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## VIPS Family Events: *Full of Fun, Learning and Support for Families Facing Special Challenges*

### VIPS Indiana

#### Spring Play and Learn (PAL)

The VIPS Indiana Spring Play and Learn was Saturday, April 14. After introductions and a song or two, staff and volunteers engaged the children while the parents participated in a wonderful “Make-and-Take” led by Robin McBride Scott of the Indianapolis Museum of Art. (Robin also leads the VIPS Toddler Art Group at IMA.) Families were provided a resource about using the community as a learning environment and were asked about how they respond when people ask questions about their child. The donated pizza from Hot Box was wonderful, and the turn-out was fantastic!



*Above: VIPS Indiana teachers, Amy and David, offered Jeremiah a choice between visually stimulating activities. Right: Parents enjoyed a make-and-take art activity.*



### VIPS Central Kentucky

#### Parents and Palettes

The VIPS Central Kentucky office hosted a unique spring family event for parents in April. Parents & Palettes gave the parents a chance to relax and tap into their creative side as our “artist in residence” Jamee Adkins (Little Learners Assistant Teacher and professional painting instructor) led them through a simple and fun painting class. While the parents were channeling Picasso, their children were having a great time with VIPS



*Amanda and Chris Lavin were ready to get creative!*



**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.**

teachers and volunteers in our classroom as they made their own masterpieces. It was such a fun way to celebrate the arrival of spring (FINALLY!) and connect with fellow parents.



## VIPS Louisville

### A Night at the Museum

March 1 may have been a gloomy day outside, but it was a perfect day for indoor exploration and fun. VIPS Louisville partnered with the *Kentucky Science Center* to bring our families the wonderful opportunity to explore the Science Center while the facility was closed to the public. Our families enjoyed three floors of educational and fun exhibits including water play, noodle mazes, cave exploration and more. Several of the exhibits provided tactual or audible interactions, making it an enjoyable experience for all who came. The staff did an excellent job of suggesting appropriate exhibits for our families and welcomed each of them with a smile. Thank you to all of our families who joined us for a fun family night out as well as the staff at the Science Center.

*Above right: Nicholas was a bit confused by the mirror maze. Below: Jaycee's dad encouraged her to feel the water*



### Egg Hunt

A huge shout out to Kristin for a wonderful Egg Hunt on March 17! Our sign-in sheet was filled with over 80 guests! The volunteers, especially *VIPS Twos' Preschool teacher Ms. Juanita (Miles) and her son, Aaron*, enabled the

event to run seamlessly. It was heartwarming to see our families connecting and friendships forging and strengthening. It was truly VIPS Magic at work!

### Celebrating Moms and Dads

During May, Kids Town Preschool at VIPS celebrated Moms in honor of Mother's Day with "*Muffins With Mom*," a breakfast where Kids Town Preschoolers shared muffins with mom, grandma, aunt, sister, or whoever they felt were the special ladies in their life! But don't think we forgot about Dads! Since Father's Day doesn't fall during the school year, we also celebrated dad, grandpa, uncle, brother and other special father figures when we had "*Donuts with Dad*." VIPS kids got to share a meal with their caregivers before school and give special Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts to these special family members!



*Above left: John and mom Angela share a tender moment. Above right: Gabriel was happy to have his grandpa come to school with him. Right: Hanna brought her dad Adam to breakfast.*



# COME AS YOU ARE!

*By Kathy Mullen, Director of Education*

When families are referred to Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) for assistance for their young child, one of the first things caregivers identify is the welcoming spirit extended by our existing VIPS families and team members. We assure families that it does not matter one bit that your child is visually impaired nor that she has other needs that prohibit her from participating in activities in the larger community. She uses a cane? No problem! She uses a walker or wheelchair? No big deal! She's not potty-trained? We can handle that! She uses a special device for communicating? Awesome!

It is our wish that VIPS families learn immediately that in our eyes, all children are perfect just the way they are. At the same time, it is our goal that we use the child's "perfection" as a foundation on which new skills are built so that the child is ready for her next educational placement. Empowering our VIPS families is the most important way to achieve this goal. We know the caregivers are the primary teachers of our VIPS kiddos.

For these reasons, VIPS is a very positive experience, whether your child is served on one of our campuses or in your home. The positive atmosphere of VIPS is very intentional for the children served and their parents and caregivers. In the world of VIPS, that is how it should be. So imagine our surprise and heartbreak when a family shares an experience that exhibits the opposite.

Just recently, a VIPS family reported such a happenstance. Of all places, the encounter took place at an older sibling's dance class; a place that should be safe for the whole family. On one particular night, while waiting in the lobby outside of the dance studio, our VIPS child began shaking her head back and forth as she does to take in visual information. This is how she sees the "whole picture." The head shaking was imitated by another child. The other child laughed at our VIPS child. Rather than redirecting the child, the other parent laughed along with his child. Our VIPS parent was left speechless. And very tearful.

When this encounter was shared with me the next day, I had a similar reaction as the VIPS mother's. My typical response to anger is tears, but this time was different. I felt called upon to up the ante on the support VIPS provides to our families when they are outside the friendly confines of VIPS. Situations like these should never happen in the first place. Yet I am afraid they have become more common and are more acceptable by some than they should be.

Initially, I reached out to a community partner agency for a parent training on how to handle such an experience. This agency serves young adults and adults with special needs, but did not have a training like the one I felt VIPS families needed.

I became aligned with another group who is partnering with local businesses to become "disability friendly." I am eager to attend their next planning meeting, but it is still some weeks away. The anger I felt needed to be addressed sooner than that.

As I wait for this planning meeting, I recognize the anger I feel inside is similar to the anger and fear I felt last year when I was told my 18-year-old son should carry his citizenship papers at all times as a young Hispanic male. Will came to our family through adoption 16 years ago. He is a Mullen through and through, and for us, that is enough. The VIPS child mentioned above is the most adorable, smart, precocious little girl you will ever meet, but suddenly that wasn't enough, either.

There are suggestions I can offer based on what I learned last year as Will's mother on how to best deal with an incident

of prejudice or discrimination, such as what our VIPS family experienced in the dance studio. Sometimes you may be a bystander witnessing this type of inappropriate behavior. These recommendations apply to those times, too.

It is always advisable to avoid verbal or physical interactions with the other person. But when it is your child who is the target of prejudice, my first suggestion is to reassure your child so she knows that she is safe and that you will stay with her. Let her know you love her just the way she is.

Next, ask the young child/adult who is imitating or staring at your VIPS child if they have a question about why your child is doing what she is doing or why she looks different. If your child is able to articulate/label her visual impairment, invite her to do so. Include your child in the conversation at the level at which she is able to participate. If the other child's parent is willing, involve them in the conversation; answer his questions, too. If the parent poses a threat (raises his voice or uses inappropriate language), stop the conversation. Move near other parents/adults in the room so you are supported physically. If that is not an option, remove yourself physically from the hostile environment. In the case of the dance studio, the VIPS parent could have moved into the actual studio, if needed.

It would be my hope in the dance studio scenario that other parents would invite the VIPS child and mother to come sit by them. It would be wonderful if the other parents had asked the child questions about her school, if she liked to dance, which dancer was her sister, etc.

I sincerely hope you are never in a situation like the one our beloved VIPS child and her parent experienced. I also hope that the climate of our country improves so that you are never called upon to stand witness to discrimination. Nonetheless, I hope you will take a moment to put yourself in both of these roles to determine a plan of action for both circumstances.

In closing, I would like to add that vision is the only limitation this VIPS child has. It is my opinion that the needs of the other child and his parent are far, far greater.

## ***A VIPS History Lesson***

Did you know that VIPS began in 1984 with eight children and one teacher/director operating on a \$20,000 budget -- \$10,000 from the WHAS Crusade for Children and \$10,000 from Metro United Way. Our "office" was a shared desk and phone, graciously provided by Community Coordinated Child Care (4Cs) in Old Louisville. The first children had been identified by a social worker at the Kentucky School for the Blind, which did not provide services to preschoolers. Those children are now in their mid-thirties!

# Early Intervention and Brain Development: Making the Most of Neural Plasticity

by Melissa Barrick, Early Interventionist, VIPS Indiana

What is the importance of early intervention for babies and toddlers? Why should families and children participate in such intervention? The answer to both these questions has to do with the young brain's capacity to change, learn, and rewire itself. This is known as "neural plasticity."

Neural plasticity involves the brain and its ability to wire and re-wire itself based on stimulation from the outside environment. This stimulation comes from exploration, experiences, exposure, or even specific training through early intervention. Neural plasticity suggests, as evidenced by neuroscientific study of the central nervous system, that the brain is "plastic" or in a sense, moldable and able to be changed to some degree with stimulation and learning experiences.

The brain remains plastic throughout the human lifespan, but most research indicates that it is the most moldable within the first three years of life. During these first three years, the human brain undergoes immense growth with sprouting of new nerve cells and forming of new neural cell-to-cell connections at a rapid pace. These new neurons grow and sprout in anticipation of a newborn young child being able to explore and learn about their surroundings through the senses of smell, sight, taste, hearing, touch, and proprioception. All of the body's senses and sensation mechanisms arise from the central nervous system, which is composed of the brain and spinal cord.

The phrases "Use it or lose it" and "Neurons that fire together wire together" hint at the importance of experiences, stimulation, interaction, and engagement, particularly with very young children. Rich sensory stimulation helps the young brain form new and lasting neural circuits that in turn supports a child's ability to learn and understand more about their surrounding environment and world. Opportunities to see, move, smell, touch, taste, hear, and feel are necessary to facilitate ongoing brain growth, as well as physical, social, and emotional development.

Early intervention services, such as those provided by Visually Impaired Preschool Services, capitalizes on the brain's exceptional ability to grow and change during the first three years of life. Initiating services early on affords the advantage of intervening when a child is at a prime age to respond relatively

quickly to stimulation that boosts brain development, and when the brain has its highest potential of neural plasticity and change.

# Expanded Core Curriculum: Growing Skills at Home

by Katie Dick, Early Interventionist, VIPS Central Kentucky

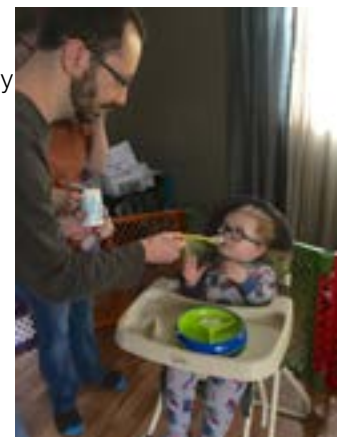
The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) consists of nine areas of skills in which children with visual impairments need instruction on top of the general curriculum. These areas are: compensatory skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills, and self-determination. The ECC allows our students to access their world and must be individualized for each student. And yes, we start this curriculum in early childhood! Early childhood is such a crucial time in development. If we instill the foundational skills early, children are more likely to be successful. Let me give you a quick snapshot of how we help our families access this curriculum during home visits.



Oliver is a one-year-old boy living with his parents, Rachel and Steve, and two older sisters. If you were to see Oliver playing at home, you would see that he is your typical, curious little boy. He is talking more and more each day and is always on the go. He loves to stack and build with Tupperware containers. Oliver has a diagnosis of blue cone monochromatism (BCM) and nystagmus. This means he has poor central vision, poor color discrimination,

and involuntary eye movements. BCM is quite rare and usually only affects males. Rachel has other family members who have BCM, but they didn't really know what the condition was or what it was called until recently. Immediately Oliver's family went searching for advice and support. That's when they found VIPS!

During our home visits, we are currently working on early independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills, and sensory efficiency skills. Oliver can feed himself with his hands, but does



not want to use any utensils. We have started incorporating scooping activities into our visits and sometimes this just looks like using spoons during playtime. He loves to explore spoons and to flip them around. We let Oliver practice scooping with just about anything -- cotton balls, pompoms, etc. When we first introduced using a spoon during mealtimes, we found out quickly that Oliver has some sensory aversions. He cried and reached for



mom as soon as the yogurt touched his hands. What do you do in this situation? Well, we backed off this activity for now and began working on sensory desensitization! We started with a dry, rice bin. Oliver explored this with his hands and feet and warmed up quickly to this new tactile

experience. We may have had to use a vacuum cleaner later, but this is progress and we celebrated!! Next, we moved on to Playdoh. He also enjoyed exploring this with his feet, stepping on it and letting it squish between his toes. It wasn't long before he was holding it in his hands and squishing it between his little fingers. Next, we plan to introduce yogurt on his high chair tray without a spoon to overcome his fear of getting his hands dirty.

Another thing we are working on now is climbing up and down stairs. Oliver's family is moving into a new home soon and this new home has the dreaded... DUN DUN DUN... stairs! Oliver has some trouble with depth perception, so his parents are worried stairs may be a new challenge for him. We have begun practicing stepping up onto a small step stool and feeling the edge with his feet. Oliver does so well with this and he loves to sit on the steps and scoot down, which he will probably continue doing until he is a little taller. We work on turning around and climbing down off the couch, so he will know how to climb down the steps safely in his new home.



Oliver has made so much progress and is moving through milestones left and right. Our home visits are always fun and he doesn't even realize he's working! Did you notice that all of our activities were completed using every day household items? You can teach your child useful foundational skills related to the expanded core curriculum on your own! If you would like to see a screening checklist for the ECC so you can take a closer look at what types of skills fall into each area, contact your VIPS teacher.



## New Arrivals

**VIPS is pleased to welcome these new children to the VIPS family:\***

Addilynn -- 2 years, Newberry, IN  
 Aiden -- 2 years, Switz City, IN  
 Alana -- 11 months, Louisville  
 Amerius -- 2 years, Louisville, KY  
 Annie -- 12 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Ashley -- 10 months, Nicholasville, KY  
 Audrey -- 12 months, Elkhart, IN  
 Avianna -- 22 months, Louisville, KY  
 Breha -- 15 months, Charlottesville, IN  
 Brenda -- 13 months, Bloomington, IN  
 Camilo -- 3 years, Louisville, KY  
 Cason -- 19 months, Richmond, KY  
 Cayden -- 2 years, Fort Wayne, IN  
 Chevi -- 13 months, Glasgow, KY  
 Christian -- 18 months, Cynthiana, KY  
 Christian -- 2 years, Mooresville, IN  
 Dakota -- 6 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 DiAngelo -- 11 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Eleanor -- 11 months, Oolitic, IN  
 Emma -- 7 months, Monticello, KY  
 Emma -- 12 months, Greenville, IN  
 Everett -- 20 months, Waddy, KY  
 Ezra -- 15 months, Mooresville, IN  
 Gracelynn -- 3 years, Coal City, IN  
 Hannah -- 2 years, Crofton, KY  
 Harper -- 6 months, Bloomington, IN  
 Jace -- 2 years, Indianapolis, IN  
 Jason -- 12 months, Richmond, KY  
 Jayden -- 10 months, Daleville, IN  
 Judah -- 2 years, Louisville, KY  
 Kenzie -- 21 months, Crittenden, KY  
 Ka'Myra -- 19 months, Indianapolis, IN  
 Kenneth -- 2 years, Covington, KY  
 Korbynn -- Harrodsburg, KY  
 Lucas -- 14 months, Paris, KY  
 Luna -- 16 months, Terre Haute, IN  
 Michaela -- 2 years, Indianapolis, IN  
 Raine -- 2 years, Lafayette, IN  
 Rowen -- 22 months, Fort Wayne, IN  
 Rueben -- 22 months, Covington, KY  
 Sawyer -- 2 years, Lebanon, IN  
 Serenity -- 2 years, Spencer, IN  
 Serenity -- 11 months, Greensburg, KY  
 Shawna -- 3 months old, Parkers Lake, KY  
 Theodore -- 20 months, Rockport, IN  
 Timothy -- 2 years, Bluffton, IN  
 Willow -- 7 months, Cattlettsburg, KY  
 (\*These children were referred by 5/20/18)

# Hip-Hip-Hooray! VIPS Kids Achieving Milestones

*Every milestone is precious! Our children work hard to achieve them, no matter how small they may seem. When we compare our children to themselves -- where they were a month ago, six months ago, a year ago -- we see the progress we are making and can rejoice that all of our efforts are coming to fruition.*

**Paige Maynard**, TVI, VIPS Louisville, shares this information about the children she is seeing through home visits:

Emma learned to use a low powered monocular while on an airplane to Disney World. She had already become proficient in spotting objects through a toilet paper tube and pre-monocular made of PVC pipe. The natural next step was to let Emma learn to master a monocular with magnification power. Elise, Emma's mom, said "Emma had no interest in looking out the window until I gave her the monocular." Not only did Emma learn to spot objects with this tool, she gained the experience of learning what the world looks like from the air! Yay, Emma and Elise, for encouraging Emma to use the monocular in a real-life setting!



Kaily crawled all the way from the living room to the kitchen today! She loves paper, so this Mylar was a great motivator that was easier for her to see. Her Physical Therapist, Amanda, collaborated with us today, and is the adult in the picture.



Left: Aubrea has learned to press buttons with her feet, a new skill she showed at my last visit with her.

Below: Connor and his Dad David explored positional concepts by putting tape and stickers on the left, right, and middle of a paper banner on the floor.



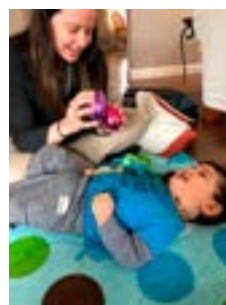
Gabriel's mom was concerned that he was having trouble seeing things out the car window. So on a recent visit we went sightseeing in the car. We practiced talking about whether things were on the left or right side of the car, and as pictured here, used a toilet-paper-tube monocular to spot large objects outside the car. Once Gabriel gains proficiency with the paper tube, we can move to using magnification so that we can help him look at dogs and deer, etc., which are the things that he has trouble seeing.



Bailey just learned the beginning pretend play skill of hugging a stuffed animal! You should have heard her laugh each time she snuggled her bear!

**Annie Hughes**, Director/TBLV, VIPS-Indiana, shared these exciting milestones for VIPS kids seen around Indiana.

Cohen has been "practicing looking" with his big sister, Mary Cate, using the mini light box and LightAide. Cohen is now looking at and following different objects. He even smiled and giggled the other day while interacting with Mary Cate! Hurray, Cohen and Mary Cate! VIPS might have a future teacher in this young lady!



Pip has been working with VIPS provider, Melissa, on orienting toward sound. Pip's mom took this photo because he was laughing and giggling at the sounds of the bumpy metallic eggs being shaken and rubbed together. Of course the more he smiled, the more sounds the eggs made!

Ruby is beginning to show more interest in playing with toys. She recently spent several minutes holding or touching a baby doll, and her mom reports that this is the longest she has played with a toy. Way to go, Ruby!

**Katie Dick**, VIPS DI, Central KY, just has to brag about the kids she is seeing.





Go Lavin for practicing drawing circles and other shapes!

Way to go Gage for holding TWO maracas and for getting so strong walking in your gait trainer!



Sloane (left) is working very hard to use her vision when reaching and grasping preferred toys. In this picture, she reached and grasped a red slinky with her right hand. This was a first for Sloane! We are so proud of her and all her hard work!

Vienna (right) is learning to match colors and strengthen hand-eye coordination

using pipe cleaners and a decorated coffee can. She matched colors with 100% accuracy! Way to go Vienna!



*Fran Woodward*, Vounteer in the Twos class, VIPS Louisville, caught some little ones working on skills.



Way to go Rebekah (top left) for activating her fan by using a switch! Yay for William (top right) for overcoming his fear of walking on grass!



Hooray for Mackenzie for navigating so well with her adapted cane!

Yay for Lexi for great color sorting!



Way to go Amelia (right) for using both hands to explore and for using a visually guided reach!



*Tracy Webb*, VIPS DI, Louisville, shares this news about her students.



Harper (left) has learned to tolerate messy hands to finger paint, while maintaining a high fashion pro-file! Harper is stepping out of her comfort zone and beginning to tactilely explore new textures such as play dough, and most recently, sticky homemade paint.



Bradley (left) is learning to use his cane to travel more independently in Kids Town Preschool.

Aubrey (right) exercises tactual skills to look at the braille riddle sign on the playground.



## Parent & Teacher Recommendations

*Ashley Gray* wants to share an idea she had to help her daughter, Ainsley, experience sensory play. Ainsley has difficulty with lifting her arms and legs, so Ashley, like the smart momma she is, thought about this challenge and hot-glued two black plastic tray-type take-out containers together. She then cut the lip off one side, so that Ainsley can just reach right in. This type of sensory play container would be good for your child if he or she has trouble lifting arms or legs to reach into a container. Ask your VIPS teacher to help you make one of these if you feel your child could benefit.



*Ainsley with her sensory tray.*

Ashley also recommends the Ditty Bird™ board book series. Each book has a button on each page which is easy to press, and which plays sounds that don't get on an adult's nerves. Ainsley's TVI, Paige Maynard, recommends that visual and tactile modifications be made to the book, specific to each child. For example, putting a small piece of contrasting black construction paper around the button to block out the visual clutter is a good idea for some kids. A tactile marker, such as a small piece of Velcro, near or around the button would also be a good idea. (Available from Amazon and from <https://dittybird.com>)

*Shirley Davis*, foster mother of a VIPS child, recommends the Fisher-Price Bright Beats Franky Beats Bat & Boogie Toy™. Long name, awesome toy! This toy is very easy to activate – a very light touch will make it make music and light up. It would be best for a child in CVI Phase 2 who is learning to reach out. (<https://www.amazon.com/Fisher-Price-Bright-Beats-Franky-Boogie/dp/B01IN4X6T6>)

*Maria Arellano Gonzales*, mother of Kaily, recommends the Nuby Sectioned Silicone Feeding Mat™. It sticks to the table or highchair, so that foods are always in a predictable place – no more bowl sliding around the high chair tray, and no more dropping the bowl on the floor. It is available in multiple solid colors, so that foods will visually stand out when placed on it. It is also much less expensive than other suction silicone dishes on the market. (<https://www.walmart.com/ip/Nuby-Sectioned-Silicone-Feeding-Mat/55314499>)

Paige Maynard, Kaily's DI, applauds Maria for doing housework while wearing Kaily in a child carrier. This enables Kaily to learn skills in so many areas! (ECC O&M, ECC daily living, ECC compensatory, ECC sensory efficiency, Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Concept Development (Cognitive), Self Help, Self Regulation). Wearing Kaily is an easy way to give her exposure to a wide variety of experiences, which will encourage independence as she gets older, and which will help her develop SO many skills now.

### ***A Spoonful of Information Helps the Medicine Go Down***

by *Brittany Clarkson*, Welcome and Family Support, VIPS  
Louisville, VIPS Mother

More often than not, our children with visual impairments have other diagnoses or needs. Sometimes this means we end up spending more time than we would like in the offices of doctors and specialist. My daughter recently visited a gastroenterologist who suggested she have some labs done. I immediately began to dread the visit. You know..... the ones that end with you and a team of nurses holding down your child while they draw blood, the ones that end in tears, both yours and your child's. Nevertheless, we drove across the street to Norton Children's Medical Center on Chamberlain Lane. We had not been to this

location before, but it was literally across the street from her gastroenterologist.

After registration, a nurse came out and introduced herself to Addy and to me. She watched as Addy picked up her cane and started walking forward. She asked Addy if she was completely blind. Addy then answered "yes". The nurse explained a teacher would come in and go over everything they were going to do. They would let her feel all the supplies and tools they were going to use and would do everything they could to make her feel comfortable and aware of what was going on.

Once we got in the room, the nurse started preparing her supplies, laying them out for Addy to feel. She told Addy she had a scanner and would need to scan her bracelet. Addy wanted to feel the scanner. She allowed Addy to feel the scanner and scan her own bracelet. This made Addy smile- which doesn't happen often while at the hospital for labs.

Another lady came in and greeted us. She explained each item they would use, how it worked and why they used it. She handed the items it to Addy to explore. She started to tie a rubber band around Addy's arm looking for a good vein to poke. Addy began to get really anxious and would not sit still at this point. I sat in the chair with her on my lap. They took the rubber band off and went over everything again.

Earlier, they had told Addy there was numbing spray they would use before they started the blood draw. The nurse described the sound of the spray as opening a coke can. Addy now insisted on hearing the numbing spray before they used it. The teacher pulled up a video and allowed Addy to hear what the spray sounded like. They brought in an iPad and asked Addy if there was any music she wanted to listen to and we started the process again. Although Addy was still resistant and I had to help hold her arm straight, they were able to get all the blood they needed without blowing a vein, in one attempt and with very few tears.

Addy asked if she would need a band aid and the nurse assured her she would put one on. Addy told her she didn't like band aids because they hurt when you take them off, so the nurse placed gauze and paper tape over Addy's arm which was much less sticky and seemed to comfort Addy. They encouraged her and attempted to make her feel comfortable in every way possible through our entire visit. They made this momma's heart happy and both of us had a much better experience than in the past.

### ***TEACHER TIP***

*Paige Maynard*, TVI/DI, VIPS Louisville

How about this tip for sensory bins? (Sensory bins are containers filled with small fillers such as beans, rice, other non-cooked materials, and cereal pieces under which specific sensory objects, small toys, 3-D letters, etc. have been hidden for the



children to seek and find.) Many parents and teachers are afraid to use such small, hard fillers for a sensory bin, and rightly so for some children who might swallow and choke on such items! I recently heard of an unusual filler to use instead of these more dangerous ones--potato flakes! Potato flakes are small enough to fully dissolve in the mouth, and can help the family feel much safer with sensory play.



*Myles uses a great pincer grasp to pick some potato flakes from his grandfather's hand. He thinks they are pretty tasty, too!*

# VIPS Students and Graduates in the Spotlight

VIPS graduate, *Addy Clarkson*, enjoyed 15 minutes of fame recently when she sang the national anthem at the University of Louisville's Women's Basketball Game. Addy appeared on Great Day Live on WHAS11 TV the day before the game along with Jeff Walz, the women's coach. Her first public performance showed up on YouTube and Facebook as well as in local news media WDRB (138,000 viewings!) and WAVE3. After this successful performance, *Addy was invited to open the second round games of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament*. She also appeared on the WHAS Crusade for Children TV show.



Prior to her UL Women's basketball appearances, Addy had sung at various charity fundraisers including the VIPS Stampede, at middle

## Derby Fever Comes to VIPS Kids Town Preschool

Just as Derby fever takes over Louisville the week before the first Saturday in May, it came to VIPS in the form of festive and educational activities for the students of Kids Town Preschool. They made boats to have their very own boat race. They decorated "horses," named them, and participated in "calls to the post." The boys wore jaunty little hats and the girls big straw bonnets they decorated in true Derby style.



*Left: Maddie and Ms. Ashley show off the sailboats the class created for the race. Below left: Ian and Lucas look so handsome in their hats. Below right: Kendall and Olive modelled their bonnets. .*



school basketball games, at church events and on Crusade kick-off events. But her recent 15 minutes has expanded because she's now getting calls for future national anthem performances! Bravo to the fearless Addy!

Exuberant *Oakley Ireland*, a current VIPS Kids Town Preschool student, can be found on YouTube supporting the WHAS Crusade for Children, which has graciously provided grants to help VIPS for over 30 years. Go to [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b\\_x02riC8JE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_x02riC8JE) to see Oakley in action in her classroom.

VIPS KidsTown Preschool student, *Maddie Horlander*, was featured in the March 2018 issue of the Lion Magazine in Joan Cary's article, "Giving Storytime Back." Maddie was pictured reading a Braille Tales book in the article describing how she receives free books through a unique partnership between the Louisville-based American Printing House for the Blind, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and Penguin Books. The books, print with braille overlays brailled by trained inmates at the

Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women, enable a print reader to read the book as a braille reader follows along (or a braille reader reads the book as a print reader follows along). Read the entire article at [http://digital.lionmagazine.org/display\\_article.php?id=3015833&view=476806](http://digital.lionmagazine.org/display_article.php?id=3015833&view=476806). You can learn more about Braille Tales and how to receive them at [www.aph.org/brailletales](http://www.aph.org/brailletales).

VIPS Kids Town Preschool student, *Eli Ruidiaz*, threw out the first pitch at a Louisville Bats game recently. To most people it looks like Eli is looking away, but his mother points out that even though it was completely overcast, he couldn't bear to look up for even a second due to his photophobia.



VIPS graduate, *Taryn Seif*, was recently named one of only three national winners of the 2018 Very Special Arts (VSA) Playwright Discovery Competition, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program awarded by the Kennedy Center's Office of VSA and Accessibility. Selected winners attended the prestigious Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in Washington, D.C., April 13-15, 2018. Theater professionals worked with Taryn and the other two winners on their scripts, culminating in a staged reading of the winning plays. The young playwrights also participated in the festival's award ceremony. Taryn's play was entitled "I'll Do Anything." Taryn, who is a 10th grader at the Kentucky School for the Blind, was the youngest winner this year. You make us proud, Taryn!!



*Taryn (left) and mother Jayne (right) took in the sights while in DC.*

## Dot-to-Dot: Part II

by Pauletta Feldman, Special Projects, VIPS Louisville

In the last Dot-to-Dot, you learned about the braille alphabet. In this lesson, let's take a look at braille contractions. There are a total of 180 contractions in the Unified English Braille (UEB) Code.

A braille contraction is used to convey a whole word or a group of letters within a word and may be made up of more than one braille cell. Contractions allow increased efficiency for reading and writing braille and help limit the volume taken up by braille. (For instance, the single, 400+ pages print text used in my son's sixth grade geography class required 16 braille volumes -- each 12"x12" and 3" thick!)

### First, a few quick definitions regarding signs or contractions:

- Strong sign: A contraction that has dots in the top and bottom rows of the braille cell.
- Groupsign: A contraction that represents a group of letters.
- Wordsign: A contraction that represents a whole word.
- Shortform: A contraction that is an abbreviation of a word.

### 1) Strong Sign Whole- and Part-Word Contractions:

and      for      of      the      with

```

⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠
⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠
⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠
    
```

These can be used as whole words or as parts of other words. They fill in the last five cells in the final line of the braille alphabet.

**\* See alphabet chart that follows to help you remember.**

The braille signs *and*, *for*, *of*, *the*, *with* can be used as parts of other words as well. For instance:

gr(and)      (for)get      (the)m      s(of)t

```

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠    ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
    
```

(with)draw

```

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
    
```

**2) There are also alphabetic wordsigns.** When standing alone in a sentence, each letter of the alphabet (except for e, i, o) stands for a particular word, as follows:

- b but
- c can
- d do
- e every
- f from
- g go
- h have
- j just

k knowledge  
 l like  
 m more  
 n not  
 p people  
 q quite  
 r rather  
 s so  
 t that  
 u us  
 v very  
 w will  
 x it  
 y you  
 z as

**\* Remember:** Dot 3 was added to each of the first 10 letters in the braille alphabet *a-j* to form the letters *k-t*; dots 3,6 were added to letters *a-e* to form *u, v, x, y, z*. The letter *w* did not follow the pattern. So, the contractions *and, for, of, the, with* are formed by adding dots 3,6 to the letters *f-j*.)

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
u	v	x	y	z	and	for	of	the	with
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
w									
⠠									

**Braille Brain Teaser -- *and, for, of, the, with:***

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

**Braille Brain Teaser -- *alphabetic wordsigns:***

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

Answers are on page 15.

# Get in the STAMPEDE Spirit!



by Dani Harper, VIPS Louisville Development Coordinator

One of the biggest fundraisers for VIPS every year is our Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates Stampede for VIPS 5K Run/Walk. This event is a great opportunity to bring VIPS families together with the community to raise funds and awareness for VIPS. Last year's Stampede raised nearly \$70,000 towards the education of children who are blind or visually impaired, and, as always, featured a special category of race winners who are blind or visually impaired!

At VIPS we encourage all families to get involved in any way they can, and Stampede is a great opportunity to get your friends and family involved in a fun way. As a VIPS parent or caregiver you have the ability to create your very own fundraising page to encourage your supporters to join you at the Stampede. The VIPS family who raises the most money or brings the most participants wins a great prize!

For years, VIPS families have used this as an opportunity to raise awareness. Kristin Horlander, mother of VIPS child, Maddie, is the leader of the team "Maddie's Minions." Kristin says, "The stampede not only gives back to a great cause that has given so much to us, but it's a chance to rally all our friends and family to stand beside Maddie to show their support for her. She declares it Maddie's Minion Race Day every year!"



And you don't have to be a current VIPS family to participate! As we often say at VIPS "Once a VIPS family, always a VIPS family." Brittany Clarkson is the creator of "Team Addy" which always brings out a huge group of friends and family for VIPS graduate Addy Clarkson. "My family looks forward to Stampede every year. We are blessed with so many who love and support our daughter and it is amazing to see them get together to support a cause so close to our hearts. We always have team shirts made -- it's a fun way to promote your team at Stampede and also a great way to raise awareness about blindness all year long."



Please contact VIPS Development Coordinator Dani Harper, [dharper@vips.org](mailto:dharper@vips.org) or (502) 498-2926, to get started on creating your very own family fundraising team for this year's Stampede. She will help you set up your own individualized fundraising page that will have its own unique link that you can share on social media to get the word out.

We hope to see you at this year's stampede on September 29th for our 2nd year at The Louisville Zoo!

## VIPS Staff News

**Karen Weber** recently resigned from her role as Instructional Assistant in the Kids Town Preschool. We wish her well in her future endeavors.

Taking Karen's place is **Debbie Hardesty**, Instructional Assistant in Ms. Staci's classroom. Debbie writes:

*"I've been married to my husband, Kevin, for 43 years. We have four children and seven grandchildren. Our youngest daughter has learning disabilities (dyslexia and Central Auditory Processing Disability).*

*My teaching certification is in grades 1-8 for both general education and special education. My master's degree included an endorsement as a reading specialist and my rank 1 certification included additional hours in reading and in math.*



Debbie played puppets with Kids Town student Harper.

*I have taught 23 years, 14 in Jefferson County Public and nine in Louisville Catholic Schools. I also worked two summers as a reading enrichment teacher in the elementary unit at the Home of the Innocents.*

*I retired in 2011 to care for my premature grandson who was born at 26 weeks weighing one pound 15 ounces and 19 inches long! He remained in the NICU for four months. Luckily, he had issues only with lung development and was attached to oxygen his first year—the hardest part for me! We did breathing treatments along with physical, occupational and speech therapy at my home his first three years. He's seven now and doing well!*

*I enjoy working with children who have differences to overcome. I look forward to working at VIPS where my life will be enriched by these beautiful children who work so hard every day."*

We are tickled to report that **Ashley May**, Instructional Assistant in the Blue Room with the Twos, became Mrs. Eric Hunter on March 24. Congratulations to the happy couple!

**Heather Benson**, VIPS' wonderful Director of Development for the previous 10 years, was invited to fill a new position on the staff of the WHAS Crusade for Children. With a focus on development of millennial giving, we know that this is a dream job perfectly suited to Heather's many talents. We are thrilled for her but so very sorry for us!

We welcome our new Director of Development, **Angela Billings**, who comes to us from KentuckyOne Health Foundation. Angela writes:

*"After serving in the United States Air Force as a public affairs officer of over 22 years, I returned to the great state of Kentucky five years ago. After stops in nine locations including Washington, D.C., Germany, Korea and New York, I wanted to continue my work as a public servant back in the state from which I hailed. I've supported spinal cord injury research and raised money for Flaget Memorial Hospital in Bardstown; I've been searching for a way I could continue to have an impact in my community.*

*As a way to reacquaint myself with the Louisville market, I attended Focus Louisville in February where Visually Impaired Preschool Services was highlighted as one of three non-profits. I met our executive director, Diane Nelson, and her mid-life purpose perspective resonated with me; I had just completed Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life and was seeking my own. I also got to hear Brittany's story of precious Addy and with two sighted children, I could not imagine the challenges visually impaired children and their families face. When the opportunity to come onboard as your development director presented itself, I jumped at the chance! I believe I have discovered my mid-life purpose as well.*

*I met my husband, Greg, while stationed in Anchorage, Alaska, and he faithfully followed me around the globe wherever the Air Force chose to send me. We have travelled the world together and have been blessed with two extraordinary daughters, Annaliese, 15 and Isabel, 12. I enjoy walking our dog, Jade, entertaining, reading suspense*

novels, and watching our daughters play volleyball. I also promote a local artist; her work is on display in a local café and some pieces are now a part of Zephyr Art Gallery's corporate art program. I'm a graduate of the University of Louisville and earned my MBA from New Hampshire College. A professional communicator, I hope to lend my voice and make an impact for our own little V.I.P.s, the very important people here at VIPS."



L-R: Annaliese (15), Angela, Greg, and Isabel (12).

## Notes of Interest

- Sam Seavey, Assistant Technology Coordinator with Bluegrass Council of the Blind, one of the speakers at the Biennial Eye Opening Symposium, has his own YouTube channel called "*The Blind Life*," dedicated to providing how-to videos for people who are blind/visually impaired.
- Sarah Cawthon, M.D., is the mother of VIPS graduate Max, who has CHARGE Syndrome and is both hearing and visually impaired. Sarah has developed six videos about eating, communicating, reading, walking, writing and dressing/using the toilet for children/individuals with deaf-blindness. These are wonderfully personal and helpful videos, sure to provide a wealth of information and support for families of children who are deaf/blind. All are available on YouTube if you search online for Cawthon deafblind (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5I7X5ND2dM>).
- **Bookshare** is a free audio book service available to blind, visually impaired, physically disabled and dyslexic students who are certified by specific authorities (including special education teachers) as being unable to process or comprehend words, see text in books or on a screen, or physically manage books or reading devices.

Bookshare was designed by engineers at Benetech, a Silicon Valley nonprofit focused on developing software for social good, and funded through a renewable award from the U.S. Department of Education. More than 600,000 textbooks, novels and other materials are read aloud by a computer-generated voice and are also available in large print and Braille directly from an Internet browser -- [www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org).

## Gifts of Time and Talent

### VIPS Kentucky

Thanks once again to VIPS father, *Phil Ballou*, whose remarkable father, Cliff Ballou, and brother in law found the hole in our roof. They not only fixed it but donated their time and materials. Thanks so much!

The *Bakery at Sullivan* donated cupcakes and muffins for the brunch accompanying our Easter Egg Hunt. Our families enjoyed them all tremendously.

Thank you to *Mandy Glassner*, mother of a VIPS child, who donated laminating film.

We are terribly sorry to have omitted *Deanna Scoggins'* name from our last newsletter. Deanna has been a faithful volunteer for several years now, using her gifts and talents weekly, reading Braille with our children and playing/teaching piano.

We continue to be grateful for *Fran Woodward's* expertise in the Twos' classroom and have loved seeing Ashley Reynolds Linson, a VIPS graduate, assisting in the preschool! Both ladies have so much to share and willingly share it with VIPS!

Blessings abound in the form of *Anne Proffitt* who has volunteered her time assisting with multiple projects and providing help with office work. Thanks, Anne.

Recent preschool observers and helpers included *Leslie Bender, Robbie Bender, Janet Coomes and Drew Doyle*. Thanks for sharing your time with our classes.

Former VIPS teacher and current VIPS board member, *Terri Connolly*, gathered a dozen *Wake Forest alums* to create adapted materials for VIPS. Terri is filled with energy and terrific ideas about creating exciting and engaging tools for children. With suggestions from the equally energetic and creative VIPS



teacher, Paige Maynard, the resulting materials are now available for use by youngsters with cortical visual impairment. We are thrilled that these generous folks contributed their time and talents to benefit VIPS kids! Thanks to all!

*Members of the Middletown Christian Church* devoted a recent Saturday to preparing the VIPS landscaping and gardens for spring. Cleaning up the debris of last year's growth and readying beds for this year's has become one of the difficult tasks they have assigned themselves. They work hard to make our building look great and we value their diligence and efforts. Special thanks to: *Betty Ayers, Lisa Guelda, Carolyn Heckmann, Ann Kantner, John Kerns, Logan Lloyd, Megan Lloyd, Linda McCarty, Sherry Moak, Denise Ward, Bill Wilson and Jennifer Wilt* for their labors!

*Young visitors from the Sacred Heart Model School* paid a recent visit to learn about the work we do and even crafted sensory bottles and tactual sticks for our preschoolers. They also brought paper towels, baby wipes, toilet paper and bleach, all indispensable items for a preschool! We greatly enjoyed their visit and hope that maybe we inspired someone to become a future teacher of the blind/visually impaired!

*Julie Duszik* generously donated a quilt to be auctioned off at the Tennis Ball as well as numerous sensory quilts to put in welcome bags for new VIPS families. She even crafted darling little bags to fit on kiddy walkers! The quilters on staff "mobbed" her and were highly enthusiastic and appreciative of her thoughtfulness and skills!



## VIPS Indiana

Thank you to *Laurie Roselle* for donating the best bag of goodies for VIPS Indiana including slinkies for Welcome Bags, computer paper, and more!

Thank you to the *Theta Chapter Delta Gammas at IU* for "Jumbo brailleing" cards that say "Love" for Valentine's Day!

Our gratitude goes to *Sandy Schlafer and Laura Houston*, grandmother and aunt of an Indiana VIPS child, for sewing 12 texture bibs for the interventionists to give to families. These bibs promote tactile exploration and can help children increase their visual attention to objects in their lower visual field.



*VIPS Indiana staff, Amy and David, show off the tactile bibs!*

A heartfelt thanks to *Julia Thorpe and her family and friends* who generously donated supplies, adding their amazing skills at making texture mats and shaker tubes for the children we serve!

Thank you to *Gary and Nancy Bingham of Diversified Mailing Services* for being so generous by providing ongoing postage services for our mail.

Thank you to *Lynn, Jerry and Trystan Pettit* for spending part of their Saturday with us on March 24 at the Delta Gamma's Founders Day Ceremony. Lynn gave an emotional account about the impact VIPS has made on her son's life along with Jerry's and her life as well. It means so much to have families we serve advocating about the importance of the services we provide.

Thanks to *Melissa Vincent*, for organizing a Beautycounter fundraiser and giving 100% of her commissions to VIPS!

## Recent Grants and Donations

### VIPS Kentucky

VIPS Louisville is so grateful for the grants that have been received recently to support services to VIPS children and families:

- **Louisville Downtown Lions Club** -- \$42,000
- **Barth Foundation** -- \$1,500 to fund the Family Retreat in November.

Our heartfelt thanks to the following grantors for supporting the blind and visually impaired preschoolers of central Kentucky:

- **Karston A. & Ethelyn O. Osmondson** -- \$15,000 for early childhood intervention program
- **Children's Charity of the Bluegrass** -- \$10,000 for early childhood intervention program in certain counties
- **The Copia Foundation** -- \$7,500 for direct services in Jessamine and surrounding counties
- **Orphan Society of Lexington** -- \$5,000 for early childhood intervention program
- **Keeneland Foundation** -- \$2,500 for family services program
- **Alex G. Campbell, Jr. Foundation** -- \$1,000 for early childhood intervention program
- **Walmart Community Giving Program** -- \$500 for early childhood intervention program

### VIPS Indiana

VIPS Indiana is so grateful for our recent donations to support services for Indiana's youngest children with visual impairments:

- **The Crosser Family Foundation** -- \$1,000 to VIPS Indiana for early intervention services.
- **Brackets For Good Indiana** -- \$750

## Tables That Bloom

On April 10, the incredible women of the *Indianapolis Alumnae of Delta Gamma* hosted Tables That Bloom at the Woodland Country Club to benefit VIPS Indiana. This unique luncheon featured local designers' creative tablescapes as well as a silent auction. VIPS dad and current VIPS Indiana Advisory Board Member, Virren



Malhotra, spoke along with his son, Krishna, who wrote and read his brailled speech. Both humorous and touching, the father-son duo did not leave a dry eye in the audience.

## reVISION | A Tactile Art Exhibition

This was the third year VIPS Indiana hosted reVISION at the Indiana Interchurch Center Art Gallery. This year's exquisite show featured artwork of various mediums. We owe a very special thank you to the incredible artists for their participation as well as the amazing student artists from the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Opening Night was well-attended and numerous groups of people, both visually impaired and sighted, have come to experience the exhibit. Thank you to sponsors *Christel Dehaan Family Foundation, Indianapolis Washington Township Lions Club, and Delta Gamma Theta Chapter.*



Above: Kennedy explores a piece submitted by Greg Thompson of GRT Glass Design.



Above right: Lola, former VIPS kiddo and the inspiration behind the creation of reVISION, enjoyed all of the tactile artwork.



Right: Preston checks out 'Survival' by Felecia Wellington.

**ANSWER to Braille Brain Teasers**

(1) and for of the with: the final sign in the sentence is a period.  
 I want a band and all of my favorite foreign foods for the banquet with my family.

(2) **alphabetic wordsigns:** the dot 5 following the c is a comma and the final sign in the sentence is a question mark.  
 I can go ff you can, but will you drive?

## In Memoriam

~ Eden Lopez ~

son of Perla Lopez of Indianapolis, IN who passed away on Feb. 25 at the age of 2 years

~ Airelyn Anderson ~

of Muncie, IN who passed away on March 8 at the age of two years.

~ Morgan Olivia Thomas ~

daughter of Beth and Bill Thomas of Corydon, IN who passed away on April 24 at the age of 23 years.

~ Hannah Nicole Jones-Taylor ~

daughter of Mary Jane and Bruce Taylor and of Darrell Jones, of Georgetown, KY who passed away on May 2 at the age of 24 years.

Our hearts go out to all of those who loved Eden, Airelyn, Morgan, and Hannah.

## VIISA Training Indiana

VIPS Indiana provided a wonderful training location for the first four-day "on-site" of the 2018 Vision Impaired In-Service in America (VIISA) training, March 18 - 21. VIPS will also host the second "on-site," July 11 - 14. The Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project at the Blumberg Center at Indiana State University organized this wonderful training. It is geared to early interventionists, teachers of blind and low vision and other providers in Indiana who work with the birth-to-three children and preschoolers who have sensory loss. Elizabeth C. Dennison, MEd, SKI-HI Institute, is the primary instructor, but Annie Hughes, VIPS-IN Director/TBLV is also teaching sections of the course.

## VIPS Wish List

### VIPS Indiana

- Pressboard classification folders
- Shiny red and gold metallic pompoms from Oriental Trading Company
- Stickers (preferably smelly)
- Small orange cones for Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

### VIPS Louisville

- Bleach
- Baby Wipes
- Paper Towels
- Dish Soap
- Construction paper
- Elmer's Glue Stick
- Clorox Wipes
- Wet Wipes



1906 Goldsmith Lane  
Louisville, KY 40218

Visually Impaired  
Preschool Services

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

**Monday, July 30 - Friday, Aug. 3**

All VIPS Offices closed for Summer Break.

**Saturday, Aug. 18**

VIPS Indiana goes to the Indiana Fever Game, 4 p.m., Bankers Life Fieldhouse! Stay tuned for more details on how you can support VIPS all while seeing an Indiana Fever home game! Contact [mhowell@vips.org](mailto:mhowell@vips.org).

**Saturday, Sept. 29**

15th Annual Dr. Mark Lynn Stampede for VIPS 5K Run/Walk, Louisville Zoo. Race begins 8 a.m., Kids Corral 9 a.m.. Registration: \$30 per person until September 6, 2018; \$10 Kids Corral (children ages 3-13). Each participant in the race will receive a t-shirt, a brailled medal, and admission to the Louisville Zoo for the day of the race. Prizes awarded to top finishers! Contact [dharper@vips.org](mailto:dharper@vips.org).

**Thursday, Oct. 18**

Biennial Eye Opening Symposium sponsored by the Blind Services Coalition of Kentucky (BSCK), the VA Medical Center, and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Division of Aging and Disability Services. Speakers include Dr. Padmaja Sudhakar, neuro-ophthalmologist with the University of Kentucky, presenting on Cortical Visual Impairment; Dr. Belinda Shirkey with Retina Associates of KY addressing the top 3 retinal disorders and treatments; and Sam Seavey, Assistant Technology Coordinator with Bluegrass Council of the Blind. Contact [vipslex@vips.org](mailto:vipslex@vips.org).

**Friday & Saturday, Nov. 2 & 3**

VIPS Family Retreat. Watch for more information about this weekend packed with learning, inspiration and fun!! Contact [bclarkson@vips.org](mailto:bclarkson@vips.org).

## VIPS Summer Programs

### VIPS Kids Town Preschool Summer Program, Louisville Campus

- "Summer of Science," runs Monday-Thursday, June 11 – July 19, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. There are still openings. Contact [kmullen@vips.org](mailto:kmullen@vips.org)

### VIPS Central Kentucky Summer Sensations, Central KY Campus <https://vips.z2systems.com/event.jsp?event=119&>

- Summer fun for children, ages birth to eight (0-3 years, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.; 3 ½ - 8 years, 1 – 3 p.m.)
- **June 1 – Carnival Day** with ponies, petting zoo and reptiles!
- **July 6 – Stars & Strips Day** with Kindermusic and Lexington Philharmonic.
- **July 27 – Camp Out Day**, with local singer and author.

### Play and Learn Classes

[bclarkson@vips.org](mailto:bclarkson@vips.org)

- Friday, June 8, 10 a.m. -- VIPS Louisville Campus
- Saturday, June 16, 10:30 a.m. -- Kenton Co. Public Library
- Saturday, June 23, 10 a.m. – VIPS Louisville Campus
- Friday, July 6, 10 a.m. – VIPS Louisville Campus
- Saturday, July 21, 10 a.m. – Garrard Co. Public Library
- Saturday, July 21, 10a.m. – VIPS Louisville Campus
- Tuesday, July 24, 10 a.m. -- VIPS Indiana Campus. Contact [mhowell@vips.org](mailto:mhowell@vips.org)
- Friday, Aug. 10, 10 a.m. – VIPS Louisville Campus
- Saturday, Aug. 25, 10 a.m. – VIPS Louisville Campus

VISability is a quarterly publication of Visually Impaired Preschool Services, Jan Moseley, Editor.

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Brittany Clarkson, Welcome & Family Support  
Brandy Crush, Preschool Instructional Assistant  
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Pauletta Feldman, Special Projects  
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Paige Maynard, TV/Developmental Interventionist  
Staci Maynard, Provisional TV/Preschool Teacher  
Juanita Miles, Preschool Teacher/Developmental Interventionist  
Jan Moseley, Visual Impairment Specialist  
Beth Owens, Preschool Instructional Assistant  
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