

Child's Hope for Sight

The Virginia Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired



Board of Directors

Dawn Peifer, 804.938.1624
President & Founder
dpeifer@childshopeforsight.com

Kristin Puryear,
804.364.7156
Vice President
kpuryear@childshopeforsight.com

Rob Puryear,
804.364.7156
Treasurer
rpuryear@childshopeforsight.com

Jennifer Lange,
Secretary
jlange@childshopeforsight.com

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Virginia Department of Blind
and Visually Impaired
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CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.childshopeforsight.com

Many, Many thanks go to
Bill Linyear
for developing & editing our website!

Bill@j-wmotorsports.com
804.743.4960

What is Child's Hope for Sight?

"Child's Hope for Sight seeks to provide parents the information needed to take advantage of all available tools and resources, thereby enabling our children to "see" the world as fully as possible." – Rob Puryear, Parent

Child's Hope for Sight (CHS) is a non-profit organization of parents, professionals, agencies and others with the common objective of providing support and service to the parents of children with visual impairments in the state of Virginia.

Our mission is to provide services that empower families, professionals, and the community to meet the needs of families and their children of all ages and ranges of visual loss including those with multiple disabilities.

We are the Virginia chapter of the National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired, www.NAPVI.org or call 1.800.562.6265

From My Heart...

As the mother of child who is blind, I know that connecting with other parents and locating information is very important.

In our last issue, I mentioned the devastation and isolation that I felt when I first learned that my daughter was blind (at five months old).

At just 3 years old, my daughter has taken me places I would have never gone, and taught me so much about life and love. She is a blessing in every way possible.

Connecting with other parents of children with visual impairments has helped me learn numerous ways to help teach my daughter, and exposed me to a variety of options and views to reflect upon.

In this issue, I would like to share information about some resources and conferences available to you. I hope you find this information helpful!

- Dawn Peifer, President & Founder

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Idea 2004

John H. Hager, assistant secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education, is pleased to announce a public meeting to seek input and suggestions for developing regulations based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

When: February 24, 2005
Time: 1-5 p.m.
Where: Academy for Educational Development
Academy Hall
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Individuals may register to comment at the door on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registered individuals have 2-5 minutes to comment. Written comments may be submitted electronically to comments@ed.gov (must be sent by 2/28/05).

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities **Seeking Candidates to Fill Upcoming Board Vacancies**

VBPD is the Commonwealth's developmental disabilities planning council, funded under the federal developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. "The purpose of this board is to engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change activities that contribute to a coordinated consumer and family centered, consumer and family directed comprehensive system of services, individualized supports and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life."

The Board is currently seeking individuals interested in committing time and energy towards the accomplishment of this mission. If you are interested send your nomination form along with your resume and a letter of interest by March 1, 2005 to :

Sandra Smalls
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
202 North 9th Street, 9th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
Email: Sandra.Smalls@vbpd.virginia.gov
For more information: www.vaboard.org/aboutvbpd.htm

Voice: 804.786.9368
Fax: 804.786.1118

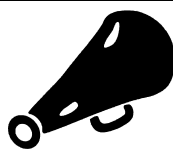
WE would like to **GRATEFULLY**
THANK and RECOGNIZE the
following individuals and companies:

\$51 - \$500 Donors:

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J-W Motorsports
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Richmond Host Lion's Club
Swim-N-Pools
Together We Can

Up to \$50 Donors:

Pam Agresti
Lorna Boyle
Barbara Crawford
Stuart & Carolyn Drudge
K.B. Eastman
Tonora Garbutt
Carolyn Peifer
Barbara Presley
Barbara Wilson



CALLING ALL FAMILIES!

Are you interested in having meetings and/or events in your area of the state? We are looking for representatives for the following areas:

Fairfax Region Bristol Region Roanoke Region
Staunton Region Norfolk Region

If you are interested in serving as a local representative, please contact:

Dawn Peifer, 804.938.1624
dpeifer@childshopeforsight.com



Orientation and Mobility Awareness Suggestions

by Jean Schipke

Teacher for the Visually Impaired
Orientation and Mobility Specialist

Orientation and Mobility Awareness has two parts:

- 1.) *orientation* is knowing where you are in space.
- 2.) *mobility* is knowing how to get from here to there with comfort and safety.

When working with young children, the first key is to get them to reach out and show an interest in the environment, whether that be people or things. Relying on the other senses means to reach out and interact. Auditory, tactile, olfactory, and taste stimuli can encourage a pleasurable experience or a frightening one. Children need to be reassured that they are not alone in the interaction. Anyone can be the teacher leading them in the right direction of experiencing life. Be creative.

Another area to enhance is proprioception and kinesthetic awareness. That is, knowing what your body can do and is doing, and how to get it to do it again. Body awareness and concept development can be taught with playing games such as "Simon Says", "Red Light/Green Light", or doing tumbling or tickling activities - these seem to be some of the Dads' favorites. When teaching a new concept such as "round", remember to not only use words to describe it, but use as many different objects showing that trait. Also, use movement to show the shape, such as, turn around, look around, roll around, and walk around a circular table, etc. The

activity can go on for a long time. Before you know it, comparisons will occur, and then the concept of same and different will begin to become understood.

Interesting toys that teach and use a multisensory approach are helpful, however, using things found in the home can assist with teaching as well. Often children are asked to do something with an object, such as a spoon, but never get the opportunity to explore and play with that object. Having a toy box filled with real life objects can help with learning. How many times do children go to the kitchen and want to explore with Mom or Dad? Let them shadow you and learn at the same time.

In regards to moving in the environment with ease and safety in open spaces, use a "bumper technique". Have the child hold arms out in front of her, and then bend the elbows; then hold onto their wrists. This gives protection just like a car bumper, and will take a bump better than a nose, chin or forehead.

Simple precane devices can be made or purchased. These will also protect children from those bumps in life and can be a group project. Use PVC piping to build a rectangle that can be pushed on the ground and give warning to obstacles or changes in the surfaces and texture. Your child will feel the vibration through the piping. You may also use the piping to build a T or I shaped device to push on the floor. Also, a child's shopping cart or hula hoop work well, as a beginning.

Use these suggestions, and find an orientation and mobility instructor or teacher for the visually impaired to help with these wonderful experiences. You may contact your local Virginia Department of the Blind and Visually Impaired at 1.800.622.2155 to find a teacher or instructor near you. *Most importantly, have fun with your child moving through all the experiences of life.*

RESOURCES

The Hadley School for the Blind

Offers tuition-free distance education for the blind, visually impaired, and their families. *Check out the Family Education Program!*

700 Elm Street

Winnetka, IL 60093-2554

1.800.323.4238 or www.hadley-school.org

Virginia Department for Blind & Vision Impaired

397 Azalea Ave.

www.dbvi.org

Richmond, VA 23227

1.800.622.2155 (to locate an office in your region)

Virginia Rehab Center for Blind & Vision Impaired

401 Azalea Ave.

1.800.323.4238

Richmond, VA 23227

www.vrcbvi.org

Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia (Free screening)

Contact them if you have a child age birth-3years old and you have concerns about possible developmental delays.

Contact: 1.800.234.1448 for an office near you.

Parent to Parent of Virginia

Parents can be matched with other parents in the state who have children with similar disabilities for support, information, & resources. Contact 1.804.795.1481 or www.ptpofva.com

PEATC

Provides support, education, and training to families, schools, and other professionals committed to helping children with disabilities. www.peatc.org

VIRGINIA VOICE

Virginia Voice is a non-profit radio reading service for those who cannot see and/or turn pages. Special radios are provided on loan, at no charge, to those whose disabilities prevent them from reading to themselves. More than 130 publications are "read" each week, including the *Richmond-Times Dispatch* and several other newspapers. Contact: 804.266.2477 or go to www.virginiavoice.org



Items of Interest...



Virginia Youth Leadership Forum Seeks Candidates

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) is searching for candidates to attend the 2005 Virginia Youth Leadership Forum in Newport News.

When: July 11-15, 2005
Where: Christopher Newport University

Twenty-five high school students from across Virginia will be selected to participate in this leadership development program. Rising juniors or seniors with disabilities who are leaders in their school, community, faith, or other environment are encouraged to apply by ***February 25, 2005***.

There is no charge to delegates chosen to participate in this program and reasonable accommodations needed for full participation provided by the VBPD.

To obtain an application, or for more information, contact Jennifer Peers or Teri Morgan, 1.800.846.4464 email inquiries to: jennifer.peers@vbpd.virginia.gov

Recruitment for PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING Class of 2006

This course is offered through the Virginia Board of People with Disabilities. It is for people with developmental disabilities or parents of young children with developmental disabilities.

Participants will attend: advocacy training, resource development, and skill building workshops provided by state and national level speakers, presenters and specialist in a variety of fields.

For more information please go to www.vaboard.org, or call 1.800.846.4464 and ask for John Richmond or Teri Barker.

TRAC Creative Music & Jazz Camp

This camp is a summer residential program, August 4-14, 2005 in New Orleans. It was created for blind and visually impaired students ages 13-19 with at least two

years of musical experience. Scholarships are available. For more information: www.unotracs.org/jazzcamp.htm or call 504.280.5700.

Living Well with Macular Degeneration

The Hadley School for the Blind is offering a tuition-free, distance education course for individuals diagnosed with Macular Degeneration, their loved ones, and professionals. Please call 1.800.526.9909.

Piano Lessons for the Blind and Visually Impaired

"My own father has been diagnosed with RP since I was born (he is blind). After learning how to teach young children the piano the last 10 years (using the Suzuki Method), teaching the blind to play piano has been on my heart constantly. I would like to let parents know that I want to bring this talent-ability into the lives of your family who cannot see or learn music in the traditional way. Music is such a light in any person's life, why not share it?" – Heather Strange

Heather Strange, Miss Strange's Piano Studio
7027 Three Chopt Road, Suite 201A
Richmond, VA 23228
804.405.6346 or email heatherstrange@comcast.net

Richmond Area DBVI Mobility Club is sponsoring an afternoon with Eric Weihenmeyer

What: Eric Weihenmeyer, the 1st blind man to summit Mount Everest.
For: Richmond Area HS Seniors with a visual impairment who receive services through the Virginia Department of the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)

When: Thursday, February 24, 2005
Where: Virginia Crossings
Time: 2 p.m.
Limited to 25.

For More Information, please contact:
Sam Hines or Susan Cobb at 1.800.622.2155,
sam.hines@dbvi.virginia.gov or
susancobb@dbvi.virginia.gov

We need YOUR help!



Please send us your suggestions to include in the newsletter:

- Awards your student has received
- A trip that was particularly meaningful to your child
- Favorite Toys
- Ideas for Topics
- A particularly creative solution to a problem that you faced
- Toys or equipment that your child has outgrown, and needs a new home. "Advertise" it here!

You don't have to write the article – we can come up with the words if you have the ideas! Contact: Kristin Puryear, 804.364.7156
kpuryear@childshopeforsight.com

UPCOMING CONFERENCES – Mark Your Calendar!

MARCH, 2005

- 3rd-5th
4th Annual Autism Conference, Richmond, VA
www.autismva.org For more information contact Commonwealth Autism Service at 804.355.0300
- 7th – 8th
3rd Annual Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia Part C Conference: The New IDEA
Where: Hotel Roanoke – Roanoke, VA
Contact: Cori Hill, 540.943.6776 or corihill@ntelos.net
- 13th,14th,15th
Virginia Annual State Technology Conference
Norfolk, VA www.vste.org/conference or contact Daniel Arkin at 804.320.3424
- 14th, 15th, 16th
Virginia Transition Forum 2005, Williamsburg, VA
If you are a family member with a young adult who will transition from high school into the adult community, this is a MUST ATTEND event. For more information contact:
Tanya Ridpath, 1.540.831.5800 or email: conf-serv@radford.edu
- 19th-20th
25th Annual Rainbow Olympic Games, Richmond, VA
www.rainbowolympicgames.com, 804.559.5782
The first day will be held at the Arthur Ashe Center, and the second day will be held at a local YMCA.
- 19th
Annual Easter Egg Hunt
for children who are blind or visually impaired
Where: Meadowood Church of God
325 Azalea, Ave., Richmond, VA
Time: Noon (Rain or Shine)
Contact: Linda Jackson, 434.589.3998

APRIL, 2005

- 13th – 15th
Virginia Department of Blind and Vision Impaired State Vision Workshop, Roanoke, VA
Where: Clarion Hotel (just off I-581 near the airport)
Cost and Time: To Be Announced.
We suggest you contact the Education Coordinator at your local office of the Virginia Department of Blind and Vision Impaired for more information.

AUGUST, 2005

- 12TH-14TH
NAPVI National Family Conference: Families Connecting with Families
Louisville, KY
Where: Galt House Hotel
Topics: Braille, Literacy, Social Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Technology, Advocacy & much more! For more information go to www.napvi.org or call 1.800.562.6265



PO Box 605
Chesterfield, VA 23832

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Child's Hope for Sight Join Today!

If you would like to join CHS, please complete this form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: (____) _____ email: _____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

My child(ren)'s Eye Condition: _____

Birthdate(s) of my visually impaired child(ren): _____

If this is a professional membership, name of the organization you represent: _____

Type of Annual CHS Membership:

____ Family (\$10 annually)

____ Professional (\$20 annually)

Joint membership of CHS and NAPVI (receive CHS and NAPVI newsletters, etc.)

____ Parent/Guardian is \$35 / year
(\$10 for CHS and \$25 for NAPVI)

____ Professional \$60 / year
(\$20 for CHS and \$40 for NAPVI)

Please make checks payable to: Child's Hope for Sight.

Please mail this form and check to: CHS, Attn: Membership
PO BOX 605
Chesterfield, VA 23823