All Hands On Tech!

Classes resumed at the Blind Childrens Center early this September with the annual arrival of enthusiastic students and hopeful parents. Much looks the same, including our mission: to foster the development and education of children—birth through 2nd Grade—who are visually impaired in an inclusive, family-focused setting. But if you take a trip down the main hall of our building, you’ll notice a new room right next to our Infant Class—the recently constructed VI (Visual Impairment) Resource Room.

Thanks to the generosity of our friends at the Ahmanson Foundation, The Gibney Family Foundation, The Ray Charles Foundation and the Moe Life Foundation, renovations and outfitting of the Room were completed over the summer in anticipation of the upcoming school year.

This state-of-the-art technology center is now fully operational, and our VI Program, headquartered in the Room, is already in full-swing.

The overarching goal of our VI Program is to provide our young students who are visually impaired with the critical skills necessary for them to thrive in all of their future endeavors. The backbone of the Program is Literacy Training, where our children are introduced to Braille reading and writing as early as possible, resulting in students who are reading at developmentally appropriate levels. If a child needs individual literacy instruction, one-on-one sessions are available in the VI Room, so students are able to keep pace with their classmates. When the Room isn’t being used for instruction, our specialists can be found converting books and lessons from print to Braille or large-print, so all of our students are able to access their lessons.
New technology has had a profound impact in leveling the field for people who are visually impaired, so much of our VI Room instruction is focused on teaching our young students to master the use of invaluable digital devices including iPads, desktops, laptops, and CCTVs (closed-circuit televisions). “It’s an opportunity for the children to explore and have fun with more freedom,” said Bianca Ciebrant, Orientation & Mobility Specialist and Assistant Director of Education at the Center. “Pretty soon, they become proficient through practice and repetition. These are tools they will need throughout their lives.”

Like all of the programs here at the Blind Childrens Center, the VI Program and VI Room are fully inclusive, with our students who are visually impaired learning side-by-side their sighted classmates. Pairing our students up in this way positively influences socialization skills, imagination, cognitive abilities, and, for our students who are typically-developing, builds empathy and advocacy skills far beyond their years.

The VI Program also includes training in Orientation & Mobility which involves understanding spatial relationships, body concepts and cane travel technique, so children are able to safely navigate their surroundings. Frequently, instructors use Wikki Stix and other specialized tools for map-making and other activities that enhance a child’s spatial awareness and cognitive mapping. All of these activities are specifically-designed to engage our young students and prepare them for the next steps in their education.

So, next time you are in Hollywood, be sure to schedule a tour of the Blind Childrens Center. You are guaranteed to experience a model program that has been replicated across the state of California and around the world. And be certain to take a look at our new VI Room. The activities inside are more than just fun and educational; they are life-changing.

How Your Support Makes a Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A child’s first white cane</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-month supply</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille paper 1-month supply</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPad</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins Brailler</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apple laptop with adaptive keyboard &amp; software</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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To help, please see the enclosed envelope or visit our website at www.blindchildrenscenter.org and go to DONATE NOW.
'Tis the season

to be…giving!

Did you know thirty percent of charitable
donations in this country are made in December
each year? This is not surprising if you consider
many of us use year-end giving not only to
benefit the causes we love, but also to ensure
we have maximized our income tax savings.

As you review your year-end charitable giving
plans and contemplate December gifts,
here are some things to keep in mind:

2014 GIFTS TO CHARITY To obtain a charitable deduction
for 2014, charitable gifts must be made by December
31. Be sure to obtain receipts for any gifts in excess
of $250. A proper receipt must be in writing, state the
amount donated, describe any non-cash donations, and
indicate the value of any goods or services provided
by the charity as consideration for the donation. A
canceled check does not meet these requirements.

CHARITABLE DEDUCTION LIMITATIONS It is important
to understand the limits on how charitable deductions
are applied to your income tax liability. When you make
gifts to public charities
like the Blind Childrens
Center, contributions of
cash can be deducted
up to 50% of your
adjusted gross income
(AGI). Any remaining
deductions can be
applied to your AGI over the next five years until
exhausted. For gifts of appreciated property held more
than a year, the full fair market value can generally
be deducted up to 30% of your AGI with the same
carry forward provisions for the next five years.

IN-KIND GIFTS OF SECURITIES If you are considering
gifts of appreciated securities such as stocks, bonds and
mutual funds, it is much more efficient to give them directly
to a charity rather than selling them and donating the after-
tax cash proceeds. This in-kind gift of securities allows you
to avoid all income tax. The charity can sell the securities
and pay no capital gains tax because it is a tax-exempt
entity. If you owned the securities for more than one year,
you also get an income tax deduction equal to the fair
market value of the securities (subject to AGI limitations).

IRA DISTRIBUTIONS DONATED TO CHARITY Since
2006, owners of Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)
over age 70½ have been permitted to pay up to $100,000
of their annual required minimum distribution (RMD)
directly to a qualified charity. This allows the IRA owner
to avoid any income tax on the distribution and to claim
the entire amount as a charitable deduction. The charity,
of course, pays no tax as a tax-exempt organization
and therefore gets the use and enjoyment of the entire
amount. Please note: as of the time of this writing, this
provision has not yet been extended by Congress for
2014. If you are interested in making a charitable gift
and are over age 70½, you may wish to delay taking
your RMD until it is clear whether or not the provision will
be reinstated. In past years, Congress has sometimes
waited until December to make the extension.

For more information, or to make a gift, please call
Kimberlee Jones at (323) 664-2153, EXT. 304 or email
kimberlee@blindchildrenscenter.org.
Please join us for our
Holiday Party with Santa

Generously sponsored by the Rampart and R&I Divisions of the Los Angeles Police Department and the Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott West Covina.

Friday, December 12, 2014
9:30 A.M.
Blind Childrens Center

R.S.V.P. (323) 664-2153
jennifer@blindchildrenscenter.org

Halloween fun at the Center included lots of great costumes and an adaptive Batmobile built around a wheelchair.

Our thanks to the San Fernando Valley Delta Gamma Alumnae Chapter and Delta Gammas from UCLA for their support.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

LA BIG 5K
SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2015
L.A. DODGER STADIUM

Want to walk or run on behalf of the Center? Make a donation or volunteer on our cheer team?

Contact Laurie Headley
(323) 664-2153 EXT. 342
laurie@blindchildrenscenter.org

Please come visit the Center and meet our children!

To schedule a tour, please contact Kimberlee Jones.

Blind Childrens Center
Lighting the way since 1938
4120 Marathon Street
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(323) 664-2153
www.blindchildrenscenter.org