

## In This Issue:

The Power of Incidental Learning.....	3
To the Little Girl Who Is Teaching My	
Daughter to Be a Friend .....	4
ECC, Pt. 5: Compensatory Skills .....	6
Two Day 2s and PAL News.....	7
VIPS-Louisville Family Events .....	8
VIPS-KSB Retreat .....	9
VIPS-Louisville Summer Programs.....	9
News from VIPS-Central KY.....	9
VIPS-Indiana News.....	10
Vance's Playhouse.....	12
Welcome New Kids.....	13
Meeting Up With Children's Minds..	14
VIPS Staff News .....	15
Thanks to Our Volunteers.....	15
Notes of Interest .....	17
In Memoriam .....	17
VIPS Parent Gives Back.....	18
Bret Dahmke Scholarship .....	18
Thanks to Our Donors.....	18
30th Anniversary Challenge.....	18
ReVision Recap .....	19
Wish List.....	19

# The Adventures Continue in Kids Town Preschool

By Ashley Emmons, TVI in Training, Kids Town Preschool Teacher

Everyday in Kids Town Preschool, children are engaged in learning skills from the Expanded Core Curriculum for students who are visually impaired (ECC). It may appear that there's just a lot of fun going on (and there is!), but it is guided fun to enable the children to grow and develop in all the ways necessary for success in school and the world.

In February, each preschool class took a trip to the grocery store. This trip allowed the students to get hands-on experience shopping for items on their grocery list, as well as learning about the different departments in the grocery store such as produce, deli, bakery, frozen foods, etc. It was a great field trip that focused on two areas of the ECC: independent living and orientation and mobility skills.

The students of Kids Town Preschool created artwork to be showcased during the VIPS Revision event on Friday, February 27. Ms. Paige's class created a handprint/footprint platter that featured various types of animals from the book, "Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?" Each student in her class also made a stepping stone. Ms. Ashley's class created a thumbprint platter to go along with the book, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." Each student in her class also experimented with watercolors, and painted his/her handprints. Ms. Staci's class decorated a large tray with each student's handprint to create a heart shape. Her students also designed and painted three tote bags. Special thanks to VIPS Instructional Assistant Kathy Moulden, a retired JCPS Special Education Teacher, for donating the tray to Ms. Staci's class.



Evie and Sarah make pizzas with a bit of help -- learning independent living skills.



Lainie got to explore a piece of artwork by artist Wyatt Gragg.

**Pg. 9 -- VIPS-Central KY moves into UK Lab School!**  
**Pg. 10 -- VIPS-Indiana achieves state budget success!**



*Noah shows off his badge.*

On Tuesday, March 10 special guest Sargeant Emily McKinley stopped by to teach the students all about the roles and responsibilities of a police officer. The students had the opportunity to tactually explore a police badge and a set of handcuffs, both of which were heavier than

expected. Meeting "community helpers" teaches children about the world of work and careers. But more importantly, it teaches them how to be safe and healthy, enabling the development of some of the very basic self-determination skills of the ECC. Sgt. McKinley, who gave all the children a stick-on badge, "swore them in" by having them promise to do what their parents and teachers tell them to do.

The students of Kids Town Preschool learned all about the post office, and in March they got to ride on a TARC bus from VIPS to the post office to deliver the letter(s) that each class had been working on all week. I am not sure what the students enjoyed most, the bus ride or the post office! On the bus, each student deposited a quarter into the fare box. Once seated on the bus, the bus driver talked to the students about bus safety, including how to ask the bus driver to confirm the bus number to make sure you are on the right bus, as well as confirming with the bus driver that the bus is traveling to your final destination. The bus driver also encouraged the students to always choose the empty seat closest to the driver. Once we arrived at the post office, the



*Students board the TARC bus for their trip to the post office.*

students had the opportunity to deliver their mail and explore P.O. boxes where packages can be picked up. At the counter, students were able to talk with a postal worker and learn more about stamps, where to put them, and how to mail a letter.



*Above: Instructional Assistant, Ms. Shelby, helps Grace locate the slot for her coin. Right: Lola (left) and Ahmed (center) climbed on a huge animal sculpture while at the zoo, assisted by Teacher, Ms. Paige, and Instructional Assistant, Ms. Gretchen.*

Another fun field trip the kids took was to the zoo, always a favorite destination for spring. Made possible by a grant from the Louisville Zoo, children's admission was covered and they got a behind-the-scenes tour with opportunities for touching live animals. Field trip teach so many things, including concepts about the world, social interaction skills with one another and the public in community settings, orientation and mobility and recreation and leisure skills.



Ms. Paige's students in the Orange Room chose to learn about chickens and eggs during April, expanding their knowledge about foods and the sources from which they come. Thanks to a special loan from KY School for the Blind, they got to tactually explore a professionally stuffed chicken. These tactile experiences help children with very limited vision build sensory efficiency skills needed to fill in the blanks for what they cannot learn visually.





Left: Ethan takes a close look at a life-like chicken.



And of course in May, we celebrated Derby with a variety of activities, including our very own balloon race, boat race and "Run for the Roses!"

Derby Fun! Above right: Kaden and Lainie prepare to propel their boats by blowing through straws. Right: Maddie, who won her heat and wears the "Garland of Roses," poses with the horsey she made in class.



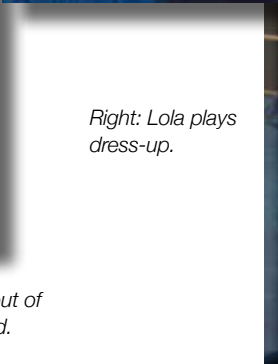
Below left: Bronson plays with Lola in a pool filled with popcorn kernels.



Left: Ethan is proud of his lego building.



Above: Vance gets a kick out of swinging on the playground.



Right: Lola plays dress-up.

# The Incredible Teaching Possibilities of Incidental Learning: The Blue Bowl Story

By Annie Hughes, TVI, VIPS-Indiana

Blindness or significant vision loss has a number of impacts upon a young child's development. One important one is the child's lack of access to what is called "incidental learning." Vision is the "great integrator" of sensory input, and though no one plans this incidental learning, it goes on every minute that a typically-sighted child is awake. To illustrate this, I often tell parents my "Blue Bowl Story."

Two babies are in high chairs at one end of the kitchen after dinner. One baby has normal vision, and one is blind. The Dad comes into the kitchen and says to his wife who is at the sink getting warm washcloths to clean off messy faces and hands, "Hey Honey, *where is the blue bowl?* I have rented a movie and want to make some popcorn." The Mom replies, "It's *on top of the refrigerator.*" So, the Dad walks to the *refrigerator*, he stretches his arm up and reaches *on top*, he grabs the *bowl* which is *blue*, and he walks to the microwave to make the popcorn. In those few seconds, the child with vision has just had four "incidental" lessons: 1) the word/label "*refrigerator*" was connected with that large object with the door that swings open, 2) the child is starting to get an idea about the concept of "*on top*" since Dad is reaching his arm up "on top," 3) the child is beginning to understand that even though this "*bowl*" is much larger than his cereal bowl, it is still called a bowl, so it must be the "scooped out/can hold things" aspect that makes it a bowl, and 4) the child has a blue ball, and his parents just called this a blue bowl, so identifying the color as "*blue*" has just been reinforced. And what did the child without vision get? She heard the same words, but they weren't connected to any meaning so the blind/low vision child did not have access to the same learning opportunity as the sighted child...she didn't get those same four "incidental" lessons.

Sometimes when children who are visually impaired hear words that aren't connected to meaning, it is called "empty language." The Blue Bowl Story illustrates how important it is for children who are blind or have low vision to have real experiences with real objects, so the language they hear isn't "empty language," but is tied to meaning. When the language is tied to meaning, the child begins to acquire concepts. The home is a wonderfully rich learning environment, ripe with opportunities for "hands-on" experiences, and parents can make a point to use normal

household chores and errands around the community, and language about all of these, to teach their children about the world.

Do you want your child to understand what and where the refrigerator is? Take her with you when you head into the kitchen for a Coke. Talk about being thirsty, and about where you are going and why. Let her help you **open** the door, then stand in front of the refrigerator and feel the **cool** air. Comment about how it feels. Pick up several items and talk about how everything in the refrigerator needs to stay **cold**...let the child feel several items against his arm and giggle about how cold each item is as you teach about what a refrigerator does, the kinds of food inside, and about temperature. Then, let your child help you and narrate as you **close** the door. Next time you return from the grocery, reinforce your “lesson” by talking about which things need to stay cold and where you will need to put them.

When you plan to leave with your child on an errand, gently place the child’s hand, arm, or cheek against the front door or window to feel the temperature and comment to the child, “We will need our jackets when we go outside,” rather than just jamming arms into sleeves. If it is raining, open the door so the child can listen to and smell the rain before going outside. The sound of gentle rain on an umbrella during a “rain walk” is fun, and taking the time to let the raindrops “water” your child along with the grass and the flowers is the best way to understand rain. (Do this when there is no lightning!)

Laundry is a chore that can teach the concepts of **wet/dry**, **open/close**, **off/on**, **clean/dirty**, **fresh/stinky**, and more about temperature. There are lots of sensations that can be a part of the process, especially riding in a basket of fresh-smelling warm towels or sheets that have just come out of the dryer. The on/off mechanical sounds, the sound of the washer filling with water, the sound of the machine agitating or in the newer machines, the slapping sounds of the clothes moving in the washer, the warmth of the dryer door...your child can learn what each of these means. Those clean clothes don’t magically appear in the drawers, and your child will understand that if he is part of the process from the beginning. Start when the child’s dirty clothes, Daddy’s stinky socks, and all the other dirty laundry are carried to the washer, and follow the process, until those fresh clothes are returned to his drawers, and Daddy’s clean, no-longer-stinky socks are put into Daddy’s sock drawer.

Find one thing during a household chore or an errand that can be a **“teachable moment”** for your child. During a trip to Target, the grocery, the hardware store, or the post office, you might take a moment to remember that none of these visits will have meaning unless you provide opportunities. Close your eyes to realize how much information you take in visually and then

remember that your child has no or little access to vision, the “great integrator.” She is receiving input using scent, sound, your body movements, and touch; the world is full of sensations, but they may be jumbled, and your child may not be not sure which ones have meaning in each situation.

As the weather improves, tour the yard and the neighborhood to include identifying sounds, the feel of the wind, the warmth of the sun on skin, touching/feeling stationary objects and plants, specifically listening for the sounds of birds, dogs, cars, trucks, and motorcycles, etc. A child who is blind may not have access to incidental learning using his or her vision, but a whole lot of learning will occur if someone provides opportunities for real “hands-on” experiences with the world. It is a wonderful way to weave together the threads of understanding into a beautiful tapestry as the child discovers our beautiful world and her place in it.

## To The Little Girl Who’s Teaching My Daughter How To Be A Friend

*By Meredith Howell, Family Services Coordinator, VIPS-Indiana*

This story was recently published on [The Mighty](#). You can read more about Lola’s adventures on Meredith’s blog, [Say Hola Lola](#).

After my daughter, Lola was born and before the roller coaster of health issues came to fruition, I sought out a group of women who had babies. It was a way for my daughter to begin socializing, and it was essential to maintaining my sanity as a new mother. Our children would roll around on the floor together, and we’d talk about things like how breastfeeding was going, what kind of nap schedules we were implementing and so on. I never thought much about the fact that Lola didn’t really interact with the other babies. What was she to do, come up with sophisticated games to play at just a couple months of age? But now looking back a few years later, many red flags should have gone up. She didn’t look at the other babies, she didn’t try to steal their toys and she didn’t coo with them. She was just sort of in her own little world, and of course she was — she didn’t have the ability to understand the use of her vision because of the cortical visual impairment diagnosis.

Even with Lola’s diagnoses (epilepsy, CVI) we would continue to put her in social situations with other children because, special needs or not, she still should be set up to make friends, and she genuinely liked being with other kiddos. We started small with just taking her to a gross motor skill class at her therapy



agency. From there, we began to drop her off at Child Watch at the YMCA. We soon enrolled her in a three day a week/couple of hour a day preschool. And you could tell in each environment she began to blossom. Not only did she like being around the kids, but she was learning from them with the use of her sight. It took some convincing, but when faced with the decision to enroll her in an all day preschool program, we reluctantly agreed -- I'm so glad we did because she loves her school peers. All of these opportunities to make new buddies have been good for her, but there's one place where she never had a friend — and that's at home.



*(Lola has the dark hair with bangs.)*

Thankfully for Lola, she's finally getting to experience what it's like to have a friend of her own and that's because of a little girl named Paisley. Paisley is our 4-year-old neighbor whose wonderful mom cares for Lola on occasion. Lola and Paisley became buddies over the summer, and it has been a true joy to watch their friendship blossom. Paisley is teaching Lola more about friendship and social etiquette than I ever could, and she's brought such happiness to our little girl's life.

A few days a week, Paisley will ask to help Lola get off of the bus, and we'll go on to play for a couple of hours. I say "we" because Lola is still trying to figure out this friend thing. I certainly give them space, but social etiquette is typically not something that comes natural to children with visual impairments. Quite often things like turn-taking, sharing and other social cues need to be learned over time. And since Lola doesn't have the ability to use her words yet, I help bridge that communication gap. Thankfully, Paisley understands all of the complexities of being

Lola's friend.

Paisley is the youngest of three kids and her mom has watched other people's children for years so Paisley is "tolerant" of Lola. I say tolerant because there are days when that's what it is. When Lola won't give Paisley her



own personal space, Paisley will simply move. If Lola won't stop playing with Paisley's hair, Paisley will simply say "no Lola" and go about her business. If Lola grabs Paisley's toy, Paisley will quite often just find something else to play with. If Lola eats Paisley's food, Paisley will just ask me for more. Paisley and I are working on teaching Lola how to be a good friend, and Lola is starting to get it, but it will take time. Paisley understands that Lola's brain works a little bit differently, and she understands that Lola can't see the way she can see. Paisley grasps the concept of inclusion more at the age of four than most adults probably ever will. It is one of the most beautiful things I've ever witnessed.

Lola has come so far in the six months since Paisley has been coming over to our house. Just a few days ago Paisley walked in the door, and Lola began to say "Paisley" without being prompted. Lola wants to use the potty when she knows Paisley has used the potty. Lola intently watches Paisley as she plays with toys and tries to mimic Paisley's actions. Paisley has patience with Lola and genuinely wants to help her. Whether it's holding her hand while going up the stairs or translating what she thinks Lola has said, it's a wondrous sight to see such compassion from someone so young. And when Paisley leaves for the day, Lola hysterically cries at the window because she misses her friend. It breaks my heart to watch, but it makes me happy that she has found her person.

As a mother (especially a mother of a child with special needs), all you want is for your kid to be included. And while Paisley may not understand it now, her ability to appreciate Lola for who she is has been such a blessing to my family — especially for Lola. The friendship between Lola and Paisley may not be "typical," but the beautiful thing about their friendship is that they are deciding the parameters of it just as we do with



our friends. No two friendships are alike and that's what makes our connections unique and authentic. The connection between Lola and Paisley is one I can only hope will last for many years to come. Lola will need champions like Paisley in her life especially because kids can be downright mean. But all it takes is one person to stand up to the crowd for others to see that a beautiful person worthy of love and acceptance is in there. Thankfully, Paisley already sees Lola for the amazing individual that she is and it brings such happiness to my heart.

## The Expanded Core Curriculum, Pt. 5: Compensatory Skills

This article continues our discussion of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). All children must learn the core curricular skills (reading, writing, arithmetic etc.). The ECC covers the skills needed by each child who is blind/visually impaired. This article will discuss the ways in which compensatory skills are integrated into the VIPS Kids Town Preschool classrooms.

To me, compensatory skills are among the trickiest to define because the entire Expanded Core Curriculum includes all the skills that children with visual impairments must have in order to level the playing field with their sighted peers; in other words, to compensate for their lack of vision. So what makes compensatory skills such a key piece of this puzzle? It boils down to access skills -- how the individual with limited vision is able to access written information, notably in the core curriculum. To master compensatory skills typically means that the visually impaired student can access learning in a manner equal to that of sighted peers.

Compensatory skills include functional academic skills such as communication modes and reading media. Compensatory skills include learning to read regular and enlarged print and to use tools to develop higher level skills (magnification devices from simple to complex). They include braille reading skills progressing from uncontracted to contracted braille and then to using a device to read refreshable Braille. They also include auditory skills and methods to access materials and ability to use the devices associated with those skills.

It is easy to see that compensatory skills overlap with other areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum such as assistive technology and sensory efficiency. Compensatory skills are

considered functional academic skills along with learning basic and complex concepts, spatial skills, study and organizational skills, and also listening and speaking.

As you can see, compensatory skills are the building blocks of all academic skills because they enable the student to access all the materials required for learning the core curriculum. They are in addition to the core curriculum -- children have to learn these "tool skills" at the same time as they are expected to learn the academic curriculum, high expectations indeed.

All preschool children at VIPS are exposed to learning the braille code including our sighted peers. Obviously, some children are taught in greater depth since they are expected to use braille in order to progress academically. Magnifiers and closed circuit TVs are in each classroom to encourage their use to access print materials. Blackboards have been replaced by Smart Boards which use computer input to display large visual images.

We encourage the growth of organizational skills in our preschool classrooms by following routines regarding lunch boxes, coats, and classroom materials. Learning how to turn pages in a book, looking at words or objects, or following tactual lines with their fingers from left to right and top to bottom are skills constantly reinforced for our preschoolers. Compensatory skills are truly stepping-stones to future capabilities.



*Hailey works with volunteer Deanna Scoggins, a retired teacher from KSB, on braille reading and writing, compensatory academic skills in the ECC.*



# Two Day 2s At VIPS-Louisville

By Tracy Webb, Two Day 2s Teacher, VIPS-Louisville

The Twos welcome Oliver “Ollie” Rosenbaum and Oliver Cox to our class. Both bring lots of smiles and laughter to our room and are a great addition to our class. We have had a busy three months learning and exploring the world around us. Our days are spent strengthening social, play, language, and cognitive skills as we play in centers, create art projects, sing and dance to music, play outside and practice life skills in Kids Town.

February was the month of love as we read books, sang songs, played games and discussed our love for our friends and family. We learned that some families are big and some small as we counted the number of family members in our immediate family and shared all the members in our family circle. We created a “friendship tree” and learned the importance of friendships and how to be a good friend.



Oliver (left) and Brody (right) share a book.



Oliver R. shares a sweet moment with Ms. Shelby.

By the end of February, we were tired of snow, so we brought a little spring time weather to our room and learned about rain, rainbows, and wind. The kids loved dancing to “Rain, Rain, Go Away” while holding umbrellas and blowing bubbles in the wind outside. We talked about how a rainbow is created, the colors of the rainbow, and

the senses we use to experience a rainbow. As the weather has warmed up, we’ve been able to take nature walks in our garden and plant our own seeds. We are anxiously watering and watching them grow in our window.

April is a time for playing outdoors as we learn about bugs, caterpillars, butterflies, fish, frogs, turtles, and snakes. We have used egg cartons to make caterpillars, danced like a butterfly, crawled like caterpillars and re-enacted the story “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”. We also used our senses as we discovered

how a frog eats, painted turtle shells, discovered bugs in our sensory table and did the fishy pokey.

To prepare our 2s for summer trips to the zoo, May was filled with discovery of zoo and farm animals. We closed out our school year singing animal songs, making animals out of shapes, delving into oats in our sensory table, and the looking at the wonderful world of “Old McDonald”. It’s hard to believe our school year has come to an end. This is truly a great group of 2’s and I have loved having them in class!



The 2s group has included (l-r): Maycin, Pyper, Twos Teacher Tracy Webb, Oliver C., Oliver R., Instructional Assistant Shelby Birchler and Brody. Oliver R. is trying to imitate the girls who are waving. Children learn so much from each other!

## Springing into PAL at VIPS-Louisville

By Staci Maynard, VIPS-Louisville PAL Teacher

Though weather and other unforeseen circumstances have affected the times our Play and Learn group has been able to meet over the past few months, we always look forward to the next time we are able to see each other. Families who attend VIPS events like PAL find that it is such a special and encouraging realization to find other people who can relate to their life experiences. Like VIPS itself, PAL is a family that shares one another’s highs and lows, and we welcome any VIPS family to join us for a time of support and fun.

Friends who have come to PAL recently have enjoyed a variety of activities from pretend play to art to gross motor to music. Perhaps even more importantly, they have worked on developing their social skills without even realizing that was what they were doing. While parents catch up on the latest events in one another’s lives, one might find children playing hide-and-seek from a pretend bear, “swimming” in the ball pit, making Easter eggs with paint and pom-poms, or tactually exploring whipped cream. Families

participate in weekly times of free play, sensory room play, gross motor play (outside or in Kids Town), art, and music.

If you are a VIPS family, please consider joining us for a PAL group meeting on Fridays. During the summer, PAL will meet from 9 -11 a.m. until July 31st except for July 3rd when there will be no PAL class.

## VIPS-Indiana Play and Learn Group

On Wednesday, April 15th, VIPS-Indiana hosted a spring-themed Play and Learn (PAL). There were springtime sensory tubs for little hands to play in, fragrant herbs to plant and take home, a sing-along and a delicious lunch for everyone to enjoy.

Parents had a lively discussion covering numerous topics about raising a child with blindness or low vision. Family Services Coordinator Meredith Howell addressed topics such as waivers, SSI, and some special benefits available to children with special needs. Our Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Annie Hughes, led the circle time for families and our Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Debby Eades, gave parents a lesson in navigating the world without the use of vision.

We thank the VIPS-Indiana families for spending part of their afternoon with us! And we'd especially like to thank Paul Schneiders of Sullivan's Hardware in Indianapolis for donating the fragrant herbs for our families to plant and take home!



Above: Breanna and her dad Josh shared a meal. Below: Moms Mandy and Allison enjoyed planting herbs.



O&M Specialist Debbie Eades worked with dad BJ on cane travel but had time to share a special moment with darling Gabriel.



## VIPS-Louisville Family Events

### Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Despite the cold start to the day necessitating a move indoors, 15 families participated in the annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 28th. Apparently the cold did not keep the Easter Bunny from hiding hundreds of eggs throughout Kids Town. The children rapidly located and deposited the eggs in their baskets while a sensory egg hunt featuring beeper eggs was held separately in the sensory room. A light breakfast was then served along with a side of candy, much to the children's delight!

### Spring Parent Meeting

Alecia Barrett from Seven Counties Services knowledgeably discussed the Michelle P. Waiver at a family event rescheduled to accommodate the wintry weather. She explained eligibility, services and how to get on the waiting list for this waiver, that is often confusing and misunderstood. She also mentioned other recourses for individuals. Several families from varied agencies attended despite the bad weather. Thanks so much to Alecia for sharing her time and expertise with our VIPS families.

**"Only education is capable of saving our societies from possible collapse, whether violent, or gradual."**

*Jean Piaget, Child Development Theorist*



# VIPS/KSB Family Retreat Weekend

**Mark your calendars now for the [First VIPS/KSB Family Retreat Weekend](#), which will be held Friday, Nov. 13 and Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015.** This wonderful event will bring together families of children with visual impairments, birth through high school age. What a fabulous opportunity for VIPS families to gain information and insight from parents who have traveled farther down the road of raising a child who is visually impaired and who can warn of road hazards ahead as well as great opportunities for learning.

There will be respite and VIPS kids camp for younger children at the VIPS-Louisville campus. There will be fun activities for older kids, too, at KSB and out in the community. Parents will attend an informative and inspirational conference at KSB.

Lodging will be provided at the Best Western near VIPS for families who must travel more than 50 miles to attend.

Watch for your registration forms which will be arriving in the fall. **You don't want to miss this great opportunity!!**

preschool, and ALL FUN! Families can enroll their children for full weeks (Monday through Thursday) or one to three days per week. The summer program runs June 8 through July 30. If you are interested in learning about remaining openings, please contact Kathy Mullen ([kmullen@vips.org](mailto:kmullen@vips.org) or 502-498-2927) or Beth Krebs ([bkrebs@vips.org](mailto:bkrebs@vips.org) or 502-498-2929).

Kids Town Preschool's [Two Day 2s](#) will continue with its school year schedule, with classes ending on Thursday, July 30.

Our [Play and Learn \(PAL\)](#) class will continue meeting on Fridays, except July 3, throughout the summer as well, ending on Friday, July 24. Summer hours will be 9 - 11 a.m.

And don't forget [Friday Friends](#)! We will open our VIPS home to all VIPS families and community friends to enjoy playing in Kids Town and on our state of the art covered playground, exploring in the sensory room and braille room. We will end the day with a special visitor each week and a story read by a person with a visual impairment using specialized equipment or adaptations for reading. Friday Friends will meet 10 a.m. – noon, June 12 – July 24 (no Friday Friends on July 3). A \$5 donation per child/\$10 per family is requested. VIPS children are free.

Finally, our community programming ([First Steps visits](#)) will continue on its regular schedule. Services provided through public school systems are on hold through the summer months.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Kathy Mullen, Director of Education, at [kmullen@vips.org](mailto:kmullen@vips.org) or 502-498-2927.

## Summer Days = Busy Days At VIPS-Louisville

*By Kathy Mullen, VIPS Director of Education*

As a member of a household of educators, if I've learned anything it's that there's no such thing as a slow time of the school year. In the world of early intervention and especially in the world of VIPS, those words are just as true during the summer months as they are in the other nine months making up the calendar! Summer 2015 is no exception.

While we typically like a week to prepare for our summer program, this year we will have two days! **"COME SEE, FEEL, AND LEARN!"** will kick-off our summer season. The "Come See, Feel and Learn!" experience is part summer camp, part

## News From VIPS-Central Kentucky

***We Are Finally In Our New Home!!***

*By Terry DeLuca, VIPS-CK Community Relations/Development Director*

**621 S. Limestone Street, #201  
LEXINGTON, KY 40508**

This is our new address and home for VIPS-Central KY. VIPS has collaborated with the Early Childhood Laboratory (ECL) School, which is a part of the University of Kentucky Child Development Program. While we were supposed to move in early January, Mother Nature and other factors decided that wasn't the best month for the move to happen. So, on March 8,



*Our new office at the ECL. Our entry is the door on the right.*

we officially moved into our new home! Yes, we have had bumps in the road, but with any move, those are to be expected and most have been overcome. We have started our Twos program on Tuesday's, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Our children are enjoying our new home, too!

Our first "Open House" was held on April 28 for parents who are interested in enrolling their child in the summer or fall toddler or preschool programs. Several attended and took a tour of the new facility, learned about our collaboration with the ECL, and listened to what VIPS has to offer for programming. We welcomed guests Dr. Ken Weaver, Ophthalmologist, as well as Dr. Palek Wall, new Pediatric Ophthalmologist with Kentucky One Health located at Eagle Creek Drive in Lexington, KY.

We enjoy having visitors to show off our facility. So please schedule a time to come by, see what we are doing, and chat with our staff.



*During the first day of summer enrichment, children went for a ride in the wonderful group stroller! They are Cadance, Molly, Rory, Clay, Lynlee, and Harper.*

## VIPS-Indiana News

### *It's Official: \$125,000 In Indiana State Budget to Serve Young Visually Impaired Children!*

Indiana State Budget Update: Great news for the VIPS office in Indianapolis and a very important step forward for Indiana's youngest blind children!

An appropriation of \$125,000 to fund early intervention for Hoosier infants and toddlers who are blind was added late in the budget process. Our sincerest thanks to Senator Pat Miller for her assistance in getting the appropriation into the budget signed by Governor Mike Pence on May 7, 2015.

The appropriation means for the first time in Indiana's history specific funding is earmarked for the ongoing, specialized services infants and toddlers who are blind need to get the best start in life. VIPS is encouraged that the Indiana state legislature has recognized the importance of these services. We look forward to partnering with the state of Indiana to expand the system of direct service and family support for all children, ages birth to 3, who are blind in Indiana.

Lots of effort on the part of VIPS-Indiana went into making the legislators aware of the pressing needs of young children who are visually impaired. Some of the things VIPS-Indiana has done to highlight the importance of their mission are detailed below.

On February 12th, VIPS Indiana staff and families stopped by to give their local legislators valentines with brailled messages and pictures of Indiana's youngest visually impaired children. Nearly 100 handmade valentines were delivered to each Indiana legislator in both the House and Senate.

VIPS mom, Megan Betz, met with Speaker of the House Brian Bosma to share her personal story. State Senator Mark



*Rebecca Davis, Sen. Charlie Brown, Meredith Howell, and Megan Betz.*

*Stoops from Bloomington/ Monroe County and State Representative Charlie Brown from Gary were among the legislators feeling the love! State*



*Senator Liz Brown* met with VIPS staff to offer her guidance and support to our efforts to add funding for specialized early intervention for infants and toddlers who are blind to the state budget.

We are very grateful to the legislators who took the time to meet with VIPS.

It is amazing to think that on Valentine's Day 2011, the first group of VIPS staff and families walked into the Statehouse with the goal of raising awareness and connecting with our local legislators. On that day, the *Riddle family* whose infant son, Levi, had Cortical Visual Impairment, met with Senator Mark Stoops and had their picture taken with Governor Mike Pence.

Four years later, Sen. Stoops has been a driving force behind legislative efforts to add funding to the state budget for specialized early intervention for infants and toddlers who are blind. Since 2011, Senator Stoops and his dedicated staff have acted as advisors to VIPS-Indiana and as advocates for VIPS families. Senator Stoops has spoken on behalf of the families of Indiana's youngest blind children many times since that first Valentine's Day meeting. He sponsored the "VIPS Bill" which helped VIPS introduce many legislators to the unique educational needs of the children we serve. He was instrumental in arranging the opportunity for VIPS to testify several times over the past year. His efforts and the efforts of the Senate staff, particularly *Andrew Dezelan* and *Adam Jones*, have not gone unnoticed. The addition of funding for intervention for blind infants to the Indiana state budget this year has been due to the efforts of many, but, none more than these compassionate, hard working public servants.



*Sen. Stoops with Levi then; Levi now at age 4*



## VIPS Indiana Testifies Before Senate Appropriations Committee

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, despite arctic cold and a new round of bad weather, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Annie Hughes, and Family Services Coordinator, Meredith Howell, visited the Statehouse to testify before the Senate Appropriations

Committee. This committee, chaired by *Senator Luke Kenley*, listens to the funding concerns of state agencies and community service agencies, many of whom provide direct services to Indiana's most vulnerable populations. Meredith and Annie shared a brief history of VIPS in Indiana and urged the legislators to add a specific appropriation to the state budget to begin building a system of service that can serve every infant and toddler in Indiana who is blind. For months, Miss Annie and Meredith testified before committees. For months, they attended meetings with every lawmaker who would meet with them to advocate for VIPS children and their families. VIPS families in Indiana are very fortunate to have these two dedicated advocates on their side.

## VIPS-Indiana in the Indianapolis Star!

In February, Indy Star reporter, Erika Smith, attended a VIPS Indiana board meeting and a home visit with an Indianapolis family. She wrote a column about the VIPS family that was published on March 8. Here is the link if you would like to check it out! <http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/columnists/erika-smith/2015/03/06/smith-devastated-get-therapy/24497479/>

## Baby Fair

VIPS Indiana joined 50 other exhibitors at the 2015 Baby Fair in Bloomington, Indiana. The Baby Fair is a fun, educational one-stop shop of parenting resources. The goal of this event is to bring everything about babies, from shopping to community resources, together in one convenient place. We owe our gratitude to our fantastic board members, *Jenny Kelly*, *Julia Slaymaker* and *Tana Hellwig* for heading up the VIPS-Indiana exhibit.

## Richmond Lions Club

Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Annie Hughes, and Family Services Coordinator/VIPS Parent, Meredith Howell, gave a presentation to the Richmond Lions Club on March 18. One Richmond Lions Club member said, "It was all new to me. But a very important program for our little ones. Our Lions Club really appreciated hearing from both of you! We love your enthusiasm." After the presentation, an invitation was extended to VIPS to apply for a Richmond Lions Club grant to help with funding for our VIPS-Indiana Play and Learn.



*Meredith and Annie with Richmond, IN Lions.*

## K's for Kutter

The Brazil Times recently featured an article by Frank Phillips about *Kutter Booe*, who receives services from VIPS-Indiana. The article talks of Kutter's difficult birth and multiple challenges.

Kutter was recently the guest of honor at the North Central High School's softball game against Clay City. Kutter's father Tony and mother Christan Roberts were approached by Clay City High School pitcher Hunter Wolfe who asked if Kutter could serve as the face of a fund-raising idea he had. The Roberts suggested VIPS as the recipient of any funds raised.

The article suggested pledges to 'K's for Kutter' per base hit or strike out by a Clay City Eels player or simply a contribution during games or even to team members who have fundraising slips. All proceeds will be given to VIPS-Indiana so that children all over Indiana can receive much needed services. Donations are solicited through the baseball and softball seasons.

For more information about how to donate, residents are encouraged to contact Hunter Wolfe at 812-691-5276.



*Kutter enjoys a home visit from Ms. Annie.*

## Bravelets Provides VIPS Supporters More Than Jewelry

The VIPS office in Indianapolis has paired with Bravelets to receive \$10 dollars from every bracelet or necklace sold through their partnership. If you follow the link below you'll find some really nice pieces of jewelry (in VIPS colors!) that you can purchase to help send some dollars back to VIPS-Indiana. Please send this along to anyone else you know who might be interested in purchasing these ADORABLE bracelets!!!

<https://www.bravelets.com/bravepage/vips-indiana-visually-impaired-preschool-services>

## Kosair Charities Playhouse

*By Kathy Mullen, Director of Education*

Visually Impaired Preschool Services is no stranger to the wonderful generosity of Kosair Charities. Just take a quick walk through Kids Town Preschool and you will know exactly what we are talking about. Kosair Charities bestows many blessings on VIPS by purchasing equipment for VIPS children, financially supporting services out in the community, and making their presence felt at almost all events sponsored by VIPS – Revision this past February as well as the 2015 Tennis Ball and Tennis Tournament in May. They even were the primary funders for the amazing Kids Town as the VIPS-Louisville building was being built!

For this reason, it was no surprise that Kosair Charities selected a VIPS family to be one of the recipients of this year's Kosair Charities Playhouse. Vance Lovett, a member of the Green Room Class in Kids Town Preschool at VIPS, is the youngest of four children born to Emily and Brandon Lovett of Mt. Washington. Shortly after his birth, Vance was diagnosed with Norrie's Disease, characterized by blindness in both eyes. Vance was first introduced to VIPS at a very young age through the Kentucky First Steps system; he now attends Kids Town Preschool as a student of Bullitt County Public Schools.

Vance is a bit shy at first meeting, but quickly turns into a charmer as he works with Mr. Maury (Weedman) moving about Kids Town addressing Orientation and Mobility goals and gaining more independence with each step. Vance has a fighting spirit – and VIPS knows where it came from! His parents, Emily and Brandon, found their way to Kentucky as a military family. Brandon is stationed at Ft. Knox. Last fall, Brandon was recognized as a Hometown Hero at a Cincinnati Reds baseball game for the sacrifices he and his family have made for his service to our country. (THANK YOU, BRANDON AND EMILY!!) He is due to retire from the military next year. The Lovetts have decided to make Kentucky their forever home because of the warm and welcoming spirit of their community as well as the comprehensive services Vance has received and will continue to receive.

The Lovett family is a baseball family. During the Playhouse Reveal held at the Home, Gardening & Remodeling Show at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center on February 26, 2015, that was very obvious. The playhouse, built specifically to address Vance's developmental needs, is a baseball dugout! With a team bench out front and a lot more baseball inside! The interior walls and floor are made of different textures for Vance to explore. One wall is lined with containers filled with different tactual materials. Vance can step down to a carpeted area with a book shelf filled



with brailled books and then climb a ladder into a ball pit. There is room for the whole Lovett team plus extra friends so Vance can practice social skills as well.

Kosair Charities worked in partnership with YouthBuild Louisville and the Building Industry Charitable Foundation of the Building Industry Association of Greater Louisville to make the playhouse a reality for Vance and his family. The mission of the Foundation is to improve the quality of life of special needs children and adults in the community. The Charitable Foundation used their talents and expertise to address Vance's needs by including his parents, teachers, and therapists in every step of its design.

They also shared their skills with YouthBuild Louisville by mentoring its members in the design and building process. YouthBuild Louisville's mission is to capitalize on the positive energy of young adults by helping them rebuild their communities and their own lives with a commitment to work, education, responsibility and family. YouthBuild aids unemployed and undereducated young people, ages 16-24, in building affordable housing for homeless and low-income families in their own communities. They split their time between the construction site and the classroom, where they earn their GED or high school diploma, learn to be community leaders and prepare for jobs or college.



*Vance's Playhouse at the big reveal on Feb. 26.*

Vance's new playhouse was truly a team effort on many different fields of play. VIPS is most grateful to Kosair Charities for identifying the Lovett family as a worthy recipient of one of this year's playhouses. VIPS has a new friend in the Building Industry Association of Greater Louisville and will support their future efforts. The educational goals and support of YouthBuild Louisville matches those of VIPS; for that reason VIPS is proud to be a part of their team as well. As with all the families served, VIPS is humbled by the trust awarded us by the Lovett family to join them on Vance's journey.

***Three cheers to this amazing community effort!!***



## New Arrivals

***VIPS is pleased to welcome these new additions to the VIPS family:***

### **VIPS-Louisville**

Angel -- 17 months, Louisville, KY  
 Aria -- 16 months, Corydon, IN  
 Emir -- 19 months, Louisville, KY  
 Elijah -- 15 months, Albany, KY  
 Evan -- 19 months, Louisville, KY  
 Gabriel -- 31 months, Simpsonville, KY  
 Gedeon -- 9 months, Shepherdsville, KY  
 Isaiah -- 35 months, Louisville, KY  
 Jacob -- 25 months, Louisville, KY  
 Leo -- 22 months, Louisville, KY  
 Mason -- 14 months, Louisville, KY  
 Mikaela -- 5 months, Fort Knox, KY

### **VIPS-Central KY**

Leo -- 22 months, Lexington, KY  
 McKenna -- 9 months, Betsy Layne, KY  
 Landon -- 11 months, Lexington, KY

### **VIPS-Indiana**

Audrey -- 9 months, Martinsville, IN  
 Baylie -- 36 months, North Vernon, IN  
 Claire -- 24 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Crew -- 10 months, Carmel, IN  
 Gabriel -- 11 months, Lafayette, IN  
 Hunter -- 18 months, Angola, IN  
 Jael -- 15 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Jesse -- 12 months, West Terre Haute, IN  
 Kasen -- 24 months, Terre Haute, IN  
 Kyler -- 24 months, Bluffton, IN  
 Lennox -- 11 months, Ambia, IN  
 Noah -- 12 months, Gentryville, IN  
 Spencer -- 10 months, Anderson, IN  
 Sydney -- 30 months, LaGrange, IN

*Ms. Annie helps Baylie open her Scentsy Buddy gift during her first visit.*



# Meeting Up With Children's Minds

Robin Schotter, Communications Manager at 4 Cs (Community Coordinated Child Care), was one of the folks who recently came to VIPS for a demonstration of easy home-made materials to stimulate scientific interest in young children. She provided play dough-type recipes that families can easily make at home, even involving their children in the process! A wealth of additional information is provided on social media. Checkout:

[www.facebook.com/4CVOICE](https://www.facebook.com/4CVOICE) and [www.pinterest.com/4cforkids](https://www.pinterest.com/4cforkids).

## Quicksand Play Dough

- 1 c. cornstarch
- 1 c. play sand
- Tempura paint for color (or food coloring)
- Small amount of water

Directions: Mix cornstarch and sand together. Add paint or if using food coloring, color a small amount of water (1/8 cup). Mix all together. If too dry, add a little water. If too wet, add a little cornstarch.

## Kool-Aid Play Dough

- 1 c. flour
- ¼ c. salt
- 2 packs Kool-Aid
- 1 c. boiling water
- 1 tbsp. oil

Directions: Mix dry ingredients. Add boiling water and oil. Knead until smooth.

## Lavender Play Dough

- 1 c. flour
- ½ c. salt
- 1 c. water
- 2 tbsp. oil
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- Optional – few drops of lavender oil and food coloring.

Directions: Mix all ingredients and cook over medium heat until thick. Knead dough until smooth.

## Approaches to Learning

Research shows that children with positive learning behaviors demonstrate better social and academic skills. Learning increases when children are deeply engaged and enthusiastic about activities. Indicators include:

- Showing motivation to learn
- Identifying what you want
- Clearly communicating what you want
- Accommodating delayed gratification
- Having tolerance for frustration
- Being a flexible problem solver and collaborator
- Having an ability to plan, focus and hold attention
- Being persistent in productive ways.



*Left: Max plays a matching game that uses a muffin tin with textures and clear plastic cups that have the same texture on the bottom.*

*Right: Robin Schotter works with Layla and Sarah with homemade playdough.*



*Left: Liz Walker of 4 Cs demonstrates the fun texture of quicksand play dough.*

*Right: Caleb enjoys the sound of shaker bottles.*





# VIPS Staff News

## VIPS-Louisville

Kudos to VIPS Director of Education *Kathy Mullen* whose professionalism, leadership and collaborative efforts throughout the commonwealth were recently recognized by the Prichard



*Kathy shares a laugh with Lainie.*

Committee and the STARS for KIDS NOW program. VIPS received kudos for our collaborative efforts with public schools and the UK ECL. Kathy was also selected to attend Utah State University's SKI HI Institute's Train the Trainer program which will give her certification to train our Project VIISA students in addition to Annie Hughes.

We sadly said goodbye to Developmental Interventionist *Alysia Rue*, who left VIPS in March. But we are pleased to introduce *Ashley Penn*, our newest Developmental Interventionist, who joined our team in February. Ashley did her student teaching at VIPS and we learned then what a jewel she is. Ashley is a recent graduate of Campbellsville University. She has worked with children at her church and in preschools for eight years prior to coming to VIPS. She is married and has two children, a daughter Olivia who is four and a son Brenden who is eight. She and husband Nathan live in Brandenburg.



## VIPS-Central Kentucky

*Dixie Miller*, Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and Developmental Interventionist (DI) at VIPS-Central Kentucky was recently featured in the University of Kentucky College of Education's publication, *Next*. The cover photo and inside story about her journey through UK's special education system and her subsequent adoption of her daughter Olivia were detailed.

In a related article, the new VIPS' partnership with UK and its Early Childhood Laboratory (ECL), was also profiled as part of a story about the new ECL facility.

Developmental Interventionist *Amanda Hamm* has moved to the Louisville Office and will be primarily working with families in Western Kentucky now.

And it is with sadness that we report that Jill Haas has left the position of Family Services Coordinator for VIPS-CK. She is completing her training to become a yoga teacher.

## VIPS-Indiana

We welcome *Jenny Feinman* who has been hired to be VIPS-Indiana's new Community Outreach Coordinator. She writes:

*"I am excited to be joining VIPS Indiana as the Community Outreach Coordinator. My husband Steve and our three children, Nicholas, Hannah and Allison currently reside in the Center Grove area."*



*My family and I were originally introduced to VIPS through word of mouth when searching for vision services for our youngest daughter, Allison. Annie Hughes was kind enough to introduce us to Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (TVI/COMS), Kelly Lloyd, who has truly been a blessing to our family. Through Kelly's hard work and dedication, Allie's vision has improved exponentially. You all know how precious it is to be able to watch your child connect with you or the outside world!"*

*Over the past 13 years, I have worked at Glazer's of Indiana, a wine and spirits distributor. During my time with Glazer's I held positions such as Office Manager, Human Resources Manager and most recently Finance & Administration Specialist.*

*I am excited for this opportunity and eager to get started while doing my part to pay it forward to other Indiana families in need of vision services!"*

## Thanks to Our Wonderful Volunteers!

### VIPS-Central KY

April is a very busy month for the *Delta Gammas*, but they still found time for VIPS! Many of the young ladies volunteered their time to help with the preparations for the VIPS-Central KY Golf Outing. They also helped put together welcome folders for new VIPS parents. And if that wasn't enough they hosted a cookout in which they raised a little over \$200 for the WHAS Crusade for Children! Thank you, Delta Gammas, for always assisting VIPS and doing it with a smile!



Volunteers from Kohl's Store 512 in New Albany did a lovely job replanting the sensory garden at VIPS-Louisville (see more below on right).

## VIPS-Louisville

We appreciate the volunteer spirit of *Fran Woodward*, whose wonderful patience and some of her time each week is spent in our Twos' classroom. We greatly value her consistency and service to our youngest VIPS classes.

A heartfelt thanks to *VIPS Mom Shelly Turpin* for sharing her time and talents in the preschool classrooms when ever and where ever she may be needed.

*Deanna Scoggins*, retired Teacher of the Visually Impaired from the Kentucky School for the Blind, deserves praise for her work on braille skills with the preschoolers. Thanks for your time, expertise and energy.

Thanks also are due to one of our very first VIPS graduates *Jamie Weedman* who continues to Braille books much appreciated by our children and staff. Congratulations are also due to Jamie who held on for 14 miles of the Boston Marathon until debilitating cramps and inclement weather forced him to stop. We are so proud of his amazing effort and talent!

Special thanks to *Amanda Coomer of Indiana University Southeast* for her assistance with Friday Friends.

*Gayle Block, Kathy Mullen's Aunt*, has our gratitude for giving us so much of her time doing office tasks.

*Alexandra Talbott and Hannah Talbott, of Sacred Heart Model School*, deserve thanks for their help with classroom clean-ups.

Thanks to volunteers who provided childcare at the parent meeting in January, including *Marissa Burgin of Assumption*, *Ryan Hack from St. Stephen Martyr School*, *Max Medley from Trinity High School* and *Haley Schnell of Sacred Heart Academy*.

Cleaning tasks were also the target of *Highland Baptist Church* volunteers *Meredith Bell, Megan Fuller, Emily Moyers and Ava Paprocki*, Thank you so much!

We are grateful to our neighbors, the *Flynn Group (Patrick and Jesse)*, for having their entire parking lot snow-plowed so that it would be school bus ready.

Speaking of snow-plowing, thanks to our lawn and snow removal service, *Landscape Innovations*, who was very flexible in scheduling so that no unnecessary plowing and salting took place. And thanks also to *Maury Weedman*, our Facilities Manager, for coordinating snow removal.

Thank you to *Melissa Ward, Jackie Desolier, and Catherine Hayes of Humana* who organized a drive for consumable items to be donated to VIPS and encouraged other employees at Humana to donate to VIPS through their matching gift program.

Thanks to the volunteers from *Kohl's Store 512 in New Albany, IN*, led by *Marie Krebs O'Neil*, cousin of VIPS Preschool Assistant Director, *Beth Krebs*, who, with other volunteers from Kohl's, completed our sensory garden. Colleagues who joined Marie included *Sharon Canary, Linda Cox, Gayle Falkenburg, Addyson Goodman, Demetra Goodman, Barbara Nixon, Amy Pate, Glenda Scott and Lance Sharp*. Kohl's also provided \$1500 in grant money to offset the costs of the plants and supplies.



## VIPS-Indiana

VIPS-Indiana relies heavily on community support. We would like to extend a huge thank you to *VIPS grandfather, Mike Singleton*. Mike, otherwise known as “Maya’s Grandpa” testified earlier this year at the Indiana Statehouse in support of VIPS. Also, for 2 years in a row, he has driven to Louisville to defend a grant application for VIPS-Indiana to the Crusade for Children. Mike’s willingness to share Maya’s story has helped VIPS raise funds to provide direct services for nearly 100 children over the past 2 years. That is what we call “Paying It Forward.” Thank you, Mike!

To all of the VIPS-Indiana supporters who sent emails, made phone calls, and wrote letters to Indiana legislators, our most heartfelt THANK YOU! The journey to get an appropriation has been a very personal mission for the mothers and teachers of VIPS-Indiana. Every time we have asked for help in sharing the story of the children and families we serve, we have received overwhelming community support from *Lions Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, IU student groups, Indiana’s Partners in Policymaking graduates, Unitarian Universalists, our neighbors at the Indiana Interchurch Center, board members from Indiana and Kentucky and the VIPS families themselves*. This has been the best kind of community effort for all the right reasons. We thank you for helping us try to make Indiana a better place to grow and to thrive for children with visual impairments.

VIPS-Indiana would like to thank *Paul Schneiders of Sullivan’s Hardware* for his donation of fragrant herbs to the Spring-themed PAL group.

Thank you, Erika Smith, for taking the time to learn about VIPS and getting our story in the Indianapolis Star!



Right: Paul Schneiders of Sullivan’s Hardware.

## Notes of Interest



The premiere of *I Am Potential*, the movie based on the life of VIPS graduate *Patrick Henry Hughes* will be held at 7:30 p.m. on July 9, 2015 at the Louisville Palace. Patrick, a gifted musician and speaker who was born without eyes, and his father made national news when they marched with the University of Louisville marching band and later wrote the book on which the movie is based. You can purchase your ticket at <http://bit.ly/1Azo1DL>.

## In Memorium

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of:

### *Martha Ann “Polly” Davis*

of Shelbyville, KY, mother of Rebecca Davis,  
Development Director of VIPS-Indiana,  
who passed away on February 23, 2015.

~ and ~

### *Ashley Drane*

of Louisville, a VIPS graduate and daughter of Dennis and Donna Drane, who passed away at the age of 28.

~ and ~

### *Sandra “Sandi” Friedson*

of Louisville, wife of Barry Friedson and  
former VIPS board member,  
who passed away on February 26, 2015.

~ and ~

### *Bret Dahmke*

son of Carol Dahmke, VIPS-Louisville Office Manager  
and Mitch Dahmke, Family Support Specialist at KSB,  
husband of Jessica Dahmke and father of Noah,  
of London, KY, who passed away on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
at the age of 26 years.

(Please see related article about the  
Bret Dahmke Memorial Scholarship on next page.)

~ and ~

### *Kitty Urton*

of Louisville, mother of Beth Krebs,  
VIPS-Louisville Preschool Assistant Director &  
Instructional Assistant,  
who passed away on April 20, 2015.

~ and ~

### *James Selby*

of Louisville, grandfather of Paige Maynard,  
VIPS-Louisville TVI in training/Preschool Teacher,  
who passed away on April 24, 2015.

~

*Our hearts go out to all who loved them.*

## VIPS-Louisville Parent Gives Back in Gratitude

Trent Damron and his wife Megan exemplify the types of parents we have at VIPS. They and their son Bronson live in Louisa, Kentucky. But regardless of the distance, the Damrons decided that VIPS provided what Bronson needed. So they set up an additional household in Louisville. Trent and Bronson live in Louisville during the week while Megan stays in Louisa.

Megan works as a psychologist and university professor and Trent has various entrepreneurial endeavors he can manage from Louisville. He has many skills and will be volunteering to help with maintenance at VIPS for the next year. Already he has painted the entire exterior of our administration building.



*Trent finished up painting the exterior of the VIPS-Louisville Office recently.*

We are honored to serve this family.

## VIPS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Challenge

The VIPS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Challenge continues throughout 2015! An anonymous donor has pledged \$100,000 to VIPS if we can raise an additional \$200,000. That means your donation could be worth 50% more than the dollar amount of your gift. Please consider helping us during this period. It will enable many more VIPS children and their families to receive important early intervention services.

A donation envelope is included in this newsletter or you can donate online at [www.vips.org](http://www.vips.org).

## The Bret Dahmke Memorial Scholarship



It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the passing of Bret Dahmke, son of longtime VIPS Office Manager Carol Dahmke and her husband Mitch, who works at the Kentucky School for the Blind. Bret was a successful husband and father who happened to be visually impaired. Although the Dahmke family did not live in Kentucky when Bret was young and, therefore, he was never a recipient of VIPS services, they certainly recognize the importance of early intervention. It is their wish, then, to establish the Bret Dahmke Memorial Scholarship for VIPS children in need. If you would like to donate to the Bret Dahmke Memorial Scholarship, please visit our donation page at [www.vips.org](http://www.vips.org) or send a check to:

VIPS-Louisville  
Bret Dahmke Memorial Scholarship  
1906 Goldsmith Lane  
Louisville, KY 40218

## Thanks to Our Donors

### VIPS-Louisville

VIPS-Louisville received \$3,000 from the **William E. Barth Foundation** for the Family Services Program.

Thanks to **Kohl's Store #512** of New Albany, IN for a \$1,500 grant to cover the costs of planting our sensory garden.

We are most appreciative of the energetic dedication of VIPS mom and instructional assistant, **Ashley Buren**. Ashley, along



with her mother **Vicki May** and her aunt **Michele Vories**, all worked diligently to pull together another VIPS Bunco night with all proceeds going to VIPS. Ashley solicited all three classrooms, each of which provided a themed basket, along with the support and administrative staff members who provided another filled theme basket. The baskets were displayed as motivation for the raffle tickets that were sold throughout the event. Everyone seemed to have a delightful time and Ashley's hard work provided \$317 for VIPS!

Thank you to **the folks at Humana** who organized a drive for consumable items to be donated to VIPS and encouraged other employees at Humana to donate to VIPS through their matching gift program.

Thank you to **Jennifer Pearson** who gave an in-kind donation of headphones for our preschool program.

## VIPS-Central Kentucky

The **Children's Charity Fund of the Bluegrass** donated \$25,000 for direct services! Thanks ever so much!

Thanks are due to **Keeneland Foundation** for providing \$2,500 for light tables, light table accessories, and preschool scholarships.

## VIPS-Indiana

Thank you to the Brown County Lions Club for their generous donation of \$400.

### Wish list

#### VIPS-Louisville

Disposable glasses/lens cleaner wipes  
Toddler-sized bibs  
(sleeveless, that snap behind the head and protect shirt front, extending almost to waist)

#### VIPS-Central Kentucky

Children's binoculars

#### VIPS-Indiana

Plastic bins with lids  
Paper towels  
Gift cards (for PAL)  
Gift cards (for gas)  
Manila file folders w/tabs  
Pocket portfolios (folders)

## ReVision Recap!

On Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup> VIPS held its annual ReVision art auction at The Ice House in downtown Louisville. Presented by Brown-Forman, ReVision re-examined the traditional art gallery experience and incorporated an untraditional "touch" by allowing guests to enjoy art through senses other than sight. All art pieces, created by local and regional artists, were available in a silent auction. Even the delectable food was art in itself! Special thanks to our sponsors, guests and the Damron family, who spoke about the importance of VIPS in their son Bronson's life.



The artwork created by VIPS Kids Town Preschool students made popular auction items.





Visually Impaired  
Preschool Services

1906 Goldsmith Lane  
Louisville, KY 40218

Nonprofit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 284  
Louisville, KY

Change Service Requested



VISability is made possible through grants from the Linda Neville Foundation and the Fred B. and Opal S. Woosley Foundation.



## Upcoming Events

### Saturday, June 27 (VIPS-Louisville)

Bring your blankets or lawn chairs to watch a "Drive In" movie in the air-conditioned comfort of Kids Town at the VIPS-Louisville facility, 1906 Goldsmith Lane! The "concession stand" for children (and adults) opens at 6:30 and will provide hot dogs, chips and soft drinks. The movie starts at 7:00 pm. Please RSVP to Martha Hack mhack@vips.org or 502-498-2926.

### Friday – Saturday, June 26 - 27

The 2015 American Conference of Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment will be held at Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. Register online at [www.ChildrensOmaha.org/upcomingconferences](http://www.ChildrensOmaha.org/upcomingconferences) or call 402-955-6070.

### Friday - Sunday, July 10 - 12

National Association of Parents of children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) annual conference will take place in Chicago. This is a great opportunity for parents and caregivers of visually impaired children to network and to support each other. Since the conference is in our region this year, it would be great if lots of VIPS families could go. Attending the NAPVI conference is a fantastic way to learn how to help your children, make new friends, and spend some time

in the great city of Chicago! You can call 212-769-7819 or email [napvi@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:napvi@lighthouseguild.org) for more information or to register.

### Saturday, July 25th (VIPS-Indiana)

VIPS-Indiana will host a Summer Play and Learn (PAL) on Saturday, July 25th from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Indiana Interchurch Center located at 1100 West 42nd Street in Indianapolis. We will have circle/music time with Miss Annie, a Summer-themed Make & Take for your VIPS kiddo and we will provide a light lunch. Our guest speaker will be Special Needs Financial Planner, Gordon Holmes, of MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning. Please contact Meredith Howell at (317) 902-0931 for more details.

### Saturday, October 3

Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates Stampede for VIPS 5K run/walk and Kids' Fun Run will be held at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium. Stay tuned for more information about this premier race event!

### Friday – Saturday, November 13-14

The VIPS/KSB Family Retreat Weekend will be held for all families in the VIPS program in KY and IN. Mark your calendars now and watch your mail for registration materials! (See article on pg. 9.)

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

#### VIPS-Louisville

1906 Goldsmith Lane, Louisville, KY 40218  
(502) 636-3207 FAX (502) 636-0024  
Toll free 1-888-636-8477

E-mail: [info@vips.org](mailto:info@vips.org) Website: [www.vips.org](http://www.vips.org)

Diane Nelson, Executive Director  
Kathy Mullen, Director of Education  
Heather Benson, Development Director  
Shelby Birchler, Preschool Instructional Assistant/After School Care  
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 Gilmeister, Music Therapist  
Martha Hack, Development Asst./Family Services Coordinator  
Amanda Hamm, Developmental Interventionist  
Marchelle Hampton, Preschool Instructional Assistant  
Dani Harper, Receptionist  
Beth Krebs, Preschool Assistant Director/Instructional Asst.  
Mary Lesousky, TV/Developmental Interventionist  
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 Moulden, Preschool Instructional Assistant  
Becky Owens, After School Care  
Beth Owens, Preschool Instructional Assistant  
Ashley Penn, Developmental Interventionist  
Amanda Rucker, After School Care  
Kim Shippey, Controller  
Tracy Webb, Two Day 2s Teacher  
Maury Weedman, O&M Specialist/Facilities Manager

#### VIPS-Central Kentucky

621 S. Limestone St. Rm. 201, Lexington, KY 40508  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 23691, Lexington, KY 40523  
(859) 276-0335 FAX (859) 276-4379  
Toll free 1-888-254-8477  
E-mail: [vipslex@vips.org](mailto:vipslex@vips.org)

Terry DeLuca, Community Relations/Development Director  
Dixie Miller, TV/Developmental Interventionist  
Courtenay Schulten Daugherty, O&M  
Mary Smyth, Office Manager

#### VIPS-Indiana

1100 W. 42nd Street, Suite 228, Indianapolis, IN 46208  
Toll Free 1-888-824-2197 FAX 1-502-636-0024  
E-Mail: [vipsindiana@vips.org](mailto:vipsindiana@vips.org)

Rebecca Davis, Development Director  
Debby Eades, O&M  
Jenny Feinman, Community Outreach Coordinator  
Meredith Howell, Family Services Coordinator  
Ann Hughes, TVI  
Kelly Lloyd, TVI