EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

BLIND CHILDREN'S CENTER

LIGHTING THE WAY SINCE 1938

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

FROM OUR CEO

Every year, I am inspired by what becomes possible when children are guided by dedicated teachers, supported by specialized expertise, and surrounded by people who believe in their potential. This past year was no exception. Across our programs, children developed strong relationships with their friends and teachers, engaged more fully in classroom routines, and demonstrated growing curiosity and confidence as learners. For many of the children and families we serve, these moments of growth represent important steps toward greater independence and opportunity.

At BCC, we believe families deserve access to specialized support as early as possible—and that no family should have to navigate a diagnosis or disability alone. That belief led to one of the most exciting developments in the Center's recent history.

I am proud to share that BCC is a founding partner in Children's Hospital Los Angeles' newly launched Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Multidisciplinary Clinic. Created to address a critical gap in services for children with CVI, the leading cause of childhood visual impairment, the clinic brings together medical expertise, educational support, and family guidance to help families better understand and navigate a CVI diagnosis.

As we look ahead, I am energized by the vision that emerged from our new strategic plan. We are exploring new ways to share BCC's expertise through a multimedia resource hub for parents, caregivers, and early educators, while strengthening our advocacy for early intervention and educational opportunities for children who are blind, visually impaired, and have multiple disabilities. These efforts will extend BCC's impact far beyond our campus and into other communities throughout California.

At a time when critical services for children and adults with disabilities face increasing challenges and funding pressures, I remain hopeful. Every day, I see what is possible when families, educators, volunteers, partners, and donors come together in service of something larger than themselves.

Thank you for believing in this mission and helping create a future filled with opportunity, belonging, and possibility.

With gratitude,

Sarah E. Orth
Chief Executive Officer

OUR VISION FOR 2030

EXPANDING OUR IMPACT. A STRONGER FOUNDATION. A BROADER REACH.

BCC's new 2026–2030 Strategic Plan builds on the Center's recent growth and sets a clear direction for the years ahead: deepen our expertise, strengthen our organization, and extend our impact for children who are blind or visually impaired and their families.

MISSION EXCELLENCE

Advance BCC's role as a leader by expanding service capacity and increasing access to specialized services.

- Launch the West Coast's first CVI Multidisciplinary Clinic with Children's Hospital Los Angeles.
- Create a virtual learning hub for families, caregivers, and professionals working with young children who are blind or visually impaired.
- Develop BCC's facilities to maximize enrollment and support broader community impact.
- Continue supporting medical research that improves outcomes for young children with visual impairments.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Build a thriving, mission-driven organization where people flourish and diversified funding supports long-term strength.

- Deepen collaboration among board members, staff, volunteers, parents, and children.
- Invest in staff and board learning, wellness, recruitment, and retention.
- Diversify BCC's financial portfolio and fundraising strategies.

BRAND EXCELLENCE

Become California's most recognized and trusted champion for children with visual impairments.

- Grow statewide awareness of BCC and its expertise.
- Build high-impact partnerships and stronger referral pathways.
- Advocate for early learning and intervention for children who are visually impaired and children with multiple disabilities.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

I am grateful for another exceptional year at Blind Children's Center and proud to share the progress reflected throughout these pages. This has been a year of both accomplishment and preparation—celebrating the strength of BCC today while making thoughtful decisions about the organization we want to be in the years ahead.

We continued to welcome new Board members, strengthening our expertise across areas including CVI, finance, education, and community leadership. After extensive research and discussion, the Board also unanimously approved a socially responsible investment strategy designed to balance sound financial stewardship with our broader responsibilities as a mission-driven organization.

Last October, Board and key staff members gathered at the Center to help shape the strategic objectives that will guide BCC through 2030. The resulting plan is organized around Mission, Operational, and Brand Excellence and reflects both ambition and practicality: expanding specialized services, strengthening key partnerships, investing in our people, extending resources to more families and professionals, and ensuring BCC remains financially strong and sustainable.

We are already moving from strategy to action. Three Board committees are helping guide work in fiscal sustainability, opportunities to extend our physical facilities, and staff management trends and practices. At the same time, we continue to explore ways to broaden BCC's reach and share the expertise developed here with communities throughout Southern California and beyond.

The environment in which nonprofits operate continues to evolve, bringing financial pressures, changing needs, and new opportunities. What gives me confidence is BCC's ability to adapt while remaining grounded in the qualities that have defined this organization for generations: expertise, compassion, responsible stewardship, and an unwavering commitment to children and families.

Thank you for being part of the BCC community. Your support gives us the foundation to move forward with purpose and confidence as we build toward 2030 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Lynne C. Thieme
President, Blind Children's Center
Delta Gamma Foundation Advisory Board

FROM DIAGNOSIS TO DAILY LIFE

Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) is the leading cause of childhood blindness and low vision, yet for many families it can be difficult to understand and even harder to navigate. Unlike eye conditions caused by damage to the eye itself, CVI results from differences or injury in the brain's visual processing areas. A child's eyes may appear healthy while the child still has significant difficulty making sense of what they see.

This year, Blind Children's Center became a partner in Children's Hospital Los Angeles' (CHLA) newly launched CVI Multidisciplinary Clinic—the first clinic of its kind on the West Coast. The partnership brings medical providers, vision specialists, educators, and family support together in one coordinated model so that families receive more than a diagnosis: they receive help understanding what that diagnosis means for learning, mobility, communication, and daily life.

BCC board member and CHLA pediatric neuro-ophthalmologist Dr. Melinda Chang first shared her vision for the clinic with BCC Chief Executive Officer Sarah Orth during a tour of the Center. Dr. Chang recognized the need for a model that could connect medical expertise with the educational and family support children need after leaving the hospital.

"It is the doctor's role to concentrate on the medical diagnosis and treatment, but families need far more than clinical answers," Orth said. "That's where BCC comes in, helping each family navigate their own unique journey."

BCC Vision Services Coordinator Brenda Perla leads the Center's case-management work within the clinic. BCC provides functional vision assessment, educational recommendations, family navigation, parent education, referrals, and follow-up support. The goal is to translate clinical findings into practical strategies that can be used where children actually live and learn—at home, at school, and in the community.

BCC and CHLA staff have also received specialized training from Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy, developer of the CVI Range Assessment and director of the CVI support program at The Children's Home of Pittsburgh. In the clinic's early months, Dr. Roman-Lantzy provided guidance and feedback on functional vision assessments and adaptations for children with CVI.

"Our partnership with Blind Children's Center allows us to extend care beyond the hospital walls," Dr. Chang said. "By working together, we can combine medical expertise with ongoing educational guidance and family support."

That bridge between medicine and everyday life is at the heart of the partnership. For families, it means leaving the clinic with clearer next steps. For educators and medical providers, it means a fuller picture of how a child actually uses vision. And for BCC, it represents an important new way to extend decades of specialized early-intervention expertise to more children and families.

WHAT IS CVI?

CVI is a brain-based visual impairment. It can affect how a child recognizes objects and faces, processes visually complex environments, directs visual attention, or uses vision to guide movement. Because the eyes themselves may appear structurally healthy, CVI can be difficult to detect and is often misunderstood.

The clinic serves children from birth through age 18 who have been diagnosed with—or are suspected of having—CVI.

"Our partnership with Blind Children's Center allows us to expand care beyond the hospital walls."

— Dr. Melinda Chang
Children's Hospital Los Angeles

HOW WE SUPPORT A CHILD WITH CVI

A CVI diagnosis does not tell a teacher exactly what a child sees or how that child learns. That is why BCC begins with the individual child. Functional vision assessment and careful observation help the team understand how the child uses vision in real settings—and what changes may make learning more accessible.

START WITH FUNCTION — Look beyond visual acuity alone. Observe how the child attends to people and objects, responds to visual complexity, uses vision during movement, and participates in familiar routines.

SIMPLIFY THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT — When a space, page, or activity contains too much competing visual information, it may be harder for a child with CVI to identify what matters. Teachers can reduce clutter and present materials more intentionally.

USE MULTISENSORY CUES — BCC has long adapted early-learning materials so children can access information through touch, sound, movement, and vision. Familiar voices, tactile markers, and meaningful objects can support understanding and participation.

ALLOW TIME AND CONSISTENCY — Children may need additional time to locate, look at, and interpret visual information. Predictable routines and consistent presentation can help make activities easier to understand.

POSITION FOR SUCCESS — Teachers consider where and how materials are presented so children can use their strongest visual responses. Strategies are individualized rather than applied as a one-size-fits-all approach.

COACH THE FAMILY — The most useful strategy is one that follows the child beyond a single classroom or clinic visit. BCC helps parents understand assessment findings and use practical strategies at home, while coordinating with educators, therapists, and medical providers.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

60
CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS, AND/OR OTHER DISABILITIES

146
PARENTS & CAREGIVERS SUPPORTED

336
PARENT & FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDED

102
CHILDREN SERVED

TIER 5
QUALITY START LOS ANGELES [5 out of 5]

WHO WE SERVE

BCC continues to pursue an approximately 50/50 inclusive classroom balance so that children with disabilities and typically developing peers learn alongside one another. Most children served live in low-income households; during 2025–2026, 34% experienced homelessness and 38% received public assistance.

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY SERVICES

Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) evaluates early childhood programs on multiple standards. BCC earned a **Tier 5 rating—the highest possible**—affirming the exceptional quality of our early learning programs.

PRIMARY OUTCOME STATEMENT

Children made steady gains across all developmental areas during the 2025–2026 program year.

The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) showed strengths in social-emotional engagement and positive relationships with adults, participation in classroom routines, growing receptive language, curiosity and interest in learning, and the successful use of visual and tactile supports, and structured environments.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

All children without an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) were screened using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2). Thirteen children were referred for further assessment, helping connect families to additional evaluation and services as early as possible.

OUR YEAR IN PICTURES

2025/2026 GIFTS OF DISTINCTION

We are deeply grateful to the individuals and community partners whose generosity sustained Blind Children's Center during the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

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$750,000+

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$75,000 - $100,000

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We also thank the many donors who gave up to $100 for the children this year.

*Delta Gamma Alumnae

OUR FINANCIALS – 2025-2026

REVENUE

Government Grants*	$2,967,807	57%
Foundations & Corporations	$892,732	17%
Civic & Delta Gamma Groups	$41,777	1%
Individual Donors	$250,615	5%
Bequests	$1,054,249	20%
TOTAL REVENUE	**$5,207,180**	100%

EXPENSES

Program	$3,584,622	79%
General & Administrative	$446,809	10%
Facility	$104,504	2%
Fund Development	$411,950	9%
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$4,547,885**	100%

- **79** cents of every expense dollar supported programs.
- Government grants provided 57% of annual revenue; private and community support remained essential to the balance of BCC's work.
- Bequests provided $1.05 million demonstrating the extraordinary long-term impact of legacy giving.

*Blind Children's Center is funded in part by the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, and California Department of Education.

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IN MEMORIAM

These gifts were made to the Center as remembrances of:

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Every effort has been made to accurately list all contributions received from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. If an error has been made, please accept our apologies, and notify Scott Kassel at scott@blindchildrenscenter.org or call us at 323.664.2153

IN MEMORIAM

This year, the Blind Children's Center community said goodbye to cherished friends whose generosity, leadership, and belief in our mission helped shape the Center across many years. We remember them with gratitude and affection, and we carry their legacy forward in the lives of the children and families they helped support.:

BOB ARCHER

The Blind Children's Center community remembers Robert "Bob" Ellsworth Archer, beloved husband of Georgine Archer, a Delta Gamma whose devoted support of BCC has spanned more than 50 years. Bob and Georgine shared 66

years of marriage and raised three children. A distinguished teacher, coach, and scholar who played basketball for John Wooden at UCLA, Bob inspired generations through his intellect, integrity, kindness, and humor. He died July 23, 2026, at age 88, leaving a legacy of mentorship and service.

GARY & JACKIE CHILDRESS

Longtime BCC supporters Jackie and Gary Childress shared a remarkable 64-year marriage and a life defined by partnership, generosity, and service. The couple, who met while attending Stanford University, passed away within months of one another this year.

As a devoted Delta Gamma, Jackie embraced the Fraternity's Service for Sight mission and remained deeply committed to BCC. Gary, a successful businessman and philanthropist, shared that commitment wholeheartedly. Together, Jackie and Gary provided steadfast support that helped generations of children who are blind or visually impaired thrive. They were proud members of the Tom Sullivan Legacy Society, which recognizes those who include Blind Children's Center in their estate plans. We remember them with profound gratitude for their friendship, compassion, and enduring legacy.

INGE JONES

For generations, *Les Marraines* has been part of the philanthropic heart of Blind Children's Center, and Inge Elise Jones was among the dedicated women who carried that tradition forward. Born in Denmark, Inge moved to Los Angeles with her husband, Tom, in the 1960s and built a home in Malibu, where she welcomed generations of friends and family with traditional Danish meals and her characteristic warmth. She faced breast cancer with remarkable resilience for many years and, after Tom's death in 1996, remained deeply connected to her community. Even after losing her longtime Malibu home in the January 2025 fires, Inge continued to bring people together from her new home. Inge was a longtime member of the Tom Sullivan Legacy Society, recognizing those who include Blind Children's Center in their estate plans. We are grateful for Inge's years of friendship and service. Her generosity and commitment will be remembered with great affection.

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BLIND CHILDREN'S CENTER
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OUR MISSION

To prepare infants, toddlers, and preschoolers of all abilities to thrive through inclusive, family-focused early childhood education, with a specialized focus on children who are blind or visually impaired.

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