

VI Sability

VIPS Parent Newsletter

Vol. 38, No. 3, July – September, 2022

Accessible Edition

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Upcoming Events

Monday, October 3

The VIPS YUM! Brands Corporate Cup Golf Tournament. This annual tournament and fund-raiser will be held at Audubon Country Club in Louisville. For more info, contact:

keaston@vips.org

Saturday, October 15, 5:30 p.m.

VIPS night at the Science Center for Halloween. Come in costume!! For more info, contact Jenny Castenir, Family Services Coordinator at:

jcastenir@vips.org

Friday, Oct. 21, 10 a.m.

White Cane Awareness Day will be held at the KY State Capitol in Frankfort. There will be a White Cane Awareness Walk, Tour of the Capitol, and Proclamation for White Cane Day. Contact:

jasamyn.degrant@clark.kyschools.us

Saturday, October 22, 10 a.m.

Trick or Treat at the Family Resource Center in Indianapolis. Local organizations will set up booths to pass out information and resources that will benefit your family. Dress up for a day of trick or treating for resources and goodies at VIPS. Staff and volunteers available to tend to children while parents/caregivers chat with each other and the organizations present. RSVP at

<https://secure.vips.org/eventReg.jsp?event=1323&>.

Saturday, October 29, 10:30 a.m.

Trunk 'N Treat at the VIPS Central KY Office. Come in costume and have a safe trick-or-treating experience and get lots of treats! Register at:

<https://secure.vips.org/event.jsp?event+1325&>

Friday-Saturday, November 4-5,

VIPS Family Retreat. Details inside. For more info, contact Jenny Castenir, Family Services Coordinator at:

jcastenir@vips.org

Tuesday November 29

Save the date! VIPS will participate in #GivingTuesday, the largest online giving day, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, November 29! Help VIPS by creating a Facebook Fundraiser to help us raise funds to meet our goal! All donations go towards supporting families in need of VIPS services. Watch for more info!

Saturday, December 10,

VIPS Louisville Holiday Party. Contact Jenny Castenir, Family Services Coordinator at:

jcastenir@vips.org

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A Focus on Mission; VIPS 2021-22 Fiscal Year Report

VIPS ended Fiscal Year 2021/2022 with optimism! Even though the year had been unique and unpredictable due to the continuation of covid, there were exciting opportunities for VIPS to shine because of resilience and mission focus.

Some of the highlights of the year include:

1. VIPS served a total of 344 children in KY and 314 in IN;
2. VIPS celebrated the grand opening of the Simon and Estelle Knoble VIPS Indiana Family Resource Center in Indianapolis;
3. VIPS Kids Town Preschool opened for its 11th year;
4. VIPS collaborated with the University of Colorado at Denver on building platforms for the VIPS Preschool and PE Curricula;
5. VIPS was represented during the Council of Schools for the Blind Leadership Conference and the American Printing House for the Blind Annual Meeting;
6. VIPS was honored for excellence in non-profit management by Guidestar and the Better Business Bureau;
7. VIPS launched the Feeling This Life podcast;
8. The KY Department of Education increased VIPS funding to \$500,000 per year for the biennial budget;
9. VIPS educational staff participated in training by staff from the Anchor Center for the Blind in Denver, assessing different as-

pects of visual functioning in newborn infants;
10. VIPS was given funding for a new car, bringing our fleet to 5 cars for teachers to use while traveling throughout KY and IN to visit children and families.

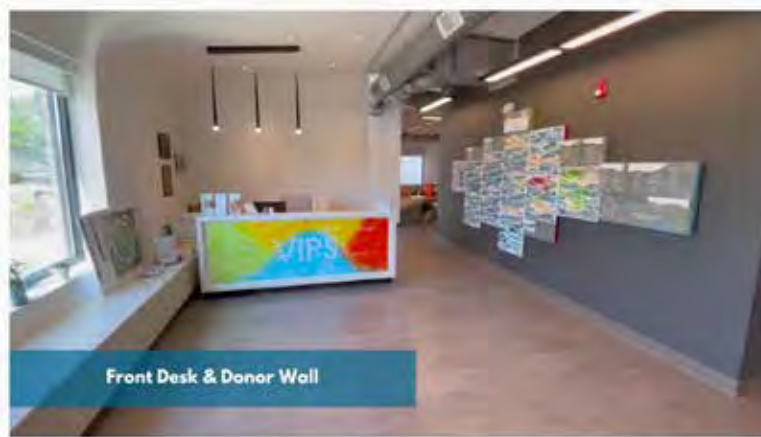
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Take a Virtual Tour

VIPS Indiana Family Resource Center

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gu-QIoIWcbE>

The picture shows the lobby of the Indiana Family Resource Center. It is bright, with lots of windows. On one wall, there is an art installation listing all donors to the capital campaign.



We Want Your Stories!!!

Please share your child's and/or your family's story! October is Blindness and Visual Impairment Awareness month, and we are looking for parent stories to share during the month that tell of both the challenges and triumphs of raising a child with a visual impairment. And be sure to share some pictures! Mail all to the link below by Oct. 7.

aross@vips.org

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What a Summer It Was!

CKY Summer Sensations Camp

Over a dozen VIPS children and their siblings came to the Central KY location for a July morning full of fun summer time activities at our Summer Sensations camp. Campers explored the theme of transportation and they played with planes, trains, trucks, boats and automobiles. VIPS children also had the opportunity to work with their VIPS teachers on Orientation and Mobility skills and activities based on their individual goals.

VIPS Louisville Summer Program

Little minds and hands were kept busy during the summer vacation from school calendars as the Kids Town Preschool staff held almost eight weeks of summer programming. The focus shifted toward fun activities while still emphasizing expanded core curriculum, literacy and math and science skills.

Stacie Maynard and Julia Sleder were the TVIs who planned four fun days each week at VIPS and a Friday VIPS playground event. Themes ranged from robots to space and from farms to camping. The warm weather encouraged days with water play, neatly fitting into the ocean and water themes. Both teachers sent home weekly newsletters which spelled out activities, included announcements and provided home activities for families to expand on each theme.

Summer interventions in children's homes and day cares continued at the same time, ensuring that children in VIPS programs were kept actively learning. This also made for shorter "remind-me-what-I-learned-last-year" time as classes following school calendars resumed in August.

Photos: The picture on the left shows two boys holding pictures of astronaut helmets up to their faces. On the right, a little boy in blue lands on his feet at the bottom of a slide.



More photos: Below, a little girl sits barefoot on a mat that has triangular pieces that are removable. The pieces have braille symbols on them. Next page: A mom has her son by the hand as they cross the talking crosswalk in VIPS Mobility City. There are tricycles and other riding toys “parked” in the background.



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Kids Town Preschool Now In Session!

Many people would expect schools to be peacefully calm and blissfully quiet once school dismisses for summer vacation. But VIPS remained a hub of activity, even after the Kids Town Preschool summer session ended.

Instructional materials were re-organized in the classrooms, books were replaced on bookshelves, and supply closets were straightened and necessary supplies re-ordered to re-stock the labeled shelves. A general, overall cleaning of furniture, floors, rugs, materials, toys and other classroom, lunchroom, and Kids Town objects was completed. Materials and new labels were developed, prepared and transcribed into braille and large type. Daily schedules were designed, changed and finally displayed in the classrooms. Additional staff members were interviewed and hired while sad goodbyes said to those staff members who left.

And then there were preparations for actually teaching the eager youngsters soon to scamper into the building. Each individual's challenges, goals, Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and

health information were reviewed and lesson plans were made to address each child's individualized needs.

Every family of a 2022-2023 Kids Town Preschool student was invited to a "meet and greet," to tour the classrooms and additional instructional and play areas and to meet the staff working with their child. True individualized attention at VIPS doesn't end with only the child!

The calendar moved closer to the re-opening date and tension mounted while last minute details were addressed. A busy buzzing seemed to almost fill the air as the excitement of a new school year steadily increased. All of the advance preparations were completed awaiting the arrival of the first school bus.

On Wednesday, August 24, the happy voices of the youngsters once again filled the halls and the hearts of the VIPS staff as another school year was underway!

Photos: On left, a little girl gets assistance stepping down the big steps of the school bus on her first day of preschool. On the right, a little girl sits in front of a brailer with her right hand on the keys. She has a big smile.



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Music Demo Class at VIPS Indiana

We had an awesome time with The Music Playhouse Carmel as they lead a FREE music demonstration class at the Family Resource Center on June 8! The Music Playhouse has a new program called POWER PUPS! This new class offering supports children with learning challenges, including physical/motor, visual, sensory, emotional, cognitive, body awareness, and self-regulation difficulties. It is a playful and fun-filled musical experience. Be sure to check out their page if you are interested in attending a class.

Photos: On the left, a music instructor scatters various music makers (tambourine, shakers, bells, rattles, etc.) between two boys. On the right, a black lab guide dog gives a big wet kiss to a giggling little girl (story below).



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A Special Visitor to Kids Town Preschool

An exciting 4-legged visitor recently made several new friends in the KidsTown Preschool classrooms. Fleurdelis, a Leader Dog for the Blind from Rochester Hills, Michigan, has recently completed her training and came to visit the preschoolers. The children's reactions ranged from delighted snuggling to tentative pats, as the well-trained dog -- out of harness so she could behave as just a dog -- greeted each child.

When in her harness, Fleurdelis is all business and, in fact, she has just returned to Michigan to meet her new owner. Both will be trained how to function as a team, as Fleur leads her owner safely through the Rochester Hills community before learning the owner's home community.

Fleur was trained by Michigan transplant, Natalie Cousin, the Assistant Director in Academic and Support Services for Bellarmine Student-Athletes. Because of her previous experience training Leader Dogs, she was allowed to bring Fleur to Kentucky.

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MAKE PLANS NOW!!

VIPS Family Retreat Weekend, Nov. 4 – 5

The entire family will have a great time at Camp VIPS -- the VIPS Family Retreat November 4-5, 2022 in Louisville, KY!

Camp will start on Friday evening with a dessert social for the entire family.

On Saturday, children up to age 10 will attend Kid's Camp at VIPS Louisville in the Kids Town Preschool classrooms. A fun day is planned with lots of activities including a lesson and crafts. Meals and snacks will be provided.

The adults will be across the street at Sullivan University's Gardiner Point Residence Hall (4004 Gardiner Point Dr. Louisville, KY 40213). Sessions will include a parent panel, an orientation and mobility session and a few surprises along the way!

Cost is \$25.00 per family. Overnight rooms are available for \$25 for families traveling more than 50 miles. Financial assistance is available for families in need. Please RSVP by October 1st at the link below:

<https://bit.ly/2022FamilyRetreat>;

For questions or to receive additional information, please contact Jenny at the link below.

jcastenir@vips.org

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Feeling This Life Podcast: Season 2!

Get ready for the widely anticipated season 2 of the acclaimed Feeling This Life podcasts, offering topics of special interest to parents of children with visual challenges. Listen to these 20-35 minute gems on any of your usual platforms: Apple Podcasts, Castbox, Google Podcasts, RadioPublic or Stticher.

Topics for 2022-2023 include:

My child's vision stumps me! with Carrie Garnett

Release Date: September 5

Jenny interviews Carrie Garnett, her daughter's teacher of the visually impaired. They discuss their experiences around confusion when a child is able to see something they "shouldn't" be able to, and when a child struggles with seeing something they "should" be able to both at home and at school. Paige, Dr. Cathy, and Jen-

ny reflect about the factors that influence a child’s functional vision. Jenny shares how her feelings of need for control have been impacted by being “stumped”.

One of the things we can observe in young (and not so young) children is the presence of “visual fatigue”. It is just one more hidden visual condition that affects individuals with visual impairment in their daily lives. As we learn more about how the brain works, scientists are starting to unravel the mystery of visual fatigue. Here is a link for understanding that research better:

<https://www.perkins.org/the-science-behind-visual-fatigue-and-cvi/>

Photo: A little girl, smiling broadly and wearing pink glasses, gets a hug from her TVI, also smiling. They look like great friends! There are classroom boards in the background.



Will orientation and mobility help my child? with Dr. Phangia Dewald

Release Date: October 3

Dr. Cathy interviews Dr. Phangia “Nana” Dewald, an orientation and mobility specialist. Cathy and Nana talk about the importance

of orientation and mobility in a child's early years and the impact that service can have on a child's development. Jenny reflects on her experience advocating for orientation and mobility services for her daughter, and how she felt as she spoke up. Cathy, Jenny, and Paige then share their thoughts about how orientation and mobility, grief, and advocacy intersect.

For The Benefit of Those Who See Book Talk

Release Date: December 5

Jenny, Dr. Cathy, and Paige reflect on reading "For the Benefit of Those Who See", by Rosemary Mahoney. Topics that come up include learning about the world using all of our senses and blind content creators. Jenny touches on how the students at Braille Without Borders (the school where Mahoney teaches) validate her experiences.

Purchase and learn more about "For the Benefit of Those Who See" book at the link below:

<https://www.rosemarymahoney.net/>

What happens when your vision changes? with Juanita Miles

Release Date: January 9

Juanita Miles, preschool director at VIPS, shares the story of how her vision has changed as she lost, gained, and then lost her sight. She shares insights she gained along the way and opens up about how it felt to lose vision and how she accomplished her goals when she wasn't sure she could. Jenny, Paige, and Dr. Cathy reflect about Juanita's resilience. Link to Juanita's life hacks is below.

https://vipsorg.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/FeelingThisLife/Eb19gjLT-WN1DjzL_xpbyhJkBhgPuVUMBXMFZPITrOGERbg

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Welcome New Children

VIPS is pleased to welcome the following new children and their families into the VIPS Program:

Aliza - 1 year old, Union City, IN
Analeigha - 1 year, Warsaw, IN
Angel - 2 years, Ft. Wayne, IN
Aniya - 2 years, Madisonville, KY
Asher - 2 years, Depauw, IN
Atley - 7 months, West Lafayette, IN
Beau - 5 months, Anderson, IN
Brooklynn - 2 years, Indianapolis, IN
Cannon - 1 year, Frankfort, IN
Carley - 1 year, Terre Haute, IN
Charleston - 10 months, Whitesburg, KY
Christopher - 1 year, Louisville, KY
Clara - 1 year, Warsaw, IN
Colton - 2 years, Greenwood, IN
Erison - 8 months, Providence, KY
Finegan - 1 year, Louisville, KY
Frankee - 2 years, Indianapolis, IN
Frankie - 1 year, Fredonia, KY
Hattie - 1 year, Muncie, IN
Heavenlee - 8 months, Independence, KY
Hudson - 2 years, Ft. Wayne, IN
Jace - 2 years, West Liberty, KY
Jai'Zion - 8 months, Indianapolis, IN
Karmalee - 8 months, Florence, KY
Kason - 2 years, Lexington, KY
Kenai - 2 years, Goshen, IN
Killian - 2 years, Frankfort, KY
Korbyn - 2 years, Georgetown, KY
Krisaya - 8 months, Hebron, KY
Lainey - 8 months, Covington, KY
Lettie - 11 months, Owensboro, KY
Levi - 2 years, Frankfort, KY
Liam - 1 year, Georgetown, KY

Lucah - 1 year, Anderson, IN
Lyla - 1 year, Warsaw, IN
Marleigh - 1 year, Lexington, KY
Mishka - 1 year, Indianapolis, IN
Murphy - 2 years, Brownsburg, IN
Oakley - 10 months, Russellville, KY
Olivia - 1 year, Pendleton, IN
Owen - 11 months, Chesterton, IN
Paisleigh - 2 years, Crawfordsville, IN
Persephanie - 7 months, Fishers, IN
Preciana - 11 months, Florence, KY
Rowan - 1 year, Lexington, KY
Summer - 8 months, Vanlear, KY
Violet - 1 year, Louisville, KY
Wade - 1 year, Dry Ridge, KY
William - 3 years, Nicholasville, KY
Wyatt - 4 months, Winchester, IN
Yuvraj - 2 years, Noblesville, IN
Zoey - 1 year, Ashland, KY

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Those Marvelous Milestones

Because of the variety of visual impairments and other disabilities that VIPS children experience, their milestones may look a bit different. The milestones below, which are the result of much hard work on the part of the children and their families and caregivers, are truly cause for celebration.

Edison is a VIPS graduate who just graduated from preschool this spring. He was awarded the honor of "Most likely to become a scientist". His VIPS teacher Ms. Amy said, "I would agree 100% with this award. Edison is very inquisitive. I remember him being very interested in figuring out how things worked. He also showed a great love for learning about dinosaurs, spiders, frogs, and other living things. Congratulations, Edison."

Photo: Edison is shown in blue cap and gown holding his diploma as he gets a hug from his smiling mom. On left, Ezra is laying surrounded by purple balloons, looking alert (story below).



Before switching to the Keto diet, **Ezra** was struggling with several seizures a day which negatively impacted his mood, alertness, and overall development. Ezra is now celebrating being one-month seizure free! Shelia, Ezra's mom, is already noticing improvement in Ezra's overall alertness and visual attention since his seizures have decreased! Congrats to Ezra and his family!

Haven's family has been having some construction work completed on their home, and Haven has been afraid of the drill-when she heard it, she would cry. Ms. Paige chatted with the family about why Haven might be struggling, and how her vision doesn't allow her to locate the source of the sound or the concept of what the is drill and does. At a recent home visit, Haven practiced exploring the drill. Once she was comfortable, her mom pressed the button with her so that she could hear its sound and build an understanding of the drill. By the end of the visit, Haven was no longer bothered by the sound of the drill and happily played with her toys! She is growing her skills!

Jayce and his dad, Robbie, are practicing joint attention and imitation. Jayce wanted to learn how to take the dust buster off the toy vacuum, so Dad modeled pressing the button, then waited for Jayce to imitate what he did. When Jayce did, he looked at Rob-

bie for a response, and Robbie and Ms. Paige cheered for him! Way to go, Jayce and Robbie!

Photos: On left, Haven sits in her mom's lap as they very carefully look at a drill. On right, Jayce and his dad play with a toy vacuum. Dad models how to press the buttons and remove a part. Jayce has his hands over dad's to feel how it is done.



Jake attends VIPS Kids Town Preschool where he made progress this year in using his hands to interact with different toys and materials. He helped with holding his utensil and his cup! Jake has also done well with moving objects and reaching for them. He has been using Big Mack switches for two objects to make choices! Great work this school year, Jake!

JP has a goal of keeping his glasses on because typically he pulls them off as soon as they are put on his face. He recently attended a Disney Princess concert, courtesy of the United Way of the Bluegrass, and he kept his glasses on the entire time! Not only that, but he loved the show and was mesmerized by the sounds and sights!

Photos: On left, Jake lays on the floor playing reaching for various brightly colored toys hanging from a playframe. Photos: JP sits in his carseat in the car, blue glasses on, while he uses his time to look at a tactile book.



In this video, **Kaylee** is using a switch to learn cause and effect by operating her bubble machine. This was one of the first times she really demonstrated that she understands that when she presses the button, something happens-- she can make bubbles! Her brother, Gunnar, is popping bubbles as she blows them, which is also great for social skills development. Way to go, Kaylee!

<https://www.facebook.com/VisuallyImpairedPreschoolServices/videos/700354084394015>

In this video, you can see **Levi** is clapping, which is a midline skill he has just acquired! Midline skills are those that involve the left and right sides of the body coming together at midline. The more practice a child gets with midline skills, the better body awareness they develop. This is so important for children with visual impairments as they build a foundation for more complex midline skills, like using scissors, drawing/coloring/writing, zipping a jacket, and spreading jam on toast! Way to go Levi!

https://www.facebook.com/VisuallyImpairedPreschoolServices/?ref=page_internal

Photos: On the left, Kaylee and her brother, Gunnar, have a great time, as Kaylee, sitting in a special chair, pushes a button on a switch to operate a bubble machine. Photos: On right, Levi, sits in his highchair, with the tray littered with graham cracker pieces and crumbs, as he claps his hands.



Lucas has made so much progress lately! He is now rolling, staying up on his elbows and knees, demonstrating better head and trunk control, playing with toys more appropriately, definitely seeing better, demonstrating less eye crossing, and sleeping for solid stretches of time. WOW! We can't wait to see what Lucas does next!

MarJani, a VIPS graduate, started with VIPS when she was just a few months old and has grown into a determined, hardworking, confident, independent young girl. She just started Kindergarten this month and we are excited to see all that she accomplishes in school. We are grateful to have played a role in MarJani's journey! Keep up the good work, MarJani!

Photos: Top photo: Lucas is on his hands and knees on the floor, looking ready to take off.



Photo: Marjani, looking so cute in a pink ruffled skirt and her hair in multiple braids, is ready for school. She has a backpack on and is flashing a peace sign with her right hand.



Rena was suffering from many seizures a day. In the process of switching to a Keto diet and changing her meds to be Keto-friendly, her seizures stopped. Her skills are growing rapidly now that her seizures have stopped. Keep up the great work, Rena!

In this video, **Sage** is playing independently and entertaining himself happily. He is using his hands to play the piano, kicking his feet to the tune, singing along, smiling! We are so proud of you, Sage!

<https://www.facebook.com/VisuallyImpairedPreschoolServices/videos/812776616554136>

Photos: On left: Rena sits in her mom's lap as they play with a toy that has buttons to push to produce lights and sounds. On the right: Little Sage sits in his busy seat. The tray holds a textured play mat that he can touch to activate.



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VIPS Parent Recommendation

This parent recommendation came from Stephanie, mother of, Felicity, who found a sensory fidget toy at Target -- Pop It! Braille. It features the braille alphabet on one side with the print alphabet on the reverse. Children delight in pushing the "bubbles", much like popping bubble wrap, while learning braille letters! It cost her \$9.99 at Target. The link is below:

<https://www.target.com/p/chuckle-38-roar-pop-it-braille-fidget-and-sensory-toy/>

Photo: Felicity sits in the seat of the grocery cart holding the PopIt! toy. She is wearing a helmet, and her dark curls are showing from the sides.



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Notes of Interest

ScripTalk is a FREE, easy-to-use service available at thousands of pharmacies throughout the United States and Canada that will read all your medication information out loud. Talking prescription labels can be crucial to ensuring medication safety and adherence.

A pharmacist programs and places on your medication a small electronic label with all your prescription information, including drug name, dosage, instructions, warnings, pharmacy information, doctor name, prescription number, date and more. The tag relies on RFID and text-to-speech technology. The free mobile app, ScripTalk, will read all the information out loud. The app is available from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

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Clifton Multisensory Art Expands Opportunities and Accessibility

Recognizing that almost all public artwork fails to consider that many viewers are excluded because of blindness and visual impairments, Liz Richter, a former teacher at the Kentucky School for the Blind, has re-imagined how public art works - for everyone. A large-scale art project that is accessible to blind and visually impaired people, among others, is planned for the Clifton area of Louisville where Liz and many individuals with blindness/visual impairments reside.

Two listening sessions of stakeholders, from both the Clifton and visually impaired communities, were held to gather suggestions, resources, collaborators and funding sources. A priority is to include not only artists, but especially artists with visual impairments already at work in the community. The project may include audio description, textured surfaces that make 2D imagery tactile, sound- and music-producing components integrated into the design, high-contrast visuals for those with some vision, kinetic

interaction, and even elements that generate pleasant aromas.

The Multisensory Public Art for Clifton is beginning construction with Liz as Lead Artist, due to her experience creating community-based, large-scale murals. A curved wall with multiple tactile and other sensory components is being constructed in Bank Commons Park across from the Kentucky School for the Blind and the American Printing House for the Blind. The community is encouraged to contribute decorated stones to the rock garden in progress. The ultimate goal is to be the pivot where local art becomes more accessible to those who experience the world differently.

Funding sources include the Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation, Louisville Visual Art, Louisville Metro Government, The National Endowment for the Arts, South Arts, Louisville Fund for the Arts, The Louisville Gas & Electric Company and Kentucky Utilities Company Foundation, Inc. and Oxmoor Auto Group.

Additional information, input and volunteers are encouraged at the website below. Also, there is a video describing the project below.

<https://www.multisensoryart.org/>

<https://youtu.be/CpmBoT7JN4I>.

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In Memoriam

Dallas Dean King, son of Nathan King and Caiman Proctor of Louisville, Kentucky, who passed away on April 30, 2022, at the age of one year.

Our hearts go out to all of those who loved Dallas.

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VIPS Staff News

VIPS Indiana

We like to call **Rita DeVore** our Indiana air traffic controller, but the reality is, she has taken on an official new title in addition to her administrative assistant position. She is now our volunteer coordinator as well and she has certainly been busy!

Laurie Smiley is a new part-time Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired for the Indiana office who lives in Bloomington, IN. Originally from Martinsville, Laurie has worked as a Developmental Interventionist/Preschool Teacher in the US and internationally. Married to a military man, she even worked in Japan! Laurie graduated from Ball State then went on to receive her TVI from Indiana State University. She has three sons and enjoys sewing clothing for her grandchildren.

VIPS Louisville

The new school year brings surprises, some positive and some not-so-much. In the not-so-much column is the departure of TVI Brittany Williamson who accepted the position of Itinerant Teacher of the Visually Impaired with Jefferson County Schools. We wish Brittany much success and know she will likely meet up again with VIPS graduates as they move into the local schools.

A positive surprise is the arrival of Kayleigh Herbert, an intern from Holy Cross. **Kayleigh** is a cheerleader, works on the year-book and has done an amazing amount of service work with a variety of non-profits. Welcome, Kayleigh!

More surprises on the positive side are several new teacher assistants to work in the Kids Town preschool.

Malinda Vogel writes, "I was born and raised in Minneapolis, MN and graduated from the College of St. Catherine with a Bachelor of Arts in Art and Writing. (They let me create a Writing major since they didn't have one yet.)" She has previously worked in

education, mostly in art, kindergarten and preschool classes.

Malinda home-schooled her son, now 31 years old, who is “still a gifted researcher and self-educator.” She worked as a special education teacher assistant in JCPS, at Johnson Traditional Middle School and Churchill Park School and loved them both. She especially enjoyed the pace at Churchill Park, and even after retiring, she felt the call to service once more and applied to VIPS. She has written a book of poetry, “Dark to Light.”

Continuing on a positive note, **Charlene Flores** will work part-time as a substitute in the Kids Town Preschool and will also volunteer in the preschool as her four-year old son, Avron, begins classes there. Charlene has a degree in Criminal Justice Administration from the University of Louisville. She is now attending the Teacher of the Visually Impaired training program at the University of Kentucky.

A Louisville native, Charlene graduated from Presentation Academy where she worked in the Development office after graduation. She is married and also has a nine-year old son. In her “spare time” she enjoys gardening, sewing and hand quilting.

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Gifts of Time

VIPS Indiana

We send a huge thank you to a group of over 20 volunteers who participated in **United Way of Central Indiana's #GoAllIN** day on June 24th. We hosted volunteers from **Edna Martin Christian Center, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, Amazon.com, and Eli Lilly and Company**. Thank you to UWCI for organizing this amazing day of volunteerism and for granting us funds to purchase supplies for volunteers to braille cards, make birthday cards and welcome bag materials, etc. Check out this awesome video featuring the various organizations that hosted volunteers. You can see our very own Volunteer Coordinator (IN), Rita

DeVore, chatting about VIPS in the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haYwWnGQQY8>

A special thank you goes to **Azucena**, a 23-year-old young lady, with the Edna Martin Christian Center. Azucena first volunteered with us through the UWCI #GoAllIN day, and has since become a regular volunteer! Azucena is also visually impaired and received her BA in Social Work in August of this year! She helped with our Summer O&M Camp and has brailled many of our Spanish books as Spanish is her first language! Thank you, Azucena, for supporting VIPS!

We give a shout out to our amazing volunteers from the **Blended Church** who visited our Family Resource Center last weekend to make birthday cards to be sent to VIPS kiddos! We are grateful to them for taking time to learn more about the families we serve. Ms. Rita even taught them how to braille on the braille writer!

VIPS – Louisville

We greatly appreciate the UPS volunteers who sweltered in the extreme heat to help with the Crusade Cookout on June 2. Thank you, **Corey Brunner, Jessica Dessart, Jim Jury, Rachel Osborn and Yolanda Pate-Savage**.

Additional volunteers from UPS helped out at the VIPS Cookout on July 1. We thank **Kelly Keets** and her co-worker for their invaluable assistance. Despite the extreme heat and lower than usual turnout, we are so thankful for the VIPS Louisville team members who stepped up to help our July 1 cookout. With their efforts, we raised almost \$1,000 for the Early Childhood Intervention Program.

Assumption student **Amy Huerta** was a big help in the preschool classrooms this summer. She also helped with the VIPS Cookout on July 13. We thank her for her time and energy!

We again thank the indomitable **Fran Woodward** for her help in the 2s classroom. She has become indispensable in dealing with our youngest children!

Robin Mullin and her granddaughter, Nora Diehl, both from St. Martha's, who helped with administrative tasks, relabeling file cabinets and setting up files. We appreciate your time spent helping us serve children with blindness.

We are so grateful to our Pickleball Tournament volunteers! Thanks are due to **Chrissy Haywood, Lauren Morris, and Josee Patenaude**, who made our committee planning possible;

Ron Spaulding, who has previously volunteered with us for 5K runs and **Edith Wright**, who works for Ford and has also helped with other events. Thanks so much for sharing your time and energy with VIPS.

VIPS CK

We are so thankful for our VIPS staff who came to support the VIPS Cupcake Classic 3k, and volunteers **Mac and Cynthia Ferguson from the Lexington Lions Club, Jennifer Holland, Karly Jackson, Kera Smyth, Chuck Marz, Olivia Marz, Tinley Easton, Todd Easton, and Shelby Easton, who was our cupcake mascot.**

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Gifts of Treasure

We were very pleased to receive a phone call from an organization called **Delivering Good** based in New York City. This non-profit's purpose is to "unite retailers, manufacturers, foundations and individuals to support people affected by poverty and tragedy. It is the charity of choice for new product donations made by hundreds of companies in the fashion, home and children's industries. Donating new merchandise provides these companies with a simple and effective way to help people in need. More than 98% of its revenue is dedicated to Delivering Good's charitable program of distributing apparel, accessories, shoes,

home furnishings, toys, books and other useful items.”

Delivering Good invited VIPS to participate in its Carter’s retail program! Every few weeks, VIPS receives a phone call to come to one of two local Carter’s stores to pick up donated children’s clothing which our teachers then distribute to children who need them. We are so incredibly thrilled with both organizations, Delivering Good and Carter’s, and so very grateful for helping us fill a need in our communities. The first load was picked up by two VIPS teachers in route to their students in the recently flooded counties of eastern Kentucky where the clothing was quickly distributed. A whopping big thank you goes to both Carter’s and Delivering Good!

The family of **Brittany Clarkson**, former VIPS employee and mother of VIPS graduate, Addie, recently donated some much appreciated children’s books. Our teachers selected a few of the books for their classroom libraries and the rest were placed in the VIPS library for parents and others to check out. Thanks so much, Clarksons!

Recent Grants and Donations

VIPS – KY

\$2,641.85 - **the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels** for upgrading and adding cameras to our VIPS Louisville campus and Kids Town Preschool

\$5,000 - an anonymous donor for Kids Town Preschool

\$10,000 - **United Way of the Bluegrass** for the Early Childhood Intervention program in Central KY

\$30,000 - **Etscorn Foundation** for another fleet vehicle, the sixth provided by this very generous foundation

\$46,000 – **Crusade for Children** for the Early Childhood Intervention program in Central KY

\$85,000 - **Crusade for Children** to the Louisville campus for Kids Town and the Early Childhood Intervention Program and

\$100,000 - **Kosair Charities** for Kids Town Preschool and the Early Childhood Intervention program. We are so very grateful for all they have done and continue to do for our children.

** **Amazon Smile** - donations come in a quarter behind collection so our most recent check totaled \$151.46. Since August, 2014 we have received almost \$3,000 from people shopping and designating VIPS.

* **Kroger Community Rewards** - Since beginning this program in 2017, we have received \$34,072.75 from our donors designating VIPS on their Kroger accounts. This quarter's most recent gifts by office were IN \$115, LEX \$60 and LOU \$425.

This photo shows Mary Smyth, VIPS Grant Writer, accepting the grant from the Colonels. They are smiling at the camera while shaking hands.

VIPS Indiana

We are pleased to announce the following grants and to thank these grantors for their faith in the work VIPS Indiana does:

\$5,000 - **Haddad Foundation** in support of our work in Indiana.

\$9,300 - **The Thomas P. and Sondra D. Sheehan Charitable Foundation**, a partner of **Hamilton County Community Foundation** for services to VIPS children in Hamilton County

\$12,610 - **The Community Foundation of Elkhart County** for services to VIPS children in Elkhart County, IN

\$42,000 - **The WHAS Crusade for Children** for teachers/interventionists to provide services to young Indiana children with blindness

\$75,000 - **United Way of Central Indiana** in support of our work in Central Indiana.

Donor Notes

1. We are excited to be 1 of the 29 organizations to receive the Family Opportunity Fund from **United Way of Central Indiana!** The granted \$75,000 will make a tremendous difference in the lives of children who are blind or visually impaired, and their families, in Central Indiana. Thank you, UWCI!
2. We were honored to present to **SCI Kiwanis Club** this week to share more about the children and families we serve. They generously gifted us \$500 along with black towels and handmade shaker tubes to use during home visits! Thank you to the Kiwanis for investing in our mission.

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Fundraising Events

The VIPS Cupcake Classic 3k

The annual VIPS Cupcake Classic 3k was once again a success, with almost 200 participants coming out to support VIPS. Runners joined from all over Kentucky, as well as visitors from Indiana, New York and Texas! All participants enjoyed a post-race cupcake from BabyCakes Cupcakes, as well as frozen treats courtesy of the Forcht Bank Ice Cream Machine.

This event wouldn't be possible without our generous sponsors and in-kind partners: **BabyCakes Cupcakes, Forcht Bank, the Lexington Lions Club, Medical Vision Institute, NFL Flag Football, RaceRise, UK Healthcare Advanced Eye Care and Wilson Pediatric Therapy and Learning Center.**

Photo: VIPS Grad, Addison Evers, who has albinism, shows her

guide dog, Dorie, to Dmitri, who also has albinism. Addison runs with Dorie.



The VIPS Pickleball Classic

The Pickleball community is such a wonderful group of people! VIPS had more than 130 participants this year at our Pickleball Classic Tournament; when compared to the less than 50 participants last year, it really shows that this sport is growing in popularity. We raised roughly \$6,000 during our two day tournament! It was a great weekend, educating people about the services we provide at VIPS. Thanks to Rhawn Enterprises and Derby City Pickleball for their sponsorships.

Next year's Pickleball Classic is set for August 19 – 20, 2023. We

are strategizing for more sponsors, and hope to increase attendance! The VIPS staff has grown personal interest in the sport; we are planning to start practicing and maybe participate next year. If you are new to Pickleball, or just thinking about playing, it's not too late to get involved and join us next year!

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VIPS Wish Lists

VIPS Louisville

- ❖ Black bath towels
- ❖ Slinkies
- ❖ Push lights- small round lights that you push the center to activate
- ❖ Mini metal LED flashlights w/on/off button on end and with short lanyard
- ❖ AA, AAA batteries
- ❖ Used for bead curtains:
 - Velcro Brand 30-ft. sticky back hook & loop fastener available from the link below:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000GRBEK2/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o01_s00?ie=UTF8&th=1

- Red and/or gold Mardi Gras beads- long strings of metallic beads (available at dollar stores or party stores)
 -
- ❖ For classroom clean-ups:
 - Swiffer replacement pads available from the link below:

https://www.amazon.com/Sweeper-Mopping-Refills-Floor-Window/dp/B07Y5G6D6K/ref=sr_1_8?crd=CF5LN8W3P4B-V&keywords=swiffer+wet+pads&qid=1658947773&sprefix=swiffer%2Caps%2C91&sr=8-8

- Paper Towels
- Unscented Diaper Wipes

- Disinfectant Wipes

VIPS Indiana

We are in need of many items for our new Family Resource Center!

- ❖ Amazon Wish List below:

<http://a.co/aeRar2N>

- ❖ Here are a few non-Amazon items that we would like:
Leo Learns By Doing DVD available at the link below:

<https://www.good-lite.com/products/790000>

Basic Spanish for Orientation and Mobility: A Phrase Book and Dictionary from the link below:

<https://www.aph.org/product/basic-spanish-for-orientation-and-mobility-a-phrase-book-and-dictionary/>

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VIPS Now Accepts VENMO!!

We are so excited to announce that VIPS now has a Venmo account so that donations, race fees and other payments can more easily be made using our Quick Response (QR) code (see below). Accessing cash apps such as Venmo makes processing these activities quickly and safely and in a much more timely fashion from a donor's/participant's cell phone. If you prefer to not scan the QR code, you can simply type in Visually Impaired Preschool (you will see our logo and @VisuallyImpairedPreschoolSvc).

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VIPS-Louisville

www.vips.org

info@vips.org

1906 Goldsmith Lane, Louisville, KY 40218
Toll free 1-888-636-8477

Diane Nelson, Executive Director
Kathy Mullen, Director of Education

VIPS-Central Kentucky

350 Henry Clay Blvd., Lexington, KY 40502
Toll free 1-888-254-8477
Kelly Easton, KY Intake Coordinator/Regional Director

VIPS-Indiana

1212 Southeastern Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46202
Toll Free 1-888-824-2197
Meredith Howell, Regional Director

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.

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