

# Thrive

Expanding Our Impact  
Through Outreach

Reimagining  
Employment and  
Entrepreneurship  
Opportunities

finding hope  
and independence  
through Hadley



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ON THE COVER: Hadley Learner Dawn Bilpuch studies Unified English Braille.

## Hadley by the Numbers

Since launching our new learning platform in July 2020, we've had:

42,000+  
*workshop enrollments*

72%  
*completion rate*  
*(much higher than online learning benchmarks)*

97%  
*helpful ratings*

## What's Hot at Hadley

Our recently launched Braille for Sighted Learners series is drawing the highest online participation. Other popular topics include:

- Organizing Your Home
- Preventing Falls
- Cooking
- Labels

If you or a loved one is interested in learning through Hadley, visit [hadley.edu](http://hadley.edu).

**YOU** MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HADLEY LEARNERS TO THRIVE AT HOME, AT WORK, AND IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



# A Letter from Julie Tye...

**I** am awed by your generosity. The past year has been challenging for everyone. Despite these difficult circumstances, you have remained committed to helping Hadley's blind and visually impaired learners. We are grateful for your support.

Your generosity has allowed people to learn new skills and to relearn old ones without the benefit of sight. Thanks to you, people adjusting to life with vision loss are finding ways to maintain their independence—and finding support among a community that shares their obstacles.

Even in the best times, finding employment with a visual impairment is difficult. Now, high unemployment

caused by COVID-19 makes this even more challenging.

The Forsythe Center for Entrepreneurship and Employment (FCE) helps people with vision loss obtain needed skills for employment or self-employment. We are excited to announce that our FCE offerings have recently been revamped and relaunched on Hadley's new learning platform so we can help more people secure or create job opportunities. With the population of adults with age-related vision loss projected to grow significantly over the coming years, employment opportunities will be even more critical. Hadley is now poised to meet this demand. You can read more about this on page 6.

Hadley may be a century old, but as this revitalized programming demonstrates, we are more relevant than ever.

There are many factors that account for this achievement but one of the most important is the role of the Board of Trustees. For the past century, the women and men who serve

as trustees have worked diligently to ensure that Hadley remains available, free of charge, to anyone who needs us. We are thrilled to announce we have expanded the board to include a number of new members. You will meet a few of them here.

Also, in the following pages you will be introduced to Hadley learners Alicia Starner, Clifford Miyashiro and Dawn Bilpuch. Their stories highlight how Hadley has made a difference in their lives and how grateful they are to you, our donors, who make this possible.

On behalf of Hadley and its thousands of learners, I echo their thanks. In fact, this is a favorite part of my role as Hadley's president. Every time I sign a letter—including this one—my heart is filled with gratitude for your kindness and support.

Thank you.

Julie S. Tye  
President

**our mission** Hadley creates personalized learning opportunities that empower adults with vision loss or blindness to thrive—at home, at work and in their communities.

# Finding Hope and Happiness through Hadley

"You gave me my mental health back. I was depressed and didn't believe anything was possible. Now, I'm starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel." —Dawn Bilpuch



"I cherish my independence. In fact, some people may say I cherish it too much."  
Dawn Bilpuch

**T**wenty-four years ago, Dawn Bilpuch's mother turned to Hadley so she could teach braille to her infant daughter who was born blind. Now, Dawn is a Hadley learner, too.

"Hadley means everything to me," Dawn declares. "Thanks to Hadley I have hope. Thanks to Hadley I can read braille again. I can be independent. I can attend college and achieve my dreams."

Dawn's dream is to become a high school counselor for kids

"By donating you are giving people hope, independence, connections, support and much more. Thank you for bringing happiness and hope into my life."  
—Dawn Bilpuch

with multiple disabilities but, a few years ago, life put some obstacles in her way.

Shortly before her high school graduation, Dawn lost access to the expensive equipment she relied on for communicating in braille. In addition, the braille code that she used her entire life was replaced by Unified English Braille (UEB), a new standardized code adopted across English-speaking countries. Dawn would need to relearn significant aspects of braille so she could once again access books, magazines and other resources in order to go to college and earn her degree.

Once Dawn found out that learning UEB through Hadley did not require special equipment, she enrolled and got to work. She progressed swiftly through the modules and is now up to speed on code changes and prepared to read college text books.

Hadley is also helping Dawn in her daily life. She was excited that Hadley's new platform allowed her to create an account independently and start learning immediately. In addition, "it is great that I can visit the website as many

times as I want or need to,” she explains. To date, she has completed nearly 50 workshops across a wide range of topics including safety basics, orientation & mobility, labeling, iPhone and iPad, dining out, and cooking.

One of Dawn’s goals is to live independently, so workshops on safety-related topics—such as labeling and preventing falls—have been among the most helpful. However, she also likes “that it’s not all educational stuff, there’s fun stuff as well.” Some recent highlights include Hadley’s new workshop on birdsongs and learning how to draw with her Perkins braille.

Dawn also participates in Hadley’s podcast and discussion groups, such as Embracing Braille and Resource Roundtable. These have been a wonderful way to make connections, pick up tips and share her own ideas. If she misses a workshop, she goes back to listen from the archives.

Dawn, who loves and relies on technology, wishes she had known about Hadley’s resources earlier. Before taking Hadley workshops on the iPad and iPhone, she was mostly self-taught, recalling, “the only



A Hadley braille course helps Dawn prepare for her future.

training I received was the helpful employee in the Apple store when I first bought my iPad four years ago, and I would also call Apple’s accessibility helpline. I had to rely on the kindness of people’s hearts, the user’s manual and my own technology knowledge to train myself.”

“Hadley is a great place to get information and resources. Plus, it is free.” Dawn explains, “Being visually impaired is

expensive. It requires special training and equipment, and people who are visually impaired and their families are paying for this out of pocket.”

To Hadley donors, Dawn sends a “huge thank you.” She elaborates, “By donating you are giving people hope, independence, connections, support and much more. Thank you for bringing happiness and hope into my life.” ■

“Hadley means everything to me. Thanks to Hadley I have hope. Thanks to Hadley I can read braille again. I can be independent. I can attend college and achieve my dreams.”

—Dawn Bilpuch

# Hadley Reimagines Employment & Entrepreneurship Offerings

Finding traditional work is challenging for people with visual impairments. According to the National Federation of the Blind, over 70 percent of working-age adults with vision loss are not employed full time. This number will grow as the population of adults with low vision is projected to increase dramatically—from 2.9 million in 2010 to 8.9 million in 2050.

To address this need, Hadley's Forsythe Center for Employment and Entrepreneurship (FCE) offers free technology and entrepreneurship instruction to people with vision loss. Founded in 2011 with the generous support of Sandy and Rick Forsythe, the FCE is the nation's only business training program developed by and for people with visual impairment.

Colleen Wunderlich, Hadley Chief Strategic Partnerships Officer, who has led the FCE since 2013 and is blind herself, is inspired by the Hadley learners she meets, sharing, "Observing and working with our learners continues to build my own character. Their resilience, self-discipline, and fortitude humble me. They take total responsibility for creating their success. They live life on their own terms."

Focused on maximizing the FCE's impact, Wunderlich explains, "It is the entrepreneurs who make the FCE a proven success. We can create quality programs, but if no one utilizes them to launch a business, the Forsythe Center cannot accomplish its mission." So, with the aim of enhancing curriculum, broadening reach and helping more people create employment

opportunities and be financially independent, the FCE recently reimagined and relaunched its offerings on the new Hadley learning platform.

## REVISED RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD TRAINING

Under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, blind vendors have priority for the operation of vending facilities on all federal property—including cafeterias, snack bars, and convenience stores—as well vending areas on military bases, municipal property, and rest stops nationwide.

Since 2014 Hadley has partnered with the National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM) and the National Federation of the Blind Entrepreneurs' Initiative (NFBEI) to help people who are blind or visually impaired to become licensed Randolph-Sheppard vendors.

The FCE offers online curriculum on topics such as food safety, customer service, and business management for states to train and license these vendors. While some states continue to provide this programming independently, Hadley is the exclusive provider of this training to 31 states and a very important partner to NABM. Hadley learning expert Scott Cass, who developed Hadley's Randolph-Sheppard training, explains, "This partnership amplifies the Randolph-Sheppard Program's outreach, standardizes



Todd Williams runs a vending facility in a small university.

training expectations and provides consistency so business enterprise program directors know that a credentialed trainee has achieved all of the expected training outcomes.”

To help blind entrepreneurs stay current with changes in policies, food safety and technology, the FCE team recently revised this curriculum. The new program encompasses feedback from students, business enterprise directors, vision rehab counselors and other stakeholders, and offers more hands-on practice.

“Hadley’s distance learning is a welcome alternative for most states, which were unable to train their blind entrepreneurs in person.”

—Scott Cass, Hadley Learning Expert

“COVID-19 has also had a big impact on the program,” Cass shares. “The difficult part is that a majority of government facilities have greatly reduced their populations which severely impacts a vendor’s income.” However, he continues, “Hadley’s distance learning is a welcome alternative for most states, which were unable to train their blind entrepreneurs in person.” To help navigate COVID-19 challenges, Hadley also developed special webinars on subjects including new technologies and micro markets that allow for safer, touchless transactions.

#### INSPIRING AND SUPPORTING ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS

“Because employment opportunities have been limited for people with visual impairments, it is vital to

provide a chance to explore and pursue entrepreneurship as a way of creating jobs and careers,” states Larry Muffett, a Hadley learning expert who works with FCE learners.

Therefore, Muffett and the FCE team revised Hadley’s entrepreneurship curriculum and launched the Starting a Business series. This series is built around the business model canvas created by Swiss business theorist Alexander Osterwalder and is a framework that is used throughout the world by

business leaders and top business schools. Muffett explains that this approach is effective because “it devotes more time to having the entrepreneur answer some basic, yet crucial, questions about the business. Through this process the entrepreneur ‘paints their own canvas’ to arrive at those answers.”

The curriculum is organized in eight modules, beginning with The Business Idea, and continuing through Activities, Resources, and Partners; Market Potential; Marketing; Measuring Viability; Making a Profit; Making an Impact; and writing the Executive Summary.

A series of video interviews with business founders provides real-life examples and lessons for aspiring entrepreneurs. Also, an interactive workbook

accompanies the workshop. As learners complete the workbook exercises, they are creating the building blocks of their business plan and addressing fundamental issues they will face in starting a business. Once done, they will have a plan ready to pitch to potential funders or partners.

With the ability to review the workbooks, Hadley’s learning experts provide feedback and support along the way. Learners can also reach out to the Hadley team for help when they have a question or want to discuss their idea and work.

Muffett shares, “Some learners will find their idea is not viable, or that entrepreneurship is not for them. However, doing so before committing time and money is one of the best things we can do for them.” He continues, “Others may be able to verify that they have a viable enterprise, which can start them down the path to success. What could be more exciting than helping learners chase their dreams?”

#### BUILDING BUSINESS SKILLS

For those who wish to gain practical business skills, the FCE also introduced a new workshop series on Using Excel with a Screen Reader. This series progresses from beginning through advanced skills so learners can build their knowledge, at their own pace. As always, Hadley learning experts provide help and encouragement and are easily accessible to assist. ■

# Meet Hadley's New Trustees

Hadley is grateful to its Board of Trustees for the support, expertise and insight they bring to the organization. We invite you to meet some of the individuals who are making an impact.



## PAUL EARLE

An expert on entrepreneurship, Paul Earle was instrumental to Hadley's Starting a Business workshop. Hadley's FCE team partnered with Paul to achieve its new vision for the program and, recently, he also joined Hadley's Board of Trustees.

Paul is Principal at Earle & Company, where he works with companies on innovation, branding and design. Previously, as the executive director at Farmhouse, Leo Burnett's innovation and new venture center, he helped clients develop new brands, products, services, and experiences. In addition, Paul is an adjunct faculty member at

Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, where he co-teaches "Corporate Innovation & New Ventures." He also writes a regular column on innovation and entrepreneurship for Forbes magazine.



## JENNIFER WAINWRIGHT

Jennifer Wainwright's father lost vision in one eye in a childhood accident, so she always understood the fragility of vision. This was a reason she was active in Hadley Woman's Board for over a decade.

A few years ago, the vision in her dad's 'good' eye began to diminish and he became completely blind. Without his independence, he grew isolated and depressed. Familiar with Hadley, Jen knew there were ways to continue the activities he loved, and she assisted him with this transition. This experience made Jen even more passionate about the critical need Hadley fills. As a trustee, she believes,

"If I can help one other person not feel the way that my father did when he lost his vision, I will be successful."



## BARBRA BUKOVAC

Barbra Bukovac is Vice Chairman of the Mid-Central Region of PwC, where she leads the firm's Assurance, Tax and Advisory service delivery and practice development. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Barbra remains active on the University's Gies College of Business Dean's Business Council. She has been honored by prestigious organizations for her civic and professional contributions. Soon after Barbra came on board, she recognized ways that PwC could support Hadley. With her guidance, Hadley secured a \$25,000 grant from PwC for the new assistive technology workshops.

Barbra and her husband have two daughters. She is excited to be part of Hadley and "to work with Julie, her team and others in furthering Hadley's mission."

# Defining Vision Loss

There are many terms we use to describe vision and vision loss. While words themselves cannot fix vision problems, they can help people who are visually impaired find the best solutions and information. Here's a short explanation of some of the most common terms:

## 20/20 VISION

This is the benchmark for good vision. Someone with 20/20 vision can see details as clearly from 20 feet away as others with good vision.

Now, change the numbers. What if someone has 20/200 vision? This individual sees the same detail from 20 feet that a person with good vision sees at 200 feet.

## FUNCTIONAL VISION

When one's eyesight is poor, but still useful enough to perform daily tasks, it is functional vision. Functional vision may require someone to modify their home and rely on assistive technologies to improve their visual experience.

## LOW VISION

If someone lacks the vision to do the things they need to do, it is considered low vision. Many

factors can cause this including age-related eye disease, such as macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Low vision cannot be corrected with glasses or surgery.

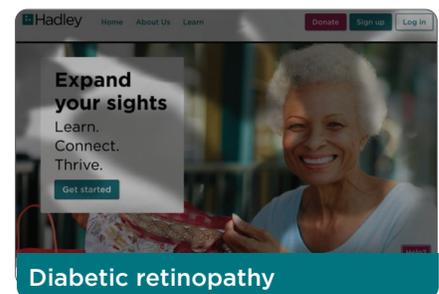
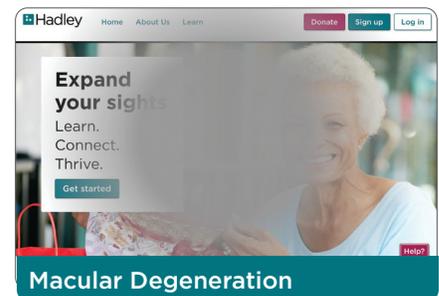
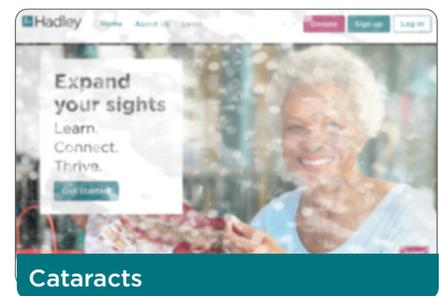
## LEGAL BLINDNESS

Someone with vision of less than 20/200 is considered legally blind. In most cases, people who are legally blind have some degree of vision. However, the legal aspect of this is important as it may make them eligible for benefits.

## TOTAL BLINDNESS

When someone has no vision at all, even the ability to see light or dark, they have total blindness. While this is what most people think of when they hear the word "blind," in truth, it encompasses only a small portion of people who have blindness.

Because of your generosity, Hadley helps people across the spectrum of vision loss. It is practical support for older adults who are adjusting to life with low vision, discussion groups that connect people who are isolated due to vision loss, braille workshops for people who are visually impaired, and much more. ■



For more on this topic, visit Hadley's workshop on the Degrees of Vision Loss, part of the You, Your Vision, and Your Doctor series at Hadley.edu.

# Learner Alicia Starner Evolves with Hadley

“Hadley is like a friend who walks with me and enriches my life through learning. Hadley is a wonderful place where visually impaired people can gather to learn and grow in a supportive, friendly environment.” —Alicia Starner

After raising her three children, Alicia Starner is taking time for herself. She loved being a stay-at-home mom but now, at age 47, is ready “to figure out what I want to be when I grow up.” So, with an interest in pursuing a career in social work, she returned to school and earned her BA in general studies in 2018. Learning through Hadley helped Alicia achieve this milestone.

Born with Leber congenital amaurosis, a rare genetic eye disorder that affects the retina, Alicia has been blind since infancy. Although she did not have learning or behavioral issues, she was placed in her high school’s special education classroom due to her blindness. Here, she did not have access to the education she would need to succeed in college. So, in 2002, Alicia began building skills through Hadley.

Over the next two decades Alicia completed more than

25 Hadley courses on subjects including math, braille and computers. “These skills were invaluable to me,” she explains.

Recently, Alicia has been focused on brushing up her braille skills so that she can increase her independence. This means learning Unified English Braille, which requires relearning significant aspects of braille. To practice and reinforce her knowledge, she has also participated in Hadley’s braille pen pal program.

Alicia adapted easily to Hadley’s new learning platform and has completed workshops including Audio Labels, Seeing AI, and Measuring Tips and Tricks. Pleased with the new approach, she shares, “I truly love Hadley and how it has evolved since I started many moons ago.”

“Hadley has helped me overcome many hurdles,” Alicia says. This includes borrowing equipment through Hadley’s braille writer loaner program, as well as receiving help and support from Hadley learning experts. Hadley’s distance learning model also makes learning convenient and



Alicia Starner

accessible for Alicia who lives about an hour east of Kansas City, MO.

While Alicia has been a learner for many years, she understands how Hadley “helps those who are newly blinded understand that losing their vision does not mean their life is over.” She explains, “they must learn skills that allow them to do the things they always did in a different way,” and Hadley can help them “read braille with the fingertips instead of print with the eyes, discover what types of technology are available to them, and learn how to make their homes safer.”

Alicia is grateful to Hadley donors for making this possible: “Your investment paves the way for people who are blind or visually impaired to reach for the stars. Your gift allows them to learn at home in a comfortable environment and gives them the confidence to be a productive member of society.” ■

**THANK YOU  
FOR HELPING HADLEY  
LEARNERS THRIVE.**

# Hadley Efficiently Expands Reach and Impact

With our online platform and reimagined workshops, Hadley is prepared to help thousands more people manage life with vision loss. Because this new learning model is scalable, we can also do this extremely efficiently, at a low incremental expense.

“We want to be as helpful as we can,” explains Kirby Lindgren, Hadley director of professional outreach. However, a key step to helping is making sure the vision community is up to speed on everything we have to offer.

For example, Hadley is building a referral network of medical professionals, such as retina specialists, glaucoma specialists and low vision optometrists.

Research reveals that early intervention is most effective to mitigate the negative outcomes that accompany vision loss—such as loss of mobility, depression and a lower quality of life. Yet, when receiving a low vision diagnosis, many patients do not know that help is available or where to find it. By educating eye care professionals about Hadley, we can be there to help their patients manage this challenging transition.

For Kirby, who grew up with three blind siblings, this



outreach initiative is “more than a job, it is a personal calling.” In addition to medical eye care professionals, he is working with public and private organizations that serve the visually impaired as well as senior living communities.

Early results of these efforts are encouraging, including a 171% increase in referrals from vision professionals versus the same period last year. In addition, Hadley has recently been featured in several publications that will help inform professionals and individuals about how we can help.

While COVID-19 has made it difficult for him to meet with professionals and

organizations in person, it has also made them very receptive to Hadley’s message. He explains, “Since Hadley has a 100-year head start in distance learning, they recognize that we can help them help their patients.” Now, by combining a century of experience with our new, scalable learning model, Hadley has significant opportunities to help many more people in the future. ■



Visit the Hadley Newsroom ([hadley.edu/newsroom](https://hadley.edu/newsroom)) for more.

**YOU** MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HADLEY LEARNERS TO THRIVE  
AT HOME, AT WORK AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

## Hadley Learning Supports Quest for Independence



Clifford Miyashiro with his grandson

**Glaucoma first set in** when Clifford Miyashiro was in his late 40s. Five years ago, he lost most of his remaining vision.

Now 74, Clifford is dedicated to building skills he will need to stay independent without sight. This requires hard work and is a physical undertaking, as well as

“It is a challenge to learn to live without sight and requires a lot of problem solving.” —Clifford Miyashiro

a mental one. “I have never used my brain as much as I do now. It is a challenge to learn to live without sight and requires a lot of problem solving,” he states.

Recognizing technology’s potential to help him, Clifford took Hadley’s iPhone workshop. He did not have much technology experience when he began so Hadley’s online format, which lets him replay the modules to reinforce his understanding, is ideal. With patience and perseverance, he mastered the material and now uses his iPhone to communicate with others.

Clifford next learned VoiceOver, which allows him to listen to text on the screen rather than read it. Thanks to this, he now easily reads

and dictates communications, accesses music and entertainment, browses the web, and researches topics of interest. “It is also a good companion,” he explains, “I like that it talks and listens to you.”

To prepare for a future without vision, Clifford began Hadley’s Braille for Sighted Learners series. He also enjoys connecting with others in Hadley discussion groups.

Over the past year Clifford has become a dedicated Hadley learner and shares, “Hadley has been so convenient during COVID-19, and has been very positive and encouraging, with good techniques and support.”