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**Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Honor Local Volunteers at Annual Celebration**

BROOKLINE, MA – (October 1, 2020) The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) honored its many volunteers at its annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration on Thursday, October 1, 2020, with a virtual celebration via Zoom. In addition to honoring its volunteer force of nearly 400 individuals, MABVI presented several special awards to recognize exceptional volunteers and community partner in three categories.

“Our volunteers’ commitment to our community demonstrates an exceptional amount of love, hard work, and ingenuity,” said Sassy Outwater-Wright, Executive Director of MABVI. “As the world changes rapidly, blind and visually impaired residents of Massachusetts face unprecedented challenges to access the things we need. The volunteer’s availability to help support us as we negotiate these challenges is critical and profoundly powerful. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all they have done to support MABVI and the people we serve.”

Milbury resident, Michael Hauck Receives the Jane Falk Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service

MABVI recognized Michal Hauck of Millbury, Mass. With the Jane Falk Award for Distinguished Service. Michael has been a volunteer for MABVI for a total of 22 years. He has provided one to one services to blind or visually impaired individuals for 19 of these 22 years. These services can include assisting with activities such as shopping, reading, clerical work, or just enjoying a walk in the park. For the last three years, Michael has worked with blind and visually impaired individuals in MABVI’s Assistive Technology program as a trainer. The program employs tech-savvy volunteer trainers like Michael, who also serve as peer support and role models to demonstrate the many ways that tech can improve quality of life for individuals with vision loss. Michael has provided 114 assistive technology trainings in the last 2 years.

About The Jane Falk Award

Each year, MABVI presents the Jane Falk Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service to one volunteer who has creatively and generously participated in fostering the ideals, services, and mission of the organization. Jane Falk was a volunteer and former President of the Board of Directors for MAB Community Services (MABVI’s parent organization). She believed strongly that individuals should seek the opportunity to give back to their communities, and that those volunteers should be recognized for their efforts. The award was established in 1983 in Jane’s memory. This year, volunteer Allen Wright received the Jane Falk Award for distinguished volunteer service.

Brookline Family Recognized with MABVI's Family Volunteer Award

The Li of Brookline Mass. was recognized this year with the Family Volunteer Award for their years of service supporting individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The award recognizes outstanding volunteer services provided by a family. Kevin Li volunteer work currently supports two individuals. His family has been volunteering with one client since 2016, The family's volunteer work started with Kevin's mother Dayu, and his brother Michael, who won the Family Volunteer Award two years ago. When Michael went off to college, Kevin continued to provide support for their client. Kevin has also been a positive role model for his peers and friends. He took the initiative to introduce Brookline High School students to join MABVI volunteer program. Kevin's dedication continued after the COVID-19 break out by reaching out to see if there were any other people he could support. He is now helping a client by picking up groceries and running errands as needed.

RSVP Norfolk Honored with Volunteer Community Partner Award

The Norfolk County RSVP Volunteer Program which provides volunteers 55+ to local organizations, was honored by MABVI with the Volunteer Community Partner Award. This award is given to an organization or business which has shown a dedicated commitment to growing and strengthening MABVI's One-to-One Volunteer Program. Norfolk County RSVP helps build stronger communities together through their volunteer service which provides volunteers who offer their personal time and utilize their knowledge and life's experiences to help meet community needs. Since January of 2020 RSVP MABVI has recruited volunteers in the Norfolk county area and sent them to MABVI to be 1:1 volunteers. This partnership has been crucial to MABVI's new TeleFriend program which connects a volunteer and an individual who is blind or visually impaired, as TeleFriends. The volunteer's check-in weekly to provide companionship via phone. The TeleFriends program provides a critical role in alleviating the feeling of social isolation and create friendships that can last a lifetime. Robert Pierson, RSVP Norfolk's Director, has recruited over 20 volunteers for MABVI. There are now 15 active RSVP volunteers with the MABVI's program.

[Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired](http://www.mabvi.org) (MABVI) is the oldest social service organization in the country that serves older adults who are blind or visually impaired. MABVI's dedicated staff provide high-impact, cost-effective services, including vision rehabilitation, adjustment to vision loss, peer lead support groups, and assistive technology training to those who are aging into vision loss. MABVI also partners with community and medical groups and grateful to hundreds of volunteers. <http://www.mabvi.org>

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