

ANNUAL



IMPACT REPORT



2022-2023



Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)



"I love working with VIPS! The quantitative scale of assessment is very helpful to see what progress is being made. Also, my [VIPS teacher] is wonderful at pointing out and explaining what improvements he sees and coming up with creative ideas to try new ideas." - Mom of Isaiah

"Our teachers are both wonderful teachers and amazing human beings. They taught us a lot, and created wonderful experiences for my son that will surely become cherished memories. We are grateful for the toys, books, cards, and mementos we received from them as well as the support and guidance they have provided. They have gone above and beyond not just in providing services but in helping me, the parent, advocate for my child as well." - Mom of Luke

"The [VIPS] teachers truly care about my child's future and wellbeing. They explain things wonderfully and always come with so many fun activities for my child and even her big brother to make him feel included." - Mom of Eleanor

"VIPS has been essential in providing knowledge and support in every aspect of life with visual impairments." - Mom of Tala

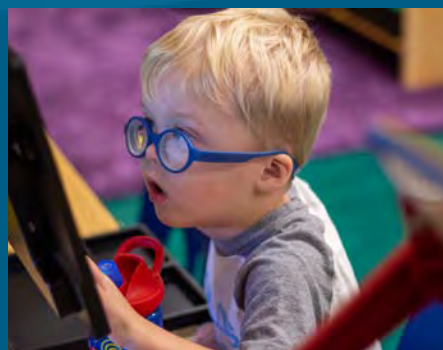




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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of VIPS,

We are extremely proud to share the highlights of our most recent fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Finally exiting the three-year period of the pandemic and its fallout, we are both exhausted and elated to report that not only have we survived, but we are on the other side of this historic time. VIPS has thrived. This impact report attempts to capture the outcomes that resulted from our laser focus on VIPS' critical mission because of your support.

As you will read in the following report, our referrals are once again growing to pre-COVID rates and we are adding to our team of teachers and contractors across Kentucky and Indiana to meet our increase in demand. Our amazing services are only made possible by this incredible team so over these last three years, we have continued to prioritize growth of their base pay and their benefit packages, to be competitive with school systems. We have also provided the additional support needed by our contractors across all regions in order to build much needed capacity. We are proud of the culture at VIPS and thrilled to share that VIPS was ranked in the second spot on Louisville Business First's 2023 Best Place to Work in the 25 to 150-employee category! When VIPS team members were asked what they loved most about working for VIPS outside of our mission they said, "The family first culture, flexibility in work scheduling, support of personal growth, being valued and cared for by leadership, and team members always willing to pitch in to help others." We feel that great services can only be delivered by a great team so we celebrate and thank our VIPS family.

It is because of this team that our expertise continues to be highlighted internationally. VIPS was honored to be chosen to host the exclusive international Early Childhood Visual Impairment Alliance's bi-annual "Think-Tank." The outcome of this work helps to create the industry agenda for best practices and growth. Also, this year, because industry leaders suggested it, seven educators from Qatar's Noor Empowerment Center came to Louisville to learn more about VIPS' best practices in early childhood education for visual impairment to inform their services in the Middle East. You should be very proud that what we do at VIPS continues to educate and inform those wanting to change the future for children born with vision loss across the world.

We have made great strides toward a more sustainable future through fiscal partnerships with the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the State of Indiana. When just 10 years ago our fee services represented only 10% of our income, today we have budgeted it to be 47% of our income. Last year, the Kentucky Department of Education raised our annual line item to \$500,000 per year. The breaking news this year is that, for the very first time in the history of VIPS, we have been added to the budget of the State of Indiana in the generous amount of \$600,000 per year. We thank all those behind the scenes who have made this possible. We also must celebrate, on behalf of the children and families we serve, the generosity of foundations, grantors, and donors that make sure we have the resources necessary to carry out our special and critical mission. We prioritize being great stewards of those donor dollars and do not take our fiscal responsibility lightly.

We are only #VIPStrong because of your generosity of time, talent, and treasure which since 1985, has improved the future for the hundreds of Kentucky and Indiana's youngest children with blindness and vision loss. So we share this success with you and simply say **THANK YOU!!**



ABOUT

We believe in every child's potential!



Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) is the first and only nonprofit organization that provides early intervention services and support to young children who are blind or visually impaired, along with their families across the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the State of Indiana. VIPS offers in-home and center-based services, orientation and mobility, transitional and advocacy services, summer programming, and infant-toddler groups to children and their families.

VIPS paved the way for vision-specific, early intervention when the first office opened in Louisville, KY in 1985. Just five years later, VIPS opened a second office location in Lexington, KY in 1990. While VIPS initially served the southern part of Indiana, services were expanded in 2011 to include the entire state. Progress has not stopped as VIPS' continued its expansion in April of 2022 by opening the Simon & Estelle Knoble VIPS Family Resource Center located in Indianapolis, IN. This state-of-the-art facility has allowed VIPS to better serve children by offering new programming and ongoing support to ensure the children go on to reach their highest potential.

MISSION

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.

MISSION IN ACTION

VIPS FAMILY HIGHLIGHT: VIPS CHILD, AISHA



Aisha is a fun-loving 3-year-old who can also be feisty says her mom, Samiah, but that strong willpower is what helped Aisha survive the early days of her life. Aisha was born prematurely at 28 weeks and spent the first five months of her life in the NICU. Samiah said, “She fought from day one and had to go through a lot of painful treatment very early on.” Some days were great and others were horrible according to the family. Aisha had to undergo many surgeries, blood tests, ultrasounds, and more and was later diagnosed with the genetic condition Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy (FEVR). FEVR affects her retinas therefore Aisha is completely blind in her right eye and has very little light perception in her left eye. But celebration erupted when Aisha was finally discharged from the hospital after a grueling five months and Aisha’s parents would soon immerse her in therapies to help with her development. Aisha would be diagnosed with global developmental delays and sensory processing disorder but the family wouldn’t give up hope that their daughter could progress toward her goals.

“We were so happy when Aisha started in-home therapy from VIPS,” said Samiah. She believes the intervention Aisha’s VIPS teacher, David Sterne, has provided not only benefitted Aisha, but she has learned a lot from David as well. David gave the family ideas of ways to engage with Aisha and strategies to help motivate her. He focused on goals the family wanted Aisha to work on to help improve her daily life skills. During one home visit, David brought Aisha a play frame that was made by VIPS volunteers. This playframe had different textured hanging objects and Samiah said it is still Aisha’s “favorite toy!”



Aisha is now in preschool and has adjusted well to the transition. She loves the bus rides and is getting acclimated to the new environment. Her mom said the new teachers are very nice and loving of Aisha. She continues to make progress toward her goals and is thriving as a preschooler.

Samiah says it’s been a tough journey but she has learned so much from Aisha, “Her patience, endurance, contentment, and so much more.” They try not to worry too much about the future as every child will have different challenges. The family would like to tell others in a similar situation to take it one day at a time. Samiah says, “Make the present as productive and happy as possible for your child.”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

FRAN WOODWARD

Meet Fran Woodward, an exceptional volunteer and steadfast donor whose story at VIPS began over 25 years ago. Fran started her career as a special education teacher and later became a First Steps Service Coordinator. Throughout her extensive 20-year tenure with First Steps, Fran encountered various nonprofit organizations, yet VIPS consistently held a special place in her heart. VIPS caught her attention due to the exceptional quality of the teaching staff and education team, a distinction that still holds true today.

For the past 14 years, Fran has been a constant volunteer in the Kids Town Preschool every Tuesday morning from 8:30 to 12:30, give or take thirty minutes or so a week.

She safeguards and cherishes her time in the two-day two's program and it's something that she looks forward to every week. Throughout her tenure as a volunteer, it's estimated that Fran has generously donated an impressive 2,688 hours of her time. To put this in perspective, the average full-time employee works 2,080 hours in a year. Therefore, she has dedicated more than a year's worth of full-time work, showcasing her extraordinary commitment to the children and VIPS.

Fran's role in the classroom is as diverse as the young minds she helping to nurture, guided by the lead teacher, Miss Kristan Decker. Some days involve individual assistance, others special activities, and at times, it entails corralling a lively group of two-year-olds for routine events like music time. Fran's presence is instrumental in the classroom, and what keeps her motivated to continue to volunteer is witnessing the remarkable growth of children. "From the time children start in the program to when they finish often times, they have transformed and evolved in different ways like being more curious, independent, and confident," said Fran. It brings her immense joy as she actively contributes to and witnesses children advancing, reaching milestones, and developing their educational knowledge and personal skills week by week. Fran is delighted to be a part of the Kids Town Preschool, particularly during what she describes as a "fun age." Her volunteer days are rewarding and full of laughter, smiling, and inspiration, noting that it is "a continuous joy to see what children can do, with an emphasis on can do" because of the transformative role VIPS plays in a child's life.

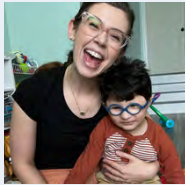
According to Fran, the true essence of VIPS lies in the children themselves and the unique approaches VIPS takes to help children reach their fullest potential, in conjunction with their families. "VIPS places a significant importance on family involvement, participation, and collaboration and it shows in the work that we do and the accomplishments the children can achieve," said Fran.

We thank Fran for her tireless dedication and service to VIPS over the past two decades. Fran is a cherished member of the VIPS family, her tireless efforts and zealous enthusiasm have created a lasting impact that extends far beyond the classroom, touching the lives of both the children she serves and the broader VIPS community. Fran, you are not just a volunteer; you are an indispensable part of our VIPS family. We are grateful for the light you bring to our community and eagerly anticipate your presence every Tuesday morning. Thank you for your unwavering service and dedication to the children!



EDUCATION & PROGRAMS

SERVICES



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



Kids Town Preschool is a nationally accredited preschool located at our Louisville campus that prepares children with vision loss for academic success and social integration.



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



Little Learners is a weekly parent-child playgroup held at the Central Kentucky office. It provides hands-on activities in a social setting that lays the foundation for future learning.



Family Events are a time for VIPS families to socialize with one another. This includes Parent Empowerment Programs (PEP), seasonal celebrations, a family retreat, etc.



Preschool Consultation includes a VIPS teacher transition and support services to the education team serving preschoolers in public school systems.

COUNTIES SERVED



MILES
TRAVELED

202,570

HOME & COMMUNITY
VISITS

3,987

FAMILIES
SERVED

620

NEW
REFERRALS

255

PODCAST



Presented by Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) & Anchor Center for Blind Children, this podcast dives deep into the triumphs, challenges, and strategies that are part of the lives of those who care for young children with blindness and visual impairment—building an audio community of families, caregivers, and early interventionists.

**GREW
34%
IN
LISTENERS
IN 2023**

RATED

**5 stars on
Apple & Spotify**



Co-Hosts:

Dr. Cathy Smyth,
Paige Maynard, &
Jenny Castenir

**The top
episode was
"What
Happens
When Your
Vision
Changes with
Juanita Miles"**

**The most
shared episode
was "Fear Less,
Do More with
Wendy Fagan"**

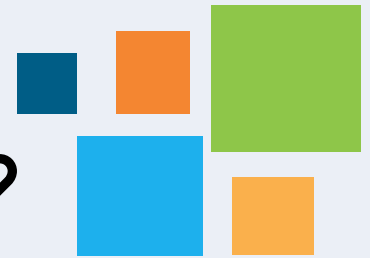
**Over
2,000
all time
streams
on Spotify**

FOLLOW THE POD

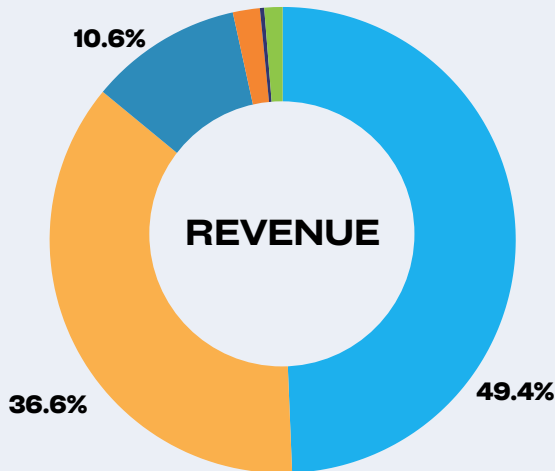
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FINANCIALS



■ Contributions & Grants
■ Contract Revenue ■ Events
■ Investment ■ Misc ■ Rental



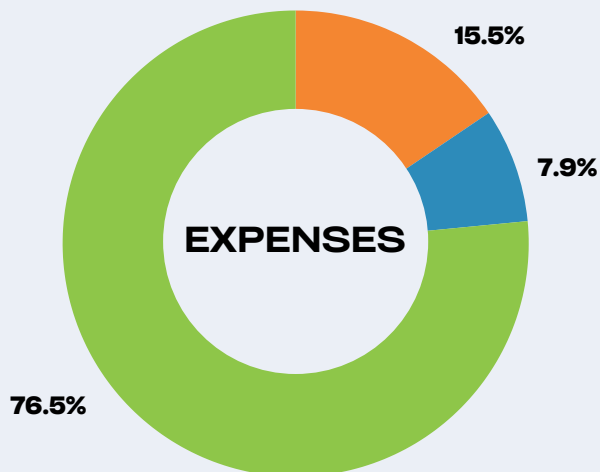
REVENUE

Contributions & Grants	\$1,621,465
Contract Revenue	\$1,203,000
Special Events	\$348,063
Net Investment Return	\$61,552
Misc Income	\$9,755
Rental Income	\$41,600

Total Revenue \$3,245,435

EXPENSES

■ General & Administrative
■ Fundraising
■ Program Services



Program Services	\$2,180,693
General & Administrative	\$442,612
Fundraising	\$225,956

Total Expenses \$2,849,261

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$5,373,307
Temporarily Restricted	\$234,516
Permanently Restricted	\$376,703

Ending Net Assets \$5,984,526



VIPS TEAM

STAFF LEADERSHIP

Executive Director

Diane Nelson

Director of Education

Kathy Mullen

Director of Development

Meredith Howell

Director of Community Outreach & Intake

Kelly Easton

Controller

Christina Welsh

BOARD MEMBERS

President

Nathan Holladay

Vice-President

Mike Johnson

Secretary

Taylor Gehring

Treasurer

John Anders

Directors

Jennifer Arington

Aaron Benson

Jerry Bizer

Jelisa Chatman

Theresa Connolly

Jena Fahlbush

Alejandro Erick Franco

Paul Frazier

Karin Geraci

Dr. Ashima Gupta

Paresh Gupta, PharmD

Arvetta Jideonwo

Emily Krauser

Donna Brostek Lee

Virren Malhotra

Ellen Prizant

Mark Stiebling

Sharon G. Bensinger

Glen Stuckel

INDIANA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Rowan Candy

Julia Doffin

Jena Fahlbush

Arvetta Jideonwo

Emily Krauser

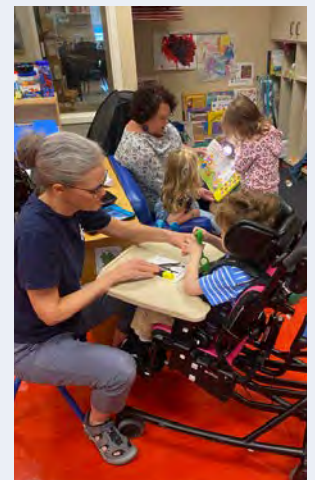
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