



**Second Sense**  
Beyond vision loss

*Because of you...* Tom is facing his fears, pg 1

Clients are using tech, pg 2

Angela expands her horizon, pg 4

Fall 2019

# Perspectives

## Tom Faces His Fears with Mobility Training



Tom is retired. He lives alone. And he is losing his vision.

“There are things I do well and things I don’t do so well. So I just have to work on those things a bit more.

“I still run all my own errands. I take a cab to Target, flirt and charm someone in customer service, and get a personal shopper.”

But, the cab is an extra expense and sometimes Tom just needs a few items at the store.

There is a neighborhood store he used to frequent. A store just across the street from where he lives. Across 95th street -- six lanes of traffic, including city buses.

Tom hasn’t crossed 95th street in a year. He remembers the last time he crossed the busy intersection near his house. **He was hit by a car and broke both his legs at the ankle.**

After a year, with his vision steadily getting worse, Tom has decided he is ready to face his fear.

He is working with Eleni, our Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, to learn to travel safely with a white cane.

Orientation and Mobility (or O&M) is a complex skill. The orientation half involves learning to pay attention to where you are in relation to your environment. You can no longer simply look up at a street sign or a familiar landmark to know which way is north. You have to keep track of the direction you are facing after each turn.

You also have to plan your route, so you know how many streets to cross, when to turn and how to find your final destination.

The mobility half involves moving safely and efficiently. And this usually requires learning to use a white cane.

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**Second Sense uses your donations wisely. See what we accomplished on page 3.**

Walking out their door. Jotting down a phone number. Sending an email.

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## Using Accessible GPS Apps



*Richard, Susan, Pam, Lisa, Angela, Gina and Edwin (not pictured) joined Kathy and Eleni to learn about apps that aid independent travel.*

“I’m beginning to learn how to use GPS more to navigate. I had enough vision in the past to get by. But, now I am finding it more of a struggle.” Lisa has great cane skills, but she wants to feel more confident in traveling to unfamiliar places.

During October, White Cane Awareness Month, we held several workshops focusing on traveling independently.

Using technology as a tool for navigation is a great option.

Apple maps, Soundscape and other accessible apps are all great options. They can be used alone or in combination to help our clients get to their destination with the least amount of frustration.

The group spent some time discussing the AIRA app.

This app connects the user with a trained staff member. Using the phone’s camera, the

staff member will act as a guide. They can help you find the right door, navigate to the right gate at the airport, or help you find an open table at a cafe.

AIRA has partnered with airports so they have maps with the terminal layouts handy.

“I think I would use AIRA if I had to travel through an airport,” Gina shared. It’s another option instead of having to schedule meet and assist.”

They have also partnered with universities, stores (like Walgreens) and museums, like the Smithsonian and Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium. Visitors to the Shedd can open the AIRA app and receive a free personal described tour of the exhibits.

Workshops like this are one way we can encourage our clients to gather as many useful tools as they can to aid in their independence. ●

Finding a job. Living an active, independent life. Because of you.

## October is White Cane Awareness Month

It takes an average of **10 hours** of one-on-one training for our clients to learn basic mobility skills. Enough to safely walk out their door and around their block.

**64%** of clients move on to learn intermediate skills — like crossing streets.

In October

**25**

adults received *individual* mobility training



**14**

clients attended O&M workshops

**9**

are participating in our Fall 1Touch self-defense class



**Did you know that you have to learn to travel with a white cane BEFORE you can get a guide dog?**

It is the law in most states that cars must give right of way or stop when a pedestrian is crossing the street with a guide dog or a white cane.

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## Facing Fears

*continued from page 1*

*“The only limits I have are the limits I put on myself.”*

So, Tom is learning how to hold the cane. How to use the cane to walk in a straight line. He’s learning how to climb up and down the stairs — which involves two different techniques. And, he’s learning how to interpret the signals the cane was giving him, Signals like elevation drops when he approaches a curb.

Once his basic skills were strong enough, Tom was ready to move outdoors. Outdoor travel brings new skills into the mix. Skills like identifying traffic patterns and crossing streets.

Tom has to pay attention

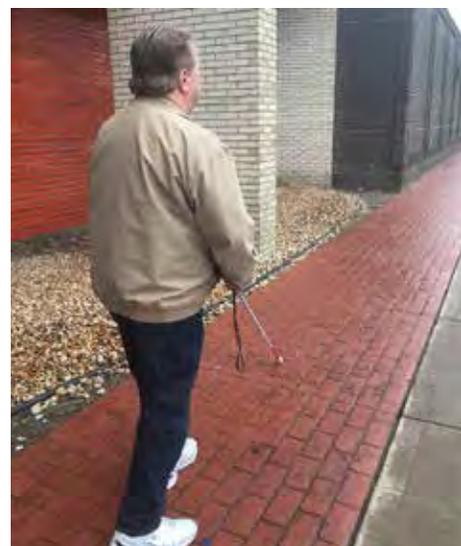
to sound. Cars backing out of driveways, storefront doors opening, kids on bikes. The sound of traffic bouncing off buildings is different than the sound when he is walking next to a vacant lot. The sound of children laughing could mean a school playground or the neighborhood park.

He pays attention to aromas. The smell of fresh baked bread means he is passing the bakery and the odor of gasoline means the corner gas station is nearby.

Most importantly, he has to pay attention to potential danger. Even common things like cracks in the sidewalk can

lead to injury.

Soon Tom will reach his goal: to cross 95th street independently and safely. ●



# Mobility Training Can Need to be Refreshed



Even experienced cane travelers need to refresh their mobility skills.

This can involve a few lessons to make sure you are focusing on the task at hand and not letting your mind wander.

Or, it can involve learning a new route, a new intersection or a new train station.

For Angela, it meant stepping outside her comfort zone. She traveled regularly. To work, to her volunteer jobs, and to meet friends.



Even though she traveled often, she tended to go to the same places. There was so much more to see and do. So much more that she wanted to experience.

Mobility training for Angela focused on planning routes, using navigation

aids and interpreting unfamiliar territory.

One of the first places Angela wanted to go was Eatly in Chicago's River North area.

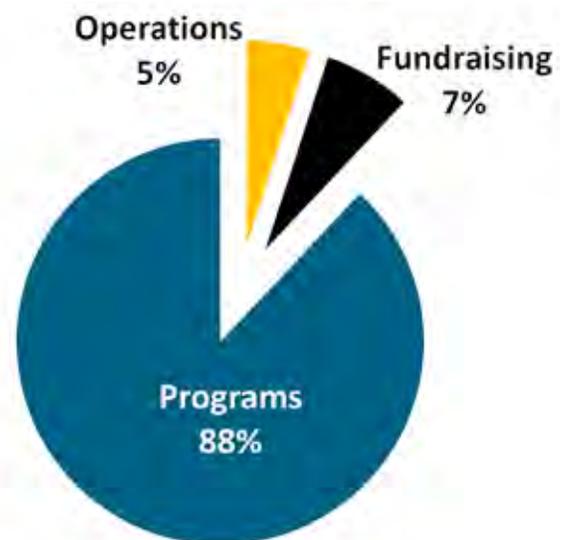
After deciding on a route, discussing the number of street crossings and determining which GPS app she would use, Angela set off — with Eleni following close by to observe.

The route offered several challenges, including sidewalks that opened to plazas with no discernible borders and then narrowed with barely enough room for two people.

As Angela neared her destination, her chosen GPS app wasn't working properly among all the high rises — a common problem in downtown areas. So, she relied on a more low tech option, asking other pedestrians for assistance.

After a few more lessons, Angela successfully reached her goal and now feels more confident exploring all the city has to offer. ●

## How Your Donations are Carefully Used



Figures from our Fiscal Year 2018 audit