



WE ARE HABILITAS

With a legacy dating back to 1869, the former MAB-Mackay, Constance-Lethbridge, Camp Massawippi and Action Centre foundations are now stronger together as Habilitas.

Our dream is to build a society where no one is left behind.

Habilitas Foundation Impact Report
Fall 2022

From HABILITAS FOUNDATION

Boutique Founded by Blind Visionary Still Changing Lives



IMAGE SHOWS SHELVES OF SPECIALTY PRODUCTS FOR BLIND PATRONS AT THE TECHNICAL AIDS BOUTIQUE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED, AND FOUNDER IRENE LAMBERT

Loss of sight can be devastating. The simplest tasks - making coffee, calling family, even navigating your own home - are fraught with struggle, risk and frustration. But thanks to Irene Lambert - and you - that world is more navigable.

Irene is the remarkable founder of the *Technical Aids Boutique for the Visually Impaired*, operating at the *MAB Mackay Rehabilitation Centre* since 1998. The Boutique stocks more than 300 specialty items that improve lives for the visually impaired - from adapted kitchen items and Braille or talking watches to magnifiers, games, specialized sunglasses, lamps and phones.

After a lifetime of advocacy and leadership (she is now 92!), Irene knows full well the challenges blind and visually impaired people face. And how important their independence is in their day-to-day.

Much more than a boutique

Since its founding, the Boutique has grown into a gateway for those needing services and support. Folks typically drop by for one item, discover and test out other devices that help them maintain their autonomy and safety. They also have the chance to learn about the programs available to them at the MAB-Mackay.

To ensure the devices are affordable to everyone, they are not sold at a profit. As such, the Boutique relies on donor support to operate. Last year, more than 1,300 items were sold, with traffic expected to surge as baby boomers continue to age.

A model for philanthropy

Irene Lambert received the *Barrier Free Canada's 2021 Distinguished Advocacy Award* - but that's just a footnote to a stellar career. She is a model for giving and community service. Or, as she says, "you're always concerned with leaving the world a little better."

Together with other pioneers, she's changed government and corporate policy affecting the visually impaired, and served as a board member at *MAB-Mackay*, as well as many other organizations. In the process, Irene has changed countless lives.

Thanks to Irene, and you, the *Technical Aids Boutique for the Visually Impaired* carries on her astounding legacy.