



Project Name:
Promoting Independent Living for Blind and Visually Impaired People

Project Need: An estimated 44,000 Palm Beach County residents are experiencing severe vision loss. Most are “newly blind” due to diabetes and age-related diseases. Visual impairment brings about real fears: fear of giving up meaningful activities; fear of losing mobility; fear of dependence for those who have enjoyed a lifetime of autonomy. Without access to training and support, they are at high risk of injury, loss of independence, and isolation that often leads to depression.

Project Overview: In response to this need, this project empowers visually impaired and blind people to live full and meaningful lives. Participants learn adaptive skills, coupled with practical experience and socialization to maintain safety, wellness, and independence. The project is uniquely qualified to meet the needs of PBC’s visually impaired residents, as its director and most staff members are blind and serve as positive role models for clients. Services are offered at no cost to individuals and families regardless of age, gender or socio-economic status. Translation services (French, Spanish, and Creole), along with assistance with transportation services, ensures access for all.

Project components:

- **Hands-on Instruction and Practical Experience through individual and group training in:** Independent Living Skills, Braille, Orientation and Mobility, and Assistive Technology. Clients practice newly learned navigation skills through Monthly Field Trips and learn about available resources through Monthly Educational Workshops presented through ZOOM.
- **Transportation Support:** Providing transportation access through Palm Tran Connection’s paratransit services, ensuring uninterrupted training and participation for clients.
- **Peer Support Meetings and Group Activities:** Socialization and peer support opportunities provide clients with ability to pursue interests and enjoy life to their fullest potential. Includes: (1) Weekly Peer Support Group Meetings, (2) Weekly Craft Club, (3) Monthly Talking Book Club in partnership with PBC Library System.
- **Case Management:** The Case Manager assists clients with developing personal goals and training plans that equip them with skills and confidence to live safely and independently. Linkages to available community resources are also provided. Regular assessments, coupled with client feedback, monitors client achievement of personal goals.

Project Outcomes: Funding provided by Impact the Palm Beaches will provide FOCB with the resources to meet the growing demand for services in our community. Last year, 438 visually impaired adults participated in one or more components of this project, a 36% increase over the previous year. With your support, we expect to serve no less than 450 adults in the year ahead.