

visability

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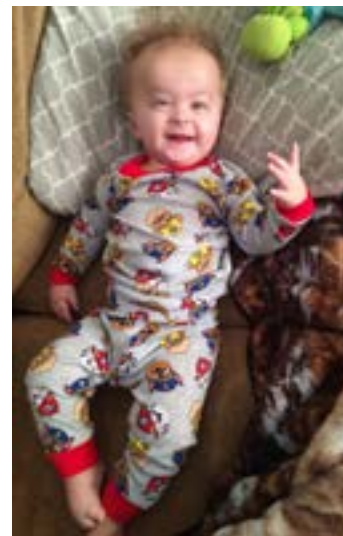
The Importance of Collaboration Between a Parent and a Blind/Low Vision Specialist

By Ashley Romine, Development Coordinator, VIPS Indiana

Easton, a 15-month-old child, started with VIPS in September 2018. Easton was referred for VIPS services due to microphthalmia, a condition in which one or both eyes are smaller in size compared to the average eye. In Easton’s case, it affects his right eye. When his VIPS Blind/Low Vision Specialist*, Melissa, first met Easton, his parents were struggling to find a toy or object to capture his attention. (This can be quite common for new parents of a child who has been diagnosed with a visual impairment.) Because of Easton’s low vision, most toys do not interest him, causing a set-back in achieving developmental milestones such as reaching or rolling.

Melissa and Easton’s mother, Jessica, brainstormed ways to boost his motivation. “We found out he definitely responds to light,” Melissa explained. “He is also very engaged with things that shine,” she added. Jessica agreed, “I saw how much he loved the lights during his therapy, so for Christmas we bought him a light bulb that changes different colors with a remote and we use that in his room often. He gets really excited and starts kicking his feet and laughing when we change the colors.” Jessica went on to say, “I think with Easton it was just really finding what motivated him, and Melissa has found exactly what grabs his attention.”

Because of the collaboration between Melissa and Jessica, they continue to discover more ways to engage Easton and motivate him to reach, roll over, and use his remaining vision. “His mom is very creative and crafty, and she showed me a number of low cost toys that have lights,” said Melissa. “She is very involved—she’s the reason I found the Baby Einstein videos,” she added. Baby Einstein videos are one of the things they have found to occupy Easton’s attention. Melissa explained that the videos often use high contrast, small and slow movement—making it easier and more entertaining for Easton to look because other shows can be too stimulating for him.



Typically sighted children are able to reach milestones such as rolling, sitting and walking simply by using their sense of sight. They are motivated to move because they see something they want to play with; therefore, a child who is blind or has low vision needs to be motivated in unique ways, whether

Continued on page 2.



Mission Statement

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

The Importance of Collaboration, Continued

through light-up toys or such things as Baby Einstein videos. Collaboration between a VIPS parent and their child's Blind/Low Vision Specialist is crucial in bringing a VIPS child one step closer to developing alongside their typically sighted peers.

Melissa beams, "Easton has made a lot of progress over the last few months. Now that he is reaching and rolling over, we are working on getting him more comfortable with touching tactile books and building his tolerance to wear glasses." Each milestone great and small is worth celebrating, and Easton is a great example of the simple progress that can be made when a creative mother and dedicated specialist help a child reach his full potential.

Jessica gushes, "We wouldn't be where we are if Melissa hadn't taught him or me so well, and showed us things that we can do to really keep him interested. I look forward to our session every month because I know Easton enjoys it so much. VIPS has been a blessing to my family and we are so thankful for the program, and that it comes to our part of Indiana. We are looking forward to what ideas we can come up with next to help Easton keep achieving his goals. I could go on for days at how amazing Melissa is. I hope that VIPS knows what an amazing asset she is to their organization!"

Because of VIPS' supporters, advocates, specialists and teachers, children's lives are changed every single day.

"In Indiana, the term "Blind/Low Vision Specialist", equates to a "Teacher of the Visually Impaired/TVI" in Kentucky.

Doing Our Very Best to Provide the Very Best Services

By Kathy Mullen, Director of Education

If you spend much time in the company of a VIPS team member, you will hear the line, "Once a VIPS family, always a VIPS family." That is a theme of welcome we take very seriously around here. I hope it is one felt and enjoyed by all who visit VIPS and are served by VIPS.

Personally, I can take this in another direction and say, "Once a developmental interventionist, always a developmental interventionist." I spent seven years in a primary level classroom and close to 18 years providing early intervention services in families' homes and community-based preschools and childcare

centers before moving into the administrative roles that brought me to my best job ever at VIPS. I loved every minute of my time as a developmental interventionist, troubleshooting trying behaviors demonstrated by the children with whom I worked, celebrating milestones and good health with families, and planning for transitioning into preschools once early intervention services ended through First Steps. I know early intervention is still in my blood by the difficulty I have bypassing the children's department in a bookstore and the Dollar Spot at Target. My family is pretty sure I have never met a baby whose developmental skills I did not covertly assess while talking to the parents.

I guess it's only natural that one of my favorite responsibilities as the VIPS Director of Education is to make observations of our education team members. Each year, I join our community-based teachers in the homes or childcare centers of one or two of the children on their caseload; the education lead of VIPS Indiana, David Sterne, does the same for those providing services in Indiana. While most of my observations of our teachers in Kids Town Preschool are larger in number due to convenience and are less formal as I move up and down the hall, I do sit for an extended time in each classroom every fall and spring semester. This is just one of the small steps we take at VIPS to ensure the quality of services provided by the VIPS Team.

I do not claim to be an expert on early intervention, but I will acknowledge the gift of recognizing good intervention when I see it. Many times I find myself forgetting the observation form I hold before me as I get lost in the moment where amazing intervention is taking place. When I come back around, I complete the observation form noting the preselected skills on my list. I then review the follow up session notes provided by the teacher and go over the form with her, asking for input. This is a very powerful time for me as well.

This past fall, I made the comment on one of our teacher's observation form about the beautiful way she embedded additional skills into her work that an untrained eye would not even notice. During our review, she asked me for specifics. How about the way she positioned herself in front of the shelf filled with enticing toys so the child could successfully focus on the ones she had before him to practice systematic scanning? How about the way she provided sensory input by demonstrating standing on tiptoes to see pictures taped to the top of child-size shelves? How about the way she pulled peers into the clean-up process so the children shared the task, practicing cooperation and thus taking less time before they could join a music activity on the rug?

I loved the VIPS teacher's response. "Oh, I didn't even realizing I was doing that!" Humility? Of course! Good early intervention? The very best! That's what we're striving for here at VIPS. Mission accomplished!

Family Events Provide Opportunities for Fun and Learning!

All events are open to all VIPS families, regardless of location.

VIPS CK Benefits from Forcht Bank Pancakes with Santa

This year was the 4th Annual Pancakes with Santa event presented by **Forcht Bank** to benefit VIPS early intervention services in Central and Eastern Kentucky. It was a packed house with children and families enjoying a delicious breakfast of pancakes, fruit and pastries while watching a video of VIPS children. After the meal, there were lots of games and sensory activities, including braille writing, for the children to enjoy, as well as carolers and a visit with Santa. Children could even write their Christmas List to Santa and send it to a real live elf at the North Pole!



A boy from the community learns about writing his name in braille.



VIPS is so thankful for the support of Forcht Bank, as well as our **Delta Gamma volunteers** who came out to help with the activities. This event was free to the community, with all donations going to support our Central KY office.

With her trusty cane, Mackenzie S. made her way independently down a hallway to her next activity.

VIPS Indiana Hosts Sensory-Friendly Santa Experience

We would like to give a BIG thank you to everyone who was able to come to VIPS Indiana's Sensory-Friendly Santa Experience on December 11. VIPS children and their siblings had the opportunity to meet and take pictures with **Indy Santa-Fred and Mrs. Claus**. We are so grateful to **Santa Fred Imhausen** for donating his time, sharing the



Santa with Kyle and daughter Mallory.



Asaiah gazes lovingly at Santa.

magic of the holidays, handing out gifts, donated by the **Indianapolis Alumnae of the Delta Gamma**, and chatting with VIPS families. It's often overwhelming to take a child who has multiple diagnoses to crowded "Pictures with Santa" locations, but Sensory Santa allowed VIPS parents to feel comfortable and relaxed while their kiddos met Santa and Mrs. Claus, ate treats provided by **Starbucks**, and sipped hot cocoa from the VIPS hot cocoa bar.



Oliver sleeps in the arms of Mrs. & Mr. Claus.

VIPS Louisville Hosts PJs and Santa Party

On December 15, families gathered at VIPS in their warmest PJs for a delicious breakfast to celebrate the holiday season. VIPS families enjoyed pancakes, eggs, bacon, cinnamon rolls and fruit all served and prepared by our friends, **Mary Frances Pack and Donna Keeling**. After breakfast, children were busy brailleing wish lists for their most coveted Christmas items and decorating foam gingerbread people. Santa must have felt all the love and Christmas cheer because he stopped by just in time. Santa took time



Ms. Brittany assists Anthony and his brother with their letter to Santa.



Aubrey and Nana had matching PJs.

with each child to pose for pictures, listen to their wish lists and let them explore his soft suit and beard. Each child left with a grin and a gift. Thanks to our gracious friends at the **Louisville Downtown Lions Club** for making our celebration so special.



Camillo and sister, Lucia, tell Santa their wishes.

VIPS CK Holds Annual Santa Party

Fifteen VIPS families from various counties came out to the annual Holiday Party at the Central Kentucky office on December 14. With the help of several **Delta Gamma volunteers**, VIPS children and their siblings participated in Dr. Seuss themed

holiday crafts, games and sensory activities. We were thrilled to have three members of the **Lexington Lions Club** join us, and they enjoyed seeing first hand the impact that their support has on families in our community.



Top left: Dmitri and Owen play on the magnetic board together.

Top right: Gage and Mom, Becca, visit with Santa.

Bottom right: VIPS was pleased to welcome members of Lexington Lions Club, including: (l-r) Lion Mac Ferguson, Lion Zadi Ryan, VIPS Regional Director Kelly Easton and Lion Pat Ryan.



Vision Loss Night at the Newport Aquarium

Vision Loss Night at the Newport Aquarium on January 31 was held in collaboration with the **Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired**. Several VIPS families attended and one family provided details of their experience:

"We went and thought it was great! The lights were dimmed throughout (except in the main entrance and gift shop), there were employees stationed at tables every few feet with tactile objects to touch (furs, skulls, turtle shells, 3D printed tadpole, 3D printed circles to feel the texture of an octopus, teeth, etc) and they were very knowledgeable and great at answering questions about the animals they were presenting. It wasn't very crowded so you could easily take your time walking through and at each of the tables. I hope they do it again! They also had enlarged maps and tactile maps available."

The Aquarium is interested in providing opportunities like this for the community and intends to host a similar event for individuals with hearing loss.

VIPS Louisville Offers Parent Paint Party

VIPS parents painted the night away on February 22, 2019 at our Louisville campus. Former VIPS dad and artist, Ben Reynolds, led our parents step by step through a beautiful beach scape painting while children played and worked on their

own beach inspired art with VIPS staff and volunteers. Parents and children enjoyed pizza and snacks throughout the evening and everyone went home with a beautiful piece of art.



Top: Artist and former VIPS dad, Ben Reynolds (far right), demonstrates a technique for parent painters (left).

PEP -- Louisville Campus

Our Parent Empowerment Program at the Louisville campus hosted special guests in February and March. In February, Ranger Julie from The Parklands joined us for a lesson in nature exploration. She brought animal pelts, fossils, fur, bones and more for our families to feel and learn about native animals across Kentucky. As Julie discussed the animals, their habits and homes, each child was given the opportunity to learn more about that animal with a real tactual representation.

March brought new music to our PEP group. Miss Stephanie with Heartland Music engaged our families with both song and music. Kids enjoyed making music with their bodies and instruments and the whole family got up and moving. After music, families enjoyed St. Patrick's Day themed sensory play. Kiddos searched for gold coins in green shaving cream and painted shamrocks using marshmallows.

There will be no PEP in April, but be sure to join us in May for more fun with Heartland Music.



Above: A table full of animal objects (turkey wings, turtle shell, skull, etc.) to touch from the Parklands. Left: Dancing to music with visitors from Heartland Music.

Those Marvelous Milestones!!

William, who is enrolled in VIPS CK Little Learners, was provided with a pre-cane device several months ago. He is now starting to use it properly and will seek it out when he knows that he is going for a walk now. Way to go, *William*!



Wow! Today at a home visit was the first time *Hunter* looked at a toy that was in his hand. This skill, called hand regard, is important because it helps him increase his body awareness, reach toward objects, and begin to purposefully grasp. What a cutie!

Andrea is making progress with using markers. Her mom, Heather, has made it a goal to include tactual learning in *Andrea*'s daily play activities. When Heather first introduced markers, *Andrea* was reluctant to even hold one, much less scribble. But with repeated encouragement and modeling, *Andrea* has started holding markers and scribbling on paper. Repetition and consistency are essential for children with visual impairments to learn. Scribbling and making marks are the beginning steps in writing and understanding written language. Scribbling also strengthens fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. We applaud Heather for her patience in providing learning opportunities for *Andrea*.



Say hello to our friend *RJ*, who has Retinopathy of Prematurity, which has caused functional field loss. He also experiences muscle tightness. This photo shows *RJ* looking to his right while his dad, Robert, holds him up to a mirror. By using the mirror to grab his attention, his parents are helping him to better move his body and develop a greater range of motion in his neck. Expanding awareness and motion will help *RJ* meet lots of other important developmental milestones. Great work, *RJ*!

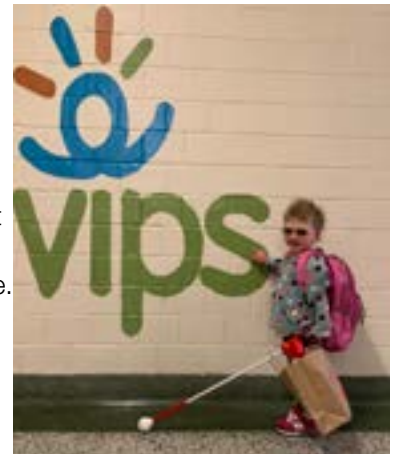


Ellis is visually fixated on an app on her mother's phone at a recent home visit. She's been having trouble with looking directly at objects while playing in her highchair, but that is changing!



Nyjah is now sitting up in chairs all by himself! It makes it easier for him to play with his busy board (which he loves) during a home visit with Mr. David.

Mackenzie S has graduated from First Steps and Little Learners. She has been a part of the VIPS family since she was about three months of age. We have watched her grow and develop and have enjoyed being a part of her journey through the years. *MacKenzie* said goodbye in February and headed off to public preschool. The Central Kentucky staff will miss this sweet girl, but we are excited to see what her future holds.



Worm Day in the Green Room

By *Brittany Williamson*, Kids Town Preschool Teacher, VIPS Louisville

Recently, I introduced my students in the Green Room to worms. Most of the students had never experienced a real worm before. This lesson allowed them to get up close with the worms and to touch and feel them. We worked on descriptive vocabulary for how the worms looked and felt. The students were worried that worms may bite them and compared them to a snake, but we discussed how worms don't have teeth. Upon releasing the worms into the garden, we talked about how the worms are good for the soil. Just a day of science at Kids Town Preschool!



Lane shows a worm, "Want one?"



At right: *Grayson* and *Maddie* get a close up view of worms crawling.

Central Kentucky Little Learners

By Dixie Miller Marz, Little Learner Teacher, VIPS CK

Wow, have our kiddos in Little Learners have been busy since the beginning of the 2019! We've had a recent graduate leave us and some new friends join us. Some of our friends have recently been willing to touch and play with playdough for the first time and one is slowly starting to show some interest in participating in art. Music and Dance parties continue to be a big hit with this crew and, of course, they all love the sensory room and recently started enjoying playing in the ball pit together. The VIPS Central Kentucky office holds Little Learners on Monday and Tuesday morning from 10-12 for our two- and three-year-olds. If you are interested in this program, feel free to call our office for more information, 859-276-0335.



Ember and Mackenzie S became fast friends.



Left: Mackenzie M. really likes art.



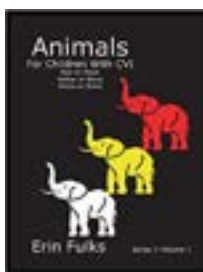
Right: Tucker loves most sensory activities, except art.

Parent/Staff Recommendations

Sheila Carwile, Mom of VIPS child, Brooks, recommends a weighted blanket to help Brooks sleep more deeply. "It has been a game changer," Sheila says. You can find the *Degrees of Comfort Weighted Blanket with 2 duvet covers* for hot and cold sleepers and advanced nano-ceramic beads (41" x 60", 10 lbs.) Amazon.



For children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), Ashley Romine, Development Coordinator for VIPS Indiana, recommends:



Animals For Children With CVI: Red on Black, Yellow on Black, White on Black available for \$25.99 on Amazon.com ; and *ABCs for Special Children: Yellow on Black, Red on Black* available for \$19.99 on Amazon.com.



The author, Erin Fulks, says, "I created [these books] specifically for children with CVI. Every child should have the opportunity to learn and explore life within their own sphere of development." While not an assessment tool for CVI, these books offer a way "for parents to hopefully have more positive and meaningful interactions with their child."

Meredith Howell, Parent and Regional Director of VIPS Indiana, recommends *ZOETOUCH LED Gloves*, available for \$10.99 on Amazon.com. These gloves are engaging for children who best respond visually to lights. You can practice and incorporate concepts such as learning color names, since you can switch the colors. You can also make them blink or flash, which will be helpful to children who need



more visual stimulation than just solid lights. Babies and toddlers love simple finger plays and action rhymes, like the *Itsy Bitsy Spider*, and the gloves can be used to help develop early literacy skills through the rhythm and rhyme. Many children with visual impairments miss out on the movements of the hands because our hands provide little contrast. When you use this type of glove, it helps draw the child's visual attention to the hands.

Dixie Miller Marz, TVI/DI, VIPS Central KY, shares the following find by Noah's mom, Ashley. "I wanted to tell you about a very cool book that one of my families has. The book is called *All Better!* from Usborne." The book runs about \$13.00 on Amazon. The book comes with reusable band aids to put on the animals' boo boos and works on a variety of skills (replacement band aids are also available on Amazon). There is a very small picture of each animal on the band aids, so the child can work on identifying small pictures and matching to a larger picture. Each page tells the story of how the animal gets hurt and where on the animal they are hurt. This allows the reader to work on body part identification. And last, the child has to put the band aid on the animal's boo-boo, which is usually hidden within



a larger picture of the animal. This works on scanning the whole picture, finding the named body part and locating the hidden boo boo in the picture. What a fun interactive book! My friend Noah loves it.

See How Far They've Come!

Our Impressive VIPS Grads!

A recent VIPS graduate from Crossroads Elementary School in Bullitt County made the Internet news by drawing a basket of apples. *Sherbitu Evangeline "Evie" Vanderpool*, age seven, used a black marker to draw the basket and then painted with watercolors to create a painting chosen for Very Special Arts (VSA) Kentucky's traveling student art exhibit. Her art reflects her "colorful spirit and 'can do' attitude", according to her teacher, Teresa Cox, who said, "Evie continues to make great strides in her effort to achieve everything she sets her mind to do." The daughter of Robert and Sarah Vanderpool of Mt. Washington, Evie was adopted from Ethiopia, where her medical needs resulted in hearing and vision difficulties, both of which now have been improved by multiple surgeries. She has regained her hearing and is able to use her limited vision very well, according to her mother. Congratulations, Evie, and keep up the great work!



VIPS graduate *Addy Clarkson* was a star as she sang the National Anthem at the University of Louisville/University of Connecticut game to the largest crowd ever (17,1500+) to attend a collegiate women's basketball game. Icing on the cake was U of L beat U Conn for the first time in 26 years! Watch Addy's performance at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU7g5evYyyl>. Mike Johnson, President of the VIPS Board of Directors, introduced Addy to Coach Jeff Walz last year and made a long cherished opportunity happen! Addy is the daughter of Nathan and Brittany Clarkson.



Speaking of Addy, she and her mother, VIPS receptionist *Brittany Clarkson*, recently filmed a commercial for the Crusade for Children. The film clip showed Addy, who was just beginning

to walk independently, crossing the finish line at an earlier VIPS Stampede and again today as she encouraged participation in Louisville's Triple Crown of Running. Brittany certainly took Addy's advice to heart as she has just completed the first two races, all three of which benefit the Crusade. We are so very proud of both of them!

Thanks to Addy's fame, VIPS made the front page of *The Pioneer News* (the Bullitt County, KY newspaper)! Although the article is mostly about Addy, it tells the story of how VIPS helped her and her family turn a challenge into a triumph. Check it out at: <https://www.pioneernews.net/content/beautiful-sounds-young>.

The Importance of Independent Mobility

By Ashley Alvey, VIPS 1999 Graduate

My name is Ashley Alvey, and I am a graduate of VIPS. I have been blind since birth from Retinopathy of Prematurity. I have never let my blindness hold me back. Currently I am the receptionist at the National Federation of the Blind headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. However, Baltimore is not where I am originally from. I am originally from Louisville, Kentucky. You've guessed it: I also love to travel. My love for travel is what I will be focusing on today.



Ashley's 1999 VIPS Graduation photo.

From a young age, I have always enjoyed traveling. I love absorbing the sounds, the atmosphere of a new place, as well as taking in the culture and languages! Two weekends ago a friend of mine and I traveled to Washington, DC for a day trip. There was a restaurant that I wanted to go to, but my friend was not feeling well and did not want to wait, so we went to another restaurant. I had my heart set on going to the first restaurant because one of my friends told me that I have to check out their food and their amazing milkshakes. I made a mental note to myself that I would go back soon.

A weekend later I was back in DC to go to that restaurant. My decision to go back and to not wait on someone to go with me is because I have missed out on so much that I have wanted to do because of waiting. A few years ago, when there was a particular sight I wanted to see, if there was no one to go with me to see it, I would not go. This was because of my fear of not finding it. I was hesitant to explore and nervous. What I learned

is that you have to take the leap of faith and just get out there and do it. It is okay if you get a bit misplaced. You can always ask someone or go into a business to get yourself back on track. You will miss out on a lot if you wait for someone to go along with you.

Also, cardinal directions really come in handy. If you know your cardinals, you can get almost anywhere in the world. I went back and it was a success. I took the MARC (Maryland Area Regional Commuter train) from Baltimore Penn Station to Union Station in Washington, found the card machine to add money to my charm card* for the Metro** and set off to find my destination. After taking the two Metros when I got to my final stop, I pulled out Google maps, looked at the route, opened up the compass app to find out which direction I was facing and took off with confidence. A few minutes later I arrived. It was such a great time stepping out of my comfort zone and pushing myself to go off and find things.

The best advice I can give is to believe in yourself. Don't give up and (do) be comfortable with the uncomfortable. You will find that traveling is amazing and structure discovery is great! Don't be afraid to get out and explore with the cane. You will be surprised at the hidden treasures you will find along the way. In the midst of your route, you may find a place that you did not know was there. Being able to go where I want when I want is an empowering feeling and it feels great. You can do anything you set your mind to. Do not let anything hold you back!



Ashley during another recent adventure hiking to a waterfall, with Fuller, her dog guide.

*A charm card can have money put on it to use public transportation in Baltimore and Washington, DC. **Metro is the rapid transit system serving the Washington, DC area.

VIPS Staff News

A warm welcome to our newest Instructional Assistant, *Shai Mullins*, who came to us via VIPS Central Kentucky where her daughter, Nyielle, received services. Shai (pronounced Shy-ee) also has a son, Levi, and very soon a second son to be named Asaiyah. In fact, we're not only welcoming her but telling her, "See you later," as she will be on maternity leave by the time this edition is printed! We can't wait to meet Asaiyah!!

We are very sad to report that *Janie Martin*, Director of Finance, has left VIPS after becoming such an integral part of

our staff. We wish her much happiness as she begins a new endeavor.

VIPS Louisville TVI/DI, *Mary Lesousky*, was honored with the "Touching Lives Award" at the Annual Conference of the KY Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. This is truly an honor for Mary to be recognized with this prestigious award by her peers! In her nearly 20 years with VIPS, Mary has been the front line that holds the hands of VIPS families through the early, often difficult, years and doesn't let go of those hands until she is sure they are ready. Many of the VIPS families Mary has served over the years have stayed in touch even as their children grow into adolescence and young adulthood, which is a true testament to the impact she has made on so many lives. VIPS is honored to have Mary as part of our team!



Mary holds her award in front of her cubicle filled with the pictures of the children she has served.

Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure!

VIPS Kentucky

VIPS Central KY is so grateful to the *Delta Gammas* who volunteered with holiday events, including: *Page Askins, Tori Beckwith, Madison Booth, Anna Craig, Ellie Feld, Kendall Geis, Madison Howard, Lauren Kohlbrand, Halee Lankford, Sydney Marecki, Savannah Miller, Anna Montgomery, Katie Morsman, Laken Pinkerman, Andrea Ringlein, Gabrielle Rondina, Mia Rose, Emily Salisbury, Brooke Stallsmith, Reagan Thornton, and Reilly Wysocki.*

VIPS Central KY was blessed by the *members and staff of Bluegrass Council of the Blind* this holiday season, as they "adopted" one of our families for Christmas. They collected clothing, toys, and gift cards for a family served by VIPS in eastern KY, and we are so appreciative of their generosity! Additionally, our *Advisory Board* adopted another family we serve, and a third family was adopted by an anonymous student enrolled in the University of Kentucky's Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments.

VIPS Louisville received the wonderful help of many volunteers over the past several months. We are so grateful to the following individuals and organizations:

For helping with personalized messages and mailing for our Holiday Giving Campaign, thanks to: *Karisa Collins, Sherry Fouche, Steve Fouche, as well as the following Delta Gamma alumnae -- Melissa Anderson, Julie Campbell, Leslie Dorris, Ginny Fuller, Gigi Gibson, Geri Huff, Elinore Jeffcoat, June King, Teresa Lawrence, Mary Frances Pack, Luly Reinhardt, Elizabeth Rivers, Tessa Young, and Krissie White.*

For cleaning in the preschool, thanks to *Robbie Bender and Ty Elpers, both from St. Xavier High School.*

For helping in the Kids Town Preschool classrooms and/or Two Day Twos, thanks to: *Sharon Bohannon; Claire Head from the University of Louisville; Jade Lasley and Karly McKinney from Holy Cross High School; Deanna Scoggins; Tamara Scott; Fran Woodward; and Alex Brehm, Bailey Hendrix and Molly Stevens from Louisville Collegiate.*

For decking our halls and our Christmas tree, thanks to *Chris Gilbert and Paula Miller.*

For assisting with the Louisville Parent Empowerment Program (PEP), thanks to *Lauren Locke from Assumption High School.*

For sending postcard reminders of holiday giving, thanks to UPS volunteers including: *Jan Arrington, Cory Brunner, Matt Gordon, Nakia Hearn, Kim Lintelman, Leigh Messer, Casey Periva, Mike Richardson, Scott Stemler, Kelly Steward, Zac Thurmand, Rob Turner and Jason Wallin.*

For making bead curtains and slinky lights, thanks to *Katie Ashley, Brandon Blackby, Travis Fermer, Kelly Heller, Blue Johnson, Jerry Moffitt, Hollie Nelson, Kelly Osbourne, Emily Russell, Christin Shepherd, Tyler Wither and Pedro Zuniga, all volunteers from Target.*



For making even more bead curtains and slinky lights and decorating Valentines that were passed out at Frankfort for Child Advocacy Day, thanks to *employees of the Kentucky Science Center, including: Maegan Baker, Summer Bosh, Adam Cobb, Jenna Dixon, Kellie Fansler, Karen Kennedy, Allen Schulz, Jacob Sye and Frankie Wareer.*



For cleaning indoors and outdoors, thanks to the great employees of *Paycor, including Paul Michael Ichde Jr., Tamara Jamson, Joseph Kendall, Ame McGann and Nick McGann.*

VIPS Indiana

We'd like to give a shout out to *Global Gifts* in Indianapolis for generously donating boxes full of gift bags to our Indiana office. These bags will be used to make our VIPS "Welcome Bags" which we fill with goodies for all our new VIPS families. "Welcome Bags" include a variety of sensory toys, such as texture blocks, slinkys, shakers, and more! Thank you, Global Gifts for your generous donation!

VIPS kiddo Jeremiah attends *The Tot Spot Early Education Academy* in Indiana. Every month, The Tot Spot chooses a charity they would like to collect in-kind donations for, and because of Jeremiah, VIPS was recently their charity of choice! Because of their donation drive, VIPS received baby wipes, play frame attachments, jingle bells, batteries, and much more. A big thank you to The Tot Spot for providing VIPS Indiana with these much needed supplies!

Thank you to *Northview Church of the Brethren* for holding a supplies and donation drive for the VIPS Indiana office! They generously donated Ziploc bags, batteries, soap, monetary donations, and more that will be used both in the office and on the road by our interventionists.

Thanks to Our Donors

VIPS Indiana

#GivingTuesday was a success! Thank you to everyone who participated November 27 as we raised over \$5,100 in 24 hours! We feel so thankful that *#GivingTuesday* gave us the opportunity to highlight the impactful story of what we do with all of our supporters. We shared a video about VIPS kiddo, *Cohen* (This video can be found on the VIPS Facebook page or VIPS YouTube channel) and the effect VIPS' services have had on his family. Cohen, his family, and his VIPS Teacher of Blind/Low Vision, Amy, are perfect examples of VIPS' mission in action. We appreciate *Ossip Optometry* for providing a match of \$1,500 on *#GivingTuesday*!

The following Grants have been received recently:

- \$10,000 from the *Smithville Charitable Trust Foundation* to fund the Early Childhood Intervention Program in Dubois, Hendricks, and Monroe counties;
- \$6,000 from the *Huffer Foundations* to fund the Parent Empowerment Program (PEP);
- \$5,000 from *Costco Wholesale* for the Early Childhood Intervention Program; and
- \$3,000 from the *Haddad Foundation* for the Parent Empowerment Program (PEP).

VIPS Kentucky

VIPS Louisville is grateful for the following grants:

- \$25,000 from the *Fred B. & Opal S. Woosley Foundation* to support family services; and
- \$10,000 from the *Irvin F. & Alice S. Etscorn Charitable Foundation* enabled us to finish the Purple Classroom addition to Kids Town Preschool. The classroom will be named later at a special ceremony.

VIPS Central Kentucky is grateful for the following grants:

- \$29,900 from the *Linda Neville Trust* for the Early Childhood Intervention program and the VISability newsletter;
- \$15,000 from the *Karston A. & Ethelyn O. Osmondson Charitable Fund* for the Early Childhood Intervention program;
- \$9,000 from the *Blue Grass Community Foundation* for Touch & Feel Print/Braille books and for the Early Childhood Intervention program;
- \$5,000 from the *Heart of Kentucky United Way* for the Early Childhood Intervention program;
- \$4,942 from the *King's Daughters and Sons Foundation of Kentucky* to fund interventionists' laptops, a TV, and the materials to make "little rooms;"
- \$3,200 from the *George Weeks Trust* for the Early Childhood Intervention program; and
- \$1,000 from the *Cumberland Trails United Way* for the Early Childhood Intervention program.

VIPS Profiled in National Professional Journal

VIPS is the subject of a feature article in the latest issue of Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education Quarterly, the professional journal for the Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education division of the Council for Exceptional Children. And VIPS Louisville's own Bradley is featured on the cover of the journal!! Be sure to also check out the feature on VIPS that starts on page 32! You can find it at: <http://dvi.uberflip.com/i/1070942-vidbe-q-64-1-winter-2019>.




New Arrivals

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

Aidan - 5 months, Goshen, IN
 Anna - 22 months, Greenwood, IN
 Annabelle - 10 months, Lexington, KY
 Arah - 2 years, Petersburg, IN
 Ayden - 5 months, Louisville, KY
 Benjamin - 1 year, Waterloo, IN
 Brantley - 1 year, Highland Heights, KY
 Cairon - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
 Carrson - 4 months, Indianapolis, IN
 Corey - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
 Elias - 2 years, Indianapolis, IN
 Elijah - 2 months, Indianapolis, IN
 Emmett - 4 months, Peru, IN
 Gavyn - 2 months, New Palestine, IN
 Grayson - 10 months, Greenwood, IN

Hazel - 1 year, Decatur, IN
 Hunter - 10 months, Wallingford, KY
 Jacob - 1 year, Muncie, IN
 Jayden - 7 months, Louisville, KY
 Jordan - 9 months, Ashland, KY
 Kaelynn - 1 year, Fishers, IN
 Laylah - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
 Jesse - 2 years, Elkhorn, KY
 Kai - 2 years, Erlanger, KY
 Leah - 1 year, Grayson, KY
 Maria - 5 months, Fort Branch, IN
 Meghan - 2 months, Madison, IN
 Oscar - 1 year, Ferdinand, IN
 Reid - 8 months, Jasonville, IN

Mia - 7 months, Madisonville, KY
 Monroe - 2 years, Louisville, KY
 Noah - 2 years, Butler, KY
 Oliver - 2 years, Georgetown, IN
 Rhett - 6 months, Princeton, KY
 Ryder - 10 months, Jeffersonville, IN
 Samuel - 6 months, Brownsburg, IN
 Savannah - 3 months, Greenville, IN
 Seth - 2 years, Plainfield, IN
 Sloane - 2 years, Fishers, IN
 Solomon - 4 months, Louisville, KY
 Tinia - 1 year, Fort Wayne, IN
 Victoria - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
 Wells - 10 months, Louisville, KY
 Willow - 1 year, New Castle, KY

Kudos to VIPS!!!

VIPS Louisville is proud to be featured as one of Metro United Way's *Terrific 25 Companies!* We are among the 25 companies in the Louisville service area with the highest combined per capita employee and corporate giving, with at least 50% participation, and that are not in the Top 25 Companies (which include the largest employers in Jefferson County). All VIPS employees understand the importance of giving back to our communities and employees working out of other VIPS offices also generously support their local United Ways. A big shout out to Metro United Way for the wonderful support of VIPS over these many years!!!

TERRIFIC 25 COMPANIES - OVERALL

The Terrific 25 represent the companies that achieved the highest per capita combined corporate and employee giving, at least 50% participation and are not recognized in the Top 25.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Metro United Way & United Way of Kentucky, Inc. | 14. Young Adult Development in Action, Inc. |
| 2. Greater Louisville Inc. | 15. Fund for the Arts |
| 3. EY | 16. Central Bank |
| 4. Dean Borton | 17. Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC |
| 5. Messer Construction Co. | 18. Bramco, Inc |
| 6. Tachau Meek PLC | 19. Brawura Corporation |
| 7. Trane Energy Supply Services | 20. Transamerica |
| 8. Invesco | 21. CareSource |
| 9. Hardig Strymaaski and Company PSC | 22. Costco Wholesale |
| 10. Old National Bank, Louisville Region | 23. Metropolitan Housing Coalition |
| 11. Sites & Harbison, PLLC | 24. Visually Impaired Preschool Services |
| 12. McLane Foodservice Distribution, Inc. | 25. Louisville Central Community Centers, Inc. |
| 13. Council on Developmental Disabilities | |

In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of

Haleigh Elizabeth Gayheart

daughter of Lisa and Ralph "Poke" Gayheart and sister of Andi of Lexington, KY, who passed away on December 26, 2018 at the age of 12.

Dajin Leavelle

son of Dagale and Shanika Leavelle of Indianapolis, who passed away on July, 22, 2018 at the age of four.

Pamela Bell

grandmother of VIPS student Trenton Holland, of Louisville, and a favorite of the other children in KidsTown Preschool, who passed away on February 20, 2019.

Our hearts go out to all of those who loved Haleigh, Dajin, and Pamela.

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."

Helen Keller

Wish List



VIPS Central KY

- Wagon
- Baby wipes
- Clorox wipes
- Copier paper
- Hand sanitizer



VIPS Louisville

- Hand Soap Refills
- Baby Wipes
- Paper Towels
- Dish Soap
- Construction paper
- Elmer's Jumbo Glue Sticks (must be purple disappearing non-toxic)
- Finger Paint
- Wet wipes
- Clorox wipes
- Batteries -- Double A and Triple A
- Magic erasers
- Laundry detergent and dryer sheets (must be ALL brand, free and clear)



VIPS Indiana

- Brother MFC7460DN Black Toner
- Rotary fabric cutter/spare blades
- Glasses: A Board Book
- Wireless mouse
- Silicone baster brushes
- Vinyl by the yard
- Plain white baby bibs
- Large, clear storage bins/totes





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

VIPS Indiana

Saturday, April 13

Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) will be held, 10a.m. - 12:30p.m. at the VIPS Indiana Campus.

Through April 30

reVISION, the annual tactile art exhibition, continues weekdays, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., at the Indiana Interchurch Center Art Gallery, 1100 West 42nd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208. For more information: <https://vips.org/event-calendar/revision-art-show/>.

Sunday, May 19

Walking for Dreams Family and Pet 5K Walk will take place along the canal in Indianapolis. Start a team, join a team, raise money as an individual or walk on VIPS' behalf. Contact Meredith Howell at mhowell@vips.org, 888-824-2197 or VIPS website.

VIPS Central KY

Saturday, April 20

Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) will be held at 1992 Walton Nicholson Rd., Independence, KY. For information or to register, contact Kelly Easton at keaston@vips.org or 859-685-6176.

Tuesday, May 7

16th Annual VIPS-CK Golf Outing will be held at Keene Trace Golf Club. Contact Kelly Easton, at keaston@vips.org or 859-685-6716.

VIPS Louisville

Saturday, April 13

VIPS Louisville will hold an *Easter Party*, 10:30a.m., featuring a sensory-friendly egg hunt and pancake breakfast. RSVP: bclarkson@vips.org.

Friday, April 26

Donuts with Dad will be held at the Louisville campus. For more information, contact Kristin Horlander at khorlander@vips.org.

Friday, May 10

Muffins with Mom will be held at the Louisville campus. For more information, contact Kristin Horlander at khorlander@vips.org.

Saturday, May 11

Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) will meet, 10 a.m., at the Louisville campus. For more info, contact Brittany Clarkson at bclarkson@vips.org.

Monday, May 20

The *VIPS Yum! Brands Golf Tournament* will be held at Audubon Country Club. Contact dharper@vips.org for more information.

Thursday, May 30

VIPS Kids Town Preschool Graduation will be held. Contact Kristin Horlander at khorlander@vips.org.

Saturday, June 1

The VIPS Tennis Ball will be held at the Louisville Boat Club. Contact dharper@vips.org.

Sunday, June 2

The *VIPS Tennis Tournament* will be held at the Louisville Boat Club. Contact dharper@vips.org for more information.

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

VIPS Louisville

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Brittany Clarkson, Welcome & Family Support

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