



## Small Device Handles Big Problems

The Looky is the most portable color video magnification system available today. Small enough to fit into a purse or a pocket, it weighs only 7 ounces and provides a sharp and bright image with magnification from 3X to 8X. The Looky has a 3.5" LCD screen that displays photographs and text in color, in white letters on a black background, or a high contrast white background with bold black letters. These features allow people with macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and retinitis pigmentosa to read mail, price labels, and menus.

"The Looky has many unique features that make it one of the most exciting visual aids released in 2007," said Dr. Brett Nagatani, low vision specialist of The Center for the Partially Sighted. "It has a foldable handle that allows it to be used either like a conventional



hand magnifier or it can be folded up and simply placed on the reading material, making it easy to use for children, adults, and even those with arthritis. The Looky, as compared to an ordinary hand magnifier, provides a wider field of view with the ability to alter the contrast," he said.

The Looky comes with a neck strap that allows you to carry it when shopping or browsing at the library. It also has a camera mode, which allows you to place it on top of a

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# Notes From the Counseling Department

Did you know that The Center for the Partially Sighted offers a variety of support groups? Sometimes, after we have adapted to the practical difficulties of vision loss, we find that other issues come along. Attending a CPS support group meeting may be the place to deal with frustrations, worries, problems with family members and friends or just a place to hear about other people's experiences.

As a leader of an older adult support group, I often hear from them how valuable the experience is. As one member said, "I didn't know how many people were struggling with the same issues. I was inspired, and I learned so much from hearing from other people. I learned how to cope."

A variety of groups meet at both the Los Angeles and the Tarzana offices. In Los Angeles, we provide two groups for older adults, a working age support group, and several diabetes groups. There is a diabetes group for Spanish-speaking people. At our Tarzana location, we provide

an older adult support group and are beginning a working age group in the near future.

The counseling staff also provides on-site individual counseling, telephone counseling, and couples counseling. We support families of children with visual impairments through our Family Resource Project, which offers telephone counseling, education and advocacy.

Please feel free to contact the counseling staff for more information.

*Janice Goldhaber, M.A., MFT*

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## Small Device

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price tag and take a photograph of the price to be read by bringing the Looky closer to the eyes.

The Looky runs on two rechargeable batteries and is good for about 1.5 hours of continuous use. On alkaline batteries, it will run for even longer periods of time.

*Bill Takeshita, O.D., FAAO, FCOVD*

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# Dining and Eating Skills

Time spent with friends and family is often shared over a meal. A concern expressed by people with low vision is “How can I eat in public without embarrassing myself?” This skill can be mastered with practice. Here are a few suggestions.

## **Environmental Concerns**

When entering an unfamiliar restaurant, with its mood lighting, noise, and possible changes in elevation (random steps), consider your safety. If you use a cane, the hostess is aware of your vision loss and may ask to assist you. If you are not asked, kindly ask for sighted guide assistance. If you choose not to use a cane, you will not be identified as having vision concerns. You may want to ask for assistance and briefly explain that you have low vision.

Whenever possible, if dining during the day, sit near a window. Choose a seat with the outside light at your back, allowing the sunlight to shine over your shoulder onto your plate. If you face the window, the outside light may cause discomfort and reduced visibility due to glare.

Selecting a quiet restaurant enables communication with guests to flow more easily. It is interesting to note how much of hearing and discerning involves lip reading and seeing facial expression. A loud environment diminishes audible cues that compensate for reduced vision.

Get to know your server by name. You can ask your server for special requests, including having your salad or meat cut into bite-sized portions or having garnish removed from the plate. This person will be the one to read you the menu, help you pay the bill, assist you to the restrooms or the restaurant exit, and relate special requests to the chef.

## **Eating Skills**

Use your fork like a cane to familiarize you to what is on your plate. Gently probe food on the plate, moving around the plate in an orderly pattern. It’s possible to identify food on the plate by texture and size.

To make cutting meat easier, turn the plate so that the item to be cut is at the six o’clock position.

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## **Dining and Eating Skills** (continued from page 3)

Spear the meat on the outside edge and use your knife to cut around the outside edges of the fork. As you spear food onto your fork, become aware of the increased weight from the food. If it seems too heavy, use the knife in your other hand to probe and determine if the item is bite-sized.

After spearing the food onto your fork, slightly jiggle it over the plate, allowing any excess food to fall onto the plate and not en route to your mouth. Always bring food to your mouth, not the other way around. When eating, to prevent food from

falling off the sides of the plate, scoop the food on the fork or spoon from the outside edge of the plate towards the center.

To avoid tipping over items on the table, like your water glass, use finger trailing. Tuck your nails under your palm and gently glide them over the table surface. Your knuckles act as a bumper by tapping items at their base. Resist reaching out for your glass if your vision is not functioning at its best in the environment.

**Bon Appetite!**

*Anita Arakawa, M.A., CVRT*

### **Contrast Helps When Eating**

Contrast can help you better distinguish items on the table. For example, at home you might want to use a bright-colored plate on a white tablecloth so that you can distinguish the plate from the cloth. Or, use a colored placemat to define a white plate from a white tablecloth. The contrast between the plate

and the placemat will help you see it. Using colored glasses instead of clear ones may also make them easier to recognize. When pouring liquids into a glass, use contrast to help you see when the cup is filled. For example, pour dark liquids like coffee into a light cup and light liquids like milk into a dark cup.

## CPS Low Vision Store Carries Items That Help

In both our Westside and Tarzana offices, the Center's Low Vision Store carries items that help you with everyday tasks. Mirrors that magnify help with daily grooming, large-lined paper makes it easier to make lists, and large print crossword puzzles or playing cards allow you to enjoy recreational activity. Here are a few items that clients tell us are helpful.



The jumbo-sized **Slimline Universal TV Remote** measures 21.5" x 8", and features large buttons that light up. It is compatible with Satellite, DVD, VCR and Cable, and runs on two AA batteries.

The **Talking Watch** comes with a leather band or with a gold or silver expansion band. It features a male voice and offers hourly announcements and alarms.

The **20/20 pen** is "easy-to-read" and makes retrieving information easier. Great for telephone numbers, labeling medications, shopping lists.

The **Cut and Scoop Cutting Board** is funnel shaped and will not crack, warp or peel. It is non-porous and non-absorbent. You can cut and slice foods and use the curved edges to pour them directly into the bowl or pot.

The CPS Low Vision Store is open Monday–Friday. For more information about items in the store, contact Alice at (310)458-3501, ext. 141 or Audrey at (818)705-5954.



*Change Service Requested*

The Center for the Partially Sighted  
12301 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 600  
West Los Angeles, CA 90025  
(310) 458-3501

FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND  
OR HANDICAPPED

## **We’re Growing!**

To better serve your needs, the Center now has three convenient locations to serve you. Below are our office locations and phone numbers.

**West Los Angeles**  
12301 Wilshire Blvd.  
Suite 600  
LA, CA 90025  
(310) 458-3501

**San Fernando Valley/  
North Los Angeles**  
18425 Burbank Blvd.  
Suite 706  
Tarzana, CA 91356  
(818) 705-5954

**South Bay**  
22340 Hawthorne Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90503  
(310) 458-3501

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 **SIGHTLINES** is published by The Center for the Partially Sighted, a non-profit agency. Our mission is to improve the quality of life and increase the independence of children and adults with low vision. Our generous donors allow us to help more than 2,000 individuals and their families each year.

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