myself, ‘Oh, my goodness! Something is wrong with my vision! I think I’d better stop driving! I went home and sold my car and never drove again.’ That was ten years ago. “I can still see, but it’s like looking through a veil,” Laurie said.

Laurie, a Sonoma County native, turned 100 in July. She now lives with her daughter, Earle Baum Center Director of Programs and Quality, Kati Aho.

When Laurie began having problems reading books and the newspaper, Kati brought her in to get a check-up at EBC’s Low Vision Clinic. Laurie was able to try out some of the magnifiers, but she was hesitant about making a decision.

“Six or nine months later, I noticed she was having problems explaining to me what she’d read in the newspaper. I actually started wondering if she was developing dementia,” Kati said. “I asked the caregiver what she thought, and she said, ‘No! Not at all. Why do you think that?’ I said, ‘Because she’s telling me what’s in the newspaper, but when I read the article, it doesn’t match up.’”

“Then one day, someone donated a video magnifier to EBC,” Kati said. “The instructor that processes them was out on leave. I knew it would be sitting there until she returned.

So, I decided to bring it home so she could test it out. Within a day, she was clear as could be about what she’d read! So, we purchased one for her. Boy, the rest is history! She reads the paper end-to-end now. And she probably reads 2-4 novels a week — I can’t keep her in books!”

“I tell that story a lot when I talk to caregivers and people who work with older people,” Kati continued. “I tell them: ‘Don’t make assumptions.’ People hide their sight loss because they’re embarrassed about it. Even my mom didn’t want to tell me, ‘I can’t see this.’ It was lucky, because

of my profession, that I knew enough to take the equipment home and have her try it out.” Kati also got new lighting over the table where her mother does her jigsaw puzzles. “It’s designed to help her with the light spectrums that she can’t see.”

Having a good quality of life is just as important, if not more so, than having a long life. And thanks to her loving daughter, and the Earle Baum Center, Laurie can now continue to do more of the things she loves to do – the things that add quality and enjoyment to her life.



Laurie celebrates her 100th birthday with granddaughter Edie and great-granddaughters Aliana (top) and Katrina.

EBC Labyrinth Walking Path



Visitors to the Earle Baum Center are invited to experience the latest addition to the campus: The Labyrinth Walking Path. Labyrinths are an ancient archetypal symbol of transformation and mindfulness. They are currently popular in parks, churches, and hospitals.

Following the path, with its concentric circles and switchbacks, requires a traveler to slow down and focus on the present. It is a place for quiet contemplation in nature that anyone can enjoy.

What makes EBC's Labyrinth unique is that it was specifically designed to accommodate travelers using white canes, guide dogs, human guides, and most walkers and wheelchairs. The path is 39" wide, with a smooth, concrete surface and 4" brick curb. Facilitators will be on hand to assist with orienting and guiding new travelers.

One of our donors funded the Labyrinth project. This artful addition to the EBC Campus offers a unique and challenging experience to our students and visitors for years to come.

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.

Join us!

Your Vision, Our Focus. A Community Open House.

Are you dealing with sight loss and have questions?
Come and explore the possibilities

Saturday, September 22, 2018
10am – 3pm

Lunch and brief presentation at noon

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