



For Immediate Release

March 12, 2020

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J M Smith Foundation Awards \$25,000 to the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolina

Charleston, SC – The J M Smith Foundation recently awarded the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolina (ABVI) a \$25,000 grant to support the growth of its *Own Your Life* program.

Through our *Own Your Life* program, ABVI helps adults who are blind or visually impaired in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties learn new approaches to daily life. Classes and opportunities provided through *Own Your Life* include: Activities of Daily Living, Assistive Technology Tutoring, Braille, Client Connections (social events), Computer, Guide Dog Scholarships, Orientation and Mobility Training, Therapy (group and family) and Vocational Rehabilitation.

“There are over 15,000 adults living in the Tri-County with a visual impairment, and studies show the rate of vision loss will double over the next 10 years. Yet, ABVI is the only nonprofit in our area dedicated to helping these individuals lead the independent and fulfilled lives they deserve,” said Courtney Plotner, President and CEO of ABVI. “In order to better reach this underserved segment of our population, ABVI has created a 5-year plan to expand our services. We are grateful to the J M Smith Foundation for supporting the first year of this expansion.”

In 2019, ABVI began offering classes in Summerville in order to expand access to clients who could not regularly travel to our Charleston location for training. Due to the popularity of the classes in Summerville as well as the growing demand for vision rehabilitation services in the Tri-County, ABVI decided to open a permanent, second location in Ladson. Our new facility is located at 9565 Highway 78, Building 800, and it is central to all 3 of the counties we serve. ABVI began serving clients in the Ladson location on March 4, 2020.

To learn more about ABVI and *Own Your Life*, visit www.abvisc.org.

About the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolina

The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolina’s (ABVI) mission is to enrich the quality of life of the blind and visually impaired. Through our *Own Your Life* program, ABVI helps blind and visually impaired adults in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties learn new approaches to daily life. ***Own Your Life* offers two tracks: Personal Independence** teaches adults how to navigate daily life with a visual impairment, while **Vocational Rehabilitation** helps clients who are ready to learn the adaptive skills needed to enter or re-enter the workforce. To learn more about ABVI’s services, visit www.abvisc.org/services.