

Insight from Ensignt



Serving people with vision impairments throughout Colorado since 2001

February/March 2021

Ensignt is a nonprofit providing low vision rehabilitation to people throughout Colorado. We are here to help in any way we can, and we welcome your questions.

What's Happening?

February is Low Vision Awareness Month

The leading causes of visual impairment are diseases common in persons over the age of 55, including age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataract, and optic nerve atrophy. National Eye Institute Director Paul A. Sieving says, "I encourage anyone with low vision to seek guidance about vision rehabilitation from a low vision specialist. For many people, vision rehab can improve daily living and overall quality of life." Ensignt shares Seiving's view and provides low vision rehabilitation as well as community education, services that foster independence.

Featured Activity of the Month

Ensignt CEO Virtual Special Presentation for Low Vision Awareness Month

Join Ensignt's CEO on Feb 17 10:00 as she shares her journey with vision loss as well as the changes to rehabilitation and Ensignt's program over the last 20 years. For info email melody@ensightskills.org

Activities

Onsite groups are on hold until further notice due to COVID19

Join a virtual version of the biweekly **Low Vision Support Group** on Thursdays at 3:30, February 11 and 25 and March 11 and 25. We'll meet on Zoom or by telephone.

**For more information, call Ensignt:
970-407-9999**

Ensignt Skills Center
1740 So. College Ave.
Fort Collins, CO 80525
970.407.9999

Curtis Strong Center
918 13th St. Suite 4
Greeley, CO 80631
970.353.9417

For Boulder, Lafayette, and Denver: 888.375.5693

Low Vision News

Vision Loss Organizations form Public Policy Alliance

Two leading U.S.-based associations representing professionals and nonprofit groups serving people who are blind or visually impaired recently announced a new public policy partnership that seeks to improve the way in which America's service delivery systems will meet the unique needs of children, working-age adults, and older people who are blind or visually impaired. The VisionServe Alliance and the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), is aimed at systems change, coordination of efforts, and greater reach as well as resource access.

VSA is a leadership collective whose member organizations provide direct educational, rehabilitative, employment, and independent living services to individuals across all age groups and stages of vision loss. VSA member groups also include major regional and national organizations conducting research, pursuing product development, providing information and referral, offering technical assistance, representing consumers with vision loss, and engaging in public education.

AER is a member organization of VSA. AER is the leading national and international voice of practitioners and leadership representing each of the highly specialized professional disciplines offering consumers with vision loss direct access to education, training, counseling, rehabilitation, independent living, and all other credentialed and supportive services. For more information, visit aerbvi.org or visionservealliance.org.

Enight is an accredited member of AER and a member of VSA.

Staff and Consumer Feature

Q&A with Enight Orientation and Mobility Specialist Danielle Burden

Who might want to use a white cane for travel?

White canes are used by people with a range of vision loss. They help to support a person's safe independent and efficient travel.

When is it time for someone to consider using a white cane?

A person may notice a change in their vision, or difficulty in navigating and traveling in places or areas in which they were previously comfortable. Tripping, falling, bumping into objects or people, uncertainty about drop-offs, becoming disoriented in once-familiar areas, or feeling scared to travel to or in new places may be other indications of a need for an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) evaluation. Individuals should always consult with an O&M specialist prior to using a white cane.

What does Orientation and Mobility Training entail?

The goal of O&M training is to provide a person with the safest, most efficient, and independent travel possible. This looks different for each person depending on their need. Individuals may need skills to travel within their home or to learn how to orient in their environment, use protective techniques or sighted guide. They may need support in training their guide dog on a certain route, or how to use their low vision aids such as a monocular or GPS app. White cane skills can be part of O&M but it is not the only skill set addressed in training.

How do you begin training someone in orientation and mobility?

I approach each situation by building a relationship with the person. It can take a lot of trust to move through space with someone you don't know. I ask lots of questions about the person's vision, their current struggles in traveling, what personal goals and concerns they may have about O&M. I may ask them to show me certain areas of their living environment such as the route to the mailbox, stair access, structures on their property. Generally, we start indoors in a familiar area, then as the person is comfortable we move to outdoor or unfamiliar indoor areas. Street crossings, transportation options, etc., are addressed as the person is comfortable.

How did you connect with Enight, and how has it been helpful?



Enight Skills Center
1740 S. College Ave.
Fort Collins, CO 80525

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Funding Options

Enight has many wonderful partnerships with funding organizations, including some with Larimer, Weld, and Boulder counties that pay for our services. Call the office to find out if you are eligible for these benefits.

Enight's Consignment Program

Enight is looking for used assistive technology components. If you have a CCTV or low vision aides you would like to donate, Enight will put them on consignment. Once they sell we will give you a percentage of the fee. This is a great way fo us to provide affordable equipment to our clients. If you have questions about dropping off, pick up, or the consignment process, call us at 970.407.9999.

Enight's E-Newsletter

If you are interested in switching to our e-newsletter, please send a request to info@ensightskills.org. If you do not receive the e-version, please contact Melody at melody@ensightskills.org.