LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I look back on the fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 the underlying themes are resilience, creativity and determination. We call it #VIPSstrong! This pandemic has affected all of us – clients, team members, donors and collaborators – but through it all VIPS has remained mission-focused and driven, finding ways to continue delivery of our critical services regardless of barriers. When 90% of learning occurs through vision, our children must begin education at birth in order to thrive so we knew we could not wait for the pandemic’s end. There were challenges to delivering services when referrals decreased and virtual instruction was not the best delivery method for some families, but we still provided 708 children and their families with frequent and on-going early education. Our teachers made almost 4,500 virtual home visits.

We have continued to keep our team members employed, our expenses low, and partners informed. We have been blessed with generosity of time, talent and treasure from our grantors and donors in support of our work during a difficult financial time. Our team went above and beyond by using any extra time capacity to write three new specialized preschool curricula tied to early childhood standards and the Expanded Core Curriculum for Preschool, Physical Education, and Orientation & Mobility; and are now working on a format to share this work internationally. We became accredited by the Association for Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired “hitting it out of the park” for all its programs across two states – Early Childhood, Pre-school Services, Itinerant Services, Orientation & Mobility, and Referrals.

A few highlights from the administrative side include receiving our 3rd consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator letting us know that we were “outperforming most other charities in America.” We were re-certified by the Better Business Bureau for meeting all 20 standards for Charitable Accountability and successfully navigated a Payroll Protection Grant of $336,000.

So you can see that your investment in the future of children with visual impairment is changing lives. We are so very grateful for your support and look forward to continuing to be #VIPSstrong in 2022.

With appreciation,

[Signature]

VIPS Annual Report 2020-2021
Before 1985, early intervention and educational programming were not available in Kentucky for infants, toddlers, or preschoolers who were blind or visually impaired until they entered kindergarten. VIPS became the pioneer in Kentucky in educating children when it opened its first office in Louisville. We then opened a second office in Lexington (VIPS Central KY) in 1990. VIPS further expanded services in 2011 to include the whole state of Indiana (VIPS Indiana). We are the only agency in Kentucky and Indiana providing regular and ongoing early intervention services to young children, birth to 5, who are blind and visually impaired.

In VIPS' continued expansion, our Indianapolis location finished the construction of the Simon & Estelle Knoble VIPS Family Resource Center. This state-of-the-art facility will help us better serve children with blindness and low vision across Indiana.

Also in 2021, VIPS became AER accredited for our Early Childhood Program, Preschool Services, Itinerant Services, Orientation & Mobility, and Identification & Referral with the note “This is an extraordinary accomplishment...Thank you for your commitment to excellence in service delivery.”

With over 36 years of experience providing educational excellence to young children who are blind or visually impaired and their families, we continue growing as an agency; striving for diversity, equity, & inclusion; and supporting our staff during continued unprecedented times.
In 2021, our Indiana staff officially moved into the new Family Resource Center located at 1212 Southeastern Avenue, just east of downtown Indianapolis! This center will not only house offices and storage for our staff, but, more importantly, will be a hub for VIPS parents to receive more resources and programming, and allow for children to receive intervention services onsite.

"Indiana will now have a space that is welcoming of all young children who are blind or visually impaired," said Meredith Howell, regional director, and mom of a VIPS graduate. "It is imperative these parents know they are not alone—VIPS is here to help."

For a parent of a child who is blind or visually impaired, the future is scary and unknown. But VIPS is changing all that—and we’re ready to change it for even more children and families in need. The Family Resource Center will be the first and only facility of its kind in the State of Indiana. It’s the culmination of years of effort that will allow us not only to serve more kids and their families but also to serve them better for many years to come.
It was during one pandemic-summer afternoon that Amy with VIPS contacted us about vision therapy for our son, Jack. I remember her voice—calm, quiet, reassuring—cut through the chaotic scene unfolding before my eyes: three toddlers running around a small living room, and one fussy baby Jack in my arms. Undeterred by the mayhem, Amy kindly invited me to share Jack's story. I explained that after 39 weeks of a healthy pregnancy, we learned that Jack's brain was hemorrhaging in-utero. Jack's diagnoses included bilateral intraventricular hemorrhage, grades 3 and 4, and ventriculomegaly. Among the consequences of the bleeds, Jack sustained damage to his optic nerve and right occipital lobe. It was suspected that Jack had some degree of left visual field loss and cortical visual impairment. These concerns were later confirmed by his neurologist and ophthalmologist. We were encouraged to pursue therapies for Jack immediately, but as Amy knew too well, therapies in April 2020 of the pandemic were simply not happening. Jack eventually participated in virtual PT and OT, but the vision piece was notably missing. I told Amy that Jack's neurologist had enthusiastically referred us to VIPS—I even admitted that we tried to find vision therapy elsewhere, but quickly learned that the "elsewhere" options led us directly back to VIPS. After speaking with Amy, I knew that VIPS (and Amy) would become an indispensable resource for our family.

The early intervention that VIPS provided for Jack has impacted his life in countless ways. What Amy did so well was to help us adapt our existing routines in ways that supported Jack's vision development and cortical visual processing. Amy was acutely interested in our day-to-day activities, what mattered to us, and what we all liked to do together. I identified three simple but cherished daily routines—reading stories, praying the rosary, and getting fresh air. Amy took that information and found creative ways to maximize the benefits for Jack. For example, she showed me how to adapt his books so that certain characters, colors, or shapes would stand out to him. Additionally, knowing that Jack struggled to move his eyeballs past midline without darting back to the right side, Amy suggested we use Jack's favorite wooden rosary with a chunky red cross for tracking (she later added the beloved "quack stick" to our pray-and-track routine). It did not take long for Jack's tracking to improve after that. Outdoor activities were trickier, but Amy was never at a loss for good ideas. She gave us a handmade "leaf book" which we used to compare the textures of fake leaves with real ones outside. Amy's multisensorial approach with the intentional use of more comparative language significantly improved Jack's ability to process images over time.

Amy also advocated for Jack when he needed it the most. We are immeasurably grateful for this. Amy gave careful attention to Jack's entire therapy plan and realized that Jack needed a formidable OT with a vision background in order for his development to truly thrive. Amy worked behind the scenes to make this change happen. We were paired with an excellent OT who came to our home on a weekly basis. Jack's progress improved quickly and exponentially. We owe that to Amy's advocacy. She saw something that no one else did, and she did not hesitate to intervene.

It is difficult to imagine where we would be without VIPS—as I tell anyone who will listen, VIPS made everything okay again. Despite his MRI scans and the gloomy prognosis from when he was born, Jack is thriving as a toddler. We owe so much of his success to VIPS. Amy—ever-patient, wise, creative, caring—has been nothing but pure sunshine in our lives, especially as we adjusted to life in quarantine with three toddlers and an infant who needed multiple therapies. As much as Amy has inspired us, we are constantly inspired by the amazing community of VIPS families. We look forward to "Milestone Mondays" and reading about each child who has achieved a new skill. We learn from them, and we are proud to be a part of this community. We are grateful that VIPS exists, because, at least in our case, VIPS helped us find our bearings and our voice, they advocated for our son, and helped us develop a routine that benefitted our entire family.
EDUCATION & EARLY INTERVENTION

708 TOTAL KIDS SERVED
343 KIDS IN KENTUCKY
365 KIDS IN INDIANA

212 NEW REFERRALS
4,354 HOME/VIRTUAL VISITS

PROGRAMS

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

Orientation & 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 Louisville campus that prepares visually impaired children for academic success & social integration.

Little Learners Enrichment Program is offered to 2 & 3 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.
## Financial Data

### Revenue

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions &amp; Grants</td>
<td>$2,447,517</td>
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<td>Program Service Fees</td>
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<td>Special Events</td>
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<td>Net Investment Return</td>
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<td>Forgiveness of debt PPP Loan</td>
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<td>Misc Income</td>
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<td>Rental Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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### Expenses

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<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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### Net Assets

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<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
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<td>Permanently Restricted</td>
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<td><strong>Ending Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,434,839</strong></td>
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*board member served between July 2020-June 2021 but is no longer with VIPS.

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Katie Norris, Classroom Assistant
Brenda Pharris, Classroom Assistant
Elaine Reed, 2’s Lead Teacher
Tommie Roesch, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision & O&M Specialist
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Kirsten Schmidt, Guest Relations/Volunteer Coordinator
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Julia Sleder, Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Preschool Teacher
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Tracy Webb, Developmental Interventionist
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