

IPVI INSIGHTS

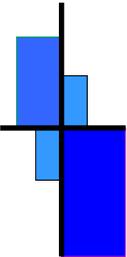


Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities

JUNE 2018

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Filiberto Almendarez III



Hello and Happy June IPVI Members. As you all know, elections were held in April and I say with a big smile, I am honored and thankful to be re-elected as IPVI President. I look forward in meeting and assisting parents of Blind/Visually Impaired children with informational resources, social family gathering and especially moral support. I cannot predict the future, but can share the past to offer hope for your journey. Also, I would like to welcome back, Mary Zabelski as Program Vice President and Joan Bielawski as Operations Vice President and Secretary. They were re elected too. I truly appreciate all their hard work on the Board.

Now, coming up is the Annual IPVI Brookfield Zoo Outing on Saturday, July 21, 2018. This is our big event where we all gather and celebrate. Everyone knows I eagerly await to spend time together and it's a joy to be around all the wonderful children. This year our guest speaker is Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer. Thank you Commissioner for being a part of our celebration. Remember, there are scheduled activities throughout the day, which we understand creates excitement and makes our children hungry. So yes lunch is provided, followed by our group photo.

Lastly, I like to add, if anyone is interested in learning more about guide dogs, please reach out. "Guide Dogs for the Blind" would gladly forward information and presentation dates. Let me know.

Take care and see everyone in July at the Annual IPVI Brookfield Zoo Outing!



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MEMORIES OF HEIDI MUSSER

Prepared for: IPVI Insights - Issue June 2018

May 20,2018

Prepared for: IPVI Insights - Issue June 2018

From: Heidi Musser

I am Wanted, I am Needed

On Twitter the American Printing House for the Blind ([APH@APHfortheBlind](https://twitter.com/APHfortheBlind) May 14) shared the visit of OSERS Assistant Secretary Johnny Collet and the following quote from him:

"As we think about improving academic achievement and outcomes for students With disabilities, we must talk about both high expectations and appropriate supports ... "

BRAVO! I could not agree with him more. I think I will write him a personal letter telling him that the Chicago Public High Schools emphasize that: I ***do not do*** exactly the opposite of what I am doing now.

As a totally blind student, when I wanted to participate in PE classes I was assigned to sit with an assistant teacher, who would read to me and teach me all about Health and Fitness. I was furious, and so was my mother! It took me more than 30 years, with the support of my mother, to prove that the educators did me ***very wrong***. I was well accepted and integrated by swim coaches at the Leaning Tower YMCA, starting at age 3.

I am now a member of a U.S. Masters Swim Team totally integrated. I am considered like

(Continued on page 6)



2018 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 21, 2018 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. Our Guest Speaker will be Commissioner Dennis Deer.

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 2018 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 30th to

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



**2018 BROOKFIELD ZOO - IPVI MEMBERS' ONLY OUTING
Saturday July 21st Registration & Payment Form**

Attendance is restricted to current (paid) members of IPVI**. All attendees must pre-register, purchase a 2018 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 "2018 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.

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

REGISTRATION CLOSSES ON JUNE 30th, 2018

**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 on supporting families challenged by visual impairments.

(Continued from page 2)

everyone else. I have shed the emotional pain of rejection. I feel wanted, needed and loved. I feel part of a more than 90-member swim team family, within which everyone contributes in his own way.

What do I have to give to my team? I helped my team to earn points at the recent 2018 Short Course Illinois State Championship Swim Meet held on April 13-15, 2018, in Musters, IL. But I feel that I gave my team members so much more than points and an applause. I feel that I gave them the awareness of what Albert Einstein said: **Only a life lived for others is a life worth living.**

I am not a fast swimmer, but I am not the slowest either. At the State Meet hardly anyone paid attention that I was blind. I just felt happy to be part of it all and have fun with my friends. That made me the happiest.

Let us live up to the highest American ideal: **The belief that we are all worthy; we are all equal and we all count.**

.....
If any questions, please contact me:

hmusser@msn.com

773-412-4454 (cell)

FAMILY CONNECT WEBSITE



Equipping Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired with Outdoor Activity Skills

By Shannon Carollo

Hearing shrieks of laughter and commotion outside, Jane peeked through the blinds. Ah, the neighborhood kids are playing soccer on the Biggs' front yard. New to the street, she didn't yet know the ages of all the children, but they looked to be between five and eight years old, similar in age to her Theo. She wondered, as she had many times before, if Theo would fit in with his peers who had typical vision. If only he could play soccer, this would be the perfect opportunity to foster friendship. READ THE REST AT: www.familyconnect.org



Empowered to Work With Your Visually Impaired Child's Medical Professional

By Shannon Carollo

You + your child's ophthalmologist + the pediatrician + any necessary therapists + medical specialists who manage any chronic or acute problems = your child's robust medical professional team.

You are a key member. Yet, it isn't uncommon for parents to feel void of expertise and, therefore, to take a passive role or back seat in medical evaluations and interventions. I'm here to remind you that your child and his or her medical personnel need you, whether or not the need is acknowledged, as you are the expert on your child and the voice for your (young or nonverbal) child. The team needs

you to remain informed, to advocate for your child's needs, and oftentimes to educate them about blindness or a visual impairment. **READ THE REST AT: www.familyconnect.org**

If you, your staff or potential applicants have any questions or would like further information, please contact Project Administrator, Jenny Schuler at (312) 746-7291 or jenny.schuler@cityofchicago.org.



Scholarship Application Available

The Chicago Department Family & Support Services is accepting applications for the 2018 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Scholarship program. The CSBG Scholarship program provides financial assistance to low-income students enrolled in post-secondary educational programs.

Students who are enrolled full-time in an Illinois college, university or vocational/certificate program by September 15, 2018 may qualify for a scholarship, which can range from \$500 to \$3,000. Funds may be applied to tuition, books, uniforms and fees related to the individual's course of study. Recipients must have primary residence in the City of Chicago and meet income guidelines.

We would appreciate your sharing this information with individuals and organizations in your community. We have attached an informational flier about the scholarship program which you can use on your website and in your newsletter, for posting in your office, and for distribution at events.

Additional information about program criteria, the income guidelines and a downloadable application are available at **www.cityofchicago.org/fss**. Applications must be received at our office by 5:00 PM on Friday, June 8th.



May 2018 E-Newsletter

ISBE special inquiry panel finds broad systemic special education violations by the Chicago Public Schools

On April 16, the special Inquiry Team appointed by the Illinois State Board of Education, in response to a complaint filed by 14 advocacy organizations and attorneys, including Matt Cohen and Associates, issued its findings. The panel agreed with virtually every allegation raised by the Advocacy Groups, finding the following:

1. The CPS computerized IEP system was confusing, inadequate training had been provided on its use, and it led to automatic blocks which led to decisions being recorded that were different than the decisions reached by IEP teams;
2. CPS imposed excessive data requirements that elevated the presence and quantity of numeric data and minimized the importance of qualitative data, created unreasonable burdens on staff and delayed and denied provision of important services such as provision of 1-1 aides, Extended School Year, transportation and therapeutic day school placements;
3. Requirements for Principal or District Representative review of data and agreement with team decisions led to services being

delay and denied and improperly pre-empted the decision-making authority of the IEP teams and the ability of parents to have meaningful participation in the process;

4. The CPS process for developing and implementing its policy manuals led to confusion and was carried out without transparency and without adequate notice to parents and staff or training of parents and staff; and
5. The CPS budget process, including the decision to require principals to fill budget shortfalls from their own school budgets and the use of a budget appeal process that did not adequately assure that staff/funds were available to implement the services provided for in students' IEPs resulted in delays and denial of services.

The Advocate Group proposed extensive remedies, including:

- the appointment of a special monitor for a period of 5 years,
- mandatory revision of all CPS policies and procedures and the CPS computerized IEP system, with input from parents, teachers and advocates;
- revision of the CPS data procedures to reduce the time and amount of data required to make various IEP decisions and to allow for consideration of qualitative data and team input regardless of the quantity of numeric data obtained;
- Revised procedures for the role of the Principal and District Representative to assure that the IEP team is empowered to make decisions and that the proper personnel are actually at the meetings;
- New training plans and requirements to assure that all staff are aware of the special education procedures and follow appropriate process and compliance with procedural requirements;

- Revision of the CPS budget process to assure that adequate staff is provided to carry out all services provided for in every student's IEP;
- A \$10,000,000 fund to pay for compensatory services for students that suffered educational harm by virtue of CPS' policies and procedures that resulted in delays and denial of services to students that should have received them;
- \$1,500,000 in additional funding to independent not-for-profit parent groups to fund parent training and advocacy efforts to insure that parents are aware of these changes and are able to assure that their children are getting the services that they need.

What is happening now:

The State Board of Education is scheduled to meet on May 16th to receive the recommendations of the ISBE General Counsel and to discuss what action to take in response to the Panel's findings. We are concerned that the State Board may not take sufficiently strong action to force compliance by CPS, to monitor the compliance, and to provide compensatory services for those children injured by CPS' illegal actions. Our concern is heightened by the statements and actions of CPS since the findings were issued, including claiming that the problems have been or are being remedied already (without input from parents, teachers or advocates), taking credit for the initiation of the investigation and launching a parent advisory group through a secretive selection process that managed to exclude parents that had been active in pursuing the complaint.



Contact Us
866-787-9270



36 Fun Summer Activities for Kids Who Are Blind or Multiply Disabled

By Amber Bobnar

“It can be very difficult to find projects or outings that are appropriate for a young child who is blind and has multiple disabilities”. READ MORE at: www.wonderbaby.org/articles/summer-activities-blind-children



These Shoes Were Made For... Giving Directions?

By Amber Bobnar

Technology moves in interesting ways: my washing machine tells me when the door is ajar, the refrigerator can report when I’m out of milk, and now my shoes can tell me which way to go. Pretty cool, right? READ MORE at: www.wonderbaby.org/news/smart-shoes



UltraCane

www.ultracane.com/

By Amber Bobnar

The new UltraCane is a step forward from the traditional white cane. The UltraCane is an electronic cane that delivers feedback through small vibrating buttons in the handle. Its ultrasound system provides information about obstacles in front of the user as well as above the head and chest. READ MORE at: www.wonderbaby.org/resources/ultracane



Adventure Walks: Helping Your Child Who is Blind Move Around Outdoors

By Susan Shier Lowry, COMS, CTVI

Children who are blind or have low vision often miss important information about the world around them, especially in outdoor and public places. Helping them get “up close and personal” with these settings improves their understanding, increases language opportunities, and enriches social exchanges with family and friends. READ MORE at:

www.wonderbaby.org/articles/adventure-walks

IPVI

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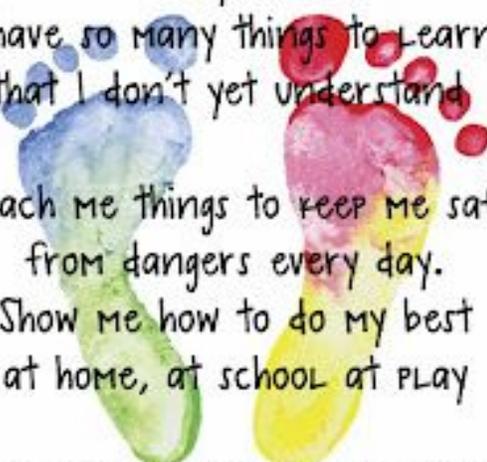
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Walk With Me, Daddy

By Helen Bush



WALK alongside me, Daddy
and hold my little hand
I have so many things to learn
that I don't yet understand
Teach me things to keep me safe
from dangers every day.
Show me how to do my best
at home, at school at play
Every child needs a gentle hand
to guide them as they grow.
So WALK alongside me, Daddy.
We have a long way to go.

dad **dada** **daddy**
PROVIDER
encouragement
strong **LOVING**
hero hero hero
COMFORTING ARM
brave patient **INSPIRE**
understanding
HARD WORKING
thank you **DEVOTED**



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: \$20 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 \$20/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
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IPVI CALENDAR

► **July 21**

2018 IPVI Members' Outing

Brookfield

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

**Newsletter Deadline for
July 2018 is June 15, 2018**



**Check Out
www.ipvi.org**

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