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## Really BIG News for VIPS Services

By Kathy Mullen, VIPS Director of Education

If you felt the buzz of great energy and bright minds working together in Indianapolis on Friday, June 3, it just might have been coming from the Simon & Estelle Knoble VIPS Family Resource Center. Members of the VIPS Education Team launched a new initiative that will help us identify young children at a much younger age, increasing the opportunity for them to benefit from VIPS services sooner. This is big! Really BIG!

VIPS has long enjoyed a strong relationship with our friends at the Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver, Colorado. At the center of that relationship is Dr. Cathy Smyth, Director of Research. In the past, members of the VIPS Education Team have joined Dr. Smyth's study on Mealtime Routines for the Visually Impaired and have successfully implemented many of the strategies with our VIPS families. Dr. Smyth has also partnered with VIPS teacher, Paige Maynard, and VIPS Family Services Coordinator, Jenny Castenir, to launch our highly successful podcast, "Feeling This Life" (available wherever you find your podcasts). So when VIPS learned of Dr. Smyth's newest endeavor with the Neonatal Assessment Visual European Grid (NAVEG), we stood up and took notice.

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Amy Nichols examines David Sterne's eyes, with guidance from Callie Robinson, of the Anchor Center. Amy and David are teachers with VIPS Indiana.



## A Joyful Grand Opening

April 28, 2022 was a monumental day in VIPS history as we celebrated the official grand opening of the Simon & Estelle Knoble VIPS Family Resource Center. This moment, 5+ years in the making, was possible due to the hard work and determination of a group of VIPS parents, donors, board members, and others committed to the future success of Hoosier children who are blind or visually impaired.

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Shown above (l-r): Matt McMahan, VIPS Board President; Diane Nelson, Executive Director; Virren Malhotra, VIPS Board Member & Parent; Tony Knoble, TWG; Meredith Howell, Indiana Regional Director; and Jeff Bennett, Deputy Mayor, City of Indianapolis.

### 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.**

# BIG Service News

Continued from front page

After months of planning and two online training sessions, Dr. Smyth and her training team members, Tammy Miller and Callie Robinson, traveled from Denver to Indianapolis to join our VIPS Education Team in a daylong training of how to administer the NAVEG to secure the most accurate results for early intervention and program planning. Hands down, everyone agrees it was an amazing day!

The NAVEG is designed to investigate different aspects of visual function in newborn infants. The NAVEG was first introduced in Europe and has undergone extensive research studies in Italy. The conclusions of the studies are amazing. The professionals at the Anchor Center adopted the NAVEG and replicated the validity studies in the United States under the guidance of Dr. Cathy Smyth. The Anchor Center is now leading the way for training on the implementation of the NAVEG in other states, including Indiana and Kentucky.

The VIPS teachers who have been trained on the NAVEG will be able to screen infants who have spent time in the NICU, and thus are at high risk for a cortical or cerebral visual impairment (CVI). The NAVEG helps identify red flags of a CVI diagnosis. CVI is the leading cause of vision loss in young children across the country; this is true in Indiana and Kentucky as well. There is no such thing as a referral coming too early for a child who has CVI as this is one diagnosis which offers a brief opportunity to rewire a child's brain to increase/improve the child's functional vision. The screener will also serve as an early identifier of children in need of First Steps services.

The NAVEG has been described as someday possibly serving as a newborn vision screening much like the newborn hearing screening that has been in place for many years. This is big news! Really BIG! VIPS is more than excited to be a part of this future practice. We are grateful for the trainers and grantors who made this training possible for our education team!



Teachers, Lesley Lusher (l) and Ashley Emmons (r), practice eye examination with Callie Robinson. In the background, Dr. Cathy Smyth talks to teacher Dixie Marz.

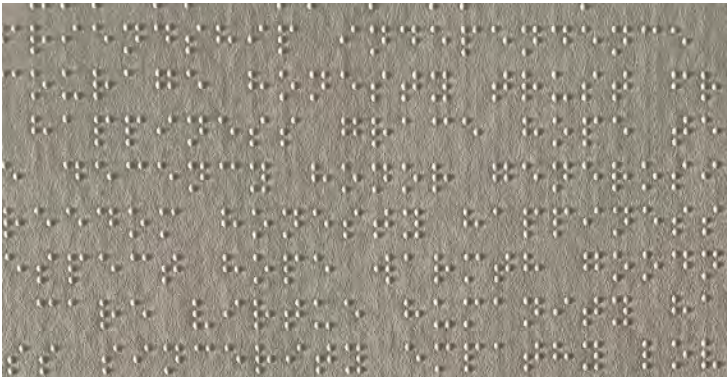
# Joyous Grand Opening

Continued from front page

Meredith Howell, Regional Director of VIPS Indiana, said “We have been dreaming of this day for years. Moving from our three-room office where resources were stacked on filing cabinets to this beautiful facility, it's truly a dream come true! We're grateful for the generous support of our donors, including Lilly Endowment Inc. and the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, who helped make it possible.”

We cannot express enough our gratitude for those who made this celebration so special. Thank you to our speakers for showing the community that these children and families matter. They included: Meredith Howell, Diane Nelson (VIPS Executive Director), Virren Malhotra (VIPS Advisory Board President and former VIPS parent), Tony Knoble (TWG), and Deputy Mayor Jeff Bennett (City of Indianapolis).

Thank you to all in attendance for sharing in this moment and celebrating this amazing accomplishment, including community supporters, neighbors, VIPS families, board members, employees, and more. We couldn't have gotten this far without you. We cannot forget those that made the refreshments possible as well! Donuts were provided by *PANA Donuts Coffee & Boba Tea*. Coffee courtesy of *Starbucks (Eleanor and Emerson store)*, and cookies thanks to *Bittersweet!*



A wonderful aspect of the design of the center is the braille wallpaper throughout! It features words that describe positive characteristics that lead to success in life.

The braille alphabet is printed below. See if you can find some words in the wallpaper!

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
•	•	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t
•	•	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••
u	v	w	x	y	z				
••	••	••	••	••	••				



# Congrats Kids Town Preschool Class of 2022!!!

VIPS Kids Town Preschool Graduation was held on Thursday, May 26 at the VIPS Louisville facility. We had a total of ten graduates who will be attending kindergarten during the 2022-2023 school year in various school placements, including public elementary schools, one with a VI Resource Room, and private/parochial elementary schools.

The theme for the graduation ceremony was space. We were privileged to be led in a space-themed song that was also written by Chris Millett, Coordinator, Music Therapy Clinic at University of Louisville. (Chris has provided twice/week music therapy for the preschool all year.)

Thanks to Keitt Wood of the Fincastle Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented braille flags to the children. Each child also received a print/braille copy of Eric Carle's book, *You Are Ready: The World is Waiting*.

It is so exciting to watch the VIPS graduates each May, knowing that they are as prepared for their future as our dedicated, highly skilled teachers and assistants can teach them to be. There is, of course, an air of bittersweet to the ceremony as well, knowing that these little ones will no longer be a part of our daily lives and some, we may never see again! Knowing that they will find many challenges is concerning but seeing the long distances they have each come in their months or years with us remains the overwhelming emotion. Congratulations to all these youngsters and to their parents for their many accomplishments inside our walls, with optimism and hope for many more accomplishments in the future!

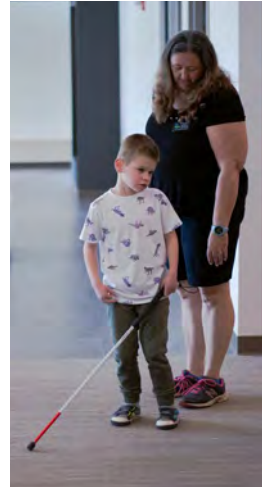


# VIPS Family Events -- Creating Opportunities for Learning and Fun

## VIPS Indiana

### Cane Quest

We were so excited to host our first ever Cane Quest at the Family Resource Center in Indianapolis on Saturday, April 2! Children were able to go on a "bunny hunt" through Toddler Town as they learned positional concepts such as around, over, under, through and more! It was awesome being able to see families enjoying the new space. We also want to give a huge thanks to the volunteers who helped with the children!



Above: O&M Instructor, Tommie Roesch, works with Jacob on using his cane. Left: Gavyn plays with translucent blocks on the light table -- building with blocks helps teach positional concepts.



### Open Gym/Soft-Opening

On April 23, VIPS Indiana hosted a "soft opening" of our new facility for families. It was wonderful to finally be able to welcome children and their loved ones into the new VIPS Family Resource Center. They explored Toddler Town, the Sensory Room, Activity Rooms, Parent Hub, and more. We hope to host more "Open Gym" style family events in the future. Keep up with the latest news on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/VisuallyImpairedPreschoolServices!>



Left: Jude with his mom, Kristy, crawls on the smooth surface of the "road" in Toddler Town. Right: Reese explores a tactile wall, as Ms. Tommie looks on.

## VIPS Louisville

### A Night at the Museum

VIPS families were invited to an after hours event, “Celebrate Spring at the Science Center” where the Science Center was reserved for VIPS families only. The kids were able to explore the museum with their families and several of their teachers. A favorite seemed to be the water section in an exhibit called



Above: Alayna gets into some water play.

### Once Upon a Time with the Louisville Orchestra

VIPS was excited to be chosen by the Louisville Orchestra to participate in their Once Upon an Orchestra Program. Children and parents had fun participating in A Storytelling Adventure where they helped tell the story of a Frog and Salamander who had to rescue their cookies from a pirate ship! Children also got to make their very own musical instrument to take home!



Above: A Louisville Orchestra member helps a child making a shaker bottle instrument.

Left: Lily shows her shaker bottle instrument to one of the violinists.



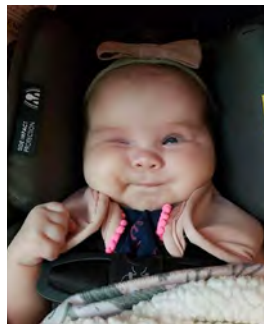
## Evie's Story

By Kristi White

We welcomed our daughter, Evelyn Ophelia White, into our lives in April of 2019. After a seemingly uneventful pregnancy, she spent a week in the NICU at birth. This is where we were handed a piece of paper at discharge with the word “Microphthalmia” on it and a print off from a search engine with a drawing of a baby with microphthalmia, the nurse told us she may have it and to seek care from a pediatric ophthalmologist.



We lived in rural Alabama at the time and unfortunately had a hard time getting her seen. We were told by doctors that the eye would just grow. We were told she was swollen from birth and her eye was fine. I continued to push for a referral to a pediatric ophthalmologist in which was finally granted. We brought Evelyn to him when she was just a few weeks old. He immediately diagnosed her with severe microphthalmia, and said that there were other structural issues with the eye and that he would not feel comfortable handling her care as it is out of his expertise.



He confirmed that she was fully blind in her tiny eye. He told us we should call Children's of Birmingham and try to get seen there. We called and a pediatric ophthalmologist got back to us and said there's nothing we can do, they refused to see her. They told us to call when she started kindergarten and that they would give her a pair of glasses.

Microphthalmia is rare. You can google but you will not find a ton on it. There's no guide book on how to care for a child with microphthalmia, or what medical decisions to make. More often than not you'll come across doctors, and even eye doctors, who have not heard and are not familiar with microphthalmia.

I was on social media and came across a mom whose daughter had microphthalmia. I frantically messaged her mother in the hopes that she would reply. She did. She lived in Louisville, Kentucky (about 9 hours away). And she told me her daughter sees a wonderful pediatric ophthalmologist. I got the information and before I knew it we were on a road-trip to see this doctor. The ophthalmologist we saw was amazing. She was the first person we talked to who knew what microphthalmia was. In addition to confirming microphthalmia, she diagnosed Evelyn with Morning Glory Syndrome, Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, Strabismus, Coloboma and Cataract. In her sighted eye she has astigmatism



and farsightedness. When she delivered this heavy information to us she was sure to add “The only thing your daughter will not be able to do is to get a pilot’s license. She will be able to do everything else in the world.”

A week before Evelyn was born, my husband got a job offer in Louisville, Kentucky. I knew we would have better opportunities for Evelyn there and better medical care. When she was 6 weeks old we loaded her up and moved 9 hours away from the only state we had lived in.

The mom we first originally connected with was the one who told us about the Visually Impaired Preschool in Louisville. I believe it was the day after we moved that I wheeled Evelyn into their doors. The ladies at the front of the school gathered around and excitedly looked at Evie. They were the first people I came across that didn’t ask “What’s wrong with her?”. They were the first people to ask me if she had microphthalmia, they knew what it was, and it was so comforting to not have to explain what I didn’t know myself. VIPS felt like home.

We started services with them right away. We had wonderful vision therapists, Christina Allen and Brittany Williamson, who supported us during the first 2 years of Evelyn’s life. They focused on helping Evie achieve her milestones and using her limited sight to the best of her abilities. They coached us and gave us strategies and even coping mechanisms to aid us in raising a visually impaired child. VIPS held playgroups and other functions where I could go and socialize with other families and babies who knew exactly what we were going through. Everything they did for Evelyn was amazing, and I’m forever thankful.

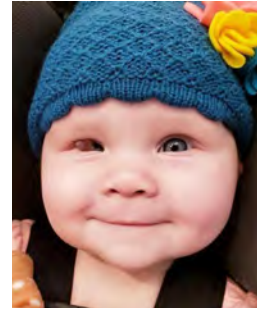
With the help of the Microphthalmia and Anophthalmia support groups, primarily ICAN (The international Children’s Anophthalmia Network) we learned that Evelyn would benefit from conformers and eventually a prosthetic. We got partnered with an Ocularist, a person who makes prosthetic eyes, and started the process when Evelyn was 10 weeks old. Conformers are hard acrylic shells that fit in the eye orbit, either in place or on top of an eye in a microphthalmic or anophthalmic eye socket. The conformers manually stretch the eye’s orbit, mimicking a natural eye pressure on the orbital bones. Babies who need conformers usually need a new one with in a few weeks to continue to promote socket pressure and growth. Around one year of age, Evelyn received her first painted prosthetic eye. Now we fly to Dallas, TX, about every 3 or so months for an adjustment.



*Some of the conformers Evie has worn.*

All of Evelyn’s medical conditions eventually led to my husband joining the military. So we had to say goodbye to Louisville and

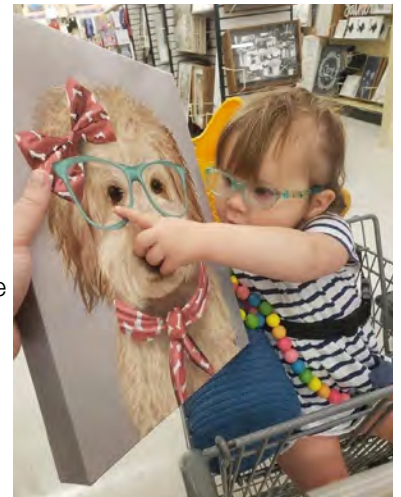
we got stationed in Fort Carson, Colorado. Fort Carson is about 1.5 hours south of Denver where the Anchor Center for Blind Children is located. We immediately connected with them and they have been a wonderful resource in getting us accustomed to living in Colorado and raising Evelyn in a strong community that continues to build her independency of navigating being visually impaired in a sighted world.



*Evie wearing a conformer.*

Evelyn recently turned 3 years old, so she has attended their toddler program. This allows us to work in small groups with therapists who help Evelyn optimize her vision. We also get to meet other families who are going through similar events. This fall Evelyn will attend their preschool program, and we are so excited to see her flourish there.

Evie is a happy three year old. Her favorite things right now are being a princess like Anna and Elsa, being a dinosaur and singing at the top of her lungs. She loves to travel and she has visited 43 US states by age two, and we hope to reach all 50 before she enters Kindergarten. With the help of the Anchor Center for Blind Children, she received a white cane to help her safely navigate unfamiliar places and she is still excelling at comfortably being able to go out and explore.



## Feeling This Life

### ***New Episodes Available!***

If you haven’t yet listened to the fabulous podcasts, Feeling This Life, a collaboration between VIPS and the Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver, Colorado, you can now check out all five episodes. VIPS Family Services Coordinator, Jenny Castenir, and VIPS Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Developmental Interventionist, Paige Maynard, work with Dr. Cathy Smyth, TVI, Ph.D., the Director of Research at the Anchor Center in developing podcasts for parents of children with visual impairments/blindness.

The introduction to the series along with Episodes 1 - 5 have been released at <https://anchor.fm/feeling-this-life>. Episodes

4 and 5 have been released since the last newsletter. Check them out!

• **Episode 4 -- What to expect when helping your child learn to get from place to place**

Dr. Cathy interviews Dr. Penny Rosenblum about what to expect when teaching your child orientation and mobility skills. Dr. Rosenblum is a professional in the area of visual impairment, and has a visual impairment herself. She shares practical ideas for helping your child to become an active traveler.

• **Episode 5 -- What to expect when fostering your child's social skills**

Paige interviews Hailee Raymer, mom of a daughter with a visual impairment and complex needs. Hailee talks about how her time at the pool with her daughter taught her a new way to connect, and gives advice to other families about what to expect when fostering social skills in their children. Jenny, Dr. Cathy, and Paige talk about the potential for each moment to become an opportunity for building a strong foundation for social development.

## Bret Dahmke Scholarship Winner

The Bret Dahmke Scholarship, named in memory of the younger son of VIPS' long time Office Manager/HR Director,



Carol Dahmke and her husband, Mitch, was recently awarded to the Howard family whose ten year old daughter, Sophia, is a former VIPS child. Sophia's mom writes:

*"We would like to thank the Dahmke family for choosing our family for the Bret Dahmke scholarship. My name is Tammy Howard and I am the mother of Sophia. Sophia has been deaf and blind since the day she was born. She was born*



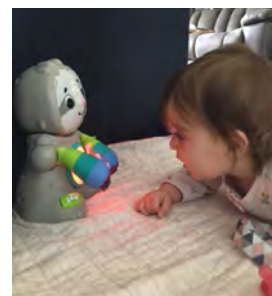
*with a disease called Zellweger syndrome. I was able to attend the Early Connections Conference sponsored by Perkins School for the Blind. By me being able to attend this conference I was able to learn a lot of new skills that will benefit my daughter and help her make an impact in the world. This has only been possible because of the Bret Dahmke scholarship. Thank you so much for making this possible for my family."*

The scholarship is awarded every other year.

## Marvelous Milestones

Never to be taken for granted, each child's milestones uniquely reflect his or her own progress through hard work and determination. We celebrate the following VIPS children and their families' accomplishments.

**Acrey** has been working on many skills like pushing up on her hands in tummy time and using a visual gaze. During a recent visit, she shifted her gaze between two objects, used a visually guided reach, and made eye contact, smiling at both mom and provider! Way to go, Acrey!



**Barrett** is now more alert and can direct his vision to his toys with more and more ease. He can look at lighted toys while positioned on his belly when Mom Katie provides him with support to look at a lighted toy on the floor. He can also look at a lighted toy while in his lounger. We are so proud of the strides he is making while using his vision!

**Haven** was struggling with seeing her foods on her high chair tray, so Mom and Dad put some contrasting tape on her tray. She immediately started intentionally grasping her finger foods! Her parents are so excited with her response that they plan to place some contrasting adhesive vinyl on the tray soon as a permanent option. What great innovation and great work, Haven!



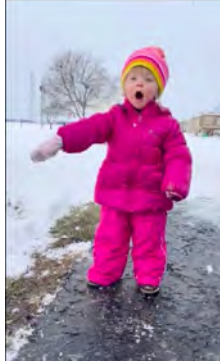
Haven is shown with twin Harlow at left.





**Kaily** has recently started taking her cane to and from school on the bus. Having her cane at home has allowed her to use the cane skills she has learned at school out in the community with her family. Most recently, Kaily used her cane while touring schools where she may attend kindergarten. Keep up the great work, Kaily!

**Leni** has fun playing in the snow and throwing snowballs! She grabs with her hands, squeezes the snow into a ball, then throws it in front of her. In this video (<https://www.facebook.com/VisuallyImpairedPreschoolServices/videos/351548946653354>), you can see her watching the white snow hit the contrasted black concrete. We love seeing Leni enjoying the winter weather!



**Levi** has been working hard on sitting up on his own. He is now able to go from lying down, to sitting, and can even stand up with some assistance from his mom. Levi has also been tolerating his glasses more and wore them for 2 whole hours! We are so proud of the progress he has made since working with his VIPS teacher Ms. Julia.



**Messiah** is now able to sit up unassisted and maintain balance! He just hit another milestone by celebrating his first birthday with his family and friends! We are so proud of everything he's accomplishing with such an amazing support system!



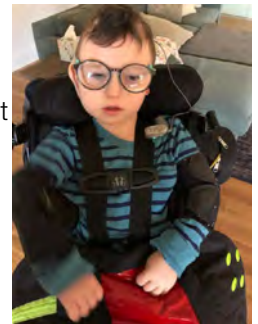
**Macie** (shown with big sis, Maddie,) has recently started working on standing while holding onto furniture. She has made so much progress in the past couple of weeks! She started out by leaning on her mom for support and comfort. She would fuss and cry when working on standing and though she put all her weight on her feet, she would keep her head down on the furniture. Macie's mom started giving her lots of verbal and tactile cues to let her know that she was going to be

put in a standing position and when she was going to let go. She recently met her goal and stood with her head UP and without fussing for three minutes! Way to go, Macie!



**Rayland** has received VIPS services due to his visual diagnosis of Optic Atrophy. This diagnosis means the optic nerve is unable to conduct electrical impulses to the brain causing loss of vision. Rayland also has some physical delays and has been provided a stander from his Physical Therapist. According to his mother, Mandy, the stander has been life changing! Rayland has been putting weight on his feet more often and has been standing up straight.

He has also been lifting his head more to visually fixate on the light box when placed on the tray in front of him. Rayland has also begun touching the items on the light box such as the bead banner! Wonderful job, Rayland!!

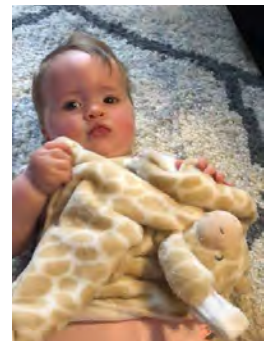


**Samuel** just turned three years old. He has a diagnosis of cortical visual impairment and during his time with VIPS, Samuel has made great progress! He is able to focus for longer periods of time, interacts with his family, enjoys playing with toys and looking at books. Congratulations, Samuel!



**Talon** is now drinking out of a straw cup. This is huge for Talon because he has suffered from reflux, so he has really struggled to allow food in his mouth. He is also now starting to eat some purees! Taking steps in his walker is huge progress for Talon because, in addition to Cortical Visual Impairment, he also has Cerebral Palsy. Talon is making so much progress!

**Wrenley** loves to play Peek-a-boo, an age-old game that teaches social skills, object permanence, motor skills, strengthens visual tracking, and is just plain fun for babies. Wrenley's mom knows the importance of social games and has been playing peek-a-boo with Wrenley in hopes that she will start to initiate and play peek-a-boo without help. Mom's hard work is paying off as Wrenley has started pulling the cloth down to play peek-a-boo and



is attempting to pull the cloth up to cover her face when mom says, “up, up, up”. We are so proud of Wrenley and her recent progress!

**William** has Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) and with targeted strategies, his functional vision has been steadily improving. Recently his mother, Marilyn, picked him up from daycare and when William heard her voice, he looked at her and then ran to her, jumping into her arms. “He looked at me when he heard my voice and that made him speed up!” It’s so rewarding to see how his use of his vision, the result of his hard work and that of his family, is paying off in how he is better able to use his eyes.



### Eating Upside Down?

Felicity has struggled with textures of foods. Ms. Paige discussed with Felicity’s mom, Stephanie, about the sensitivities of Felicity’s body parts and that Felicity’s mouth was more sensitive than her hands and feet.

Stephanie decided to present purees to Felicity’s feet to help her learn to explore and accept the texture. She gradually encouraged Felicity to explore with her hands, and now Felicity is learning to explore food textures with her mouth! We call this strategy “eating upside down.” It is part of the Mealtime Research Visual Impairment (MRVI) study strategy, a federal study that seeks to create an evidence- and practice-based intervention for infants and toddlers with visual impairment and to assist their families in developing realistic goals in the areas of developmental mealtime skills such as using utensils and self-feeding, eating a variety of food choices, fostering positive communication between caretakers and babies, and creating positive mealtime environments. Great teamwork, Stephanie and Ms. Paige!



## Parents’ Ingenuity Creates Solution

by Paige Maynard, TVI/DI, VIPs Louisville

On a recent home visit with one of my kiddos, Gabriel, I was completely blown away by a strategy that Mom, Hillary, and Dad, Jake, are using with him! At a previous visit, Hillary had shared that it had been difficult to easily present items against a black background, which is a strategy that they know works to help Gabriel actually look at items (he has Cortical Visual Impairment).

Between the visits, Hillary and Jake collaborated, designed, and 3D printed this toy stand! It is the perfect size to be portable, and infant toys and other small items fit easily on it. It is easy to hold in various places in Gabriel’s visual fields, and it can be oriented so that the circle is on the bottom, with the square as the background, or can be oriented so that the square is on the bottom with the circle as the background - depending upon the toy and positioning.

The best part is that Jake will share the file with our families so that they can print themselves (many UPS stores have a 3D print service). Our families are truly amazing, and I am humbled at their creativity and dedication!

Jake wrote a beautiful description of why he designed it, and how they use it to help Gabriel. Here is the link to the file:

<https://www.printables.com/model/173498-cvi-toy-stand>.



Gabriel is able to focus on the toy when placed on the stand.





## New Arrivals

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

Addison – 1 year, Louisville, KY	Giovanni – 8 months, Ft. Wayne, IN	Marietta – 1 year, Decatur, IN
Amelia – 2 years, Lexington, KY	Hannah – 7 months, Jeffersonville, IN	Muhebullah – 9 months, Louisville, KY
Ayden – 10 months, Plainfield, IN	Hazel – 2 years, West Lafayette, IN	Nairobi – 10 months, Greenwood, IN
Ava – 1 year, Hoagland, IN	Ivory – 1 year, Indianapolis, IN	Nova – 2 years, Carrollton, KY
Beckett – 8 months, Carrollton, KY	Ivy – 3 months, Frankkton, IN	Novalee – 11 months, Hillsboro, KY
Blake – 8 months, Evansville, IN	Jaivy – 7 months, Muncie, IN	Oliver – 2 years, Nashville, IN
Brantley – 4 months, Owensboro, KY	Jaxson – 11 months, Mecca, IN	Parker – 2 years, Latonia, KY
Bryce – 9 months, Greenwood, IN	Jayda, – 8 months, Radcliff, KY	Quinn – 6 months, Dyer, IN
Camila – 1 year, Fishers, IN	Jose – 1 year, Indianapolis, IN	Remington – 1 year, Martinsville, IN
Carlos – 7 months, Louisville, KY	Julian – 1 year, Jeffersonville, IN	Rhys – 9 months, Kokomo, IN
Chandler – 1 year, Indianapolis, IN	Kai – 2 years, Ingalls, IN	Roriee – 1 year, Louisville, KY
Charlotte – 1 year, Galveston, IN	Kaiser – 5 months, Covington, IN	Rowen – 1 year, Sellersburg, IN
Colson O'Neil – 1 year, Brazil, IN	Lai'Lani – 1 year, Evansville, IN	Ryan – 9 months, Indianapolis, IN
Cupertino – 1 year, Versailles, KY	Lavonna – 1 year, Owensboro, KY	Sawyer – 10 months, Crofton, KY
Damonty – 2 years, Indianapolis, IN	Levi – 1 year, Greenfield, IN	Seth – 1 year, Milroy, IN
Dominic – 1 year, Huddy, KY	Lillian – 1 year, Brownsburg, IN	Shelton – 11 months, Valparaiso, IN
Dustin – 6 months, Stearns, KY	Lillian – 1 year, Decatur, IN	Skylar – 1 year, Kokomo, IN
Ella – 1 year, Williamstown, KY	Luca – 11 months, Greenfield, IN	Sullivan – 2 years, Westfield, IN
Evan – 11 months, Columbus, IN	McCoy – 6 months, Wabash, IN	Wyatt – 9 months, Carrollton, KY
George – 2 years, Walton, KY	Madelyn – 11 months, Westfield, IN	Zalaney – 1 year, South Bend, IN

## Notes of Interest



***The Kentucky School for the Blind has partnered with students and faculty from the University of Louisville (U of L) Department of Anthropology and Center for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, the Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation (KSBCF) and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) for a month-long summer archeological field school.***

The project teaches KSB and U of L students archeological field methods as they help uncover the historic schoolhouse of the segregated School for the Blind, opened in 1884 and in operation for 71 years. The school was demolished after desegregation in the 1950s. The project gives KSB students the opportunity to be a part of uncovering their school's past as they participate in all aspects of the field investigation, from excavation to curation of recovered artifacts.

Involvement in this project has prompted deep reflecting by students like David Yeast, a VIPS graduate, about what their own experiences might have been like had they attended when the school was segregated.

"It kind of shocks me to think I might have been here if I came in the 1800s," said Yeast. "I didn't really think about that until now. I think it's important that we remember things that happened in the past."

To read the entire article, go to [https://www.kentuckyteacher.org/news/2022/05/kentucky-school-for-the-blind-students-digging-into-the-past-as-part-of-uofl-summer-archeological-field-school/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.kentuckyteacher.org/news/2022/05/kentucky-school-for-the-blind-students-digging-into-the-past-as-part-of-uofl-summer-archeological-field-school/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Brittany Williamson, TVI/Kids Town Preschool Teacher, recommends a ***new song loved by her students by Jack Hartmann that features the braille alphabet with alphabetic word signs.*** Hartmann and Jessica Hayes, MS, ED developed

the song to assist students with visual impairments and their families learn the braille alphabet and the corresponding word signs. Check out: [https://youtu.be/qT\\_dD7tEIEg](https://youtu.be/qT_dD7tEIEg).

**The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has a series of podcasts called Change Makers** in which interviews are held with the people who are making the biggest difference in our field of visual impairment and blindness. The recurrent theme is making the world of print more accessible to individuals with those challenges. In observance of Global Accessibility Awareness Day, May 19, 2022, suggestions for making social media more accessible for those with visual impairments were highlighted. Other recent topics include Orientation and Mobility Specialists, high tech Braille devices, tactile graphics, making sure your child is counted in the census and so on.

To access these podcasts go to <https://www.buzzsprout.com/354881>. To suggest a change make the podcast should highlight, E-mail [communications@aph.org](mailto:communications@aph.org).

**APH is undertaking a major construction project to create an expanded museum space to house the Helen Keller Archives.** In 2020, the Helen Keller Archives were transferred from the American Foundation for the Blind to APH. They include thousands of artifacts from documenting the life of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan. You can read more about it at: <https://plcmanagement.com/portfolio/helen-keller-museum-american-printing-house-for-the-blind/>.

## VIPS Staff News

We warmly welcome **Emily Thornton**, our new Database Coordinator, originally from Terre Haute, Indiana. She graduated from Indiana State University in 2019 with a degree in Recreation, Youth Leadership, and Nonprofit Leadership. She was a member of Delta Gamma and worked at Camp Navigate as a mentor, intern, and Child and Adult Care Food Program Coordinator during her time at ISU.



During Covid-19 she worked as a nanny for twin boys while they were out of school, then decided to go back to school. She then graduated this spring with a Masters of Leadership Development degree from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College,

interning at the Wabash Valley Community Foundation as a Front Desk Attendant and assisting in Donor Management and Database entry.

Emily has two cats, Toulouse and Winston and enjoys going to concerts, doing crafts and DIY projects, and spending time with family and friends.

**Emma Strange** is no stranger to VIPS. She first joined us as an intern when she was a junior at Holy Cross High School. Emma is now a student at the University of Louisville, majoring in special education and has joined our VIPS Kids Town Preschool team as a classroom assistant. Emma has worked with children of all ages for many years while volunteering as a coach at Prairie Village Baseball/ Softball. She also has 5 sisters, the oldest being 19 and the youngest being 3, who she loves teaching new things. She is very excited to be back at VIPS as she says it holds a special place in her heart. Welcome back, Emma!



Emma with Kayse, who she used to coach.

We also want to welcome our Bellarmine University intern, **Danie Miner**. Danie will be working with Kathy Mullen, Education Director, on the next steps of the curriculum development.

**Meredith Howell**, Regional Director of VIPS Indiana, and her daughter Lola were featured on front page of the Indianapolis Star!! The headline read, "These families are not alone anymore." The article talks about the New VIPS Family Resource Center on

the near east side of downtown Indy. We are so grateful to the Star for featuring our organization and we hope it will bring awareness to the amazing families we serve! You can read the full article online: <https://www.indystar.com/picture-gallery/news/2022/04/25/indianapolis-vips-building-virtual-tour-photos/7246693001/>



Meredith and daughter, Lola, hold the paper in which VIPS was featured.

For the past 116 weeks (since the beginning of the pandemic) **VIPS Executive Director Diane Nelson** has written a Friday message for VIPS staff and board. Begun during COVID, they have been continued as a tool to unite staff and keep us informed, even though we are separated by multiple factors e.g.,



physical location, backgrounds, job roles, etc. We have been amazed, motivated and inspired by her writing each Friday. Diane is ever resourceful and has used similar material to send out "From the Desk of Diane" twice each month to donors and friends of VIPS. We were totally amazed to learn that she is being followed by readers in Sweden, the United Kingdom and Israel!

We want to recognize our very own **Director of Education, Kathy Mullen**, who was awarded the 2022 Cathy Holden Excellence in Operational Leadership Award at the Vision Serve Alliance (VSA) Annual Conference. This award honors a high-level employee of a member organization who has made an impact on, contributed to, or led staff in the pursuit of organizational excellence, which is the true definition of Kathy's leadership here at VIPS. We feel honored to have her leading our education team. Congratulations to Kathy!



*We are so grateful for our dynamic leadership duo, Diane (left) and Kathy (right).*

Congratulations to **Amy Nichols**, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision for VIPS Indiana, who received Indiana's 2022 First Steps in Excellence in Service Award. Excerpts from her nomination letter state:

*"Amy is one of the most caring individuals you will ever meet. She definitely makes the world a better place. VIPS families LOVE Amy; she has not received anything less than amazing reviews from the families she serves...Every year Amy volunteers at our VIPS Annual Family Retreat and Parent Conference; this past year, she led an amazing session on emergent literacy skills in young children with vision loss. Parents were entranced and engaged from beginning to end. Amy has been asked to lead a small group of VIPS team members in a presentation at the Indiana Early Intervention State Conference in June. She is always looking for new ways to support our VIPS mission through leadership, volunteering for VIPS events, and putting her caring heart into everything she does for our VIPS families and team members."*

We are so blessed to have Amy as a member of the VIPS team.



*Amy shares a moment with a little one in the Sensory Room at the VIPS IN Family Resource Center.*

## In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of

### **William Greyson Jones**

son of Matthew and Marilyn Blessinger Jones of Louisville, KY, who passed away on April 5 at the age of 34 months

~ and ~

### **Reid Kustes**

son of Nathan and Tianna Kuctoc of Louisville, KY, who passed away on May 25th at the age of 7.

*Our hearts go out to all of those who loved William and Reid.*

## Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure

### **VIPS Indiana**

Since moving into our new space, we are grateful to be able to host volunteers who can help with a variety of tasks ranging from cleaning, filing, making birthday and thank you cards, and brailleing, just to mention some.

Thank you to **Christina Swider** for donating her time helping with administrative tasks in the Family Resource Center.

We were so excited to host Indiana **University HP Pediatric Ophthalmology** at the VIPS Family Resource Center in March! The volunteers came armed with ideas and supplies from the Amazon Wish List. They volunteered, helping us paint,



tape, braille and more! Then we were able to do a round table discussion to figure out how we can all work as a team to better help families of children with visual impairments across Indiana. It was amazing to see the collaboration taking place right in our very own space — they learned, we learned! And we're just getting started. Thank you for all your hard work and what we hope will be the start of a wonderful relationship! Thanks go to Rita DeVore for her impeccable coordination of this event.

Check out these amazing cards made by the **PRECISIONxtract** team! They had a group of 16 individuals ranging from Analyst level to Executive Vice President participating to create the birthday cards that will be sent to VIPS children throughout the year. We are so grateful to this group of volunteers!



## VIPS Kentucky

Our deep appreciation goes to the following individuals for escalating the repair of our audible street crossing signal in VIPS Louisville's Mobility City: **David Hayes, Pat Johnson and Stacy Keith from the City of Louisville and Patrick Mulvihill, our Councilman and his assistant, Geoff Wohl**. A very important part of teaching children with blindness how to navigate their environment safely and independently is teaching them how to safely cross streets. Orientation and mobility instruction must focus on city travel skills as key to independent navigation. Without our functional audible street crossing signal, VIPS O&M instructors were missing a critical piece of instruction. Thanks so very much!

Our thanks to six members of the **UPS SCS Brokerage** who volunteered at VIPS Louisville on Friday, April 15, weeding and mulching our garden beds. They included: Mark Hartlage, Jim Jury, Jason Wallin, Jessica Dessart, Nick Willhoite and Mike Grady. We are very grateful for their partnership with us.



**Audra Sommers and her team of ten volunteers from BCCLT Consulting Engineers** applied their engineering skills cleaning out and planting the Sensory Garden at VIPS Louisville. The volunteers even wrote an article about it in their company newsletter!



We continue to be blessed by **Fran Woodward**, who volunteers weekly in the Two's classroom at VIPS Kids Town Preschool.

Thanks to **Kayli Hartlage, Holy Cross Intern** for VIPS Louisville, who not only assisted in the preschool, but also went on a home visit with a VIPS Developmental Interventionist and observed a Physical Therapist work with children. Kayli has also helped with administrative paperwork and prepared a bead curtain.

We also appreciate the efforts of two **duPont Manual High School students, Evie Reed and Jake McMahon**, who sanitized Kidstown and prepared bead curtains.

We thank the **Legal Department at Texas Roadhouse for their work making cards as well as Tracy Leet, Taylor Leet and DJ Johnson** for their volunteer work placing the braille message "Happy Birthday" on several cards that will be sent to VIPS children on their birthday.

Thanks to the team from **UPS Solutions Engineering** that volunteered on March 21st. They wrapped with duct tape all the pvc materials that teachers make play frames out of. They also purged the old children's files and sent out the letters to the families regarding the records.

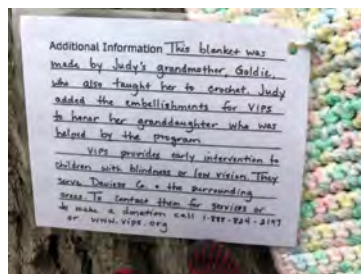




## Volunteers Get Crafty for VIPS!

### Yarn Art Raises Awareness of VIPS

VIPS Indiana says a special a special thank you to **Ms. Judy Singleton** Judy created this yarn art in the park project, which is one of the numerous pieces of art created by RSVP Volunteers and other community members in Daviess County, Indiana. Judy decided to replicate our VIPS logo and attach an info card as a way of getting VIPS' name to many local individuals. What a creative way to support our mission! Judy and her husband, Michael, are not only generous donors, but they are amazing VIPS advocates. Thank you, Judy and Michael, for your dedication to VIPS in honor of your granddaughter.



### What A Joy! Problem Solving through Sewing

VIPS TVI in Central Kentucky, Tammy Maynard, thanks her friend, **Joy Lynn Buckingham**. Joy and a few friends recently assisted VIPS with a special project for our children with vision impairments. "Our children frequently have difficulty in seeing objects on busy backgrounds and exploring their textures." Tammy says. "The towels that Joy sewed provide a solid background with vibrant colors/textures to explore while the child may be sitting in their chair or doing tummy time."

Joy says, "I've been sewing since the 5th grade. After 30 yrs of teaching K-8, I spend my retirement time sewing, quilting, traveling, photography and writing a blog @ [joysjotsshots.blogspot.com](http://joysjotsshots.blogspot.com) about it all. I feel God gave me the ability to sew, so I like to volunteer my sewing time including QOV (Quilts of Valor).



## VIPS Receives (Another!!) Prestigious Award

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) recently announced the winners and finalists of the **2022 BBB Torch Awards for Marketplace Ethics**. The winners and finalists were honored at the BBB Torch Awards Ceremony at The Olmsted in Louisville. The Torch Awards for Marketplace Ethics honors companies whose leaders demonstrate a high level of personal character and ensure that the organization's practices meet the highest standards of ethics, and consequently, generate trust.



## You Shared; We Care!

### What We Learned from the VIPS Donor Survey

In February, VIPS surveyed our donors to determine how they perceive our work and stewardship of the funds they entrust to us.

Out of 3565 surveys sent, 147 donors responded, which translates into a 4% response rate – this is considered an acceptable rate.

In answer to the question, "What motivated you to get involved with VIPS?" 46% responded that they knew a child who has been served by VIPS; 26% said they were asked by a friend; 14% said they had attended a VIPS event and 11% said they volunteer for VIPS.

Eighty-five percent of respondents felt that their involvement and donations made a difference, with most responding they believed they made a significant difference. Only 3% felt that their donation made little difference, and 12% said they did not know.

There were a variety of answers to the question, "How has VIPS demonstrated the difference your donations make?" Some said that growth of the program and the number of children served clearly demonstrate that their donations make a

difference. Others said their confirmation came from the real-life stories of children and families that VIPS shares. Still others cited the new Indiana Family Resource Center. Thank you notes, social media and newsletters also gave donors insight into the good work VIPS is doing with their donations.

Respondents said they stayed up to date with VIPS by reading posts in social media, the bi-monthly letter *From the Desk of Diane* by Executive Director, Diane Nelson, the *In the Loop* donor newsletter, and *VISability*, the VIPS Parents Newsletter. Fully 95% of them felt that VIPS publications were informative and meaningful.

A large majority of respondents ranked VIPS highly in the following areas:

- prudent & effective management of funds (85%);
- showing the impacts and outcomes of philanthropic investment (75%);
- connecting donors with stories of recipients of their generosity (80%);
- sending thank you notes in a timely manner (80%); and
- recognizing donors in appropriate public/private ways (79%).

When asked to rank the importance of various types of donor acknowledgement, receipt for donation was ranked highest, followed by thank you note or postcard. Receiving a personal phone call of thanks was ranked least in importance.

*For those of you who took the time to respond to our donor survey, thank you so very much! We continually strive to provide excellent services with the funds you entrust to us and it is so important that you recognize our efforts and can see the impacts of your generosity. You are the backbone that helps us stand tall in the nonprofit world and especially in services to young children who are visually impaired.*

If you were not able to complete the donor survey previously, and would still like to share your input, you can fill out the VIPS Donor Survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9HJK6Z9>.

## Development News

### VIPS Kentucky

VIPS is so grateful for the following grants and donations:

- \$500 - the **Ancient Order of Hibernians** for general support
- \$1,000 - **Alex G. Campbell, Jr. Foundation** for the Early Childhood Intervention Program
- \$1,000 - **Community Foundation of South Central Kentucky (from The Paulette Wells Family Fund)** for the Early Childhood Intervention Program for counties in their service area

- \$2,000 - **Orphan Society of Lexington** for materials for the Early Childhood Intervention program in Fayette County
- \$2,000 - **V. V. Cooke Foundation** in support of our IT needs to upgrade the wireless in Kids Town Preschool
- \$4,000 - **Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels** for security camera upgrades
- \$7,500 - **The Copia Foundation** for the Early Childhood Intervention Program
- \$8,000 - **E. O. Robinson** for the Early Childhood Intervention Program
- \$10,000 - **Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood's Division of Regulated Childcare** (under their relief support program) for upgraded/new HVAC control system for Louisville
- \$38,000 - **Lexington Fayette County Urban Government** for early intervention in Fayette Co.
- \$40,000 - **Louisville Downtown Lions Club**: \$25,000 from the Dr. Ralph Stengel Scholarship for Kids Town, \$10,000 match for KY Give for Good Day and \$5,000 sponsorship of the Lynn Family 5K for VIPS. *(Note: The Downtown Lions Club has generously donated \$210,000 and has pledged to help raise a total of \$500,000 by December 2025. These funds will be permanently invested and the proceeds of those investments will be used for operations in perpetuity. \$110,000 of this amount was personally donated by Charlotte Stengel in honor of her late husband, Dr. Ralph Stengel. It is up to VIPS to raise another \$115,000 in the next two and a half years in order for the Lions to match those funds and establish an endowment for VIPS to use going forward.)*

### Kentucky Gives Day

Kentucky Gives Day generated almost \$2,000 in support. Thanks so much to our dear Marchelle Hampton, Preschool Classroom Assistant, who reached out to her network of family and friends and raised over half of the total!

### The VIPS Gala

VIPS was blessed and overwhelmed by the generosity of our hundreds of supporters at both our extremely fun Gala in Louisville. *Our first live gala in three years enabled us to raise*



*Bidding was spirited during the live auction.*



over \$100,000 that helps us pay our teachers and meet our operational targets. We are blessed with so many generous supporters.

## VIPS Indiana

We are so thankful to our generous donors;

- \$1,000 - **Eric Bruun**, a longtime friend of Meredith Howell's, who joined her on a shopping spree and purchasing supplies for the Family Resource Center;
- \$5,000 - **Anonymous** former donor who recently toured the new facility;
- \$6,522 - Indiana First Steps for NAVAG equipment;
- \$40,000 - **AWS Foundation** for the Early Childhood Intervention Program in Northeast Indiana
- \$41,000 - **United Way of Central Indiana** for Capital Campaign commitments.
- **GE** donated a new refrigerator, washer and dryer to the new Indiana Family Resource Center. Thanks are due to VIPS board member **Taylor Gehring** for her assistance in this wonderful donation.

## Indiana Brewery Running Series and Ash & Elm Cider Co.

We want to give a huge thank you to the Indiana Brewery Running Series and Ash & Elm Cider Co. for hosting a run on behalf of VIPS! There were about 55 runners in attendance, all raising money for children who are blind or visually impaired! We were able to teach them about braille and chat about the work VIPS does in the community. And because the race was right next to our new facility, we gave a few tours of the Family Resource Center. Thank you to everyone for coming out and supporting our mission! We are lucky to have such awesome neighbors next door at Ash & Elm.

## Walking for Dreams

We had an amazing time at Walking for Dreams Family & Pet Walk 2022 in Indianapolis! We raised \$23,000 thanks to our generous walkers, supporters, and sponsors! We were at a new location this year. Instead of walking along the canal downtown, we were at Crown Hill Cemetery. It was a beautiful day to get out and walk for a great cause. We had VIPS families in attendance, along with Indy board members, staff, and volunteers. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again in May 2023. Mark your



calendars to be a part of the next walk in Indy! We want to give a shoutout to the sponsors who made this fundraiser a success!

**Sertoma Club of Broad Ripple**

**Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity (Purdue University)**

**Bose, McKinney & Evans**

**EYE Can See, Inc.**

**Republic National Distributing Company**

**The Spectacle Shoppe**

**Steele Pediatric Dentistry**

**Bosma Enterprises**

**Citizens Energy Group**

## VIPS Wish Lists

### VIPS Indiana

We are in need of many items for our new Family Resource Center! Checkout our VIPS Indiana Amazon Wish List: <https://a.co/aeRar2N>

### VIPS Louisville

VIPS Louisville Amazon Wish List: [https://www.amazon.com/s?k=vips+Louisville+amazon+wish+list&crd=218TAP0X3Y53Z&s\\_prefix=vips+louisville+amazon+wish+list%2Caps%2C101&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=vips+Louisville+amazon+wish+list&crd=218TAP0X3Y53Z&s_prefix=vips+louisville+amazon+wish+list%2Caps%2C101&ref=nb_sb_noss)

Also needed:

Bluetooth dual pairing speaker set

Self-Adhesive laminating sheets, 9" x 12"

White, black, yellow, and brown cardstock

White construction paper

Adhesive hook and loop velcro, black, 1-Inch x 10-Foot

Industrial grade and wear and tear resistant

Green washable, non-toxic tempera paint

Unscented baby wipes, sensitive, hypoallergenic, water-based

Cottonelle Ultra ComfortCare toilet paper, soft bath tissue, septic-safe

Paper towels

Sealable plastic sandwich bags

Zippered quart and gallon storage food bags

Facial tissue

Disinfectant wipes

Lysol spray

### VIPS Central KY

Amazon Wish List : [https://www.amazon.com/s?k=vips+Central+Kentucky+amazon+wish+list&crd=1NP2UD7CX4KHF&s\\_prefix=vips+central+kentucky+amazon+wish+list%2Caps%2C73&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=vips+Central+Kentucky+amazon+wish+list&crd=1NP2UD7CX4KHF&s_prefix=vips+central+kentucky+amazon+wish+list%2Caps%2C73&ref=nb_sb_noss)



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

### Friday, June 24, 10:30 a.m.

Louisville

**Park Pals** will meet at Beckley Creek Park. Contact [jmiles@vips.org](mailto:jmiles@vips.org).

### Friday, July 1, 11 a.m.

Louisville

**Cookout to benefit VIPS** -- \$5 meal gets you a hamburger/hotdog (nonmeat options available), chips and drink. It will be held in the parking lot of VIPS Louisville. Contact [kschmidt@vips.org](mailto:kschmidt@vips.org).

### Friday, July 8, 10 a.m. - noon

Lexington

**VIPS CK Summer Sensations.**  
Contact [keaston@vips.org](mailto:keaston@vips.org).

### Friday, July 8, 10:30 a.m.

Louisville

**Park Pals** will meet at Iroquois Park. Contact [jmiles@vips.org](mailto:jmiles@vips.org).

### Wednesday, July 20, 10:30 a.m.

Indianapolis

**Story Time Presented by IN Talking Book & Braille Library.** Contact [rdevore@vips.org](mailto:rdevore@vips.org).

### Friday, July 22, 10:30 a.m.

New Albany, IN

**Park Pals** will meet at Kevin Hammersmith Memorial Park. Contact [jmiles@vips.org](mailto:jmiles@vips.org).

### Wednesday, Aug. 10

Louisville

**JCPS First Day of School**

### Monday, Aug. 22

Louisville

**IMI Golf Tournament** to benefit VIPS, Audubon Country Club. Contact [aford@vips.org](mailto:aford@vips.org).

### Friday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m.

Lexington

**VIPS Cupcake Classic 3k**, Wellington Park. Register at <https://bit.ly/3IJJobR>.

### Saturday, Sept. 17

Louisville

**Lynn Family 5k for VIPS**, Waterfront Park. Contact [aford@vips.org](mailto:aford@vips.org).

### Monday, Oct. 3

Louisville

**YUM Corporate Cup Golf Tournament**, Wildwood Country Club. Contact [aford@vips.org](mailto:aford@vips.org).

### Saturday, Oct. 15

Louisville

**VIPS Family Night at the Science Museum.** Contact [jcastenir@vips.org](mailto:jcastenir@vips.org).

### Friday & Saturday, Nov. 4-5

Louisville

**VIPS Family Retreat.** Contact [jcastenir@vips.org](mailto:jcastenir@vips.org)

#### 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  
Suzanne Bigbee, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Bob Boyd, IT  
Jenny Castenir, Family Services Coordinator  
Kristan Decker, Preschool Assistant  
Rebecca Dunda, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Ashley Emmons, TV/COMS/Preschool Teacher  
Pauletta Feldman, Special Projects  
Ashley Ford, Event Coordinator  
Marchelle Hampton, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Debbie Hardesty, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Pam Holladay, TV/Preschool Teacher  
Brian Justice, Facility Manager  
Paige Maynard, TV/Developmental Interventionist  
Staci Maynard, TV/Preschool Teacher  
Juanita Miles, Assistant Preschool Director/DI  
Jan Moseley, Visual Impairment Specialist  
Brenda Pharris, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Laney Reed, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Kirsten Schmidt, Guest Relations & Support  
Julia Sleder, TVI (Provisional/DI) Kids Town Preschool Twos Teacher  
Emma Strange, Preschool Classroom Assistant  
Emily Thornton, Database Manager  
Tracy Webb, Developmental Interventionist  
Maury Weedman, O&M Specialist/Maintenance  
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, TVI/Developmental Interventionist/

#### VIPS-Indiana

1212 Southeastern Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Toll Free 1-888-824-2197 FAX 1-502-636-0024  
E-Mail: [vipsindiana@vips.org](mailto:vipsindiana@vips.org)  
Meredith Howell, Regional Director  
Kim Berghoff, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision  
Rita DeVore, Administrative Asst./Special Projects Coord.  
Michelle Flora, Blind/Low Vision Specialist  
Mindy Koehne, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision  
Amy Nichols, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision  
Tommy Roesch, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision/COMS  
Ashley Ross, Development Coordinator  
David Sterne, Teacher of Blind/Low Vision/  
First Steps Coordinator

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