

## “The Seeing Eye” Steadily Increases Contributions Thanks to Donor Software

“We originally selected resultsplus!™ because it is a very powerful software package, yet it is also very easy to learn and use,” says Jean Dragos, Computer Coordinator in the Development Department of The Seeing Eye of Morristown, New Jersey. “We also heard good things from others about Metafile’s diligence in continually improving the software and providing competent technical support.” Since making that decision The Seeing Eye has used the fund-raising software to generate a steadily increasing stream of contributions from their database of 120,000 donors. “We have automated what used to be a tedious manual process and also gained the ability to closely track our donors to the point that we can quickly generate lists. We can then use the lists to create effective targeted appeals.”

The software helps the organization track the demographics and interests of its contributor base as well as individual contacts and contributions, and makes it easy to recall the information and generate specialized lists. “resultsplus! software from Metafile™ Information Systems provides the tool we need to efficiently reach out to large numbers of people in a minimal amount of time,” said Dragos. The development staff also uses the software to produce regular reports that track contributions from specific campaigns, geographic areas, and time periods, for example, as well as to generate special reports requested by the business office.

### The Seeing Eye organization

The Seeing Eye, North America’s pioneer dog guide school, was founded in 1929 by Dorothy Harrison Eustis. Its mission is to help blind people achieve greater independence, dignity, and self-confidence through the use of Seeing Eye dogs. In pursuit of this aim, it teaches Seeing Eye dogs to guide blind people, breeds and raises the dogs, teaches instructors for training guide dogs, instructs blind people in the proper use and care of the dogs, and educates the public about the role of dog guides and the capability of blind people for



*The mission of The Seeing Eye is to enhance the independence, dignity, and self-confidence of blind people through the use of Seeing Eye dogs.*



independent living. Since its founding, The Seeing Eye has provided nearly 13,000 dog guides to 1,700 people in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and all provinces of Canada. The Seeing Eye’s school and training grounds occupy a campus of almost 60 acres nestled in the historic Washington Valley, 35 miles west of New York City.

Support for The Seeing Eye comes from annual contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations, bequests, and other planned giving. Income from The Seeing Eye endowment covers 70% of costs; the other 30% must be raised annually.

### Use of database in direct mailing

Dragos uses resultsplus! throughout the entire fund-raising process. The Development Department multifaceted fund-raising program utilizes both mass and targeted mailings. Twice a year, the Department launches two major fund-raising campaigns, sending out 800,000 appeal letters per year through rented lists and 100,000 letters to its donor database. The names and addresses are drawn from two sources: the organization’s own large list in the resultsplus! database plus rented mailing lists. In preparing for each of these mailings, Dragos queries the resultsplus! database to select tens of thousands of donors who have given in the past.

Dragos also queries the database on many other occasions throughout the year to select names for more specialized mailings. The largest of these is their Planned Giving mailing which goes out to about 35,000 people each year. Another special mailing goes to graduates of The Seeing Eye who

#### CUSTOMER



#### PROFILE

**Headquarters**  
Morristown, NJ

**Type of Business**  
Programs for Disabled

**Web site**  
<http://www.seeingeye.org>

receive a special appeal from a fellow graduate recounting their personal story of how they have been helped by their dog. This type of targeted appeal generally produces a higher response than a mass mailing because the message is personal and can be targeted more closely to the recipient.

The staff uses the information in the database to generate the list of recipients for *The Guide*, The Seeing Eye's magazine, which is published three times per year. The magazine provides news for graduates and donors, such as human interest stories about how graduates have been helped by their dogs and the experiences of volunteers. The query for this magazine list typically includes volunteers, puppy raisers, graduates, and people who have given a contribution in the past year.

#### Tracking effectiveness

As contributions are received, each one is matched against its source so the effectiveness of the mailing can easily be measured. Knowing what prompted the donor to give is helpful in planning future solicitations. The results**plus!** pledge management function enables tracking of pledges made, pledge payments due, and payments received. According to Dragos, the results**plus!** software provides a wide range of reporting capabilities and options that meet all of her organization's needs. Examples of reports The Seeing Eye uses include: a graph that shows the funds raised by each campaign, a report that gives amounts of all contributions received in the form of annuities and legacies, and a report that factors the percentage of last year's donors who repeated giving this year. "The software provides nearly all of the information required by our management to track the effectiveness of our development efforts," Dragos said.

#### Custom reports

Dragos said that The Seeing Eye also produces custom reports to meet special requirements, designed with the award-winning Crystal Reports software that came with their original purchase of their results**plus!** system. Since Metafile designs the results**plus!** standard reports with Crystal Reports, customers are able to have uniformity

among all of their reports, and still produce virtually any custom report they can imagine. Combining the Report Writer's design power and the detailed field names and functionality provided in results**plus!**, the possibilities for finely-tuned reports are endless.

#### It's made a difference

According to Dragos, results**plus!** enables The Seeing Eye to collect and store a wide variety of information and call it up whenever and however they need it later. It also makes it possible for the organization to touch more people's hearts with The Seeing Eye story, which in turn helps them increase the number of people they are able to serve. It's definitely a win-win situation.

*"We heard good things from others about Metafile's diligence in continually improving the software and providing competent technical support, too."*

*- Jean Dragos  
Computer Coordinator,  
Development Department*

"The Seeing Eye has been very successful with its fund-raising efforts over the last few years despite difficult economic conditions, and results**plus!** has played a significant role in that success," Dragos said. "It provides a single repository that allows us to keep track of everything we need to know about our contributors. This helps us develop a more personal and effective relationship with each donor by tracking a range of information far beyond the usual basic demographics. "I think the reason our specialized appeals have been successful is that we are able to select a smaller audience with common

interests and develop a message that speaks directly to them," Dragos said. "The process of producing these appeals is greatly aided by having software that makes it possible to generate even the most complex and specific queries with a couple of keystrokes."

Dragos concluded, "the effectiveness of the software is also increased by the excellent quality of technical support we get from Metafile. Over the years I have always resisted changing to any other systems because results**plus!** always keeps improving to stay ahead of the others."

