**July 7, 2025| Vol. 57**

**DELAWARE DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED NEWSLETTER**

** Providing educational, vocational, and technical support to empower and foster independence for Delawareans with visual impairments.**

\*Correction to Last Newsletter: In the last DVI Newsletter, it was written that Norman Jester was a manager at the Delaware Department of Transportation. He is actually a Digital Accessibility Coordinator at DelDOT.

**July is UV Safety Month:** Research indicates that prolonged exposure to intense sunlight can elevate the likelihood of developing cataracts and other eye growths, including cancer.

Ultraviolet rays bouncing off surfaces like sand and water can lead to sunburn of the eyes, which may cause temporary blindness within a few hours.

In recognition of UV Safety Month this July, the American Academy of Ophthalmology emphasizes the necessity of protecting the eyes from the sun's damaging rays by wearing sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays and broad-brimmed hats.

The Sun, UV Light and Your Eyes: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/sun>

**July is National Dry Eye Awareness Month**: This campaign aims to inform the public about dry eye syndrome. By emphasizing ongoing dryness, irritation, and blurred vision, we can enhance awareness and promote early diagnosis. The initiative centers on treatments that include artificial tears, prescription eyedrops, managing screen time, and utilizing humidifiers.

Dry eye risk factors, symptoms, and treatment options: <https://preventblindness.org/2023-dry-eye-awareness-month/>

**Disability Pride Month**: This month marks the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990. It is a time to honor the accomplishments, contributions, and experiences of individuals with disabilities, while also promoting awareness of disability rights and related issues.

**This New Platform Is Changing Travel by Verifying Luxury Hotels for Accessibility and Inclusivity**

By: Kate Nadworny

Date: June 19, 2025

Luxury travel just got a bit more inclusive, thanks to a new platform designed for discerning travelers with disabilities.

Accessible travel company Inclu has just launched a new hotel discovery platform for travelers with disabilities called Inclusive Luxury Hotels. The platform features hotels that have been vetted (or are in the process of being vetted) and awarded "Verified by IncluCare" status for both accessibility and luxury. All the properties featured have demonstrated their commitment to the concept of “conscious inclusivity” for travelers with disabilities, including mobility, sensory, and neurodivergent exceptionalities.

The platform at launch features 18 hotels and resorts in 10 different countries, with a goal to expand to more than 50 properties by the end of 2025.

Verified by IncluCare accreditation was established in 2022 and is awarded to providers who have completed a four-step process of evaluation, education, and transformation led by Inclu’s experts. The program for hotels aiming for accreditation includes a comprehensive Inclusive Hospitality Appraisal of facilities, amenities, and services, an online webinar to train staff, suggested recommendations in an “action and adjustment plan” to improve accessibility and guest inclusivity, and promotion of the property.

Amilla Maldives is the first Verified by IncluCare five-star property, a ranking that is granted only to hotels and resorts who have demonstrated guest inclusivity excellence for a minimum of 24 months. Some properties are also awarded the ranking on a discretionary basis if they can demonstrate an innovative or exemplary provision for inclusivity.

Six other properties on the platform have been granted Verified by IncluCare status, including: The Atlantic Hotel in Jersey, England; Euphoria Retreat in Mystras, Greece; Hotel Éclat Beijing in China; La Miniera Pool Villas Pattaya in Thailand; Leopard Walk Lodge in Hluhluwe, South Africa; and Ximuwu Lodge in South Africa's Klaserie Private Nature Reserve.

Verification requires hotels to make their inventory of accessible rooms clearly visible on the Inclusive Luxury Hotels website and provide fully confirmed bookings, which contrasts with the majority of hotels that often offer accessible rooms on a request-only basis or make them otherwise difficult to find online.

The platform will also highlight “En Route” properties that are in the process of verification and have completed the Inclusive Hospitality Appraisal. Eleven properties currently qualify as En Route, including hotels and resorts in Costa Rica, the U.K., Belize, the U.S., and Turkey.

**Pennsylvania mother continues to go to bat for her visually impaired children with screenplay, "Curveball"**

By: Stephanie Stahl, Brad Nau

Date: June 19, 2025

Fighting for inclusion and ways to overcome adversity – that's the theme of a new movie in the works from a mother in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

This is a family with two sons who have very limited vision, but that hasn't stopped them from belonging to sports teams. Accomplishments that came after their mom went to bat for them.

Kristin Smedley is back in her field of dreams in Richboro, the setting for a screenplay she wrote about convincing a Little League to allow her partially blind 10-year-old son to play on a team.

"It's the story of the power of inclusion, of fighting for inclusion," she said.

Her son, Michael, who's 25 now, said the team eventually rallied around him.

"We were able to talk with them and make some accommodations like hitting off a tee and playing the outfield with another guy on the team," he said.

The team went on to win a championship. Now, the screenplay called "Curveball" is a finalist in the Authentic Global Film Awards.

"Blindness is not a curveball," Kristin Smedley said.

"Things that we maybe perceive as barriers and challenges can actually end up being strengths when you look at it and reframe it from a different perspective," Michael Smedley said.

Full article: <https://www.cbsnews.com/philadelphia/news/richboro-pennsylvania-baseball-curveball/>

**What to Check Out**

**Books:**

Title: When Your Ears Can't Help You See: Strategies for Blind and Low Vision Individuals with Hearing Loss

Description: What do you do when everyone at work and home seems to be mumbling, and you are missing words in your favorite TV shows or talking books? What do you do when the echolocation that used to let you "see" with your ears is suddenly silent? And what happens next when the third (or thirteenth) person tells you they rang the doorbell, and you realize that, no, it is not broken: your ears are? The good news is that, just as you found with working around blindness — whether you grew up blind or lost your sight in your fifties — there are techniques and technologies that can work with limited hearing.

More information: <https://shop.nbp.org/products/when-your-ears-cant-help-you-see>

Title: The Magic Eye: Saving a Life and a Place in the Age of Anxiety

Description: Nothing could have prepared me for being diagnosed with a rare and deadly eye cancer in the middle of trying to save the Kansas land where my husband and I live. From the 2019 diagnosis through the pandemic, I entered into both a risky plan to buy our fifth-generation farm and daunting treatment to survive the large tumor in my right eye. The Magic Eye tells the story of saving a life (my own) and a place, a 130-acre farm we had been actively turning into a wildlife refuge for three decades.

Interview with author: <https://kansasreflector.com/2025/06/08/in-a-forthcoming-memoir-a-kansas-writer-sees-the-land-and-herself-anew/>

Website:

<https://www.carynmirriamgoldberg.com/magic-eye>

**Tools:**

Optaro: A case and camera for an iPhone that transforms the iPhone into a handheld video magnifier with crisp images, high contrast, and plenty of magnification.

The Optaro is a high-quality HD camera, light, and stand built into one unit that connects to a case holding the iPhone.

More information: <https://afb.org/aw/summer2025/Eschenbach-Optaro?ms=N423FEB2EM1AW&emci=e51ce088-ad35-f011-a5f1-6045bda9d96b&emdi=70654063-0437-f011-a5f1-6045bda9d96b&ceid=12500645>

**EVENTS**

**ILS Meet & Greet: Emergency Preparedness and Organization**

**Date**: Wednesday, July 16th from 1:00 to 3:00pm

**Location**: Appoquinimink library, 204 E Main Street, Middletown DE 19709

Please register by calling Laura Gallant at 302- 255-9948 to reserve your spot.

**Walk-In Wednesday**

The next “Walk-In Wednesday” to have all your assistive technology questions answered will be July 30th.

Time: 10am to 1pm

Location: The DVI Training Center 1901 North Dupont Highway. Biggs Building. Door #3 New Castle Delaware 19720



**July DABA Events**

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**July Calendar of Events**

Event of Blind Delawareans, courtesy of Sylvia Reid.



**Outreach Events:**

Delaware State Fair 2025

Date: Saturday, July 25, 2025 from 2:00 to 4:00pm

Location: Rt 13 south in Harrington, Delaware (Delaware Building)

Abundant Life Community Development 2025 Community Health Fair

Date: Saturday, July 26,2025, from 11am to 3pm.

Location: Abundant Life Community Development Center, Enoch Center, 24 Blevins Drive, New Castle, DE 19720

**DVR Pre-ETS Summer Opportunity**

DVR Pre-Employment Transition Services Summer Employment Exploration

*Empowering Students for a Brighter Future* (Flyer below with more information)



**Camp Abilities Delaware 2025**

Camp Abilities Delaware is an educational sports camp for children ages 5-17 who have visual impairments. The goal of CADE is to empower youth with visual impairments through sport, physical activity, and wellness education.

Date: August 3-8, 2025

More details: <https://www.campabilitiesdelaware.org/?fbclid=IwY2xjawLJLe9leHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETF2VVdCNnJMUVZkNlZTWVlwAR5xH_hI4e6coOLwRA_6SxxO7zRs21KFPmdgdByU966N8KbAhNBieD09BWSsxg_aem__X_34umiEXe_s1cFf2fHnA>

**FREE Junior Chefs Summer Cooking Classes**

This is for outgoing 8th graders and high school students with disabilities in grades 9 thru 11 in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties. They are only hosting 3 summer camp sessions this year.

For more information and to register, please visit their website: <https://www.humanityskitchen.org/culinary-summer-camp/>

**Discover What’s Possible: Aging and Disability Services in Delaware**

Join for a relaxed and informative conversation about Delaware Health and Social Services initiatives that support healthy aging and independent living with a disability. This is your chance to connect with local experts and learn about a new pilot program offering home modifications, vehicle adaptations, and assistive technology to help you or your loved ones live more comfortably and confidently. (Flyer below)



**Peer Support**

Peer Support Program: Trained visually impaired volunteers assist other adults in adjusting to their vision loss on a one-to-one basis, primarily through telephone contacts. This program is available statewide and is provided through community partners, such as the BlindSight Delaware and Blind Ambition Groups.

Blind Sight Delaware:

Life doesn’t stop when one loses sight, but the day-to-day can be challenging. BlindSight Delaware provides professionally facilitated Peer Support Group meetings around the state, and one-on-one telephone support.

**Group Support:**

In-person meetings provide an opportunity to connect with others who are experiencing similar day-to-day challenges. Sharing with others reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness which are common as one loses visual ability. Group support also points out access to community resources, products and solutions and offers tips and techniques to make day-to-day living easier.

**One on one Telephone Support:**

Sometimes all that is needed is a private talk with someone. BlindSight Delaware volunteers, who not only are compassionate listeners but also visually impaired themselves, offer telephone support based on their own wealth of knowledge and experience in adapting to everyday issues.

BlindSight DE Website: <https://bsdelaware.org/services/>

Contact 302-998-5913 Ext. 102 or 103 if you would like to receive services.

**Follow DVI on Social Media:**

 [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/DVIDelaware) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/dvidelaware/) [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/%40DEDVI-r7e)



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