

Free And Easy Ways To Support Our Program!

What if The Hatlen Center for the Blind earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our nonprofit? And how great would it be if every time you shopped for groceries a percentage of the cost went to our program? Well, now it can!

It's very easy to start earning money for The Hatlen Center for the Blind - just go to www.hcblind.org/donate/other to sign up with one or all of the programs that donate money to nonprofits at no cost to you. It just takes a few minutes to sign up, but it would make a lifetime of difference to our organization. Thanks for your support!



Local Support Provides Essential Equipment

The Hatlen Center's Adaptive Technology lab has seen many improvements over the past few years. Most recently, we were awarded a generous grant from the **San Pablo Community Foundation** to purchase four brand new computers for the lab. Our students rely on these computers for training purposes and, in many cases, to complete college homework assignments. These computers will help keep the lab's technology cutting-edge and provide our clients with training on problem-free PCs.

In the pursuit to keep our tech lab up-to-date, the staff's technological needs often get overlooked; however, thanks to the **Soroptimist International of Richmond**, our staff finally got their outdated computers replaced. The new computers have increased staff productivity and virtually eliminated the many hours per week spent troubleshooting various problems that invariably plague older computers. In addition, the Soroptimist International of Richmond provided funds to purchase a netbook for our Executive Director, Patty Williams. The whole staff is thrilled with their new equipment!

We want to extend a whole-hearted thanks to these local organizations for their important contributions to our community.

Meet Alyssa Rossi

In this issue:

- Meet Alyssa
- New Website
- SFSU Class
- Ski Trip
- Symphony
- Support Us For Free
- Community Support

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 or call (510) 234-4984

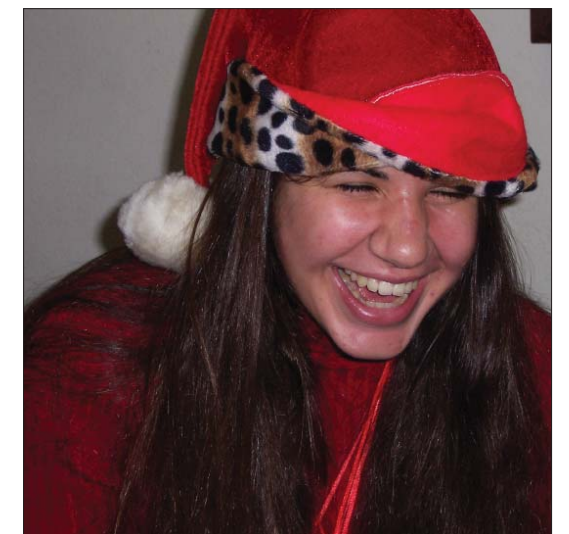
If you would like to sign up for our e-newsletter and help reduce our paper use, simply send an email to news@hcblind.org

I came to The Hatlen Center not knowing anything in mobility and living skills. My teachers Meggie and Samir literally changed my life. I learned so much about street crossings, how to be oriented in unfamiliar areas, how to analyze traffic, and I gained so much confidence about asking for assistance and being around people I don't know. Before I was kind of scared by that. Meggie and I, ohmygosh, we were just like a team. I'm not afraid to go out anymore. It's fun. I took the bus to Hilltop Mall as a lesson, now I'm going to Hilltop tomorrow with "my girls." My friend Laura and I go everywhere on paratransit now. I've been to El Cerrito countless times, and before I was afraid to take paratransit.

As for living skills, I came here not even knowing how to turn on the stove; I didn't know anything. Samir started teaching me simple things like laundry, folding, and hanging up my clothes, and then we started cooking. I learned really, really well from Samir. Egg salad first, then spaghetti, boiling chicken, grilling chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, cookies, and pumpkin pie.

There are so many things I can cook now, and I am a master at pasta dishes. I love French toast, it is so much fun. I had never full-on grocery shopped before, but I learned fast. Besides living skills and mobility, I also learned how to pay my bills, and Ron helped me appreciate technology. His lessons on the Braille Sense notetaker have made me feel more prepared for college.

In addition to all that, the symphony was awesome!



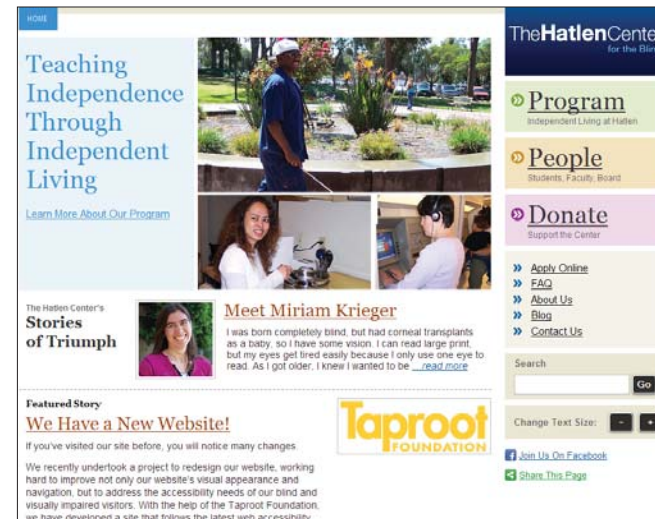
To hear Alyssa's amazing singing voice, visit our website (www.hcblind.org) and click on her story

Check out our brand new website at www.hcblind.com

The Hatlen Center Has A New Website!!

If you've visited our site before, you will notice many changes.

We recently undertook a project to redesign our website, working hard to improve not only our website's visual appearance and navigation, but to address the accessibility needs of our blind and visually impaired visitors. We have developed a site that follows the latest web accessibility guidelines for text size, link visibility, contrast, and ease of navigation for screen readers to ensure that the site can be viewed and browsed easily by visually impaired and blind users.



We are very pleased with the results and hope that it will be a better resource for all visitors to the site. We hope that you will visit us often!

To accomplish our goals, The Hatlen Center partnered with the **Taproot Foundation**, a nonprofit consulting firm that works to connect professionals in fields such as marketing, finance, and information technology with local nonprofits.

Thank you so much to our volunteer Taproot team for going above and beyond the scope of this project to give us our beautiful and professional website!

Teachers-In-The-Making Come to Learn

On Saturday, March 6, The Hatlen Center was happy to host a day-long class for 24 graduate students from San Francisco State University. These students are earning credentials and/or Masters degrees to become teachers of the visually impaired.

Dr. Sunggye Hong, SFSU Professor, asked our Program Director, Patti Maffei, to give an in-depth lecture on the kinds of non-academic skills (and how to teach them!) that blind and visually impaired children need to become truly independent. Part of the morning was spent having students pair off, blindfolding one student and having the other teach that student a cooking lesson, then switching roles. The Hatlen Center is proud to support the teacher preparation program at San Francisco State.



Program Director Patti Maffei lectures SFSU graduate students

Annual Ski-Trip ❄️

For close to 30 years, Hatlen Center students have gone on a cross country ski trip in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The 3-day field trip is accomplished in collaboration with another Bay Area nonprofit called Environmental Traveling Companions (ETC), which provides a cabin, ski equipment, and a sighted guide for each student. Several days



First trip to the snow



Kinda big, don't ya think?

before the trip, our students begin to prepare food for the trip, and excitement begins to build. Students often remark that this experience is one of the highlights of their time in the program. This year was no exception. Soft snow fell the whole time they were skiing, and the students, some of whom had never been to snow country before, felt that the snowfall only "made it better." The cabin was located on a golf course, and the last morning was spent building a snow man, making "angels" in the snow, and ended with a raucous snowball fight. Upon their return, virtually all of the students exclaimed, "It was awesome!"

*"People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing."
-Dale Carnegie*

Thank you, Ara!



Student David Kolotinsky and board member Ara Chackerian chat before the symphony

Hats off to newest Board member Ara Chackerian, who hosted a field trip to the San Francisco Symphony at Davies Hall on February 18 for all staff and students. Before leaving to take BART to the city, we watched a wonderful video of SF Symphony conductor Michael Tilson Thomas explaining Beethoven's Eroica Symphony. Later, as we listened from our incredible front row seats, we were all better able to track Beethoven's emotions, expressed musically in this beautiful symphony, as he traveled from joy to the dark despair created by his loss of hearing, and eventually to a peaceful place. It was an amazing experience for all, topped off by a very fun dinner at Chevys Restaurant.

Special thanks to Contra Costa Braille Transcribers, who Brailled the program in advance for our students.