



**Jay and Laura Bell, Co-Chairs  
ACBVI 2008 Annual Campaign**

## *A Message from Jay and Laura Bell*

Dear friends,

Laura and I would like to share with you the story of an organization that is very close to our hearts. We first became aware of the **Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired** through our neighbor and friend, Steve Welker. Steve lost his vision as the result of a car accident shortly before his teen sons were born. We saw Steve everyday as a successful business man and a devoted father and husband who was actively involved with his family and community. We realized that Steve could do just about everything anyone else could do, despite his disability and we wondered how this was possible. As a professional baseball player who needed my sight, I wondered how different my life would be if I lost it. When we asked Steve to tell us his story, he told us how he had been helped by the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired and invited us for a tour of the Center.

When Laura and I toured the Center, we were amazed at all the sophisticated technologies available and the broad range of skills being taught to help blind and visually impaired individuals regain their independence and take back their lives. But most of all, we were in awe of all the different people we met there and the perseverance and optimism they showed as they worked to overcome the devastation of vision loss and transform their lives. In this supportive, accepting environment, with dedicated, caring, and highly skilled teachers, yes it was possible! We knew then that we wanted to help make sure ACBVI's programs and services would always be available for us, those we love and everyone who would need them now and in the future.

Today the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired is serving over 3,000 individuals annually. But there are over 90,000 individuals in Maricopa County who are legally blind or severely visually impaired. And that number is expected to double by 2025! More than 20 percent of individuals age 55 and over will experience vision loss in their lifetime. And now increasing numbers of younger adults are losing vision from Diabetes and traumatic injury.

As the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired faces the challenge of meeting the ever increasing demand for services, institutional funding remains flat and the threat of cuts in government funding looms on the horizon. Laura and I have made a personal commitment to ACBVI's 2008 Annual Campaign. We urge you to join us in supporting this very worthy cause. Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.