

# IPVI INSIGHTS

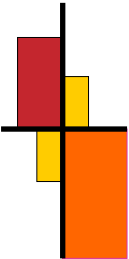


*Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities*

SEPTEMBER 2017

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Filiberto Almendarez III



IPVI had an exciting July. Thanks to the Brookfield Zoo Outing. Pictures are in this month Newsletter. As you may recall, we had a questionnaire at the Zoo Outing. Many completed the form, but did not return them. Please feel free to forward via mail. Of those submitted, the results were Yes for the following: Autopay of membership dues, Pumpkin Patch Outing and Purchasing IPVI merchandise. As for fund raising ideas. Some were: Carwash selling Candy Bar and an Auction. A final suggestion was: Members/Non members should sign up via our website. Thank you IPVI families for your input. Also, as hard as filwe tried and as you know, "Time stops for No one". Our first Pumpkin Patch Outing will have to wait until next year. Sorry, everyone. October just snuck up and time dwindle down.

Additionally, did anyone notice our new logo on the Newsletter. It's located at the top right corner and shows a larger hand holding a smaller hand embraced by the outline of the State of Illinois. The logo is beautiful, catchy and meaningful. Although, hands do many things. Hand holding is more than connecting as a unit. It offers guidance, protection, reassurance and comfort. Besides, your child's hand always fits perfect in yours, regardless of size and age. Furthermore, while we hold their hand, we affectionately express, I am here for you, to take care of, I am Proud, I Love You and together we can do it as a Family.

Keep at heart.

"When you love what you have, you have everything you need".

Take Care!



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In line for a great pizza lunch



Middle: Speaker Juan Vaglienty  
Right: President Fil Almendarez  
Left: Vice President Mary Zabelski



Mary and Fil conducting raffle



Riding the Tram



Attending the Dolphin Show

**THANKS  
FOR  
JOINING  
Us**



**THE  
IPVI  
BOARD**



**PLAY FOR ALL**  
**CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE *and* IPVI FAMILIES**

**A morning of fun for everyone**

**The Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier  
700 E. Grand Avenue, Suite 127  
Chicago, IL 60611**

**Saturday, November 11, 2017**

**Pre-registered families 9:00 - 1:00**

**General public 10:00 - 1:00+**

**To register or for more information, please contact:  
Gail Patterson at the Chicago Lighthouse -  
(312) 997-3695**

**Pre-registration includes:**

**Free admission for Chicago Lighthouse & IPVI Families  
Free shuttle from the Chicago Lighthouse to Navy Pier  
First 50 people only!!!**

**If leaving from Chicago Lighthouse, please arrive at 8:30am.**



## IPVI'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND

For students who are blind or visually impaired

Any individual intending to continue his/her education at a college, university or trade school and is interested in being considered for the IPVISF, must meet the following criteria: Illinois resident, blind or visually impaired, undergraduate or graduate student, and an IPVI member.

The candidate's application is processed free of charge. The student must mail or email a written request to receive a copy of the application from IPVI. Then the student must complete the IPVISF Application Form, provide 3 completed Reference Forms, submit medical records or a letter from the vision specialist confirming the condition, and mail them to IPVI. The applicant may attach a 1-page resume of clubs, offices held, or any other pertinent information concerning his/her activity record.

The IPVI Board of Directors will review all scholarship applications and select the winner. IPVI reserves the right to announce such award in its newsletters and marketing materials.

The IPVISF is funded completely from tax-deductible donations from individuals, companies and corporations who support IPVI's goals. Any individuals or groups wishing to donate to this fund, please forward your tax-deductible donations to IPVI. Thank you for your continued support of IPVI.



**To request a scholarship application, please contact the Board of Directors at: P.O. Box 316634, Chicago, IL 60631.**



### The #1 Way to Skyrocket Your Child's Success in Braille

By Hillary Kleck

A teacher of the visually impaired (TVI), the best braille curriculum, braille labels on everything, braille transcriptions of the books the other kids are reading, a state-of-the-art braille notetaker for use in school and at home... you've asked for it all in IEP meetings and you're doing the best you can to make sure your child will be a successful braille reader. But did you forget the **#1 most important thing** your child needs to learn braille? : **READ MORE at: WonderBaby.org**



### 25 Braille Toys for Kids Who Are Blind

By Amber Bobnar

The best way for any child to learn to read is through constant exposure to the written language... and through play! Sighted children play with alphabet blocks or simple word puzzles when they are young to help develop a foundation for literacy, and blind children have the same opportunities with toys in braille. **READ MORE at: WonderBaby.org**



### 3 Tips for Teaching Young Children with a Visual Impairment How to Become Strong Readers

Guest Post

Learning how to read can be an exciting adventure for a child when he is set up for success before reading begins! Here are some tips to help you help your child become a strong braille reader. **READ MORE at: WonderBaby.org**



### Ten Tips to Teach Yourself Braille

By Amber Bobnar

Maybe your child is just getting ready to begin learning Braille or maybe your blind infant is years away from phonics lessons but you want to get a head start. Whatever the reason, as the parent of a blind child you're going to need to know Braille. **READ MORE at: WonderBaby.org**

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Illinois Statewide Transition Conference



## Stepping Stones of Transition

Illinois Statewide Transition Conference  
Bank of Springfield Center  
One Convention Center Plaza  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

**October 23-24, 2017**

The conference, titled "Stepping Stones of Transition", invites participants to imagine the possibilities for students with disabilities in the areas of independent living, education and training, employment, community integration, health care, and self-advocacy.

Conference sessions will be organized into 4 tracks: Education, Employment, Community and Healthcare.

**Space is limited so register today!**

**The deadline for registration is**

**Friday, September 15, 2017.**

Family Resource Center on  
Disabilities | (312)939-3513 |  
info@frcd.org | www.frcd.org



After looking at Pumpkin Farms throughout the Chicago area and suburbs, I have found a great one in Bolingbrook, Johansen Farms. They offer a wide variety of kid friendly attractions, including pumpkins galore.

They have a program specifically for our blind/VI children which is offered during the week only. Each child would have their own free chaperone if needed.

During our Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, we discussed the possibility of the practicality of planning this event to take place this fall.

One point was that to do the special needs program it would have to be during the week which means parent(s) and child(ren) would have to take off work and school. Although it will be less crowded during this time so our children would be able to participate in more activities, we thought this may not work because it was during the week. But keep in mind, weekends would be very crowded and our children would not benefit from the whole experience.

The next point was the fact that after the zoo outing, which cost us much more this year, we would bring our treasury down even more. Without dues and donations, we may not be able to include this for a fall event, at least not this year.

Please email Joan Bielawski at [wjbielawski@yahoo.com](mailto:wjbielawski@yahoo.com) to hear your thoughts and ideas on this matter.



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FAMILY CONNECT WEBSITE

## Tears, Language Delays, and Seeking an Answer

By Emily Coleman

Last night, when we went into Eddie's room to say goodnight, we found him sitting on the edge of his bed with his lower lip sticking out and giant tears quietly sliding down his face. We sat down on either side of him, but his continued silence and steady crying gave us no answers. Eddie is 12, and he still can't tell us what's wrong. He still can't say if he's hurt, why he's sad, or if we can help him.

As I've shared hundreds of times, Eddie is blind, but he's also autistic. He lacks most expressive language and what he says is often a repetition of something he's heard, which is called **echolalia**. Most days, we can find out what he wants or needs through a series of well-versed questions. Other days, his bank of scripted responses is empty and frustration kicks in for all.

All parents experience these feelings before their children learn to talk. They know what it's like to stay up all night with a crying baby and not be able to figure out what's wrong. They know the feeling of inadequacy as they may call their friends, family, or pediatrician. What all parents don't know is that for some of us those experiences carry on for months, years, and sometimes for a lifetime.

Communication struggles, to me, feel like the greatest barrier for Eddie. Without a way to express himself, he cannot share what he knows and what he doesn't. He can't share what he loves or what he hates. He cannot even verbally share affection for those in his life... like me. Instead, we're limited to body

language, memorized phrases, and the occasional unscripted breakthrough. These things are all helpful, but they keep his repertoire small.

I'd love to give him a way to express more with us and the world. Some kids with communication needs use systems with pictures or words and some use iPads with communication apps. Many communication systems that are even slightly complex require sight to access. Braille can make them more accessible, but Eddie only knows a handful of braille. So, what do we do for our kids? What do we do for Eddie?

We have used tactile symbols and objects in the past and a few braille key words with success. Now, we want to add more, we want to give him as much access to communication as possible, and we are creating systems ourselves. Even though I don't know if our latest homemade creation will be successful, we have to try. Without access to communication, Eddie can't fully speak up for himself... and everyone needs a voice.

So, we carry on and collaborate with speech/language pathologists, teachers of students with visual impairments, and anybody else who takes an interest in Eddie and in his future. Although the frustration can be overwhelming for us, it's always worse for Eddie. I know that we will find a way to give him a voice, and then, we won't have to spend any more nights wondering what's wrong because he will simply tell us.

Please go to [www.familyconnect.org](http://www.familyconnect.org) and search for this article. It will bring you to several other sites about this problem.



**IPVI**

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Come said the leaves to the  
wind one day,  
Come o'er the meadows and  
we will play.

Put on your dresses

Scarlet   
and Gold 

For summer is gone and  
the days grow cold.

George Eliot





# 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:

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**Have questions or need more information?**

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

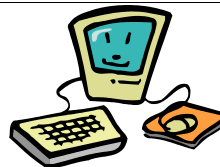
**Illinois Association for Parents of  
Children with Visual Impairments  
P. O. Box 316634  
Chicago, IL 60631**

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## **IPVI CALENDAR**

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

**Newsletter Deadline for  
October 2017 is September 15**



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

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