

# IPVI INSIGHTS

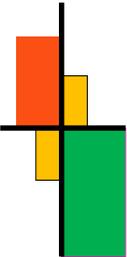


*Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities*

DECEMBER 2017

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Filiberto Almendarez III



It's hard to believe 2017 is coming to a close and 2018 is almost here. There is so much to say, so I will briefly comment. First, the November Outing at the Children Museum at Navy Pier was a blast. Thank you IPVI and Chicago Lighthouse families for attending. I truly enjoy being with familiar faces and their parents too. Secondly, IPVI and the Chicago Lighthouse are having their annual Christmas Party in December. Information is provided in the newsletter. Please save the date. I look forward to celebrate one last time this year. Hope you can be there. Thirdly, election for IPVI Board Members is coming up. More information will follow. Please consider being a Board Member. The two requirements are being a parent of a Visually Impaired child and to live in Illinois. Also, there are five positions for consideration. As current President, some duties include, but not limited to: be Chairperson of the Board of Directors, have general supervision and direction of all corporate affairs, be a member ex-officio of all Committees except Auditing and Nominating. Plus, meet and greet wonderful families at events, write monthly communication in the Newsletter, develop new fundraising methods, promote IPVI agenda throughout the State of Illinois. As for the other Board positions. They are Operation Vice President, Program Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Each has their assigned duties. However, aside of the positional duties, the self reward you gain from meeting and helping other parents and their children who are in need of information and support, especially through challenging time is immeasurable. To assist in turning a painful tears into a joyous one, to share hope despite of uncertainty, to watch a child grow into a young adult and be all they can, to have various Doctors, Teachers and Loving Parents as friends and to learn from your child to see through your Heart-Precious.

Please consider being a Board member. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as IPVI President.

May your Holidays be joyous and I wish you and your family a happy and healthy New Year!

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## Winter Holidays Braille Book List

By Hillary Kleck

### Holiday Book Titles in Accessible Formats Including Braille, Large Print and Audio

December is a wonderful month full of stories of faith, heritage, family and friends. Celebrate the season with these stories and open up the world for your child through braille and audio books. Try pairing the story with other sensory activities including arts and crafts for gifts, braille and [tactile holiday cards](#) and more. Whatever you decide to do, remember to cherish the time you are spending together this holiday season! READ MORE at: [WonderBaby.org](http://WonderBaby.org)

### HOLIDAYS INCLUDE:





## 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.**



**Santa reads braille**

**Santa's Workshop will  
be open on November  
24th**

## **LETTERS FROM SANTA CLAUS IN BRAILLE**

The Christmas Season reminds us to be grateful. Grateful for family and friends; grateful for good health; grateful for food and shelter; grateful for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

“Why Braille Letters from Santa?” We simply wanted to do something special for kids at Christmas, that’s it. If you have kids of your own, you already know Christmas is magical and everyone deserves to feel it. We’d love to shatter the notion that only ‘seeing is believing’ and help bring to life the idea that every child deserves a letter from Santa Claus. Everyone can feel the spirit of Christmas and sometimes, it takes more than seeing to believe.

Here at Braille Works we also understand the fun side of Christmas. Santa and his elves; flying reindeer; stockings hung by the chimney and a host of other traditions. These are wondrous things that bring smiles and laughter to children around the world. In fulfilling our mission toward “*Making the World a More Readable Place*™”, we’re bringing ‘Letters from Santa’ to children who are blind or visually impaired. It’s our desire to bring a little more of that Christmas wonder to your child and give him, or her, an opportunity to hear from Santa. At the same time; letting them know that Santa reads braille is a great way to encourage them to develop their braille reading skills.

We would love to hear from you and send your child a braille letter from Santa. We are asking that only families who have a child who is blind or visually impaired take part. Teachers of students who read braille are also encouraged to submit requests.

Thank you for taking part in Santa Reads Braille and have a blessed Christmas Season.

<https://brailleworks.com/santa-reads-braille/>



## WHY INTERVENTION?

*By Mary Zabelski*

Although the effects of visual impairment can range from mild to severe, any degree of vision loss can affect all aspects of learning. Many children who are blind or visually impaired may exhibit delays in motor and language development within the first few months of their lives. These delays may be due in large part to a lack of visual stimulations.

Much early learning is acquired incidentally as toddlers watch other children and adults interact with the environment and imitate their actions. Incidental learning is learning gained by observing persons and activities around us within our immediate environment. Babies begin to attach names or words to objects as they see their parents using familiar items, and this process encourages their language development. Therefore, much of early learning is attached to visual experiences, as is much of early motor development. Children who are blind or visually impaired may not move toward an object in the immediate environment because they may have no knowledge of its presence, unless perhaps the object makes itself known by a sound or in some other way or unless someone else calls their attention to it. As a result, the motivation to crawl or walk may be delayed for many visually impaired children, with the result being a delay in their motor skills. Overall, since so much early learning is acquired through visual experiences, an infant or toddler who is blind or visually impaired can miss out on many opportunities for incidental learning unless he or she is provided with early stimulation that has been deliberately and thoughtfully planned and carried out.

Children who are blind or visually impaired may also miss social opportunities, since they may be unable to watch the ordinary play and

behavior of other children. However, their families can play a critical role in helping them learn and participate in relationships with others. For these reasons, early intervention services that provide families with guidance on specific, specialized strategies to help their children have experiences that other children regularly participate in can be invaluable.

Through play, by providing stimulating experiences and describing people, objects, and events, with the help of trained professionals, you can teach your child to explore the surrounding environment and become aware of what is around him or her. You can learn how to encourage the development of natural curiosity, often untapped in a child who is blind or visually impaired. And you can be shown ways of providing your child with direct information about the world and its objects that can help him or her develop an understanding of them. This in turn leads to the growth of concepts and language—known as concept development and language development—that your child can use to describe the world.

The term “early interventionist” is broad, and in general is used to describe professionals who work with infants from birth through age 36 months who have disabilities and their families. Early interventionists come from a variety of backgrounds and have a range of expertise in such fields as child development, special education, occupational and physical therapy, and speech and language therapy. Early intervention programs whose staff includes a teacher of students with visual impairments, an orientation and mobility (O&M) instructor, and an early childhood specialist knowledgeable about multiple disabilities and specifically trained to work with children who are blind or visually impaired offer expert services targeted to meet the needs of children who require extra help in finding out about the world. Your child may also benefit

from the services of an occupational therapist, physical therapist, or speech pathologist for assistance in overall growth and development. A comprehensive program can help you and your family learn parenting skills designed to be especially supportive of your child's educational and development needs.

### **The IPVI/Chicago Lighthouse Family Outing at the Chicago Museum Play For All**

November 11 was a fantastic opportunity for the children and their families. We met, made new friends, participated in various museum activities, and had a great time! Plus the activities were free for us. Free buses provided transportation to and from the lighthouse.

We will have another trip to the museum in February. Hope you can all join us!!







### How I Will Change the World for My Deaf-Blind Daughter, One Toy at a Time

*By Jacob Lacourse*

I am the parent of a child with a disability and I am determined to adapt the world to her. In doing so I am hoping to help others along the way as well, by creating low cost solutions that promote accessibility. READ MORE at:

**WonderBaby.org**



### The Learning Blanket: Tactile Activity Blankets and Pillows For Visually Impaired Kids

Sample: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Thelearningblanket>

The Learning Blanket is an Etsy store that creates interactive educational blankets and pillows for children with (or without) visual impairment. READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**  
Don't forget to watch the video.



### My Special Needs Child Is Getting Older and It's Scaring the Crap Out of Me

*By Amber Bobnar*

...when your special needs child ages out of the special needs kids industry and you're looking for things that fit a special needs teenager or special needs young adult, suddenly you realize just how little support our society provides to special needs ADULTS. ... READ MORE at:

**WonderBaby.org**



### How One Tiny Fish May Help Us Find a Cure for Blindness

*By Amber Bobnar*

In research, scientists use animal models to test their theories when looking for cures to human diseases. They've used mice for generations, but mice have limitations in research. Many scientists are now using zebrafish in their research. READ MORE at: **WonderBaby.org**

**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.
- 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**

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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  
January 2018 is December 15<sup>th</sup>**



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

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