



Vision Loss Alliance

of New Jersey

Formerly NJ Foundation for the Blind

FALL 2021

VLANJ TRUSTEE CLAUDIA SCHREIBER Created Legacy

Claudia Schreiber devoted her life to lightening the burden of others. In death, she continues to support the visually impaired, funding programs at Vision Loss Alliance of New Jersey that once helped her.

Claudia died May 26 from colon cancer at age 61, leaving behind dear family and friends, and a legacy that will fortify VLANJ programs for years to come.

“Claudia wanted to be sure programs receive the funds, because that’s where her passions lay,” said Michelle Bookbinder, Claudia’s friend of 20 years. Days before her death, the mother of two donated \$10,000 to establish The Claudia Schreiber Program Fund. She asked that friends and loved ones continue to contribute to the VLANJ fund in her memory, Bookbinder said.

The Marlboro resident was an artist and entrepreneur, as well as an advocate for the visually impaired, becoming a VLANJ trustee in 2018.

“Claudia was a very active trustee from the start, always giving wise counsel,” Board of Trustees Chair Carl Augusto said. As chair of the board’s program committee, Claudia championed strong technology programs, including the Technology Learning Lab, Augusto said. “She was admired and inspired by everyone she met,” he said.

Claudia lost her vision completely in 2005, and diligently figured out ways to adapt. The advent of the iPhone “really opened up her world,” Bookbinder said. She happily shared what she learned, teaching others with vision loss useful smartphone apps and the voiceover program that could help in their daily life. Sometimes, she simply listened to their concerns.

“She really liked helping people in a personal way,” Bookbinder added.

An autoimmune disease began affecting Claudia’s vision in her early 20s, two decades before she became blind. In 2008, she began attending VLANJ, taking a class that rekindled her passion for art. The first piece she created was a self-portrait with clay. The instructor “gave me the courage to get back into my life,” Claudia said in a 2019 interview. “I fell in love with this organization.”

For three years, Claudia ran an art program for the New Jersey Blind Citizens Association in Monmouth County, volunteering her time and donating the supplies. Claudia served as president of the nonprofit’s governing board.

Claudia taught art classes and served as a peer support facilitator for the New Jersey Commission for the Blind, overseeing four support groups. People “need to learn that

life isn’t over because they’ve lost their sight,” Claudia said.

For VLANJ’s virtual Dining in the Dark event during the pandemic last fall,

Claudia allowed herself to be video recorded preparing a meal of tomato basil pasta with garlic bread. She showed viewers techniques for safely chopping onion and garlic and accurately measuring ingredients. The segment was supposed to run five minutes, but Claudia was so charming, they gave her 20 minutes, Augusto said.

Claudia supported VLANJ’s mission through generous annual gifts. She also donated items for silent auctions and recruited an entourage to attend VLANJ’s fundraisers. “She was one of the most giving trustees,” Augusto said.

By donating to Claudia’s fund, supporters can help Claudia’s memory live on. To contribute, contact Jennifer Singer, vice president of development and communications, at 973-627-0055, ext. 1323 or jsinger@vlanj.org.

Claudia Schreiber





Bill Schuldt

President and CEO

Dear Friend,

I am excited to be welcoming participants back to our Denville and Ridgewood locations this month, and I'm looking forward to meeting more of the VLANJ community. (It was a pleasure meeting more than two dozen people over Zoom back in May.) While our virtual programming kept staff and students connected during the pandemic, there's nothing like gathering in person, to learn with and support one another.

In my first months as president and CEO, I find myself impressed by the drive and commitment of our staff, students, and

trustees. We are busy developing plans for robust offerings going forward, a combination of in-person and online classes. This will be a work in progress, as we learn what works and strike a balance for using our current resources.

We resumed in-person Better Health and Wellness classes this month, with COVID-19 protocols in place. Rather than have all students attend on a single day, we're hosting two weekly sessions, with roughly half of participants attending each. Everyone is required to wear masks. As always, our goal is to keep us all healthy.

Virtual classes have been invaluable during the pandemic, and we were proud to roll out new programs for healthy aging. We have Atlantic Health System's Morristown Medical Center Community Health Committee to thank for the grant that funds LIFT, STRIVE, and the newest addition, ARISE, a virtual speaker series which will feature a variety of topics designed to motivate and inspire people with vision loss to achieve their best selves.

I want to acknowledge a generous — and unexpected — bequest we recently received from the estate of a VLANJ supporter. We are honored to be remembered in her will. VLANJ is so grateful to donors who contribute monthly and annually but hope more supporters will also include us in their estate planning. Over VLANJ's 78-year history, bequests have played an important role in our funding. We are establishing a legacy society so supporters can inform us of their intended gift, allowing us to plan accordingly.

Know that VLANJ's work of empowering people with vision loss in all aspects of life could not happen without our supporters. I look forward to getting to know more of you in the coming months. Please feel free to reach out to me by phone or email with your ideas and questions. Wishing you well.

Sincerely,

Bill Schuldt
VLANJ President and CEO
wschuldt@vlanj.org
(973) 627-0055 ext. 1333

PLANNED GIVING

Vision Loss Alliance of New Jersey has served members of the blind and low vision community for more than 75 years. Planned gifts have long been an important source of funding to support our mission. By including VLANJ in your estate plan, you create a lasting legacy that may also generate tax benefits for you and your family. Whether through a bequest, charitable trust, insurance plan, annuity or another financial instrument, The Diamond Spring Society celebrates your support

with special recognition. Consider leaving a legacy, so your cherished values live on.

About The Diamond Spring Society

The Diamond Spring Society is named in honor of The Diamond Spring Lodge, which we created in Denville 1955 as New Jersey's first residential summer camp for blind women. It grew and evolved over decades, becoming the only comprehensive, non-residential vision rehabilitation

program for adults in New Jersey.

The Diamond Spring Society honors those who have designated VLANJ as a beneficiary to their estate plan or declared their intent. For more information or for help making a planned gift, please contact VLANJ Vice President of Development and Communications Jennifer Singer at jsinger@vlanj.org or 973-627-0055, ext. 1323.

VLANJ WELCOMED THREE NEW TRUSTEES



Tajma Kotoric

Tajma Kotoric is CEO of New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons. Kotoric said her late grandfather was blind and headed a blind advocacy organization in the former Yugoslavia, traveling across Europe to raise awareness and financial support. Kotoric hopes to help VLANJ expand awareness about its important work in helping people with vision loss manage daily tasks. Kotoric lives in Newtown, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Eldin, and their two daughters, 11-year-old Medina and 7-year-old Aldina.



Lyndsey Lord

Lyndsey Lord is a registered nurse and chief operating officer of a technology startup that works with health care providers and health care systems. “As a nurse, I have worked with many visually impaired patients, and have been inspired by the strength and perseverance needed to manage many activities of daily living,” the Ocean Grove resident said. Lord said she is impressed by VLANJ’s technology classes. “There are so many ways that technology can ease daily activities and help connect people to their friends, family, and loved ones,” she said. Lord hopes to use her expertise and connections to help VLANJ recruit more students and donors, and form partnerships with like-minded organizations.



Juan Sanchez

Juan Sanchez is chief financial officer and chief operating officer of General Vision Services, a nationwide administrator for eye care plan benefits. Sanchez said he’s excited to work with VLANJ. “It’s motivating to be part of the vision of VLANJ and to possibly be part of improving people’s lives,” he said. Sanchez said he hopes to support VLANJ’s management team in achieving the organization’s mission and vision. He lives in Long Island, New York, with his wife, Adriana, and their two children, 17-year-old Brandon and 12-year-old Sophie.

THE CARES ACT

The Cares Act, extended through 2021, includes provisions to encourage donations to nonprofits like ours. A \$300 tax deduction is available even if you don’t itemize. New in 2021, for those who are married filing jointly and do not itemize, you will be able to take an above the line deduction of up to \$600 in cash contributions. If you do itemize, the existing gap on annual contributions is 100% of adjusted gross income. Please consider donating today by check, credit card, stock or your donor advised fund.



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155 Morris Ave., Ste. 2
Denville, NJ 07834



You're invited to a **FOUR SENSES WINE & CHEESE PAIRING**

a unique sensory adventure
October 28, 2021 at 6:30PM

Experience a journey beyond sight!
Enter a world of taste, smell, sound,
and touch as you enjoy a unique
sensory experience like no other.

Please visit our website
www.vlanj.org for more information
and to purchase tickets!



Vision Loss Alliance
of New Jersey

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have decided to postpone our annual Dining in the Dark event until October 2022. We will, however, be hosting a smaller, more intimate event following all social distancing and safety guidelines where we can all be safe and enjoy!

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF VLANJ'S AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FROM 2020

	2020	2019
Program Income & Contributions	\$456,145.00	\$223,468.00
Special Events	\$29,890.00	\$52,338.00
Legacy and Trusts	\$162,852.00	\$345,792.00
Net Investment Income	\$120,091.00	\$129,735.00
Total Income	\$768,978.00	\$751,333.00
Total Expenses	\$878,371.00	\$940,842.00
Net Loss	\$(109,393.00)	\$(189,509.00)

The organization's net assets enable us to fund annual deficits.