
Hadley Supporting Aging Adults With Vision Impairments During Pandemic

WINNETKA, IL (September 1, 2020) — It's becoming increasingly demanding keeping up with rapidly-changing recommendations and rules about staying safe during COVID-19.

The scope of the outbreak poses unique challenges to daily life - social distancing, lack of reliable transportation, and local services closed to in-person appointments. Leaving the house while coping with these new circumstances can be stressful for anyone, on the other hand, staying at home can lead to cognitive concerns, including depression, resulting from long-term isolation.

Now imagine these same challenges for the 11 million people in the United States that have some form of age-related macular degeneration. Daryl Pratt, a longtime Arlington Heights resident, is among them.

It was hard enough for the Vietnam vet and retired Motorola salesman to identify people's faces due to macular degeneration. Now, it's even harder to recognize others while their faces are partially covered. Similarly, social distancing for those with low vision is impracticable when they are unable to see six feet in front of them.

For the blind and low vision community, the existing constraints brought about by the pandemic have created added obstacles that can contribute to their already vulnerable circumstances and can thrust them quickly into a world of near-total isolation.

Through his own experience with vision loss, Daryl was able to recently serve a vital role in assisting other low vision individuals as part of a group of advisors and beta testers selected for their input on the recent design and implementation of the new Hadley.edu.



“The last thing I needed was a pandemic that forced people to wear masks.”

Daryl Pratt, Arlington Heights
Diagnosed with macular degeneration in his mid-50's

“I come in contact with a lot of folks who are recently diagnosed with macular degeneration,” said Pratt. “It can hit you like a Mack truck—they go from having perfect vision to being nearly totally blind so quickly that it is really scary.”

As distance learning experts for the past [100 years](#), Winnetka-based Hadley serves those with vision loss by providing services at no cost. Hadley’s practical help is offered via audio and video-based, professionally-staff tutorials as well as hard copy materials sent in the mail. And their popular call-in discussion groups are held monthly on a wide variety of topics.

About Hadley

The mission of Hadley is to create personalized learning opportunities that empower those with vision loss and blindness to thrive --- at home, at work and in their communities. A 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, Hadley relies on contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations to fund its programs.

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