

## **Denny Moyer**

### **Her Legacy: National recognition for blind and low-vision services through the Ensign Skills Center**

As a member of the board of directors for the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services, Denny Moyer is in the perfect position to advocate for the population she serves through the Ensign Skills Center. Denny was diagnosed with Stargardt's disease, a form of inherited juvenile macular degeneration which can lead to vision loss, at 19. Denny moved to Colorado in 1993 after earning a degree in occupational therapy.

Denny founded the Ensign Skills Center in 2001 to teach the low vision and blind population skills they can use to live independently. It's a struggle Denny knows personally, as by age 29 her vision had deteriorated enough that she could no longer drive.

Denny's mission is to ensure no one has to feel alone the way she did. In particular, she says, "The doctors can seem very ... offhand about [diagnosis]." When she first moved to Colorado, Denny found courses about helping patients with low vision—not originally part of an occupational therapist's skill set—and her employers agreed to offset the costs if she could work it into her regular employment. She managed that and more.

Denny has been active in the Fort Collins community for more than 20 years as part of the Fort Collins Lions Club. She helped create the Inspiration Playground in Fort Collins and served the community during devastating events such as the High Park Fire and Big Thompson Flood.

The Lions Club helped her found Ensign with a grant of \$5,000. Denny started out volunteering with a partner while working part-time; over the next two years they gathered other occupational therapists and doctors to serve the more than 300,000 people who struggle with low vision in Colorado. Ensign can reach 2,100 itself, but Denny's model has inspired other organizations around the nation to reach out themselves.

Written by Melissa Allbrandt, Archivist, Editor, and Writer