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Light the Way
CELEBRATION



**THURSDAY
MAY 12, 2022**

**LOS ANGELES
RIVER CENTER
& GARDENS**

For more information, tickets, or Event Sponsorship opportunities, please visit <https://LTW2022.givesmart.com>

Or contact Scott Kassel at 323.664.2153 or scott@blindchildrenscenter.org



AN EXCITING NEW CHAPTER FOR BCC!



serve as a model for inclusion in early learning environments. **LACOE**, which is funded by the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, and California Department of Education, partners with 13 other delegates including nonprofit agencies and school districts to serve more than 10,000 children ages 0-5 in Los Angeles County.

In 2018, BCC adopted a strategic plan that set goals to diversify our revenue and expand services to children from birth to 5 years old. Over the last three years, we have been actively pursuing partnerships to achieve these goals and are proud to announce that BCC is now partnering with Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to provide high-quality, inclusive infant, toddler and preschool programs through the Head Start/Early Head Start Program model. As a LACOE delegate, BCC will be positioned to increase our enrollment to nearly 100 students per year, and to

For 84 years, the Blind Children's Center has evolved to meet the needs of the youngest children in our county facing blindness and other visual impairments. We are excited to enter this new chapter in our history as we strive to serve more families than ever before and expand our reach throughout Los Angeles. ●



Best Friends

Our year-end mail campaign featured kindergartner Anadalia who enrolled at the Blind Children's Center as a 7-month-old and is poised to graduate this year. She has flourished during her time at the Center and is a particularly social child who makes friends easily.



visual cues involved in engaging other children," said Director of Early Childhood Education Bianca Ciebrant. "For example, eye contact and learning through observation are sometimes not easy or possible for a child who is blind or visually impaired."

"Building friendships can be challenging for children who are visually impaired since there are so many

But Anadalia has thrived in that regard. "She has learned to advocate for herself and is one of BCC's

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“This is Us”...and Us!

At a Board Meeting three years ago, a conversation arose about a developing storyline on NBC’s hit show “This is Us” involving a visually impaired character named Jack.

We reached out to Blake Stadnik, the actor portraying Jack as an adult, and introduced him to BCC and our critical mission. Blake who has been visually impaired since birth due to Stargardt Disease immediately sparked to our cause and has been a friend ever since and even hosted our virtual gala last year.

But our relationship with the hit show didn’t end there. Over the past two years “This is Us” has cast not one,

but two students from the Blind Children’s Center to play young versions of Jack! Our former student Sebastian Forbes had a run as baby Jack a couple of years ago, and this year our student



Johnny



Sebastian



Blake

Johnny Kincaid has taken over the mantle. He has had several lines opposite stars Chrissy Metz and Chris Sullivan and is getting rave reviews from fans and online blogs alike.

The show’s portrayal of Jack as an independent, successful adult aligns with our aim to set our students on the path to independence and shines a light on people with disabilities among us. All of the actors who have played Jack have been visually impaired themselves, and the show’s connection to our school has come full circle. Thank you to “This Is Us” for the great entertainment and featuring our stars! ●

BCC ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY BACK IN-PERSON!

On Thursday, December 16, 2021,

the Blind Children’s Center returned to campus for its annual Holiday Party. BCC students eagerly lined the front of the school in anticipation of Santa’s arrival. They began leaping with joy when they heard the sirens down the street as Santa and his sleigh were escorted in style by LAPD officers on motorcycles and in squad cars. Dozens of

LAPD officers from the Rampart and R&I (Records and Identification) Division formed an assembly line from the sleigh to the BCC Christmas tree, and helped Santa unload a generous donation of wrapped gifts for the students.

Once the gifts were unloaded, the kindergarten class led Santa through BCC’s sensory playground to the outdoor stage where a special front row seat to the performance



awaited him. Class by class, BCC students performed dance routines and sang songs while their families, LAPD officers, Delta Gamma alumnae, and Santa happily cheered them on. After the performance, BCC students took turns taking pictures with the officers and Santa



before leaving with their families with huge smiles of their faces.

For nearly 30 years, committed officers from the LAPD have visited the Blind Children’s Center for our annual Holiday Party, continuing a tradition of generosity and joy. We are so thankful for their partnership and commitment to making sure that our students always have an extra special holiday season. Thank you to everyone who made this event a huge success! ●

Best Friends CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

most confident students,” said Adaptive Services Specialist Rosalinda Mendiola who works with Anadalia on her braille literacy skills.

During her years at the Center, Anadalia has developed a close friendship with Mila, a sighted student who is currently in our transitional kindergarten class. Friendships like theirs are a special byproduct of our inclusive learning environment with sighted children in each class.



“NOW I KNOW SHE CAN THRIVE IN THE SIGHTED WORLD.”

– Anadalia’s Mother

Although they are in different classes this year, they are still close friends, often seen socializing together outside on the playground. Both girls have benefited greatly from their friendship, and their experiences at BCC will make them more prepared for their next educational steps. Blind Children’s Center has been a leader in inclusive education, beginning in 1988, promoting friendships like Anadalia and Mila’s for the past 34 years. ●



THE TOM SULLIVAN LEGACY SOCIETY

A PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

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.

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 or visit our Planned Giving website at www.LegacyBCC.org



BLIND CHILDREN’S CENTER
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