Hadley

You Put One Foot Forward

Presented by Douglas Walker

**Douglas:** Hello, and welcome to the Insights and Sound Bites podcast, where people facing vision loss share insights about what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Voice 1:** You cannot do this alone. You need people who are experiencing the same thing.

**Voice 2:** Probably the hardest part was just navigating through the emotions of it.

**Douglas:** My name is Douglas Walker. Sometimes, all we need is that one connection. Today we’ll hear from Gregory. Gregory will share with us how finding a mentor made all the difference in the world to him, and his entire family.

**Gregory:** Hello, my name is Gregory Peterson from Elmwood Park, Illinois.

I was born with low vision. I was probably 15 maybe, 15, 14, 15-years-old. And I was diagnosed with rod and cone dystrophy. I've lived a prosperous life, a fulfilled life, I think. A couple kids, three kids and grandkids. And I became an operating engineer working on air conditioning and maintenance in a building.

And then about two years ago, I noticed my vision declining. I was like, "This is getting worse. Something's going on here." Find out I have cataracts. Saw the cataracts. They removed the cataracts. That's as good as I'm going to get. And here I am. Now I'm visually impaired, legally blind. And that's it.

**Douglas:** Gregory reached out and discovered Hadley’s mentor program.

**Gregory:** The turning point, when I got my phone call from my mentor, somebody that has gone through and is going through vision loss, made the difference where I am now. It's been one of the best things, Bill and I, he calls every two weeks, and we don't talk about woe is me. We talk about all kinds of stuff, and what's out there. And he helps me out, and I help him out. And just to have somebody to talk to that's going through the same thing or has gone through the same thing. You put one foot forward at a time.

And it gives me a purpose now. I'm going to get involved. It's made a big difference for me and my family.

**Douglas**: Was there something that someone said to you or something that happened along the way that made all the difference in the world in helping you adjust to living with vision loss?

We‘d love to hear from you if you’d like to share with us, just leave us a message on our Insights & Sound Bites Podcast voicemail by calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can use your smartphone or computer and email us a recording to podcast@Hadley.edu. Again, my name is Douglas Walker. Take care and I’ll see you next time.