



## VIRTUAL VISION EXPO 2021 GUEST SPEAKER AGENDA

### Thursday, September 23, 2021

#### Sign in via Zoom:

10:15 AM **Deborah Zelinsky, O.D.** - *Mind-Eye Institute*

#### ***The Critical Role of a Mind-Eye Connection in the Legally Blind Population***

Most people think of legal blindness as a condition where eyesight is not clear, or some of the visual field is missing. This presentation explains (in simple terms) how eyesight is only one of many visual skills. It is a visual skill dealing with external information. Even if eyesight is not “normal”, there are many other learnable visual skills to help legally blind people make sense out of the surroundings. A couple of take-home games will be demonstrated for people to develop their internal visualization abilities and judgments of space.

11:30 AM **Philip Troyk, Ph.D.** – *IL Institute of Technology*

#### ***The Intracortical Visual Prosthesis (ICVP) – Communicating Image Information to the Brain***

For the past 20 years, Illinois Tech has led a multi-institutional team for the development of the Intracortical Visual Prosthesis (ICVP), which is designed to communicate image information directly to the brain, bypassing the eyes and optic nerves. An 8-institution team, funded by the NIH BRAIN Initiative, has brought the technology to a current clinical trial for the purpose of determining how people with severe visual impairment might be able to use this artificial vision as a visual aid. The project began in 1970 at the NIH

and has seen a long history of technological development coupled with enhanced understandings about how and why people with blindness might benefit from the ICVP system. This presentation will describe the technology and report on our unique work to understand experiences and motivations of potential clinical trial participants, as well as those of others who have experienced earlier brain-based visual prosthesis systems.

12:30 PM – **LUNCH BREAK/TAI CHI** – stay online for an intro to Tai Chi with instructor **Dennis Newport**. Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art that incorporates mind, breath and motion-benefits includes improved balance, enhanced brain function, stress relief, and better sleep.

1:00 PM **James Boehm, M.Ed, LPC-MHSP** – *Alliance Counseling*  
***Finding Peace During the Storm***

James Boehm shares his personal journey, from losing his sight suddenly due to a suicide attempt, to graduating from Peabody College of Vanderbilt and practicing as a mental health counselor in Nashville TN. James' experience-from rock bottom to rocky top-is one example of many who have overcome the challenges of mental health, disability, and the pain caused by the world's unprecedented universal trauma. The proper tools, mindset, and support can transform hopelessness into hope-pain into growth- and challenges into strength. Our life experiences of pain and suffering do not have to occur in vain but can serve as opportunities for purpose and resilience. Yes! Come what may, we can find calm in the storm.

2:30 PM **Parres Wright, O.D., FAAO** – *Midwestern University*  
*Low Vision Aids and Technology Update*  
Learn about the latest low vision aids & technology and how they can help you.



## VIRTUAL VISION EXPO 2021 - GUEST SPEAKER BIOS



### **Deborah Zelinsky, O.D. - *Mind-Eye Institute***

Deborah Zelinsky, O.D. is an optometrist noted worldwide for her discovery of the use of eyeglasses to alter sound location, and her subsequent development of the Z-Bell<sup>SM</sup> Test. This patented test allows Dr.

Zelinsky and her team to prescribe lenses that synchronize the integration between auditory and visual sensory inputs. Dr. Zelinsky's background includes a rotation at the Society for the Blind in Minneapolis, and the Directorship of a Low Vision Clinic in Florida. Currently, she serves as founder and executive research director of The Mind-Eye Institute in Northbrook. She wants to "Leave 20/20 in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" by enhancing eye testing to include more assessments of moving targets and overall awareness of surroundings. The measurement of 20/20 eyesight does not consider the periphery or sensory integration, both of which are critical in the legally blind population. In addition to her work with the Mind-Eye Institute, Dr. Zelinsky is a board member of the Society for Brain Mapping and a community leader for the Society of Neuroscience. More information can be found at [mindeye.com](http://mindeye.com).



**Philip Troyk, Ph.D. – *IL Institute of Technology***

Dr. Troyk is a Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, the Executive Director of the Pritzker Institute of Biomedical Science and Engineering, and an affiliated Professor in the Stuart School of Business at IIT. His research interests are broad and include cortical and retinal visual prostheses, implantable EMG sensors (IMES), functional electrical stimulation systems, design of neural prostheses, bioelectronic medicine, smart sensors, Radio Frequency Identification, telemetry, VLSI design, and packaging of implantable electronic devices. He is also President/CEO of Sigenics, Inc, a Chicago-based company that designs customized electronics for medical and industrial uses. He is the leader of the eight-institution ICVP team to develop an intracortical visual prosthesis. He obtained his BS in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois, Urbana, and an MS and Ph.D. in Bioengineering from the University of Illinois, Chicago.



**Dennis Newport – *Tai Chi Instructor***

Dennis Newport has been a Tai Chi practitioner for more than a decade, studying three major forms -- Yang, Chen, and Wu. He is currently studying Wu forms as well as Qigong and Taoist meditation with Chris Cinnamon at Chicago Tai Chi and is certified by Allison Deputy of Moonwillow Tai Chi to teach Chair Tai Chi to seniors. Dennis can be found teaching at many locations throughout the Chicago area, but BSA is quite fortunate to have him on Tuesday mornings for our very unique audio only class. Dennis is wonderful with audio instruction and connecting with participants via phone conference. Every class starts and continues with appreciation of the breathe and gentle movements which leave you relaxed and with a renewed sense of well being.



**James Boehm, M.Ed, LPC-MHSP – Alliance Counseling**

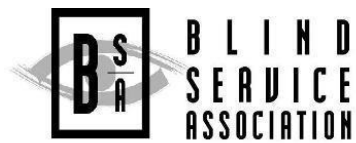
James Boehm describes himself as a passionate leader and an advocate who values collaboration and empowering others to their fullest potential. His specialties within counseling include, but are not limited to, adjustment to disability, depression, anxiety, chronic pain, suicidal ideation, and addiction. Through an integrated approach of mind and body, Boehm engages with clients to apply strategies and develop personalized goals that help them to move forward. James completed his master's degree in May 2019 from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. He is working towards his LPC in the mental health counseling field at The Refuge Center and Alliance Counseling, his own practice in Maryland Farms. Boehm feels that with the proper tools, education, and supports, all individuals can live the life that they were created for and believes strongly in advocacy and equality for all individuals, including people with disabilities. James serves on the Nashville Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities, as the President of the Nashville Chapter and the state VP of the National Federation of the Blind, and as Founder and President of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit You Cane Give with his wife, Wendy Boehm. He also founded and served on the TN Association of Guide Dog Users (he has an amazing guide dog named Bogey) and has been a mentor to college students with Learning Ally.



**Parres Wright, O.D., FAAO – Midwestern University**

Dr. Wright is a honors graduate of Tennessee State University. She is also a graduate with professional distinction from Nova Southeastern University's College of Optometry. Dr. Wright completed her residency training in Low Vision Rehabilitation and

Geriatric Optometry at the VA Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama. During her residency, she was selected as one of five optometry residents in the nation to be a presenter in the Southeastern Educational Congress of Optometry (SECO) series “High Hurdles: The Most Challenging Resident Cases of the Year.” Following residency training, Dr. Wright headed an Advanced Low Vision Clinic at the VA Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Wright is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry. Her passion is working with visually impaired and geriatric populations.



**VIRTUAL VISION EXPO 2021**  
**EXHIBITOR AGENDA – Friday, September 24, 2021**

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**Sign in via Zoom:**

10:00 AM	<b>Accessible Pharmacy</b> – Andy Burstein, Chief Executive Officer
10:20 AM	<b>Friedman Place</b> – Christian Zapata, Social Services Supervisor
10:40 AM	<b>Second Sense</b> – Siobhan Midgley, CVRT, COMS, TVI
11:00 AM	<b>Woodlake Technologies</b> – Ralph Samek, Owner
11:20 AM	<b>Hadley</b> – Marc Arneson, Director of Community
11:40 AM	<b>Chicago Parks Adaptive Sports &amp; Rec.</b> – Sheena Hager, Program & Event Coordinator
12:00 PM	<b>Guiding Eyes for the Blind</b> – Cindy Lou Altman, Guiding Eyes Graduate

- 12:20 PM      **American Council of the Blind** – Maureen Heneghan, ACB  
Rep
- 12:40 PM      **NFB Newslines** – David Meyer, Illinois Coordinator
- 1:00 PM **CPL Talking Books Center** – Patrice Johnson, Assistive  
Resources Manager
- 1:20 PM      **DHS Bureau of Blind Services** – Ingrid Halvorsen,  
Assistant Bureau Chief
- 1:40 PM      **The Chicago Lighthouse** – Martha Younger-White,  
Employment & Rehabilitation Services & Patrick Andrade,  
Assistive Technology Manager
- 2:00 PM      **Identity Theft Resource Center** – Alexandra Stephenson,  
Communications Leader
- 2:20 PM      **Blind Service Association** – Marty Kummetz, Reading  
Program/Volunteer Coordinator
- 2:40 PM      **LS&S** – Tomasina Perry, Vice President of Sales
- 3:00 PM      **END**



## **EXHIBITOR INFORMATION**

**ACCESSIBLE PHARMACY SERVICES FOR THE BLIND** - a comprehensive, home delivery pharmacy service specializing in the needs of the blind and low vision community. They are the only provider of its kind and the largest blind-owned healthcare company in the United States.

**WEB:** [www.AccessiblePharmacy.com](http://www.AccessiblePharmacy.com)

**EMAIL:** [info@AccessiblePharmacy.com](mailto:info@AccessiblePharmacy.com)

**PHONE:** 215-799-9900

## **AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND**

You're not alone in your journey through vision loss and blindness. American Council of the Blind (ACB) welcomes and accepts you. Guided by its members, ACB advocates for equality of people who are blind and visually impaired, inspires community, and connects you with education, resources, and each other to support your independence.

**WEB:** <https://www.acb.org>

**EMAIL:** [mheneghan364@gmail.com](mailto:mheneghan364@gmail.com)

## **BLIND SERVICE ASSOCIATION**

Blind Service Association has provides an array of programs and services to people who are blind & visually impaired including in-person and virtual reading services, education and support for seniors, summer youth program, an employment program, support groups, scholarships, and information and referral.

**WEB:** [www.blindserviceassociation.org](http://www.blindserviceassociation.org)

**PHONE:** 312-236-0808,

**EMAIL:** [info@blindserviceassociation.org](mailto:info@blindserviceassociation.org)

## **CHICAGO PARKS ADAPTIVE SPORTS & REC.**

The mission of the Chicago Park District special recreation program is to provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities for children and adults with disabilities. These include the following programs and services: Adaptive Sports; Paralympic Sports; Special Olympics; recreation and leisure programs for deaf/hard of hearing and/or blind/visually impaired individuals, ranging from introductory levels to competitive sports.

**WEB:** <https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/special-recreation-programs>

## **CPL TALKING BOOKS CENTER**

The Chicago Public Library Talking Book Center, a sub-regional library of the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service, in partnership with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) provides free library service to Chicago residents who cannot read standard print comfortably due to visual or physical limitations. Eligible individuals who qualify may register for service by submitting an application.

**WEB:** <http://www.ilbph.org/>

**PHONE:** 312-747-4001

## **THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE**

Are you looking for employment? Do you want to enhance your employability? Do you want to learn about assistive technology? We can help! The Chicago Lighthouse has an educated and experienced team that can offer a variety of programs to prepare you for employment, every step of the way. This presentation will cover some of the benefits and resources to help you attain your employment goals.

**WEB:** [www.chicagolighthouse.org](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org)

**PHONE:** (312) 666-1331

**DHS – BUREAU OF BLIND SERVICES** - The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS/DRS) is the state's lead agency serving persons with disabilities. Bureau of Blind Services helps adults and transition age youth who are blind or visually impaired rediscover their independence and achieve their employment, education, training, and independent living goals. Services include: specialized vocational rehabilitation services; a short-term residential program for adults who are newly blind or visually impaired; independent living services for older individuals who are blind, and the Illinois Business Enterprise Program for the Blind. These services enable blind and visually impaired individuals to work and participate fully in family and community life.

**WEB:** [Rehabilitation Services](#)

**EMAIL:** [Ingrid.halvorsen@illinois.gov](mailto:Ingrid.halvorsen@illinois.gov)

**PHONE:** 217-299-8008

**FRIEDMAN PLACE** - The mission of Friedman Place is to provide housing and supportive services to adults who are blind. Friedman Place emphasizes resident self-determination, independence, and interaction within the community. Friedman Place strives to be a primary force among professional organizations serving adults with visual disabilities.

**PHONE:** 773-989-9800

**EMAIL:** [christian@friedmanplace.org](mailto:christian@friedmanplace.org),

**WEB:** [www.friedmanplace.org](http://www.friedmanplace.org)

### **GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND**

Guiding Eyes for the Blind provides guide dogs to people with vision loss. We are passionate about connecting exceptional dogs with individuals for greater independence.

**WEB:** [www.guidingeyes.org](http://www.guidingeyes.org)

**PHONE:** 1-800-942-0149, ext. 2222

**EMAIL:** [admissions@guidingeyes.org](mailto:admissions@guidingeyes.org).

## **HADLEY**

The mission of Hadley is to create personalized learning opportunities that empower adults with vision loss or blindness to thrive - at home, at work, and in their communities.

**WEB:** <https://hadley.edu>

**EMAIL:** [info@hadley.edu](mailto:info@hadley.edu)

**PHONE:** (800) 323-4238

## **IDENTITY THEFT RESOURCE CENTER**

The ITRC is a non-profit organization established to empower and guide consumers, victims, business and government to minimize risk and mitigate the impact of identity compromise and crime.

**WEB:** [idtheftcenter.org](http://idtheftcenter.org)

**EMAIL:** [itrc@idtheftcenter.org](mailto:itrc@idtheftcenter.org)

**PHONE:** 1-888-400-5530/

## **LS&S**

Mail order company specializing in products for the visually impaired, Blind, hard of hearing and deaf.

**WEB:** [www.LSSPRODUCTS.COM](http://www.LSSPRODUCTS.COM)

**EMAIL:** [LSSinfo@LSSproducts.com](mailto:LSSinfo@LSSproducts.com)

**PHONE:** 800-468-4789

## **NFB Newslines**

NFB-NEWSLINE is a free audio news service for anyone who is blind, low-vision, or otherwise print-disabled that offers access to more than 500 publications, emergency weather alerts, job listings, and more.

**WEB:** <https://nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-newsline>

**EMAIL:** [datemeyer@mysero.net](mailto:datemeyer@mysero.net)

## **SECOND SENSE**

Second Sense inspires individuals to move beyond vision loss and believe in their abilities. Through client-centered support and training, they learn new skills, build confidence and realize their value in our community. Together we are changing society's perception of human potential.

**WEB:** <https://www.second-sense.org>

**EMAIL:** [info@second-sense.org](mailto:info@second-sense.org)

**PHONE:** 312-236-8569

## **WOODLAKE TECHNOLOGIES**

For over 25 years Woodlake Technologies has been an acknowledged leader in providing assistive technology to help individuals to meet their vocational, educational and personal goals.

**WEB:** [www.woodlaketechnologies.com](http://www.woodlaketechnologies.com)

**EMAIL:** [ralph@woodlaketechnologies.com](mailto:ralph@woodlaketechnologies.com)

**PHONE:** (312) 733-9800