

Mary Hiland

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Mary Hiland is the recently retired Executive Director of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. She held this position from August, 2006 until December 31, 2011. Before that, she was the Director of Volunteers, for over 21 years at the radio reading service in Columbus. Her other vocations include full time mother, dance teacher, and free lance writer. She has been published in Red Book Magazine and in Chicken Soup for the Parents' Soul. Mary's passions include cross country skiing, tandem bicycling, hiking, public speaking, classical music, her four granddaughters, her Seeing Eye dog, Pippen, and ballroom dancing.

Mary carried the Olympic torch when it came through Columbus in 2001, started the Toastmasters Club in Gahanna, started the Red Hat society in Gahanna, is a charter member of the Gahanna Noon Lions Club, and is an active member of the Good Samaritan Church.

Mary is 67, a graduate of Ohio State University and holds a BS in Social Work. She was married for 25 years, then divorced in 1991. That same year, she was sent to Norway as one of the 4 ambassadors from a cross country skiing program called Ski for Light.

Mary has a son, Steve, 42, a daughter, Kara, 39, and they each have two daughters ranging in age from 8 to 13. Steve lives in Gahanna and works for the department of recreation and parks for the city of Columbus, and Kara lives in Syracuse, where her husband is a professor of marketing at Syracuse University.

Pippen is Mary's third dog guide from the Seeing Eye in Morristown, NJ. Mary is a public speaker and teacher of disability awareness for home-schooled children. She is often called upon to make presentations and to serve on various committees in the disability community. She has served on the Consumer Advisory Committee on Disability Issues for four years and is currently serving her third term on the Secretary of State's Consumer Advisory Committee. She has served on the Ohio Votes Coalition, the planning committee for Solidarity, and the advisory board for the mentoring program for the Ohio State school for the Blind and for the newly formed course at the Ohio State University on orientation and mobility. .