

IPVI INSIGHTS

Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities

**April
2017**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Filiberto Almendarez III

The Annual Meeting for IPVI was held on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at the Hilton Doubletree in Oakbrook. I would like to say thank you for their accommodations and excellent service. Also, it was a joy to see IPVI members and their children and a big welcome to new members who attended. The Annual Meeting minutes are included in this Newsletter. Another thank you goes out to my fellow Board Members. I truly appreciate all the time and effort that each and every one of you contribute to our organization. Month after Month, year after year. Your position carries various tasks and some have multiple titles. In addition, you may sit on other boards or panels, are employed and most importantly a parent. Thank You! And last but not least, there are several open Board positions. If you are interested, please reach out to a Board Member. Our information is in the Newsletter.

In reference to the meeting, there was plenty of conversations and ideas that were presented. Although progress exists, there is still work that needs to be done. One item that stands out is secondary education and the requirements established for receiving a degree. Some schools do not offer Braille courses or provide the tools to achieve. Let's work together with administrators to understand and find a way for our children's successful future. Another topic discussed was the Art of Music/playing an instrument and Reading. First, members expressed the benefits their child gained from playing a musical instrument and having music in their life. Second, reading was mentioned to establish a book club or a day of reading where children can read together. Either Braille or print. Please consider involving your child in both music and reading or at least one.

Happy Spring, everyone. A time for outdoor activities with your child. Whether it's physical, musical or read(ical---it rhymes) under the warm Sun. Take Care!



Inside This Issue:

President's Report	1
Save the Date - Annual Brookfield Zoo Trip	2
Annual Meeting Minutes	3
Budget Breakdown	4
What the BrailleNote Does	5
What Piano Means To Me	5
WonderBaby.org	7
20 Multi-Sensory Easter Basket Ideas...	7
5 Glowing Easter Egg Activities	7
Buyer's Guide to Beeping Easter Eggs	7
My Child Has LCA and Presses Her Eyes...	7
Saving Vision by Tricking Rods...	7
Diagnostic Evaluations Help Guide Educational...	8
Can I See? Book for Kids About VI	8
Making Sense	8
Nature for the Blind	8
Leader Dogs Summer Camp for Teens	8
Helpful Videos for Your iPhone	8
Family Connect Website	9
AFB Family Message Boards...	9
5 Tips for Medically Treating a Child...	9
IPVI Board of Directors	10
Easter Poem	10
IPVI Membership Dues	15
IPVI Calendar of Events	16



On Saturday, July 15th, we will be attending our

Annual Brookfield Zoo Trip.

If your membership is up to date, you and your immediate family will get free admission, parking and special tickets. We always have a great pizza lunch in the Discovery Center. Hope to see you there!



FREE



PARKING



ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2017

In attendance: Filiberto Almendarez, Mary Zabelski, Joan Bielawski, Bill Bielawski, Frederick Prete, Rosanna Almendarez, Tina and Justin Egle, Erika, Fred and Heidi Musser, Akash Patel

Taxes: Federal and State – Almost complete. Fil will notify all when done.

Budget – Our annual year runs from the beginning of September until the end of August. Fil presented our budget. The Board needs to consider fundraising options, which may include raising our dues.

Open Board Positions

Treasurer – Asked for volunteer but did not get one. Fil will continue to do this job in addition to being President but would still like someone to come forward.

Secretary – Joan Bielawski asked to hold this position.

Vice President – Asked for volunteer but did not get one. Joan will continue to do this job in addition to being Secretary but would still like someone to come forward.

Scholarship – We already have a 2017 scholarship to be given to Samantha Smolka. For 2018 we will start advertising in our newsletter for people to apply. We will give out one scholarship.

New Items

Zoo Outing – July 15. Fil and Mary explained what is involved. Erika asked if we could possibly get TV coverage.

Fall Outing – Joan is going to look into various places and will be held at a pumpkin farm.

Gift Cards – We will give gift certificates to our volunteers, but none to the board.

Opened the Floor to All

Erika asked if we have parents involved in IPVI. Yes, but we need many more.

Fil would like to get a Beep Baseball game together.

Mary talked about NAPVI, which is moving in a different direction, which includes no funding to state affiliates.

Fil mentioned that southern Illinois wants to be more involved.

Erika offered to Braille anything that people send her.

Erika would like more blind children to be involved in swimming. She volunteered to work on this.

Tina said she will send us an article on Braille for the newsletter.

Akash will write an article about the BrailleNote.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.



IPVI PROFIT & LOSS

Beginning Balance \$13,367.72

INCOME

Donation	4400	
Fundraising	510	
Membership	1009.25	
Zoo Clothing	876.50	
	6795.75	\$6,795.75

EXPENSE

Exhibit/Display	138.21	
Food	149.35	
Gift Giving	892.81	
IL License/Permit/Fee	25.00	
Scholarship	1000.00	
Postage	45.66	
Printing	249.43	
Supplies	518.88	
Hotel/Travel	454.13	
IPVI Zoo Membership	115.00	
Storage Rental	480.00	
Tax Preparation/ Accounting fee	400.00	
USPS	87.05	
Quick Book Software	179.99	
NAPVI Dues	50.00	
Newsletter/Publication	1046.37	
	5831.88	\$5,831.88

Net Income \$963.87 \$963.87

Year End Balance \$14,331.59

Profit and Loss Standard
September '14 - through August '15

Net Ordinary Income	-3,300.58
Net Income	-3,300.58

What the BrailleNote Does

By Akash Patel

During my senior year of high school, I was very determined to learn how to use the BrailleNote.

My vision itinerant Sue Barrett taught me all kinds of things that the BrailleNote does.

We started with the MPower and then, Ray Campbell of the Chicago Lighthouse For the Blind recommended that the Department Of Human Services purchase for me the Braille Note Apex.

The BrailleNote Apex does all kinds of things.

You can create and open documents, save them from the BrailleNote to the flashdrive, download documents from the flashdrive to the BrailleNote, use the radio, scientific calculator, calendar, and more importantly, the Apex also has WiFi so you can access the internet just to name a few.

Unlike the big heavy Perkins Brailier, the BrailleNote Apex is portable and can be taken anywhere you go.

Just like the Perkins Brailier, the BrailleNote has a space bar key, six letter keys, an enter key, and a backspace key.

When you create a document, it will show up as a blank document and once you type something, the Braille dots come up just like when you're using the Perkins Brailier and you put a piece of paper into it.

I'm hoping that more and more blind and visually impaired children and adults will learn to use the BrailleNote because I use it to do my homework for school, prepare questions for my radio show and read them off with the BrailleNote, and I even take notes with it dur-

ing class lectures.

Is it expensive?

Unfortunately it is, but it's a lot better than carrying around a big heavy Perkins Brailier.



What Piano Means To Me

By Rupa Elizabeth Sprecher

I was adopted from Bangalore India when I was seven. A few days after I arrived, my mom took a keyboard out of a closet. She put it in the living room and I played around with the keys. After a few days, I was able to figure out a few simple melodies and my parents decided that I should start taking piano lessons. For four months, I worked with Heidi Musser, who introduced me to the piano. In the summer of 2009, my parents bought a piano and I began taking lessons through DePaul Community School of Music with Kathy Lahiff. Kathy was my teacher ever since that summer. These teachers, as well as others, have helped me grow by showing me how to expand my ideas. They have helped me think artistically and outside the box.

It was not until twelve and a half years old when I actually enjoyed playing the piano. I don't know if the practice was paying off or just that I became interested in the pieces. I felt attached and committed to the piano and I loved it. My favorite genre of music became

classical music. There were so many pieces I wanted to learn because I loved them, but I could not because my hands were too small. People told me that I would eventually be able to play more amazing pieces, but I've often wondered when. When was I going to play those amazing piano pieces that took my breath away? When in my life would I be able to say so many powerful words and sentences through those pieces? There's something about playing the piano that feels amazing. It's not about playing the piano, but it's about expressing your feelings through dynamics, phrases, and making the music sound like someone is singing. It all comes from the heart. Now, I cannot imagine my life without music.

Playing the piano is important to me because I portray my feelings in the music. One of my favorite pieces is the first movement of the Sonata in G Minor Op. 49 No. 1, by Beethoven. I like the change of tone and mood in the development section because not every note is the same. Playing the piano lets me communicate in various ways. For example, I think of different colors and tones. Sometimes, those words are hard to describe by talking. To me, green is soft like a garden. Yellow is colorful when the piece returns to its exciting theme. Red is the end of a phrase or when the piece becomes intense. Purple makes me think of this Schumann piece I learned recently. During my Freshman year at The Chicago High School for the Arts, (ChiArts) I had a teacher who told me that I could use color and other parts of my imagination. For example, smells, sounds, and food. Once, she told me to play a scale like fudge. I felt like these ideas opened my mind to figure out a deeper way of expression. At the last piano Showcase of that year, I told her that I had to change the sound of the instrument in my mind.

There are many pieces that inspire me because I feel I can understand them. Depend-

ing on how I feel, I listen to a certain piece. When I feel good, I listen to a piece that makes me hold my breath. There are pieces that make me feel like flying. When I don't feel good, I listen to a more mellow piece. When I am angry and cannot stand how I feel, I listen to a piece that has many contrasting sections, changes in tone, color, and character. Without the piano I would be a blank slate. Without Heidi and Mrs. Musser, I would have never known the most important thing about myself.



EYE On India Gala fundraiser event
on June 9, 2016



PLEASE

WE ARE LOOKING FOR OUR MEMBERS TO SEND SOME FEEDBACK ON OUR ARTICLES INCLUDED IN THE NEWSLETTERS. IT WOULD BE GREAT TO KNOW IF THEY HELPED OR WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE INCLUDED.



20 Multi-Sensory Easter Basket Ideas for Kids with Sensory Impairments

By Amber Bobnar

There are lots of ways to make your Easter Basket multi-sensory and accessible for kids of all abilities, including kids with sensory impairments. READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**



5 Glowing Easter Egg Activities

By Hillary Kleck

We've rounded up five of the greatest Pinterest ideas for your child to have fun with glowing Easter eggs! Your kids will enjoy going on a glow-in-the-dark Easter egg hunt, exploring sensory bins, and more. READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**



Buyer's Guide to Beeping Easter Eggs

By Hillary Kleck

If you're on the hunt for beeping Easter eggs, then you've come to the right place! The search for these often expensive eggs, as well as the commercial talking or noise-maker eggs, can be a headache, and even more so as Easter Sunday draws closer. READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**



My child has LCA and presses her eyes. Is this normal? What can we do about it?

By Laura KM Steinbusch (and all members of the LCA Support group on Facebook)

As the parent of a child with LCA I can tell you that yes, it is common for kids (and even sometimes adults) with LCA to press or poke their eyes. READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**



Saving Vision by Tricking Rods into Thinking They're Cones?

By Amber Bobnar

There are so many different approaches on the horizon for treating inherited retinal diseases, like Retinitis Pigmentosa (PR) and Leber's Congenital Amaurosis (LCA). READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**

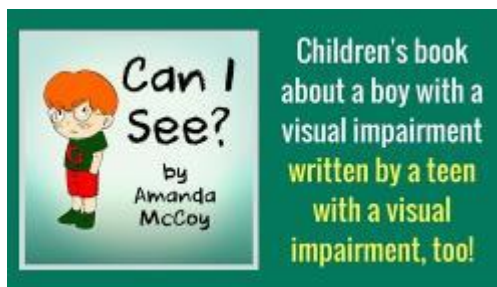


Diagnostic Evaluations help guide educational plans for blind students

Shared by Hillary Kleck

<http://www.perkins.org/school/diagnostic-evaluations>

Perkins School for the Blind offers diagnostic evaluations for students ages 3-22 who are visually impaired, deaf-blind, or deaf with other disabilities who are in public, home or private school settings. READ MORE at **WonderBaby.org**



Can I See? Book for Kids About Visual Impairments

Shared by Hillary Kleck

<https://www.createspace.com/5885060>

Amanda McCoy is a teen author/illustrator who is also visually impaired. She wants to show visually impaired kids that they can do anything they set their mind to! READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**

MAKING SENSE

Nature for the Blind: Do you know how many sensory gardens and braille trails there are in the world? Over 165! You can find where they are by visiting

www.naturefortheblind.com

The Braille Nature Trail directory connects people with vision loss to a wide variety of outdoor resources including braille trails, sensory gardens, summer camps and sports organizations. The site also includes the history of braille trails and important information on why access to nature for people with vision loss matters.

Leader Dogs Summer Experience Camp for Teens: Leader Dogs for the Blind offers a summer camp for boys and girls ages 16 to 17 providing an opportunity to have fun while developing independent travel and leadership skills. Campers climb rock walls, kayak and ride tandem bikes while socializing with peers facing similar challenges. Teens also spend time with guide dog and guide dog mobility instructors to learn about the responsibilities of being a guide dog handler. This camp has been accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services. This year's camp runs June 23 to 30, 2017. To download an application visit www.leaderdog.org and click on the Summer Experience Camp link.

Helpful Videos for Your iPhone: Are you looking to get the most from your iPhone but don't know where to find a resource that's easy to follow? Hadley Institute's iFocus videos can help you get started using your phone or move to more advanced skills. The videos are nicely categorized and cover navigation, low vision, communications, web

browsing and more. To access the videos, visit

www.hadley.edu

and click on the Instructional Videos link.

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5 Tips for Medically Treating a Child Who Is Blind

By Emily Coleman

Recently, we had the unfortunate experience of spending a few days in the hospital with our son, Eddie. Our brief medical residency reminded me that not everybody knows what to do with children who are blind. Here are five tips I thought of to ease a hospital experience for our kids. READ MORE at: www.familyconnect.org

FAMILY CONNECT WEBSITE



AFB FamilyConnect Message Boards: Why and How to Use Them

by Shannon Carollo

You already know, blindness and visual impairments are low incidence disabilities. Most likely, you, parents and family members of babies, children, and teens with vision loss, are undertaking the parenting journey alongside few other (or no other) parents of children with vision loss. As such, I want to make you aware of one avenue to support and connect with each other: [AFB FamilyConnect's Message Boards](http://www.familyconnect.org). READ MORE at: www.familyconnect.org

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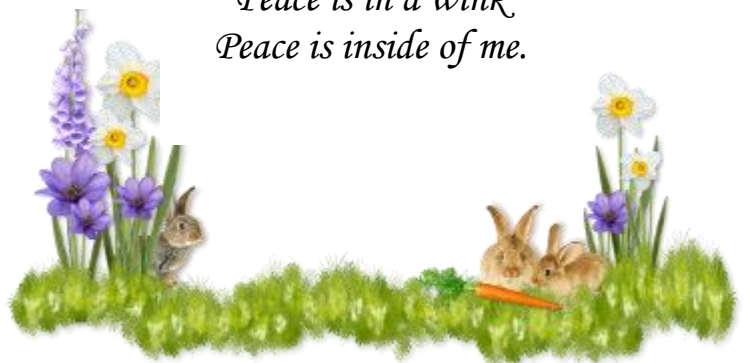
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Easter

*Spring is here
Easter it brings
Peace in his heart
A child sings
Hand to hand
The world can be
When Peace begins
with me
What is peace?
Peace is respect for others
Peace is sharing
Peace is understanding
Peace is caring for others
Peace is helping
Peace is giving to others
Peace is singing together
Peace is laughing together
Peace is playing together
Where is peace?
Peace is in a smile
Peace is in a handshake
Peace is in a wink
Peace is inside of me.*





Join **IPVI** or renew your membership today!

The *Illinois Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments* is a state-wide, non-profit organization that enables parents to find information and resources for their children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.

Your IPVI membership dues or generous contributions help to support all of our ongoing efforts:

- Regular communications which include: workshops, conferences, training seminars, legislative issues, organizational announcements, products, and advice about raising a child who is visually impaired.
- Offers several \$500 college scholarships each year.
- Publishes a resource catalog which includes anything and everything to do with visual impairment.
- Conducts training and support sessions where parents share experiences and ideas.
- Holds fun outings adapted for children with visual impairments at athletic, cultural, educational, and entertainment settings.
- Represents parents of children with visual impairments at conferences, public hearings, and on committees.

What does IPVI do?

- Promotes and provides information through meetings, correspondence, publications, etc., which will help parents meet the special needs of their children with visual impairments.
- Facilitates the sharing of experiences and concerns in order to provide emotional support and relief from feelings of isolation for parents and their families.
- Creates a climate of opportunity for children who are blind in the home, school, and society.
- Fosters communication and coordination of services among federal, state, and local agencies and organizations involved with providing services to people who are visually impaired.
- Advocates on a statewide level for services to children who are visually impaired and their families.
- Keeps members informed about current proposals and actions which impact on children with visual impairments and their families.

Check one:

Parent/Guardian Membership: \$15 per year.

Child(ren)'s Names: _____

Birthdate(s) of my visually impaired child(ren): _____

My child(ren)'s eye condition: _____

I give my permission to release my name to other parents.

Group/Agency Membership \$50 per year.

Extended Family/Friend Assoc. Membership \$15/year.

Medical Specialist \$50 per year.

Scholarship Fund \$10.00

Donation: \$ _____ (tax deductible)

New Membership

Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) - _____

Email: _____

Please enclose this form along with your payment by check to:

IPVI • P.O.Box 316634 • Chicago, IL 60631

Have questions or need more information?

**Call us at
1-773-882-1331**

**Illinois Association for Parents of
Children with Visual Impairments
P. O. Box 316634
Chicago, IL 60631**

IPVI CALENDAR

► **July 15** **SAVE THE DATE!** Annual Brookfield Zoo Trip **Brookfield**

Please call
1-773-882-1331
for any questions, concerns,
or comments that IPVI can
help you with.

**Newsletter Deadline for
May 2017 is April 15**



**Check Out
www.ipvi.org**

Calendar of Events!
News and Updates!
Useful Links to Web Sites!
And more...