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# #VIPsstrong

## FY 2020-21 in Review

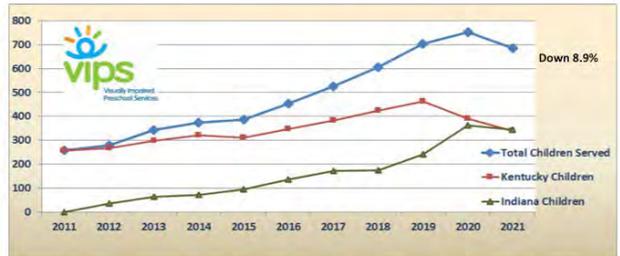
Looking back to March 2020 when VIPS shut down, we left thinking we'd return in a few days or weeks. Instead, we encountered, as Executive Director Diane Nelson so eloquently said, "unique and unpredictable challenges, exciting opportunities and most importantly, a time for VIPS to shine because of our resilience and mission focus."

In looking back, we discovered that we did, indeed, shine with many accomplishments! We discovered that we were glowing stars, from instructional and administrative staffs, to children and their families and on to board members, shining with achievements both collective and individual.

Exactly what did we accomplish in the last year and (almost) a half?

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Fiscal Year End Totals	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Children Served	257	280	343	373	386	454	526	605	704	752	685
Kentucky Children	257	266	299	321	310	348	384	424	462	391	340
Indiana Children	0	37	65	71	95	135	172	174	242	361	345



Of note: Covid restrictions were in effect for 3 ½ months of FYE 2020 through FYE 2021. Indiana First Steps quickly approved virtual visits but Kentucky First Steps was very late adapting and shut down their referral system for many months. Additionally, ISBVI halted birth to three services for Indiana absorbed all their new referrals.

# Game-Changing Grants For VIPS Indiana Capital Campaign

## Grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. and Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust Bring VIPS Indiana Near Capital Campaign Goal!

VIPS Indiana has received grants from [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) and the [Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust](#) in the amounts of \$300,000 and \$250,000 respectively for its Envision the Future capital and operations campaign.

The grants are instrumental in helping VIPS complete the newly named the Simon and Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center near downtown Indianapolis. Once open later this year, the center will be a hub for parents to receive resources and a place for children to receive therapy onsite. The

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**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.

## VIPS Indiana Capital Campaign Grants

Cont'd from front page

center will also allow VIPS Indiana to offer more programming and training sessions for providers. The grant money VIPS received will allow the organization to continue providing vision-specific early intervention to children who are blind or visually impaired and support to their families.

“The Family Resource Center has been a dream of ours and the families we serve for years, and this funding from the Lilly Endowment and the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust puts us at 98% of our goal,”

said Meredith Howell, regional director of VIPS Indiana. “The generous support from all our donors will impact the lives of countless children living with blindness or vision loss for years to come.”



*The new building is nearing completion!*

“You cannot overstate the positive impact VIPS Indiana makes on these children and their families. The Family Resource Center will be an incredible asset to the entire community,” said Gene D’Adamo, president and CEO, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust.

VIPS Indiana has \$15,000 to go to reach its capital campaign goal of \$2.5 million and continues to seek donations. You can learn more about the center and the capital campaign at <https://vips.org/vips-indiana/family-resource-center/>.

The Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust was established upon the death of Nina Mason Pulliam in 1997 to support causes she loved in her home states of Arizona and Indiana for 50 years. The Trust seeks to help people in need, protect animals and nature, and enrich community life in metropolitan Indianapolis and Phoenix. The Trust has distributed a total of nearly \$341 million.

## #VIPSstrong

Cont'd from front page

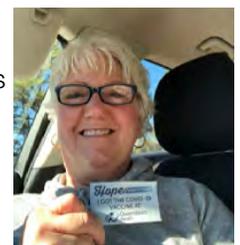
Despite being kept separate by virus restrictions, the staff held together through the eloquence of Executive Director Diane Nelson’s Friday messages to staff each week for 51 weeks (and counting) -- positive words of cheer, hope and news of people and places which were closed off to us, words that restored a sense of normalcy in the most unusual situation any of us have ever faced.

### ***But what about instruction for an agency whose very heart is teaching?***

- VIPS served 685 families last year, through 15,809 hours of face-to-face time (virtual and in-person) with children, including 13 individual, distanced graduations in children’s homes.
- Referrals from KY First Steps were delayed for many months (down 8.9% from the previous year); virtual visits were approved and, finally, face-to-face visits resumed in May 2021. IN First Steps quickly approved virtual visits then lifted restrictions to see children face-to-face again in February 2021.
- Our teachers spent over 450 hours collaboratively creating three new innovative curricula: Preschool, Physical Education and Mobility. We hope these will become a national standard for learning for all preschool children with visual impairments. They will soon be tested with the final product anticipated to be market-ready through collaboration with university programs in early intervention.
- VIPS Indiana staff absorbed referrals as Indiana School for the Blind/Visually Impaired halted services to preschoolers.
- Team members received their first “shots of hope” in February 2021 (and received their second shots 3-4 weeks later) to begin our journey back into children’s homes.
- VIPS offices and Kids Town Preschool re-opened in March 2021 after a 12-month shutdown. The second day that the Preschool was open, a surprise visit from Kentucky Childcare Licensing resulted in a continued 5 Star Rating!
- Kids Town Preschool graduated 13 children with in-person ceremonies spread over two nights to accommodate COVID distancing requirements.



*Avron was bright and ready for his virtual session.*



*VIPS teacher, Ms. Carla, was happy to get her first dose.*

### **And what about the children's families - what happened to them?**

- Family participation was a key to the success of virtual intervention.
- Some families opted not to receive virtual services during Covid, preferring to resume services once face-to-face was possible.
- Virtual "Connecting During Covid" programs were held for families.
- 40 families registered to attend our Annual Family Retreat, our first virtual retreat – the most ever!
- As of May 2021, all KY First Steps clients now have the choice of in-home or virtual services.



*Owen and his mom during a virtual visit.*

### **How was financial support impacted by the pandemic?**

We ended the fiscal year in the black, raising more money than we spent, despite COVID shutdown/restrictions, cancelled/virtual fund-raisers and reduced donor contributions. Highlights include:

- \$1.1 million in support of our new VIPS Indiana facility, the Simon & Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center, through in-kind services from TWG Development, Construction and Management.
- \$336,000 loan-to-grant conversion from the Small Business Administration to support keeping people employed throughout Covid.
- \$300,000 from the Eli Lilly Endowment for the Simon & Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center.
- \$250,000 from the Kentucky Department of Education.
- \$250,000 from former VIPS IN parent and board president, Virren Malhotra, to jump start other giving and for chairing the capital campaign for the Simon & Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center.
- \$225,000 support from Kosair Charities.
- \$200,000 endowment from the Louisville Downtown Lions Club and Lion Charlotte Stengel, in honor of her late husband, Lion Dr. Ralph Stengel, with a pledge to help raise \$500,000 by December 2025 to be permanently invested, with proceeds to be used for VIPS operations in perpetuity.
- Two fleet cars including their insurance, maintenance and repairs for a period of five years from the Etscorn Foundation, stretched by



the Huffman Auto Group to obtain great, gas-saving Nissan Altimas. We now have vehicles in Indianapolis, Lexington, Louisville and Owensboro!

- \$75,000 endowment from the Louisville Downtown Lions Club to support continued education and to grow a pool of new teachers in the field with a lens to increasing diversity when possible.
- \$30,000 from IHeart Media in free radio advertisement in Central Kentucky.
- \$25,000 from GE Appliances to support Kids Town Preschool and to rename the preschool kitchen.
- All appliances for our new Simon & Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center from GE Appliances, as well as the replacement of aging appliances for VIPS Louisville.
- Families directed gifts to VIPS in memory of their loved ones: Bob Belknap, Stephen Boyd, Bob Bracy, Willie Frank Honza, Dow Huffman, Joe Lesousky, Betsy Montgomery, Sara Krebs Osborne and Lion Judy Wright.

### **And yes, we even received recognition, awards and positive publicity:**

- Charity Navigator awarded VIPS a third consecutive 4 star rating for "outperforming most other charities in America."
- The Better Business Bureau recertified VIPS as a Charity of Choice for meeting all 20 standards for Charitable Accountability.
- VIPS was featured in a 70-minute documentary created by the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- The United Way of Central Indiana welcomed VIPS Indiana as a new community partner, the first in 10 years, saying, "We commend your organization for your commitment to quality human service delivery and sound governance and management."
- VIPS "hit it out of the park" in an extraordinary accomplishment, receiving accreditation by the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, the international professional organization for blindness workers and agencies. Accreditation was granted for ALL VIPS programs and services across both states in the areas of Early Childhood, Preschool Services, Itinerant Services, Orientation and Mobility and Identification and Referral.

### **And what about growing our services?**

- Building began on our future home in Indianapolis, the Simon and Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center, with a potential move-in in late the Fall.
- Kathy Mullen, VIPS Director of Education, and David Sterne, VIPS Indiana teacher and First Steps supervisor, helped certify a new class of VIISA graduates, teaching other service providers about visual impairments/blindness.

- VIPS Louisville added a much-needed new parking lot behind the Kids Town playground.

As we look back on this year of extraordinary challenges, changes, creativity, innovations and accomplishments, we recognize the star quality of our staff, children, parents, Board of Directors, and incredibly generous donors. We not only held together, we exceed our own expectations and are #VIPStrong!

## Low Vision Clinic Brings High Hopes

by Jenny Castenir, VIPS Family Services Coordinator

After attending VIPS Kids Town Preschool and having built a solid foundation of skills, our daughter, Hannah, entered Kindergarten at a public school this year. We were thankful to have a school where her teacher and principal took an interest to understand Hannah and make sure the school did everything possible to help her succeed. Hannah was provided a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) who would visit with her several times a week. We were all excited to see how much Hannah loved school and how hard she worked. She constantly exceeded expectations going over her goal on MAP tests and learning 100 sight words in Kindergarten!

Most kids graduating from VIPS Kids Town Preschool go to a Low Vision Clinic (LVC) during their last semester at VIPS. However, due to the pandemic, Hannah was not able to have an evaluation completed prior to Kindergarten.

Her TVI explained to us that as school work got harder each year, Hannah could benefit from technology. So, having her evaluated by certified low vision specialists would help us to determine how well she can use the vision that she has.

We spent an afternoon at Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) where she was evaluated by a low vision specialist and was able to try specialized equipment that could help her in the future such as a close-captioned TV (CCTV) and monocular. In one afternoon I came to understand Hannah's vision more than I had in the last 5 years of her life! When they gave her the monocular, she could immediately read words on a whiteboard! She took it home with her and noticed trees and signs on our way home. She took the monocular with her to her sister's dance recital and was so excited to be able to see her sister dance. She was even able to find her on the stage!

Hannah was prescribed several items that will help her to maximize the vision that she has while in school. While she regularly receives care from a highly recommended ophthalmologist in Cincinnati, and while we know her diagnosis and the health of her eyes, I had always struggled to understand what she can actually see. I never knew the importance of a Low Vision Specialist or Low Vision Clinic, but in one afternoon at the Low Vision Clinic, I began to comprehend what my daughter sees and how she sees.

This valuable experience at the Low Vision Clinic is helping us to assist her in maximizing her vision at school and at home!

\* \* \* \* \*

In May, VIPS partnered with KSB to host a LVC on the Louisville campus. It was a great way to put our doctor's office to work!

Four VIPS students and two students from Jefferson County Public Schools were evaluated by certified low vision specialists to determine how well the students can use the vision they have. The students also got to try out some specialized vision aids that will help when reading or completing their school work.



Left: Dr. Mejia assesses Andrea's vision. Right: Lane uses a CCTV with Ms. Connie from KSB.



Left: Emma tries out a monocular. Right: Ethan tries out magnification software.



## Congratulations Class of 2021!

If VIPS Kids Town Preschool had a school song, it might be "If You're Happy and You Know It," or at least that would be the school song for Graduation 2021, held on the nights of May 25 and 26. There was lots of clapping, lots of foot stomping, and many, many "Hoorays"! And that was just from the students!



Not to be outdone, those in the audience celebrated just as loudly and just as enthusiastically as the graduates proceeded to the Kids Town stage donned in their purple caps and gowns. Attendees clapped as the graduates were introduced, as their class awards were announced, and as their diplomas were granted. Foot-stomping and even more shouts of “Hooray” were heard as the students performed an action song to thank their loved ones. Teachers shared a video of graduates through the years, consisting of pictures from infancy through the current school year. (At this point, a few “boo hoos” were also heard.)



Ms. Juanita gives Amerius a hug.



Ms. Brittany met Sloane in person for the first time at graduation. Sloane had been a virtual student.

This class of graduates had a very unique preschool experience as they maneuvered through the restrictions of a world pandemic. The students’ caregivers earned their diplomas, too, as they learned the joys of online schooling. Group lessons meant full parent engagement. Daily lesson plans meant all hands on deck for the whole family. Returning to in-person school equaled an 18-day school year. To say the least, it was a family affair from start to finish!

So, as we stand for our school song, we clap, stomp, and cheer for all the graduates – those in the purple caps and gowns and those with the proud smiles in the audience.

Congratulations, VIPS Kids Town Preschool Class of '21! We're so happy for you and we certainly hope you know it!

## Summer Fun with VIPS Park Pals

VIPS Central Kentucky's first Park Pals was held on Tuesday, June 8th at Jacobsen Park in Fayette County. Teachers, Ms. Dixie and Ms. Tammy, met families at the playground area and had a great time catching up on the progress that children had made over the past year while we've been unable to meet in person. The play area was especially appropriate for work on gross motor skills as the children climbed the ladders and ropes and went down the slides. An enclosed maze area was a great place to work on navigating a space with low light, and provided a wonderful opportunity to practice stepping on and off of the structure and exploring all of the different ground coverings.

VIPS Louisville Park Pals began with an outing to Waterfront Park. It was followed by trips to Big Four Park, Fern Creek Park and Broadrun Park, among others. The children thought they were just having fun playing together, but their teachers made certain that they were also learning through exploring, practicing and observing!



Left: Eden climbs on the monkey bars. Center: Ethan looks pretty cool in his “shades.” Right: Aubrey can't resist the spraying arch.

## Playground Safety

by Tommie Roesch, TVI/COMS, VIPS Indiana

Summer is still in full swing and it is important to get out and play on play equipment. But the question comes of how to keep my little one safe when they struggle with seeing drop offs and navigating different environments. So one way to teach your child to be safe on the play equipment is to teach them that when they see a pole there is a hole. You may be asking yourself what does this mean? Well if you have ever looked at the lay out of the playground equipment there is always a pole before there is a transition. These transitions can be a small step, a change in the equipment like the start of a ramp, or a major drop off with a pole that you slide down. Many of our children don't see the drop off part and can find out the hard way that the step was a lot bigger than they thought. So, I tell the children that I am working with that “poles mean holes,” and this has stopped them from falling off the equipment.

# Summer Learning & Fun at Kids Town Preschool

## FARM WEEK



Cecilia creates a farm village. Gabriel "milks" the plastic glove inside the "cow."



## SPACE WEEK



Alana prepares to explore the blow-up astronaut. Sophia creates a space alien. Apple is an astronaut!

## ZOO WEEK



Nate & Millie sort zoo animals. Ms. Ashley helps Finn explore the animal models. Eliana rolls a marble through black paint to make stripes on her tiger.

## WATER WEEK



Children play with arctic animals in a tub of ice cubes.

## PARK WEEK



Oliver enjoyed the swing.

## Family Voices: Indiana's Virtual Heart to Heart Conference

Family Voices: Indiana's Virtual Heart to Heart Conference, to be held Thursday, Sept. 30, is a day of learning and support targeting Indiana families who have children with special healthcare needs and the professionals who serve them. The day will start with Keynote Speaker, Sue Badeau, addressing the importance of self-care for parents. Twelve unique sessions will be held throughout the day, including sessions about preparing for an inpatient hospital stay and telehealth.

Parents will have the chance to network with other attendees and to interact with sponsors and exhibitors throughout the day.

Registration is now open and FREE for families. Kentucky families are also welcome even though some of the information presented may be specific to Indiana. Spots are limited so make sure you register today: [https://whova.com/portal/registration/hthc\\_202101/](https://whova.com/portal/registration/hthc_202101/).

## Judah's Story

by Rachel Collins, VIPS mom, from the speech she gave at the VIPS Gala. You can listen to Rachel's speech [here](#).

My name is Rachel Collins, and I am Judah's mother and his advocate. Nearly six years ago I found myself in a life threatening and compromising situation. I was to learn my son was very sick.

On September 11, I received the call to come into the hospital for my scheduled induction. I was 40 weeks and it was just time! Spontaneously, my water broke the next day, but Judah hadn't made much progress in coming and I hadn't dilated much either.

Things took a turn for the better on the 13th, and I pushed out a beautiful baby boy, except he was blue. Judah wasn't breathing, he was almost unrecognizable with the swelling of his face especially his eyes. Being a first time mom, I was like "Oh, this is normal ... right?" Sadly, I was so wrong.

After holding him for 54 seconds, they rushed him to NICU. We found out he was suffering from a "bicycling seizure" and he had come down with an infection during labor that caused him to have a fever. So I still thought things would be okay; I hated seeing him this way, but I knew he'd pull through.

With Judah just 24 hours old, the most devastating news slapped me harder than an UFC fighter ever could. Judah had experienced a Right Posterior Cerebral Artery (PCA) stroke – a stroke on the right side of his brain. This type of stroke, from what we were told, was less common than stroke involving the anterior circulation. And it was rare. I would then be told that his peripheral vision was “fried” and cognitive, speech and fine motor skills would be severely impaired. Finally, after 24 days in the NICU, 26 seizures, one kidney doubled in size, three major blood clots and some medications, Ju and I were headed home to start this new journey, neither of us knowing what was ahead.

I placed Judah in Kidz Club, a daycare for medically fragile kids, so I was able to go to work peacefully knowing he was taken care of. One day, I just started thinking about what more could I do for him. He was already in First Steps, and in a facility that offers all therapeutic exercises and counseling. But I knew he needed more!

I mean, I was told his peripheral vision was “fried,” so his sight to me was and is the most important factor. I did some research and soon came across VIPS, and a sense of victory overtook me. I knew in my spirit that they were going to save my baby. It’s been nearly six years and I can’t tell you how everything unfolded, but look where I am standing today! We have hung tough with VIPS! They have become a part of my family, without doubt. We have encountered so many beautiful people in this ugly world, it’s unimaginable!



*Rachel at the VIPS Gala, holding baby Love, with Judah in front and daughter Genesis to Rachel's right.*

We started with Ms. Paige who gave us so many tools, literally -- so much equipment to help Judah engage in in-home activities and things he could use for when he's in class. She has a patient spirit, letting Ju play in her hair while she's with us during a session at home! We fell into Ms. Juanita's lap, when Ju went to the twos summer program. Then we met Ms. Staci, and I don't know, but there wasn't anything I could ever find wrong with her! I mean she was just so insightful and just all around cool! Then we came across Ms. Christina, who by far kept it going for not

only Ju, but for me. There were so many late night texts, and she probably doesn't even know I look back over from time to time, reading how she told me, “he's doing well “ and “you got this mama,” not to mention I think she's Judah's first crush! Finally, here we go back with Ms. Staci. And I found out then, truly every round goes higher! Staci took Ju to a new level for real! I felt such a security with having him with her again; we both literally have so much respect for her!

When Ju lost his enthusiasm for education, I vented to Staci about it and we both worked diligently to get him back on track, along with Kendra and Sarah, his speech and occupational therapists. Ju was a handful but they put in some hard work for us. I felt as if they took on the responsibility with me and that was such a selfless act!

Going into Kindergarten now, Judah has his spark back! He's so much on fire to learn and to grow it's such an inspiration to me, even as his mother! He's overcome so many obstacles and I know it's because of VIPS' push, their guidance, their love, and their sense of just caring for these children as if they were their own! I'm grateful to Ms. Kathy, who has been on every IEP (Individual Education Plan) with me -- she doesn't even know what she means to me! She said she would brag on me how, I was just “that mom.” I turned my dining room into a classroom during the pandemic and she couldn't get over the efforts I took just to get Judah through.

From birthday shout outs to Christmas give aways... Judah was a part of it all for the past 3 years! The donors are so giving it blows my mind! We can't thank this family of teachers enough! They are like the perfect team and definitely heaven sent! We love you guys and thank you all so much.

## “Visual Impairment Is Not About What I Can or Cannot Do.”

### *A Teenager Speaks on Being Visually Impaired*

*This speech was given at the VIPS Gala by VIPS Ambassador, sixteen-year-old Bria Byrd, of Elizabethtown, KY. You can listen to Bria's speech [here](#).*

My name is Bria Byrd. Just looking at me you wouldn't know that I have Amblyopia, which is a visual impairment where one eye and the brain do not connect. Some people have a stereotypical idea of what a blind or visually impaired person looks like, while others have the outdated idea that blindness means you have no sight at all.

I was asked to share a little about MY personal experience with having a visual impairment. Visual impairment is different for everyone. For me, I have no useful vision in my right eye, things are very blurry. It's like an old camera that's out of focus. I can see colors and light but that's about it.



Having a visual impairment isn't a bad thing. It's part of my identity like race, gender, culture, and my love for food and pageants. It's not something I grieve over or I'm ashamed about.

Having a visual impairment isn't about what I CAN or CANNOT do; it's about learning the best way to accomplish whatever goals I set out to achieve. Which leads me to why I chose to be an ambassador for VIPS (and I'll share more about that later).

Two years ago at the suggestion of a friend, I started participating in pageants. Never in my wildest dreams had I thought about being in a pageant but I must admit, when I tried on a long gown and started practicing with my friend, Sophia, something magical happened. It was as if I transformed into Princess Diana and I embraced that magical moment. In fact, I soon decided that I wanted to be in a pageant.

After participating in a few, I started to keep a journal about my experiences and when Covid-19 hit, I turned my journal into a published children's book called "These Heels are Made for Talking!"

In this book, the pageant heels are telling the story about my journey of trying something new, meeting new friends and not letting a disability hold me back. In addition, I have committed to donating a percentage of my book sales to VIPS and today I will be donating \$200. My pageant platform is called "Do you see what I see" which is about seeing a person's ability before their disability and bringing awareness to Amblyopia.

It is my mission to save the sight of other children and share resources which is why I'm grateful to be an Ambassador for VIPS. After doing some research and consulting with my pageant director, Ms. De de Cox I found out about VIPS. I learned that it is the only visual impairment preschool program in KY, a program where teachers help families to teach their visually impaired child. That is so awesome!

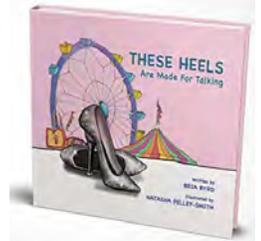
My family never knew about VIPS; in fact they didn't know about my condition until I was about eight years old. The thing about Amblyopia, if you catch it between the ages of three to five, there's a greater chance of restoring the eyesight.

When Ms. Diane offered me the opportunity to be an Ambassador, I was very excited and honored because I LOVE children, I want to bring awareness to Amblyopia and I want EVERYONE to know about VIPS, and its amazing resources for visually impaired children!

Unfortunately, due to Covid and all the limitations, I haven't been as visible as I'd like, however, I have promoted a few online fundraisers and I was honored to speak at the annual conference for the KY Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired this past March. I look forward to participating in the 5K this September, reading books to the kids in school and doing whatever I can to promote and assist this great program!

\* \* \* \* \*

Bria's book is available from Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08FHCKXG1/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?\\_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08FHCKXG1/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)



## Marvelous Milestones

**Claire's** parents recognize that it is not uncommon for children with visual impairments to be delayed in developmental milestones. For this reason, they actively look for opportunities to encourage independence even at Claire's young age. One of the pictures at the right shows how mom provides initial help holding the bottle while encouraging Claire to hold independently. The second picture shows how mom has faded her support and Claire is holding the bottle on her own. Claire's parents have also been mindful to use smaller bottles to encourage holding the bottle. Kudos to Claire for achieving this milestone and kudos to her parents for encouraging independence!



During a recent visit with VIPS teacher Ms. Amy and his PT, **Liam** sat up independently for the first time ever! His mom, Haley also wanted him to work on using his hands more purposefully, so Ms. Amy encouraged her to engage him with different textures. Mom decided to make a texture board (pictured at left)! So now not only is Liam sitting up on his own but he is using his fine motor skills to feel and interact with the board! What an awesome collaboration between Mom, Ms. Amy, and Liam's PT!

**Kagan** has been receiving VIPS services for a few months and is already making great progress. He's looking and reaching more for objects on his left side, and also is enjoying new objects and exploring a variety of textures of objects. He is even exploring two objects at once! Way to go, Kagan!



**William** has recently started learning to stand without support. During his recent visit with his VIPS teacher Ms. Paige, he explored the lite box and practiced his squatting and standing skills. His mother and grandma were so excited! Way to go William! Watch a video of William [here!](#)

Sending a big shout out to **Khristian** for showing improved tolerance of his glasses!! When glasses were first introduced to Khristian, he would immediately pull them off and resist wearing them, making it difficult for his family to tell if the glasses were helpful or not. During a recent visit, both his VIPS teacher and Khristian's Aunt Allyson noticed that he is more tolerant and willing to wear his glasses outside during play. With encouragement from Allyson, Khristian wore his glasses for most of the visit and demonstrated an improved visual awareness of objects on the ground and improved eye-hand coordination during fine motor play. Allyson continues to encourage Khristian to wear his glasses during outdoor play and during preferred activities to help build a tolerance and acceptance of the glasses.



## VIPS Parents Recommend...

### **Interested in prescription swim goggles?**

Karie, a VIPS Central KY mom, wanted to find swim goggles for her daughter and several options were emailed to her. She ordered from [www.gogglesnmore.com](http://www.gogglesnmore.com). She said, "The goggles

are AMAZING!!!! My daughter no longer has trouble navigating her landscape and is much more sure of herself in and around the water! She doesn't always like to wear them because of the suction, but honestly they are the best purchase ever!!!"

Melisa Mathews, VIPS Indiana TBLV, recommends this site for several options: [https://www.aclens.com/eye-care/swimming-goggles/hilco-\(z-leader\)-children's-prescription-swimming-goggles/213?stockid=439s](https://www.aclens.com/eye-care/swimming-goggles/hilco-(z-leader)-children's-prescription-swimming-goggles/213?stockid=439s). If you search, there are many reviews on the page.

Another source is [swimoutlet.com](http://swimoutlet.com) which sells several different goggles along with a chart that calculates the strength when the prescribed strength is selected. Local ophthalmologist Dr. M. A. Haider of Louisville notes that wim goggles can be ordered from Amazon if you know the approximate prescription. You can also order them at most optical shops.

### **How About an Enclosed Play Yard?**

Another awesome summer-time recommendation comes from VIPS parent Brittany. She recommends the outdoor play yard from <https://thecaliforniabeachco.com/>. This play yard helps keep Leah Jo safe outdoors, allows her to be independent in playing outside, and is shaded. You can tell how much she's able to relax outside from the picture!



### **And a recommendation from a VIPS Alum**

VIPS Alum, Marissa, who is now 37, recommends "A *Celebration of Family: Stories of Parents with Disabilities.*" This book contains the stories of thirty families in which one or both parents have disabilities: physical, mental, sensory, and/or intellectual. Dave Matheis is the author/editor of the book, with an introduction by Jason Jones, which is published by Avocado Press and the Center for Accessible Living in Louisville.

One of the parents profiled by the book is Marissa's own father, Rick, who is totally blind with some hearing loss (a photo of Marissa hugging Rick as he reads braille is one of several family photos on the book cover!). Marissa was adopted by Rick and his wife Carol when she was just a baby. Marissa has retinopathy of prematurity, having been an extreme preemie. Marissa says of the book, "This is a game changer. There's no other book like this out there and I know it will help so many people."

The stories in the book illustrate the infinite variety of the American family. It is that variety that gives the family both its strength and its beauty. Like individuals, no two families are the same. In the course of discussing their family experiences, the



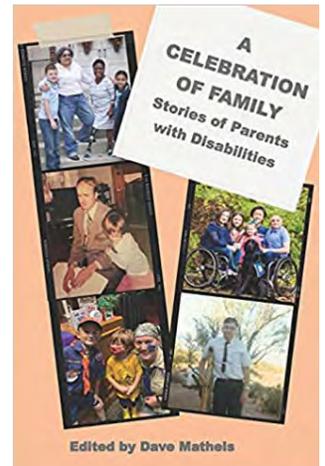
## New Arrivals

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

- Ahzari - 1 year, Louisville, KY
- Angel - 10 months, Bloomfield, KY
- Cami - 7 months, Barren, KY
- Caroline - 1 year, Terre Haute, IN
- Charlie - 10 months, Charlestown, IN
- Cooper - 1 year, Bedford, IN
- Cruz - 1 year, Evansville, IN
- Dallas - 7 months, Louisville, KY
- Daniel - 9 months, Louisville, KY
- Dawson - 6 months, Greencastle, IN
- Ella - 2 years, Richmond, IN
- Ezekial - 1 year, Mt. Washington, KY
- Finn - 2 years, Louisville, KY
- Grayson - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
- Isaiah - 1 year, West Lafayette, IN
- Ishaan - 1 year, Carmel, IN
- Judson - 2 years, Hartford, KY
- Julio - 1 year, Louisville, KY
- Kaius - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
- Kaydence - 11 months, New Albany, IN
- Kaymus - 7 months, Argos, IN
- Kenny - 1 year, Liberty, KY
- Levi - 2 years, Zionsville, IN
- Lucas - 10 months, Indianapolis, IN
- Macie - 5 months, Versailles, KY
- Mason - 9 months, Bowling Green, KY
- Mason - 2 years, Rochester, IN
- Molly - 9 months, Indianapolis, IN
- Nicholas - 2 years, Williamstown, KY
- Rebecca - 1 year, Independence, KY
- Ronald - 1 year, Louisville, KY
- Rylan - 9 months, Indianapolis, IN
- Serenity - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
- Soren - 10 months, Flatwoods, KY
- Tatum - 2 years, Fort Knox, KY
- William - 7 months, Indianapolis, IN

### **Celebration of Family cont'd from pg.9**

parents cover a number of topics. Most stories concern having children through birth, but there are also stories about fostering and adopting. Four stories concern single parenthood. Many parents talk about adaptations and accommodations they made to be effective parents, but even more talk about how wonderfully adaptive their children were to their disabilities. Many parents talk about individual discrimination and societal bias they have faced. A number of stories highlight the decision-making process to have children when the possibility exists of passing on an inheritable condition. Parents are included that had children before they acquired a disability and they relate how that acquired disability affected their family. Several stories discuss legal and policy issues around parenting with a disability.



The stories contain humor, compassion, and gratitude. They are proof that one thing you can get any parent to talk about is their children.

As one parent in the book puts it, “if you suck as a person, you are going to suck as a parent, whether you have a disability or not. If you are compassionate and caring and nurturing as a person, you will be like that as a parent, too.” The book is available from Amazon -- click [here](#).

## Notes of Interest



If you love to read but struggle to see print, **Bookshare** may be for you. Bookshare is a nonprofit e-book library that makes reading easier for people with low vision or blindness with e-books in high-quality audio, large print, and digital braille. Members get unlimited access to nearly one million titles, including New York Times bestsellers, periodicals and more. Bookshare is FREE for New York Public Library patrons; non-patrons pay less than a dollar a week for unlimited reading. Bookshare is always free for U.S. students of any age with a qualifying disability. Bookshare can be accessed at <https://www.bookshare.org>.

\* \* \* \* \*

The **Sunu Band** is a smart wrist band that detects obstacles through vibrations when an object or person is close. It uses sonar-echolocation technology to protect your head and upper

body by warning you with vibrating pulses on the wrist that become more frequent as an object is close or less frequent as the object is farther away. It is to be worn in conjunction with the cane or dog guide to detect obstacles. Enhancements to the obstacle detection enable you to differentiate between a person, a wall, a car, etc. It sells for \$299 and monthly payment plans are available. Go to <https://www.sunu.com> for additional information.

\* \* \* \* \*

**WeWALK** is a tech company that has created an electronic handle for the top of a cane. A blind Turkish inventor, Kursat Ceylan, who had an accident while struggling to pull luggage and checking GPS directions on his smartphone at the same time has invented this “smart cane.” It doesn’t just detect obstacles but can also give users information about the shops and restaurants they are passing. It uses ultrasound to detect obstacles and can be paired with a smartphone to give voice feedback. The foldable cane, priced at \$599, is already being used by thousands of visually impaired people in 59 countries, and WeWALK is working with companies including Microsoft to add more features. To learn more go to: <https://wewalk.io/en/product/>.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you use/know braille and want to add a little braille bling to your IOS message, **Sensory Sun** has added Braille Stickers to the Apple App Store and now you can download the stickers to your iOS iMessage! There are currently twelve cute, colorful stickers but plans call for adding holiday stickers as well as more cool sayings and the braille alphabet. Check out <https://www.sensorysun.org/blog/braille-stickers/>. They also have stickers for physically sticking onto objects, not just virtually!

\* \* \* \* \*

Through the **APH ConnectCenter** the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has grouped resources that cover every aspect of life under a single site. The **APH Connect Center** includes:

- FamilyConnect.org – gives parents of children who are visually impaired a place to find resources and support each other.
- CareerConnect.org – provides employment information, career exploration tools, and job-seeking guidance for individuals with vision loss and professionals who work with them.
- VisionAware.org – helps adults who are losing their sight continue to live full and independent lives by providing timely information, step-by-step daily living techniques, and a supportive online community.
- BrailleBug.org – teaches children about braille through games and activities and provides resources to teachers and parents.

## Gifts of Time Talent & Treasure

Thanks to **Emma Strange**, a Senior at Holy Cross, and other Holy Cross volunteers who donated craft supplies to the Preschool.

Thanks are due **Caroline McCullough**, a senior at UK, who plans to be an optometrist and will soon be taking the exam to get into optometry school. Caroline began volunteering for us this summer, making bead curtains that the direct interventionists and teachers use with our children who have cortical visual impairment (CVI). The curtains are then left with the parents so they can also use them when working with their children.



We are so thankful for the support from former VIPS parent, **Phil Ballou** (who owns **Balcor**), who is repairing our roof for a fraction of what it would have cost through others and that he dropped everything to get it done quickly.

## News of VIPS Staff

We are very sad to see VIPS Louisville TVI and preschool teacher, **Christina Allen**, leave us for JCPS’ Kammerer Middle School Visually Impaired Resource Room. But we are excited and happy that she will again work with many of our VIPS graduates! We know they will do well in her most capable hands. We wish her all the best.

If the name **Tommie Roesch** sounds familiar to those of you in Indiana, it may be because you know her as a contract Teacher of Blind/Low Vision for VIPS Indiana. Tommie has been a TVI for 23 years, working in a variety of school districts, and an O&M instructor for the past 6 years as well. She been married for 32 years with two grown children and, soon to be, three grandchildren. Tommie says, “I love to read and teach Braille to young children and make creative activities to make learning fun. In addition, I love to explore new environments when I working with children on O&M skills. I am happy to start my new adventure with VIPS full-time and look forward to making a big difference in all the little ones in Indiana.”





We welcome **Brian Justice** as our new full-time VIPS Louisville building, grounds, and maintenance team member. Brian brings a boatload of experience to the job, having worked in apartment/townhouse maintenance for 16 years. He is a Louisville native, growing up in Fern Creek, graduating from Fern Creek High School and currently living with his wife in Highview. He is the father of three children and the stepfather of three more children.

## In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of:

**Isaac Harris**

son of Scott and Catrina Harris of Columbia City, IN who passed away on May 1, 2021 at the age of three years.

~ and ~

**Kenneth Kunst**

of Mishawaka, IN, father of VIPS Indiana TBLV, Amy Nichols, who passed away on May 26, 2021 at the age of 94.

~ and ~

**William Joseph "Bill" Spath**

of Louisville, KY, father of VIPS Director of Education, Kathy Mullen, who passed away on June 26, 2021 one day shy of his 87th birthday.

~ and ~

**Julia Slaymaker,**

of Bloomington, IN, former VIPS Indiana board member, who passed away July 20, 2021 at the age of 79.

*Our hearts go out to all of those who loved Isaac, Kenneth, Bill and Julia.*

## Thanks to Our Donors

As VIPS Executive Director, Diane Nelson, recently wrote "We would not be able to do our critical work without the generous support of so many who believe and invest in our mission and help us stay the course to elevate the future for children with vision loss." We are so blessed by this wonderful mix of individuals, corporations, foundations and partners who come together to make sure VIPS has the resources to answer the call of a family needing help in educating their child, building strong foundations for their futures.

We appreciate all donations, regardless of size, because they all help us help VIPS children and families.

### VIPS Indiana

- \$300,000 from **Lilly Endowment** for the capital campaign in Indiana that is making our new home in Indianapolis possible.
- \$250,000 from **The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust** for the capital campaign in Indiana.
- \$58,000 **WHAS Crusade for Children.**

### VIPS Central Kentucky

- \$50,000 **WHAS Crusade for Children.**
- \$23,226 from the **George S. Weeks Trust**, for the Early Childhood Intervention program in Fayette and Bourbon counties.
- \$8,000 from the **E. O. Robinson Mountain Fund**, for the Early Childhood Intervention program.
- \$5,000 from the **Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation**, for the Early Childhood Intervention program in Boone, Campbell & Kenton counties.
- \$2,000 from the **Kentucky Gives Day initiative.**
- \$300 from the **Orphan Society of Lexington**, for interventionist supplies.

### VIPS Louisville

- \$225,000 from **Kosair Charities.**
- \$200,000 from the **Louisville Downtown Lions Club** for The Dr. Ralph Stengel endowment fund, \$100,000 of which was personally donated by **Charlotte Stengel** in honor of her late husband. The Lions have pledged to help raise \$500,000 by December 2025 to be permanently invested and whose proceeds of those investments will be used for operations in perpetuity.
- \$95,000 **WHAS Crusade for Children.**
- \$28,478 from the **Louisville Downtown Lions Club** for the Dr. Ralph Stengel Memorial Scholarship fund and the replacement of the gate to the preschool playground.
- \$25,435 from **Metro United Way** for early intervention.
- \$12,000 from the **Kentucky Colonels' Good Works Program** to replace the torn cover over the Kids Town Playground.
- \$10,000 from **Caldwell Tanks** to support Early Childhood services.
- \$5,000 **The Snowy Owl Foundation** for Kids Town Preschool supplies.
- \$3,000 from an **anonymous donor** for general operating support.
- \$3,000 **William E. Barth Foundation** for Family Retreat.
- \$3,000 **The Gilbert Foundation** for Kids Town Preschool summer program.

- \$2,500 from **Norton Healthcare Community Initiatives** for programming.
- \$2,000 from the **V.V. Cooke Foundation** for Zoom Business subscription.
- \$1,836 from the **GE Employee Giving Campaign** for operating expenses.

\* \* \* \* \*

We say a huge thanks to **Metro United Way & Grainger**. They donated hundreds of hand sanitizers and PPE to help VIPS keep our precious children safe at school.

*VIPS Louisville teachers, Ms. Paige and Ms. Staci, show their excitement with receiving the donation of so much PPE, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting supplies.*



\* \* \* \* \*



**Jessica and Phillip Brann** visited VIPS recently with their **children Ashlyn and Jacob**. Ashlyn received services from VIPS Interventionist Tracy Webb at their home in Florence, KY but has since had surgeries so that she no longer needs vision support. The family grew many varieties of tomato plants from seed as a lesson to their children

and sold the extra plants at their lemonade stand this spring. Between the tomatoes, lemonade and generous friends they raised \$447.59 in donations for VIPS.

Jessica and Phillip believe in teaching their children about philanthropy so they drove down to Louisville so the children could tour the facility and present their donation in person. We are so very grateful for this impressive family and their generous support.

*Ashlyn & Jacob present a check to Diane Nelson, VIPS Executive Director.*



\* \* \* \* \*

Board Member & VIPS parent, **Taylor Gehring**, recently announced a gift from **GE Appliances** of \$25,000 to support Kids Town Preschool and to rename the classroom kitchen. In addition, GE Appliances will donate ALL the appliances for our new Simon and Estelle Knoble Family Resource Center in Indianapolis and will replace, for free, our aging appliances in the VIPS Louisville facility.

## Thank You, Crusade!!

We recently received amazing news from Louisville's WHAS Crusade for Children. As many of you know, the Crusade invested \$10,000 to help start VIPS in 1985 and since that time has most generously supported our efforts. Even though they traditionally only support agencies in counties that raise money or contribute to them - they have always embraced our services wherever they exist. Once again the Crusade has stepped up exponentially to make things happen across VIPS.

The Crusade will grant VIPS \$203,000 this year (an increase of 14% or \$28,000 over last year). The breakdown is as follows:

- Central Kentucky is receiving \$50,000 (up from \$45,000)
- Indiana is receiving \$58,000 (up from \$45,000 with part of the new money focused on the capital campaign)
- Louisville is receiving \$95,000 (up from \$85,000)

Over our 36 year relationship with the Crusade we have been gifted a total of \$2,873,000! If you would like to send a note of gratitude to the panel of ministers that lead this effort and decide how to spend the dollars raised, please send to:

WHAS Crusade for Children  
 Attention: Dawn Lee  
 520 West Chestnut Street,  
 Louisville, KY 40202

We celebrated with pride that VIPS staff raised close to \$1,500 in support of the hugely successful Crusade. The 2021 campaign raised \$5,100,000 to help children with disabilities throughout Kentuckiana!

## Walking for Dreams

On May 23 VIPS Indiana held our annual fundraiser, Walking for Dreams Family & Pet Walk, in Indianapolis! We raised nearly \$20,000 and we are extremely grateful to all the walkers that traveled from near and far to join us on the canal or through



Facebook LIVE! It was a beautiful day to get out and raise money for a great cause. All funds raised ensure we can fulfill our mission to provide vision-specific education to young children who are visually impaired and their families. Thank you to ALL our sponsors who made this event a success:

- **Bosma Enterprises**
- **Butler University Delta Gammas**
- **EYE can see, Inc.**
- **Gordon Homes with WestPoint Financial Group**
- **Kiwanis Club of Bloomington**
- **MCM CPAs & Advisors LLP**
- **Shawna's Home Team**
- **Steele Pediatric Dentistry**
- **The Sertoma Club of Broad Ripple**
- **The Spectacle Shoppe**

And thanks to **Starbucks at Emerson and Eleanor** in Indianapolis for the wonderful donations of coffee, fun cups, and more that were given away as raffle prizes to a few lucky winners. We would also like to thank **Bose McKinney & Evans LLP** and **Bose Public Affairs Group LLC** for donating their Indianapolis Indians suite as the grand prize for our raffle at Walking for Dreams!



*Reece and family enjoyed the day!*

## A Successful Gala!

We are excited to report that the 2021 Gala (all virtual) raised over \$100,000! We are also very thankful to our generous Gala sponsors who continue to invest in our work because it matters:

- **Kosair Charities**
- **Caldwell Tanks**
- **American Printing House for the Blind**
- **Passport Health**
- **Rhawn Enterprises**
- **Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation**
- **Louisville Academy of Ophthalmology**

Thanks to all of those who donated auction items and gifts of bourbon -- our Bourbon Pull sold out in 12 MINUTES! Thanks, also, to those who hosted Gala guests in their homes because we could not host a large in-person event and to **Maxwell's House of Music**, in Jeffersonville, for providing a great broadcast venue.

And thanks to VIPS mom Rachel Collins and VIPS Ambassador Bria Byrd, who were our inspirational speakers (see their talks on pages 6-8 or listen at the links provided). It was a great night of overwhelming generosity and passionate commitment to VIPS!

## Disappointing Legislative Update for Indiana

Sadly, there was no increase in the state of Indiana budget for VIPS Indiana this legislative session. This is devastating news. We will continue to work tirelessly to raise the hundreds of thousands of dollars it takes to ensure ALL Indiana families with young children with vision loss get the services they so desperately need. As the only organization serving this population of kids, we could have really used more help from the state. We won't go away quietly though, which is why we've already been following up with every legislator we met this Spring. We know there are lawmakers who would like to find permanent funding streams for VIPS, unfortunately, that doesn't solve the issue of hiring more teachers to serve more kids NOW or ease a bit of pressure off of the VIPS team to raise the dollars to provide services. We will be steadfast in our advocacy as Indiana needs to be held accountable.

Here are a few ways you can help VIPS and other families like your own.

1. Make a donation or sign up for monthly donations-- contributing to VIPS will go a long way. It will help ensure our teachers can continue to travel to homes to provide education to families and work with children.
2. Contact your state legislators -- both Senators and Representatives. Let them know how critical VIPS services are and that they need to work with VIPS so that a permanent funding stream can be found.
3. Connect with Indiana regional director, Meredith Howell, if you can make introductions or have any other ideas.

## Upcoming Fundraisers

The **4th Annual Cupcake Classic 3K** will be held on Friday, August 27, 7:30 p.m., at Wellington Park in South Lexington! All participants receive a cupcake courtesy of BabyCakes Cupcakes after the race. Join us on this beautiful paved course to raise funds for VIPS. Registration is \$25 for the 3K (in person or virtual) and \$15.00 for the Kids dash. Click on the link below for more info!

VIPS' newest fundraising event, the **VIPS Pickleball Classic**, will be held August 28 & 29 at the [Springhurst Multi Sport Center](#) in Louisville. Players 8 years old and up can sign up to play in women's and men's doubles and mixed doubles.

Registration is \$60 and includes a swag bag, snacks and a water bottle. All proceeds go to VIPS. We will also have a silent

auction throughout the event and an opportunity for our VIPS children to learn how to play pickleball from a coach!

We hope you'll join us at this new event in supporting our children and babies! For questions about the event or sponsorship information, email Alexis Asamoah at [aasamoah@vips.org](mailto:aasamoah@vips.org). Register [here](#).

The **Annual YUM! Brands Corporate Cup Golf Tournament** will be held October 4 at Wildwood Country Club in Louisville. All proceeds support VIPS Early Intervention programs.

Team Sponsorships include a foursome with tee gift, lunch and dinner, with beverages and snacks also provided. It's not too late for your company to register a team or become a Dinner/Lunch/Wine Tasting or Beverage Cart Sponsor! Contact Kelly Easton for more information regarding all sponsorship levels and individual registration at [keaston@vips.org](mailto:keaston@vips.org) or 859-685-6716. Register [here](#).

## VIPS Wish Lists

### VIPS Central Kentucky

- Mini bubble bottles
- Clorox wipes
- Folding sports/utility wagon (for hauling items to events)
- HP Printer Paper | 8.5 x 11 Paper | Copy & Print 20 lb | 10 Ream Case - 5,000 Sheets | 92 Bright | Made in USA - FSC Certified | 200060C -- \$58.30
- Fun and Function Cozy Canoe - Inflatable Sensory Peapod - Therapeutic Compression & Calming Pressure for Kids 3+ with Special Needs - Latex Free - Medium - 70.4" \$149.99 Size : Medium
- Singer 70032 Braided Elastic, 8 Yard by 1/4-Inch, White \$4.74
- 500-700 PCS Assorted Mixed Color Resin Buttons 2 and 4 Holes Round Craft for Sewing DIY Crafts Children's Manual Button Painting, DIY Handmade Ornament \$6.99
- Scotch (TM) Thermal Laminating Pouches, 8.5 Inches x 11 Inches, 100 Pouches (2 Packs of 50) \$18.21
- Amazon wish list -- [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/17GUTS23K50ME?ref\\_=wl\\_fv\\_le](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/17GUTS23K50ME?ref_=wl_fv_le)

### VIPS Indiana

- Large black towels
- Scotch tape refills
- Hardware store gift card
- Pegboards for Little Rooms (at least 24" X 24", makes one wall)

- Disinfectant wipes
- Amazon Wish List: <http://a.co/aeRar2N>

### VIPS Louisville

- Paper towels
- Diaper wipes (unscented)
- Clorox/Lysol Wipes
- Fabric softener sheets (unscented)
- Black or Brown Cardstock
- From Lakeshore Learning: <https://www.lakeshorelearning.com/>
  - Solar System View Finder -- \$19.99
  - Insect View Finder -- \$19.99
  - Sea Life View Finder -- \$19.99
  - Life Cycles View Finder -- \$19.99
  - Birds View Finder -- \$19.99
  - Sea Life Specimen Center -- \$34.99
  - Reptiles Specimen Center -- \$34.99
  - Birds Specimen Center -- \$34.99
  - Moth Lifecycle Specimen Set -- \$49.99
  - Sea Life Specimen Set -- \$49.99
  - Insect Specimen Set -- \$49.99
  - Plant Specimen Set -- \$49.99
  - Wild Animal primary colored counters -- \$24.99
  - Sea Animal primary colored counters -- \$24.99
  - Positional Words Resource box -- \$29.99
- From Kaplan: <https://www.kaplanco.com/>
  - Butterfly Lifecycle Specimen Set -- \$33.95
  - Wild Animal primary colored counters -- \$21.95
  - Pet primary colored counters -- \$21.95
- Learning Resources products from Amazon: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/)
  - Rainbow Sorting Crayons -- \$32.41
  - STEM Explorer Magnet Movers/ 39 pcs -- \$11.69
  - Smart Snacks Alpha Pops -- \$24.49
  - All About Me Sorting Neighborhood (3-4 sets) -- \$11.49
  - Gears! Gears! Gears! 100-piece set (2-3 sets) -- \$22.23
  - Snap N Learn Alphabet Alligators -- \$13.45
  - Farmers Market Color Sorting Set (2-3 sets) \$36.91
  - Fine Motor Peacock Pals -- \$23.60
  - Counting Dino-Sorters Math Activity Set -- \$29.91
  - Birds in a Nest Sorting Set -- \$13.98
  - Wriggleworms! Fine Motor Activity Set -- \$24.99
  - Veggie Farm Sorting Set -- \$17.09
  - Froggy Feeding Fun Activity Set -- \$16.27
  - Smart Scoops Math Activity Set -- \$22.49
  - One to Ten Counting Cans Toys Set -- \$35.98
- Amazon Wish List -- <https://a.co/0zrxZja>



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

## Upcoming Events

### Friday, August 27

The *VIPS Cupcake Classic* will take place at Wellington Park, Lexington, KY. Visit [www.vips.org](http://www.vips.org) or [www.racerise.com](http://www.racerise.com) for more information or to register. (See details on pg. 14)

### Saturday, August 28 - Sunday, August 29

VIPS' newest fundraising event, the *VIPS Pickleball Classic*, will be held at the Springhurst Multi Sport Center in Louisville. Contact [aasamoah@vips.org](mailto:aasamoah@vips.org). (See details on pg.14)

### Saturday, September 25

The *Lynn Family 5K for VIPS* will be held, 6 p.m., at the Lynn Family Sports Vision & Training Center in Louisville. Contact [aasamoah@vips.org](mailto:aasamoah@vips.org).

### Thursday, September 30

*Family Voices, Indiana's Virtual Heart to Heart Conference*, will be held. Kentucky families are welcome, too. Register at [https://whova.com/portal/registration/hthc\\_202101/](https://whova.com/portal/registration/hthc_202101/). (See details on pg. 6.)

### Monday, October 4

The *YUM! Brands Corporate Cup Golf Tournament* will be held at Wildwood Country Club in Louisville. Contact [keaston@vips.org](mailto:keaston@vips.org). See details on pg 15.

### Saturday, October 9

A festive *Halloween party* will be held in Louisville for VIPS families. Contact Jenny Castenir at [jcastenir@vips.org](mailto:jcastenir@vips.org) or 502-498-2939. Watch for more details.

### Friday, October 29

*Halloween fun* will be on tap for VIPS families, 6-8 p.m. in Lexington. Contact Kelly Easton at [keaston@vips.org](mailto:keaston@vips.org). Watch for details.

### Friday & Saturday, November 5 - 6

Mark your calendars for *the VIPS Family Retreat!* Contact Jenny Castenir at [jcastenir@vips.org](mailto:jcastenir@vips.org) or 502-498-2939. Watch for more details.

### Friday, December 3

A *Holiday party* for VIPS families will be held in Louisville. Contact Jenny Castenir at [jcastenir@vips.org](mailto:jcastenir@vips.org) or 502-498-2939 for more details.

### Friday, December 10

VIPS Central KY will host a *Holiday Party*, 6-8 p.m., Contact Kelly Easton at [keaston@vips.org](mailto:keaston@vips.org) for details.

#### **VIPS Non-Discrimination Policy**

VIPS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law in policies or practices related to: children and/or families served; employment, contractors, or volunteers; and membership on the VIPS Board of Directors or advisory boards.

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

#### **VIPS-Louisville**

1906 Goldsmith Lane, Louisville, KY 40218  
(502) 636-3207 FAX (502) 636-0024  
Toll free 1-888-636-8477 E-mail: [info@vips.org](mailto:info@vips.org)  
Website: [www.vips.org](http://www.vips.org)  
Diane Nelson, Executive Director  
Kathy Mullen, Director of Education  
Christina Frasher, Controller  
Carol Dahmke, HR Director/Office Manager  
Alexis Asamoah, Development Coordinator  
Bob Boyd, IT  
Jenny Castenir, Family Services Coordinator  
Kristan Decker, Preschool Assistant  
Ashley Emmons, TV/COMS/Preschool Teacher  
Pauletta Feldman, Special Projects  
Marchelle Hampton, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Debbie Hardesty, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Pam Holladay, TV/Preschool Teacher  
Brian Justice, Maintenance  
Paige Maynard, TV/Developmental Interventionist  
Staci Maynard, TV/Preschool Teacher  
Juanita Miles, Assistant Preschool Director/DI  
Jan Moseley, Visual Impairment Specialist  
Katie Norris, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Brenda Pharris, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Kirsten Schmidt, Guest Relations & Support  
Carla Vied, Developmental Interventionist  
Jinhee Walsh, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Tracy Webb, Developmental Interventionist  
Maury Weedman, O&M Specialist/Facilities Manager  
Brittany Williamson, TV/Preschool Teacher

#### **VIPS-Central Kentucky**

350 Henry Clay Blvd., Lexington, KY 40502  
(859) 276-0335 FAX (859) 276-4379  
Toll free 1-888-254-8477 E-mail: [vipslex@vips.org](mailto:vipslex@vips.org)  
Kelly Easton, KY Intake Coordinator/Regional Director  
Mary Smyth, KY Grant Writer/Assistant Regional Director  
Tammy Maynard, Developmental Interventionist  
Lesley Lusher, Developmental Interventionist  
Dixie Miller Marz, TV/Developmental Interventionist/  
Little Learners Teacher

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