

2019-20 Annual Report

Celebrating

35

Years



Visually Impaired
Preschool Services

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Letter from the Director

Dear Donors and Supporters,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generous and continued support of VIPS as we celebrate 35 years of services to children with blindness and low vision. I am thrilled to share with you this annual report and the amazing story that it tells about VIPS' resiliency and mission focus. You will see that we were able to continue to grow despite many challenges and served 752 children and their families across Kentucky and Indiana this year - 7% more than last year.

Our team had been practicing the use of virtual technology to build capacity long before the coronavirus pandemic and its effect on service delivery. VIPS was prepared, even though our "Virtual Home Visit" model was intended for a totally different purpose. On March 13th we closed our offices and on March 16th we were in the homes virtually and our onsite classes continued via Class DoJo and Zoom. Our amazing team of TVIs (Teachers of the Visually Impaired), DIs (Developmental Interventionists) and assistants have not missed a beat since.

Early on, we applied for and received a Payroll Protection Program loan, which has enabled us to continue supporting our team with full steam ahead. We expect that loan to be forgiven in our next fiscal year. Community Partners have come to our aid as well with COVID-19 relief support totaling \$90,000 across both states, which we hope will carry us through this uncertain period of time. We are grateful for all our supporters because without you, our services would not be possible. You are changing lives!

With deep gratitude,



Diane Nelson
VIPs Executive Director



VIPS' 35 Years

1985

In April, VIPS began early intervention services for eight blind and visually impaired children and their families with grants from Metro United Way and WHAS Crusade for Children. Offices housed in Community Coordinated Child Care building.

1990-1994

1990

- Central Kentucky (CK) satellite office opens at University of Kentucky Medical Center.

1991

- Eastern Kentucky satellite office opens in Floyd County
- "Can Do!" video series launches

1993

- VIPS buys first building at 1229 Garvin Place in Louisville
- VIPS becomes a Metro United Way participating agency

1994

- "Play and Learn" program for children under age three begins

2000-2004

2002

- "Full of Hope" video series launches

2003

- First "Stampede for VIPS" is held, featuring elite blind athletes
- First annual golf outing for VIPS Central Kentucky

2004

- VIPS moves to 1906 Goldsmith Lane
- "Build the Vision" capital campaign begins

2010-2014

2010

- "Friends of VIPS" begins
- First annual Tennis Tournament
- Nearly 300 children and families in Kentucky and Indiana served

2011

- Rebecca Davis helps VIPS expand services in Central Indiana

2012

- VIPS obtains inclusion as a line item in the Kentucky budget
- VIPS opens Kids Town Preschool programs to a limited number of community peers
- Kathy Mullen hired as Director of Education

2014

- VIPS unveils new logo
- VIPS relocates Indiana office to Indianapolis (IN)
- VIPS IN participates in Walking for Dreams 5K

1980s

1988

- Statewide outreach program begins

1989

- First Family Retreat, first Summer Day Camp, first VIPS/KFC Golf Tournament
- Cabinet for Human Resources funds VIPS outreach services

1995-1999

1997

- Preschool Enrichment (REACH) program launches with the help of a Kosair Charities grant
- Transportation provided by the American Red Cross for on-site programs

1998

- First formal VIPS graduation ceremony

1999

- VIPS becomes a United Way of the Bluegrass participating agency

2005-2009

2005

- Kroger and Governor's Cup Golf Classic Tournament name VIPS as beneficiary

2006

- "Joe's Place" playground dedicated in memory of past Board President Joe Helm
- "Growing My Way" video series launches

2007

- Kosair Charities gives largest ever donation
- Groundbreaking for 8,300 sq ft addition to 1906 Goldsmith Lane
- First annual Beacon Awards honoring donors and volunteers

2008

- Kosair Charities Kids Town Preschool opens with full-time preschool
- Co-founder Sharon Bensinger retires, Diane Nelson named Executive Director

2009

- First center-based preschool class graduates

2015-2019

2015

- VIPS CK relocates to University of Kentucky's Early Childhood Lab School
- VIPS IN begins holding Play & Learn classes
- VIPS IN is added to Indiana budget
- Kosair Charities play house in Kids Town playground is completed

2016

- VIPS CK locates to Lexington Hearing & Speech Center and begins Little Learners classes
- Ribbon cutting for Ford Mobility City at Kids Town
- Radio Eye reading services for the blind and visually impaired locates to VIPS Lou
- Kids Town received accreditation from AdvancED and a 5-star quality rating by Kentucky's All STARS system

2017

- New partnership with Cincinnati Children's Hospital hosting CVI clinic
- First annual 5K for the 5 senses at VIPS CK

2018

- "Every Child Can" video available for purchase
- VIPS hosts Vision Impaired In-Service in America (VIISA) trainings

2019

- VIPS named one of Metro United Way's Terrific 25 Companies
- VIPS IN announces plans to build a Family Resource Center in Indianapolis
- VIPS begins offering virtual home visits

2020

VIPS celebrates 35 years of existence!

- VIPS IN begins capital campaign for Family Resource Center
- VIPS offices close in March due to the pandemic and services and events become completely virtual



VIPS believes...

That parents are their child's first and best teachers;

That every child has a contribution to make to society and should be valued as an individual;

That every child can learn and progress;

That young children who are visually impaired need and have a right to individualized, specialized services to empower them to function maximally in the sighted world;

That young children who are visually impaired are children first;

That offering parent education and support benefits the child's development;

That siblings, extended family members, and significant others should be included in family educational and support activities;

That building awareness of the needs and abilities of young children who are visually impaired and engaging in community advocacy are important responsibilities for VIPS staff and board members.

VISION

VIPS strives to be a national leader in services to young children who are visually impaired and their families through adherence to evidence-based, best practices in the fields of education of the visually impaired and early childhood education.

MISSION STATEMENT

Visually Impaired Preschool Services (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.

How has COVID-19 affected VIPS ?

The second week of March, our VIPS Kids Town Preschool was empty, as schools across Kentucky required students to begin non-traditional instruction (NTI) from home. We also converted to virtual home visits and suspended our Parent Empowerment Program (PEP). It was rough for our children, teachers and team in Kentucky and Indiana, but health concerns made it necessary to implement these changes.



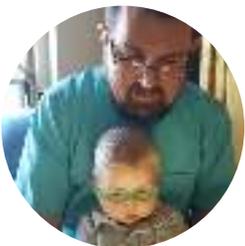
Graduation for our preschool children looked different, as teachers visited students individually to deliver graduation certificates and celebrate with masks on. Our teachers and developmental interventionists have been working hard to support our families and give them the tools they need. However, while this pandemic has not made learning convenient for our children, we are amazed that this time has empowered parents and caregivers to be more involved in their child's development. We are looking forward to the milestones still to come and await the day when we can engage with our families and children in person.

PROGRAMS & IMPACT



EDUCATION & EARLY INTERVENTION

VIPS provides education and early intervention services to children and babies born with blindness or a visual impairment in Kentucky and Indiana. These services include evaluations, in-home visits, vision-specific education and resources for parents and caregivers to advocate for and support their child's vision development.



Home visits by teachers and interventionists equip parents and caregivers with vision-specific knowledge and resources to teach their children.



Orientation and Mobility (O&M) is a program that helps our VIPS children navigate their environment safely with the use of a white cane.



Kids Town Preschool is a nationally accredited preschool located at our VIPS Louisville campus that prepares visually impaired children for academic success and social integration.



Little Learners Enrichment Program is offered only to two- and three-year olds in Central Kentucky. It provides a structured preschool setting and lays the foundation for future learning.



Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) is a space for VIPS families to socialize with one another. (This has been replaced by a virtual support program called Connecting During COVID, during the pandemic.)

PARENT STORY

by Tiffany Shipp, Mom to Owen, age 3

We learned Owen had albinism when he was six months old. We had noticed his nystagmus, so his pediatrician sent us to a pediatric ophthalmologist who told us to get in touch with VIPS. Since then, VIPS has been an enormous help and support in our journey. They helped us get him enrolled in First Steps for early intervention, introduced us to other kids with albinism, and they hold events where we could do fun activities and get involved with the VIPS community.

"The guidance we got from VIPS has helped us advocate for Owen."

During "coronetimes" we've stayed connected with Little Learners using Zoom. Remote learning has been harder for Owen and it's something we are still navigating to give him the skills he needs to develop in a format he understands and can use. As Owen's parent, I think the guidance we got from VIPS teachers has helped us to advocate for Owen. These times have been a learning experience for us all. I look forward to the days when we can reconnect with VIPS in person, but throughout this time we have been supported and encouraged by VIPS.



Owen, age 3





752
CHILDREN SERVED

253 NEW
CHILD
REFERRALS

21 FAMILY SERVICE
EVENTS

During COVID-19:

(March 16 - June 30, 2020)

735 VIRTUAL VISITS

330< VIRTUAL LESSONS
ON CLASS DOJO

120< LEARNING PACKETS
TO KIDS TOWN
PRESCHOOLERS

85< ZOOM CALLS FOR KIDS
TOWN PRESCHOOL
CLASSES

18 KIDS TOWN PRESCHOOL
GRADUATES

***INCLUDES COUNTLESS PORCH DROP-OFFS
OF MATERIALS, BRAILLERS AND SUPPLIES;
AND PHONE CALLS AND TEXTS OF
ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT***



VIPS INDIANA BUILDING CAMPAIGN



FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

1150 E Washington St, Indianapolis, IN

Groundbreaking for the VIPS Indiana Family Resource Center began in October 2019 and is quickly shaping up to be a 6,200 square foot space within Line Lofts, located just east of downtown Indianapolis. Since the VIPS Indiana office opened in 2011, the number of Indiana children we have reached has continued to grow exponentially every year. This new center will be a hub for parents to receive resources, expand office space to support more programming, be a place for VIPS children to receive on-site therapy and ultimately allow us to better serve our Indiana children and families. The center will also meet the current gap in support services, as there is currently no physical space designed for Indiana children from birth to three years old with a visual impairment.

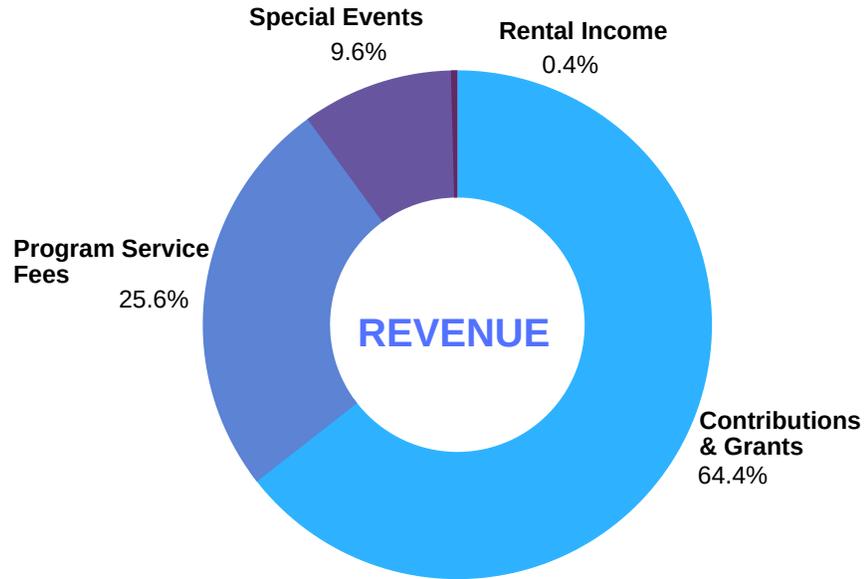


FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Contributions & Grants	\$1,809,851
Program Service Fees	\$719,997
Special Events	\$271,416
Net Investment Return	\$60
Rental Income	\$13,200

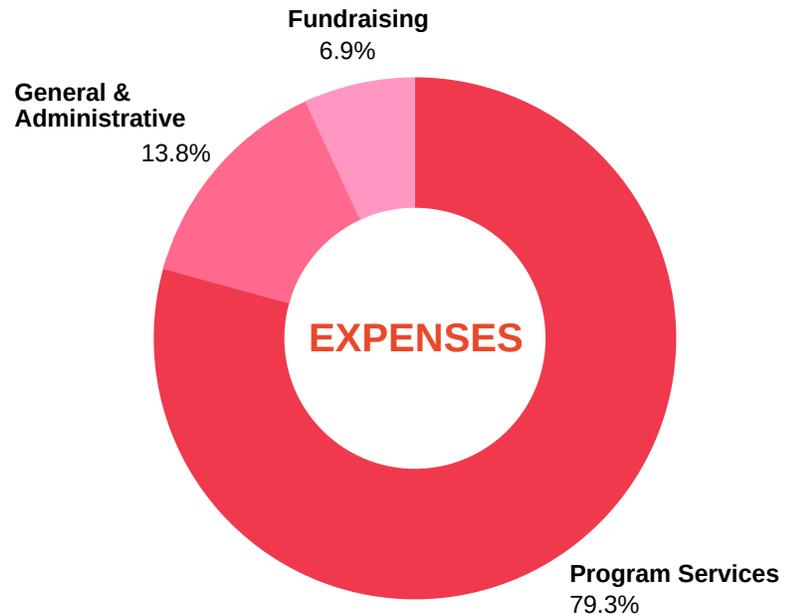
Total Revenue	\$2,814,524



EXPENSES

Program Services	\$1,919,205
General & Administrative	\$335,302
Fundraising	\$168,032

Total Expenses	\$2,422,539



NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$2,426,711
Temporarily Restricted	\$297,830
Permanently Restricted	\$82,350

Ending Net Assets	\$2,806,891

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