

# IPVI INSIGHTS

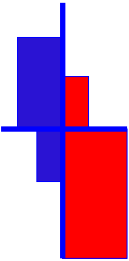


*Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities*

**July 2019**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Filiberto Almendarez III



Happy Summer IPVI families. It's been a little chilly, but at least the electric bill will be low. Aside of the weather, I would like to discuss education and our children's success. Why? I share my son graduating from grammar school. Wow, what a walk though the past. From not knowing his conditions, how will he survive in this fast paced world to progressing forward and hearing his name called as he received his diploma. Tears from the heart are beautiful. It's seemed like 20 years of effort, but truly only 9 years of school life. What an awesome accomplishment—for all of our graduates.

The only sad hearted moment was saying goodbye to the wonderful teachers who taught him learning techniques, how to read, had an abundance of patience and enormous caring hearts. I thank them for helping my son do things we were told he would not do.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

So I say, keep hoping and do not under estimate your child's progress, no matter how slow you go. Just don't stop. Suddenly, one day you realize how much your child has learned and advanced. Although, my son is off to High School, I keep in mind that other parents are just starting their journey. This is why we must advocate for more Special Educators. We need to maintain/continue the high level of education for our future children. Education is a gift that no one can take away.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that our 2019 Zoo Outing is Saturday, July 20, 2019. Please see the newsletter for more information. Go to **IPVI.org**

Hope to see you and take care!

**Prepared for IPVI INSIGHTS –  
JULY 2019**

***Inside This Issue:***

President's Report	1
Teacher Shortage for Blind & VI Students	2
2019 IPVI Member's Outing	3
Zoo Registration Form	4
Zoo Map	5
Petting Zoo Information	6
Matt Cohen May 2019 E-Newsletter - Govt. & State	7
Chicago Early Learning Annual Parent Conference	8
IPVI Board of Directors	9
4th of July - America the Beautiful	9
IPVI Membership Dues	10
IPVI Calendar of Events	11

**Teacher Shortage for Blind and Visually Impaired Students**

Thank you Fil for calling our attention as our IPVI President to the wide-spread teacher shortage in our State in your report in the **IPVI INSIGHTS/May 2019**.

Trying to analyze the problem, here are my thoughts:

- Northern Illinois and Illinois State University need to make more grant money available to attract students. Let's give future teachers of our blind and visually impaired students the joy of graduating without worries to pay back student loans.
- While still in high school, let us encourage sighted students to interact with blind and visually impaired students to give them a chance to tie friendships and to overcome negative societal attitudes towards the blind and visually impaired population that are still so prevalent.
- Let us encourage volunteers – preferably blind individuals – to come to schools to help out with the teaching. We learn a foreign language quicker from a person who speaks the language fluently, because it is his/her native language – this fact should hold true for a blind person teaching academic and daily living skills to a blind student.
- As a result of being written up in the news, because she did an Olympic distance triathlon in Montreal, Canada, in 1999, my daughter Heidi was invited to

*(Continued on page 6)*





## 2019 IPVI Members' Outing

*"Literacy through Experience at Brookfield Zoo"*

Imagine (in the mind's eye) a sensory Zoo experience - listening to the animals, smelling the environment, touching real and simulated animals in their habitat.....well

### Saturday, July 20, 2019 at Brookfield Zoo

is the chance of a lifetime.....the only problem? Are you going to be there?

**ATTENTION! ATTENTION!** Brookfield Zoo is BIG and the choices are many—arrive early and plan on spending the entire day. **Plan to arrive at 9:30am, the Zoo opens at 10am.** Tons of activities are available throughout your day! Your IPVI T-Shirt will be your exclusive passport into all the action.....into the Zoo, the **Seven Seas Dolphin Show after lunch (with exclusive after show event), and tickets to other venues.** Sensory experiences abound!!

Our theme is *"Literacy through Experience at Brookfield Zoo"*.....ask questions, touch the special exhibits, analyze and enjoy the unique sounds, smells and textures of the Zoo!

Our luncheon, at the Discovery Ballroom, will include pizza, drinks, and a chance to meet other parents with children of all disabilities.

**Become an IPVI member!** Dues paying members (\$20) receive free admission and parking at our Members' Only Events — Zoo Outing, Holiday Party, Play For All, etc. — activities intended to provide social and literacy opportunities for children, parents, teachers, professionals and friends.

Paid membership includes newsletters sent by email (so be sure to provide yours on the form), and invitations to various seminars and conferences from various other organizations.

If you'd like more information on how to attend the 2019 IPVI Zoo Outing, or on how to become a member of the "IPVI Family Network", call **Mary Zabelski at (773) 882-1331.** The registration form is on the following page.



Mail Registration & Payment by June 30<sup>th</sup> to

Gail Patterson  
The Chicago Lighthouse  
1850 W. Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, IL 60608



**2019 BROOKFIELD ZOO - IPVI MEMBERS' ONLY OUTING  
Saturday July 20<sup>st</sup> Registration & Payment Form**

Attendance is restricted to current (paid) members of IPVI\*\*. All attendees must pre-register, purchase a 2019 Zoo T-Shirt and show current identification at the Zoo. Attendees may be required to sign Release of Liability & Use of Photographs Form. Registration is limited to one family per IPVI which includes parents, their children only, and grandparents. **ANY OTHER FAMILIES OR FRIENDS OF THE PAID MEMBERS MUST HAVE THEIR OWN ZOO REGISTRATION FORM AND IF NOT A PAID MEMBER, MUST JOIN FOR \$20.00.**

Family Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IPVI Current Membership [y/n] \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ city: \_\_\_\_\_

zip: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ H ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ C ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

1) MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

2) SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

3) CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

4) CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

5) CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

6) CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

7) CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt: (infant), (small), (med), (large), (X-lg)

Admission to the "2019 IPVI Members' Only Event" includes parking (enter far South lot), buffet lunch, admission into Zoo, Dolphin Show and Hamill Family Play Area. The T-Shirt is required and identifies your participation and assists Zoo personnel in providing accommodations. Double and Triple extra large shirts available at extra cost of \$1.00/shirt.

<b>Membership Dues (\$20.00/year per family)</b>	
<b>Total Number of Zoo Admission T-Shirts @ \$12/person</b>	
<b>Additional Tax Deductible Donation to IPVI</b>	
<b>TOTAL MONEY INCLUDED - PAYABLE TO IPVI</b>	

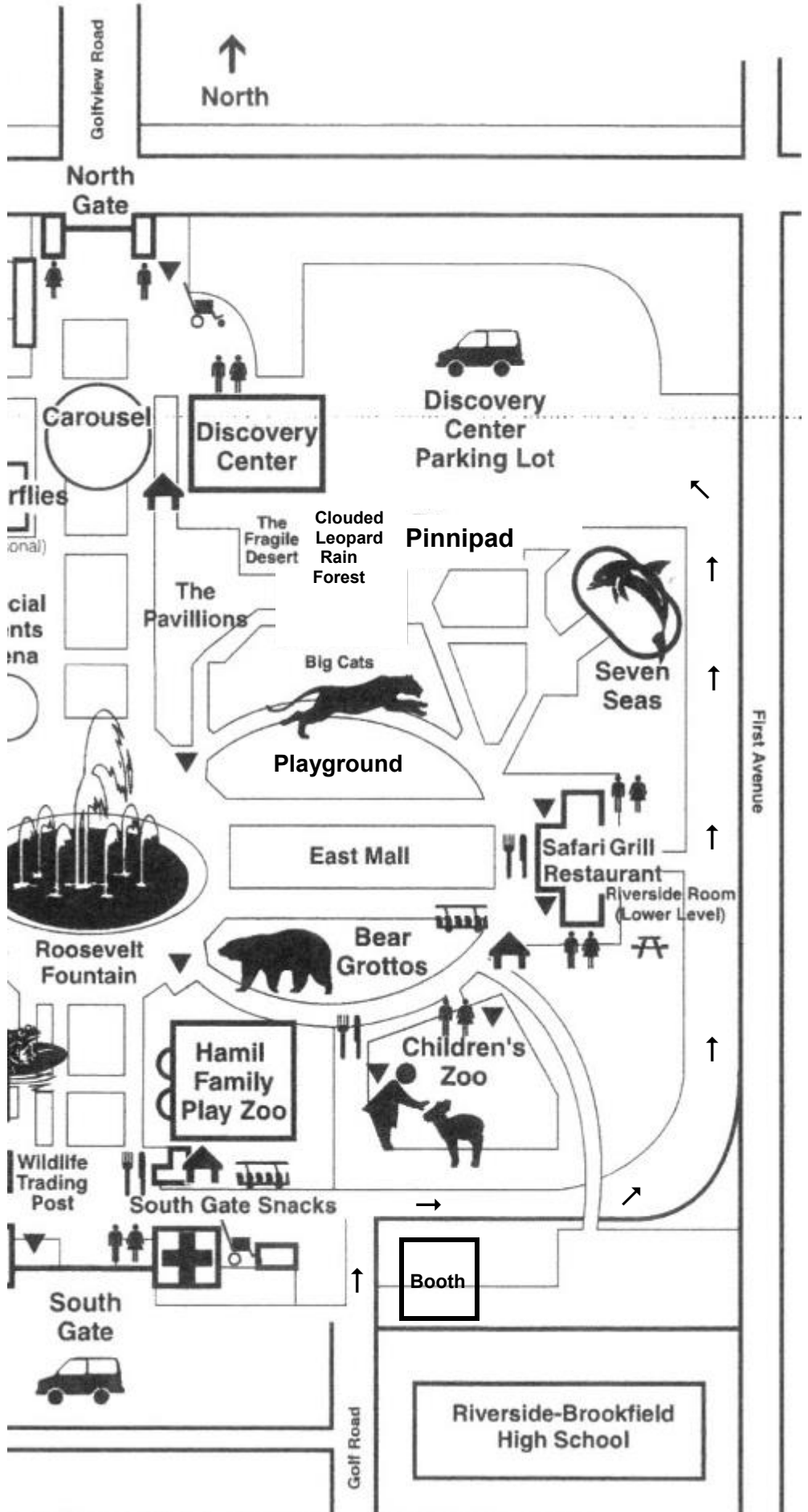
**REGISTRATION CLOSSES ON JUNE 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

\*\*IPVI is funded from member dues, activity/event participation fees, & private and public donations. IPVI benefits are available to anyone who needs and applies for membership, regardless of their ability to pay. IPVI is an all volunteer organization. We sincerely welcome your participation, support and ideas. We focus



We are gathering in the Discovery Center. We are to park in the Discovery Center Parking Lot. We need to enter at the SOUTH Entrance, not the main entrance. To get to the South Entrance, take 1st Avenue to Ridgewood Road (the first traffic light south of 31st street). Go west on Ridgewood to Golf Road. Turn right on Golf Road to the South Entrance Parking Booth (See map).

At the South Entrance Parking booth, say that you are with IPVI and you will not have to pay for parking. After the south parking booth, stay to the right and tell the next gate guard that you are with IPVI and they will let you on to the road leading to the Discovery Center parking lot. Come to the Discovery Center to check in and get your shirts and Zoo map. See you all there!





(Continued from page 2) - Teacher Shortage for Blind and VI Students

help out teaching Braille to 8-year Akash Patel at Hines Elementary School in Morton Grove. The experiment was immensely successful! Why can't it be repeated over and over. After 20 years, they are still buddies.

- Also, I humbly suggest that parents get more involved with supporting their child with learning to read and write Braille. When teachers didn't find the time to teach my daughter, I taught myself Braille and then, I taught her. She still prefers reading books in Braille. When not available in Braille, I pay out of my own pocket to cover the cost for Braille transcriptions of books I value. Presently, Horizon for the Blind is working on transcribing the David Brooks' book "The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life" for Heidi to analyze and discuss with friends at our dining room table.

I expect that numerous of the *IPVI Insights* readers will go along with my ideas only partially and hesitantly; that's OK! Changes are slow, but let us work together to support the teachers who do an excellent job teaching our children. If they see our willingness to support them, changes will occur.

\* \* \*

Erika A. Musser  
[eamusser@msn.com](mailto:eamusser@msn.com)



**We will have tickets to the Dolphin Show and free Tram rides.**

Please read below if you want to take your children to the Petting Zoo.

Attorneys Fred Pritzker and Ryan Osterholm are warning about the dangers of **E. coli infections from petting zoos**. As the weather warms and summer starts, petting zoos are popular attractions for families with young children. Unfortunately, those venues can be and have been the source of serious and even deadly E. coli outbreaks.

When children pet these animals, then put their hands into their mouths, or eat food after visiting the animals without washing their hands, they can easily ingest the pathogenic bacteria. And it only takes 10 E. coli bacteria to make someone seriously sick.

Hand washing stations should be available and stocked with clean water and soap. There should also be transition areas at entrances to a petting zoo area where parents can leave strollers and bags. Educational messages about the dangers of animal contact should be posted.



## May 2019 E-Newsletter

### **Court ruling sides with parents, bars hindsight review for determining IDEA eligibility and recognizes that getting good grades is not a basis for denying eligibility when the child's disability impacts other areas of school functioning**



A ruling by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals could set an important precedent for parents challenging school district denials of special education services. The

Court ruled that when determining eligibility for services, only information available to the IEP team at the time of the decision should be considered on review--so no "Monday morning quarterbacking" allowed. The Court also held that determining whether special education is needed does not include considering whether special education could maximize a student's potential. It also rightly concluded that it is not a parent's responsibility to determine what special education would look like, stating "a party urging eligibility need not unilaterally identify what the IEP will entail."

Although the child in question earned all A's and B's in his classes, the Court found that he was still entitled to special education, stating "while grades are a consideration in determining whether special education services are necessary, they may not be the exclusive one." Other factors considered in determining that the child was eligible for special education included failure of benchmark tests, struggles with attention to task due to avoidance behaviors, and difficulty producing written work. The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates filed an amicus brief in the case. Matt Cohen is on the organization's board.

### **Important revisions to Truancy provisions in Illinois School Code**

Important revisions to the truancy law in the Illinois School Code took effect in January. The "valid cause" for a child's absence from school was updated to include "circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student." And, if a parent has such reasonable concerns, they should report them to the school district in writing. If there is valid cause for the absence, the child cannot be considered truant and the school district cannot punish the student for truancy. This new language is very important for families that decide they can't send their child to school because they are in crisis due to negative experiences AT SCHOOL.

### **Special education bills go to Illinois governor's desk**

Three bills addressing important issues for special education students passed the Illinois legislature and are awaiting signature by Gov. J. B. Pritzker. Thanks to all the advocates, parents and educators who called their elected officials and helped pass these important bills.

**HB 2830** makes it illegal for an employer to fire a parent for attending their child's school conference, academic or behavioral-related meeting.

**HB 3302** extends the deadline for parents to file complaints for compensatory services as a result of the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) public inquiry, which found that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) denied and delayed services in violation of federal law.

**HB 3586** provides more transparency and parental notification about special ed policies, requires CPS to provide its procedure manual in English and Spanish and includes safeguards for kids being referred for Response to Intervention services.



## Chicago Early Learning Annual Parent Conference

Thursday, August 15, 2019  
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM CDT

Isadore and Sadie Dorin Forum  
725 West Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, IL 60608

All attendees receive a gift bag at registration.

- First 150 attendees will receive a Golden Ticket to redeem at the Bill's Back to School Book Bonanza Activity
- First 500 attendees receive a conference T-shirt
- Special Needs and Disabilities Workshops and Resources
- Workshops, Resources, Raffles, Refreshments and More!
- Parking Passes and Bus Passes for Public Transportation will be issued at registration

### **PRIVATE BUS SERVICE IS NOT AVAILABLE**

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, UIC Center for Literacy and Chicago Public Schools would like you to enjoy a day of sunshine services. Why? Because we ADORE you!

Planning committee member organizations: Department of Family and Support Services, UIC Center for Literacy, Citywide Parent Policy Council, Community Organizing and Family Issues, Chicago Public Schools, El Valor and Illinois Action For Children.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Please e-mail: [smaxwell@uic.edu](mailto:smaxwell@uic.edu) or call 312-355-3873



**IPVI**

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# 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.
- Holds fun outings adapted for children with visual impairments at 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: \$20 per year.  
 Child(ren)'s Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 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 \$20/year.  
 Medical Specialist \$50 per year.  
 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**

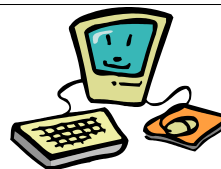
**Illinois Association for Parents of  
Children with Visual Impairments  
P. O. Box 316634  
Chicago, IL 60631**

## **IPVI CALENDAR**

### **2019 IPVI Members' Outing Saturday, July 20, 2019 at Brookfield Zoo**

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

**Newsletter Deadline for  
August 2019 is July 15, 2019**



**Check Out  
[www.ipvi.org](http://www.ipvi.org)**

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