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## New Offices Will Enable Expanded Services!

VIPS Central Kentucky has forged a great collaboration with the University of Kentucky! After years of searching for the perfect spot for a new office, we will relocate our Lexington office to UK's Early Childhood facility on campus in one of the just-acquired, former theological buildings.

In addition to being housed in a great facility, a terrific part of this collaboration is that UK's Department of Education staff will be located on site for guidance, support and collaboration. While the discussions are still in the planning stages, it is anticipated that the layout of the building will include VIPS private offices (one for teachers with multiple work stations and one for administrative duties), and a sensory room. A conference room, kitchen, reception area, gross motor space, multi-purpose space for family events, break room, laundry room and many additional classrooms will also be in the building and available to VIPS. There will be playgrounds with swings and a sensory garden.

*Continued on pg. 2*



Ground breaking at UK.

VIPS Indiana has a new home, too! In late March, VIPS leased an office space of 500 square feet in the Indiana Interchurch Center (also known as the IIC) at 1100 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in Indianapolis. (VIPS will continue to maintain office space in Bloomington.) The IIC was created over 50 years ago by religious leaders to promote collaboration among diverse religious groups. Over the years, the IIC has become the home to many civic, educational, and religious organizations. The other residents of this facility are church groups from Muslim to Christian and non-profits such as Hospice, Water Step, Sierra Club and an International Student Exchange program.



The building contains three conference rooms giving VIPS space for future Play And Learn (PAL) classes and family events. We will also be able to install our own phone system that will work with the system existing in our other offices. Continued on pg. 2



### Mission Statement

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



## New Central Kentucky Office cont'd.

The VIPS continuum of services, ranging from our provision of support in inclusive classrooms all the way to one-on-one learning in designated spaces, will be continued in the new facility. Just as in Louisville, the local school schedule will be followed (Fayette County Schools) and VIPS holidays will be honored.

There will also be the possibility of having music therapy and dance classes such as those at VIPS Louisville. It is hoped that VIPS designated two-hour parking spaces and space for a bus turn-around will be available. The building will accommodate state-of-the-art technology, including SMART board wiring, remote trainings, access availability and Wi-Fi.

VIPS children, including those with multiple disabilities, will be able to participate in before and after class care. Opportunities will exist for family events to be held during non-traditional hours (weekends, evenings, etc.). It is anticipated that the VIPS Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) will work approximately 20 hours per week in the preschool.

The next step is to meet with Superintendents of surrounding school districts and then begin meetings with the architect to plan the space. Additionally, we began putting together our list of needed equipment and potential funding sources.

According to UK's Dr. Jennifer Grisham Brown, this 14-year dream is anticipated to come to fruition in January 2015.



## New Indianapolis Office cont'd.

The IIC is near Butler University and across the street from the Indianapolis Museum of Art, just north of the city off of I-65. Stop by and see us when you are in the neighborhood, or go to <http://indianainterschurh.org> to learn more about the wonderful history of this building.

Thanks to the Kelly family (an Indiana VIPS family) for finding this wonderful site for us. This location will afford us so many opportunities for collaborations and already feels like home. We are truly thrilled and feel it was a space especially made for VIPS. As Diane Nelson, Executive Director, said, "Life is great and the future of VIPS Indiana is even greater!"

# Learning and Fun: That's What VIPS Family Events Are All About!

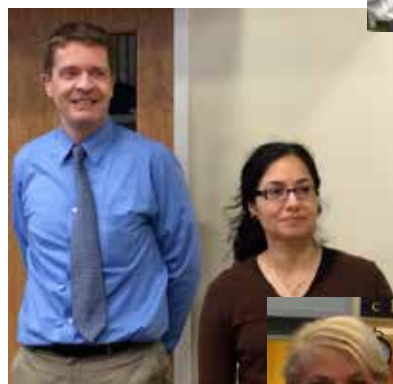
## VIPS Louisville

### Meet the Doctors

On Wednesday evening, March 19, VIPS Louisville hosted a "Meet the Doctors" event for families and friends of VIPS. We want to thank the local ophthalmologists and optometrists who gave up an evening with their own families to be with ours. Four pediatric ophthalmologists came to chat with families, including: Dr. Craig Douglas, Dr. Peggy Fishman, Dr. John Franklin, and Dr. Ashima Kumar Gupta. In addition, two pediatric optometrists came to meet our families -- Dr. Kelly Borgman of Dr. Fishman's office, and Dr. Lindsey Keown of Dr. Bhola's office. Dr. Gupta's assistant, David Boegler also attended.



Above: Dr. John Franklin (L) and Dr. Craig Douglas (R). Left: Dr. Ashima Gupta with assistant David Boegler. Below: Dr. Peggy Fishman (L) with Laura Leigh Logsdon and daughter Presley.



Thanks also to Bob Belknap of the American Printing House for the Blind for coming to tell parents about the Partner's Print-Braille Book Program. Through this program, families can get free print-braille books for their children.

### Easter Party

Saturday morning April 19 proved beautiful weather for the annual Easter Party and pancake breakfast. Delicious pancakes were made by Kathryn Brangers, Kathy Mullen and Diane Nelson.

Elizabeth Gardner and Claire Adams helped with organizing the tables and greeting the 21 families who attended the event. The children met the Easter bunny (Tonya Otis) and then investigated the sensory table that included eggs that lit up, played sounds, and had different textures and smells.

After the pancake breakfast, which was donated by Vicki May, the Easter Bunny led all the children to the playground and sensory garden for the annual egg hunt. All children were able to find some eggs and enjoy the playground. Eggs had been hidden by Ryan Hack and Hailey Schnell. The tactile eggs were organized by Lauren Berryman and Natalie Burton. Susan, Brandon and Mary Bays helped in the kitchen and with cleaning up.

## Celebrating Special Moms

Thursday, May 8 was a beautiful day for a celebration as some of our most famous dignitaries ever joined VIPS staff for a very special brunch. Our annual Mother's Day Brunch honoring the mothers of our VIPS children was held on the patio surrounding the Sensory Garden. The moms listened to the wind chimes and the water feature as they enjoyed the beautiful plants in the garden while eating chicken salad and other luncheon treats. Thanks to Cristy Plank who donated the chicken salad.

## VIPS Louisville Holds KSB Information Dinner

An informative dinner at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) was held for VIPS families on May 5. The purpose of the dinner was to help parents understand how the resources of KSB can enhance their children's experience in their local schools. Thanks to Mitch Dahmke, John Roberts and Kristin Hammond who shared their knowledge and time with VIPS parents.

# VIPS Central Kentucky

## Communing with Nature

On Sunday April 27, VIPS Central Kentucky hosted a family event at the UK Arboretum Kentucky Children's garden. This accessible garden offered a variety of sensory experiences such as a butterfly garden and a hands-on digging box so the children could explore the soil. It was even warm enough to play in the running stream! Thanks to all the families who attended for sharing in the beautiful and warm day!



Kinsley and mom Nina enjoyed the sun.

# Helen Keller Celebration and Challenge

By Rebecca Davis, who has been the VIPS Bloomington Development Director and is the mother of two girls, the youngest of whom happen to be a terrific hugger and have multiple disabilities

June 27 marks the birthday of Helen Keller, one of history's most inspirational figures.

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Alabama. At 19 months old, she contracted an illness that left her blind and deaf. She spent the next five years in darkness and silence surrounded by a loving family who did not know how to teach her. Without communication, Helen grew into a frustrated and unruly child. She lashed out at anyone who tried to deny her anything.

In 1886, Helen's mother read about the successful education of a child who was deaf. As she had done throughout Helen's childhood, she wrote letters to educators and public figures asking about how to get a similar education for her daughter. As the result of one of those letters, Anne Sullivan arrived in 1887.

Anne was both a tenacious and gifted teacher. She was eventually able to break through Helen's walls of darkness and silence. She taught her how to communicate – at first with finger spelling, later, to read and write in braille. With Anne Sullivan's help, Helen Keller became the first deaf blind person to graduate from college. With Anne by her side, Helen became an accomplished writer and advocate for people with disabilities.

Anne Sullivan was called "The Miracle Worker" by Mark Twain after learning of her success teaching Helen Keller. The Miracle Worker became the title of a play and several movies depicting the story of Anne and Helen's early days together. It is a great story of the triumph of hope and will over seemingly insurmountable odds.

And, as with every great story, there is more to it.

On Helen Keller's birthday, I would like to celebrate the people who made the story possible. Before the Miracle Worker could begin, Captain & Mrs. Keller had to find her. Before Anne Sullivan set foot in Alabama, Helen's parents spent five years seeking someone who could teach her. They had experienced years of despair and longing to better understand their child so

isolated from the world by blindness and deafness. They wanted her to be educated. The Kellers wrote letter after letter to schools and doctors. They took Helen to numerous appointments, often traveling for days to see doctors in the northeast. But, to no avail. Years passed. Helen grew more difficult. No one seemed to know how to help them, or even if Helen could be taught.

It might have been easier for the Kellers to give up. They did not. Before the story of the Miracle Worker could happen, there had to be parents who believed in miracles.

Keller herself once wrote, “No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.” She could have been referring to her own parents whose optimism provided the opportunity to open the door to Helen’s fierce intellect and compassion.

The Kellers are among countless parents throughout history who forged a path of inclusion and education for their children with disabilities. Although Helen faced many challenges and her future seemed uncertain, her parents continued to hope. That Helen Keller did not languish in isolation and ignorance is the triumph of parents who refused to give up.

I would like to encourage the parents in Indiana who have children with visual impairments to remember the Kellers and their determination to give their daughter an education that would help her live to her fullest potential. Indiana’s youngest children with visual impairments need access to specialized early intervention to help them make sense of the world in the same way that Anne Sullivan brought the world to Helen Keller.

Indiana’s blind children need more highly trained Teachers of the Visually Impaired. Children who are blind need to be taught braille. Families of children who are blind need support and education to teach their children to be as independent and productive as possible.

I challenge Indiana to do better for her children who are blind and I challenge the parents of these children to insist upon it.

Thankfully, in modern times education is not a miracle; it is a right for every child. The miracles are the children themselves. And, what we do for them will be the best thing we ever do!

**Editor’s Note:** And as Rebecca said above, as with every great story, there is more to it. Rebecca followed in the



Kellers’ footsteps and rather than bringing Anne Sullivan to Alabama, she brought her daughter, Eliza, to VIPS when she discovered a lack of appropriate services for Indiana children with visual impairments. Eliza attended VIPS four days a week for two years as Rebecca commuted from Bloomington. And like the Kellers, the Miracle Worker she found was also named Ann in the form of Annie Hughes, a retired Teacher of the Visually Impaired, who added the instructional piece in combination with Rebecca’s development skills to form VIPS Bloomington. (See also Staff News, p.12.)

## In Memorium

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of:

### **Jordan Cottle**

son of Tracy Cottle of Louisville, KY who passed away at the age of 18, on March 18, 2014

~and~

### **Zoey Young**

daughter of Joey and Karin Young and sister of Noah and Maya of Lexington, KY who passed away at the age of eight on March 21, 2014

~and~

### **Laiken Hewitt**

daughter of Robert and Sheena Hewitt and sister of Lauren of Lexington, KY who passed away at the age of three on April 6, 2014.

*Our hearts go out to all of those whose lives were touched by Jordan, Zoey and Laiken.*

## Braille Challenge

There is a unique contest held each winter that is likened to a Special Olympics of braille abilities. The Braille Challenge is a national test of Braille skills in which the top scoring students from across the nation participate. The American Printing House for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Blind collaborate to stage a day of testing Kentucky students’ braille reading, writing and comprehension skills. Our Kentucky winners’ scores are compared nationally and the top students journey to California to determine the national winners.

Because several of the VIPS staff members volunteer at this event, we always love to see how many of our graduates are winners. We think this helps prove the point (that research already has) that an early start to education helps a child be more



successful and, especially, when that child has so little useful vision that she must become a braille reader. Of the 17 winners in this year's Braille Challenge, 14 were involved in VIPS as young children. We were thrilled that so many of the children got their start with us!

#### Apprentice:

Calli Larison, 1st place  
Logan Armstrong, 2nd place  
Dawson Barr, 3rd place

#### Jr. Varsity:

Shane Lowe, 1st place  
Justin Hedges, 2nd place  
Alex Stine, 3rd place

#### Freshman:

Brandon Milan, 1st place  
Karleigh Bruner, 2nd place  
Mickey Foard, 3rd place

#### Varsity:

Taylor Hollar, 1st place  
Kianna Waller, 2nd place  
Cheyene Harper, 3rd place

#### Sophomore:

Mason Tilley, 1st place  
Jolean O'Connell, 2nd place  
Nicole Arnett, 3rd place

Highest Score: Taylor Hollar

Highest Reading Comprehension: Mason Tilley

Below left : Winner and VIPS grad Mason Tilly



Below right: A girl writes with a Perkins braille during the competition.



## Project VIISA – Vision Impaired InService in America

Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) will be offering an intensive training to First Steps providers in Indiana and Kentucky with the goal of better preparing early interventionists for serving children who are blind or visually impaired. VIPS has long recognized the specific developmental and sensory needs of children receiving services from our early intervention teams. Through the provision of the VIISA (Vision Impaired InService in America) training, more service providers will be identified and trained to address these needs. More importantly, more young children will be served.

VIISA originated from Utah State University's SKI-HI training, addressing the needs of young children who are hearing impaired. The training was adapted to the VI population by its originator, Bess Dennison. Bess continues to work in the SKI-HI program as well as consulting nationally for developmentally appropriate services for children who are visually and/or hearing impaired. She will be joined in training by Ann Hughes, VIPS Indiana's Teacher of the Visually Impaired and former VIISA attendee.

This training has been made possible through a very generous grant from the Glick Fund of Indiana. The training was offered first to Indiana early interventionists; the remaining slots have been filled with First Steps providers from Kentucky. The participants have completed a screening process so that all regions of Indiana will be covered by providers attending the training.

VIISA will take place on the VIPS Louisville campus for three days in July and three days in November; participants must commit to all six days of training, as well as outside assignments to be completed.

Why is specialized early intervention so crucial for children who are visually impaired? Experts estimate that 80-90% of what a child learns occurs through the use of vision. Therefore, they risk experiencing delays in all areas of development. Children who have limited vision must learn to use all of their senses to gather information about the world and how it works and how to use any remaining vision they have to their best advantage. Specialized instruction helps level the playing field for them as they strive to function in a sighted world.

# So Your Child Is Changing Placements.....

As parents of children with special needs who are entering kindergarten for the 2014-15 school year, you may already have attended the meeting with the local school district to determine where your child will attend school next year. Some school districts have already completed those meetings for incoming students prior to the end of the 2013-14 school year. However, there may be a few families who still have not yet learned what options may be available for their child. Perhaps this information will be of help to you.

The first thing to keep in mind is that the local school district must base your child's placement on where the goals and services listed in the Individual Education Program (IEP) can best be implemented. So be sure you know what the IEP contains, especially in the columns that list the specific amounts of time your child will spend with the special education teacher. For example, if your child has attended a part day program and is transitioning into a full day program, the minutes will have to be changed to reflect that change.

Sometimes the IEP has already been updated or is already appropriate to describe services for the upcoming year. At other times, the meeting to discuss placement must first focus on updating the goals and services your child will need by developing a new IEP. Once that has been accomplished, discussion can begin about where is the best place to implement the IEP.

Generally the conversation turns to the category or categories of special education for which your child is eligible and that is listed on her IEP. Under federal guidelines, there are 13 distinct categories of special education. They are: Autism, Deaf-Blindness (DB), Deafness, Developmental Delay (DD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Hearing Impairment (HI), Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities (MD), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Visual Impairment, including Blindness (VI). Sometimes the category of your child's disability is the same as the type of classroom where she is placed. However, it does not HAVE to be the same IF her IEP can BEST be implemented in a classroom of another type disability.

When school district personnel speak of ITINERANT services, they are speaking of a special education teacher who provides services to a child who is a full time student in another teacher's classroom, whether that is a special education or a general education classroom. The itinerant may work with their assigned child in the other teacher's classroom or "pull out" your child for services in some other space. They are to have a specific space in which to work in every school they visit but are not necessarily assigned an entire classroom of their own. The itinerant teacher may travel to several schools throughout the school day and week.

RESOURCE teachers, on the other hand, are certified in special education and are assigned a classroom in the school. They can collaborate with other teachers by working with your child cooperatively in the other teachers' classroom or pull out your child to work in their own classroom. No child can spend more than three hours a day in a resource room according to regulations.

Placement in a SPECIAL class means that the child will spend MORE than three hours a day in the special classroom which is led by a special education teacher. The rest of the day is usually spent in a general education classroom.

These three types of classes are typically in general education schools, meaning that all types of children attend, both those with IEPs and those without. But there are additional placements that are do not allow as much interaction with general education classes.

One such placement is a SPECIAL SCHOOL in which ALL children have IEPs. Examples would be the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf but local districts usually have a special school of some type as well. For meetings involving placement at a special school, there is typically a representative of that school participating in the meeting.

The placement for children with health or other needs so severe that they medically cannot attend school is called HOME/ HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION. A teacher provided by the local district instructs the child in your home when provided a required medical statement documenting the reasons for this type of very limited placement. One-on-one instruction is provided but the number of hours/week is usually extremely limited.

More information about these options can be found online. One such option is the Kentucky Department of Education's website under Special Education at <http://education.ky.gov/special/except/pages/default.aspx>.

You might want to save this article and refer to it when your child is going through transitions to refresh your memory about various placement options that are available for children who are visually impaired.

# The Expanded Core Curriculum, Pt. 3

We continue our discussion of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) by looking at some of the ways the ECC is integrated into the VIPS KidsTown Preschool classrooms. As you may recall there are 9 different areas of the ECC; this article will highlight Independent Living Skills.

Independent Living Skills are those activities of daily living that include personal hygiene, food preparation, managing money, and organizing materials and time. In short, these skills enable each child to grow into an adult capable of caring for herself.

Classroom routines are established as a way to practice needed skills whether academics, recreation or independent living. We teach children to wash their hands at specific times -- after using the restroom, before and after lunch and certainly after performing messy tasks such as finger painting, using glue, etc. Singing with the child as she lathers her hands ("Top and bottom, top and bottom, in between, in between, rub your hands together, rub your hands together, now they're clean, now they're clean!") and then rinses off the soap makes the experience more fun!

In addition to routines, each child has a cubby where her backpack, lunch box and jacket are to be placed as soon as she enters the classroom, though occasional reminders are needed. Besides prompting each child to keep up with her personal property, we teach and practice cleaning up after herself. When the familiar "clean up" song begins, each child knows to put away the items she has used. Again, reminders are often needed, not just to return items to their correct spot, but also to stop one activity in order to begin the next.



Two-year-olds Kim and Lathan cook with Ms. Beth.

At KidsTown Preschool, children get to handle food and prepare small snacks. They are always creating edible projects such as strawberry and marshmallow skewers (to look like the stripes in Dr. Seuss's hat) where each child is responsible for making several skewers assisted by an adult. Mixing together whipped topping and chocolate cookie crumbs is the first step to searching in the "dirt" for gummy worms,

a tasty yet entertaining snack and one that can prepare the path for independent cooking skills!

Chase Bank in KidsTown provides a great opportunity for children to handle play money. One child's favorite activity is to "sell" ice cream at the drive up bank window, a fun way to learn about paying for purchases. What a wonderful opportunity to present a lesson on coin identification!

Many of the fun activities experienced by the VIPS preschoolers can also help them become adults who can cook, feed, clothe, and wisely handle their possessions and their time independently, the goal of this aspect of the ECC.



## VIPS Central Kentucky

### Two Day Twos

Is your child two or older? Are you looking to get your child ready for the transition to preschool when he turns three? Or are you wanting to find socialization alternatives for your older child? VIPS Lexington started a "pre-preschool" program called Two Day Twos in March. The class runs on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9 a.m. - noon at our Lexington office. A teacher and an assistant staff the classroom. 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 to speak to Ms. Dixie.



The day begins with everyone in circle time and a "Welcome" song.





Above Left: Clay plays in the pool of colorful balls. Above Right: Ms. Dixie shows Madelyn a new toy. Left: Carter looks for buried treasures in the bean bin.



## VIPS Central Kentucky Summer Preschool

The VIPS Central Kentucky Summer Preschool program is designed to help children who are two start the fun transition to preschool when they turn

three (it will take the place of Two Day 2's for the summer). For their three-to-five-year-old companions, this program offers continuation of preschool through the summer to help them maintain their skills in a fun, sensory-filled environment. Our class will be held this summer on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. -12 noon at the UK Lab school. For more information or to reserve a spot for your child, please call the office at 1-888-254-8477 or 276-0335.



Ashlynn and Clay explore a play structure.

# VIPS Indiana

## Play and Learn (PAL)/Home Visits

On Saturday, April 26th, VIPS Bloomington hosted a spring Play & Learn (PAL) at the Irvington United Methodist Church Preschool in Indianapolis. Over 25 people attended. The families enjoyed delicious pizza generously donated by Jockamo Upper Crust Pizza, participated in sing-alongs with Miss Annie, created Make & Take Smelly Jars, played outside and connected with others. Almost every family was a first time attendee! We thank all of our families for spending their afternoon with us! We greatly appreciate the Kroger's on Shadeland Avenue for donating a gift card to help buy refreshments/ supplies and the Irvington United Methodists for graciously letting us use their preschool.



Above: Little November loves the bell bracelet that fits her tiny hand perfectly. Right: Breawn checks out a shapesorter.



During home visits: (Above) Callie practices feeding herself. (Right) Orlando gets a hug from his big sister Dayanara.





# "Smelly Jars"

By Annie Hughes, TVI, VIPS Indiana

"Smelly Jars" are a fun way to help children begin to understand the information they can receive through their olfactory sense. Make up a little song about using our noses, and include Grandma, brothers and sisters, and yourself in the experience. (Your child with visual impairment should not be the only one doing the smelling!) Scents for "Smelly Jars" are easily made using extracts and scented lotions, but can also be made by collecting specimens from nature and from around the home. Here are some ideas:

- Chlorine bleach on a cotton ball smells like "the pool"
- Dad's soap or aftershave can be the "daddy smell" (make Grandpa's scent too!)
- Mom's shampoo or perfume can be the "mommy smell" (make Grandma's scent too!)
- Your child's shampoo can be the "clean shampoo bath time smell"
- Pine needles from a tree in your yard can be the "outside smell"
- Whole cloves or allspice make a nice "fall smell"
- Extracts are available in many varieties including; banana, cherry, coffee, orange, lemon, peppermint, vanilla, etc.
- Lotion scents include a wide variety of flower and fruit scents.
- Check your pantry for items such as dry minced onion, Cajun seasoning, cinnamon sticks, and chili powder. All have strong scents. If you are using something that does not soak into the cotton ball, put it in the bottom of the bottle and slide a cotton ball down on top of the loose items to help hold them in place.

As a parent, you can decide if the smelly jars are always used with supervision or become an independent activity. Use a spur-point bit, also known as a dowel bit drill bit to drill holes in the tops of the plastic lids if you want your child to be able to smell them without you there to open and hold the jars.

As with any objects being used around young children, please remember that the cotton balls or items inside could become choking hazards, so use childproof lids. If your child will be using the jars independently, make jars that won't have tiny or loose pieces that could come out of the holes you have drilled in the lids. Be certain that there are no rough edges around the holes that could cut little fingers.

Talk about good and bad smells as they occur naturally in the environment... the lilac bush at the corner of the house, the spaghetti sauce simmering on the stove, Daddy's stinky socks, the clean, fresh smell of laundry coming out of the dryer, etc. Peppermint and citrus scents can be used to help to awaken or improve the alert status of a child, while lavender and vanilla might be used to calm or relax. Just remember to use scent carefully as some

children might be unable to physically move away from a scent that is not pleasurable for them.

Please visit <http://www.tsbvi.edu/seehear/summer05/smell.htm> to learn more from the article "The Sense of Smell: A Powerful Sense."

**Editor's Note:** When this article was sent to the VIPS staff, Martha Hack, VIPS Louisville's Family Services Coordinator and Event Manager, reminded us that she used scented cotton balls inside plastic Easter Eggs for a Smelly Egg Hunt. She said the scent lasted over a week!

## VIPS Louisville

### KidsTown Preschool

The students at KidsTown Preschool have learned lots about science including: magnets, sink/float, color, light, etc. While at the Louisville Science Center in March, the students had the opportunity to explore the "Science in Play" exhibit. The students also spent some time in the Kidzone where they were able to experiment with pipes and tubes in the water area, interact with a pulley system in the block area, explore an airplane, bus, spaceship, and much more.



Children in KidsTown Preschool participated in a "Happy Dance" (with signs in print and braille) to the hit song "Happy" for a WHAS-11 Crusade for Children TV spot.

In April the students were introduced to spring and gardening. We took a trip to Garden Gate Fruit Market where the students had the opportunity to actually explore many different flowers, plants, vegetables, and fruits.

While at the fruit market, the students took part in a "Senses Scavenger Hunt." The scavenger hunt asked the students to find:

- their favorite flower -- "What color is it?"
- a green bean -- "What does it smell like?"
- a tomato -- "What does it feel like?"

We also talked about what sounds they heard at the fruit market, and if they were able to taste anything, what did it taste like? Once we returned to school, we discussed each child's findings, and the students drew pictures of their favorite things at the fruit market.



We had special visitors who taught us many different things -- a fireman and a police officer with a police dog taught us about safety. Miss Kim, the VIPS Controller, taught us about stringed instruments and let us play her cello. Dental Hygiene students visited to teach us about how to keep our teeth and gums healthy.

Above: Firefighter Beau Schuster (whose son Max attends KidsTown Preschool) showed his special equipment. Right: Ahmed gets to play Ms. Kim's cello. Below: Sam brushes Ahmed's teeth.



Right: Megan demonstrates how she uses her monocular for distance vision. Below: Bronson and Grace enjoy the beads together.



The students learned about different zoo animals -- a perfect time to take a trip to the Louisville Zoo! The students participated in another "Senses Scavenger Hunt" where they were asked to name and/or write down what animals they saw, what they heard, what they smelled, what they touched, and possibly what they tasted while at the zoo. After the field trip, the students documented their findings in their very own experience book complete with drawings and textures.



We will feature graduation in the next issue!



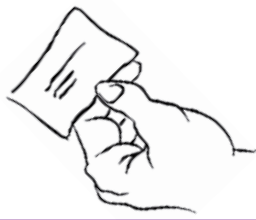
## Two Day 2s -- Growing Up So Quickly!



Above: Layla, Lathan and Sarah look, listen, and smell for popcorn topopand comespilling out of the popper Ms. Laura Leigh operates. Below: Ms. Beth shares a happy moment with lovely Olivia. Right: Pyper is proud to be one of the newest two's in the class.



## Notes of Interest



Carol Dahmke, VIPS Louisville Office Manager, shared a website featuring children or adults reading stories aloud. Children can hear different accents from around the world, depending upon the reader's locale. You can locate the website by Googling <http://pay it forward for the blind>.

Mary Smyth, VIPS Lexington Office Manager, shared what one elementary school in Lexington did to simulate what it's like to have a disability for their students. To view it, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfJn7VITisM>.

A website bearing repeating is FamilyConnect, a collaborative effort of The American Foundation for the Blind/ National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments. On FamilyConnect you'll find videos, personal stories, events, news, and an online community that can offer tips and support from other parents of children who are blind or visually impaired. Go to [www.familyconnect.org/parentsitehome.aspx](http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsitehome.aspx) to learn more.

Wonderbaby is another website well worth mentioning again. It is set up by the Perkins School for the Blind and is absolutely invaluable for parents of young visually impaired or blind children. Go to [wonderbaby.org](http://wonderbaby.org) to see what's new!

Jill Haas, Parent Coordinator of VIPS Lexington, reports that United Way has a great service called 2-1-1. It is a number to call to get assistance in finding support services including, but not limited to, housing assistance, emergency childcare resources, legal aid, food and healthcare assistance. Just dial 2-1-1 and speak to the trained specialist who can help you locate what you need.

Jill also mentioned the following in her family newsletter. Did you know that your local Lions Club chapter may be able to assist you in funding for your child's glasses? Find your local chapter at: <https://directory.lionsclubs.org/>. The Lions are wonderful supporters of the needs of blind or visually impaired individuals and groups!

There are many ways to modify your games and activities at home to make them more interesting and accessible to your child with visual challenges. With each game and activity, think of ways to make it more tactile, audible, or even more "smelly". Some ideas...

- Outline the black lines of basic coloring pages with glue and then let it dry. This will make it easier to feel the lines so the child can color inside them.
- When reading books, gather some physical objects that are represented with pictures in the book for your children to hold and feel as you are reading.
- If you are playing tag games, use the light of a flashlight to tag so kids with limited mobility can still participate. A headband flashlight works especially well!
- Don't be afraid to modify the rules of a game. It will make it more interesting for all the kids. For example: all the players work with a partner, not just the child who needs the modification.



## New Arrivals

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

### VIPS Louisville

Anthony – 21 months, Louisville, KY  
 Ashella – 2 years, Louisville, KY  
 Desra – 9 months, Albany, KY  
 Elliott – 13 months, Caneyville, KY  
 Harper – 18 months, Bowling Green, KY  
 Isaac – 2 years, Louisville, KY  
 Jimmy – 14 months, Louisville, KY  
 Miracle – 4 years, Louisville, KY  
 Shelby – 9 months, Louisville, KY  
 Tatum – 11 months, Louisville, KY  
 Zachary – 14 months, Louisville, KY

### VIPS Central Kentucky

Carson – 7 months, Lexington, KY  
 Gabriel – 5 months, Stanton, KY  
 Joseph – 4 months, Pikeville, KY  
 Lee – 19 months, Williamstown, KY  
 Marshall – 9 months, Lexington, KY  
 William – 7 months, Lexington, KY

### VIPS Indiana

Aadyn – 2 years, Bloomington, IN  
 Aubrey – 18 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Cade – 3 years, Noblesville, IN  
 Diana – 3 years, Indianapolis, IN  
 Edward – 2 years, Richmond, IN  
 Emma – 3 years, Indianapolis, IN  
 Kyla – 10 months, Munster, IN  
 Mackenzie – 2 years, Rockville, IN  
 Nathan – 2 years, Indianapolis, IN  
 November – 11 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Orlando – 3 years, Bloomington, IN  
 Sam – 2 years, Alexandria, IN  
 Troy – 22 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Zamorian – 18 months, Indianapolis, IN

## VIPS Staff News

Rebecca Davis, the passionate visionary who was the impetus behind the formation of VIPS Bloomington, is leaving Indiana, though not VIPS, behind. Rebecca's husband has already relocated to Florida, while she finished out the school year and sold their Bloomington home. While we are so sorry to see her leave, we know she will continue to support VIPS through grant writing and legislative relations support. So although we will lose the day to day contact with her, we will still have the benefit of her substantial skills. Rebecca will be on a leave of absence through the summer.

Her concerns for other Indiana parents led her to Oregon where she became qualified as a VIISA Parent Advisor. Her attempts to improve services for other visually impaired preschoolers drove her to secure funding and a temporary office so that she and Annie Hughes, retiring from the Indiana School for the Blind, could begin serving children. Together this dynamic duo made presentations, raising awareness and funds, and put VIPS Bloomington on the map. Today there are two additional TVIs working part time to support the over 110 children taught by Annie over the last 3 years. And now a lease has been signed for VIPS to have an office with space for family events and classes!

We wish Rebecca all the best as she moves south!

Meredith Howell is the new VIPS Bloomington Family Services Coordinator. Meredith's journey with VIPS began over two years ago when her own daughter Lola began receiving VIPS services. After feeling frustrated with the lack of early intervention programs available for Lola and her vision impairment, she finally found relief and hope when Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) Ann Hughes entered their lives. This is what she wants to do for other families as the Family Services Coordinator for VIPS-Indiana: Restore hope.

Meredith grew up in Michigan where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications and Journalism. After graduation she moved to Indianapolis where she would soon meet husband, Rob. Together they embarked on an adventure when they moved to Costa Rica where Lola was eventually born. But





Indianapolis kept tugging at them to return and is where they now reside. They welcomed a son, Sebastian, in January. He is the youngest VIPS Indiana advocate (he has already been to the State House in honor of his big sister). Meredith enjoys writing, swimming, baking and living a simple life with her family. She is honored to be joining the VIPS team and looks forward to helping other families just like her own.

Tana Hellwig is the new Community Outreach Coordinator for VIPS Indiana. Tana's family moved to Bloomington, IN from Houston, TX in June 2009 when her husband took a job with Indiana University. They have two children, Claire and Owen. Rebecca and her family were one of the first neighbor families they met when they moved to Bloomington.



Tana has been on the VIPS Advisory Board in Bloomington since its inception. In February, Tana started as the Community Outreach Coordinator for VIPS-Bloomington. Tana has a background in Human Resources and most recently worked part-time for Global Gifts as the Volunteer Coordinator. Tana is also involved with several other non profits in Bloomington, including the Boys & Girls Club Auxiliary and the Women Build Committee with Habitat for Humanity. She looks forward to continuing to help VIPS provide VI services in Indiana.



The VIPS Indiana team outside their new Indianapolis office. Top row (l-r): Community Outreach Coordinator Tana Helwig, Family Services Coordinator Meredith Howell, legislative guiding force LeNee Carroll, and O&M Specialist Debbie Eads. Bottom row (l-r): TVI Kelly Lloyd, the founding guiding force Rebecca Davis, and TVI Annie Hughes.

## VIPS Indiana News

### VIPS Advocates in Indiana -- Valentine's Day at the Indiana State House

VIPS-Bloomington staff took homemade valentines with Braille and pictures of VIPS children to the Indiana State House on February 13<sup>th</sup>. Meredith Howell, mother of VIPS graduate, Lola, advocated for improving services for children like her daughter. Lola's two-month old brother, Sebastian, came with his mom and won the prize for youngest lobbyist of the day.

TVI Ann Hughes, Tana Hellwig, and Rebecca Davis had a productive morning passing out valentines and engaging local legislators. Rebecca had the good fortune to personally deliver a valentine to Speaker of the House Brian Bosma. Our very sincere thanks to Sen. Mark Stoops, Sen. Pat Miller, Rep. Matt Pierce, Rep. Ed Clere, Rep. Riecken, and Speaker Bosma, among others, for taking the time to speak with us. Also,

we are grateful to Kim Dodson from the Arc of Indiana for her assistance.



Rebecca Davis with IN Speaker of the House Brian Bosma.

### HB 1358

VIPS has been working since February 2013 to add pediatric visual impairments to the Indiana Birth Defects Registry in order to raise awareness of the number of children in Indiana who require specialized early intervention. This year Sen. Mark Stoops helped craft language to do just that. Ann Hughes and Rebecca Davis testified before committees in the Senate and the House in support of updating the Birth Defects Registry. Our little piece of legislative language was moved between Senate bills and House bills until it landed in HB 1358.

We are delighted to announce that HB 1358 passed the state legislature and was signed into law by Gov. Pence on March 25<sup>th</sup>. This is an important first step in improving the services available

to all of Indiana's youngest visually impaired children. Thanks to Sen. Stoops and LeNee Carroll for helping VIPS navigate the legislative process in Indiana.

There will be a legislative Summer Study Committee this summer for Indiana's legislators to examine the gap in early intervention services for infants and toddlers with visual impairments. VIPS hopes to be an active participant in this discussion.

## Zionsville Lions District Convention

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, VIPS families and staff joined together to present to Lions Clubs from central and western Indiana. The Pangle family and the Howell family spoke to the Lions about their children's vision loss and the importance of VIPS in their lives. The Lions Club members particularly enjoyed seeing VIPS children, Lola and Jason, in action.



## Dessert in the Dark for College Kiwanians

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Kelly Lloyd, one of VIPS Bloomington's Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) and Rebecca Davis presented at the luncheon of the 54<sup>th</sup> annual District Convention of the Indiana District of Circle K International.

The crowd of Kiwanians appreciated the opportunity to learn about the need for early intervention for Indiana's youngest visually impaired children. Kelly and Rebecca shared some dining tips that Teachers of the Visually Impaired teach their students. Diners were then given the opportunity to put on blindfolds and finish lunches and desserts without the use of vision.

A lively conversation followed as Kiwanians of all ages shared their thoughts and gave feedback. Thanks to Circle K's Katie Moreno and Circle K Governor Mak Hozo for their hospitality.

## Kiwanis Mid Year Conference

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ann Hughes, Tana Hellwig and Rebecca Davis spoke to the Indiana Kiwanis Mid Year Conference in Indianapolis.

Nearly 100 Kiwanians enjoyed Miss Annie's stories and joyful personality. The Kiwanians also volunteered their time to make dozens of texture cubes, texture bottles, and crafts for spring lessons for VIPS children. Thanks to Dr. Kris Bowers of the Indiana Kiwanis for inviting VIPS to such a fun and productive event!

## VIPS Mom Hosts Party to Provide "Scentsy Buddies" to VIPS Children in Indiana

When Miss Annie began home visits to a family in Muncie, she introduced a little girl named Aria to a special toy called a "Scentsy Buddy." Scentsy Buddies are stuffed animals with interchangeable scent packs. Aria has dual sensory loss making communication more challenging for her family. Aria's mom, Rachael, was excited to see how much Aria enjoyed her Buddy. She wanted to give back to the other children served by VIPS.

On Valentine's Day, Rachael hosted a party to raise enough funding to buy a Scentsy Buddy for every VIPS child in Indiana. Thanks so much for your unselfishness and motivation to help others!

## VIPS honors a Lion Champion for Children

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, VIPS Bloomington presented at the Indiana Lions State Convention in Columbus, Indiana. VIPS was invited to this convention by Lion Sara Provines of the Spencer Lions. Lion Sara has been a staunch supporter of VIPS since Rebecca Davis approached her at a State Lions Convention in 2011. For 3 years, Lion Sara has worked to spread the word among Lions Clubs about the need to improve services for Indiana's youngest visually impaired children. She has invited VIPS to present to numerous Lions Clubs and, most recently, orchestrated the first "Taste of Service" volunteer event for VIPS by having Lions make playframes for VIPS children.

Rebecca Davis and Tana Hellwig of the VIPS-Bloomington office took the opportunity to thank Sara and her club, the Spencer Lions, with brailled tactile thank you cards. Lion Sara is one of VIPS' first and finest champions in the state of Indiana!





# VIPS Central Kentucky News

Take me out to the ballgame! Make plans to join VIPS on August 7, 2014 as we root, root, root for the Lexington Legends at Whitaker Bank Ballpark in Lexington, KY. The Fur Circus, a live entertainment act, will also be performing skits, posing for pictures and mingling with the crowd throughout the game. The Legends will be playing against the Greenville Drive. Game begins at 7:05 pm. VIPS has 50 discounted tickets priced at \$8 each. This is a fundraising event and VIPS will receive 50% of the proceeds of the sale of each of these tickets. For more information please contact Mary Smyth at [vipslex@vips.org](mailto:vipslex@vips.org).

## Kind Gifts of Time from Generous People

### VIPS Louisville

Thanks to Aggie Nelson for her wonderful job filling in for our receptionist Dani while she was out due to surgery and for assisting with our library reorganization.

And let us not forget to thank our classroom volunteers: Susan Teaford volunteered in the 2s room and Fran Woodward, as always, volunteers every Thursday with the 2s. Thanks, ladies, for your hard work!

Special thanks are due the members of the Middletown Christian Church for volunteering on a Saturday morning in April to prepare the VIPS-Louisville grounds for warmer weather. They mulched, trimmed, washed windows and much more! The group was brought to VIPS by Erik and Brandi Hitzelberger, parents of VIPS graduates, current and former board members and overall great supporters of the agency. Thank you for making VIPS-Louisville look so beautiful!

Thanks to a helpful group of gardeners from GE who cleaned up the winter's leavings and prepared the sensory garden for spring. We appreciate the time, efforts and green thumbs of T.J. Berhow, Brittney Fulk, Soleny Gonzalez, Bob Hall, Usha Kantheti, Chris Lauret, Todd Lesousky, Jim Penn, Tim Postlewait, Chris Reina, Lauren Speaker, Jeff True and Nick Van Wallaghen.

A number of ladies from Middletown Christian Church helped with moving books from the preschool into the Parents' Library and with labeling and organizing them. They included: Susan Abbott, Amy Alonzo, Gladys Barrickman, Nancy Fluhr, Brandi Hitzelberger, Sarah Hoover, Pidge Marcucci, Angela Vance and Nancy Vann.



Ladies from Middletown Christian Church helping with the library. Above (l-r) Amy Alonzo, Angela Vance, Sarah Hoover, Pidge Marcucci, Gladys Barrickman, and Brandi Hitzelberger. At left: (standing) Susan Abbott and Nancy Fluhr, and sitting Angie Vann.

Thanks to the Easter Bunny's helpers, Lauren Berryman and Natalie Burton, who assisted with set up for the Easter Party. We also appreciate the gracious volunteers who helped out during the party: Claire Adams and Elizabeth Gardner from St. Agnes School; Lauren Berryman, Natalie Burton and Haley Schnell from Sacred Heart Academy; Mary Bays from Presentation Academy; Suzann Bays and Brandon Bays from Yum! Brands; and Ryan Hack. Thanks to Kathryn Brangers, Kathy Mullen and Diane Nelson for making the delicious pancakes.

We say a heartfelt thanks to our practicum students from the Spalding University Occupational Therapy program. They included Hailey Blanchard, Kim Green, Akim Nyormo and Dragan Petri.



Spalding OT students Kim Green and Dragan Petri get to know Hailey. *page 15*

Thanks so much to Collegiate third graders taught by Ms. Jill Beasley, Mr. Jim Schindler, and Ms. Kitty Davis for making tactual greeting cards for VIPS.



Left: Maya Mandy; and Right: Max Allen, Henri Zamanian and Benjamin Greenbertof Collegiate.



We say a big thank you to Denise Dillard and her crew from Brown Forman for filling our cabinets with more welcome bags!

## VIPS Indiana

We so appreciate all of the folks who lobbied the state house to get legislation passed: the Theta Chapter of Delta Gammas from Indiana University, Vanessa McClary, Allen Pease, Kelly Rockhill, Kelly Seibert, Indiana Kiwanis including Steven Hadley. Special thanks to the VIPS families who made the trip or helped in other ways. And of course we appreciate the help we received from Speaker of the House Brian Bosma. Our very sincere thanks to Sen. Mark Stoops, Sen. Pat Miller, Rep. Matt Pierce, Rep. Ed Clere, Rep. Gail Riecken, and Speaker Bosma, among others, for helping us!

Thanks to the Kelly family for introducing us to the Indiana Interchurch Center, site of our new home!

Thanks to VIPS mom Rachael Alaniz for hosting the Scentsy Pals party whose proceeds will fund the purchase of a scented stuffed animal for every VIPS Bloomington child!

Thanks so very much to the Pangle and the Howell Families for taking time to spread the VIPS message to the Zionsville Lions District conventioners.

We appreciate the time and efforts of Sara Provines and the Spencer Lions for making playframes for VIPS teachers to use with their children.

We are so very grateful to Senator Ron Grooms who invited Ann Hughes to testify before a Committee on Development Disabilities. While we're thanking Senators, we also need to thank Senator Vaneta Becker for keeping a watchful eye out so that our little piece of legislative language could get attached to an actual working bill.

## VIPS Central Kentucky

The VIPS Lexington Golf Outing was on May 20th at the beautiful Keene Run Golf Club. Thanks to our sponsors Scott-Gross, Blue Belle Creameries, and Window World. For the Golf Outing we had three wonderful volunteers: Jennifer Allen, Rebecca Smyth, and Stephen Smyth. Jennifer Allen is a current board member who is very active in all of our events. She always goes above and beyond the call of duty. She graciously agreed to assist with set up, registration, and check out during our golf outing. She was a tremendous help, and, as always, was greatly appreciated. Rebecca and Stephen Smyth jumped in and without hesitation helped with set up. They did a spectacular job with the layout and organization of the silent auction.

## Students Combine Blindness Awareness with Volunteer Activity

Thanks to volunteers from Sacred Heart Model School for assisting with filling Easter Eggs for our Easter Party. They combined their visit to VIPS to volunteer with some opportunities to boost their awareness of the needs and abilities of the blind or visually impaired.



Above: Students stuff Easter eggs. Below: Caroline Dawkins gets a lesson in cane travel from O&M instructor Maury Weedman.





DeShay Jones, a social work student from ECU, is currently volunteering for the summer. She is assisting with making welcome bag items, welcome folders, various administrative tasks, and preparations for our move to UK.

## Thanks to Our Wonderful Donors Grants, Awards and Special Donations

### VIPS Louisville

With the expert assistance from MML&K Government Solutions, lobbyists with a long-term relationship with VIPS, VIPS will continue to receive the \$100,000 appropriation for each fiscal year from the new budget recently passed by the legislature.

Because of a generous gift of \$45,000 from the Louisville Downtown Lions Club, we will be renaming the Kids Town Public Library the "Louisville Downtown Lions Club Public Library." Mitch Dahmke came up with this wonderful idea and we will have the official unveiling of the new sign at the Lions' Officers' Dinner in June.

Thanks to everyone who helped support VIPS with their online donations on the 24 hours of the Give Local Louisville event. Out of over 180 non-profits, we came in 3<sup>rd</sup> for the most donors, came in first in donors for the morning rush hour, and raised about \$26,000!

The VIPS annual Lunch Time Cookout to benefit the WHAS Crusade for Children, a long-time supporter of VIPS, was a great success! The cookout was held on a blustery and cold day in May, yet raised over \$600.

The following people have donated items from our consumables list that we sent out in a Facebook and e-mail blast a few weeks ago: Bob Bracy, Bill & Kathryn Brangers, Jeanette Butler, Brittany Clarkson, Will Corrigan, Sarah Evans, Pauletta Feldman, Patty Kauffman, Kentucky Eye Care, Corine Liebert, Vicki Maloney, Vicki May, Mary Frances Pack, Michelle Renbarger, Beau & Amy Schuster, Andy Steinbach, John and Jill Talbott, Michele Vories and Jason & Erika Weilage. Thanks for responding so quickly to our needs!

Thanks to the Louisville Nimble Thimbles for donating fabric. The teachers had a blast using it for art projects!

Many, many thanks to Denise Sohm, who donated a piano to the preschool. And thanks also to Two Men And A Truck for moving the piano to VIPS free of charge. We very much appreciate Chris Dahmkew who donated his time, cleaning and performing a pitch raise while tuning the donated piano. All of this help was music to our ears!

Brandon Milan, a graduate of the very first Kidstown Preschool Class at VIPS, recently stopped by to donate his light box for VIPS children to use for years to come. Brandon is now 10 years old and, until recently, attended Breckinridge Franklin Elementary School (he has since moved to Florida). He is still friends with

many of his fellow classmates from his VIPS days, and tells his family that VIPS is still his favorite school! Brandon is going to be a pen pal for the VIPS preschooler once he moves. Thank you, Brandon, for thinking of VIPS after all of these years. We love how you are "paying it forward!"



Brandon using the Perkins braille during the Braille Challenge.

Brendan O'Dea, a young man following in the footsteps of his long-time VIPS supporter and board member mother, Jennifer O'Dea, requested new or gently used children's books for his seventh birthday party. The books are perfect for use by our teachers who frequently take books to give to the older siblings of the VIPS children they serve at home. Thanks for being so considerate, Brendan.



"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." ~ Dr. Seuss

Jill Tilley, mother of VIPS graduate Mason, dropped off a box full of Braille books to add to our library! Thanks for your thoughtfulness in keeping us well supplied! Apparently reading all those books really paid off for Mason. He recently finished first in his age group in the state-wide Braille Challenge as well as made the overall highest score in the reading comprehension section. Mason was Kentucky's representative to the 2013 national Braille Challenge in Los Angeles. (Mason is shown on page 5.)

Katherine Robinson, who is a Montessori teacher, has had an interest in applying Montessori methods and materials to teaching children who are blind or visually impaired for many years. She recently donated a wonderful array of materials to the VIPS KidsTown Preschool and conducted an in-service for VIPS teachers. Thank you so much for sharing your expertise and for purchasing educational materials for VIPS!



Katherine Robinson, standing, with KidsTown Preschool teachers (l-r) Paige Maynard, Staci Maynard, and Ashley Emmons.

## VIPS Indiana

Members of Indiana's Kiwanis Clubs and Key Clubs donated time this spring at District convention to make tactile valentines for VIPS families to present to Indiana lawmakers. They also made tactile cubes and other homemade toys for welcome bags.

Spencer County Lions donated time, effort and funds to make playframes for VIPS children in Indiana.

The Brown County Lions donated \$300 for services for children.

Psi Iota Xi, Zeta Chapter, chose VIPS to receive \$500 from the profit earned at their Bloomington Thrift Store. The funds will be used to fund direct services for children in Monroe County.

Thanks to the members of Omega Phi Tau for the \$2,000 donation to continue services. A special shout out goes to Joyce Lessig for her part in this donation!

## VIPS Central Kentucky

\$17,500 was received from the Children's Charity of the Bluegrass to fund early intervention services. The mission of the Children's Charity Fund of the Bluegrass, Inc. is to "establish and maintain an ongoing concerted fund-raising effort to benefit local charitable organizations which have as their primary goal the betterment of children of the Commonwealth." VIPS Lexington recently was thrilled to learn that we have been chosen as the Spotlight Charity for this year's Children's Charity, which means that VIPS will be featured in the program for the golf tournament. VIPS has been the beneficiary of the Children's Charity Fund for several years but this is the first time we have been placed in the spotlight position, which means an increased awareness of our mission. Allocations are made each June following the celebrity golf tournament.

On April 9th, VIPS participated in Kentucky Gives Day sponsored by the Kentucky Nonprofit Network. It was a full 24-hour online fundraising event in which thousands of Kentuckians joined together and donated to their favorite charity, like VIPS! Thank you to everyone who donated to VIPS, and to those who shared our emails and posts on Facebook. We had a remarkable day of Facebook shares and reached over 8,500 people!

## 12th Annual Dr. Mark Lynn and Associates Stampede for VIPS

Stampede 5K Registration is Open!

Saturday, September 13, 2014

Papa John's Cardinal Stadium

Louisville, KY

8 a.m. Walk/Run

9:30 a.m. Kids Fun Run

Family friendly activities throughout the event!

We encourage all VIPS families to gather a team in support of your precious VIPS child.

To register, visit [www.vips.org](http://www.vips.org)

and click on the Stampede icon.



# Walking for Dreams

Walking for Dreams 2014 was VIPS Indiana's largest fundraiser to date! The 5K fundraiser is sponsored by the Sycamore Foundation in Indianapolis to give nonprofits the benefits of a fundraising walk without the overhead costs. On May 18th, walkers representing 20 nonprofits arrived at the Buggs Temple to walk along Indy's downtown canal. VIPS had an amazing 98 walkers in Walking for Dreams. Our walkers raised over \$9,800. Several VIPS families created their own teams and raised some serious funds! Our thanks to Team Lola, Team Eliza, Team Maya, Team Allie, Team Cole, and Team Kutter! Team Kutter and captain Christan Roberts, raised over \$3,000. Team Annie walked in honor of our incredible teacher, Annie Hughes. We also welcomed a team from the Indianapolis Washington Township Lions.



Above: Team Kutter raised over \$3000! Below: Rebecca Davis' daughters Eliza and Ana Cady walk with family friend Jessica Endicott.



The over \$8,700 raised from Walking for Dreams will go directly towards early intervention services for Indiana's youngest visually impaired children as well as to support and advocacy for their families.

Thank you Indianapolis! Thank you Sycamore Foundation! Thank you families and friends! Let's do it again next year!

## Help Create a Vision for the Future

You can create a legacy by remembering VIPS in your estate plans. We would love to help you in this journey. Please call Heather Benson at 502-498-2933 if you would like to explore your options in making a lasting effect for young children of blindness.

## Blind Services Coalition of Kentucky

Blind Services Coalition of Kentucky (BSCK) is moving along with its mission of providing more comprehensive services to individuals and families with members who are blind or visually impaired. The coalition is made up of 30 individuals, representing 19 service agencies, educational institutions, and foundations. Membership is open to any person or group providing services to individuals of all ages.

BSCK is currently working on the wording of the proclamation declaring October as Blindness and Visual Impairment Awareness month in Kentucky. Along with that effort, planning is in place for White Cane Safety Day activities and presentations and the annual open house at the McDowell Center – both to take place in October. The Coalition has recognized the need to produce brochures and to launch a website to help share information about the services provided collectively by the group. Possible funding groups have been identified.

BSCK meets quarterly, hosted at different members' sites, in an effort to learn more about our partners firsthand. Collaboration with the Vision Coalition of Greater Cincinnati has also been identified as a fruitful partnership. The two coalitions will advertise each other's efforts at community fairs.



Visually Impaired Preschool Services  
1906 Goldsmith Lane  
Louisville, KY 40218

*Change Service Requested*



VISability is made possible through a grant from the Linda Neville Foundation.

## Upcoming Events

### VIPS Lexington

#### Thursday, August 7

The Lexington Legends vs. the Greenville Drive, 7:05 p.m. Only 50 tickets are available for a discounted \$8 each as a fundraising event for VIPS.

#### Thursday, August 28

Central Bank Thursday Night Live, 4:30 – 9 p.m. Enjoy the live music of The Payback band in a family friendly atmosphere! Located at Fifth Third Bank Pavilion at Cheapside Park in Lexington. VIPS receives tips during this event.

### VIPS Indiana

#### Thursday - Saturday, July 17 - 19

Project VIISA training at VIPS Louisville, Accepted applicants only. If you have any questions, please contact VIPS at 888-824-2197 or [vipsbloomington@vips.org](mailto:vipsbloomington@vips.org) or [kmullen@vips.org](mailto:kmullen@vips.org).

### VIPS Louisville

#### Saturday, June 28

Summer Picnic and Fourth of July Celebration, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Join VIPS to have a cookout and play on the VIPS playground for a Fourth of July celebration. We will have fun games for the children. VIPS will provide the meat. Please bring a dish to share.

#### Wednesday, August 21

Kids Town Preschool Orientation, 6 p.m. VIPS will have orientation for all children attending Kids Town Preschool and Two day Twos.

#### Wednesday, August 21

Back to School Bash, 6:30 p.m. Join VIPS for dinner and some fun as we get ready to head back to school.

#### Saturday, September 13

Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates Stampede for VIPS. Stay tuned for more information about this premier race event!

#### Saturday, September 27

The VIPS Family Retreat will be held at the Louisville Office for VIPS families served by all three offices and the Outreach Program. Watch your mail for details!

## VIPS Has a New Logo

VIPS has a new logo! A newsletter template featuring the new logo is being designed and should be ready for our next issue. We say a huge "THANK YOU!!" to board member Mark Stiebling of Price Weber for wonderful design work!



Mark Stiebling with the new VIPS logo he designed.

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Permit No. 284  
Louisville, KY

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

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Carol Dahmke, Office Manager  
LaRhonda Daniels, Preschool Instructional Assistant  
Ashley Emmons, O&M/TVI (in training)/Preschool Teacher  
Pauletta Feldman, Administrative Support  
Greta Gillmeister, Music Therapist  
Martha Hack, Events Manager/Family Services Coord.  
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Paige Maynard, TVI (in training)/Preschool Teacher  
Staci Maynard, TVI (in training)/PAL/Preschool Teacher  
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