

Hadley Provides Access to Practical Help for Visually Impaired Residents Across Rural America

WINNETKA, IL (November, 15 2021) -- More than 60 million people, or one in five Americans, live in rural areas of the country. Residents of rural communities face different challenges than those in urban areas, including lack of public transportation, making it difficult to access needed social services, assistance and in-person help. For those with low vision or blindness living in small town America, these challenges are compounded by their already vulnerable circumstances, with added restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

Angela Rader is among the 20 percent of us who call rural America home, describing her town of Ash Flat, Arkansas as a close-knit, proud, community of neighbors and friends who always supported each other, but located far from “big city” resources. Diagnosed with macular degeneration, Rader is one of the thousands of visually impaired and blind individuals who have turned to [Hadley](#), a leader in distance and online learning for visually impaired adults, to overcome distance barriers to vital resources and stay connected to practical help at home and work, regardless where they may reside.

During November’s annual conference of the American Academy of Optometry, new data from the World Report on Vision identified the lack of access to appropriate assistance for the blind and low vision community as a major issue, noting the inequalities in rural and low-income areas, specifically among women, elderly individuals, indigenous people, ethnic minorities and disabled individuals.

For [more than a century](#) Hadley, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has been the nation’s leader in distance and online learning for visually impaired adults from all 50 states and more than 100 countries. Hadley recently launched its new online learning hub, [Hadley.edu](#), built on many months of research and based on the needs, wants and desires of visually impaired adults, the platform is available at no cost and provides help from live topic experts.

“Being able to access resources that improves the quality of life for older adults with vision loss or are blind has opened up a world of opportunity for those with visual impairments,” said Ed Haines, Hadley’s Chief Program Officer. “For those in rural areas of the country, online and distance learning has been a real gamechanger, particularly when in-person assistance is difficult to get to or not available during the pandemic.”