



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Koula Callas  
216.791.8118, ext. 215  
[kcallas@clevelandsightcenter.org](mailto:kcallas@clevelandsightcenter.org)

## **Vision Rehabilitation Pilot Program Slated for Lakewood**

*Cleveland Sight Center Program to debut at The Westerly Apartments November 27th*

CLEVELAND, OH – November 20, 2007 – Cleveland Sight Center is pleased to announce its first community-based vision rehabilitation and technology training program, EnVision Independence. For many years the Sight Center has helped individuals who are blind or visually impaired learn rehabilitative daily living skills to help them live more independently. This training is currently available at the Sight Center's University Circle location as well as during in-home visits for clients across Northeast Ohio.

Cleveland Sight Center is now taking this expertise to the public in a community-based pilot program. The program will be implemented using a class-like setting in an efficiency apartment at The Westerly in Lakewood. There is no cost for the classes, which are being funded through a grant from The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation. All Lakewood senior citizens who are blind as well as those who are visually impaired due to macular degeneration, glaucoma, and other eye diseases, are encouraged to participate. Transportation may be arranged through Lakewood Senior Services. The Lakewood Department of Aging is working closely with the Sight Center to identify clients for the program and accommodate its visually impaired residents.

Each EnVision session will last seven weeks, with the first session beginning on Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. The classes will be held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with up to seven participants at a time, and will be taught by licensed social workers and rehabilitative professionals, including rehabilitative specialists who are blind. The apartment at The Westerly will be furnished with special adaptive equipment and low vision aids, such as Closed Circuit Televisions and talking clocks. Each participant will receive \$350 worth of low vision/vision rehabilitation aids to keep, and will have the option to request in-home follow up.

Group counseling and mobility skills (techniques to navigate the physical environment within and outside of the home) will be included in the program. Technology training at the adjacent Barton Senior Center will complement the daily living skills training. Sight Center staff will introduce voice-activated, large text, and other software programs designed to enable individuals with vision loss to communicate effectively using the latest computer technology. More than \$15,000 worth of software and equipment will be donated to the Barton Senior Center, and will be available for use by all Lakewood residents with low vision.

"The change in a client's confidence and outlook on life once they have completed their vision rehabilitation is remarkable," says Peggy Keating, Director of Senior and Outreach Services at Cleveland Sight Center, "We hope to expand this program to communities throughout Northeast Ohio." Interested Lakewood residents should contact Debi Welsby at 216.791.8118, ext. 228.

### **About Cleveland Sight Center**

Cleveland Sight Center, a nonprofit agency founded in 1906, provides people who are blind or visually impaired with educational, rehabilitative, preventative and other vision support services. **FOR MORE INFORMATION** visit [www.clevelandsightcenter.org](http://www.clevelandsightcenter.org), or call 216.791.8118, ext. 215.

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