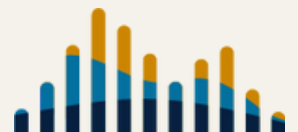


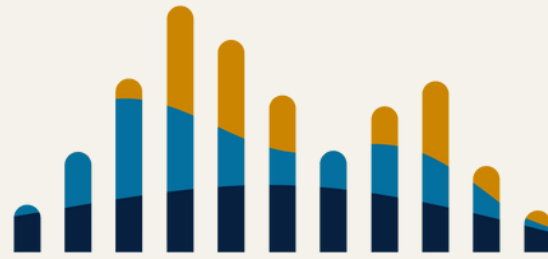
A community hub for audio news,
entertainment & resources



Annual Report 2023

 www.aftersight.org  303-786-7777



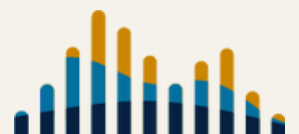


Aftersight

A community hub for audio news,
entertainment & resources

- 2 A Note from the Director**
- 3 Aftersight's History**
- 4 Strategic Goals**
- 5 Aftersight Original Programs**
- 7 Successes**
- 9 Challenges**
- 11 Data**
- 13 Our Listeners**
- 15 Volunteers**
- 16 Major Contributors**
- 17 Financials**

Table of Contents



Wrapping up 2023

A letter from the Executive Director

We began implementing our strategic plan in 2023. Our major accomplishment was choosing a new name and logo. Thank you to those that served on the Name Change Committee for your passion.

Our Programming Advisory Committee continues to provide essential feedback. With their guidance, two new podcasts were launched: Blind Level Tech and Volunteer Spotlight. And listenership is up! Podcast downloads increased by 25%, and streaming connections increased by 13%.

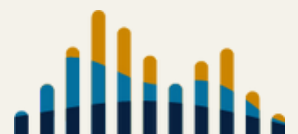
We also worked closer with our passionate volunteers. We offered several trainings and boot camps. Volunteers used the knowledge to take our program quality to new levels. Volunteers also participated in our two fundraisers: Music in the Dark and our Brining Print to Life Hike. Our third annual hike was the largest yet with over 30 blind and low vision participants and sighted guides. 2023 fundraising ended on a high note with record Colorado Gives Day donations. We appreciate all our event sponsors, grant funders, and individual contributors.

2024 begins with the launch of our new name. New audio editions and podcasts are planned. Volunteer trainings and appreciation events are in the works, including our popular summer ice cream social. Please join us!

Sincerely,
Kim Ann Wardlow



Kim Ann Wardlow
Executive Director





Aersights Yesterday

Over 30 years of service

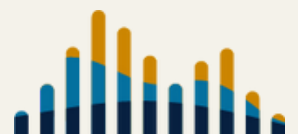
In 1990, David Dawson knew that people with vision loss or blindness needed better access to news and information. So, he launched a service to offer **Audio Editions** where volunteers to convert print into audio. He called this service the “Radio Reading Service of the Rockies.” Some years later, the org felt that this name wasn’t quite right. The name was changed to “Audio Information Network of Colorado.” Just recently, we changed it again. We thought it was too long, too complicated, and too hard to remember. It also didn’t speak to what we now do. So, after a lot of thinking we changed our name again. **Today we are simply: Aersights.** We hope it captures a spirit of connection and services for people living with vision loss or blindness. If not, we hope it’s easy to remember.

Aersights Today

Originals, streaming, and online groups

In 2021, we started having a lot of discussions about what else we could do with audio. After all, the world had changed a lot since 1990 - podcasts had become huge, and online groups were common. We realized had the infrastructure to embrace new programming.

So, after three decades of service, we launched our first **Original Podcast**. This podcast, ***The Blind Chick*** (Then Called *Aersights*), shares stories and experiences of people with vision loss. It was an instant hit. So, we added more programs, introduced virtual support groups and book clubs, and made our programming super easy to find and easy to use. Today, you can simply ask your smart speaker (which we offer for free) to read your paper, learn about benefits, find out about tech, and so much more.





Aersight Tomorrow

Strategic Planning

In Fall of 2022, Aersight gathered stakeholders including staff, volunteers, listeners, and board members to discuss where we were and where we should be. After a lot of thinking by a lot of great minds, we now have a strategic plan to guide our focus over the next three to five years. Our strategic priorities came directly from this process. These are to:

1 Support Informed Independence

Make sure listeners have access to the tech and information they need; nurture relationships with peer orgs; continue to solicit feedback.

2 Build inclusive communities

Enhance our events; expand Aersight presence, educate and equip ALL of Aersight's listeners, volunteers, staff, and board; expand Spanish-language services; find and develop the new home of Aersight.

3 Ensure Aersight is future-ready

Grow financial stability through funds diversification; develop the organizational culture of the board and staff; invest in the resources needed for positive change; rebrand for clarity simplicity.

We've put in a lot of work toward these goals. Our Aersight Originals discuss everything from mental health to music. We've added more inclusive publications, like OUT FRONT magazine, and we've worked with to recruit staff and volunteers that can help us better serve Colorado's Spanish-speaking community. We've also worked hard to find a home base that better fits our work. And, of course, there's our name - Aersight. Our new name was a big first step as we work to be clear, positive, and community focused.



Afersight Originals

Self-produced programming



Navigating Life with Vision Loss

A weekly podcast about the challenges facing people with blindness or vision loss. Afersight's Executive Director, Kim Ann Wardlow, talks with experts about mental health, self-advocacy, legal rights, finding and connecting to resources, travel, and much more.



Blindsight

Dedicated to healing the mind, body, and soul. Bill Lundgrin addresses behavioral health topics ranging from addiction, grief, and denial, to overcoming trauma, dealing with relationships, and "next steps" in your specific journey.



The Blind Chick

The Blind Chick is about blindness and the life of possibilities that follows. Each week, Penn and Moses Street are joined by a guest to talk about how blindness or low vision has impacted them – and how THEY have impacted the community.



Blind Level Tech

Lighthearted conversations dedicated to the use of technology for those who are blind or Low Vision. Being blind is hard enough. Your tech experience shouldn't be.



Featured Collaborations

Strategic Planning

Low-Vision Book Club and Support Group

Join our Low-Vision Community for support and book discussions. In partnership with Enight Skills Center, we discover, share, and find joy in our monthly virtual meetings. Hosted by Jeff Flodin and Jim Fellion.



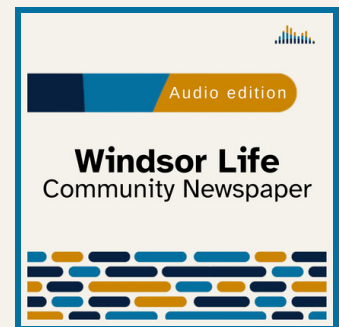
White Cane Project

Thanks to the generosity of Colorado Lions Clubs and Wana Brands Foundation, Aftersight has provided over 75 free white canes to those in need. Join our mission for independence and mobility.



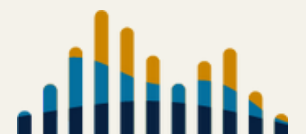
Audio Newsletters for Retirement Communities

Aftersight collaborates with retirement communities, such as Windsor Gardens, to transform their newsletters into audio editions, ensuring all residents stay informed and connected.



Clear Creek County News

Aftersight and Clear Creek County have teamed up to bring local news to life in audio format, ensuring accessibility for all residents. Highlighted in the Clear Creek Courant and available on the county's website, this collaboration enhances community connection.



2023

Ann



Successes

Afersight's Third Fundraising Hike

In August 2023, Afersight held our third-annual fundraising hike in Boulder, CO. It was a perfect late-summer day in the Colorado foothills, and all of our staff was at the event. We were blessed to be joined by almost 30 hikers who are blind or low vision and even more volunteers who came along or be sighted guides. Our 2023 attendance exceeded our hike in 2022!

The hike has become our cornerstone fundraising event. Each year it continues to grow, and it shows the need for accessible outdoor experiences for our community. Our hikers tell us that this hike is the highlight of their summer and look forward to it. We capture audio interviews with the hikers and share them on our various platforms.



Concert in the Dark

On May 4th, Afersight partnered with RMPBS for Concert in the Dark – an experimental event designed to celebrate music and active listening. The concept was born from a discussion on The Blind Chick (an Afersight Original podcast). The idea was to experience music without the distraction of spectacle. The event was headlined by multi Grammy winner, Diane Schuur. Other artists included Heart and Music, Trevor Hahn, and Robert Weinberg. It was a huge success!





Aftersight

Successes: Programming

Impact and Recognition

Aftersight's commitment to quality programming and audio excellence has led to significant growth, adding hits like "Blind Level Tech" and "Volunteer Spotlight" to our originals. With over 400K downloads in 2023 and a 25% growth rate, our content reaches wider audiences than ever. We're even being recognized for these efforts!

Awards:

- **Colorado Lions State Project**
- **Colorado Lions New Voices Award**
- **IAAIS Program of the Year (On Location):** "Aftersight ep 22 - Penn and Evan Go Skiing!"
- **Senior Heroes Awards:** Honoring volunteers Waldemar and Chris for exceptional service
- **IAAIS Program of the Year (Newspapers):** Denver Post



Evan, Penn, and guide dog Beethoven receive an award

Diversity and Inclusivity

Through bias and geographical assessments, community feedback, and market research, we launched efforts to address and fill identified gaps in content.

- "Navigating Life with Vision Loss," draws directly from our Programming Advisory Committee, offering a diverse range of voices and experiences on topics from career growth to mental well-being and family life
- We've added LGBTQ+ newspapers like OUT FRONT
- Enriched Spanish programming
- Increased focus on previously underrepresented Colorado regions



Challenges

Technology and Accessibility

The advancement of technology involves opportunities and challenges for accessibility. Determining the best fit for our listeners' varied needs can be challenging. Balancing tech-savviness, simplicity, and cost requires ongoing dialogue and pilot projects to navigate this ever-changing landscape.

Spanish Programming

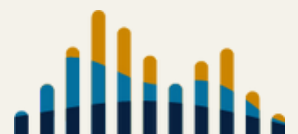
Recruiting Spanish-speaking volunteers has historically been a hurdle, but with our newly hired Spanish-speaking Programming Volunteer Specialist, Jennifer, we've made strides in bridging this gap. Contributions from our Programming Advisory Committee (PAC) members and an intern from Mexico have been instrumental in enhancing our Spanish content.

Quality Assurance

Auditing 125 hours of weekly content with a small team is tough. However, with the help of volunteers and our Audio Production Technician, Evan, we ensure quality and consistency across all programming. Training and stricter auditions have significantly raised volunteer audio standards.

Growth

As we face the challenges of rapid growth, we've turned to improved technology, AI, automation, and community partnerships to sustain our expansion, enabling our small team to meet increasing demand efficiently. By formalizing our processes and protocols, we're setting the stage for a future where every listener finds value, connection, and empowerment through our programming.





Challenges

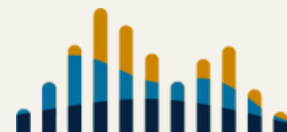
The knowledge gap

A wealth of services exist for people with vision loss or blindness, but research shows that they are underutilized. “A series of focus groups that were conducted by the National Eye Institute (NEI) indicated that many older persons with low vision have little or no awareness of these services, and, as a consequence, few take advantage of them (National Eye Institute, 2001). Similar findings were reported in the Lighthouse National Survey on Vision Loss (Lighthouse International, 1995)[...]. The most common reason for the lack of utilization of low vision devices and services was the participants’ unawareness of them” (Casten et al).

This awareness gap includes services like ours at Aftersight. We need to make sure people know about who we are and what we do. This is why our outreach efforts are VITAL. The awareness gap extends to tools and services that are more specialized or advanced. This is why Aftersight works hard to offer education build public awareness about ALL tools and services that would empower people with vision loss or blindness.

Funding Diversity

We are aging as a society. “In 2020, about 1 in 6 people in the United States were age 65 and over. In 1920, this proportion was less than 1 in 20. Blindness and vision loss are more common with age” (Census.gov). This means more people will need our services. However, funding for aging and disabilities services is (at best) staying flat or (at worst) decreasing. Nonprofit grants have trended away from aging, and have decreased from 2% of the total share of funds granted to 1%. Aftersight is working toward funding diversity and new revenue to meet the needs we face.





Data

Listeners

Registered Listeners

■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023



↑ **1,400**
Active Listeners

↑ **300**
New Listeners (2023)

Volunteers

11.5K

Volunteer hours logged

110+

Active Volunteers

Donations

↑ **\$300k**
In-Kind donations

\$12.5K
Raised for Colorado Gives Day



Aftersight

Data

Programming

Top shows

1. New York Times
2. BBC Mundo
3. National Geographic en Español
4. Denver Post
5. The Blind Chick

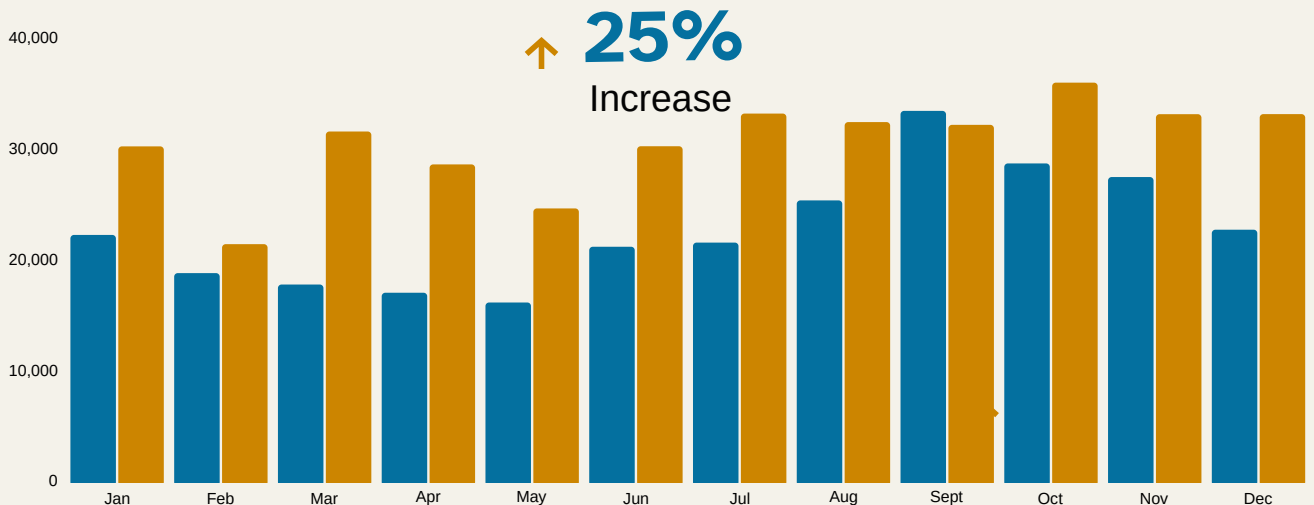
↑ **400k**
Program Downloads

↑ **130**
Unique Programs

↑ **125**
Hours of weekly content

Show Downloads

■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023





Our Listeners

Survey Responses

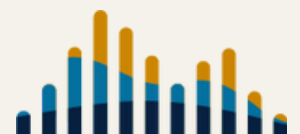
Every year, we reach out to our listeners to get their input and to ask if they would share some thoughts. This year our listeners had some great things to say.

- 77% said Afersight helps to connect to their local community
- 73% said Afersight helps to connect to the larger low-vision community
- 81% said Afersight help offer independence
- 89% said a human voice important for their news
- 94% said Afersight's content meet their needs

Feedback

"I attended my first AINC fundraising event this past summer and thoroughly enjoyed it. The event was very well organized and the volunteers were amazing. I really enjoy the podcasts, especially having Penn on Afersight. Kudos to all the staff and volunteers that make AINC possible!"

I am new to the VI/B community. So my life is upside down and I have been finding out how much more I have to learn. To compound that, I have been accepted at UNC to learn how to be a teacher of the visually impaired. The help of the smart speaker has been totally unbelievable right now. Having that auditory assistant right there by my side as I am researching a subject of writing my next assignment. I also love the new white cane. It is so nice and my favorite. Having a firm, stiff and light cane that doesn't flop with the heavier roller ball tip. Thank you so much, AINC"





Aftersight

Our Listeners

Robert Weinberg, donor and devoted listener



Robert Weinberg
&
Ellie White

Robert Weinberg describes himself as “one of the elders of the Denver blind community.” He is also a celebrated photographer. When he became legally blind in 1995, his photo career was disrupted. Bob became a listener, and he has been for three decades. He was also the first guest interviewed by Penn Street’s *The Blind Chick* podcast. He even exhibited photos at our Concert in the Dark in 2023.

Bob has said, “I am very impressed by the camaraderie in Denver’s blind-low-vision community, [Aftersight] is a part of it.” In 2023, his collection, *The World in Denver*, was exhibited at the History Colorado Museum. This is a series of black-and-white portraits from the 1980s and 1990s that are accompanied by print and Braille descriptions. As the exhibit came to a close last month, the museum asked him where they could deliver the prints. He chose Aftersight, and we are so grateful for such a beautiful gift.



Volunteers

Volunteer Spotlight

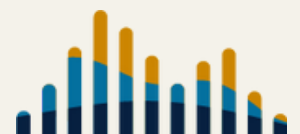


In January, Afersight launched the Volunteer Spotlight podcast as an addition to our volunteer of the month award. This monthly podcast is meant to give volunteers of the month the chance to talk about how they first got involved with Afersight, their experiences as a volunteer, and how it has impacted them. The main goal is to not only inspire and educate volunteers and listeners, it's also to encourage others to get involved.

Programming Volunteer Specialist



A native Coloradan, Jennifer Neptune, served in Costa Rica, Colombia and Brazil for over 20+ years as a missionary serving marginalized populations, presenting them with resources and opportunities to not only survive but thrive in life. She returned to the States in 2021 and found jobs that would reach populations that needed care, connection and support. Her hobbies are macramé and horseback riding.





Volunteers

2023 Volunteers of the Month

JANUARY: Emily

Human Health

FEBRUARY: Nick Isenberg

Tactile Traveler

MARCH: Jon Arnold

Colorado Outdoors

APRIL: Mariel Paulina Canepa

NYT en Español

MAY: Jerry Podgorski

On the Lighter Side

JUNE: Elaine Walford

Broomfield Enterprise

JULY: Angie and John Flynn

Parents Magazine & Pueblo Chieftain

AUGUST: Bill and Anita Head

Boulder Daily News • Denver Post

SEPTEMBER: Philip Neilsen

Prime Time for Seniors • Adams CO News

OCTOBER: Nicola Fordwood

Boulder Daily Camera • Longmont Times Call

NOVEMBER: Ginger Hedrick

Colorado Sun • Fort Collins Coloradan

DECEMBER: Thomas Anglewicz

Christian Science Monitor

Relocation Committee Architect

Volunteer Engagement

This year, we achieved a record number of volunteer applications and introduced our first-ever waitlist. Key initiatives included:

- **Voiceover Bootcamps:** Enhancing skills through hands-on training
- **One-on-One Support:** Weekly sessions with an audio pro
- **VSL and Educational Series:** Celebrating contributions and expanding knowledge on topics from listener metrics, deafblind experience, and audio quality
- **Online Guides & Studio Sessions:** Upgraded resources and welcomed volunteers back into studios
- **Feedback and Appreciation Events:** Implemented improvements based on surveys and hosted special events



Aftersight

Financial Supporters

Funding is provided through grants from foundations, trusts, and jurisdictions, as well as donations from corporations, service clubs, and **individuals**.

Foundations

AEC Trust
 April Fund
 Broomfield Community Foundation
 Colorado Trust
 Collins Foundation
 Community Foundation of Boulder County
 Credit Union of Colorado Grants
 DAV Charitable Service Trust
 Denver Foundation: Care Fund
 Denver Foundation: Comprecare
 Edmund T. & Eleanor Quick Foundation
 Erikson Fund (@Pikes Peak Foundation)
 Erik Weihenmayer Reach Foundation
 Fort Collins Lions Foundation
 Virginia W. Hill Foundation
 Hynd Trust for the Blind
 Longmont Lions Foundation
 Network for Good
 William B. O'Rourke Foundation
 Joslyn Charitable Trust
 James Hynd Blind Trust
 Henry W. Bull Foundation

Cities

Arvada
 Westminster

Counties

Broomfield City & County

Business and Corporations

Benevity Matching Gift Program
 KCO, Inc.
 Kroger
 Wana Brands
 Trinware
 Orion Reverse Mortgage

RMPBS Stations

KRMA-TV Channel 6 (Denver)
 KTSC-TV Channel 8 (CO Springs/Pueblo)
 KRMJ-TV Channel 18 (Grand Junction)
 KRMU-TV Channel 29 (Durango)

Service Clubs

MD6 Lions Clubs

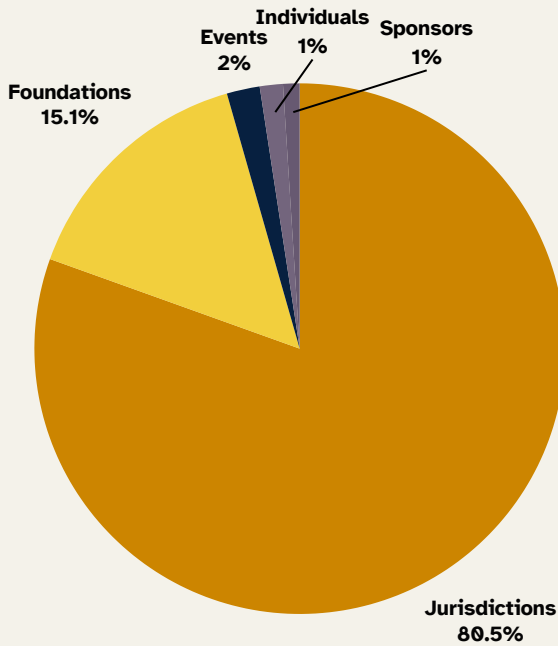
AAAs

Boulder County
 Denver Regional Council of Govts

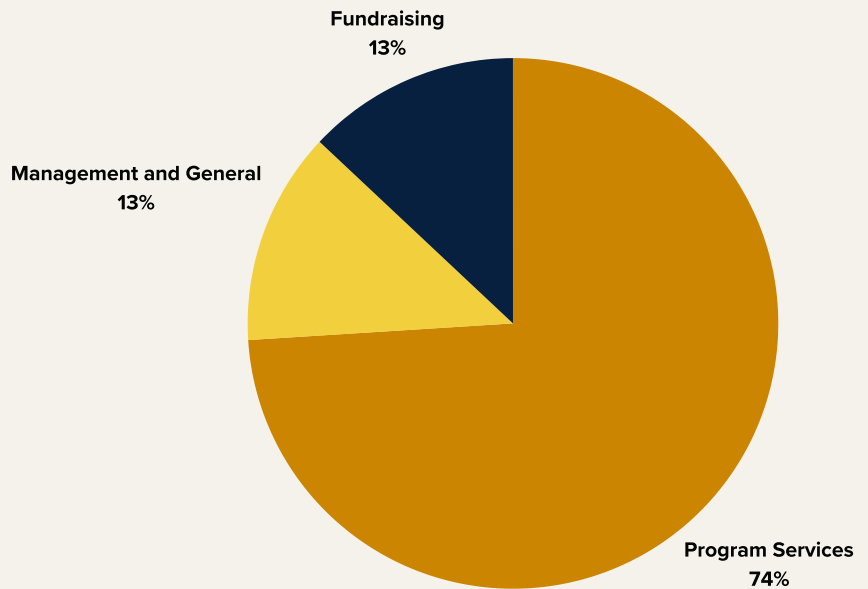


Financials

Income



Expenses



2023



Annual Report

Bringing Print to Life

1700 55th St., Suite A, Boulder, CO 80301

🌐 www.aftersight.org 📞 303-786-7777

