PREMIER VISUAL VOICE:
AN INDUSTRY CASE STUDY

Margaret Downs
President & CEO

Margaret may be blind, but it hasn't kept her from giving back. "I've never thought of myself as having a disability. Things are challenging for me sometimes, yes. But, I have never lived my life as a victim. I've made a choice to see that me providing captions for the deaf and hard of hearing is my way of giving back."

SUCCESS THROUGH SERVICE

Margaret Downs is the President and CEO of **Premier Visual Voice**. Established in 2011, Margaret's company provides accurate, live event captioning and CART services through both voice writing and steno-based captions.

Located in the Cleveland, Ohio area, Margaret and her team of ten captioners provide much-needed accessibility services for the deaf and hard of hearing all over the country. Premier Visual Voice is a 100% woman-owned small business and is **EDGE** certified (Encouraging Diversity, Growth, Equality) in the state of Ohio. PVV provides high-quality captions for live webinars and classroom lectures to large conferences of over 10,000 attendees. Her company also provides post-production services. Margaret is certified in Court Reporting Technologies and is a Registered CART Provider through the **National Verbatim Reporters Association.** (NVRA)

DIVING INTO THE DEEP END

Margaret has been a user of **StreamText** from the start of her captioning career. Margaret shared, "After my training in school, I was looking for work. I was on the NVRA website and I saw an ad from a company looking for voice writers. I applied and tested with the owner and got the job. A few weeks later, my new boss sent me an email with a link to the StreamText website. He wrote, 'Here's a link to the company we're going to use to stream your captions to the Internet. Learn it like the back of your hand.' So I did." Margaret's first event using StreamText was for a deaf client located in the San Francisco area. She used Dragon to provide voice-written captions.

A CAREER OF GIVING BACK

What makes Margaret's story as a voice writer unique is that she is legally blind and has been since childhood. She was diagnosed with glaucoma in elementary school and underwent the first of several eye surgeries at the age of nine. Her sight was severely limited throughout high school and her 20s but began to drastically decline in her 30s.

Margaret shared that it was time to start pursuing a new career with her vision rapidly declining. "At first, I started with medical transcription. But I wanted more diversity in my work. So, I went back to school in 2008 and started a whole new career." Margaret also shared that the year she started training to become a voice writer was also the same year her son started kindergarten. "We both started school the same year." Her son, Alan, now 14 years old, was also diagnosed with early signs of glaucoma. But his vision has not been affected and is undergoing consistent treatment and monitoring by an ophthalmologist.

GROWING A BUSINESS WITH STREAMTEXT

Using StreamText has been an incredible asset to growing her business. Margaret shared that her clients like the speed and presentation **output options** for captions on StreamText's platform. "StreamText is the Cadillac of streaming text services. Captions are delivered almost instantly. I've used other platforms or methods mostly because a client has requested it, but I always prefer StreamText."

From a StreamText **support** standpoint, Margaret laughed when she shared about a few examples. "I was getting ready to go live and minutes before the event was to start, I had some random technical issue come up. I couldn't figure it out and was panicked. So, I called Nick. It was 8 or 9 PM and thank goodness he picked up! He was understanding and patient, and he helped me resolve the issue in less than a minute. Even though I was freaking out, he calmly walked me through the issue and I was right on time for my event."

To learn more about StreamText and how it can provide captioning for your next event, please visit **www.streamtext.net**