

Thrive

 Hadley

**With your support,
Hadley helps
people:**

- Gain Confidence
 - Build Connections
and Community
 - Navigate Life with
Vision Loss
-



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ON THE COVER: Bill Massey is helping Hadley pilot its Peer to Peer mentoring program

Leave a Legacy that Changes Lives

Include Hadley in Your Estate Plan

We are grateful for the gifts and foresight of donors that make it possible for Hadley to provide its services free of charge. Because cost is not a barrier, Hadley is accessible to anyone who turns to us for assistance.

By making a gift to Hadley in your will or estate plan, you will be helping people long beyond your lifetime.

There are many options for an estate gift including naming Hadley as the beneficiary of a retirement account (like an IRA or 401k), a donor-advised fund, or an existing insurance policy. A bequest through your will can provide Hadley with a



specific gift, a percentage of your estate or a residual gift - what is left in your estate once all other obligations have been met.

If you already have or are planning to make a gift to Hadley in your will or estate plan, thank you! Also, please let us know so we can welcome you to *The Clarence Boyd Jones Society*, a special recognition group for donors who have shared their planned gift intentions with us.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Brooke Voss at 847.784.2774 or brooke@hadleyhelps.org.

New Hadley Mentor Program Builds Community

Hadley has launched a peer-to-peer mentoring program to connect individuals who are early in their adjustment to vision loss with peer volunteers who are a few steps further down the road.

“When facing a new challenge, it is helpful to talk to someone who has been there before,” explains Faye Evensky, a licensed clinical social worker on Hadley’s support services team who oversees the program. “This type of support is hard to find, but it can be so beneficial. People gain peace and comfort from someone who truly understands what they are going through.” Faye reports that the program is getting results. “Mentees are gaining skills and confidence. They feel more comfortable going out to do things thanks to the guidance and encouragement they receive from their mentors.”

Currently in its pilot phase, the initiative has matched nearly 50 sets of mentors and mentees. The pairs are encouraged to speak on the phone for 45 minutes every other week to start. Once the relationship is established, they decide what works best for them. It is important to note that mentors are not therapists. If someone needs additional support, Hadley Support Services can point them to resources in their hometown.

Given the great interest in and results of this program, Hadley is planning to increase the number of participants. This does take time because the Hadley team considers many factors to ensure the pairings are successful. “There’s an art and a science to this,” explains Marc Arneson, Hadley’s director of community. “It needs to be done in a thoughtful manner so that everyone benefits.”

The feedback from everyone involved has been excellent. For the mentees who are newer to vision loss, mentors are a wonderful source of information and understanding. “This was the



missing piece,” explains Sarah Fulmer. “It was really nice to talk to somebody else who has lost her vision. I have a lot of questions about how to manage. It’s very empowering to hear her say, ‘Yeah, it was really stressful for me, too. It was complex and difficult. But now I’m 20 years on the other side of it and I’m just adjusted to my life.’”

Mentors share they are also benefiting by building connections and having a greater sense of purpose by helping others. Sheila Shulleeta, who has been a mentor to two people, including Sarah, observes, “I think what it’s giving the mentees is a person who can relate and encourage and listen. And it is good for me, too. It makes me feel good to help them. I am so glad Hadley is addressing both the practical skills and the social/emotional side of vision loss. Both are so very important.”

The support people are receiving begins with you, our donors. Because of your generosity Hadley can provide programs that build connections and community for people with visual impairment. This includes Hadley’s popular discussion groups that give people the opportunity to meet virtually with others who share their interests. Now, through the mentor program they can build valuable one-on-one connections too. ■

Mentor Bill Massey Assists Peers and Gains Confidence

Bill Massey retired from a career in marketing and advertising at the age of 60. Not ready to stop working, he embarked upon a second chapter as a sixth-grade art and art history teacher, which he describes as “the lowest paying but most rewarding job.” Having taught six class periods per school day with 35 students per class, and getting all new students every 18 weeks, Bill figures he taught about 5,000 kids during his 12 years in the classroom.

He retired from teaching in 2015, at the age of 72, because he could no longer travel to the school. Bill’s glaucoma had progressed to the point that he had to relinquish his car keys. Four years later, he could no longer read print.

Bill found Hadley through a presentation at the North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind, where he trained on the white cane and low vision skills. It was a trip to the doctor’s office that prompted Bill to call. He recalls, “It was humbling to go to an office building and have to wait for someone to get in the elevator to push the button for me.” That was when he decided to learn braille.

Learning and Sharing Braille

Braille has many benefits for Bill, including allowing him to navigate public spaces to find



Bill Massey is a mentor to three other Hadley learners

“The best thing that has happened to me was being asked if I would be a Hadley mentor. It has given me a sense of confidence.”

the right floor, suite number or restroom. “It sounds like a little thing, and you don’t do it very often, but when you do, it is pretty important,” he says. He also likes the mental challenge and puzzle aspect of braille. He practices by writing to friends who use braille and brailles famous quotes to practice his punctuation.

Bill also continues his love for teaching by encouraging the kids in his neighborhood to learn about braille. He writes nursery rhymes in braille for them to translate. When they get it right, he rewards them with candy. If the kids find he has made a mistake, he gives them extra!

“ There is a path to blindness, and then there’s a path through blindness. The sooner we can find resources like Hadley on our way to blindness, the better off we are going to be in getting through it.”

Becoming a Mentor

Hadley began piloting its mentoring program in 2022 and contacted Bill in hopes he would take part. He recalls, “my first thought was ‘I don’t know I am qualified. I am still struggling through this myself.’ Then, I realized the most important facet of a mentor is to say ‘this is where I’ve come from and what I’ve been through’ to people who have not yet traveled that road. You don’t have to be far down the road ahead of them before you can start sharing insights.”

Once matched with a mentee, “it only took a couple of conversations before I couldn’t tell if I was the mentor or mentee,” he remarks. Both benefitted by building this connection and sharing their experiences and resources. Since then, this network has continued to grow. Bill now has three mentees. He speaks with them individually a couple of times each month. One of his mentees has become a mentor, too.

“The best thing that has happened to me was being asked if I would be a Hadley mentor,” Bill declares. “It has given me a sense of confidence. If I hadn’t been part of it, I would not have thought I have this much to impart.

There were things I didn’t feel comfortable getting involved in that I have no hesitation about anymore. Now, I know I can find my way.”

With this renewed confidence, Bill stays busy with many organizations and activities. He takes classes two days a week and volunteers with several outreach groups for people with visual impairment. Bill has also been named a Hadley Hero for his contributions to the Hadley community.

Hadley’s Impact

“Before I got involved with Hadley and things like braille and the mentorship program, I don’t think I felt like I had much of a future,” Bill states. A Vietnam veteran, he draws a parallel between what he has learned through Hadley and aspects of his military service. “When I was in Vietnam, we had a relatively safe base camp zone we called ‘inside the wire.’ If we went outside the wire, we weren’t nearly as safe. Now, with my blindness, I feel more comfortable going outside the confines of my home and neighborhood, and into the expanse of my community as a whole. The hazards have been minimized.”

Looking back at the early days of vision loss, Bill feels a sense

of frustration that medical professionals did not help him prepare for this transition. “There was a tipping point when I was moving towards blindness that they could have directed me to resources. It saddens me to know how many people don’t know what to do, where to go and who to talk to.”

Hadley fills this gap. As he describes it to others, “There is no better and no broader organization with a wider wealth of resources that I’ve come into contact with than Hadley. It is a tremendous resource for people who are losing sight.” He continues, “Hadley is also extremely encouraging. It makes you feel like, okay, you have a future and now it is up to you to figure out what you want to do with it within the confines of your ability, which is only hampered by your willingness to learn.” ■

You make it possible
for Hadley learners to
thrive at home, at work
and in the community.

Gregory Peterson, Beginning My Next Chapter



Mentee Gregory Peterson has now become a mentor

"I've lived a prosperous life, a fulfilled life," Gregory Peterson states. A resident of Elmwood Park, IL, Gregory spent most of his career as an engineer working on air conditioning and building maintenance. Now 60, he has three grown kids and enjoys spending time with his grandchildren.

Gregory has also lived with low vision his entire life. Diagnosed with cone-rod dystrophy in his teens, he reflects, "I've never seen 20/20, so I don't know what it's like." Then, a few years ago, cataracts led to worsening vision. "That's as good as I'm going to get," Gregory explains. "Now I'm legally blind and that's it."

A family member who has macular degeneration suggested Gregory contact Hadley.

Hesitant at first, Gregory eventually reached out to ask about resources because he had to stop driving. One of the upcoming discussion groups was talking about that very topic, so Gregory joined in—and he's never looked back.

"From there, I dug into the website and began taking workshops," Gregory says. "Because I like to cook, I started with those and found them very helpful. Now whenever I'm done using a sharp knife, I put it behind my sink. That's a tip I use every single day." He has completed nearly 50 workshops on topics including adjusting to low vision, babysitting and seeing AI, a smartphone app that audibly describes what is in front of the camera.

When Gregory was asked if he would be interested in connecting with a peer mentor, he agreed. Within several weeks, he was matched with Bill Massey.

Gregory recalls, "The turning point was when I got my phone call from my mentor, somebody that has gone through and is going through vision loss. This made the difference in where I am now."

Gregory and Bill speak on the phone every two weeks. "We don't talk about 'woe is me.' We talk about life and what's out there to help. He helps me

out and I help him out. Just to have somebody to talk to that's going through the same thing is extremely helpful. You put one foot forward at a time."

Bill introduced Gregory to several other organizations serving the visually impaired community. Gregory jumped right in. "It's been one of the best things for me, and it gives me a purpose now. I'm going to get involved. It's made a big difference for me and my family."

Gregory sums up his current outlook on life, "Well, here it is. This is the beginning of my next chapter." As part of this, he has become a Hadley peer mentor himself. "It's very good to just hear someone else's story; what they're going through and struggling with," he says.

Named a Hadley Hero for his contributions to the Hadley community, Gregory explains, "For me, it's a good thing to serve, to give back a little bit. I reached out and there was a service there that helped me. Now, I just want to pay it forward and help out in any way I can." ■

Scan this code to hear Gregory tell his story on the Insights and Soundbites podcast.



Sonya Teets Maintains Independence

“The discussion groups make me feel calmer and more confident. I realized other people face the same things and do it anyway. So, I can too.”

Braille allows Sonya Teets, who is fiercely independent, to continue doing things for herself. At home, where she lives with family, Sonya puts braille labels on food in the fridge and on appliance settings so she can prepare her own meals and do her own laundry. Outside of the home, she relies on braille to read restaurant menus and elevator buttons. Braille also helps her organize her work schedule and personal calendar. To write braille, she uses the slate and stylus that Hadley provided. She also reaches out to Hadley learning experts if she has a question about using her Perkins brailier.

Sonya started braille with Hadley in 2016 and continued until a family illness required her to pause. When she was ready to resume, Hadley's new Braille for Everyday Use workshop series had replaced the previous approach. Sonya was immediately a fan of the new format, sharing, “I like the way it is laid out. It is less stressful. It flows easier.”

Sonya started losing her vision in her early 30s. She will always

retain some sight, but it is limited to general outlines and shapes.

When driving was no longer possible, Sonya gave up her job as the secretary of public works and the administrator of special events for the Village of Stone Park, IL. She now works from her home as a customer service representative for a catalog retailer. However, she states, “my salary covers my medical bills, and there is not much leftover. If I had to pay a fee for classes, I wouldn't be able to take them.” Thanks to Hadley donors, learning braille is free of charge.

Sonya also benefits from Hadley podcasts. She gleans great information on topics like grocery shopping and socializing, and she recollects how an episode on adjusting to vision loss helped her learn to accept help from others. “I know everyone wants to help, but I prefer to do things myself. The podcast helped me understand that it is okay to let them assist.”

Hadley discussion groups are another important outlet for



Sonya with her dog, Tucker

Sonya who explains, “I can talk to family, but it is not the same as talking to someone who gets what it is like to live with vision loss.” She makes it a point to attend the cooking and fitness groups and listens to the Book Nook replay since it is scheduled while she's working. Recalling a Get Up and Go discussion group that helped her overcome her fear of going to the gym, she shares, “the discussion groups make me feel calmer and more confident. I realized other people face the same things and do it anyway. So, I can too.” ■

Gaining Hope and Supporting Others



Carol Gresslin

“It has made a great difference in my life by providing the information that gives me hope, which is so important to leading a productive life. In other words, Hadley gives hope.”

Carol Gresslin was unable to find a low vision support group near her home in Frisco, TX, so she decided to start one. Her first step was to reach out to Hadley learning experts who directed her to information about facilitating support groups. Then, she spread word about the group across the 55+ community where she lives and was amazed that nearly 50 people responded with interest. Since then, the group has met monthly with approximately 25 people in attendance at each session.

Running the group is a new experience for Carol, who worked as an accountant and tax auditor before retirement. She selects a discussion topic, researches the subject and identifies useful materials to share. Very often, these resources include information derived from Hadley workshops. Carol also reminds the group about Hadley at the end of most meetings recognizing, “Everybody wants to be independent, but when you lose your vision, it chips away at your self-confidence. The website videos and materials offer us help and hope for retaining our independence.”

Carol discovered Hadley when she was diagnosed with macular degeneration in 2022. Since signing up, she has completed 40 workshops on topics including preventing

falls, keyboarding, cooking, and adjusting to vision loss. Carol likes the website because it is easy to locate helpful information, and she loves the workshops that are full of great tips—such as using task lighting to adjust light for better vision, affixing bump dots to her computer keyboard, and feeling for the place to insert a plug into an electrical outlet.

She is also grateful for the emotional support Hadley provides explaining, “With vision loss, it is hard to know which emotions are common and those which are not. People with vision loss often feel alone in the world, they may isolate themselves from social interaction, become depressed and lose hope. Hadley helps them find others who have similar challenges and offers inspiration from their stories.” She asserts, “It has made a great difference in my life by providing the information that gives me hope, which is so important to leading a productive life. In other words, Hadley gives hope.” ■

YOU are helping
people with vision loss
to discover new ways
of doing things.



Lumata Partnership Expands Hadley Reach and Impact

Hadley has partnered with Lumata Health, a technology-driven health care startup. Their proprietary software helps ophthalmologists identify which patients are at risk of advancing disease due to logistical barriers like arranging transportation or getting prescriptions filled. Lumata then connects each of these patients to a dedicated eye care coordinator to address their personal barriers to care.

Partnering with Hadley made perfect sense. Our organizations offer services that complement one another with the common goal of helping adults facing vision loss discover the assistance they need to thrive. As Hadley CEO Julie Tye explains, “Together we will address many of the key challenges patients face through our shared commitment to empower the lives of those living with vision impairment and blindness.”

Through this partnership, Lumata will encourage their patients to take advantage of all that Hadley has to offer, from workshops on labeling medication or personal care to connecting to emotional support through peers in our discussion groups or peer mentor program. Their care coordinators will even assist patients through the Hadley sign up process. And as always, everything at Hadley is free of charge.



Through this partnership, Lumata will encourage patients to take advantage of everything Hadley offers



Landon Grace, CEO and co-founder at Lumata Health, stated, “We couldn’t be more excited to bring Hadley’s vast library of resources to our patients to improve their everyday lives and continue to help them thrive independently as we work to help them prevent further vision loss. This allows us to address a wider range of obstacles patients with vision loss face.”

Both Hadley and Lumata agree that the biggest winners in this partnership will be the people we serve.

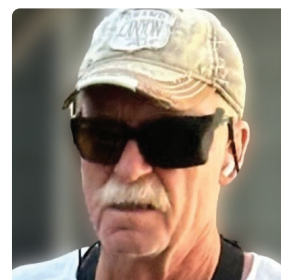
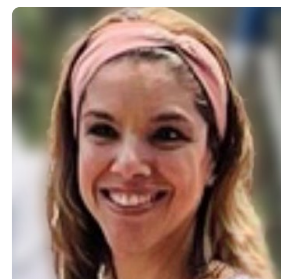
As always, we thank you for your generous support. It allows us to create programming that is attractive to potential partners and help even more people who have impaired vision. ■

Hadley Advisory Panel Provides Important Feedback

Hadley's collaborative approach is key to helping adults with vision loss. Julie Tye, Hadley president, explains, "Turning to our learners for advice and counsel is central to Hadley today. Listening, learning and evolving to meet their needs is key to ensuring we always maximize the ways in which we help people navigate their vision loss."

Hadley's Advisory Panel is a big part of this. This group of volunteer learners was first formed to help with the development and rollout of the Hadley 2.0 new content and delivery system. They provided essential suggestions, identified issues and tested functionality to make it a success.

Since then, the Advisory Panel has continued to grow. There are now more than 2,300 Hadley advisors who offer their time, insights and opinions to help Hadley create and fine-tune programming. Advisors are encouraged to provide suggestions and prioritize topics. They are also asked to evaluate and test initiatives—such as the Braille for Everyday Use series and Adjusting to Vision Loss workshops—to make sure they are ready for launch.



Here are a few of the volunteers on Hadley's Advisory Panel.
Top row: Robert Walker, AZ; Sheila Shulleeta, ID; Alejandra Sanchez, TX
Bottom row: Eric Boklage, IL; Zenobia Carson, MN; Ron Peterson, CA

Hadley team members work closely with panelists to understand what works well and what doesn't. The team incorporates this input and makes needed changes. Then, the review cycle is repeated until everything is right.

However, feedback is not limited to the Advisory Panel, everyone who participates in Hadley's programs has a role. For example, every time someone completes a workshop, they are asked if was helpful and, if so, what they liked best. This information is extremely

valuable to Hadley's product development effort. It helps us understand what is working well and where there are opportunities for improvement. And, of course, the Hadley team always welcomes a call or email from the individuals we serve to learn what they need and how we can help. ■

Thanks to **YOU**, people facing vision loss can learn without barriers or boundaries.

Meet Hadley Advisor Tom Piche

Tom grew up working on cars alongside his dad. "I was a regular Mr. Fix It," he jokes. Given his mechanical aptitude, it wasn't surprising that Tom decided to become a mechanic. He spent the first thirty years of his career working on cars and trucks in several car dealerships. Then, at the age of 47, he reinvented his life and moved to a sales position selling janitorial supplies. He thrived in that role, too.

It was around this time that Tom noticed some blurred vision in his right eye. He was diagnosed with a rare genetic disease that can cause the loss of central vision. With treatment, this improved. Then, a couple of years later he began noticing the vision in his left eye was getting blurry too.

As a regional sales representative, Tom drove a lot - about 3,500 miles a month. With his eyesight making it difficult to drive safely, he had to reinvent himself again at the age of 55. He recalls, "In the beginning, I was overwhelmed. I kept thinking, 'What do I do now?'" His oldest daughter stepped in and began researching. She found resources for her dad, including Hadley.

"I have to say that of all the resources that are out there to help the blind or those with low vision, I have found that Hadley is probably the best

resource that I have available to me," Tom shared after completing a workshop about Talking with Your Employer. He has completed nearly 80 other workshops, many of them on technology topics.

He also participates in Hadley discussion groups; Tech It Out and Resource Roundtable are his favorites. "I really like the mix of people who join the calls. It helps remind me that I'm not alone on this journey," Tom reflects. "There is life after vision loss. You may need to reinvent yourself, but you can learn to adapt and continue to make it a life worth living. It does take time, though. It takes patience."

Tom also volunteered to be a Hadley Advisor. In this role, he answers questions and provides insights about his experiences. Tom has been named a Hadley Hero for his contributions.

Helping others is important to Tom. This is reinforced by his faith, which he has been leaning on more than ever. He reflects, "it's through trials and suffering that we become more compassionate towards others. I like to serve others and I am still able to serve. I know that the value of my life in the end will be measured on how many people are better off because I lived." ■



Tom Piche

“There is life after vision loss. You may need to reinvent yourself, but you can learn to adapt and continue to make it a life worth living. It does take time, though. It takes patience.”



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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.

Presenting the Hadley Woman’s Board 2023 Braille Holiday Card

The 2023 Braille Holiday Card features a whimsical winter scene with stocking-capped cardinals perched on silver birches amid falling snowflakes. For tactile effect, a bird, tree and snowflakes have been embossed. The card carries the interior greeting “Wishing you peace, happiness and the spirit of the season” in both print and braille.

Artist Cindy Fuller is a native of Winnetka, IL. Cindy has enjoyed painting since she was young and explains, “My current pieces are painterly reflections and draw inspiration from happy places both near and far.”

Holiday Cards may also be customized with corporate or personal imprints. Sales begin September 11, 2023. Order online at brailleholidaycard.hadleyhelps.org or call 800.323.4238.

Prefer a Custom Photo Card? Shop on Minted.com. When you use the code FUNDRAISEHADLEY, you will save 20% on your order and Minted will also donate 15% of your purchase to Hadley. This offer also applies to Minted’s personalized stationery, gifts and home décor items and **can be applied any time of year.**

