



# Years of Changing Lives

AFB Annual Report 2011

**The American Foundation  
for the Blind expands  
possibilities for people  
with vision loss.**

# 90 Years: Looking Back, Moving Forward

For AFB, 90 years is a milestone, no question about it.

For nine decades, AFB has championed access and equality for those with vision loss. With each passing year, we've stood at the forefront of new technologies. We've revolutionized the blindness field, crafting innovative tools and strategies for educators and other professionals. And we've been instrumental in opening doors to employment and social participation once thought beyond the scope of people with visual impairments.

In sum, AFB has transformed a culture of presumed dependency into one where vision loss need not define the parameters of independence and achievement for anyone.

One might think that 90 years' worth of victories warrants a moment or two to pause, reflect, celebrate...

And we would, but we're much too busy meeting the next challenge, rising to ensure opportunity, empowerment, and engagement for individuals with vision loss of all ages and walks of life.

It is fitting, then, that even as this report glances back to key moments in AFB's historic journey, our focus is forward. In these pages, you will learn about the successful expansion of AFB's CareerConnect® employment network to Canada, the latest eLearning webinars for vision loss professionals, and the fruits of our consulting work with leading U.S. companies. Meanwhile, innovations like our newly launched FamilyFriends social network are ending the days when disability meant isolation; we are using technology to create a supportive virtual community of parents eager to learn from one another as they share the experience of raising children with visual impairments.

With every new advance, there is always a new challenge affecting the vision loss community—

a weak economy, shifting legislative priorities, new technologies that need to be adapted for people with limited vision. Over 90 years, only AFB has gained the expertise and authoritative voice to address these challenges.

Our diligence and attention are always required.

What do 90 years of achievement mean to us at AFB? Nostalgia and satisfaction of a job well done, certainly; but above all, we view our past 90 years as a solid foundation for the vital work ahead of us.



*Carl R. Augusto*

Carl R. Augusto  
President and CEO



*Concetta F. Conkling*

Concetta F. Conkling  
Chair, Board of Trustees

## 1921

AFB is founded with the support of philanthropist M. C. Migel.



## 1924

Helen Keller begins her 44-year tenure at AFB.

## 1932

AFB develops Talking Books and Talking Book machines. These long-playing records, played on special machines, were made available free of charge. For many of the thousands of Americans with vision loss, a wealth of literature and knowledge was readily available for the first time in their lives.



## 1938

AFB plays the leading role in the passage of the Wagner O'Day Act, which radically improves employment opportunities for people with vision loss. This law required the federal purchase of blind-made products and led to the creation of the National Industries for the Blind.

## 1945

AFB sets up a “model shop” to research and develop aids and appliances for those with visual impairments.

## 1945

Following World War II, the Veterans Administration requests AFB to help set up its rehabilitation program for blinded soldiers. M. C. Migel, AFB's President and CEO, gave what was at that time a large donation of \$10,000 toward the establishment of the Blinded Veterans Association.



## 1952

AFB creates the Tellatouch, a machine that resembles a typewriter, enabling sighted and deaf-blind individuals to communicate with each other.

## 1959

AFB develops and begins offering early childhood services and workshops to help train special education teachers and professionals.



## 1966–67

The federal government and AFB team up to sponsor the initial development of management and program standards for agencies and schools serving those with vision loss throughout the country. These efforts led to the creation of the National Accreditation Council (NAC), which administered the program of accreditation and standards-development for the field.



## 1975

AFB presses national leaders to pass the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, which provides equal educational opportunities for children who are blind or visually impaired. This issue arose again 19 years later, when AFB led the advocacy effort to ensure children with visual impairments receive their textbooks and classroom materials on time and in braille, large print, and electronic formats.

## 1985

AFB establishes the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI), the first organization for parents of children with visual impairments. This paved the way for FamilyConnect<sup>®</sup>, a new website introduced in 2008.



## 1986

AFB establishes the National Technology Center at its New York headquarters. It was renamed AFB Tech in 2002 and relocated to a larger facility in Huntington, West Virginia.

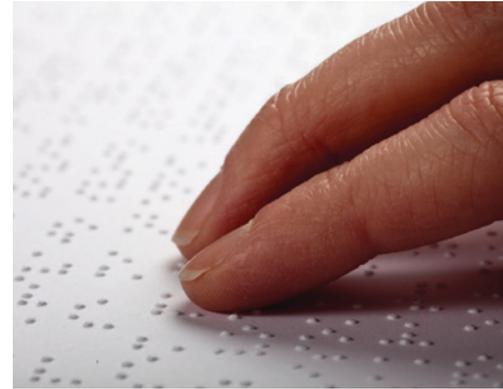


## 1990

AFB is instrumental in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This landmark civil rights law gave Americans with disabilities more public access and greater protections against discrimination.

## 1996

AFB launches its accessible website, [afb.org](http://afb.org).



## 1999

AFB opens the National Literacy Center in Atlanta, Georgia, which plays a major role in the advancement of braille literacy.

## 2002

AFB fights to ensure that people with vision loss can vote independently and privately. Great progress was made with the passage of the Help America Vote Act.

## 2006

AFB opens its Center on Vision Loss in Dallas, Texas, to help provide information to older Americans with low vision.



## 2010

AFB leads the way for passage of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, which requires television programs, smart phones, and other modern communications technologies to be accessible.

## 2011

AFB gives professionals in the vision loss field the tools they need to stay on top of cutting-edge research, adaptive technology, and best practices. AFB has, to date, published over 500 books and other titles about blindness and visual impairment.

**Today, the American  
Foundation for the Blind  
helps the 25 million  
Americans with vision loss  
achieve their full potential.**

# Helping families with children

No one has more insight or better advice for parents faced with the challenges of raising a child with a visual impairment than another parent who has been there. In partnership with the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI), AFB created FamilyConnect® as an online community where parents of visually impaired children from across the country can exchange advice, concerns, and daily triumphs simply by logging on.

In 2011, AFB launched FamilyFriends, a new social networking feature that allows users to

create and post a customized “parent profile” that can be shared with other parents whose children belong to the same age group, have the same eye condition, or live in the same community.

“We are raising a 6-year-old who is blind in a rural community. There are no other children in town like my son, but through FamilyConnect, I have a neighborhood from around the world that gives me the opportunity to reach out to other parents in our same situation.”

—Emily Coleman, FamilyConnect parent



Source: 2009 American Community Survey (ACS)





**6.5 million**  
Americans age 65  
and older report  
experiencing significant  
vision loss.

Source: 2008 National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey

# Helping older Americans

Over the next 20 years, as the baby boomer generation ages, rates of vision loss due to degenerative eye disease are expected to double. AFB is prepared to play an integral role in helping seniors and their families receive the tools they need to lead full, independent lives.

AFB Senior Site® is a Web community that offers visitors information on how to remain independent and continue to perform everyday tasks like cooking, paying bills, and reading despite vision loss. Senior Site also features message boards and inspiring video testimonials from people who

refuse to allow their vision loss to set them back. In the past year, Senior Site added a number of new resources to help older individuals live more independently and safely, including a detailed checklist for choosing an assisted-living or retirement community.

*“AFB Senior Site’s eTips have made a big difference in my life. They are short, easy to read, and give me practical advice on things like organizing and identifying the bills in my wallet.”*

—Lloyd Barnard, Senior Site user

# Providing professionals with the tools they need

AFB is working for a future where the needs of the rapidly expanding number of individuals experiencing vision loss are met by a community of informed, highly trained professionals. To that end, AFB is adding to its arsenal of online training tools.



Source: Vision and Aging: Crossroads for Service Delivery

The population of individuals with severe vision loss is growing faster than the number of qualified rehabilitation personnel to help them.

The AFB eLearning Center on Aging and Visual Impairment teaches healthcare providers the latest methods for helping visually impaired seniors maintain their independence. In 2011, the eLearning Center added popular new webinars on reading without seeing and the management of diabetes-related foot disorders.

To further meet the needs of professionals, this year AFB Press published an expanded two-volume edition of the field's seminal textbook, *Foundations of Orientation and Mobility*, as well as *Reach Out and Teach: Helping Your Child Who Is Visually Impaired Learn and Grow*, an essential resource for educators and early interventionists.

**"AFB and AFB Press provide me and other personnel preparation professionals and our students with the publications and resources we need to do our jobs well, and ultimately, help people with vision loss live full lives."**

—Ellen Trief, EdD, Professor, Hunter College



**Only 19%**  
of legally blind adult  
Americans (18 and  
older) are employed.

Source: Blind Adults in America: Their Lives and Challenges

# Preparing job seekers

Financial independence is a pipe dream without viable employment. AFB is dedicated to helping capable candidates who are visually impaired find rewarding careers.

AFB CareerConnect® is a Web resource that illustrates to adults who are blind or visually impaired the diversity of career paths available, provides interview tips, connects job seekers to mentors, and more. Career Clusters, a new feature added in 2011, allows job seekers to explore a range of professional positions “clustered” together by field, including law,

education, and health care. And with the addition of CareerConnect Canada™, Canadians with vision loss now have access to this employment and networking resource as well.

“I chose to be a mentor in order to encourage others with a visual impairment in the pursuit of their career goals. Hopefully, I have given a few folks practical guidance on how to become an attorney and encouragement toward the pursuit of that goal.”

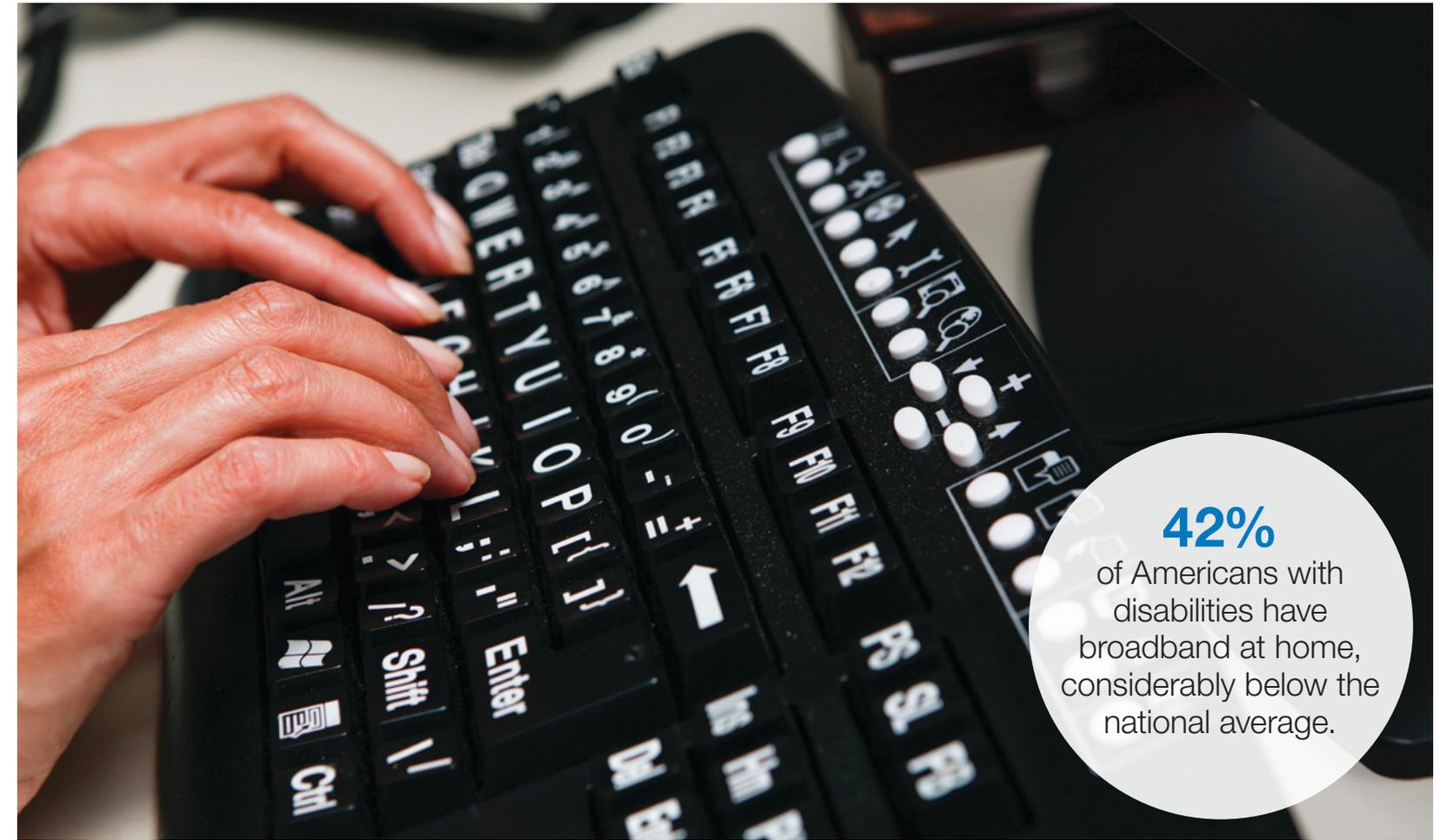
—Richard Chen, attorney and CareerConnect mentor

# Making technology accessible

AFB is committed to helping companies supply user-friendly devices to individuals with vision loss. The AFB Tech team evaluates mainstream and assistive technology and collaborates with companies to ensure the latest products meet the needs of consumers with visual impairments. These evaluations are published in AFB's popular online magazine, *AccessWorld*®, as well as in leading industry journals. In 2011, AT&T, Verizon, and Sony Ericsson worked with AFB's consulting arm to help make their popular cell phones more accessible to people with disabilities.

“Thanks again for your excellent work, in particular your continuing coverage of the cell phone market. Your articles on cell phones and other equipment help me greatly personally, and in [the] work I do to assist other blind and visually impaired people through the Kansas Rehabilitation Services.”

—Todd, vision rehabilitation counselor and *AccessWorld* reader



**42%**  
of Americans with disabilities have broadband at home, considerably below the national average.

Source: FCC survey, October-November 2009

# Advocating on Capitol Hill



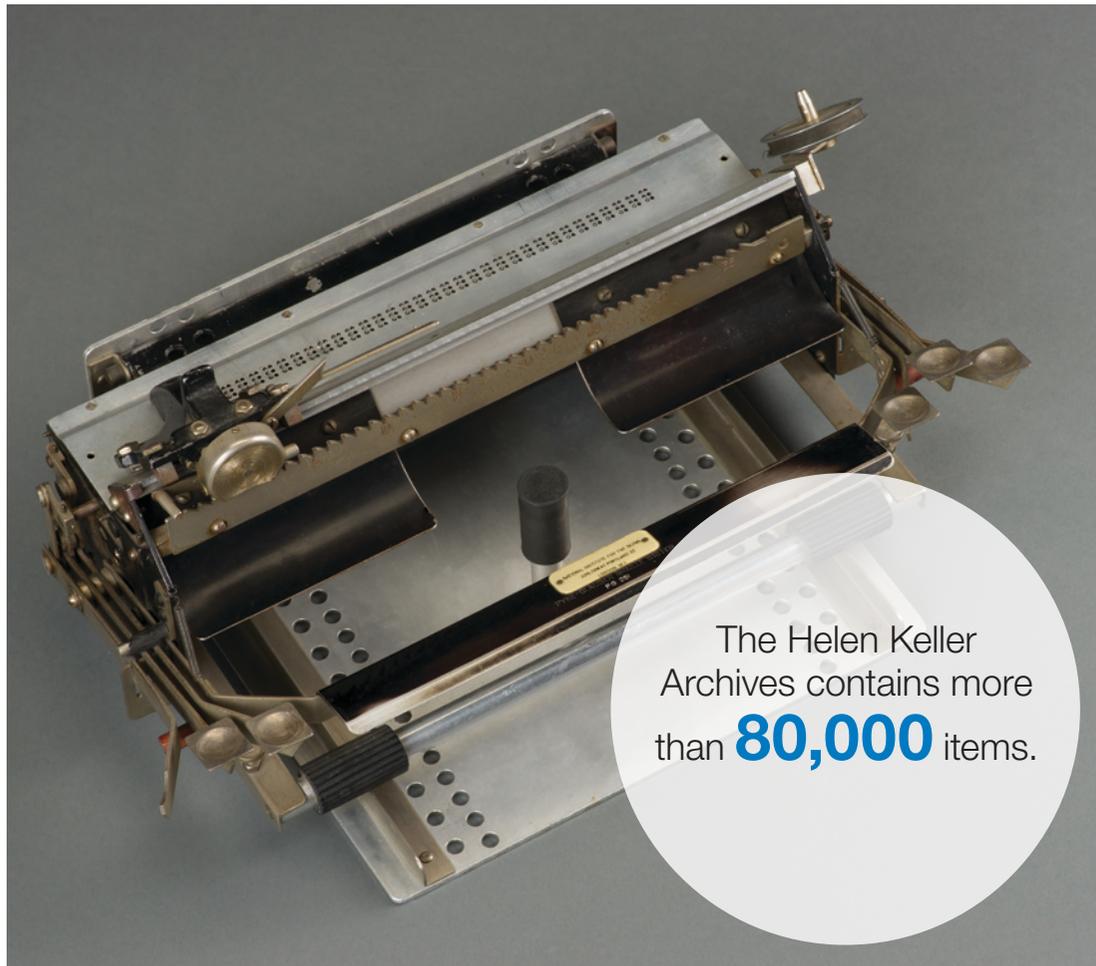
An estimated  
**25.2 million**  
adult Americans have  
significant vision loss.

Source: 2008 National Health Interview Survey Provisional Report

AFB's Public Policy Center is a leading voice in our nation's capital. The policy team advocates for fair federal and state programs that affect the education and rehabilitation of people who are blind, as well as laws that relate to their economic status and civil rights. AFB led the way for the enactment of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, signed into law by President Obama in October 2010. This new law improves access to television programming and smartphones. In addition, in 2011, AFB's Public Policy Center focused its attention on making paper currency more accessible and making prescription labels easier to read.

*"The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act will make it easier for people who are deaf, blind, or live with a visual impairment to do what many of us take for granted—from navigating a TV or DVD menu to sending an e-mail on a smartphone."*

—President Obama, joined by disability activists, signing the historic legislation at a White House ceremony, October 2010



The Helen Keller Archives contains more than **80,000** items.

Pictured: Helen Keller's Honorary Oscar, 1955 and her travel Braille Writer, 1946 (seen in a folded position)

# Bringing the Helen Keller Archives into the digital age

With her brilliant writings and commitment to social action, Helen Keller continues to inspire each new generation. The letters, photographs, and artifacts that comprise the record of her public life remain as relevant as ever.

Thanks to a generous matching grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation, many of Keller's greatest treasures will become more widely available to the public. This past year, over 250 artifacts from AFB's Helen Keller Archives were digitized with the goal of creating an online

museum. It's fitting that in its 90th year, AFB continues to employ the latest technology to ensure that Helen Keller's legacy will inspire hope and social change for generations to come.

*"Touch each object as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail. Smell the perfume of the flowers, taste with relish each morsel . . . Make the most of every sense; glory in all the facets of pleasure and beauty which the world reveals to you."*

—Helen Keller

# 2011 Financials

The full set of financials can be found  
at [www.afb.org/2011AnnualReport](http://www.afb.org/2011AnnualReport)

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as of June 30, 2011 (with Comparative Totals for 2010, in Thousands)

Assets	2011	2010	Liabilities	2011	2010
Cash and cash equivalents	\$3,756	\$4,542	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$1,364	\$935
Investments, at fair value	37,503	32,362	Accrued postretirement benefit liability	153	212
Accounts receivable, net	377	313	Deferred revenue	226	132
Pledges and grants receivable, net	3,250	3,661	Deferred rent obligation	495	476
Other receivables	199	551	Obligations under capital leases	38	78
Inventories, net	344	353	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$2,276</b>	<b>\$1,833</b>
Prepaid expenses and other assets	154	322			
Property and equipment, net	1,919	2,052	<b>Net Assets</b>		
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$47,502</b>	<b>\$44,156</b>	Unrestricted	\$26,457	\$22,548
			Temporarily restricted	14,879	15,996
			Permanently restricted	3,890	3,779
			<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$45,226</b>	<b>\$42,323</b>
			<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$47,502</b>	<b>\$44,156</b>

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

as of June 30, 2011 (with Comparative Totals for 2010, in Thousands)

Revenues, Gains and Other Support	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2011	Total 2010
Public Support	\$1,788	\$1,229	\$78	\$3,095	\$2,840
Legacies and bequests	4,007	1	33	4,041	1,657
Grants from government agencies	-	557	-	557	146
<b>Total Public Support</b>	<b>5,795</b>	<b>1,787</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>7,693</b>	<b>4,643</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>					
Sales, primarily text books and other publications	787	3	-	790	1,533
Investment activity	4,396	1,766	-	6,162	4,927
Royalty and other income	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous revenue	436	188	-	624	2,882
<b>Total Other Revenue before discontinued operations</b>	<b>5,619</b>	<b>1,957</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,576</b>	<b>9,342</b>
Less revenues from discontinued operations	(24)	-	-	(24)	(864)
<b>Total Other Revenue from continuing operations</b>	<b>5,595</b>	<b>1,957</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,552</b>	<b>8,478</b>
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	4,861	(4,861)	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>16,251</b>	<b>(1,117)</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>15,245</b>	<b>13,121</b>

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS, CONTINUED

as of June 30, 2011 (with Comparative Totals for 2010, in Thousands)

Expenses	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2011	Total 2010
<b>Program Services</b>					
Knowledge building and information dissemination	\$4,072	-	-	\$4,072	\$3,981
Technology solutions	3,618	-	-	3,618	3,148
Advocacy and public policy	818	-	-	818	770
Production, sale and distribution of audio material	(5)	-	-	(5)	1,189
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>8,503</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,503</b>	<b>9,088</b>
<b>Supporting services</b>					
Management and general	1,073	-	-	1,073	1,572
Fundraising	2,785	-	-	2,785	3,201
<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>3,858</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,858</b>	<b>4,773</b>
<b>Total expenses before discontinued operations</b>	<b>12,361</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,361</b>	<b>13,861</b>
Less expenses from discontinued operations	5	-	-	5	(1,189)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES FROM CONTINUING OPERATIONS</b>	<b>12,366</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,366</b>	<b>12,672</b>

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2011	Total 2010
<b>Change in net assets before loss on discontinued operations and postretirement related changes</b>	<b>3,885</b>	<b>(1,117)</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>2,879</b>	<b>449</b>
Gain (Loss) on discontinued operations	29	-	-	29	(325)
Postretirement related changes other than net periodic costs	(5)	-	-	(5)	8
<b>Changes in net assets</b>	<b>3,909</b>	<b>(1,117)</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>2,903</b>	<b>132</b>
Net assets, beginning of year	22,548	15,996	3,779	42,323	42,191
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>26,457</b>	<b>14,879</b>	<b>3,890</b>	<b>45,226</b>	<b>42,323</b>

# Our Donors

**AFB relies on the support of many generous donors to ensure that people with vision loss have access to the resources they need to live independent, productive lives. We appreciate the generosity and commitment demonstrated by our supporters. Although space limitations permit only a partial listing, our deepest gratitude goes to all our loyal friends.**

**Thank you for all your support. It makes a difference in so many people's lives.**

# AFB Miracle Workers

We would like to pay special tribute to the Miracle Workers, our leadership group of individual supporters whose gifts have an enormous impact on our work.

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\*multi-year pledge payment

\*multi-year pledge payment

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\*multi-year pledge payment

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Family, friends and the Center on Vision Loss Board contributed over \$6,000 to the Dallas-based Center on Vision Loss in honor of Judy Scott's induction into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in September 2010.

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*AFB is deeply grateful for the contributions of in-kind gifts and professional services.*

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*This year, the following companies matched gifts their employees made to AFB.*

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## Bequests

*We honor the memory of those whose bequests were received in the past year.*

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Pictured: Incense burner, Japan, early 19th century. Gift to Helen Keller. Portrait of Helen Keller by Alexander Clayton, 1956



## Lions Clubs International Foundation

In 1925, Helen Keller addressed the annual convention of Lions Clubs International, and asked that they answer the call to foster the work of the American Foundation for the Blind. This year, the Lions and AFB collaborated to fulfill Ms. Keller's wish.

Contingent upon raising \$150,000, Lions Clubs International Foundation pledged an additional \$50,000 to implement the digital conversion of more than 250 artifacts within our extraordinary Helen Keller Archives. We are proud to have met the challenge, due to the generosity of foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the country. The Lions' grant enabled us to engage many new partners, and to begin the critical process of digital conversion, so that the Helen Keller Archives may be preserved and accessible for future generations.

We are deeply grateful to Lions Clubs International Foundation, and we look forward to a longstanding partnership so that, together, we may carry on the important and enduring legacy of Helen Keller.

# The Helen Keller Society

The Helen Keller Society, established to ensure the future of the American Foundation for the Blind, perpetuates the good work of Ms. Keller for future generations. Through bequests and other planned gifts, the members of the Helen Keller Society provide substantial support to AFB, and, depending upon the type of gift, provide for their own future as well. We are proud to welcome our new members, whose names appear in bold.



# The Helen Keller Society

- |                            |                             |                            |  |                         |
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New York, NY 10121

P: (212) 502-7600  
F: (888) 545-8331 or  
(646) 478-9555  
(Executive Office)  
E: afbinfo@afb.net

**AFB Huntington**  
1000 Fifth Avenue,  
Suite 350  
Huntington, WV 25701

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Suite 513  
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P: (202) 469-6831  
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