

visability

A Parents Newsletter
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A Valentines Visit to the Kentucky State Legislature

As part of our ongoing effort to keep our name out in front of the legislators, especially in light of the Governor’s call to place more importance on early childhood education, VIPSI parents, children and staff members from the Louisville office journeyed to Frankfort to be introduced on both the Senate and the House floors early on Valentine’s Day. Handmade Valentines featuring VIPSI children’s photos, braille overlay greetings and thanks for support of VIPSI were presented to each representative and senator. The entire trip was undertaken because of the success of VIPSI Bloomington’s 2013 trip to the Indiana state house.

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VIPSI families and staff with Sen. Dennis Parrett from E’town and Sen. Gerald Neal from Louisville (left) and Sen. Morgan McGarvey from Louisville (far right).

VIPSI Bloomington Receives Major Grant from the Glick Fund

VIPSI Bloomington is honored to announce that the Glick Fund has awarded VIPSI a grant for \$47,000. The Glick Fund, a fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation, was established by Eugene and Marilyn Glick in 1998 to support a variety of causes. It has awarded over \$50 million to not-for-profit organizations since its inception. Grants focus on four areas: arts, education, human needs and the alleviation of suffering; and self sufficiency and job skills.



“These grants support organizations that seek to enrich lives and to empower people with knowledge,” said Marianne Glick, chairwoman of The Eugene & Marilyn Glick Family Foundation and The Glick Fund.

Part of the funding provided by The Glick Fund will enable VIPSI to provide an 18-month training of Project VIISA (Visual Impairment InService in America) to qualified candidates. Project VIISA
Continued on pg.2



Mission Statement
 VIPSI empowers families by providing educational excellence to young children with visual impairments in order to build a strong foundation for reaching their highest potential.

Glick Fund

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is a highly specialized program of early intervention for young children with blindness. This kind of specialized training is needed to help VIPS properly train Early Interventionists in Visual Impairment.

“The Glick Fund’s support is critical for VIPS,” said Rebecca Davis, Development Director for VIPS Bloomington. “In Indiana, infants and toddlers who are blind are underserved. Over the past 3 years, VIPS has worked with nearly 100 children in 22 counties so far, but, there are literally hundreds of children throughout the state who need the kind of direct services we provide. Our ultimate goal is that every time a child is born and has vision loss, anywhere in Indiana, VIPS will be there to give the family specialized early intervention, advocacy, and a sense of community. We currently have only one full time teacher. Training more early interventionists through Project VIISA will bring us one step closer to that goal. On behalf of the families we serve, VIPS sincerely thanks The Glick Fund and the Central Indiana Community Foundation. The impact of this funding will be felt for years to come.”

For more information about the Glick Fund, visit: www.cicf.org. And our eternal gratitude goes to Ryan Brady, our contact with the Glick Fund.

As we look forward, 2014 will be a year of growth and transition. New referrals are coming in all the time from all over the state. The grant from the Glick Fund will be a tremendous boost to help VIPS build a staff to meet our growing caseload. Also, to improve services for these children and their

families, VIPS is also working with Senator Mark Stoops to pass legislation (Senate Bill 419) to collect better data about infants and toddlers with blindness. More accurate data about the population of Indiana’s youngest visually impaired children will help us secure funding to provide the services VIPS kids and families need. VIPS will continue to advocate for Senate Bill 419 and hope for the best. We invite families to call their local representatives as well as the Governor’s office in support of Senate Bill 419. The current legislative session ends in March.

Legislative Visit

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And did meeting such an illustrious group of legislators make an impact on the youngsters who attended? One astute young lady was overheard asking if she was going to get to deliver Valentines to the donkeys and elephants she had heard so much about!



VIPS families and staff with Rep. Joanie Jenkins of Louisville who introduced VIPS on the floor of the House.

The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act: H.R. 4040

The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act, H.R. 4040, has been introduced by Representatives Matt Cartwright (D-PA), Mark Takano (D-CA), and Steve Stockman (R-TX). This bill, if passed, would enhance and reform the special education system for students with vision loss and those with hearing loss. It helps ensure that each child’s unique learning needs will be met by addressing planning, accountability, evaluation, services, and skills from the federal level all the way to the individual child level.

Forty years after the passage of the federal law ensuring appropriate educational for children with special needs, this law is designed to further specialize opportunities for children who are deaf and/or blind so that another 40 years will not pass without additional progress, hence the 4040 in the title. The act is named for Helen Keller’s beloved teacher, Ann Sullivan Macy, and for the first deaf girl to be educated in a school for the deaf in the United States, Alice Cogswell. Advocacy groups for both disabilities from across the US urge all those who support this act to contact their member of the US House of Representatives to ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 4040! For additional information visit www.AFB.org/MacyAct for regular updates as the Cogswell/Macy Act progresses.

READING Makes a Difference

1000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge

VIPS is joining forces with the Louisville Free Public Library and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer to encourage parents to read to their young children. By reading just 3 picture books a day for a total of 15 minutes, you and your child can complete over 1000 books in one year! Let VIPS help you do this! Visit our Family Resource Library to check out the following:

- Braille picture books
- Companion reader storybooks (print with braille overlays)
- Braille storybooks
- Story boxes (kits containing braille picture books and objects from the story for children to tactually explore)
- Books on tape (including the complete series of Winnie the Pooh donated by Central Kentucky Radio Eye)

The VIPS Family Resource Library is your family's library!

APH Partner's Print-Braille Book Program

Kick start your child's reading with a brand new print/braille book delivered to your home every other month, free of charge! The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) understands that early reading helps your child become aware of braille, building confidence and enthusiasm for reading. APH has carefully selected books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to produce as print-braille books. When enrolled in the Partner's Print-Braille Book Program, families receive six free print-braille books each year until their children reach six years of age.

To be eligible for the program:

- ~ You or your child must meet the definition of blindness;
- ~ Your child must be age 5 or under;
- ~ Both you and your child must reside in the U.S. or its outlying areas; and
- ~ You must be able to be reached by email.

To apply, please visit www.aph.org and click on Free Print/Braille Books.

Welcome to VIPS!

By Kathy Mullen, VIPS Education Coordinator

Because the Louisville campus of VIPS claimed its home in the heart of a metropolitan area, you might expect it to have a revolving front door. Why? Because the door we have now is rarely closed! Visitors are always coming and going.

Are folks coming to see Dani, our welcoming receptionist and volunteer coordinator? Quite possibly. Dani is definitely a warm and welcoming ambassador of VIPS.

Are folks coming to Kosair Charities Kids Town? That could be it, too; Kids Town is rented out regularly for birthday parties, family gatherings, and holiday events to VIPS families and staff.

Are families coming to spend time in our Family Resource Library? Maybe. It is not unusual to find a parent or caregiver reading, or even sleeping, in the library while his or her child attends Kids Town Preschool at VIPS. After all, some of our families travel up to an hour each way for their child to be educated in our state of the art preschool for children with visual impairments and their sighted peers.

Perhaps the reasons people come to visit VIPS are as numerous as the number of visitors themselves. In 2013, VIPS welcomed over 1100 visitors to our Louisville campus alone. These visitors were here to help celebrate the accomplishments of our young students in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons.

Universities in our region recognize VIPS not only as an example of a developmentally appropriate preschool program for children of all learning styles, but also as a resource for learning ways to individualize instruction. Visiting students come to learn ways to embed technology in a preschool classroom. Students in early childhood education programs come to Kids Town for a look at the most current educational equipment and materials to encourage independence and interactive learning.

Students in occupational therapy programs recognize the sensory work done in our preschool and come to Kids Town for firsthand experience to do the same. Speech-language pathology students come to observe the language skills of children who are visually impaired in order to learn ways to enhance the language development of all young children. Physical therapy students come to learn strategies for arranging an environment that is safe and inviting for all children.

Within the past year, students and teachers from over 16 different school systems and university programs in three states came for tours and training sessions at VIPS.

VIPS is continuously blessed with volunteers coming to help us achieve our goals and priorities in cost effective ways. Volunteers come from church groups, civic clubs, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, and school clubs. VIPS has been adopted by a couple of elementary schools in the community as part of their ministry program. These schools send classes of fourth graders and seventh graders respectively to tour our preschool and complete onsite service projects such as preparing for an Easter egg hunt or cleaning classroom toys and learning materials. Individuals come to volunteer as well. They are put to work filing or organizing bulk mailings. VIPS greatly relies on our army of volunteers; their worth is valued and never overlooked.

VIPS also opens its doors to our professional partners. Therapists and other team members serving our Kids Town students and home- and community-based children are always welcome to come to VIPS for a session or visit. Our children can be joined in the preschool classroom or families can schedule a time to have their children seen in our sensory room, Kosair Charities Kids Town, on the adaptive playground, or in the sensory garden. Kids Town was built to be a learning tool for all; we take that seriously.

It is not uncommon to have families call and ask if it is okay to stop by VIPS so their children can spend a little time in the sensory room – a safe place for calming and learning and being. Sometimes grandparents or aunts and uncles come in town and want a firsthand look at the center they have heard so much about. We welcome our out-of-town family members, as VIPS recognizes a child is not solely an individual, but a member of a bigger whole. We are pleased to be a part of the child’s family and want to welcome other members as well.

VIPS even hears from people who just happen to be passing through Louisville for another reason, but want to come see what they have read and heard about from other sources. This last year we even welcomed a preschool teacher from Iowa who was in town visiting a cousin and asked if she could come see VIPS!

We are proud of the work we do at VIPS. We recognize that much of the value and success we enjoy comes from the blessing of our surroundings. It seems only right that we share these surroundings with others. So, please, do not wait too long to come for a visit to VIPS. The reason does not matter! Our door is always open, revolving or not! Hope to see you soon!

Monthly Eye Exams Offered in VIPS Louisville Kids Town

Visually Impaired Preschool Services welcomes Dr. Ashima Kumar Gupta to the Louisville community. Dr. Gupta is a board certified ophthalmologist specializing in pediatrics. She has spent the past seven years as Director of the Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Service at the State University of New York in Brooklyn, NY. Dr. Gupta has returned to Louisville, joining her father and brother, Drs. Shushil and Rishi Kumar, in their ophthalmology practice at Kumar Eye Institute.



Dr. Gupta began offering pediatric eye exams one afternoon each month in the Dr. Mark Lynn eye doctor’s office in VIPS Kosair Charities Kids Town in February. Appointments may be made through Dr. Gupta’s office at 502-368-3937.

VIPS appreciates and supports all pediatric ophthalmologists serving our VIPS children. This monthly afternoon appointment is offered as a service to our families – a personal eye exam in a safe, fun, familiar environment. This is not intended to be an endorsement of one specific doctor over another.

Patrick Hughes Movie

If you did not catch VIPS graduate Patrick Henry Hughes and his family on the Family Feud last November or again early in February, you can get your “Patrick fix” coming in 2014 to a theater near you. Check out iampotentialmovie on facebook for more information.

VIPS Family Fun

VIPS Lexington

The Lexington VIPS office held a holiday open house for families and board members on Tuesday Dec. 17. Twelve VIPS families were treated to photos with Santa and gifts for the family. Each VIPS child received a sensory blanket handmade by the female inmates at the Federal Medical Center from materials donated by the Community Relations Board. VIPS also provided a full meal with help from the Soup Kitchen's donation of soup. The kids created several holiday crafts and they got the opportunity to tell Santa what they were hoping to find under the tree.



Michelle communes with Santa



Santa knows that Katelyn and Caroline have been very good girls!

Sayla, with her mom April, is overjoyed with her sensory blanket.



VIPS Louisville

Eleven families joined the VIPS staff for a Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 21. Many thanks to Kathryn and Bill Brangers who provided the turkeys which were roasted by VIPS' wonderful cooks, much to the delight of all of us within olfactory distance. Each family brought a side dish to flesh out the meal. The children stamped their hand prints on paper to make turkeys and then decorated them. Thanks to Sharon Bohannon, Stacy Gathos, Ryan Hack, Max Medley and Will Mullen who volunteered their time and energy to make sure that everyone had a delicious and delightful time.

Eight families attended the annual Santa party on Dec. 1 and what fun they had! The highlight was the visit from Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and the Head Elf (Bobby, Tonya and Clint Otis) who gave each child a book that was donated by St. Agnes School and the Plank family. Each VIPS child received a Braille book.



Ahmed has a chat with Santa.

The children enjoyed filling ornaments with interesting objects that delighted them and encouraged tactile exploration at the same time. Thanks to St. Patrick Catholic Church who provided wonderful desserts for the party. We could never host such wonderful events for families without our marvelous community of volunteers. Those who helped with the details of the holiday party included Claire Adams, Leigh Ann Barney, Mary Bays, Suzann Bays, Lauren Berryman, Sharon Bohannon, Elizabeth Gardner, Kristy Gardner, Stacy Gathos, Ryan Hack and Sarah Schubeh.



Christian displays the ornament he made.



Above: Addyson thinks she just might like Santa after all. Left: Levi definitely likes Santa. Below: The VIPS staff posed with Santa, Mrs. Claus & their elf.



The SibShop for siblings of VIPS children was held on December 14. The siblings made wonderful tactual and braille books for their VIPS brothers and sisters. These included aromatic stickers and tactual pictures. While their siblings worked on their masterpieces, the VIPS children made tactual cards. Everyone came together to decorate cookies and to play in Kids Town.

Many thanks to Mary Bays, Rose Ann Bays, Ashley Emmons, Pauletta Feldman and Ryan Hack for helping with the SibShop.

Future SibShops have been canceled for now.

Five families came together for the January 16 family dinner. Once fed, the children were off to play in Kids Town with volunteers Mary Bays, Susan Bays, Ryan Hack, Beth Krebs and Mary Lesousky while Erika Janes, RN, with Safety Kids at Kosair Hospital shared information on how to keep children safer! Parents learned about car seats, choking, bike safety and much more. Everyone enjoyed Erika's talk so much that she will be invited back in the future.

Holiday Generosity Creates Joyful Memories

We are always indebted to the generous folks who spend their time and treasure demonstrating the true meaning of Christmas. This year, there were many who helped make the holidays merry by adopting VIPS families needing some extra help this year. They included:

- The Pathfinder, the Reckless Christians and the Getting Real Sunday School Classes Middletown Christian Church -- the Gardner, Hall, Hitzelberger, and Rodman/Skipper Martin families;
- Delta Gamma alumnae;
- Kentucky Eye Care;
- The Mullen family;
- Norton Healthcare;
- PNC on Newburg Road; and
- The Omega Psi Phi and the Theta Omega chapters of the Louisville Board of Realtors

UPS 2DA Wing B provided a gift for each child in the Preschool and Two Day 2s and helped them have a wonderful Christmas party on the last day of school.

St. Agnes School and the Plank family gave a book to each child attending the Annual Holiday party at VIPS Louisville.

Mega Caverns donated passes for our families to enjoy Lights Under Louisville. The children loved the beautiful lights and wonderful sounds of the season.

Prescription Drug Assistance

Metro United Way is participating with FamilyWize, to offer free prescription drug discount cards, in a partnership approved by United Way Worldwide. Forty percent of adults don't buy the medicine they need, have difficulty affording it, or reduce the required dosage because of the high cost.

FamilyWize free prescription discount cards can save individuals up to 75% on prescriptions; on average, savings are 35%. Our community has saved \$2.5 million through the use of FamilyWize free prescription cards over the last several years, including \$700,000 just this past year. Learn more about the program at: <http://www.familywize.org>.

CLASSROOM NEWS

Holidays and a New Year Offer So Much to Do in Two Day 2s

By Staci Maynard, VIPs Louisville, Former Twos Teacher

The Twos class had a lot to celebrate and be thankful for during the holiday season in 2013. A couple of new friends joined the



Brooklyn and Sarah sing as they work.

class, and we moved to a new classroom with a new teacher in January as VIPs opened a third preschool room. There was so much discovery to enjoy as our classes learned about food, holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, our feelings, and winter.

At the beginning of November, we explored what foods we need to eat to be healthy. During the unit's first week, each friend made a plate that contained genuine examples of food from each food group. We did activities such as matching real fruits and vegetables, looking at which fruits and vegetables had seeds, and putting jars of food in order by quantity contained in each jar. Our friends enjoyed smelling each food. Activities during

the second week of the unit included making real vegetable soup together and then getting to eat it. The children had fun creating stamp paintings using fruits and vegetables. Their favorite songs about food were "Apples and Bananas" and "Way Up High in an Apple Tree."

Our class spent the rest of November focusing on learning about being thankful. My favorite activity was creating a quilt out of alternating colors of paper and having each friend decorate a square with something for which he/she was thankful. The children thought dying popcorn kernels and then making popcorn out of it was the most fun. They also enjoyed playing with the feathers, gourds, and maize in the sensory table. To create a smelly turkey craft, each friend dipped her/his hand in glue, put the handprint on a plate, and then sprinkled on Thanksgiving herbs and spices of her/his choice. Their favorite Thanksgiving song was Eight Different Turkeys, a color identification song.

The first week of December was our unit on feelings. We listened to recordings of voices displaying different emotions and talked about how that person might be feeling. Our favorite song was "If You're Happy and You Know It" except that we added other emotions such as angry, scared, sleepy, sad, and surprised. Their favorite verse was "If you're surprised and you know it say, 'Oh, wow!'" Our friends painted to fast music and then slow music according to how the music made them feel.

The winter holiday season offers many opportunities to include fun textures, smells, and shiny objects into the classroom. The children were excited to make ornaments and then to use the



Cannon likes wearing the Santa hat.

ornaments to decorate the room's Christmas tree. Candy canes, cinnamon, cloves, and pine branches gave our science center a lovely holiday smell. Our friends also made special scented ornaments out

of apple sauce and cinnamon, using cookie cutters to form them into their desired shape. Their favorite songs were "The Dancing Christmas Tree Song" and "The Lights on the Tree."

During the second week of our holiday unit, the children made photo frames as a present for their parents. They practiced matching different textures on Santa's clothes and played with shiny objects like garland, bows, and ornaments set against black birdseed in the sensory table. Finally, they made edible holiday trees out of waffle cones, green frosting, and candy; it was sort of a simpler version of making a gingerbread house. The challenge with this activity was getting our friends to create with the materials instead of eating them!

In January, we talked about the winter season. Our friends explored what the weather is like in winter, what clothes we wear in the winter, and what activities people like to do when it's cold outside. We made puffy snowflakes out of shaving cream and glue, played on the light box with bags of colored water and snowflake-shaped ice, danced like a snowflake, and predicted what will melt ice the fastest. While outcomes for the winter clothing lesson focused on being able to identify items of clothing we wear in winter and dressing in them, we also explored fun experiments like painting with colored ice and painting mittens that will match after being pressed together. As we talked about winter activities, our friends engaged in lots of dramatic play as we pretended to ice skate (on wax paper), made snow angels (in a box of cotton balls), had a snowball fight (with rolled up socks), and made snowmen (out of homemade dough that we made together).

There is so much to explore in the world, so much to know and to feel, and our

experience is always enhanced when we do it together. That's why learning in community like at VIPS Two Day 2s and Kids Town preschool is such a special opportunity.



Cannon was so ready to mold playdough ornaments that he forgot to remove his hat when he arrived.

There is Never a Dull Moment in the Kids Town Preschool

By Angie Paisley, Kids Town Preschool Teacher

During the month of December, the Kids Town preschool classes explored what the holidays are about through many hands-on experiences. We emphasized math through concepts such as counting, identifying numbers, adding, and discovering more or less than. The classes even got to count down the days until Santa arrived. We learned about the story of The Gingerbread Man



Our Music Therapist Miss Greta lets Bronson enjoy a close look at her guitar.

through sequencing the story as well as acting it out. We sorted various textures of ornaments on miniature Christmas Trees, and explored all the different scents that are associated with the holidays, such as peppermint, gingerbread and pine. We identified and matched letters and numbers as well as sounds the letters made using Christmas Tree templates with letters and numbers. We painted and decorated Santa's workshop with various textured items. The children not only loved this process, but also enjoyed pretending to be elves making toys. We also created ornaments using chalk and stencils.



Megan sports a clown hairdo!

Our two very exciting field trips this month were to see KaLightscope at the Galt House and to visit Golden Living Center Nursing Home where Mr. Ash lives. (Mr. Ash is the gentleman who, with his brother, gifted us his home.) We also stopped by the home of our sweet neighbor who keeps up with our activities throughout the year.



The children sang their Christmas Carols loud and proud at the Golden Living Center to the delight of the residents.



Levi made a good friend at the Golden Living Center.

Play and Learn with Friends at PAL

By Staci Maynard, VIPS Louisville PAL Teacher

The Play & Learn (PAL) group did not get to see each other very often during the holiday season due to various scheduling conflicts. When we did meet, the group averaged 5-6 families. Many of our families come very regularly, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere in which they can play and talk together. The children enjoyed activities such as listening to Christmas songs while playing bells, making handprint turkeys out of different Thanksgiving seasonings, riding bikes and cars in KidsTown, and stamp painting with fruits and vegetables. We had a little holiday party on the last week before break. Thank you to our friends who brought cupcakes, applesauce, and juice boxes to share with everyone.

The families of VIPS toddlers are invited to join us on Fridays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. for PAL. PAL will not meet on April 4 or May 2. Also, we follow the JCPS schedule, so if school is called off, PAL will also be cancelled. In case of delay of JCPS school openings, PAL will operate on its regular schedule unless VIPS announces otherwise. We look forward to seeing our friends old and new as we start this new year.



Above: Pyper, front, and Cannon, rear, play at the sensory wall.



Left: Isabella engages in some gross motor play in KidsTown as Miss Beth watches.

Right: Maycin loves the weighted fiber lights and the comfy swing in the sensory room.



Left: The classroom is hardly big enough to contain the excitement that children and parents bring to PAL.

VIPS Lexington Class News

Two Day 2s & More

Is your child two years old or older? Looking to get your child ready for the transition to preschool when he turns three? Or wanting socialization alternatives for your older child?

VIPS will be starting a “pre-preschool” program called Two Day 2s in March. The class will run on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9 am to noon at our Lexington office. There will be a teacher and an assistant leading the class. We will focus on getting your child ready for the wonderful world of preschool by working on separating from parents, doing fun arts and crafts, sitting at circle time and participating in teacher led activities.

If you are interested and would like more information please call 1-888-254-8477 and ask for Ms. Dixie. We will take children up to 4 years of age if space permits.

Input Needed

VIPS welcomes parent input as we work to develop a partnership with the University of Kentucky. Please contact Jill Haas (jhaas@vips.org) if you are interested in assisting us. Your feedback can help your child as well as other children both now and in the future.

Bloomie Cuties!



Above: Able loved exploring the items on his play gym.



Left: Alayna liked pulling the fuzzy ball ornaments OFF her Christmas Tree.

Expanded Core Curriculum, Pt. 2

By Jan Moseley, Visual Impairment Specialist & Newsletter Editor, VIPS Louisville

In our July-August-September issue we introduced the topic of Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), all of the skills needed by each child who is blind/visually impaired in addition to the core curriculum that all children need. We elected to delay the next section of the article because of the holiday and parent articles in the last newsletter. We now continue the discussion in this newsletter by looking at some of the ways the ECC is integrated into the VIPS Kids Town Preschool classrooms. As you may recall there are 9 different areas of the ECC; this article will highlight Sensory Efficiency.

Sensory Efficiency-use of whatever vision is present along with all of the senses to interpret environmental cues

We continuously observe the children’s use of their residual vision to try to determine what visual skills each child has (or lacks) as she performs classroom activities. In addition to the eye doctor’s medical statement, seeing how the child actually uses her vision enables us to be able to make accommodations and begin the process of teaching each her how to independently request appropriate modifications, a truly indispensable life skill. And we continuously stress to the sighted peers that another child “sees with her hands, not her eyes” to help them learn about differences.

We “push” using residual vision to examine items fascinating to young children such as insects and other objects found outdoors. We use a closed circuit TV and a variety of hand held magnifiers to help motivate close looking. It’s also a way to “sneak in” learning how to use those devices which may become the best way for the child to access future learning. And we notice that when we get the sighted peer excited about viewing close up, the children with visual challenges seem to become more interested in exploring themselves.

We also work on building each child’s sensory skills other than vision. Learning to use touch, hearing, taste and smell represents an important developmental step for all children, and one absolutely critical to children whose future independence relies upon using every non-visual skill they can develop. The frequent art projects and activities building those sensory skills are not only charming to see and feel; they also are intentional skill-builders critical to future classroom success.



New Arrivals

VIPS is pleased to welcome the following new children and their families into the VIPS Program:

VIPS Louisville

Aiden - 10 months, Louisville, KY
 Angel - 12 months, Louisville, KY
 Anthony - 33 months, Shelbyville, KY
 Evie - 22 months, Louisville, KY
 Isaiah - 7 months, Louisville, KY
 Oliver - 14 months, Louisville, KY

VIPS Lexington

Daimian - 13 months, Berea, KY
 Davianna - 33 months, Monticello, KY
 Desmond - 24 months, Rush, KY
 Katelyn - 20 months, Denniston, KY
 Kendall - 9 months, Lexington, KY
 Lynlee - 11 months, Frankfort, KY
 Molly - 21 months, Georgetown, KY
 Penelope - 12 months, Somerset, KY
 Whitley - 15 months, Cynthia, KY

VIPS Bloomington

Abram - 15 months, Anderson, IN
 Gracie - 18 months, Bloomington, IN
 Hunter - 17 months, Versailles, IN
 Iliana - 26 months, Indianapolis, IN
 Izabella - 32 months, Greenfield, IN
 Jayden -

32 months,
 Shelbyville, IN
 Kaitlynn -
 14 months,
 Ossian, IN
 McKenna -
 14 months,
 Bloomington, IN



McKenna and mom
 Kyliedrop chips into the
 shiny, noisy can.

VIPS Grad Named Outstanding Delegate at KY YMCA Youth Assembly

Caden Rich, a VIPS graduate who is currently a middle school student in Bullitt County, was named the Outstanding Delegate at the 2013 Kentucky YMCA Youth Assembly. He and his classmates were also honored for presenting the outstanding premiere bill.

Caden gave an eloquent speech to several hundred students and adults, casting aside his usually low key persona. In his speech, he told how the use of an iPad had enabled him to become less dependent on others, something he felt every Kentucky student with visual challenges should be able to do. The bill he and his classmates presented would require public school districts to provide iPads for their students identified as visually impaired. What a fabulous idea! Way to go, Caden! We're proud to know you!



VIPS Staff News

VIPS Louisville

With the start of the new year came many changes in the 2014 VIPS classrooms. We are so thrilled to announce that we have opened a third classroom in the Kosair Charities Kids Town Preschool. Paige Maynard, who worked as a TVI with Angie Paisley, is leading the new class. Staci Maynard, who has taught the Two Day 2s, has moved in with Angie and TVI Barbara Merrick.

Ti Erika Carney resigned as After School Instructional Assistant and has been replaced by Shelby Birchler and Amanda Rucker. Ti Erika will help out occasionally.

A Fond Farewell, But This Is Not Goodbye

By Staci Maynard

January was my last month with the Two Day Twos class. I am still at VIPS but am now serving children in the preschool classroom. The Twos class is now being taught by Laura Leigh Logsdon assisted by Beth Krebs, who served as my assistant during my time with the class. Assistant is too weak a word to describe Beth. She is a capable, compassionate, candid, creative woman who will be a great asset for the children and their new teacher.

As I look back on my time teaching the Two Day Twos class, I cannot believe that a year passed so quickly. At the beginning, I was apprehensive about taking on a new role, but now our class seems like a natural part of my identity. I will never forget the pleasure I received from working with these curious, energetic, amusing toddlers every day. The job never gets boring, because even with lesson plans and class structure, you never know what might happen. We had fun every day, and we learned every day, often without realizing it. I know the two year olds at VIPS will continue to thrive under new guidance, and I hope to see some of your children again in Kids Town Preschool when they turn three. Thank you, parents, for sharing your most precious gifts with me for a few hours each week; they have enriched and blessed my life.

Welcome New Staff

by Kathy Mullen

Laura Leigh Logsdon joins us as our new Two Day 2s teacher, replacing Ms. Staci who is now serving as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired in one of our 3-4-year-old classes. She may be new to Kids Town Preschool as a teacher, but Laura Leigh is an experienced VIPS mom; her son Levi was served by VIPS through First Steps and now attends Kids Town Preschool.

Laura Leigh earned her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Criminal Justice from University of Louisville and a Masters in Special Education from University of the Cumberlands. She and her husband Derek are the proud parents of Levi (3) and Presley (10 months). Currently, Laura Leigh is one busy mom, but looks forward to the day when she can return to school for further studies in the world of education. Welcome, Laura Leigh!



Please join VIPS in welcoming Linda Penn to our newest classroom in Kids Town Preschool where she is working as an Instructional Assistant with Paige Maynard. Linda found her way from Connellsville, Pennsylvania to Louisville in 2001 to join her husband Michael. She brought a lot of energy and enthusiasm with her! Linda has a history of working in childcare centers in Louisville. She retired from Premier Packaging last year and decided retirement was not for her. Lucky VIPS! Linda enjoys spending her free time in her flower garden and caring for her two dogs and five cats. Welcome, Linda!



Shelby Birchler has been hired to be an After School Instructional Assistant. She has had a long interest in working with children, beginning as a Red Cross trained babysitter – rather interesting, since Shelby is only a sophomore at UofL, working toward a degree in art therapy. That interest heated up when Shelby's aunt, Diane Nelson, began working at VIPS and encouraged her to volunteer at the Family Retreat, which she has done for the last three



years. Shelby is from Louisville where she lives with her parents, Kathy and Larry, and her brothers, Chris and Austin.



Amanda Rucker has also been hired to be an After School Instructional Assistant. She is a student at Spalding University, working to become an Occupational Therapist. Amanda loves small children so this job is right up her alley. She lives in Shelbyville.

VIPS Lexington

Best Wishes, Mary

We are sad to report that Mary Moore Yohon, Development Director, has resigned. Mary has coordinated efforts in the Lexington office for 13 years and has been an integral part of the Lexington team through several staff changes. Her diligence in the Lexington office, both in terms of increasing staff and locating a more functional workspace, has been of tremendous value. Mary's compassionate slant to identifying funding sources has surely

swayed many grantors. Under her leadership, the Party with the Pros has grown by leaps and bounds and VIPs' participation in several bluegrass area fund and awareness raising campaigns has added to the strength of that office. We wish her the best of luck in future endeavors. We will miss you, Mary!

Thanks, Miss Dixie, For Believing In Sylvie

By Jill Haas, VIPs Lexington Family Services Coordinator

I just wanted to give a big thanks to Dixie (Miller) for her part in getting the TOBII representative to come to VIPs Lexington and assess Sylvie and two other children. The TOBII device is an eye gaze tablet that tracks the eyes and allows users to make selections and communicate hands-free. You can check out some success stories of children like Sylvie with the TOBII at <http://www.tobii.com/en/assistive-technology/global/user-stories/rett-syndrome/alyssa-and-her-tobii-c12/>.

When we began the assessment with Sylvie, she very quickly could focus on and select her favorite cartoon character from the screen. As we kept on challenging her with smaller pictures, she continued to be able to find and visually fix on the photo. We then offered her a choice between two characters, with one of them having a reward video that played after she looked at it. Within a few minutes she had discovered the reward and then was able to choose that character from then on... it was AMAZING!!

Sylvie will be getting a month long trial with the device in our home and then we will begin the process of getting insurance to purchase her own device. Thank you so much, Dixie and VIPs, for never giving up on Sylvie, and for supporting me in this learning process. I will give you all more updates as the process continues. My little girl might get a voice!!!

Connecting Through Collaborative Efforts

Kathy Mullen, Director of Education, is helping with The Outreach Forum, a gathering of Directors of Outreach from schools for the blind across the country, to be held April 24-26. About 30 Outreach Directors will share information about their programs and also discuss upcoming trends, technology, etc. at annual meetings held at different schools for the blind. The Kentucky School for the Blind is a first time host and has planned tours of KSB, the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and VIPs.

Speaking of APH, VIPs is collaborating with APH on a grant received for the Partner's Print-Braille Book Program to provide

free braille books for blind children (see pg. 3). Through this program, our kids could receive free braille books every other month until they reach the age of 6 years (older if the child is delayed). In addition, the books can be made available to blind parents of children under the age of 5. This is through APH's collaboration with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

Diane Nelson, VIPs Executive Director, is co-hosting the Spring Conference for the Vision Serve Alliance, April 23-27, with Tuck Tinsley, President of APH. Vision Serve is made up of CEOs and Executive Directors of over 100 agencies across the US serving the visually impaired. They will discuss "business issues" that affect us all.

VIPs hopes to host an upcoming family meeting at APH, with dinner, product demonstrations and a tour of their wonderful museum that spotlights blindness and blindness services, history and culture. We are thrilled to have this opportunity.

VIPs proudly hosted the first meeting of the newly formed Blind Services Coalition of Kentucky, made up of more than 20 agencies serving the blind and visually impaired throughout Kentucky. This collaboration was a result of VIPs Lexington's efforts during Blindness and Visual Impairment Awareness Month last October. The Bluegrass Council of the Blind in Lexington hosted the second meeting in February.

In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of:

Bentley Rothrock,

son of Morgan Trowell and Derek Rothrock and big brother of Marley Rothrock of Columbus, Indiana who passed away on January 10, 2014 at the age of 20 months

~ and ~

Avery Kennedy Butler,

son of Brittney Dansby and Tony Butler of Louisville and brother to Antonio Jr., Antoine, Kaidence, Aryn and Ayden Butler; who passed away on February 2, 2014 at the age of 18 months.

Our hearts go out to all those whose lives were touched by Avery and Bentley.

Kind Gifts of Time from Generous People

VIPS Louisville



What would we do without our wonderful Two Day 2s weekly volunteer Fran Woodward. Thanks, Fran, for the many ways you help the class run more smoothly.

Vance enjoys a story with Miss Fran.

At our November Family Thanksgiving Dinner, we were blessed with a great group of volunteers who made sure that everyone had a delightful time, including: Sharon Bohannon, Bill & Katherine Brangers, Stacy Gathos, Ryan Hack, Max Medley and Will Mullen.

Our Holiday Party for VIPS families was made so festive thanks to many generous volunteers including: our wonderful Claus family (Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and the Head Elf), Bobby, Tonya and Clint Otis, respectively; St. Agnes School and the Plank family who provided a book to each child attending the holiday party; members of St. Patrick Catholic Church who provided wonderful desserts; and great volunteers who helped so much during the party including Claire Adams, Leigh Ann Barney, Mary Bays, Suzann Bays, Lauren Berryman, Sharon Bohannon, Elizabeth Gardner, Kristy Gardner, Stacy Gathos, Ryan Hack and Sarah Schubeh.

Many thanks to Mary and Rose Ann Bays, Ashley Emmons, Pauletta Feldman and Ryan Hack for help with SibShop on Dec. 14.

Our January 16th family dinner offered valuable information to our families, thanks guest speaker Erika Janes, RN, with Safety Kids at Kosair Hospital. Thanks to energetic volunteers who watched the children and made it possible for parents to concentrate, including Mary Bays, Susan Bays, Ryan Hack, Beth Krebs and Mary Lesousky.

Ryan Hack, one of VIPS' youngest and most energetic volunteers, moved all the books from the back closet to the Family Library and all the VHS tapes from the library to the hall. He has also assisted with video sales, cleaned up the garage and helped at all the recent family events. Ryan has become one of our most dependable volunteers -- quite impressive since Ryan is only 12 years old!

ReVision on Feb. 22 was a wonderful success thanks in part to the help of a great group of volunteers, including our fabulous committee chair Mark Stiebling and Bob Bumann, Chris Bumann, Ashley Buren, Carol Dahmke, Angela Dunaway, Beth Krebs, Mary Lesousky, Paige Maynard, Staci Maynard, Ed Nelson, Tom O'Bryan, Alysia Rue, Kim Shippey and Maury Weedman.

VIPS alum Jamie Weedman has been brailleing six books each week for our preschool program, as well as helping other staff with braille needs. Thanks Jamie!

VIPS Lexington

VIPS Lexington Parents Night Out gives parents the opportunity to spend a little time with their significant other whether on a date, shopping trip, or taking a nap, knowing their children are in a safe environment with experienced and knowledgeable staff. But VIPS staff couldn't do it alone and we are very appreciative of the volunteers who assisted us recently. We wish to thank Emma Dennis, Kristina Harrison, Laci Pickett, Elizabeth Rose, Lucy White, and Krysta Wright for their invaluable help and compassionate hearts.

Our Holiday Party just wouldn't have been the same without Santa. Thank you, Jack Pattie, for being jolly Old Saint Nick for us again this year! And many thanks to the Soup Kitchen for providing the delicious food.

We had so many wonderful helpers making Party with the Pros on Feb. 2 a great success. We say a huge "thank you!" to: Jennifer Allen, Steve Allen, Alison Bogen, Casey Boyle, Spencer Branham, Rachel Browne, Kelly Chung, Olivia Clark, Ricky Clews, Cara Croley, Kelsey Daly, Kendra Dean, Emma Dennis, Shelby Detring, Danielle Doak, Mackenzie Dunaway, Lynley Durbin, Danielle Endicott, Jessica Feldman, Hope Frazier, Rachel Granby, Abby Grooms, Mackenzie Hailey, Anna Harris, Lena Jones, Madalyn Kaiser, Brynn Lehman, Emily Malehn, Sarah Meyer, Megan Mihalovich, Emily Mundt, Julia Murray, Allison Olive, Natalie Olive, Nancy O'Neill, Caroline Paige, Bridget Patterson, Leslie Pedigo, Haley Polsgrove, Alexis Pullia, Katelyn Quinn, Hadley Scruggs, Kylie Sheehan, Kelly Snowden, Casey Sorrels, Chelsea Stewart, Paige Theobald, Sydney Tripp, Christina Vazquez. Thanks also to the VIPS Louisville staff who spent extra hours on the icy roads to provide support and extra hands: Carol Dahmke, Ashley Emmons, Martha Hack, Dani Harper, Kathy Mullen, Diane Nelson and Kim Shippey.

VIPS Bloomington

A great big thanks goes to Jenny & Gavin Kelly, parents of Maya, VIPS Bloomington's first child to be served by Ann Hughes in 2011, and who has made a successful preschool transition in Bloomington. As with all of the families VIPS has served over the years, Maya's family will always be a VIPS family. Their efforts, donations and volunteerism on Maya's behalf and on VIPS' behalf exemplify "team spirit." Jenny serves on the VIPS Bloomington Advisory Board, providing tech support, moral support and great development ideas. Gavin was instrumental in helping VIPS get donated marketing materials and pamphlets. Maya's uncle, Christian, has donated many hours of time and effort over the past two years to design both our pamphlets and the fantastic Dining in the Dark programs. Maya's grandparents, Judy & Mike Singleton, have been advocates and supporters of our events and our direct services. They also bake for bakesales, help clean up, take e-mails after hours and so much more! To Maya's family, VIPS can only say, "Thank you for everything!" We could not do what we do without you.

Thanks to Kelley Brown & Carol Kelly and the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce for a holiday donation of craft materials.

More thanks go to Melissa Keller and students from IU's School of Education for volunteering during the Martin Luther King Day ON Volunteer Project for VIPS. We are also grateful to VIPS board member, Tana Hellwig, who helped gather materials for their use (see more on pg. 16)



Crafting for VIPS Bloomington

Thanks to Meredith and Rob Howell, parents of Lola, for tech support to VIPS Bloomington. Meredith and Rob made an email database for us. Rob designed our holiday Thank You and has volunteered to create a VIPS Bloomington/Indiana website.

We are extremely grateful to VIPS Board Member Marcee Wilburn who shared her time and expertise as preparations begin for a Project VIISA training for Early Interventionists in Visual Impairment.

Thanks to Ryan Brady and the Central Indiana Community Foundation for assisting VIPS-Bloomington with the Glick Fund grant we received in November.

VIPS would like to thank Megan Hammerle and the Lebanon Key Club for taking the initiative to hold this event and to raise funds for the direct services VIPS provides to Indiana's youngest visually impaired children.

VIPS Bloomington News

Global Gifts

Global Gifts, a fair trade non-profit with stores in Bloomington and Indianapolis, donated 10% of sales between 5 and 8 p.m. on November 18 to VIPS Bloomington. Our thanks to Dave Debikey, Kelly Trimble and Rachel Ferguson for including VIPS in your generous program of giving back to local agencies. Thanks to local shoppers for choosing Global Gifts! For more information about Global Gifts and the great work they do, check out their new website, www.globalgiftsft.com.



Our friends from Global Gifts donated 10% of sales on Nov. 18.

Bloomington Kiwanis

On December 12, Bloomington Kiwanis President Hal Hanes welcomed VIPS Bloomington, when the club hosted their Christmas Holiday Luncheon in the Georgian Room of the Indiana Memorial Student Union. VIPS board member, Jenny Kelly, and Development Director, Rebecca Davis, attended to herald the coming holidays with our Kiwanian friends, and to celebrate the success of the Chili for Children fundraiser. Guests were treated with a delicious meal, sing-alongs, entertainment and holiday cheer. The Bloomington Kiwanis partnered with the Indiana National Guard Family Readiness Group, Miss IU Organization, Circle K at IU, and the IU Army ROTC to

sponsor Chili for Children as a fundraiser for three programs: VIPS, Operation Military Kids, and Kiwanis Youth Programs. Our gratitude to the Bloomington Kiwanis for their continued support of VIPS-Bloomington. Thanks to David Garshaw for masterminding the idea of Chili for Children. Thanks to Diana Fellure, Hal Hanes, Vanessa McClary, Thomasina O'Connor and Allen Pease for devoting much time and effort to making the event a success. Thanks to Circle K members & Circle K Indiana District Governor Mak Hozo for many volunteer hours and much good will. We are honored to be involved with the Kiwanis and the important work they do locally and world-wide for children. Checkout: www.kiwanisbloomington.com.



David Garshaw and Rebecca Davis with the Kiwanis' check for VIPS

Lions Midwinter Conference

On January 4, Ann Hughes and Rebecca Davis were welcomed at the Lions MidWinter conference in Plainfield, Indiana. The Lions have been kind enough to request information about VIPS every year for the past three years.

This year, the Lions wanted some ideas about ways to support VIPS as the agency grows in Indiana. Ann & Rebecca presented

a brief history and progress report, suggested ideas about sponsoring VIPS families, holding fundraisers, and becoming an Indiana



Lions experiment with accomplishing tasks by touch.



Lions' State Project. Ann also led the group in learning activities while wearing sleepshades so they could understand more about the challenges faced by Indiana's youngest visually impaired children.

Thanks to Lion Sara Provines of the Spencer Lions Club for taking photos and to Lion Ann Haffner for including VIPS in the conference program.

MLK Day ON! Not Off

On January 20, students from IU's Early Childhood Education program enjoyed a morning of craftmaking for a great cause. IU School of Education professor, Melissa Keller, heard about VIPS from local media and contacted our office to offer assistance. She rounded up 10 volunteers who met in the School of Education to make homemade toys for Welcome Bags for new VIPS families. Students cut and glued tactile concept books of "Long and Short" and "Hearts" books with many different textured hearts for teachers to use during home visits in February. Students also made texture cubes (wooden blocks covered with different textures on each side) to put in Welcome Bags.



IU Professors Angela Lexmond and Melissa Keller and IU Early Childhood Education students.

Volunteering to make tactile toys gave Professor Keller and her students a firsthand opportunity to learn more about the specific needs of young children with vision loss. We discussed the importance of teaching parents to engage their children's other senses and the importance of encouraging children with vision loss to use their hands. We also discussed the need for more Teachers of the Visually Impaired, both on a state and national level.

Volunteers were treated to bagels and coffee donated by the always generous Bloomington Bagel Company. Thanks to Dawn Keough for providing the great food and drink!

Our thanks as well to Melissa Keller, Tana Hellwig, & the Early Childhood Education students who participated in this event.

MLK Day ON was a great chance for VIPS to raise awareness and connect with the IU School of Education and to fill our Welcome Bags for new referrals!

Advocacy at the State House

Senator Mark Stoops has championed the cause of Indiana's infants and toddlers who are blind. Senator Stoops recently submitted a bill which would add the categories of blindness, legal blindness, and Cortical Visual Impairment to the Indiana Birth Defects and Problems Registry. On January 22nd, Rebecca Davis and Ann Hughes testified before the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee to support this bill, currently named Bill 419. Bill 419 passed the Senate committee and will move on to a committee in the House. If it passes the House committee, it will be submitted for a vote.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Senator Stoops, Policy Director, LeNee Carroll, and Senator Pat Miller, for their efforts to update legislation to reflect the needs of the visually impaired children in Indiana. Thank you to IU's Dr. Rowan Candy, and the pediatric ophthalmologists at IU Health Riley Hospital, Dr. Daniel Neely and Dr. David Plager, for sharing their expertise in determining how to update the registry most effectively.

Dining in the Dark, Key Club Style/Lebanon, IN

By Michaela Belcher, Lebanon Key Club

In honor of Key Club week, the Lebanon High School Key Club decided to take their service to a new level by hosting a Dining in the Dark experience. The dinner was held as a fundraiser for VIPS Bloomington on Thursday, November 7. Guests were served a dinner of lasagna, green beans, and lemonade in the dark. Soft, live music was played in the background for the event.

The purpose of the lack of light was to raise awareness of what it would be like to be visually impaired. Lebanon High School's Key Club had a great turnout. About 70 people came to the dinner and made a profit of \$720.

VIPS Lexington Celebrates Super Bowl with the Pros

Nearly 350 football fans braved the elements to root for their favorite team at the 8th Annual Party with the Pros on February 2. For a third year, fans gathered at the Embassy Suites in Lexington to enjoy the game, the commercials, and a silent and live auction.

Fans mingled with current Washington Redskin Chase Minnifield and former NFL players Joe Federspiel, Frank Minnifield, Marty Moore, Jason Dunn, Randy Burke, and Cornell Burbage. The Ale 8 One Freeze Machine was a new addition and a clear favorite. To

top off the tailgate buffet, fans sampled Blue Bell Ice Cream on a Stick. Popular auction items included a UK football dipped by Maker's Mark in blue and white wax and signed by Coach Stoops. Not to be outdone, the basketball signed by five NBA and former UK players went for top dollar.

The game may have been lopsided, but the atmosphere was fantastic. Thanks to our many volunteers (see pg. 14) and the Louisville staff who spent extra hours on the icy roads to provide support and helping hands.



Chase and Frank Minnifield



Left: Levi scored a signed football!



Right: Jason Dunn;

Below: Frank Minnifield, Marty Moore, Shane Boyd, and Adam Boyd.



VIPS Louisville ReVision A Success!

On Saturday, February 22, VIPS hosted ReVision, sponsored by Brown-Forman Corporation, at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage. Guests browsed 40+ pieces of art, produced by local artists

including our own in-house artists, aka children from the Kidstown Preschool at VIPS. All art was available for purchase through a silent auction. Guests also dined on gourmet food made by Ladyfingers Catering while stopping by various "sensory stations" to participate in fun activities.

The highlight of the evening was listening to VIPS mother Brittany Clarkson speak to the crowd about her precious daughter Addyson, who attends Kidstown Preschool at VIPS. There was not a dry eye in the house during her testimony.



Top: Brittany Clarkson, with husband Nathan and daughter Addyson, talks about the impact of VIPS. Below: Jonathan Obst creates on site.



We greatly appreciated John Pacyga for bringing out his amazing 3D printer and creating custom-made pieces during the event and Jonathan Obst for creating two paintings live at the event. And of course, thanks go to our wonderful volunteers who helped all evening (see pg. 14). Special thanks to Brown-Forman Corporation for its continued support of ReVision, the ReVision committee lead by Mark Stiebling and to everyone who came out to attend this year's event!

Recent Grants and Donations

As of mid-January, the success of the holiday campaign was tremendous, although typically donations still trickle in for another two months. Thanks to the Good Giving Challenge, receipts for VIPS Lexington are up by almost 50%, with many 2012 first-time donors becoming repeat donors in 2013, making this the best holiday giving campaign ever! Agency wide, VIPS raised over \$90,000. We are so grateful for these donations!

VIPS Louisville

Recent grants include:

- \$40,000 Louisville Downtown Lions for teacher salaries;
- \$27,500 from Kosair Charities as the second of four installments for our fiscal year;
- \$20,000 from the Woosley Foundation for family services and summer programs;
- \$15,000 from Brown-Forman Corporation to support ReVision and Kids Town Preschool at VIPS;
- \$12,000 from the Irvin F. and Alice S. Etscorn Foundation for computers;
- \$10,000 from Louisville Downtown Lions Club, matching sponsor for Louisville Gives Day;
- \$8,000 Horseshoe Foundation of Floyd County for early intervention in Southern Indiana
- \$6,818 from the Kentucky Colonels to pay for the sunshade over the playground and other preschool equipment;
- \$3,300 from King's Daughters & Sons of Kentucky for our Tap Dance Program;
- \$2,958 from the GE United Way Campaign;
- \$1,000 from Southern Indiana Community Foundation for early intervention in Southern Indiana; and
- \$950, thanks to VIPS mom and classroom assistant Ashley Buren, VIPS was the beneficiary of the Beechmont Women's Club Annual Fall Bunco Night. Several VIPS staff members joined in the fun and were warmly welcomed by the gracious ladies (and one husband!) who played bunco with a passion, raising funds for VIPS!

VIPS Lexington

\$20,000 from the Linda Neville Trust awarded to VIPS Lexington to partially offset the cost of the parent newsletter, in-home intervention and family events. We are so grateful for this continued support.

VIPS Bloomington

Recent grants include:

\$3,000 from the Monroe County Community Foundation to help pay for early intervention services.

\$600 from Bloomington Kiwanis;

\$180 from Global Gifts, 10% of sales on Nov. 18, 5 - 8 p.m.

\$170 from employees of Old National Bank in Bloomington for the right to wear jeans on Fridays in December. Many thanks to Lorne Aubin for recommending VIPS.

\$165 raised during the Alternative Christmas Fair at Northview Church of the Brethren. VIPS was invited to participate by church member David Sterne, a First Steps provider in Indianapolis who has partnered with Ann Hughes on several cases. VIPS-Bloomington TVIs -- Ann Hughes, Kelly Lloyd, and Debby Eades -- staffed the VIPS display (thanks for putting in extra hours for VIPS during the busy holiday season!).

Win Big Bucks!

VIPS is selling raffle tickets for a chance to win up to \$10,000.* Tickets are \$100 each and only 200 will be sold. Drawing will be held June 1 at the Tennis Tournament at the Louisville Boat Club. You need not be present to win. Call 502-636-3207 to purchase your chance today!

*If all 200 tickets are not sold, winner will split the pot.

Sophisticated VIPS-ing

Bridget & Eric Williams have selected VIPS to be one of 50 charities profiled in Sophisticated Living Louisville's new launch of "Sophisticated Giving." We will be featured in a two-page spread in the inaugural Sophisticated Giving Charity Register. One page will be color photos of our facilities and children with the second page will contain info about VIPS and a calendar of our annual events; we will get priority coverage at those fundraisers. If this is successful, they will also include VIPS in the Lexington and Indianapolis editions.

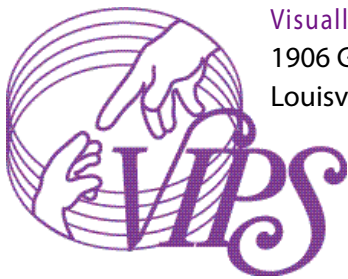
Larkmoor House Sold

The house on Larkmoor which was "gifted" to VIPS sold in January for an amazing \$100,000 which was deposited directly into our endowment account. John Talbott of Bardenwerper & Talbott donated his title work and all the closing costs. In fact, John also donated back to VIPS the \$500 in closing costs paid by the buyer! Thanks to all who worked long and hard on this project to help ensure support for VIPS in the future.



Wish List of Consumables for Classroom and Office

Adhesive backed Velcro (if possible just the half with hard bristles)	Glass cleaner (ammonia free)	Trash bags (13 and/or 33 gallon sizes)
Batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, 9volt)	Googly eyes (all sizes)	White & Colored Copy Paper
Bandaids	Left-handed children's scissors	White paper plates (cheap kind)
Card stock, black, white, and all colors	Liquid soap	Zip lock baggies
Clear hair gel (to float inside baggies as sensory and/or visual stimuli)	New empty spray bottles	Other Needs
Clorox or bleach	Paintbrushes for kids (thick, jumbo)	Easter candy for the Easter party
Construction paper (especially red, black, yellow)	Paper Towels	Tractor feed braille paper (11.5x11) available from American Printing House for the Blind, aph.org or (502) 895-2405
Contact paper	Playdoh	Sandpaper alphabet letters -- 2 sets upper and lower case (available from http://products.lakeshorelearning.com)
Disinfectant wipes	Puffy Paint	
Disposable gloves (non-latex)	Scented stickers	
Facial tissue	Snack foods (Goldfish, pretzels, fruit snacks)	
Food coloring (especially red)	Tempera paint in large jugs -- red, blue yellow and black	
	Water beads	



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Upcoming Events

VIPS Louisville

Monday, March 31-April 4
Spring break -- no school at Kids Town Preschool.

Thursday, April 17

Eye exams by Dr. Ashima Gupta at Dr. Mark Lynn's Eye Doctor's Office in Kids Town, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Appointments necessary. Call 502-368-3937.

Saturday, April 19

Pancake breakfast and Easter Egg hunt, 9-10:30 a.m., with tactual, lighted, and traditional egg hunts. Bring your Easter basket.

Thursday, May 8

Mother's Day brunch, 11 a.m. for VIPS mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters and friends. VIPS will provide a light brunch and special treat for all moms attending.

Monday, May 19

Yum! Brands Golf Tournament at Persimmon Ridge.

Saturday & Sunday, May 31 & June 1

Tennis Ball & Tennis Tournament at Louisville Boat Club.

Sunday, June 29

Summer Picnic and Fourth of July Celebration!

VIPS Lexington

Friday, April 25

Parents Night Out, 6 - 9 p.m., Gardenside Christian Church in Lexington.

Saturday, May 17

Riding for Hope, at KY Horse Park in Lexington (time to be determined).

Tuesday, May 20

11th Annual Lexington Golf Outing at Keene Run Golf Course. See details on pg. 19.

VIPS Bloomington

Saturday, April 26

A Play & Learn (PAL) group will be held at Irvington United Methodist Church. Watch your mail and email for details.

VIPS Needs You!!

VIPS invites you to participate in two powerful days of action this spring! On April 9th, VIPS will be part of Kentucky Gives Day and on May 6th we will be participating in Louisville Gives Day. Both days are a 24 hour online "day of giving" campaign. All you have to do is go to our website, www.vips.org, and click on the tab for that particular day of giving, and your gift goes directly to VIPS! What's even better is your gift on Louisville Gives Day will be doubled, thanks to a very generous donation from the Louisville Downtown Lions Club!

Urgent Reminder

VIPS Louisville Parents, please complete and return your parent survey that was sent in mid-February. It couldn't be easier. It only takes a few minutes to complete. And we sent it with a self-addressed, stamped envelope so it would be simple to return your completed survey. We really want to know how you think we are doing meeting your child's and family's needs. This is a critical part of our Metro United Way performance measurements. Serving you well is our reason for being!

VISability is a bi-monthly publication of Visually Impaired Preschool Services, Jan Moseley, Editor.

VIPS Louisville

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Ashley Buren, Preschool Instructional Assistant
Ti Erika Carney, After School Care
Gretchen Cutrer, JCPS Preschool Instructional Assistant
Carol Dahmke, Office Manager
LaRhonda Daniels, Preschool Instructional Assistant
Ashley Emmons, O&M/TVI/Preschool Teacher
Pauletta Feldman, Administrative Support
Greta Gillmeister, Music Therapist
Martha Hack, Family Services Coord./Event Manager
Dani Harper, Receptionist
Beth Krebs, Two's Instructional Assistant
Mary Lesousky, TVI/Developmental Interventionist
Laura Leigh Logsdon, Two's Teacher
Paige Maynard, TVI (in training)/Preschool Teacher
Staci Maynard, TVI (in training)/PAL/Preschool Teacher
Barbara Merrick, TVI/Preschool Teacher
Jan Moseley, Visual Impairment Specialist
Kathy Mullen, Education Coordinator
Beth Owens, Preschool Instructional Assistant
Linda Penn, Preschool Instructional Assistant
Amanda Rucker, After School Care
Alysia Rue, Developmental Interventionist
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