



# SHARED VISIONS

**SUMMER 2015**

## **VISTA CENTER TEAM TEACHES LIVING SKILLS FOR SAFE AND HEALTHY LIVES**

**At Vista Center we know that vision loss does not prevent anyone from living an active, independent, safe and fulfilling life. We also know that when someone is new to vision loss, accomplishing the daily tasks of life can be very daunting.**

**Vista Center has a dedicated team of professionals who work with clients in their homes to help them learn new skills and adaptations so they can perform these daily tasks with ease and confidence while incorporating their own techniques to make life easier, safer and more healthy. In this article we will meet three staff members who work with our clients. They will share tips and techniques you can adapt to your own environments.**

**Carla Frazier is a long-term Daily Living Skills instructor with Vista Center. She has helped hundreds of clients over the years learn how to adapt their homes and apply simple techniques to enable them to perform tasks that are viewed as visual. Her adaptations are focused on the needs of the client and she brings years of experience to each client meeting.**

**Sharon Hudson, Associate Director of Vista Center, continues to work with clients in addition to tending to her administrative duties. Sharon is also a wizard in helping clients create organization out of chaos. Due to her longevity in the ADL field, she pretty much has a solution to any daily living skills challenge and is a valuable resource to our clients and staff.**

**Nancy Rosenberg, Occupational Therapist, joined Vista Center's team first as a volunteer and then as an Occupational Therapist in 2014. Nancy has the wonderful ability to listen to what is concerning the clients and then she diligently works with them to solve their dilemmas. Noted below are handy hints these three professionals shared so you can incorporate them into your life as well.**

### **Organizational Ideas**

**Organizational skills can help you cope with the world around you. They provide structure, create a semblance of order and reduce daily stress levels.**

**When you are visually impaired it is a lot harder to just search around and hope you will find something.**

**Yes, organizational skills are about having a place for everything and everything in its place. When this has been mastered you won't waste countless hours trying to find your most recent bank statement or last year's tax return.**

**Things to think about when you are creating a system are:**

- 1. What needs to be organized? Is it papers, canned goods, medications, clothes, etc.? Knowing that will help determine what method will work for filing/tracking the item.**

- 2. Have the non-necessary things been taken away? Is the junk gone?**
- 3. What type of system will work? Here are some possibilities to consider:**
  - a. Color coding**
  - b. Braille labels**
  - c. Large print labels (if large print is readable)**
  - d. Audio labels created with a device such as the Penfriend (available at Vista Center's Store in Palo Alto)**

**Use the best storage tool for the item, such as expandable file folders, letter boxes that can be labeled or a file cabinet. Keep the supplies for the system with the files, for example, color dots for marking folders, heavy markers for labeling files, and empty file folders for new topics.**

**Keep your favorite tools close by for easy access. Most of us have an abundance of pens, but we usually use only a small group of "favorites". Pick out the pens that you tend to use the most and keep them in their own container. You can mark the pens with contrasting colored rubber bands or tape for easy identification.**

### **Kitchen Tips**

**The simplest way to use a microwave is to mark the 1 minute button and possibly the 30 seconds button (depending on make of microwave) with a marker or bump dot, and only use those buttons. Each time you push the button it adds time and will go off when you are finished. There is no way of accidentally hitting other buttons.**

Use a tray when you are pouring or measuring. If you do it over a tray and spill, it is easy to clean by wiping the tray. When preparing anything with ingredients, put all the ingredients on the tray and as you use them take them off the tray, which saves having to remember, “did I use it or not?” The tray keeps everything together so you don’t need to search for anything.

Use 3x5 cards or smaller to make large print labels for foods, or use the Penfriend for audio labels. You can laminate the cards if the cards are for refrigerated foods. The cards can be stored in a basket or card file for creating a shopping list.

If you want to keep the organization of kitchen shelves easy to follow for sighted family members or house mates, labels can be posted on cupboard shelves.

Frequently-used kitchen utensils can be marked on their handles with waterproof colored tape or rubber bands, or you can buy utensils that are made in contrasting colors. Put away tools that you rarely use to reduce clutter. Favorite tools can be stored together in a container near your stove.

### **The Color Contrast Rule**

Use light colored objects against dark backgrounds, and dark colored objects against light backgrounds. Use contrasting colors that you see well. When you are pouring dark liquids, such as orange juice or coffee, use a light colored cup. Place the light colored cup on a dark plate, placemat or tray. When pouring light liquids such as milk, use a dark cup placed on a light plate or placemat.

Use a dark cutting board for light colored foods, and a light cutting board for dark food. Vista Center's Store carries a cutting board that is white on one side and black on the other.

## Personal Items and Clothing

### Marking Clothes:

Coordinating one's wardrobe can be accomplished with the following techniques:

1. **Safety Pins (must be small brass pins so they won't rust in the wash)**

This method uses small safety pins to identify colors in clothing. You must create a simple method that will be remembered. It involves placing a safety pin in a specific hidden spot for each color on each garment.

For example:

- For shirts —tail, side seams, cuffs (side w/button or side w/hole), middle inside collar, under collar points, middle back tail
- For pants — waistband to match the position of color on matching shirt (e.g., blue shirt with pin on left front tail and matching blue pants w/pin on left front waistband)

2. **Commercially Available Products for labeling clothing**

- ***Braille Labels***
- ***Match Makers***: Special plastic covers with large tactual dots are bonded to nickel plated safety pins.
- ***Teflon Scott Tape***: This tape can be brailled on a slate, cut to size, and sewn into clothing items. The tape is 1/2 inch wide and 5 feet long.

- *Puff Paints*: raised marks can be created in any shape.

**Uses for humble rubber bands:**

**Adding a rubber band to help you distinguish between two same size containers is an easy tactile modification. Put the rubber band on the shampoo bottle to separate it from conditioner.**

**These handy hints are just a few examples of techniques for creating organization and methods for making visual tasks easier. The staff at Vista Center is available to work with you in your home to create systems designed for your specific needs. For more information, please contact Vista Center at 650-858-0202 in Palo Alto and 831-458-9766 in Santa Cruz.**

### **CHOICES AND CHANGES – ADJUSTMENT TO VISION LOSS CLASSES IN PALO ALTO**

**Our Choices and Changes class is open to adults with visual impairment and their family members (if the client is enrolled) and is led by Vista Center's social services staff. This class introduces clients to services, equipment, and resources available to help in adjusting to vision loss, and increases understanding of the adjustment process.**

**The next set of classes will be offered the following Thursday mornings from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM: October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 8<sup>th</sup>, October 15<sup>th</sup>, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, and October 29<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in attending, please call Jo Jaros at 650-858-0202 extension 115 or Alyssa Brodeur at extension 131.**

**SAVE THE DATE – LOW VISION EXPO IN SAN JOSE**

**Vista Center and the Santa Clara Valley Blind Center will host the Low Vision Expo in San Jose! This event is designed to educate blind or visually impaired individuals, their families and friends about the resources, aids, latest technology, and services available to them through Vista Center, SCVBC, and other local organizations in the community. The program schedule will include a doctor presentation, technology segment, and plenty of time for the attendees to visit with exhibitors.**

**If you would like to attend, please pre-register by calling 650-858-0202 extension 110. Please check our web site for updates about the Low Vision Expo.**

**When: Saturday, October 17, 2015**

**Time: 10:00AM – 4:30PM**

**(Registration begins at 9:00AM)**

**Where: Santa Clara Valley Blind Center**

**101 North Bascom Avenue**

**San Jose, CA 95128-1805**

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW LOW VISION OPTOMETRIST IN SANTA CRUZ**

**Dr. Jill Fajardo is a graduate of Berkeley School of Optometry and completed a low vision residency at the Veterans' Affairs Hospital in Palo Alto. She will be evaluating clients at our Low Vision Clinic in Santa Cruz the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. We are very excited to have her join our team. Welcome Dr. Fajardo!**



for the blind and visually impaired

**FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

### **How to Contact Us**

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