



Light the Way

VIRTUAL CELEBRATION
THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2021

5:30pm PST
Virtual Wine Tasting Pre-Party
6:30pm PST
Light the Way Virtual Celebration

Visit <http://bit.ly/BCCLTW> for Information,
Virtual Wine Tasting Tickets, or Event Sponsorship.
Or contact Laurie Headley
213.247.9874 • laurie@blindchildrenscenter.org
All proceeds benefit the Blind Children's Center.



LIGHT THE WAY

W I N T E R 2 0 2 1 N E W S L E T T E R



SERVING THE WHOLE FAMILY

When twins Kalifa and Aquila Mubyana were born, their mother Aida Raha knew that something was different about her son Kalifa. "He was weaker than his sister, but the doctor kept telling us our son was fine and 'boys develop later,'" Aida said. When Kalifa was four months-old, the doctors finally confirmed what Aida already knew: Kalifa was blind. In the following months, he was diagnosed with epilepsy, then an intellectual delay.

Aida knew she had to find a school that could accommodate both Aquila's and Kalifa's different



needs. The Blind Children's Center was exactly that place. At the Center, students who are blind or visually impaired learn alongside children who are typically developing. Between inclusive classrooms and supportive parent groups, Aida found a place that cared about the entire family. For Kalifa, the Center provides an understanding environment that can adapt to his educational and social needs.

"I want my son to have a positive experience at school and not feel like school is a place where he is being pressured or judged," said Aida. The Center's

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Home for the Holidays

On December 17th, 2020 at 5:30pm PST, the Blind Children's Center hosted Home for the Holidays, a Virtual Celebration with the BCC Family! This fun and heartwarming event included messages from our families and supporters, including the LAPD Rampart and R&I Divisions, LAPD Chief Michel Moore, Los Angeles Police Commissioner Steve Soboroff, and the UCSB Delta Gamma chapter. Attendees also enjoyed performances by entertainer and blindness advocate Tom Sullivan and actor Blake Stadnik of NBC's "This is Us" fame, and holiday activities like voting on our ugly sweater contest and viewing our students' questions for Santa. The full program can be viewed on our event website, <http://bit.ly/BCCATHOME>.

Thanks to the generosity of our board members and key donors, all donations from the campaign were matched, and the Center raised more than \$96,000! Thank you everyone for helping us continue to provide critical early intervention and family services to children who are visually impaired and their families throughout Los Angeles County. ●



Address
Address 1
Address 2
City State Zip

4120 Marathon Street - Los Angeles, CA 90029-3584

BLIND CHILDREN'S CENTER
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COVER STORY CONTINUED

teachers and specialists adapt each classroom activity so that Kalifa can participate along with his classmates.



The Center has helped Aquila become more understanding of children with disabilities, like her brother. Aida said, "My daughter has learned it's not just her brother who is different.

It has increased her knowledge of humanity and empathy." On the Center's playground, Aquila is known for playing gently with younger students and her friends with disabilities.

Peace of Mind About the Future

The family services at the Center have been invaluable for Aida, connecting her with resources for her children and providing guidance and support through weekly parent groups. "BCC has taught me how to be a good mom to someone with a disability," said Aida.

The greatest service that BCC has provided for Aida's family is peace of mind about her family's future. "The Center has given

me hope that there is a future for my son, and that even with his disabilities he will be able to lead a full life," she said. Thanks to the strong foundation Aida and her children have built at the Center, Aida knows that they can overcome any obstacle life puts in their way. ●



AN EVENING WITH TOM SULLIVAN



On November 17th, 2020 at 5:30pm PST, the Blind Children's Center held An Evening With Tom Sullivan, a virtual event introducing donors to the Tom Sullivan Legacy society. The event included a live musical performance by Tom, conversations with BCC students and staff, and a Q&A on the advantages of planned giving. The event recording can be accessed on the Blind Children's Center's YouTube channel.

The Tom Sullivan Legacy Society recognizes and honors those who have made, or intend to make, an estate-related gift to the Blind Children's Center.

When you include us in your estate plan, you leave a legacy of care, support and light to children with visual impairments and their families.



Benefits of Legacy Society membership include optional recognition on our donor wall and in printed materials, and invitations to special gatherings and events. By joining our Legacy Society today and sharing your gift intentions with us, you ensure that your gift is directed according to your wishes in the future.

To learn more, join, or be connected to an expert, please contact Scott Kassel, Director of Development, at 323.664.2153 or scott@blindchildrenscenter.org. ●



Pictured Above: Tom treated guests to a performance from his home.

Pictured at Left Clockwise: Tom Sullivan; Marcus Tanimoto, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management Advisor; Sarah Orth, BCC CEO; and Dr. Fernanda Armenta-Schmitt, BCC Director of Education & Family Services, during the event.

How We Have Adapted Our Services During Covid-19

OUR INFANT & PRESCHOOL CLASSES

- We hold three weekly Zoom sessions for each class
- We offer a weekly Zoom session for every student/family to meet privately with their teacher or family worker

OUR KINDERGARTEN

- We hold four weekly Zoom sessions for the class
- We offer a weekly Zoom session for every student/family to meet privately with our Kindergarten teacher or family worker
- We lead weekly sessions where two to three developmentally matched students are grouped to build friendships & develop social skills



OUR TEAM of specialists continue to meet with students online to work on individual skills and goals ranging from chewing and feeding for younger students, to braille literacy, mobility skills and white cane use for our older students.

To augment our virtual services, we have created a suite of original video content for students and caregivers to access anytime on YouTube. Videos include physical fitness activities, stories read by staff, health and Covid-19 prevention tips, and more.



JOIN OUR SUSTAINER PROGRAM

Please help us continue our critical services into the future by joining our sustainer program today!

For as little as \$10/month, you will become part of our special community of monthly supporters dedicated to helping children who are visually impaired thrive in a sighted world.

BENEFITS OF MONTHLY GIVING

- EASY** – A simple online portal lets you give according to your budget.
- EFFICIENT** – Recurring gifts are automatically processed, and you will receive an email acknowledgement saving you time and cutting our administrative costs which allows more of your donation to go directly to serving our students.
- ESSENTIAL** – Dependable monthly support ensures our students have consistent access to critical educational programs and interventions, enabling us to plan for the future and continue to expand services.
- ENDURING** – Your generosity builds a long-term foundation of support for children who are blind or visually impaired.



Monthly giving enables us to provide online learning with live teacher interactions.



Our Sustainer Program helps families get the resources they need to keep children learning at home.

www.SustainBCC.org

Or call our Director of Development Scott Kassel 323.664.2153 ext. 2330