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Prevent Blindness Announces Recipients of 2020 Jenny Pomeroy Award for Excellence in Vision and Public Health, and Rising Visionary Award

CHICAGO (May 20, 2020) – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, has announced the recipient of the “[2020 Jenny Pomeroy Award for Excellence in Vision and Public Health](#),” as the [Children’s Vision Rehabilitation Program \(CVRP\)](#) at West Virginia University. The recipient of the inaugural “[Rising Visionary Award](#)” is Araba Otoo, third-year optometry student, at [The Ohio State University](#). Both award recipients will have the opportunity to present at the Ninth Annual [Prevent Blindness Focus on Eye Health National Summit](#), to be held as a virtual online event due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Jenny Pomeroy Award for Excellence in Vision and Public Health is named for Mrs. Jenny Pomeroy, who served as CEO of [Prevent Blindness Georgia](#) from 1996 until 2013, and was an advocate for championing the role of public health in vision and eye care services and programs. The annual award recognizes an individual, team, or organization that has made significant contributions to the advancement of public health related to vision and eye health at the community, state, national, and/or international level.

The CVRP, led by program director Rebecca Coakley, MA, CLVT, was selected by a volunteer committee for the program’s innovative approach to respond to the individual needs of visually impaired children, teachers, parents, and related professionals in West Virginia. Founded in 1996, the CVRP has a three-pronged approach in meeting the needs of blind/visually impaired children by:

- providing comprehensive low vision exams in the community.
- mentoring teachers of the visually impaired who are often isolated without appropriate support and training.
- creating and implementing special programing to address the “nonacademic” needs of the child with visual impairments to succeed in life.

To help children succeed outside of the classroom, the CVRP began a program to assist in mastering skills in relation to independent living, communication, organization, self-help, socialization, and self-advocacy. Last year, the CVRP held four events for

visually-impaired students: adventure camp, summer day camp, technology camp, and an orientation and mobility weekend trip to New York City. The CVRP and its low vision services continue to serve as a model for programs both nationally and internationally, including countries such as Canada and Egypt.

Araba Otoo, a third-year optometry student at The Ohio State University, was selected as the first recipient of the Prevent Blindness Rising Visionary Award. The award recognizes an optometry student or resident, ophthalmology resident, or other health care professional student or resident in the United States who has the best essay based on a question related to the 2020 Focus on Eye Health National Summit theme, "An Eye to the Future." Otoo's essay featured ideas on public education and awareness tactics to create the most impactful change to improve the future outlook of vision and eye health.

"By working together, and learning from the successful efforts of those who are making a significant impact on the vision and eye health in their communities, we can help to expand those efforts across the country," said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "We not only congratulate the CVRP team on their receipt of the 2020 Jenny Pomeroy Award for Excellence in Vision and Public Health, but thank them for their outstanding work. We look forward to Ms. Araba Otoo's impact as she continues her career providing sight-saving services."

For more information on the Prevent Blindness Jenny Pomeroy Award for Excellence in Vision and Public Health, please visit <https://preventblindness.org/jenny-pomeroy-award-for-excellence-in-vision-and-public-health/>. Information on the Prevent Blindness Rising Visionary Award may be found at <https://preventblindness.org/rising-visionary-award/>. Or, contact Nita Sinha, director of Public Health, at (800) 331-2020 or npatelsinha@preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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