



# 2011 Annual Report

100 Years of Seeing Without Seeing

# A Century of Service

Alphapointe Association for the Blind is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has continued to serve people who are blind and visually impaired in the Kansas City, Missouri community and surrounding region since 1911. Alphapointe Association for the Blind is the largest single employer of visually impaired individuals, employing 174 people, and is the only comprehensive rehabilitation and education agency for people with vision loss in the state of Missouri, serving over 6,000 individuals.

Our Mission is to empower people with vision loss to maximize their independence.



Catherine Hale opens her home as a meeting place for the Allied Workers for the Blind.



Catherine and her brother incorporate Kansas City Association for the Blind in order to start providing employment opportunities for people who are blind.



The Catherine Hale Home for Blind Women opens in Midtown Kansas City. Eight years later, the late Hiram Koller bestows a \$250,000 gift to the home for renovations and expansion.



The Kansas City Association for the Blind takes the first order for handmade brooms, made by a total of 8 blind employees.



KCAFB has grown to employ nearly 50 men with vision loss.



KCAFB sells 14,000 dozen brooms, 133 dozen floor mats, and canes 880 chairs.



Kansas City Association for the Blind is awarded the Navy E Class Award for its superior service and contributions to the War Effort.





Dr. Helen Keller visits the Kansas City Association for the Blind to lend her support to their mission of employment for people with disabilities.



Kansas City Association for the Blind, The Delta Gamma Sorority and the Junior League of Kansas City partner to create the Kansas City Nursery School for Blind Children, now known as CCVI; Children's Center for the Visually Impaired.



KCAFB starts manufacturing a new line of pens.



KCAFB begins providing therapeutic services to seniors with vision loss.



KCAFB changes its name to Alphapointe Association for the Blind.



Alphapointe starts manufacturing plastics, thereby adding new emplyoment opportunities for people who are blind.



Alphapointe begins providing comprehensive vision rehabilitation services to anyone with vision loss.



The Alphapointe Life Skills Campus opens in south Kansas City, bringing both manufacturing and rehabilitation under one roof.



Alphapointe cuts the ribbon on the Low Vision Clinic, offering low vision evaluations and occupational therapy to the almost 60,000 people living with vision loss in the Kansas City area.



Alphapointe celebrates 100 years of service, employment and advocacy of people with vision loss in the Kansas City community.



# A Century of Leadership

President's and Board Chair's Message

In 2011, Alphapointe celebrated an amazing milestone: 100 years of service to the community.

In 1911, a group of determined individuals set about to change the way of life for people who are blind in the Kansas City area. Led by Catherine Hale, these community leaders took it upon themselves to develop a business plan that would not only succeed, but would most importantly provide a path to independence for people who are blind. At the time, certainly none of them imagined that the work they began in a local park would continue on for a century.

As we walk the halls of Alphapointe's state of the art Life Skills Campus, we often think about Mrs. Hale and the other community members who helped found the Kansas City Association for the Blind. We see people who are blind operating complicated machinery, producing millions of products each year, earning an honest wage to take care of themselves and their families. In our Rehabilitation and Education Center, men and women overcome the challenges of new vision loss so that they, too, are able to work, live and be independent. Somehow, we don't think Mrs. Hale would be surprised at the accomplishments of the employees and clients at Alphapointe. Even a century ago, she knew that any person could realize success, given the right tools and opportunities.

In 1911, Catherine Hale had a vision for the future, a vision that included a path to independence for anyone who was willing to work hard. In 2011, we are proud to still be stewards of that vision. As we look toward beginning our second century of service, we invite you to share Catherine Hale's vision for a brighter path, and a better future for people with vision loss.



Reinhard Mabry, President and CEO



Sheri Johnson Chair, Board of Directors



Catherine Hale Founder, Kansas City Association for the Blind

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# Manufacturing





For 100 years, manufacturing has been the backbone of Alphapointe's business operations. Starting in 1916, when Catherine Hale helped to incorporate the Kansas City Association for the Blind, people without vision were able to obtain competitive employment at the Association's workshop in downtown Kansas City. Workers made brooms, mats and other hand goods, and then sold those goods door to door throughout the city.

During the 1940's, with support from lawmakers and community leaders including Helen Keller, the Association for the Blind began partnering with other similar agencies to sell products to the Federal government. Formerly known as the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, The Ability One Program helped the Association experience unprecedented growth through the sales of products to the government during both WWII and the baby boom that followed.

Today, Alphapointe is still a proud partner with the Federal government through the AbilityOne Program. Alphapointe produces a line of 13 different writing instruments, a variety of plastic products and has partnerships with numerous brands including 3M<sup>™</sup>, Kensington<sup>™</sup>, and Boulevard Brewing<sup>™</sup>.







# Office Supplies & Packaging

2011 was a successful year for Alphapointe's Office Supplies and Packaging divisions. We developed new partnerships with SKM Industries to produce paint markers and correction pens, as well as Sealed Air to package padded envelope mailers.

Alphapointe also expanded existing partnerships. In addition to packaging Boulevard Brewing Company's 12 bottle Variety Sampler, we also began packaging their signature Smokestack liter bottles along with 2 pilsner glasses. Our long-standing partnership with Kensington also expanded in 2011 when we contracted to add a Desktop Lock and Peripherals to our production of their signature Notebook Locks.

In addition to the products sold to various government agencies through the AbilityOne Program, Alphapointe's online store, www.alphapointeonline.com, offers over 40,000 brand-name office supplies. This innovative web-based store offers a variety of office supplies, furniture, and janitorial and break room supplies to serve a broad range of customers throughout the country, and features a team of attentive customer service professionals. Most importantly, every purchase provides jobs and services for people with vision loss.

The end result of new business partnerships and expansions is the creation of jobs, including competitive employment opportunities, for people who are blind. Much as it was 100 years ago.



# Plastics Manufacturing

The broom manufacturing operations at Alphapointe continued until 1969, when advances in automation eventually made hand production obsolete. In order to continue to provide competitive employment for people with vision loss, the Association for the Blind began looking for new business ventures to diversify the manufacturing products. In the early 1990's, Alphapointe began producing a line of plastic products that included pharmaceutical bottles and medical testing supplies. This new business resulted in competitive employment opportunities for nearly 50 people with vision loss each year.

Growth and new business was the theme for the Plastics division at Alphapointe in 2011. In addition to the plastic products manufactured for the Federal government, Alphapointe sought to once again diversify into commercial and private markets.

In 2011, we added our first commercial client, JT Naturals Corporation, a vitamin and supplement company based in Joplin, MO. Other commercial clients soon followed, impressed not only by Alphapointe's mission of empowering people with vision loss but also by our commitment to quality in manufacturing and customer service.



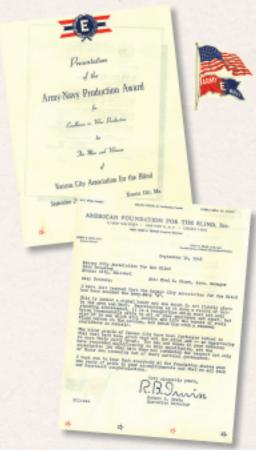








# Base Supply Stores & VA Call Center Serving our Soldiers, Then & Now.



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Alphapointe has a long tradition of service to our soldiers and veterans. Starting with the Javits-Wagner-O'Day legislation in the 1940's and especially throughout various war efforts during WWII, people who are blind have always done their part to ensure that our military has the necessary supplies to do critical work all over the world.

In 1945, the Association for the Blind was honored to receive the Army-Navy "E" Class Award for Excellence in War Production during WWII. Presented to the Association on September 25, 1945, this distinction was in recognition of the contribution of parachute and tent ropes, bandages and rubber mats used throughout the war effort in the South Pacific.

Today, Alphapointe is still a proud supporter of the U.S. military efforts. Through the operation of two military supply stores, Alphapointe employees ensure that active duty military personnel have access to the supplies they need to both operate domestically as well as during deployment. In 2011, employees at the base store at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri also pitched in with supplies when a tornado swept through the base, displacing many service men and women and their families.

Alphapointe is also committed to serving our veterans.

Alphapointe employees manage and operate the call center at the Veteran's Administration Medical Center in Kansas City, routing all incoming and outgoing calls so that medical professionals, patients and their families can stay connected. Alphapointe also supplies the VA with millions of plastic pharmaceutical bottles each year so that all of our veterans can receive prescription medication through a mail order service.

Then, and now, Alphapointe is honored to serve our military.





# A Century of Caring



Long before Alphapointe began providing therapeutic services in the mid-1980's, founder Catherine Hale once again directed her considerable talents for community building towards helping people who are blind. In 1916, Catherine Hale began working with other community members to fill a critical need for safe, affordable housing for women who were blind. With a generous bequest from the estate of Hiram Koller, Catherine opened the Catherine Hale Home for Blind Women later in 1916. The group quickly outgrew the first facility at 29th and Flora Streets, and moved to 29th and Charlotte a year later. The Hale Home remained open until 1989 when community services finally caught up to the need for affordable, safe housing for women with disabilities.

Today, Alphapointe continues a legacy of providing service to people who are blind or visually impaired in our community. Alphapointe is the only provider of comprehensive vision rehabilitation in the state of Missouri. In 2011, Alphapointe provided direct services to nearly 1700 clients in a multi-state region, ranging in age from 2 years to 92 years. Through innovative programs for teens, seniors and all ages in between, Alphapointe empowered people with vision loss to work, be and live independent.

## Comprehensive Vision Rehabilitation



In 1911, the term comprehensive vision rehabilitation program probably was not used much by Catherine Hale and the early leaders of the Kansas City Association for the Blind. At that time, just the simple act of offering a job to someone who was blind was considered highly unusual. The concept of providing that person with education and training to develop skills, while certainly a worthy cause, probably did not seem possible.



In 2000, Alphapointe Association for the Blind took a major step forward in the provision of rehabilitation services to the over 60,000 people with vision loss in the Kansas City area and Midwest region when the organization opened the Center for Blindness and Low Vision. Housed at a local hospital, the CBLV, now known as the Comprehensive Vision Rehabilitation Program, provided a wide range of services to individuals aged 14 through the end of life.

This multi-discipline approach to vision rehabilitation is the only one of its kind in the region. In 2011, Alphapointe provided comprehensive rehabilitation services to 273 people with vision loss. Clients typically spend about three months in the program learning a variety of skills to maximize their independence in the sighted world.

In 2011, the world presents both new challenges and new opportunities for people who are blind. Our clients now demand to be better prepared to enter the workforce, and to be competitive with their sighted peers. The Comprehensive Vision Rehabilitation program at Alphapointe is ready to help those who are ready to help themselves.

## Work Adjustment Center



In 1987, the Association for the Blind took another step forward in advocating for people with disabilities when the Work Adjustment Center opened its doors to adults with multiple developmental disabilities. Again, there were woefully few resources for employment for those members of the community with special challenges, and the Association saw a duty to provide opportunities for independence to these individuals. Employees began by making pens, and eventually progressed to a variety of jobs.

In 2011, the Work Adjustment Center at Alphapointe provides a safe, therapeutic working environment to over 40 adults with multiple developmental disabilities. All of these individuals have some level of vision impairment, ranging from complete blindness to partial vision loss. Many of the employees in WAC have cognitive and physical disabilities, and most live in group homes. They spend their time at Alphapointe completing a variety of projects, including assembling pens and other piece work. They are paid for their work, and receive incentives and rewards for a job well done.

More importantly, these individuals receive therapeutic services. Staff members work with clients to improve their orientation and mobility skills, to teach proper workplace behavior and conflict resolution skills. Each client is assessed prior to beginning work, and is subsequently monitored to ensure progress. The Work Adjustment Center is home to many challenges, but it's also the place where many hard won successes are celebrated. Whether it is something as simple as throwing away their lunch plates or walking to the bathroom utilizing a white cane, all of the victories in the WAC are cause for celebration.





## Senior Services

In the mid-1980's, the Association for the first time began providing therapeutic services to seniors in their homes. This new addition to the services at Alphapointe grew out of response to an increasingly large senior population community, and the rise of eye diseases such as macular degeneration, cataracts and glaucoma. Occupational therapists began by evaluating senior adults on the basis of current vision based ability. Training centered around activities such as cooking, shopping, reading mail and taking medication, as well as improving orientation and mobility skills so that seniors could remain in their homes safely.

In 2011, the Senior Adult Services program at Alphapointe is still the leader in vision rehabilitation for adults in the Kansas City area. Therapists still help seniors with activities of daily living. Today's senior, however, is facing a new set of challenges. Navigating technology such as email and the internet, as well as facing the possibility of working beyond retirement age has created new opportunities for Alphapointe to empower seniors with vision loss.

### Meet Filamena



"Alphapointe showed me I could still live on my own, I could still be independent, and I could still take care of myself.

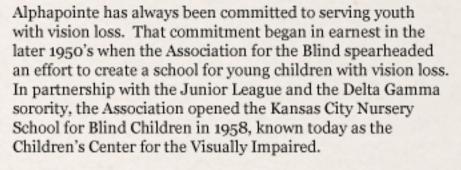
That piece of mind is priceless."





## Teens and Youth







In 2011, Alphapointe is still lighting the way for children and teens with vision loss. This year, the Low Vision Clinic at Alphapointe began seeing children as young as two years old, providing both comprehensive medical evaluations as well as occupational therapy and equipment.



Alphapointe's services extend into the teenage years, when those children are ready to transition into employment and college. Through the Student Transitional Employment Program (STEP), teens with vision loss received specialized training and support as they enter the workforce for the first time. In the College Preparatory Program (PREP), students preparing to go to college work with an Occupational Therapist on a variety of skills so that they have every advantage possible to be competitive with their sighted peers.

Also in 2011, Alphapointe launched two new summer camps for kids and teens with vision loss. Alphapointe Adventure Camp, in partnership with Campfire USA, hosted kids ages 9-14 for a week of hiking, canoeing, crafts, ropes courses and other confidence building activities. Alphapointe Technology Camp, attended by teens with vision loss, centered on adaptive technology and the possibilities that exist with the right technology and training. Tech campers spent the week learning how to utilize the Apple iPad, and the various music, ebook and social media applications attached to the iPad.



## **Events:**

## A Year of Centennial Celebrations

To celebrate 100 Years of "Seeing without Seeing," Alphapointe planned a series of events, community programs and partnerships to bring awareness to our mission of empowering people with vision loss to live, work and be independent. The events were attended by over 1,900 people and raised over \$160,000 in funds for the programs at Alphapointe.



#### Alphapointe Night at the Coterie Theatre January 2011

We kicked the year off with a night of fun and theatre at the Coterie Theatre in Crown Center. Families attended a production of the play Bridge to Terrabithia, and then enjoyed a fun after-party with a dessert buffet and special activities.



#### Tactile Tours at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art January-December 2011

Alphapointe partnered with the world-renowned Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art throughout the year to make art accessible to people with vision loss. Museum docents developed two tours, a tactile tour and a descriptive tour, designed specifically for people with vision loss. Participants wore white gloves, and were able to touch several pieces of sculpture in the Nelson's collection. This partnership has evolved, and now tactile tours are offered free of charge each month.



#### Blindness Isn't Black art opening and reception, in partnership with VSA Missouri April 2011

Alphapointe partnered with Very Special Arts Missouri to present the traveling exhibit, Blindness Isn't Black on the campus of Truman Medical Center. This exhibit featured artwork by artists with disabilities from across the state of Missouri, including a musical performance by Michael Blind Cat McIntyre. The exhibit was on display through the month of April, and viewed by hundreds of people.



#### 7th Annual Alphapointe Classic Golf Tournament May, 2011

Alphapointe hosted 124 golfers for a great day on the links at Loch Lloyd Country Club. Golfers enjoyed 18 holes on one of the area's most exclusive courses, and hospitality throughout the day. David Meador, a past president of the U.S. Blind Golfers Association, once again conducted an instructional clinic on golfing without sight, and shared his message of inspiration and determination with the players at the post-tournament awards banquet.



#### Alphapointe Summer Reading Program at the Kansas City Public Library July 2011

Throughout the month of July, Alphapointe hosted a summer reading program in partnership with the Kansas City Public Library. Alphapointe employees Chad Rohr and Melvin Smith read to children from books written in Braille, and then talked about 'reading with their fingers'. Chad and Melvin also introduced their sighted guide dogs, Caddy and Julius, to the kids.



#### Centennial Homecoming Picnic September 2011

Alphapointe welcomed employees, volunteers and supporters to share lunch at a Homecoming Picnic and Celebration in September. Over 200 people came to the Life Skills Campus to share their memories of Alphapointe, and to honor several individuals and groups for their service to the organization. Mayor Sly James as well as representatives from Congressman Emanuel Cleaver and Senator Claire McCaskill's offices also attended, and honored Alphapointe with proclamations and congratulations on a Century of Service to the community.

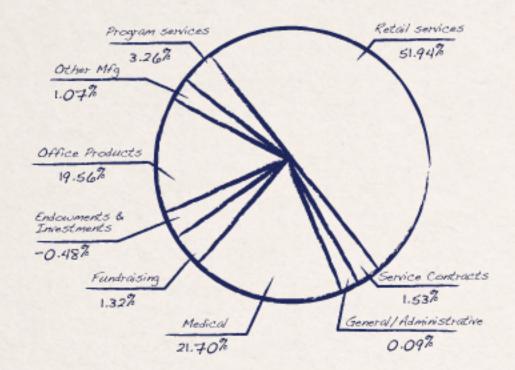


#### Centennial Celebration starring the Blind Boys of Alabama and featuring Sara and Sean Watkins November 2011

Alphapointe blew the roof off of the Midland Theatre on November 12 when we welcomed 5 time Grammy-Award winners the Blind Boys of Alabama to celebrate our Centennial. Guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d'ouerves as sister/brother duo Sara and Sean Watkins kicked off the night with bluegrass and blues. The Blind Boys of Alabama took the stage, and got the crowd on their feet with their inspirational and rousing blues, jazz, and gospel renditions of many classic songs. The night was capped off when the Blind Boys wished Alphapointe Happy Birthday, and 100 more years of success!

## **Financials**

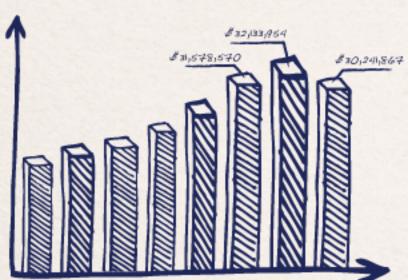
Fiscal Year 2011 Revenue



#### Fiscal Year 2004-2011 Revenue

As of
September 2011
Assets to Liability:
3.09
Debt to Equity:
50%

#35,000,000
#30,000,000
#25,000,000
#20,000,000
#15,000,000





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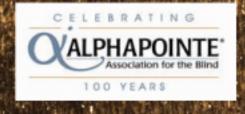
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