



# CVRA



## Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program




*At a Glance*

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## Program Description



The Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program (CVRP) was established in 1996 with a small grant from the West Virginia Lions. CVRP's mission is to provide school-aged children with incurable vision loss, access to the visual environment. CVRP is a "needs-based" program that responds to individual needs of visually impaired children and their teachers, parents and related professionals in West Virginia. Clinical vision evaluations, teacher education and mentoring, parent assistance and support, site visitation/student follow-ups, summer camps, and a lending library for optical devices and technology are components that have been identified by teachers and parents that will assist in meeting these needs. CVRP's staff consist of a Pediatric Ophthalmologist, Low Vision Therapists, Occupational Therapist, Assistive Technology Specialist, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, and other administrative support staff.

CVRP was the recipient of the 2002 Dean's Award for Community Service. Community service and interaction is a key element in the success of this program. To ensure that the visually impaired child succeed, the community, teachers and parents must become active participants.

## Mission

To increase educational and social opportunities, independence, and employability for children with incurable vision loss by providing access to all environments that sighted children experience.

CVRP provides comprehensive evaluations, training, technology, and support to the visually impaired school-aged population, their parents and professionals to promote success.



# Comprehensive Low Vision Clinics

CVRP evaluated six children in its first year and now evaluates over 100 children per year throughout West Virginia and continues to have a waiting list. Children receive free of charge a comprehensive low vision evaluation as well as optical and/or non-optical devices that are determined to be beneficial to them.

The program continues to evolve based on the needs of the students, teachers, parents, or administrators. By developing professional support systems, resources, and education in the community, and creating a lending library of optical devices, parents and teachers who have struggled in the past now have access to life-changing vision outcomes. This has a direct impact on a child's independence, self-esteem, future employability, and enhanced quality of daily life.

## Quotes...

*It's a program that I don't think a lot of people could go without. I would never be at WVU if I didn't have the resources that I did growing up. ~Lauren C.; Jane Lew, WV*

*I just wanted to say thank you to the entire team at Kaitlyn's appointment last month. It means a lot to us that we are able to get the things Kaitlyn needs in order to succeed in school. We appreciate everything you all do. ~Jacqueline; Martinsburg, WV*

*Just a note to let you know, my son Cody attended your clinic this year and he was very pleased with his monocular. He found it very helpful. We are very fortunate to have CVRP. If it were not for CVRP I don't think Cody would be doing as well as he is. You guys keep up the good work! ~Cathy; Huntington, WV*

*I want to let you know how uniquely CVRP has been to me and my students. CVRP provides a level of useful information I've never managed to replicate using other services. ~Melinda, Teacher of the Visually Impaired; Charleston, WV.*



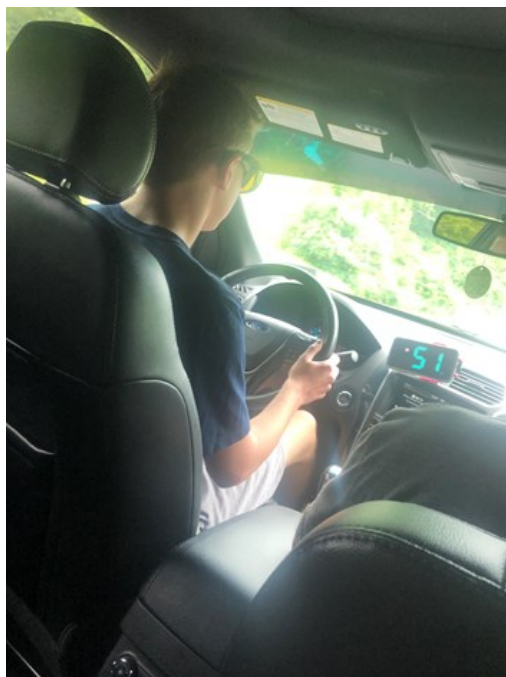
# Bioptic Clinic

West Virginia passed a law in 2009 that would allow drivers to use a bioptic device to obtain a West Virginia Driver's License. This has strict criteria and mandates from the state that include a specific power of devices, a visual acuity measurement, training on the device and successful completion of a bioptic driving class (6 weeks). This will greatly increase the independence of this population for jobs and education. In WV, public transportation is minimal especially in the rural settings. It is documented through research that bioptic drivers are safer than the male population between the ages of 18-25. CVRP offers a bioptic clinic each year. This clinic prescribes the bioptic, fits and follows up on the device. Training will be provided to prepare the user for the driving school.

## Quotes...

*I wanted to thank CVRP for providing me with a bioptic and helping me complete the driving process. It was very challenging at first but very much worth while in the end because of what you're able to accomplish by yourself, such as driving, watching basketball/football games etc, and helpfulness with education like seeing the white-boards! It makes the old process of just holding a big binocular up to your eye a lot more convenient, because it's a pair of glasses ~ Avery; Sistersville, WV*

*I am so thankful for CVRP getting me a bioptic and helping me through the process of enrolling and completing the bioptic driving course. Being able to drive has given me so much independence! This will allow me to attend college at the WVUP campus and commute from home. From devices, exams, summer camps, CVRP has provided me with so many opportunities throughout the years. ~ Andrew; St. Marys, WV*

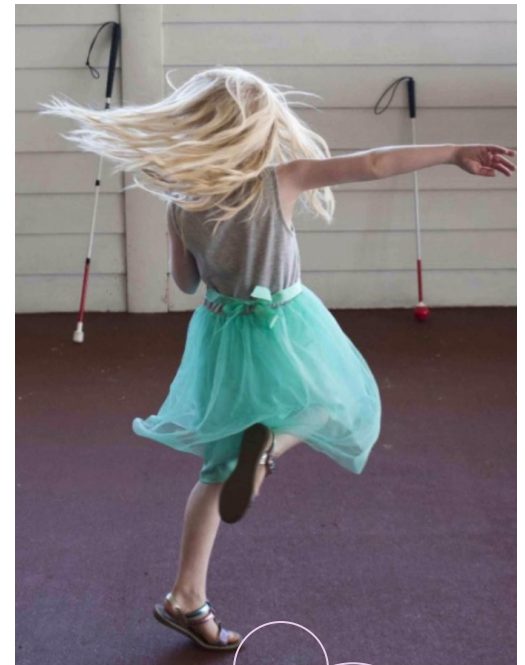




# Institutes of Learning (Summer Institutes)

Institute of Learning, formerly known as Summer institute was implemented in 2003 to provide a forum for children of the visually impaired to receive direct instruction on specific skills (i.e. braille, independent living, assistive technology, orientation and mobility, and self-help skills). These topics are referred to as the Expanded Core Curriculum in the educational setting. Throughout the school year, teachers of the visually impaired focus on subject content and assisting the student with academics through modification of print (braille) or assignments (tactile maps). It has been observed that our students are academically sound to attend college but sometimes cannot succeed because they lack the skills to live independently, thus retreating home for parental support and ending higher education opportunities.

Additionally, these institutes provide a forum for students, parents and teachers from different counties to network and establish support systems. Often times, this is the first opportunity for a child with a visual impairment to interact with someone that has the same disability. In this setting, the visually impaired child who is the "outcast or disabled" child in their home school becomes just like their peers in this setting. This year, the focus will be on orientation and mobility. Children who are blind and visually impaired must learn how to travel independently in familiar and unfamiliar environments. CVRP creates themes based on the needs assessment from teacher, parents, and students. CVRP usually conducts four learning institutes per year. The focus of these institutes are technology, Orientation an Mobility (cane travel), Adventure and a day camp for our "little ones" (elementary) and their families.



See one our Institutes of Learning Camps here (Our Voice):  
<https://youtu.be/FyS9h6D-23A>

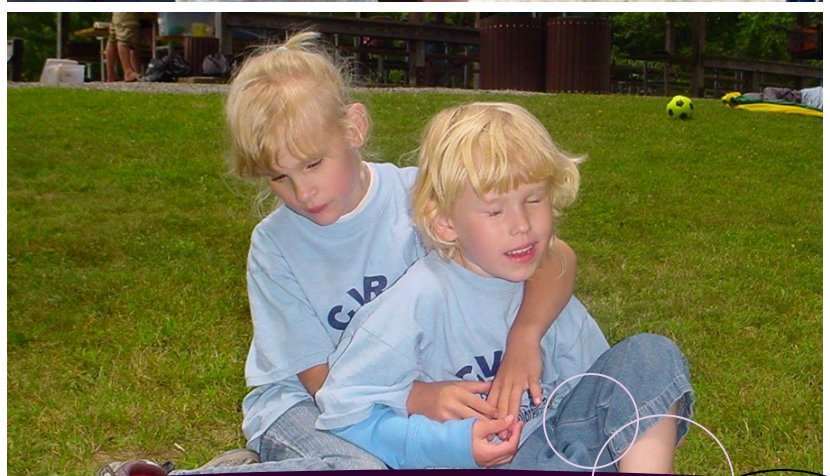


# Institutes of Learning (Summer Institutes)





# Institutes of Learning - Day Camp



## Quotes...

*Thank you for CVRP Camp! Lora is still talking about it!! She had such a wonderful experience and met some new friends. The activities were awesome! Thank you all for taking the time to make wonderful memories for Lora Beth!*

*~Mary D; Fayetteville, WV*

*Thank you once again for providing such a wonderful camp experience for the visually impaired in WV! These camps have given my children the opportunity to meet and make friends with children who are experiencing the same issues and challenges that they are experiencing. I hope you will continue your summer camps for years to come! ~Kay M; Morgantown, WV*







# Institutes of Learning - Adventure Camp

the  ADVENTURE begins



## Quotes...

*Thank you CVRP for all the effort you put into this camp. It was one of the best camps I have ever attended. The ideas you had as well as the experiences themselves, were wonderful, fun and unique. This week will definitely be one I will never forget. ~Katie M.; Fairmont, WV*



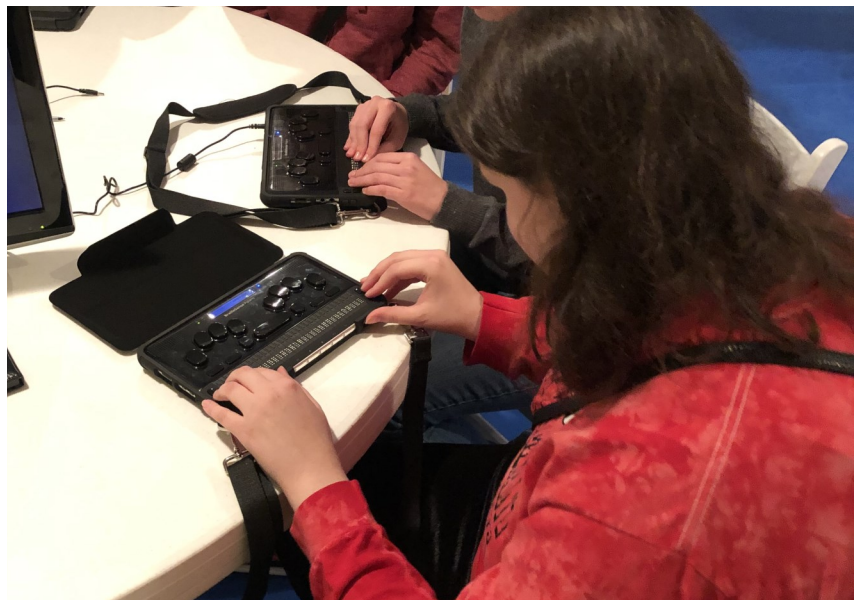
See the experience in action here:  
<https://youtu.be/lZ9jw1AVqvE>







# Institutes of Learning - Technology Camp



## Quotes...

*My experience with the CVRP tech camp was really good. I met some really cool people, got to do some really cool things. The tips and tricks I learned with using the iPad will help me tremendously in school! ~ Luke L; Winfield, WV*

*Thank you to all who make CVRP camps possible. This camp allowed me to come out of my shell and make new friends. I learned how to download apps that will be helpful to use with my vision. This was such a fun experience for me. ~ Cara K; Fairmont, WV*

*Thank you for working with Hannah. Her separation anxiety gets the best of her. The way you handled the situation made her feel safe. I am very thankful for this type of camp for Hannah! She needs these skills to help her become independent! What a wonderful opportunity. ~Samantha K.; Morgantown, WV*





# Institutes of Learning - Technology Camp

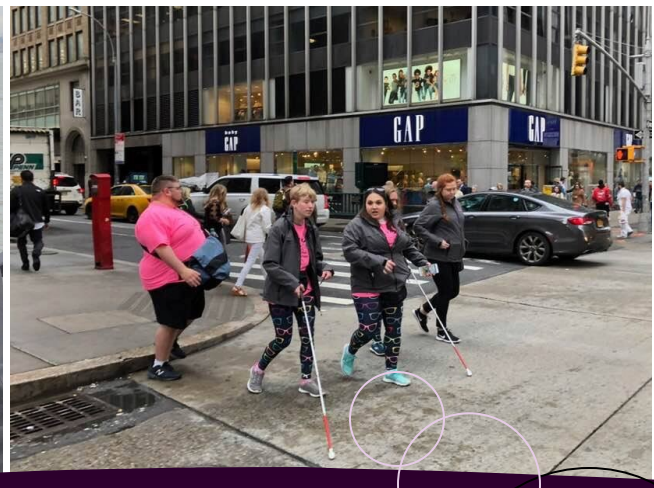




# Institutes of Learning - Orientation & Mobility

## Quotes...

*I just experienced an orientation and mobility weekend I won't forget. It started in Morgantown, my lesson was to order at the food court, which wasn't hard, it was scary, as it was a giant open space. We went to Pittsburgh; when I tell you how perfect it was, compared to here, you may wanna skip past it, because it may make you emotional. When I first stepped out of the van, and realized where I was, I said, this is nice, this is perfect. No crappy sidewalks. The amount of public transportation, buses, subways, uber, options were endless. Accessible pedestrian signals, that told you streets you were crossing and when to cross, from accessible ticket machines, I was walking streets with much confidence, that it surprised me. When we left, I got sad, my eyes got teary, because I knew what I needed and wanted for so long. Finally my amazing journey, I did some travel of Morgantown. I was the main navigator of our group. I used native iOS maps app to get me and the group to destinations specified by our instructor. This experience I'll never forget, and will take with me for the rest of my life. ~ Hope R.; Fairmont, WV*



See the experience in action here:  
[https://youtu.be/i-uCmD\\_Hx2A](https://youtu.be/i-uCmD_Hx2A)





# Mentor Program

Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program (CVRP) continually evaluates the needs of visually impaired and professionals related to this field. Through formal and informal needs assessment studies, it was determined that a Mentor Program was needed.

CVRP created a mentor program which provides education, training, support, and technical assistance in an effort to maintain and recruit quality professionals in the field. Vision professionals in a geographically challenged state such as West Virginia are frequently isolated, with limited professional development and peer networking opportunities. This program includes but is not limited to: educational seminars, literature-based resources, technical assistance, conferences, and a web site to access current vision related information.





# Humanitarian Missions

**St. Lucia** - In 1999, while presenting at the National Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) conference, a nurse from St. Lucia approached CVRP after the presentation with a plea to bring this program to their underserved and underdeveloped country. In St. Lucia, eye care is limited based on ability to pay and there are a limited number of service providers.



The population served in Saint Lucia is similar to West Virginia in terms of both rural distribution and socioeconomic status. Noting these similarities and the effectiveness of the West Virginia program, the Saint Lucia Blind Welfare Association (SLBWA), appealed to CVRP to provide vision rehabilitation services for visually impaired children on the island of St. Lucia.

**Panama Outreach** - San Blas Island just off the Atlantic Coast of Panama where the Kuna Indians have the world's highest rate of oculocutaneous albinism (specifically OCA2), with an estimated frequency of 1:160. The individuals with albinism are called Moon-children or children of the moon, on the theory that one or both parents gazed too long at the moon during that particular pregnancy. Skin cancer and visual impairment plague this population. No access to sun filters, sunscreen, spectacle correction or low vision devices diminish their quality of life and expectancy. This project provided evaluations, sun protection for the eyes and skin, low vision devices, glasses and education.

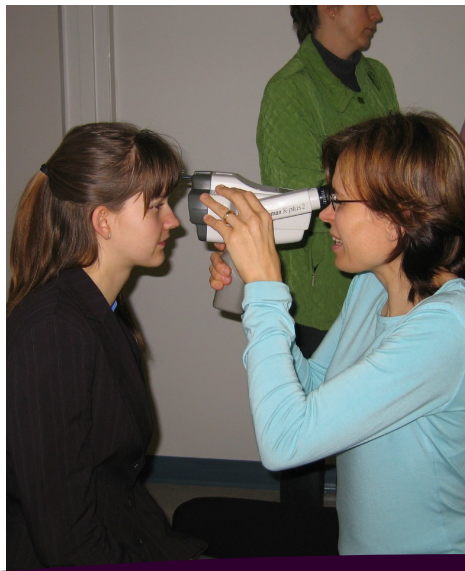


See the Panama Outreach experience in action here:  
<https://youtu.be/9Jbhloun6Ww>



# Project Model

CVRP leads the nation in low vision service delivery. This program has become model for other states in developing care for children with low vision. CVRP has assisted Ohio and Missouri in establishing a program that will address their specific needs. Internationally, British Columbia, Canada adopted and implemented the program October 2005 and Egypt implemented the program in 2012.



# Multidisciplinary Team

**Terry L. Schwartz, MD (Medical Director):** Dr. Schwartz graduated from the WVU School of Medicine and completed an Internship in Pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and an Ophthalmology Residency at WVU. She also completed a Fellowship at the University of Iowa in Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus. She was an academic pediatric ophthalmologist (clinician and surgeon) for 21 years at WVU School of Medicine and is currently at Cincinnati Children's Hospital (CCH) and University of Cincinnati (UC) School of Medicine, where she has worked for the past 9 years. She has expertise in visual development, pediatric low vision rehabilitation and pediatric visual function assessment. She has directed pediatric low vision rehabilitation interdisciplinary programs for 21 years as the founding Medical Director of Cincinnati Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program and WVU Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program serving children with ocular and brain based visual impairment from birth to 21 years of age. She has lectured and designed instructional courses at national meetings on the delivery of pediatric low vision care. She serves on Low Vision Rehabilitation committees for the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus.

**Rebecca Coakley, MA, CLVT (Program Director):** Rebecca Coakley graduated from Marshall University with a Bachelor's Degree in Education, specializing in Elementary and Mentally Impaired, and later received a Master's Degree in Leadership Studies/Administration from West Virginia Graduate College. In 1990, she received her Blind and Visually Impaired Certification from the University of Virginia. She is a certified Low Vision Therapist through ACVREP. Rebecca has worked in the field of visually impaired since 1989. She presents in the area of low vision internationally and has chaired several task forces to establish low vision projects in other states and countries. Rebecca has taught courses for Southwest Missouri State University and is currently an adjunct professor at Marshall University Graduate College, West Virginia University and University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She has been instrumental in creating programs/services in Canada, St. Lucia, Egypt and Panama in the area of low vision. She serves as the Director/ Pediatric Low Vision Education Specialist for the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Project and Adult Low Vision at West Virginia University.

**Paula Lang, MA, CLVT (Low Vision Education Specialist):** Paula Lang graduated from West Virginia University with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, specializing in Human Resource Management in 1995. She received her Master's Degree in Special Education with certification in Low Vision and Blindness from West Virginia University 2011. Most recently, Paula received her certification as a low vision therapist through the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP) in 2014. Paula shares her knowledge of working with individuals with low vision and blindness by presenting at conferences and mentoring new teachers of the visually impaired. She specializes in the area of assistive technology. She is currently an adjunct professor at University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She serves as an Educator of the Visually Impaired and as a Low Vision Education Specialist/Program Coordinator for the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program and Adult Low Vision at West Virginia University.

**Ellen Blaydes, MA, COMS (Outreach Specialist):** Ellen Blaydes graduated from West Virginia University with a Bachelor's degree in History and a Minor in Italian in 2007. She received her Master's Degree in Special Education with certification in Low Vision and Blindness from Marshall University in 2013. She also received her certification in deaf/hard of hearing through Marshall University in 2016. Most recently, Ellen received her certification as an orientation and mobility specialist through ACVREP in 2019. She specializes in the areas of early intervention and orientation and mobility. She is currently an adjunct professor for Marshall University Graduate College and University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Ellen serves as an outreach specialist for the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program with a specialization in orientation and mobility.

**Bethanie Mateer, MA, COMS (Outreach Specialist):** Bethanie Mateer graduated from West Virginia University with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, specializing in intervention services in 2011. She received her Master's Degree in Special Education with a certification in Low Vision and Blindness from Marshall University in 2016. Recently she received a certificate from Salus University for Orientation and Mobility and became a certified orientation and mobility specialist through ACVREP in 2019. Bethanie has shared her knowledge of working with individuals with low vision and blindness by presenting at conferences and mentoring new teachers of the visually impaired. She is currently an adjunct professor at Marshall University Graduate College and the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She serves as an outreach specialist at West Virginia University, specifically providing orientation and mobility services for counties in southern West Virginia.



## Contact Information

If you would like more information or have any questions regarding the program, please contact:

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*Yes, I would like to help support the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program by making a tax deductible donation.*

Please mail completed form and donation (payable to WVU Foundation, Inc.) to:

Paula Lang, MA, CLVT  
WVU Eye Institute  
Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program  
1 Medical Center Drive, PO Box 9193  
Morgantown, WV 26506-9193

*Thank You!*



- ☐ I am enclosing a *tax deductible contribution* of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program (please note CVRP on the memo line of the check). **Please make checks payable to WVU Foundation, Inc.**
- ☐ I would like to talk with someone personally about making a gift. Please contact me at the number provided below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



*B*ringing comprehensive rehabilitation services to  
West Virginia children with visual impairments and blindness