

Annual Report

2012



Resources for the Blind, Inc.

Resources for the



B·L·I·N·D
Inc.

From the Executive Director ...

I read recently the story of Gelly, a young lady in Cebu whom we have known since her elementary years. She told us that she used to dream she could go to school but didn't know how that could ever happen because of her disability.

When she was four years old she loved to pretend to be the teacher of her two younger siblings. Her mom was a single parent and worked in a plastic factory to support their needs, and didn't know of any school that Gelly could attend. So Gelly stayed home with her aunt while her younger siblings went to school.

Then, on Gelly's tenth birthday, one of the teachers we had trained in Consolacion, Cebu, visited their home and encouraged her to enroll as one of the first visually impaired students in their school. It was a dream come true for Gelly. She proved to be a good, hardworking student and was mainstreamed after her first year. From then on she won academic excellence awards at the end of every school year.

During her elementary and high school years she attended our Summer Camps, our Student Leadership Congress, and our Computer-Eyes Camp. When she graduated from High School she attended our College Prep Workshop, and

then we helped find a scholarship for her college education.

Despite the financial difficulties the family continually encountered, our RBI Cebu office always found ways to encourage Gelly to not give up and to finish her college course. We used her a number of times to speak at our Parents Workshops and also at our School Principals Orientation Workshops. She was always a very effective speaker and an encouragement, especially to parents of blind children.

In March of 2012 Gelly graduated with a BA in English Language and then in August she took the Licensure Exam for Teachers. In November she got the good news that she had passed the exam and is now submitting her application to DepEd to be a teacher. We are convinced that she will be an excellent school teacher.

Gelly's story should encourage all of us who invest in the lives of these young blind children. Just a few years ago very few blind children outside of Manila were ever able to go to school. This year there are 3000 blind children in school in all regions of the country, and 144 in the college level. What a difference we can make in giving them a chance to go to school.

Our very sincere thanks to all who have helped make these programs possible for blind children like Gelly. You have truly changed the lives of those who had no hope of ever achieving their dreams.

Randy Weisser
Randy Weisser



RBI Management Team with the members of the Board of Trustees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Running to a Better Future

The year 2012 witnessed our continued efforts to reach one of the country's most marginalized groups—Filipinos with visual impairment.

Under our Eye Care and Blindness Prevention program, we served a total of 28,188 patients. We conducted 97 medical missions and partnered with 98 ophthalmologists. We also trained a total of 1,923 Barangay Health Workers.

We helped almost 3,000 children in our education programs, from the pre-school level to higher education. Once education is accomplished, our job placement services take over to help the graduates find employment. With college degrees and computer skills, blind graduates have much better opportunities to find good, stable jobs.

Our Braille Production Department produced over one million pages of braille over the year and 96 titles of audio books. Most of these were textbooks but also other good reading material enjoyed by our many blind friends.

Our Christian Growth Department distributed Bibles or Bible portions in either braille, large print or audio versions to 1,648



persons with visual impairment. Ten of our blind pastors conducted weekly Bible studies to more than 800 blind children around the Philippines.

This report highlights these and other accomplishments in 2012 in the various program areas that we implement. It also highlights the importance of our partnership with you in helping the country's visually impaired population reach their fullest potential in life. ♦

Chapter 1—EYE CARE and BLINDNESS PREVENTION



We conducted a total of 97 medical missions in partnership with local government units, which sponsored in full or in part expenses incurred by patients during surgery. These medical missions were conducted in 35 provinces nationwide. We partnered with a total of 98 ophthalmologists, who volunteered their time for eye screening and surgeries.

We trained a total of 1,923 Barangay Health Workers nationwide in Primary Eye Care, and assisted them in conducting community eye screenings.

Our partnership with the East Avenue Medical Center Department of Ophthalmology has been running for 20

What Does Being “Blind” Mean?

A person is considered blind or visually impaired if his vision cannot be corrected to better than 20/200 in the better eye, or if the visual field is 20 degrees or less in the better eye. Being blind can either mean being *totally blind*, where no vision is left except for some light perception, or it can mean having *low vision*, where the best corrected vision is usable but not adequate for normal function. Some function can be improved through the use of special optical devices called *low vision devices*. ♦

years now. In Cebu we partner with Perpetual Succor, Cebu Velez, and Cebu City Medical Center. In Davao we partner with Davao Adventist and Tagum Doctors Hospital. Overall, we served a total of 28,188 patients in 2012. ♦

Chapter 2—LOW VISION

Low Vision refers to visually impaired persons who are not totally blind but whose remaining vision restricts their ability to engage in the normal activities of life.

Our Low Vision services ranged from trainings for persons with low vision to training for eye care professionals. We also facilitated clinical assessments for 374 patients, and dispensed low vision devices such as magnifiers, reading and writing guides, telescopes, large print books, and adjustable book stands.

A total of 1,106 other stakeholders were trained, including parents, school teachers, clinicians, and undergraduate optometry students. We also provided practicum opportunities in our Low Vision Clinic to 59 optometry students within the year. ♦

What Causes Low Vision?

Low Vision can be caused by various eye diseases such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataract, diabetic retinopathy, and retinitis pigmentosa. It can also be caused by eye injuries. Low vision can occur at any age but it is more common among older people.

Relatively few people with visual impairment are totally blind, with about 75 percent of all visually impaired people classified as low vision. ♦



Chapter 3—EDUCATION

There were 3,000 children with visual impairment enrolled in schools nationwide in 2012. This can be attributed to our teachers' training programs which were aimed at equipping school teachers to mainstream students with visual impairment.

A total of 1721 teachers and 164 school administrators participated in our various training programs. Our biennial National Teachers Congress on Visual Impairment, held in Cebu, had 649 participants.



For our early intervention and pre-school program, we served close to 70 children in both our Manila and Davao offices. Our pre-schools also served as a training venue for 42 practicum students who were taking up BS Education and Masteral in Special Education from different universities in Manila and Davao.

The practicum included hands on experience in teaching Braille reading and writing, Orientation and Mobility (the use of a white cane to be able to move around even without a guide), abacus (used in solving mathematical problems), and teaching strategies for visually impaired children with additional disabilities.

Continuous training for parents was also provided, including blindness skills and the development of advocacy skills. A total of 457 parents participated in these training workshops. ♦

Lions Luzon Inclusive Education Project

RBI is currently implementing a project called “Inclusive Education for Children with Visual Impairments in Luzon, Philippines,” in partnership with the Chicago-based Lions Clubs International Foundation, the Boston Perkins School for the Blind, and the Parent Advocates for Visually Impaired Children. The three-year pilot initiative aims to increase access to education for children with visual impairments.

Now in its mid-term of implementation, the project has already made significant progress in this area through accomplishments such as:

- More than 1,400 students in Luzon received services during the first year;
- 153 students received clinical low vision assessments;
- 400 new children enrolled in school for the first time;
- 198 children re-enrolled in school through the Zero Dropout Rate (ZDR) program;
- 78 new schools offered inclusive classrooms ;
- 38 teachers participated in the university teacher training program; and
- 108 school administrators took part in the administrators orientation. ♦

Chapter 4—HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2012, a total of 162 key administrators and professors from 36 colleges and universities nationwide participated in our orientations conducted in partnership with the Philippines' Commission on Higher Education. The orientations were designed to help university faculty and administrators understand the accommodations needed by students with visual impairment. All these 36 colleges and universities in major provinces of the country are now accepting students with visual impairment.

We helped students attain success in higher education by loaning them assistive devices like laptops which speak whatever is displayed on the monitor, talking scientific calculators,

and special software which speaks mathematical equations and graphs.

Our Students' Resource Center helped students in their research and other academic requirements. The Center is equipped with computers with online access, and a braille printer which can produce braille copies of their lessons and study materials.

We conducted numerous trainings and tutorials throughout the year to help blind students cope better with their academic requirements. Our records show an enrollment in 2012 of 144 visually impaired college students nationwide, in 90 colleges. They are enrolled in courses such as Education, Information Technology, Business Administration, Music, and others. ♦



Chapter 5—REHABILITATION

Counseling

For 2012, RBI provided rehabilitation and counseling services to a total of 260 persons with visual impairment.

We have devised sessions to help blind persons adjust to life and cope with new challenges that they may encounter as a result of their vision loss. We helped them accept and process their current circumstances through counseling and prayer.

Our counseling services also involved trainings in independent travel and mobility, use of technology to overcome obstacles, and lessons in braille reading and writing. We helped them go back to a normal life and become functional members of the society.

Job Placement

RBI provided job placement services to adult blind persons after giving them the necessary trainings. We gave them advice on matters relating to social, spiritual and emotional well-being. Equally important, we continued to provide orientation for the employer or prospective employers.

One of our clients, Niña, shares her experience of being a recipient of RBI's job placement services: *"The job placement program conducted by RBI gave me an opportunity to discover that there are companies that accept persons with disabilities like me. It helped me in exploring the possibilities of getting a job online in spite of my condition and encouraged me to try new things which I thought I cannot do. Thank you RBI for opening the door of opportunities for us."* ♦

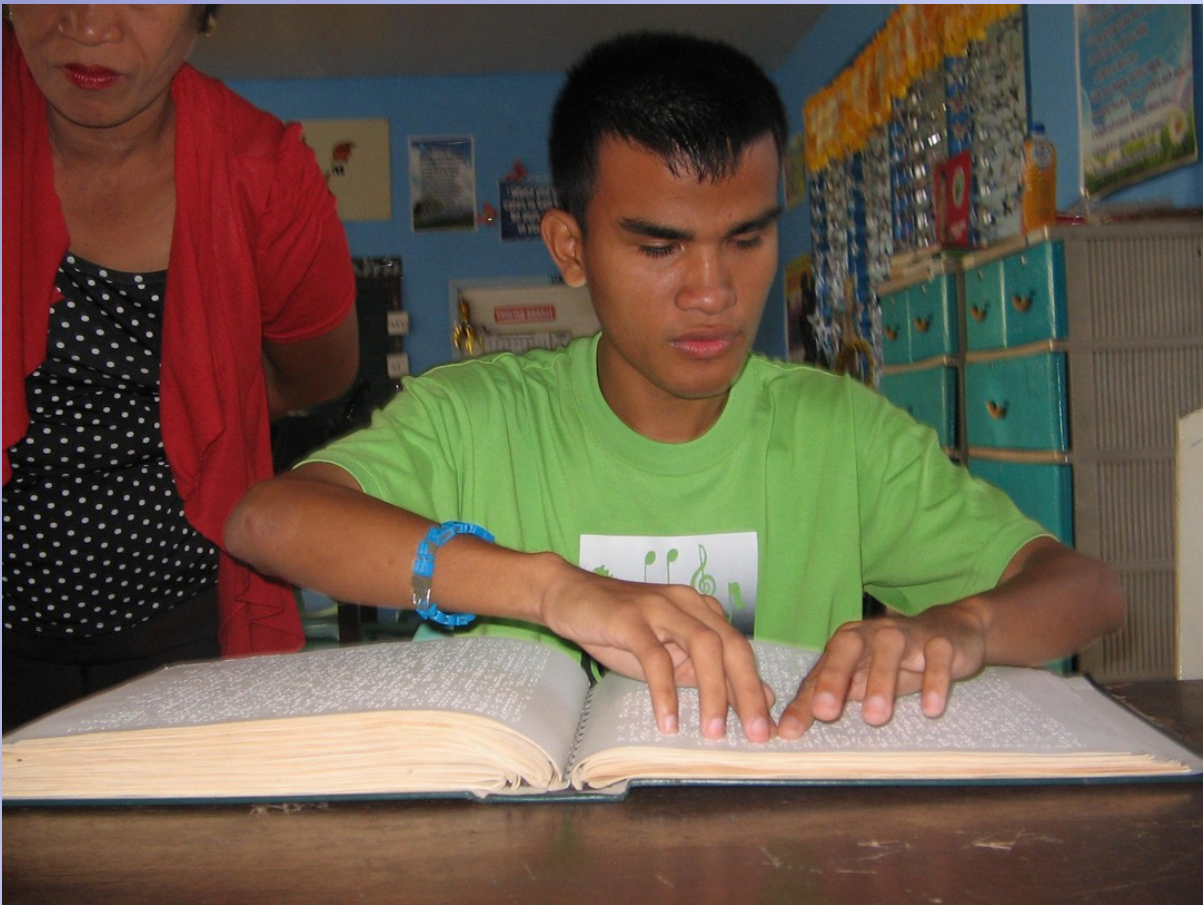


What Kind of Work Can a Blind Person Do?

The booming business process and outsourcing industry in the Philippines, including call center work, has led us to focus our job placement for blind persons in work that requires computer skills.

In partnership with IBM and the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia, we were able to provide computer training courses to 95 blind high school and college students in 2012. This prepares them well for future work in an industry that is continually in need of qualified workers. ♦

Chapter 6—BRAILLE PRODUCTION



In partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) we produced 30 percent of the Braille textbooks needed nationwide. The remaining 70 percent was produced by DepEd using the Brailier machine loaned from RBI.

We also addressed the dearth of braille reading material by publishing two braille magazines, namely, *Double Yum* and *Insight*. The former is a magazine for children containing testimonies, Bible stories, letters, tongue twisters, games, and others. The *Insight* is a magazine for adults that contains various stories such as local and international news, technology-related stories, features, sports, poems, book excerpts, testimonies, English lessons, and others. All of these are designed to help those with visual impairment to develop their knowledge and skills in various aspects of life.

We also produced a total of 94 new titles in digital audio books, which is better known as DAISY. DAISY stands for Digital Accessible Information System, and is an audio system similar to an MP3, that is designed specifically for the blind. It makes it possible for blind students to carry their textbooks and other reading material in their pockets. ♦

Where Do We Get Braille Paper?

RBI has been importing Braille paper since it started producing materials in Braille twenty years ago. In 2012 we produced over one million pages of braille, all which had to be imported from overseas. Now, a local paper supplier has agreed to invest in a machine that will allow us to purchase braille paper locally. ♦

Chapter 7—CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Resources for the Blind was founded to insure that blind Filipinos have access to a braille Bible in their preferred dialect. In partnership with the Philippine Bible Society we produced and distributed accessible Bibles or Bible portions to 1,648 blind persons in 2012.

To introduce the Bible to a new generation of blind persons, our team of 10 blind pastors fanned out across the Philippines to conduct weekly school-based Bible studies for 803 blind students in the elementary and high school levels. One hundred and fifty of these children joined our summer camp program, where their biblical foundations were further strengthened.

Our radio program, *Si Bartimeus at Ako* (Bartimaeus and I), continued to touch lives in 2012. Hosted by our blind staff, we now have four stations broadcasting the weekly program of information and inspiration—one in Luzon and three in Mindanao.

In 2012, a total of 19 pastors with visual impairment—17 from Luzon and 2 from Davao—participated in our Pastors' Retreat. The participants, all of them involved in church ministry, had an opportunity to share and discuss their experiences and identify strategies to address various concerns in the ministry and their day-to-day living. This retreat was sponsored by our friends at the Church on the Rock in Wasilla, Alaska. ♦

It's more fun to run for the **Word of God**
in the **Philippines**



What Can a Blind Pastor Do?

As our commitment to Bible distribution, RBI blind pastors along with other blind pastor-friends from the Manila Blind Church joined the Bible Run organized by the Philippine Bible Society. This advocacy run is a nationwide campaign to raise awareness on the importance of Bible reading and to raise funds for the printing of Bibles to be distributed to underprivileged Filipinos. ♦

Chapter 8—MANAGING RESOURCES

A. Human Resources

RBI has a total of 68 employees in all three offices—RBI Manila, RBI Cebu and RBI Davao. Considering training an essential component of human resource development, a total of 62 staff underwent training on various topics, such as organizational development, project management, monitoring and evaluation, computer-related courses, and others. Nine staff underwent specialized blindness trainings overseas that weren't available locally. Because of this continual emphasis on training, RBI staff have become national experts in their areas of study and are regularly called on for input into programs of the national government.



As of December 31, 2012, RBI has 11 employees with visual impairment. This is 16 percent of RBI's total number of 68 employees. Due to the high number of employees with visual impairment, RBI was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Philippine Government's Department of Labor and Employment during the 34th National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week 2012 celebration. ♦



The RBI Staff

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RBI Davao



RBI Manila



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(Not in photo) **Evelyn P. Delos Reyes** - Member

B. Programs and Services at a Glance — 2012

Program	Project	No. of Persons Served
Blindness Prevention	Eye Screening	25,615
	Eye Surgeries	2,573
	Brgy. Health Workers Training in Primary Eye Care	1,923
Low Vision	Clinical Assessment	374
	Stakeholders Training	1,106
	Optometry Practicum	59
Christian Development	Children in School-based Bible Studies	803
	Summer Camp	150
	Received Bible Portions	1,648
	Pastors Retreat	17
	Bible College Scholarship	6
Education	Pre-Schools	71
	Elementary and High School	2,880
	Higher Education	144
	Educators Trained	2,534
Rehabilitation and Counselling		260
Job Placement		15
Staff Training and Development		62
Office Walk-ins		11,471
Total		51,711*

* There may be some duplications to the total number of persons served.

Visually-impaired student hurdles 2012 Metrobank Math Challenge elims

(The Philippine Star) Updated February 02, 2012 12:00 AM

MANILA, Philippines - For the first time in 11 years of the Metrobank-MTAP-DepEd Math Challenge (MMC), a visually-impaired student from Sarangani Province topped one of its nationwide eliminations last Jan. 18. Steven Valdepeñas of Alabel Central Integrated SPED Center topped the eliminations for the Grade 6 competition among the 15 takers in the District of East Alabel for the DepEd Division of Sarangani Province. He is one of the top placers among 234 students from 78 schools in the entire division. Steven is diagnosed to have a congenital glaucoma. Despite his circumstance, Steven excels in all subjects and Mathematics is his most favorite. In fact, Steven has won several Mathematics competitions at school and district levels including a championship award at the division level of the Mathematics Quiz Bee.

The MMC questionnaires were translated into Braille by noted SPED Teacher and 2001 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Teacher, Evelyn Caja, of Ramon Magsaysay High School. This is in order for Steven to solve the set of Math problems. He was asked to read the questions in Braille first before answering then the proctor verified if it is the same with the set of original questions.

“The participation of a visually-impaired pupil named Steven from Sarangani in



the 2012 Metrobank Math Challenge is remarkable and is something we ardently embrace. It tells us that no disability can hinder one's excellence and that we continue to achieve the competition's objective in awakening greater interest in Math not only in ordinary students, but also for those who have special needs. Let Steven be our inspiration in realizing our dreams," said Metrobank Foundation president Aniceto Sobrepeña. ♦

Vision

Our vision is for all Filipinos who are visually impaired to be able to reach the fullest potential in life and service that God has for them.

Mission

To design and implement programs that will enable those with visual impairment to understand and reach their God-given potential in life and service.



Ways You Can Help

- **Donate through BancNet ATM**

1. Go to BILLS PAYMENT
2. Select bills to pay OTHERS
3. Select from which account you want to charge the donation, either SAVINGS or CURRENT
4. Select RESOURCES FOR THE BLIND from the list
5. Enter the AMOUNT you wish to donate
6. Get transaction receipt.

For official receipt, kindly fax copy of transaction to (+632) 727-0077. Please state your name, exact mailing address, and contact number

- **Mail a Check Donation**

Make check payable to **Resources for the Blind, Inc.**
and send to: PO Box 1831, CPO
Manila 1099, Philippines

- **Hand Over Your Gift**

RBI has offices in Manila, Cebu, and Davao
Call us to pick up your donation,
or visit our nearest office:

RBI – Manila

4th Flr. COTI Bldg., 623 EDSA, Cubao, QC
Tel. Nos. (02) 726-3021 to 24

RBI – Cebu

Door 106, Ground Flr. Krizia Bldg.
Gonzales Cpd., Camputhaw, Cebu City
Tel. No. (032) 232-2004

RBI – Davao

Rm. 418, 4th Flr., Central Plaza 1 Bldg.
JP Laurel Ave. Bajada, Davao City
Tel. No. (082) 225-8937

YOU CAN TURN THEIR DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

Please join us in giving hope and a future to those who are blind

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