

# The Hatlen Center for the Blind

Fall 2009

## Meet Miriam Krieger

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I was born completely blind, but had corneal transplants as a baby, so I have some vision. I can read large print, but my eyes get tired easily because I only use one eye to read. As I got older I knew I wanted to be independent. I knew I needed to get out into the world and see if I could do things for myself. As soon as I heard about The Hatlen Center for the Blind, I decided to come, because at the Center, we have no choice, we have to do everything by ourselves. I thought that would be the perfect opportunity for me to try being independent.

### THE HCB DIFFERENCE

The most important point of difference between the Hatlen Program and other programs is that our students are not living in a simulated real-life setting—they are living independently in apartments among sighted neighbors in the real world with guidance from our highly trained staff of professionals. To learn more, apply, or donate, visit [www.hcblind.org](http://www.hcblind.org) or call (510) 234-4984

I was very nervous when I first got here because I didn't know anybody, and I was wondering how I was going to get things done. Really, I didn't know what I was doing. I needed a lot of guidance when I first came. My confidence about everything was just so low. I was very, very afraid of the stovetop. I was really afraid to get on a bus. I was very, very self-conscious about using a cane. I didn't know how to pay my bills. Now I can cook anything I want on the stove. Now I have absolutely no problem going to and from San Francisco on BART or to Berkeley on the bus. And I've learned that the cane is really a protection for me. I have learned how to keep a budget, so I know what I spend each month and can determine if I have a little extra money to go to Starbucks with friends or not. It's a big responsibility, but I feel very good about what I can do.

If you would like to sign up for our e-newsletter and help reduce our paper use, simply send an email to [news@hcblind.org](mailto:news@hcblind.org)

The other reason I got over being nervous is because I made friends almost instantly. A lot of people in my high school didn't know how to deal with my visual impairment. They thought it was weird or whatever, so I didn't really have that many close friends. But from the first day I came to The

Hatlen Center, I was making friends left and right, it was amazing. I couldn't believe what was happening. And I don't think there was one person at The Hatlen Center that I truly did not get along with. I made a lot, and I mean a lot, of new friends. My social life has definitely changed for the better.

My parents can't believe all the things I'm doing now, and it's all because of The Hatlen Center. Now I'm moving to an apartment in El Cerrito, and I'm going to attend Berkeley City College. After that, my dream is to attend UC Berkeley. I also have a volunteer job with TeleCare. It's a program for seniors who are homebound. I call and check up on them to see if they need anything. I would encourage any young adult who wants to live independently to look into The Hatlen Center. I'm certain that if I were still in San Diego, where I'm from, things would be just the way they were before. That was fine when I was younger, but now I want to live my own life, and that is exactly the opportunity that is available at The Hatlen Center. It was a great experience for me.



Volunteer Danielle Mourning has not only helped out on several field trips this year, she also took some amazing photographs of our students and staff kayaking in Tomales Bay and on a trip to Alcatraz. Thank you so much, Danielle!

The Hatlen Center  
for the Blind

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**  
[www.hcblind.org](http://www.hcblind.org)

**Watch for our new website, going live before the end of the year! [www.hcblind.org](http://www.hcblind.org)**

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Although the State is late in paying us, we are still getting paid, and even though the students have sustained a cut in their SSI income, they are still managing to pay their bills. In other words, despite the economic downturn, we are happy to report that our program has not changed. The students had an incredible time recently on a kayak trip to Tomales Bay, and just last week they came back feeling really pumped up from a self-defense class called Kid Power. A few days ago one of the students brought me a custard dish of homemade chocolate soufflé, hot from the oven. Truism: It's difficult to worry about much of anything while eating chocolate soufflé! We have a really great group of students this year, young people who are working hard on this very real chance to become independent. With a little help from our friends, I know we will survive this economy. And what a wonderful, loyal group of friends we have! Your names are listed below. Your gifts to The Hatlen Center are more deeply appreciated than we can ever express. As long as your loyalty remains strong, we will continue to sustain the quality of program for which we are so well known. Thank you so much.

-Patricia Williams, *Executive Director*



## WINGS OF FREEDOM AWARD

At a Gala event held on October 15 in Louisville, Kentucky, our founder, Dr. Philip Hatlen, was presented with the Wings of Freedom award, the highest award presented by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for service to our field. In fact, this award has been presented only 13 times in APH's 150-year history. Held at the beautiful Mohammed Ali Center, over 400 people attended the ceremony and celebration. The outpouring of love and appreciation from the APH staff and so many of Phil's friends, the wonderful venue, speeches, and food coalesced into a truly magical evening. It cannot be overstated how much Phil's prolific contributions to our field have empowered thousands of people who are blind and visually impaired. In addition, he has mentored and inspired hundreds of teachers to enter the field, including myself. We are so proud to be carrying on Phil's philosophy and legacy at The Hatlen Center for the Blind.



Dr. Tuck Tinsley III (right), president of APH, presents award to Dr. Phil Hatlen (left)

## DONATIONS

## 2008 - 2009

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### IN HONOR OF

Douglas Gerry  
Christine Harkinson  
Paula and James LeDuc  
Kristen Phinnessee  
JoAnne & George Riggs  
Samir Shaibi  
Petal Turner  
Andrew Webb

### VOLUNTEERS

Robert Barnett  
Matt Durning  
Danielle Mourning

### THANKS ALSO TO:

Chevron Humankind Employee Funds  
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*We apologize to anyone whose name we may have forgotten to list here. Please know that your support is deeply appreciated.*

As you think of making your end-of-year donations, please consider supporting the work of The Hatlen Center for the Blind

*"We make a living by what we get.  
We make a life by what we give."*

*-Sir Winston Churchill*