



The Sight-Loss Support Group of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

Turning Darkness into Light Since 1982

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THE OUTLOOK Newsletter

December 2022

TIS THE SEASON OF HOPE

Christmas turns the world upside down. For most of the year the words of Christmas - peace, joy, goodwill toward men – seem like a mirage as ethereal as fairy dust. The problems of the world we see on the news are unrelenting and dis-spiriting. With no counterweight of good news, we lose hope - solving the problems and healing the wounds of the world seems near impossible.

But the news is only part of the story. In truth, good news abounds in our lives and the world around us. Christmas reminds us to focus on the light rather than the dark. If we focus on the light, we will get more light; if we focus on the dark, then darkness will grow. In the words of Helen Keller, “Christmas is the festival of optimism.” The world can be renewed. Peace, joy, and goodwill toward men can take hold. All we need to do is turn ourselves and our world upside down.

HOLIDAY FEAST, DECEMBER 8TH

Well, here is some good news. We will celebrate the season with our holiday party on Thursday, December 8th. It will be a feast. We had to cancel last year’s party due to the winter surge of Covid. This year, we expect clear sailing. We’ve got some catching up to do, so your job is to come hungry and full of cheer.

We'll be feasting at the usual time and place of our 2nd Thursdays meetings: 11:30-1:00 at Mt. Nittany Residences, 301 Rolling Ridge Drive. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Our 2nd Thursdays support group meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at Mount Nittany Residences. We resumed our meetings last March and we plan on continuing unless a significant Covid surge causes us to pause the meetings again.

UPCOMING AUDIO DESCRIPTION EVENTS Winter/Spring 2023

**Into the Woods – Centre Stage at The Playhouse Theatre at Penn State
Saturday, March 18, 2023, 2:00 pm**

RESERVE TICKETS BY MARCH 4, 2023

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Book by James Lapine
Directed by Rick Lombardo

Does “Happily Ever After” really exist? The musical intertwines the plots of several Brothers Grimm fairy tales, exploring the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests.

A Baker and his wife, Cinderella, Jack, Little Red Riding Hood, and even the Witch all wish for something, but they must learn the responsibility that comes with getting what you want in this Tony Award-winning musical. This show takes “a look at the darker side of fairy tales in dealing with the themes of communal responsibility, the importance of showing consideration to others, and the values we pass on to our children.”
(Stanley Green)

The musical is tied together by a story involving a childless baker and his wife and their quest to begin a family (the original beginning of the Grimm Brothers' "Rapunzel"), their interaction with a witch who has placed a curse on them, and their interaction with other storybook characters during their journey.

Hello, Dolly! – State High Thespians, State College Area High School Auditorium

Sunday, April 2, 2023, 2:00 pm

RESERVE TICKETS BY MARCH 19, 2023

Hello, Dolly! is a 1964 musical with lyrics and music by Jerry Herman and a book by Michael Stewart. The musical follows the story of Dolly Gallagher Levi, a strong-willed matchmaker, as she travels to Yonkers, New York, to find a match for the miserly "well-known unmarried half-a-millionaire", Horace Vandergelder.

The show has become one of the most enduring musical theater hits, with four Broadway revivals and international success. It was also made into the 1969 film *Hello, Dolly!* by 20th Century Fox, which won three Academy Awards, including Best Score of a Musical Picture. (Wikipedia)

Hello, Dolly! is a happy combination of a favorite stage plot, a title role full of comical opportunities, and eleven enjoyable musical numbers. The comedic nature of the show and the toe-tapping songs will keep you entertained through the whole production!

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF – Center for the Performing Arts, Eisenhower Auditorium at Penn State

Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 7:30 pm

RESERVE TICKETS EARLY, BY APRIL 4, 2023, AT THE LATEST

Audiences across North America are toasting a new production of *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*. Rich with musical hits you know and love, including "Tradition," "If I Were a Rich Man," "Sunrise, Sunset," "Matchmaker, Matchmaker," and "To Life," *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* is the heartwarming story of fathers and daughters, husbands and wives, love and laughter.

Tony Award-winning director Bartlett Sher and the team behind *South Pacific* and *The King and I* bring a fresh and authentic vision to this beloved theatrical masterpiece from Tony winner Joseph Stein and Pulitzer Prize winners Jerry Brock and Sheldon Harnick. Featuring a talented cast, lavish orchestra, and stunning movement and dance from Israeli choreographer Hofesh Shechter, based on the original staging by Jerome Robbins,

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF will introduce a new generation to the uplifting celebration that raises its cup to joy! To Love! To life!

EMILIA - Centre Stage at The Pavilion Theatre at Penn State

Saturday, April 22, 2023, 2:00 pm

RESERVE TICKETS BY APRIL 8, 2023

Four hundred years ago, Emilia Bassano wanted her voice to be heard. It wasn't. Could she have been the 'Dark Lady' of Shakespeare's sonnets? What of her own poetry? Why was her story erased from history? (Wikipedia)

1609

I AM EMILIA.

Writer. Wife. Lover. Mother. Muse.

I am unheard.

I want education, equality, opportunity, respect. For us all.

We want choice.

We want a voice.

2019

WE ARE EMILIA.

400 years ago, Emilia Bassano wanted her voice to be heard. It wasn't. Her story is still our story

Emilia and her sisters reach out to us across the centuries with passion, fury, laughter and song. Listen to them. Let them inspire and unite us. Times are finally changing. Not fast enough. It's up to you. We are all Emilia. Stand up alongside her and be counted.

JOSIE KANTNER: COMPOSING A LIFE WITH VISION LOSS

If you have connected with our organization in any form over the last twenty years, you have most likely been welcomed, advised, or consoled by the current heart of the Sight-Loss Support Group, Josie Kantner. Joining the SLSG as a member after moving to State College from Bedford, PA, by 2002 she was elected to the Board of Director, hired as Programs Director in 2008, and was appointed as Director of the Sight-Loss Support Group in

2013 upon the retirement of founder Rana Arnold. With determination, knowledge, and a drive to support others, Josie helped the Sight-Loss Support Group transition to a new kind of organization. With the help of loyal board members and volunteers, the organization moved from a “brick and mortar” organization to a “virtual” office in 2015. This change allowed the group to focus its financial resources more directly on programs: providing emotional and peer support, access to the arts and local events, and offering a gateway to regional vision rehabilitation services.

Legally blind since her late thirties from retinitis pigmentosa, Josie’s vision has declined gradually throughout her lifetime. In a quote from an interview with the Center Daily Times, Josie says:

“Having a vision problem myself, I think it would be hard to do this kind of work if you couldn’t relate personally to what people are going through. It’s this personal experience with losing one’s vision that motivates me and gets me out bed in the morning. If we can help people be more hopeful and optimistic and encourage them to realize that there is a lot of possibility out there living with sight, then I’ve made the world a slightly better place.”

But Ms. Kantner is more than a caring, understanding friend. In 2022, she earned an M.Ed. in Counselor Education from Penn State. This degree, along with her M.A. in Anthropology from George Washington University and B.A. in Humanities from Johns Hopkins University, gave her the professional tools and credentials to back up her kindness and wisdom.

In her current position as outreach specialist for our virtual organization, Josie is the SLSG’s primary phone and email connection, our liaison to local, state, and federal agencies, coordinator of the monthly lunch support group meetings, newsletter editor, and promoter of View Via Voice’s audio-description events. Aside from bringing people with vision loss together to find common ground, Josie’s mission is to help clients open the door to vision rehabilitation services that put people on a path toward hope and greater independence.

“We have more and more people who are becoming visually impaired, and the vast majority of them either don’t know about vision rehabilitation services or are choosing not to use it, so I think outreach is really important.

And I'm trying to collaborate more than we have in the past with other agencies in the area.”

Living with vision loss can be overwhelming, especially at onset. The Sight-Loss Support Group is here to support individuals at the beginning and throughout the inevitable changes and challenges in the years ahead. Our mission statement says “We offer a supportive atmosphere where individuals can adjust to loss of vision, learn what resources are available for assistance and develop strategies to regain independence. Through shared experiences and a positive approach, the SLSG helps people answer the question, “What do I do now?”

Although Covid risks have made everything more challenging, we are still very much here. Remember that our organization and an understanding friend are always a mere phone call away. Currently, while the Covid risk is limited, you can connect in person with Josie at our 2nd Thursdays lunch group. There you will find a supportive group of people who are learning to live with sight loss and representatives from the blindness organizations in the region. And we mustn't forget lunch –yes there is such a thing as free lunch. Josie's smile will most likely be the first one you see and she will probably be serving your meal, which she may have contributed to herself. A representative from our View Via Voices audio-description program also attends the meeting and keeps us up to date on upcoming events on campus and in the community. Josie will often be in the audience, headset on, waiting for the curtain to rise. Vision loss can be hard, but it also has its rewards, opening us up to new challenges and experiences.

*Quotes are from a 2013 CDT article, **Q&A with Josie Smith, Director of the Sight-Loss Support Group of Central PA** by Mike Dawson*

TECHNOLOGY TIP: SWITCHING LIGHT MODE TO DARK MODE ON IPHONE AND IPAD

Thanks to George Enteen for this technology tip! At our November meeting George shared with us how you can change your background on an iPhone or iPad from white to black for easier reading. Here is a link to a video with the instructions.

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8u5e9c>

At the next Sight-Loss Support Group luncheon, people will be available to help you with this if you need assistance.

CATAGO: A NEW MICROTRANSIT SERVICE FROM CATA

CATAGO is a new “on-demand” transportation service offering same-day service in four zones: Park Forest, Pine Grove Mills, Bellefonte/Pleasant Gap, and Boalsburg. You can travel within the zones and CATABus Routes, as well as make connections to designated destination points outside the zones. The fare is only \$2.20 per trip; persons over 65 are free and persons with disabilities are half-price. To make a reservation call (814) 237-1821. For more information visit CATABUS.com/GO! Below are the service days and hours which vary from zone to zone.

Northwest Zone (Serving Park Forest and Surrounding Areas)

Service Hours: Monday - Friday, 6:00 am - 10:00 am and 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm.

Southwest Zone (Serving Pine Grove Mills and Surrounding Areas)

Service Hours: Monday-Friday, 6:00 am -10:00 am and 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm.

Boalsburg Zone

Service Hours: Monday - Friday, 6:00 am - 8:00 pm; Saturday, 9:00 am - 8:00 pm.

Bellefonte/Pleasant Gap Zone

Service Hours: Monday - Friday, 6:00 am - 11:00 pm; Saturday, 6:00 am - 7:00 pm.



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SECOND THURSDAYS SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Dec. 8 Christmas Party
Jan. 12 Feb. 9 Mar. 9 Apr. 13

AUDIO-DESCRIBED PERFORMANCES

Mar. 18 Into the Woods
Apr. 2 Hello, Dolly!
Apr. 18 Fiddler on the Roof
Apr. 22 Emilia

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