

## TALKING POINTS

1. The Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) helps Vermonters with a vision problem to stay independent and remain in their community. National statistics for our type of services says that without them,
  - a. They are 15 times more likely than other seniors to end up in a nursing home.
  - b. They are 17 times more likely to fall and break a leg than other seniors.
  - c. That timely service is needed to prevent these things from happening.
  
2. We actually save the State money. Our services cost less than \$1000 a year per client. A nursing home costs \$70,000 a year. Many of our clients express their concerns that they will end up in a nursing home due to their vision loss. But by the end of our services, 98% of those who had those concerns say they no longer have that fear.
  
3. We serve 65% more clients yearly than we did 11 years ago – the last time we saw an increase in funding. Our Staff is maxed out. We cannot provide them all the services we'd like as we don't have the time. It's more of a Band Aid approach. I am requesting \$50,000 in additional funding from the State. This, in addition to the Federal Global Commitment Funds would mean a total increase of about \$230,000. We currently subsidize the program by \$300,000 a year and can't afford to increase that amount.
  
4. The effects of this increase would:
  - a. Allow us to hire additional staff to handle the increase in clients that we are serving. Our staff cannot take on more than their current workload.
  - b. Prevent a backlog which would likely result in clients getting discouraged and having to leave their home and/or hurting themselves due to their vision loss and not being able to receive timely services.
  - c. Offer technology training to our clients as the apps and features on smartphones and iPads can greatly improve the quality of their lives as well as helping them to remain independent.
  
4. We cannot fundraise the additional money. There is a lot of competition for funding due to cuts made to many non-profits over the last few years. We already fundraise as much as we can in trying to reduce the current \$300,000 subsidy.
  
5. Most elders want to stay in their community and to stay independent. Please help us to do so with our visually impaired neighbors.

