Finding Purpose Through Perseverance

Blind - A Sixth Sense

Holiday Health & Wellness Tips

Lady Rabia

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Inclusion

"Create inclusion - with simple mindfulness that others might have a different reality from our own."
~Patti Digh

Welcome & Happy Holidays!

Welcome to our holiday and the first edition of CAPTIVATING! where "The Power and Possibilities of Inclusion are Limitless!" CAPTIVATING! is a new and soon to be fully accessible digital lifestyle magazine designed to empower people with disabilities worldwide.

CAPTIVATING! is a collaborative project created by Social Entrepreneurs, Chelsea Nguyen, CN Vision Image Consulting, and Stephanae McCoy, Bold Blind Beauty. CAPTIVATING! is creating opportunities for people with disabilities to shine while unifying abled and disabled communities through education, information, and compassion.

There are approximately 1 billion people (15% of the population) around the world who have a disability. We at CAPTIVATING! know the power and possibilities of inclusion are limitless.
So Why CAPTIVATING!? 

We wanted a name that embraces our disabilities and our unique attributes. “Captivating” is defined as “something that’s completely enthralling and holds your attention.” Nothing is more captivating than witnessing someone confidently living their life. If it were not so, we wouldn’t receive so much attention. So, yes, we indeed are CAPTIVATING!

In this issue of CAPTIVATING! you’ll meet our featured guest, Lady Rabia and a team of collaborators including Victoria Claire, Brittany Culp, Jennifer Dutrow, Maria Palacios, George Rector, Liz Wisecarver, and Stephanie Stephens Van. We have a lineup focusing on Accessible Travel, Accessible Art & Entertainment, The Disability of the Month, The Blind Spot (resources on blindness & sight loss), Health & Wellness, and a Q&A.

We hope you enjoy our first issue of CAPTIVATING! where "The Power and Possibilities of Inclusion are Limitless." We invite you to submit questions, articles, and ideas to editor@captivatingmagazine.com
The Other Side of Ableism

by Maria Palacios

CAPTIVATING! • December 2018
Internalized ableism is believing the lies we have been told about our bodies, believing that nobody will love us or want us believing we are damaged and broken because others have said we are.

Internalized ableism is negating ourselves the right to say no, denying ourselves the right to say yes or saying yes when we should say no, or saying no when we should say yes because we’ve been made afraid to trust ourselves.

Internalized ableism is the thick extra layer of skin we grow in order to not get wounded by the voices that say we’re imperfect, and worthless and undesirable.

It is staying silent to comments made without thinking or made while thinking it’s ok because we believe them too. Internalized ableism is allowing others to define our truths and explaining our bodies as an apology....as a mistake.
It is that little voice inside our heads negating things we want to yell out, but can’t because our inner cripple is not yet liberated.

Internalized ableism is Focusing on walking again, or seeing again, or being able-bodied again while throwing away a perfectly livable life because we’ve been led to believe our lives as disabled people have no worth unless they’re attached to an able-bodied goal, or an able-bodied dream.

Internalized ableism is refusing to see our lives as lovable and powerful and beautiful, and painting our disabled lives with an able-bodied brush.

Internalized ableism is being in a rush to prove ourselves as nondisabled and judging those whose disabilities can’t be as well disguised, or whose bodies can’t wear the outfits of “normality” disabled people must wear in order to fit in,
It is judging other disabled people for not working or for not living the able-bodied lies that push us to try to be “normal.” Believing that if we can work, every disabled person can work, If we drive, Every disabled person can drive. Internalized ableism is wearing our invented able-bodied privilege as a badge of inspiration while justifying the oppression of others like us and enjoying the freedom given to us by the advocacy of crips who carry the burden of our shame.

Internalized ableism is not recognizing that independence is something many disabled people are still fighting for, or not recognizing when our rights are being wronged because, deep down, we are convinced others know better about what’s good for us.

Internalized ableism is not being outraged about the invasion of our disabled lives, allowing able-bodied people to make choices for us...
choices
we are capable of making ourselves,
choices
we have the right to make.

Internalized ableism is
believing that our bodies
are incapable of pleasure
allowing others to define how we should define
pleasure
because many people believe
broken bodies don’t feel
broken bodies don’t give,
broken minds don’t understand
Love,
Intimacy
Sensuality.

Internalized ableism is
denying our own sexuality,
or turning able-bodied lovers into heroes for
sleeping with us
because sex with a disabled person is some sort
of sacrifice,
something that deserves respect
or an Amen
because sex with a cripple is gotta earn you
some heaven brownie points
even at the risk of sin.
Internalized ableism is body shaming crip shaming using disability as a bad word, using disability as a double edge sword that cuts deep into our own fears.

Internalized ableism is holding back the tears that would allow us to heal, accepting other people’s definition of beauty and referring to our bodies in a language not reflective of love. It is not knowing how to love our differences, not recognizing our uniqueness as the one thing that makes us whole. while believing that wholeness must always equal able-bodiedness, must always mean going back to pre-disabled form because that’s the norm and nothing else will do. Otherwise we have no value, no purpose to reason to live.

Internalized ableism is seeing disability as something we always have to overcome
It is becoming passive witnesses to the struggles of others like us or saying that we’ve never been oppressed while saying “those people” even though we’re one of them.

Internalized ableism is labeling each other putting each other down segregating ourselves into little groups that farther label us as we fail to recognize that, in the end, we, really, are fighting the same war.

Internalized ableism is pretending that the hierarchy of self-actualization is applicable to crips forgetting that in the crip hierarchy of actualization access and inclusion are at the base of everything otherwise, we cannot actually actualize ourselves no matter how hard we may try.

Internalized ableism is ignoring all that and judging other disabled people for nor forcing themselves into outfits of social acceptance not tailored for their disabled bodies.
Internalized ableism is believing that we have to wear them any way because that way others can see us as one of them but only in our eyes because disability doesn’t lie.

Our crip truths are always louder than what whatever words we use to disguise ourselves in the non-disabled world.

Internalized ableism is erroneously believing that the nondisabled world is the only world that matters. It is sharing our stories from a position of pity instead of power and believing that we have no power and no voice.

Internalized ableism is accepting the myth that if we need help, we’re helpless, that if we can’t move our bodies we need somebody to live our lives for us, accepting the lie that others know more than we do about how to feel
even though we’re the only ones who have to exist in our disabled bodies.

Internalized ableism is feeding the lies that portray our lives as pathetic and empty of joy, purposeless and void of any value and any hope, believing the shit we have been fed, and turning away from the struggles of others because we don’t want to see ourselves there.

Internalized ableism is believing that our mobility aids imprison us, calling ourselves “wheelchair bound”, handicapped and falling for the inspiration crap that tells the world we are pitiful, needy, vulnerable and helpless instead of the human potential that lives within all of us.

Internalized ableism is accepting the medical model as the model that defines our lives, surrendering to the illusion that inclusion is something
that does not apply
to us, or something we do not
deserve.

Internalized ableism is
not making our access needs known
because they have been known
to inconvenience others.
So instead we accept half-ass access
or none at all, and do so while expressing
gratitude
as if our rights were half-ass rights,
as if our needs were inferior
to the needs of others.

Internalized ableism is
letting other people raise our kids
because we’ve been convinced
that we don’t have what it takes to be parents.
It is
believing
disabled people should not be parents,
or that disabled children should not be
born…..thinking
that disability
always is the worst possible outcome,
the worst possible consequence,
the most painful
punishment—something we can’t wish
on anyone.
Internalized ableism is letting religious fanatics pray and prey over us and use our differences as a scare tactic to explain their version of God as a punishing God as a vengeful God.

Internalized ableism is hiding our differences as much as we can, concealing our scars, covering our “imperfections”, not being able to say “Disability Pride” with pride…. not feeling offended by the use of the word crip by noncrips, allowing others to choose how to refer to us and what language to use when doing so.

Internalized ableism is only sharing able-bodied pictures of ourselves although we’ve been disabled for a while…. Not wanting to be friends with other disabled people, reminding ourselves again that we’re not one of them, and believing that “those people” do have problems, but they’re not our problems to worry about because…..well…. you know,
as long as we internalize our fears, we can convince ourselves they won't come true and live in our very own dis-abled-bodied world where we can hide our disabled side until the day when, hopefully, we realize that we have ALWAYS been whole that we have ALWAYS been worthy, and we are finally able to see ourselves in the mirror of others whose bodies look like ours, whose lives reflect our lives and find beauty and hope and human potential instead of brokenness and fear and wasted humanity for only when we recognize each other's value will our own humanity make itself evident to ourselves and to the world.
“Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.”

~Mahatma Gandhi
Ask Chelsea & Stephanae

by Chelsea Nguyen & Stephanae McCoy
How did you get involved with the disability community?

I first got involved with the blind community in 2011 when I started reading on the radio for Sight Into Sound Radio. For many years my clients at my salon, friends, and strangers would compliment me by saying I had a nice voice. So, when I started looking for an organization to volunteer with, a client of mine recommended that I read on the radio for a Non-Profit Organization called Taping for the Blind.

What are your activities and hobbies within the blind community?

I do my best by getting involved in the blind and disabled community by learning how to use assistive technology, understanding the basics about orientation and mobility skills as well as learning how to use Houston’s Para-Transit, METRO-Lift. I then went to the University of North Texas to get my certified rehabilitation professional license and am now a UNTWISE - CRP Director who is able to teach Work Readiness Life and Soft Skills to individuals of all different levels of abilities and vision how to prepare for interviews and become gainfully employed.
How do you teach someone who is blind/visually impaired how to do their hair and makeup?

When teaching an Individual who is blind or visually impaired how to do their own makeup, it is very important to use very descriptive words to explain exactly step-by-step where and how to apply the makeup. It’s also a matter of knowing where key facial features are such as the jawline, cheekbones, nose bridge, and forehead to name a few. (More to come.)

What is one of the things that you do in the disabled community that you enjoy doing the most?

One of the things that I enjoy doing the most every year is hosting a Fully Accessible and Audio Described Tour of the Annual World Championship Barbecue Cook-Off.

Since 2014, my friend, Scott Arthur and I map out a fully accessible route and invite a group of 20 blind, visually impaired or disabled guest along with 10 volunteers to come on the tour as Scott and I audio describe everything we see for the guests.
Why should a blind person care about how they look if they can’t see?

Aside from making us feel more confident, what we project to the world is important to our well-being. There are many blind people who care a great deal about how they look. While we might not be able to see ourselves the world can see us. For those of us who care about our image, our appearance is important. We are people first.

Stephanae

How can a blind person shop unassisted?

I’ve written about this on Bold Blind Beauty. Personally, I prefer online shopping, as do many of my friends. I also who have friends who love being able to fully immerse themselves in traditional brick and mortar stores. If a blind person is familiar with a store they can shop by feel or go with a friend or family member who can guide them to a specific department. If going alone they can call ahead to request assistance.
How can you apply makeup with a visual impairment?

It takes some practice although in my personal situation since I’ve worn makeup almost all my life it was simply a matter of finding products that I could work with my sight loss. For example, I can no longer use liquid eyeliner so I use a pencil that works very well. When you lose a sense you learn to become adaptable.

What is one misconception people have regarding your sight and fashion?

One of the biggest misconceptions that boggle my mind, is that many people think sight loss equals frumpy when nothing could be further from the truth. There are people with sight who either have no interest in or lack fashion sense. Likewise, there are people who are B&VI and they have a great sense of fashion.
“Self is a sea boundless and measureless.”

~Kahlil Gibran
As a child, I suffered from reoccurring eye infections and terrible headaches. I received my first pair of glasses at nine years of age, but the eye infections and headaches continued.

By the time I was fifteen years old, my vision had worsened. I never wore the thick glasses they gave me for my near-sightedness because they didn’t seem to improve my vision.

Poor vision was my norm and I soldiered through it, never letting it deter me from accomplishing my goals.

I became a member of the Cayman Islands Taekwondo Team and participated in the 1994 World Cup Taekwondo Games. During that same year, I clinched the title Sportsperson of the Year. Next, I successfully completed the University of Tampa as the top honors graduate in Economics in 1997.

In the giddy blur of all these accomplishments, I also birthed three healthy children. But it was not until 1998 that I fully realized just how devastating my situation was.
I was 25 years old, driving down the highway with my three young children in the van. When suddenly, I realized that I could barely see the traffic lights. Scared, I detoured to the local optometrist with my six-year-old son, Mohammad, calling out the color of the traffic lights.

**Sudden Vision Change Leads To Diagnosis**

At the optometrist office, my diagnosis was Keratoconus a progressive eye disease. The disease was already so advanced that glasses could not correct my vision. I was informed that hard contact lenses were my only option. Without these contact lenses, I would not be able to live a normal life. I was shocked. Unfortunately, in 1999 they were unable to fit the lenses in the US.

Relief wouldn’t come until two years, and two more children later, when I moved to Saudi Arabia. There, doctors at King Khalid Eye Specialist Hospital successfully fitted me with contact lenses. And it was one of the best days of my life! For the first time, I could see my children clearly and I stared at them in awe. Everything looked crisp – like HD TV.
More Trials To Come

In 2007, scarring on my cornea forced me to use the ‘piggybacking system’—wearing two lenses in each eye—soft lenses placed beneath the hard lenses for comfort. Though I had infections on and off after that, my vision seemed to have stabilized, so I got on with my life.

I became an author and illustrator and birthed another daughter. But things took a horrible turn for the worse as a result of a tumultuous divorce, when I was made homeless in Saudi Arabia while my children were swept away, and hidden, in another foreign country. Eventually, I was able to rescue them and flee back to the Caymans. My life basically became a made-for-TV-drama and I endured constant eye pain as it played out.

In 2014, after an especially severe infection, my ophthalmologist in the Cayman Islands suggested I seek treatment overseas. So, in the summer of that year, I packed up all six children yet again and moved to the UK. The move would allow me to start my business and hopefully get the constant infections resolved.

By 2015, I became intolerant to contact lenses and my vision also drastically deteriorated.
The days literally were a blur after that. A blur of doctor visits; a blur of dreams I had to put on hold; a blur of support workers and white cane training; a blur of my children’s faces whom I could no longer recognize.

Due to my failing sight, I was scheduled to have corneal transplants in both eyes. The first transplant took place on 12th September 2016 and the second will be this coming year.

**The Journey Continues**

Today, I am striving to restart my publishing company while volunteering as an Ambassador for Fight for Sight UK.

This organization is the largest eye research organization in the UK. As an ambassador, I am keen to raise awareness as the exact cause of Keratoconus is still unknown. My mission is to promote the urgent support needed to fund eye research.

There is still a long journey ahead as I fight to save my sight. In spite of this, I am determined to use my experience to inspire and transform the lives of others.
"There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more."
~Robert M. Hensel.
Blind A Sixth Sense by the Artist Victoria Claire has shown at Beach Creative in Herne Bay for 2 weeks, it ran from the 6th - 18th Feb 2018. During this time 500 members of the public went through this very unique exhibition. This was the first of its kind in the UK and Beach Creative have supported Victoria to make this rather conceptual idea into a raving success. The idea originated from Victoria’s personal experience of sight loss. She has a rare condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa which has been slowly claiming her sight over the past 23 years.
An artist in contemporary sculpture for 25 years, Victoria created six sculptures from wood, each piece represented a sense, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and a sixth piece which portrayed a sense of trust. The exhibition set in a pitch black gallery space was designed to highlight 3 important messages. The first was to invite the audience to engage with all of their other senses whilst experiencing the work in the dark, the second was to share her own experience as she has slowly learned to accept and embrace her blindness. Finally, there was a message to the visual arts, this was that DISABILITY IS NOT AN IMPAIRMENT TO CREATIVITY. She wants to change how curators put on exhibitions and to encourage them to create more accessible exhibitions so that art then becomes enjoyable for everyone.

The exhibition was an overwhelming success with the public understanding the premise behind it. A packed out Beach Creative hosted a Private View and the exhibition was officially opened by Barbara Norton of Moorfields Eye Hospital. It then continued with visitors coming from all over the South East to experience the exhibition. The BBC reported on it with Art and Culture Correspondent Robin Gibson. Victoria was also invited onto the KMTV evening news programme to talk about Blind A Sixth Sense. Various magazines and publications have featured the exhibition too. This has all really helped to raise the profile of the exhibition.
Over the duration of the exhibition, some very special and inspiring guests have enjoyed the experience. These include Sir Roger Gale MP, The Sheriff Of Canterbury, Wendy Daws MBE and the incredible visually impaired Team GB Skier Millie Knight, who so kindly took the time out of her extremely busy schedule and will be competing in South Korea in March.

The overall consensus to this very unique exhibition has been an extremely engaging, inspiring and uplifting event. Many of the public believe that Blind A Sixth Sense should be shown on a national level, starting with The Turner Contemorary. Victoria said “This truly has been an incredible success which went beyond my wildest dreams, the support has been so wonderful and the interaction with the public has given me the opportunity to highlight sight loss and my personal journey through it. I am truly grateful”
“However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do, and succeed at. It matters that you don’t just give up.”

~Stephen Hawking
Holiday Health & Wellness Tips
It’s Thanksgiving day, you’ve donned your classiest comfy pants (you know you have them) and you’re staring down the barrel of day of epic food. What do you do? In the past, I’ve personally, thrown caution to the wind, and gone full-on glutton! This year, however, I exercised! Exercise - even standing at the stove (safely!!), can be easily worked into your holiday routine. Believe me, not only will you get a chuckle out of butt-clenches at the kitchen sink, you’ll also feel so much better mentally for putting forth the effort!

Tongue-In-Cheek Easy Peasy Exercises For The Holidays

by Jennifer Dutrow
It is that time of year again. The time for family, friends, cheer, and the thing that is at the center of most holiday parties... food. Desserts, wine, and entrees that smell too tempting to pass up. After all the festivities have passed and come to an end, you may find your clothes fitting a little tighter and somewhat regretting having that second slice of pie at every holiday dinner you attended. What can you do to keep the holiday fluff under control? How can you go about ensuring that your holidays are not only happy, but healthy as well? Here are a few tips that can make a significant difference throughout the holiday season.

Healthy Holidays

By Brittany Culp
Paying closer attention to what you are putting on your plate is the most important thing you can do. I recommend to my clients to follow these key steps to keep their nutrition in check:

- **Eat more protein**: Start by putting protein on your plate first. This includes turkey, ham, steak, fish, or whatever cut of meat you are having with your holiday meal. It is best to avoid processed meats such as sandwich meats. 1-2 palm-sized portions are sufficient. If you are not a meat eater, other sources of protein include beans, eggs, and cottage cheese. Many people do not consume enough protein in their daily nutrition. Protein is an important macronutrient that has numerous health benefits including keeping muscles, bones, blood, and hair and nails healthy. It also helps build, repair, and maintain tissues, as well as increase fat burning, boosts the immune system, and lower the risk for diabetes.

- **Eat your vegetables**: Next load your plate up with veggies. 2 fist-sized servings will do the trick. Green vegetables are the best because they tend to have more fiber, contain more vitamins, and have less carbohydrates which help you be able to eat larger portions of them without the extra calories. Green beans, broccoli, asparagus, and spinach are at the top of the list.
Eat your vegetables contd. - If you are going to have vegetables such as corn, just be aware of their higher starch content in comparison to green vegetables.

Control your carbs - Lastly put carbs on your plate. Carbohydrates often get a bad reputation. I am here to tell you that carbs are not your enemy. It is all about consuming them in moderation and making smarter carbohydrate choices, especially if you are planning on having dessert which is usually high in carbs and fat. Some wise carb choices include whole wheat pasta salad, sweet potatoes, yams, brown rice, or baked potato. 1-2 cupped hand-sized portions is a good amount. These options are what I call “good carbs”. They are the more healthy options and provide better macronutrients in comparison to carbs you usually see at holiday meals. “Bad Carbs” to me include mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, bread, and stuffing. If you are going to have “bad carbs” I recommend putting a ½ cup on your plate and limiting yourself to one dinner roll.

Downsize your dessert - For dessert as much as I would love to recommend the fruit salad, chances are most of you will pass it up whenever it is sitting next to the abundance of cookies, cakes, and pies (nor do I blame you).
Downsize your dessert contd.- Therefore, consider choosing the one that stands out the most to you. If the cheesecake is the most appealing, help yourself to a sensible slice of that. If you are a person who likes to sample everything, then I highly suggest that you get \( \frac{1}{4} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \) sized slices of whatever it is you are sampling. It is also important to note that wine and alcoholic beverages often contain high amounts of carbohydrates and sugars, so just like how you are monitoring your food portions, moderate your alcohol consumption as best as possible too.

Drink your water- It is important to stay hydrated no matter what, but by drinking more water throughout the day of a holiday feast you will find yourself less hungry. This can assist in cutting down your cravings, as well as help prevent you from overindulging.

Pace Yourself

Chances are you are going to attend several holiday gatherings, whether it be church functions, work parties, your children’s school celebrations, and extended family gatherings. Baring this in mind, it is wise to plan ahead. If you know you will be attending a gathering, eat healthy during the time surrounding it. Use that delicious holiday meal as a reward.
Pace yourself contd. - This does not mean starving yourself all day before heading off to the gathering either. Many think that this will make up for the extra calories, or somehow make the total amount of calories consumed that day significantly less. Unfortunately this is not the case. By depriving yourself of food all day, you are actually more likely to eat even more food than you would had you been eating sensible meals leading up to that point. You are also slowing down your metabolism, making your body digest that huge feast even slower. Another piece of advice I can offer is to only eat when you are hungry; do not eat just for the sake of eating.

Stay active

Although your eating habits are the most important component of keeping the holiday pounds at bay, exercise will significantly assist in the process. Many people decide to wait until the new year rolls around to start exercising again, but why?

By getting started after the damage has been done, you are making it even more difficult for yourself. In my opinion, it is best to get started beforehand.
Stay Active contd. - Not only will you be on the right path towards laying the foundation for your exercise routine once the new year hits and beginning to establish healthy habits, but you will be decreasing the amount of weight that you could potentially gain from all the holiday food. A mixture of cardio and weight training at least 3 days a week is a good place to start. Joining a gym is something you could even do as a family or you could also attend with a friend. Group fitness classes are a good place to meet other people, and they also offer a means of extra support. Some types of cardio you could do on your own are machines such as the treadmill, elliptical, stationary bike, or stair master. If you are not quite ready to venture out to the gym, consider by jogging around your neighborhood or going on walks more frequently.
About the author:

Brittany Culp is a personal trainer, bodybuilder, and model. She runs her own personal training business, Blind Fury Fitness. Blind Fury fitness provides one-on-one personal training, as well as online training plans and meal plans. Brittany also has her masters degree in Counseling Psychology. She believes that mental health and physical fitness go hand-in-hand and equally contribute to the overall health and wellness of an individual. As a child, Brittany was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa, which has caused her to lose her sight with age. Brittany has not let her blindness hold her back from becoming the best version of herself, and she encourages her clients to do the same no matter the circumstance.
Value

“I am different, not less.”
~Temple Grandin
Multi-Dimensional Barcelona

by George Rector
Barcelona, the old and still vibrant Spanish city on the Mediterranean. We wondered why we even booked a cruise leaving from there, as Spain had not been high on our bucket list. It just felt like the right place at the right time. It was, indeed! Barcelona is a sensory experience like no other. Here is an experience of sights, of course, but also of touch, listen, smell, and taste. And kindness.
The Gothic Quarter

Having arrived tired in the late afternoon, we ventured out onto La Rambla and found a very busy eatery, La Poma Pizzeria. For our first experience in Spain we had spaghetti bolognese. What can I say?

After a good night’s sleep we thought we’d explore La Rambla to get a feel for where we were. About a block down, we encountered a busy walkway off to our left with a triangular or V-shaped building. A busy pedestrian walkway. A V-shaped building separates 2 narrow walkways. On the right are the pedestrian Walk signal and the store Mango. Walkways went on each side. “Which way?” “I don’t know. Left I guess.” We followed a narrow passageway with some stores along each side. The sounds echoed softly as my wheelchair tires bumped across 500 year old cobbles. Then came a steep incline that took both Sandy and me to get my chair up. At the top, a busy plaza and beyond that the Cathedral of Barcelona. Built largely in the 1300’s, it is is a magnificent example of Gothic architecture. The Gothic cathedral is almost in silhouette against a sky of deep blue with white clouds. Toward the left rise the main spire and several smaller ones. Toward the right is the stone structure that makes up the rest of the building.
From its rough, stone walls that beg to be touched to the young man filling the square with his opera (not amplified) you can feel the vibrancy.

**La Rambla**

Just a few pushes of the wheelchair rims from the entrance of the Hotel 1898 is La Rambla. This is a wide pedestrian walkway running north and south from the circle in the north to the port and statue of Christopher Columbus at the south. Unlike the cobbles of the oldest part of the Gothic Quarter, La Rambla is a wavy surface of rectangular tiles. My expectations were that they would ride rough, but the reality was that riding on them was a bit of a massage. Wide, tree-lined pedestrian walkway. Buildings along each side. The surface is rippled and made of rectangular tiles.

Along the sides of the walkway are shops selling souvenirs, gelato, and fresh flowers. Near the south end, these give way to tables where tourists enjoy tapas and sangria.
La Rambla is about tactile and sound. Mostly couples speaking softly in Spanish, English, French, and some Chinese create a blend that seemed almost musical. I’m sure this got “livelier” late in the evening, but this guy is seldom out late. This sensory delight is a full day’s experience if taken slowly.

La Sagrada Familia

Towerling above a newer part of Barcelona is la Sagrada Familia. Still under construction, I wonder if it will ever be finished. The architect Antoni Gaudi spent the last 40 years of his life working on it full time, and he died in 1926. He is buried in the crypts. The lines were excruciatingly long.
Learning about an area in advance often pays off. We went to the back side of the cathedral where there is an entrance for people with disabilities. Parts of the cathedral are not accessible, and some had a rather steep ramp. There is plenty to experience, anyway. Multiple stone columns soar upward in the cathedral. In the background and on the right side are the magnificent stained glass windows filling the space with light.

Towerling pillars support a ceiling that is far up. With the stone walls and floor, stained glass windows, and columns sounds echo and reverberate gently creating a sense of awe that I’m afraid most visitors might not notice amidst the marvelous statuary and windows.

**A word about accessibility**

Barcelona is old, but much effort has been put into making it accessible to everyone. There are curb cuts with tactile warnings, designated pedestrian crossings on La Rambla, and a genuine effort. Buses are accessible. We took the big red on and off tour bus. All of its busses have low floors and ramps that flip out. Everyone was eager to flip the ramp, no hassles.
As I write this the day before Thanksgiving in the U.S., please be mindful that each of us has much for which to be thankful. Family and friends mean more than anything we can imagine. And when things seem overwhelming, remember the simple flip up ramps and the people eager to help. No one can do it all; try to be thankful for what we can do and build upon our strengths.

Photos: The main photo is la Sagrada Familia, a large Neo-Gothic style, unfinished cathedral. Ornate carvings fill the facade. Second photo is a busy pedestrian walkway with a V-shaped building creating 2 narrow walkways. On the right are the pedestrian cross walk sign and the store Mango. Third picture is the Cathedral of Barcelona towering into a blue sky with white clouds. To the left are the main spire and several smaller ones. The right is the stone, Gothic building. Fourth picture is La Rambla. A tree lined pedestrian walkway with buildings on either side. The surface is ripples made of rectangular tiles. Fifth picture is 2 large glasses of red sangria with fruit floating and colorful straws. Sixth picture is inside la Sagrada Familia. Stone column literally soar toward the ceiling. In the background and to the right are the magnificent stained glass windows that fill the area with light.
“Once you choose hope, anything's possible.”
~Christopher Reeve
The Blind Spot
Finding and Hiring a Driver If You're Blind or Visually Impaired

by Stephanie Stephens Van

The Driver Problem: A Daily Frustration

My husband and I are legally blind and are raising two boys. We have no car. We have chosen to live in an urban area for the benefit of transportation, but we have also faced the challenges of living in suburbs and small towns. We are continually reminded of our transportation challenges by family and friends who will ask, "Why don't you move back home?" or "Why don't you come visit more often?" The answer is simple. We need a driver.

Assistive technology has put me on a more-or-less equal playing field with my sighted counterparts. Despite all of these impressive technological advances, however, what continues to frustrate me the most in my daily life is the stress and anxiety of being at the mercy of public transportation systems.

Getting a driver sounds simple, doesn't it? It sounded simple to me when I was in my twenties. In my naiveté, I thought this would be easy. But over the past thirty years, I have learned it is not that simple.
The Driver Problem contd.

Transportation options have declined, due to lack of funding. Fewer persons are available to volunteer as drivers. Medical facilities and shopping areas have sprawled far outside the city limits. Transportation options and related ease of mobility have decreased significantly.

My Early Driver Experiences: It Was So Much Easier "Back Then"

When I first began working as an itinerant (or field-based) Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (VRT) in the 1980s, the private, non-profit agency that hired me provided a corps of volunteer drivers. Work problem solved! The need to get around to shopping, medical, and social events was also less problematic back then, when taxis were prevalent, reliable, and accommodating.
Mindfulness As A Useful Tool For Sight Loss

by Victoria Claire
Living life with a visual impairment can be hugely challenging in all sorts of different ways. I have sought support from a variety of counsellors over the years in my quest to come to terms with my sight loss and find ways to overcome the obstacles I face. About three years ago I started working with a holistic counsellor and began exploring mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a real buzzword at the moment, and has its roots in the Buddhist tradition and meditation. It is designed to help us focus on the present moment by encouraging us to concentrate on our breathing and physical presence. Research into its benefits is ongoing, but it has already been shown to be beneficial in some cases of depression and anxiety.

Personally, I have found mindfulness hugely beneficial. Living with a progressive sight loss condition makes it easy to become overwhelmed by fears about the future. This was regularly my own experience, and prevented me from enjoying the present moment – I was missing out on life whilst worrying about what was going to happen in the coming months and years. Working with my holistic counsellor, and practicing regularly myself, I found that by concentrating on my breath and noticing what was happening within body I was able to centre myself in the here and now.

Mindfulness As A Useful Tool For Sight Loss continued from pg. 60
I am now able to avoid projecting too much into the future and concentrate on what I can achieve in the present. I continue to produce sculptures for private commissions and exhibitions, and my role as an ambassador for RP Fighting Blindness gives me the opportunity to speak publicly about living a full life with sight loss.

You can find out more about mindfulness on the NHS website: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness

Mind’s website: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/
DRESS UP YOUR LONG WHITE CANE FOR CHRISTMAS

By Liz Wisecarver
We decorate our homes, yards, offices and even cookies for the holidays, so why not make your long white cane festive for the occasion? A cheerful Christmas cane will be the talk of your next holiday party and can make any Grinch smile. There are several quick and easy ways to decorate canes for the Christmas season, so get creative and check out your local craft store, dollar store or items you already have at home for inspiration.

**Candy Cane**

Make your white cane into a candy cane by adding a red swirl. Use double-sided tape and red ribbon to make the iconic twisted red stripe around the cane.

Start by rolling some double-sided tape from the handle of the cane down toward the tip in a spiral pattern where the ribbon will be placed. Roll several inches, then stop and cut the tape so it is easier to manage.

Next, begin to place the ribbon on top of the double-sided tape stuck to the cane. Use both hands, one pushing down where the ribbon was placed on the tape and the other pulling the spool, to keep the ribbon straight and taut. Do not cut the ribbon, rather place it on the sections of tape as you go and cut it when you reach the very tip of the cane. This is much easier when you have someone holding the cane by the handle who can turn the cane as you go.
For an easier candy cane swirl, try using red electrical or Duct Tape.

**Glam With Garland**

There is always a plethora of multi-colored garland when it’s time to trim the tree, so pick your favorite and make your cane sparkle.

There are many different types of garland, but the traditional light-weight tensile works very well for Christmas canes. Use double-sided tape and garland to create a swirl down the cane.

Place segments of double-sided tape on the cane, then press the garland on top. For an easier method, use pieces of clear tape on top of the garland to keep it attached. Experiment with layering different colors or textures for a festive look.

**Merry And Bright**

If you really want to shine, try adding lights into the mix. There are several varieties of battery-powered LED Christmas light strands available today that can brighten up your cane and make a bold statement.

First, find a type of adhesive that works for you and your set of lights. Try stronger clear packing tape or zip ties.
Start by testing the lights to make certain they are working — nothing worse than stringing up broken lights.

Begin by attaching the light battery pack under the cane handle. Use tape or zip ties on top of the cord to attach the lights to the shaft of the cane. Pull the lights around the cane in a spiral, and place tape or zip ties on top in regular intervals to secure the lights.

This flashy decoration is somewhat delicate and will add weight to the cane, so save it for special occasions.

**Deck The Halls With Duct Tape**

Duct Tape is an easy and affordable way to decorate your cane for any occasion. It comes in a variety of solid colors and patterns, including holiday motifs, cartoon characters, and even sports team logos. Plus, it adds very little weight to the cane and is quite durable.

Hold the cane vertically with the tip on the floor. Start by rolling a small length of Duct Tape out from the spool, then place it short-ways under the cane handle so that the spool is rolling down the cane shaft. Use one and to hold the tape on the cane and the other to pull the spool downward. Press the Duct Tape down against the cane in its center, so that the left and right edges of the tape are not yet attached to the cane.
Pull the spool of tape down slowly as you continue to press the tape onto the cane. This works best if another person can assist by holding the cane upright by the handle.

After you have reached the tip of the cane, cut the Duct Tape from the spool. Pick one side of the still detached tape and gently press it to the cane shaft starting from the top of the cane and working your way down. Note that you may need to pull on the tape to keep it taut. Once you finish the first side, do the same with the second side of tape, pulling it as you go to make it smooth. The second side of the Duct Tape will overlap with the first.

Adding Duct Tape in this vertical manner uses less tape and looks smoother, especially with patterned tape. Try using multiple colors of Duct Tape in alternating sections.

**Toppers And Bling**

You can add even more personalization by attaching a small object to the cane handle cord. Try tying jingle bells, light-weight plastic ornaments, mistletoe, jewelry or holiday keychains to the cord for a little extra bling.
Things To Consider

Remember, of course, that the white cane is a tool, so make certain your decorations do not take away from its usability. Be aware of additional weight or distractions that any particular materials might cause, and tone it down if needed.

A decorated cane always starts a conversation. It can even be an ice-breaker that helps people understand that blindness is not a tragedy, it simply means doing things a little differently. Rock your cane in style this holiday season.

Bio: Liz works for the National Federation of the Blind of Texas as the NFB-NEWSLINE® Texas Coordinator and holds a National Orientation and Mobility Certification. To learn more about NFB-NEWSLINE®, the free electronic information system for legally blind and print disabled subscribers, visit www.nfbnewsline.org or call 866-504-7300.

Photo Description: Liz stands holding her long white straight cane decorated like a candy cane with red satin ribbon and red jingle bells on the handle. A red door and silver Christmas wreath can be seen behind her.
"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
~Helen Keller
Introducing Astreos

By Yuma

Astreos is the concatenation of light and dark, the cycle of night and day occurring everywhere in our universe. Astrius is the god of dusk, and Eos is the goddess of dawn. hence the name.

The app uses a custom augmented reality engine which does not rely on Geolocation only, but also the position of the stars and manmade satellites to orient the user about the sky.

And one big sky this is. We as visually impaired individuals often omit or just don't think about the dome of light above us, it’s beauty, legends and simply put, it’s majesty.

Astreos tries to reconnect the user with a visual impairment to the skies, by means of both sound and tactile dimensions.
Sounds are carefully chosen to provide the imaginative sense of what a constellation would sound like, and real frequencies emitted by many planets and moons are used in 3D positional audio.

The tactile dimension is an exploratory game to find out how constellations are formed, what their shape is like, as well as find the orientation of the rings of planets, or the actual shapes of spacecraft and telescopes sent up by humans, with full descriptions and touchable images of everything from constellations to comets.

The app aims to continue expanding towards more professional use cases, smarter features and notifications for when big events occur, such as on our planet.

**For Additional Information:**

Website: www.oseyeris.com  
Twitter: @OSeyerisVIP  
Facebook: @OSeyerisVIP
Closing Remarks
By Chelsea & Stephanae

We hope you enjoyed our first issue of CAPTIVATING! While we did our best working within the parameters available to us, we are dedicated to making this publication fully accessible. Right now there aren't any accessible platforms that meet our specifications however as we said in our Editor’s Note, we know the power and possibilities of inclusion are limitless.

The creation of this first edition of CAPTIVATING! is a live demonstration of what can be achieved when we believe in limitless possibilities.

Just imagine what we could accomplish with an accessible magazine creation platform?

Many thanks to all of our contributors. Without you, this wouldn't have been possible.

CAPTIVATING! "The Power and Possibilities of Inclusion are Limitless."

We invite you to submit questions, articles, and ideas to editor@captivatingmagazine.com

Happy Holidays!
1. Front cover: on the top quarter of the cover page is the logo and name of the magazine, captivating, written in white bold All capital letters except for the V in the magazine name is drawn with an artistic style font in Bold red and looks like a big check mark. And at the end of the word, captivating is also a red bold exclamation mark.

The cover is our featured guest, Lady Rabia wearing an elegant and festive long sleeve burgundy gown standing in front of a white fireplace covered with Christmas decorations. Her hair is black and left down long and curled.

2. Page 2: to the far right side of the page with the table of contents, there is an enlarged image of a shiny white snowman made of porcelain. He is wearing a top hat and a scarf painted in silver With silver round buttons, a silver round nose, two smaller round, and black eyes and has a pleasant, warm and very welcoming big smile on his face.

3. On page 3 the table of contents continues and to the far right of the page is an image of a red and white peppermint candy cane laying on top of a wooden board that also has a square white love note on it that has the word "Joy" Written in beautiful calligraphy in black ink. The dot on top of the "j" was replaced with a small heart. Around the frame of the Candy cane and wooden board are Various Christmas ornaments such as a silver round tree decoration and a glittery silver
Image Descriptions

snowflake and a red and black plaid scarf woven between them to complement the red stripes of the peppermint candy cane.

4. Page 4: in the upper right-hand corner of the page for above the words welcome and happy holidays is a close-up view of three frosted white and brown pinecones that have fallen on the ground.

5. The same image is repeated on The upper left portion of page 5.

6. On page 6 we have an image of Ms. Maria Palacios, the author of the poem, “The Other Side of Ableism” is sitting in her wheelchair smiling and proudly holding a sign that says... “The Crip Resistance, Freak Flag”, then to the left of those words is a female sign with an image of a woman sitting inside of the circle part in a wheelchair. The words outside of that circle says: “FREE OUR PEOPLE”.

7. Pages 7 thru 17: The image on each of these pages is a photo of Ms. Maria Pelacios closing her eyes while passionately reading from her iPad at a public speaking event. She is wearing a microphone headset, a long-sleeved black dress, and a silver peace sign necklace.

8. Page 18: on the top of page 18 is the word possibilities written in the upper left-hand corner of the page. Then there are images of various sized gold and red Christmas presents wrapped with bows on them.
9. Page 19: At the top of the page is a close-up photo of a big red ceramic bowl filled with yellow fluffy popcorn sitting on top of a table next to a white mug that is covered with a red and white knit mug cover. The mug is filled with hot chocolate and has a stirring spoon inside. In the background of the photo is a golden yellow and orange fire burning inside a red brick fireplace. Immediately under this photo is the title for the next segment of the magazine which reads - Ask Chelsea & Stephanae.

10. Page 20: On the upper right-hand corner of the page is a photo of a round red Christmas ornament with white snowflakes on it sitting in the snow.

11. Page 20 bottom left corner: is a professional Profile photo of Chelsea smiling and looking forward with her makeup on, long black hair with copper and Caramel highlights and wearing a black silk top with slits on the sleeves and a silver necklace with a circle pendant in the center.

12. The next two photos of page 21 are Of silver and white round Christmas ornaments along with a white and silver bird decorated with sparkling white diamonds. The bird is half the size of the close-up photos of the round Christmas ornaments.
13. On the upper right-hand corner of page 22 is a side angled profile photo of Stephanae McCoy smiling and looking straight at the reader of the magazine. She is wearing a rich red lipstick, black eyeliner, and very soft natural makeup on. Her rich brown hair is short and stylish and accented with golden copper highlights. She is also wearing a professional black jacket and accessorizing it with a silver chained necklace adorned with white diamonds in the shape of a flower with a blue sapphire center stone in the center of each flower. On that same necklace, there are also round peach colored stones throughout the necklace as well.

14. Pages 22 through Pages 24. The next few images are of various Christmas ornaments starting with a red and white and gold glass star ornament, followed by white Gift boxes wrapped with rope and topped with many pinecones, green leaves, and red berries. Finally on page 24 is a close-up photo of golden ribbons, miniature wrapped golden presence and white and gold lights.

15. Page 25: here is a close-up photo of Lady Rabia with her long straight black hair, natural makeup, pink lipstick, and her eyeliner is drawn with black liquid liner wispy cat tail technique. Her eyebrows are on Fleek and looking great! In this close-up photo of her head is tilted to her right and her left hand is rushing through her black hair. Her nails are also painted with pink nail polish to match her lipstick.
16. The same photos are repeated on pages 27 and 28 up of Lady Rabia.

17. On the top of page 29 is a family photo of Lady Rabia and her six children. Two of the taller boys are in the back and on the front row with her is Lady Rabia and her four daughters in the front.

18. On page 30 is a close up photo of various round Christmas decorations tied to the end of white ribbons hanging from the ceiling.

19. Pages 31 through 36 are photos of artistic wooden sculptures by Victoria Claire: All of Victoria's sculptures are tactile delights which are very smooth, varnished and have softly rounded edges. Just looking at the pieces they have a soothing flowing characteristic. The Sixth Sense is a dove in flight and represents acceptance. Sight is an eye where the pupil is a stone suspended within the center of the eye. For Sound, Victoria who is also an accomplished musician created an electric guitar that can actually be played. For smell, she made a magnificent magnolia flower. Upright praying hands represent Touch and they are holding a gemstone in between them. A voluminous garlic bulb is Smell.
20. On the top of page 37 is a close-up image of a Christmas present wrapped in light brown wrapping paper with darker brown Christmas cookie decorations on it and tied with the decorative red and light brown striped ribbon.

21. On the top of age 37 is a close-up image of a Christmas present wrapped in light brown wrapping paper with darker brown Christmas cookie decorations on it and tie with a decorative red and light brown striped ribbon.

22. Page 38 is a close up image of dumbbells used for weightlifting and exercise.

23. Page 39: is a selfie photo taken by Jennifer looking into the camera while wearing a sleeveless workout shirt and a colorful headband. In the background is two of her golden retrievers relaxing and sleeping on a navy blue sofa.

24. On page 40 is a full page photo of Ms.Brittany Culp standing in a gym wearing a matching two-piece workout black outfit with Red, orange and yellow flames designed on it. She is standing tall looking straight at the camera and her right arm is holding on to a pulley connected to a weightlifting machine. Her makeup is soft and natural with pink lips, coral cheeks, and neutral brown eyeshadow. Her hair is long and blonde with golden highlights.
25. this same image of Britney is repeated on pages 41 through 47 alongside her article.

26. On page 48 the word value is written in the upper right-hand corner superimposed on a photo of red Harley on a branch with leaves red and white ribbon and Brown pinecones in the background.

27. Pages 49 through 55 are photos of Various historical buildings and tourist areas in Barcelona. Photos were taken and described by George Rector.

28. Page 56 is a photo of close-up images of various hand painted and decorated around Christmas ornaments hanging from a Christmas tree with golden lights in the background. The Christmas ornaments are blue, white, gold and red.

29. The image on page 57, 58 and 59 are of a gentleman driving while holding the steering wheel with his left hand. In the distance, you can see out through the front of his window city lights at dusk.

30. Page 60 through 62 are the same photos of a Wintory white landscape wherein the white snow has covered the road ahead. The trees are bare and also frosted with snow and ice on all of their branches. In the background, there’s also a lake that has frozen over.
Image Descriptions

31. The images on 63 to 68 are of Liz Wisecarver standing in front of the house smiling and holding her long white cane decorated like a candy cane.

32. On page 69 there is an image of a red round Christmas decoration with a castle painted on it.

33. On Pages 70 through 72 or images of circles dots and lines on a dark blue and teal background that shows electronic circuits.

34. At the top of page 73 is a close-up image of a Halle Berry tree outside with snow on its branches and leaves. The berries are various shades of red, orange and yellow while the Leaves are a dark green.

35. The photo to the right of page 74 is a photo of cinnamon sticks, pinecones nuts Pinesett leaves and a white candle inside of a burgundy votive all sitting on top of the wooden table top.