ANNUAL REPORT

2022

LIGHTING THE WAY SINCE 1938

BLIND CHILDREN’S CENTER

www.blindchildrenscenter.org
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Los Angeles CA 90029-3584
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FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT L. ALAN BORING

All young children need to feel the love and warmth of an accessible and welcoming early education. Our commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion has allowed the Blind Children’s Center to provide a loving and warm environment to so many children and families within our community since 1938. Serving on the Board and as President for the BCC is truly a great honor. Many of the children who attend our Center face significant challenges as they navigate this budding new world of theirs. These children, and their families, will discover that at the Blind Children’s Center we celebrate the uniqueness of each student, and we welcome everyone with open arms. This inclusive and nurturing environment has been BCC’s anchor since our inception, and we are so excited about the incredible opportunities to serve more children in the coming months and years through our upcoming renovation and expansion.

While we evolve and grow as an organization, we will continue to embrace children of all abilities as we strive to foster and champion a sense of belonging and inclusivity for all of our students and families. We will continue to serve our children who are blind or visually impaired together with children who are sighted in each classroom.

Our specialists, teachers, Board members, donors, and now, our partners from Los Angeles County Office of Education, are united in our quest to improve the lives of children of all abilities; lighting the way to a brighter future; helping our infants, toddlers, and preschoolers achieve their highest potential. Thank you for joining us!

Gratefully yours,

L. Alan Boring

FROM OUR CEO SARAH ORTH

While the Blind Children’s Center (BCC) has evolved its programs over the last 84 years, we have never lost sight of our founding purpose: to improve the lives of young children who are blind or visually impaired. This commitment, coupled with our inclusive early learning model, has shaped our philosophy and services for decades. This past year, BCC entered into a partnership with Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to ensure that we can continue to serve our unique population and sustain our inclusive early learning programs for years to come. LACOE is our nation’s largest Head Start/Early Head Start grantee and subcontracts to fourteen school districts and nonprofits (delegate agencies) throughout the county to serve nearly 10,000 children and families each year.

BCC is a first for LACOE – not only in terms of a fully inclusive early learning center (more on opposite page), but also the first delegate to receive recognition from the federal Office of Head Start as serving a special population that has limited options for high-quality, early childhood education services – blind and visually impaired children. This designation will ensure that families with children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities, will always have a place to receive free, comprehensive services at the Blind Children’s Center.

What a validation this is for an agency that was founded in 1938 by a group of forward-thinking Delta Gamma alumnae whose commitment to “Service for Sight” is woven throughout BCC’s history, leadership, family of donors, and volunteers. As we embark on a new year, BCC will continue to model inclusion in early learning, ensuring that all children can experience belonging and reach their fullest potential.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Orth

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Inclusive education is when all students are placed in classes by age regardless of disabilities. Knowing that our students who are blind or visually impaired would be entering a sighted world upon their graduation, we began implementing inclusion in the late 1980s, long before it was accepted as educational best practice. We recognized then that offering an inclusive school program to children at such a critical age provided unique opportunities for behavior modeling, socialization, and problem solving.

Countless studies over the ensuing decades have confirmed that students with disabilities have higher achievement and improved skills through inclusive education, and their peers without disabilities benefit, too.*

We know that education involves the whole family, and making parents and caregivers a part of the process is a key aspect of inclusion and our program. Parents of children who are typically developing are sometimes skeptical when they first hear about inclusion, only to find that their child has grown in ways they couldn’t have imagined, most importantly, learning empathy and understanding diversity.

Aside from the technical aspect of what is taught in the classroom and on the playground, inclusion proceeds from a philosophy that children with disabilities are just as competent as their peers. Understanding and accepting our similarities and our differences is the heart and soul of inclusive education, and it’s been the heart and soul of the Blind Children’s Center since 1938.

*Bui, et al., 2010; Dupuis, Barclay, Holms, Platt, Shaha, & Lewis, 2006; Newman, 2006; Alquraini & Gut, 2012
The Blind Children’s Center has been providing an inclusive learning environment since the 1980’s. But how do we provide equal access to curriculum for our students who are blind and visually impaired? Meet the Disabilities Services Team — Brenda Perla and Rosalinda Mendiola! Brenda and Rosalinda work one-on-one with our students and hand-in-hand with their classroom teachers and parents to provide specialized instruction, empowering them with the skills needed to reach their next milestone. The team’s critical role includes transcribing printed text to braille, introducing magnification tools and other key technology, and providing dedicated Orientation & Mobility (O&M) training to teach students how to safely navigate our school and the outside world. Brenda and Rosalinda’s paths to BCC were very different, but they share a deep passion for early childhood education and providing equal opportunities to children with disabilities.

Native Angeleno Brenda Perla grew up with a calling for serving others which led her to obtain a bachelor’s degree in Communicative Disorders from Cal State University Los Angeles (CSULA). Brenda continued to pursue her education at CSULA during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, earning a master’s degree in Special Education with an emphasis on the blind and visually impaired, along with dual credentials as an Orientation & Mobility Specialist and a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Brenda never lost momentum and kept pushing forward through the pandemic while juggling the demands of being a full-time working mother, to remind her daughter of what is possible through hard work and perseverance. She recalls visiting BCC during her training and noting how impressed she was with the program and her hope to join the team one day. As good fortune would have it, Brenda joined us last year as our Disabilities Coordinator bringing her expertise and can-do spirit.
Adaptive Services Specialist Rosalinda Mendiola’s road to the BCC was quite different. Born legally blind due to albinism in Monterrey, Mexico, where there were no resources for the visually impaired community, she and her family traveled to California in search of opportunities. Rosalinda enrolled at Hollywood High School where she faced difficulties due to lack of services yet graduated despite the obstacles. She continued on to Cal State University, Northridge, earning confidence and new skills along with her BA. Her father remains the greatest influence on her teaching style. She credits him for spending countless hours supporting her education and always believing in her. Rosalinda is among our longest serving staff members, joining the team in 1991 when she welcomed six blind students into her classroom. She initially found it challenging but rose to the occasion and soon realized her own experience facing visual impairments helped her relate to her students. Rosalinda’s longstanding commitment to her students is unmatched, and she is incredibly grateful for her impact on the lives of so many successful students.

Brenda and Rosalinda remain inspired by the vibrancy their students bring to campus every day. Rosalinda summed it up best, “We don’t see blindness; we see a different world where everything is normalized and anything is possible.”

The students whose lives they impact each day are the proof. Thank you for lighting the way, Brenda and Rosalinda!
### OUR DONORS

We are so grateful for the many individuals and community partners who funded The Blind Children’s Center during the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

## 2021/2022 Gifts of Distinction

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- Mr. & Mrs. Gary A. Childress
- Dr. & Mrs. Jeff Leitzinger
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We also thank the many donors who gave up to $100 for the children this year.

* Board Member
↓ Delta Gamma

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$50 to $99

$25 to $49

$10 to $24

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Supporting our mission is our highest priority, and we appreciate every gift.
IN MEMORIAM

On September 1, 2022, the Blind Children’s Center lost one of our dearest friends. Carolyn Newberry, who was born in 1938, the same year BCC was founded, served as a classroom volunteer and Board member for almost 30 years. First introduced to BCC by past Board President Sue Shields in the early 1990s, Carolyn long has been among the Center’s most dedicated supporters, especially passionate about the time she spent volunteering in classes through the years.

“She loved working with the students,” her daughter Rebecca remembered. “She knew how important it was to give opportunities to students with disabilities, and she was so glad to be able to help. She would have volunteered at BCC forever.” Carolyn was often seen at events with Norm, her husband of 52 years who passed away in late 2020. A Hollywood set designer, he was recruited by Carolyn to serve as BCC’s volunteer photographer for years, a role which they both relished. Much like Carolyn relished being around children.

Known for her quick wit and generous spirit, Carolyn’s smile lit up any room she was in. She is already deeply missed by staff, students, and fellow Board members. We extend our condolences to her children, Peter and Rebecca, and the entire Newberry family. Please designate gifts in Memory of Carolyn Newberry on the enclosed gift envelope.
The Blind Children’s Center was founded in 1938 by Dr. Lillian Titcomb and other visionary alumnae of the Delta Gamma Fraternity. Established in 1873, this philanthropic group of women adopted “Service for Sight” at its 1936 National Convention, and our original school opened out of a private home two years later as Delta Gamma’s first preschool for children who were blind or visually impaired.

Since our founding, Delta Gamma collegians and alumnae have supported us as volunteers, donors, staff members, board members, and board presidents. Last year alone, Delta Gamma collegian and alumnae groups combined to raise more than $50,000 for the Blind Children’s Center! Each dollar raised goes directly to serve our students and their families. We wouldn’t be here without your love and support.

Thank you for always keeping us anchored!

Visit our Planned Giving website at www.LegacyBCC.org
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