



We Accept Medicare

The Ensign Skills Center is a not-for-profit organization and relies on funding from grants and personal donations. Your donations are tax-exempt. Please help us give hope to others working to regain their independence. Thank you.

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Name _____

**JANUARY
2007**

Tuesday Evening Support Group Information

Up coming meetings are:

Jan. 9 - Assistive Technology
Feb. 13
Mar. 13

Tuesday evening support group for working adults is normally held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Ensign office.

The meeting time is 6:45 p.m.

Ensign Skills Center
3307 S. College Ave, #108
Fort Collins, CO 80525
970-407-9999
ensight@qwest.net
www.ensightskills.org

Assistive Technology

Technology, or what we often refer to as “high tech,” has significantly changed the way we learn, work, play and just simply live. But while computers have had a tremendous influence in everyone’s life, they can have an even more profound and critical impact on those who are blind or have low vision.

If you have been dependent on your computer but can no longer distinguish information on the computer screen, even using the accessibility and magnification features of Windows XP, you may be feeling very lost.

Thanks to major advances in screen reading software, it has become much more possible and far easier to access all aspects of computer usage via synthesized speech. Some of the more popular speech software programs (screen readers) on the market today include:

- JAWS
- WindowEyes
- Hal
- Zoom Text

Simply using a larger monitor may not help you see the information on the screen any better.

Computers can help access reading material, such as, books, magazines, and mail. Printed material can be accessed primarily via two ways: (1) **Electronically**, via the internet or email; (2) By **scanning** it into your computer and reading it using screen reading or magnification programs.

Computers are capable of providing people with severe vision loss unprecedented access to a myriad of information, recreation and leisure options. In addition, technology can have tremendous impact on one’s ability to accomplish many of the daily tasks which become more difficult with impaired vision. Some examples are: Reading mail, Financial management and Shopping.

Assistive technology reaches people of all ages and skill levels. Ensign offers an assistive technology specialist, Chris Johnson, who provides 1 on 1 support and education to visually impaired and blind.

Regular Exercise May Stave Off Degenerative Eye Disease

Regular exercise can cut the likelihood of developing the degenerative eye disease, age related macular degeneration by 70% suggests research published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology.

Age related macular degeneration is usually divided into two types-- dry or wet. The authors based their findings on the number of cases of ARMD arising over 15 years among 4,000 U.S. men and women in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin.

Participants in the study were aged between 43 and 86 at the start of the study and were assessed at five yearly intervals. As well as detailed eye exams, they were asked about their lifestyle and the amount of regular physical activity they took, including flights of stairs, daily walks and exercise.

After taking account of other risk factors, such as weight, blood fat levels, and age, those with an active lifestyle were 70% less likely to develop “wet” ARMD than those who had a sedentary lifestyle. Regular walkers were 30% less likely to develop “wet” ARMD.

Other factors, such as diet, may explain the findings, cautioned the Researchers. But physical activity is known to reduce systemic inflammation and irregularities in cells lining the arteries, both of which are thought to have a role in the condition.

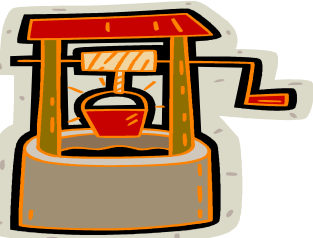
Physically active people are also likely to be “biologically” younger than those with a sedentary lifestyle, which could also be important as ARMD is associated with aging.

-Information from Vision Connection founded by Lighthouse International

Our Wish List

There are several things that we need that would help us run our office but we are reluctant to spend our limited funds. Here is our current wish list, please consider helping.

- **AAA and C Batteries**
- Large print books and books on CD
- Small computer speakers



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3307 S. College Ave
Suite 108
Fort Collins, CO 80525

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*Ensign Skills Center is working to improve the quality of life
for the visually impaired.*

SUPPORT GROUP CALENDAR

Our Monthly support group is normally held the 4th Thursday of each month at the Ensign office. Kirstin Hartman of Seniors In Transition is our moderator.

Group is held from 10:00-11:30 AM

Jan 25 Personal Response Systems

Feb 22 Equipment - technology

See page one for Evening Group
Information.

