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www.childshopeforsight.com

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Lynchburg
Advisor

*Did you know...
Currently in Virginia there
are over 1900 blind or
visually impaired children,
and those numbers are
rapidly growing.*

What is Child's Hope for Sight?

Child's Hope for Sight (CHS) is a non-profit organization of parents, professionals, agencies, and other persons 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 of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments**, www.NAPVI.org.

What is NAPVI?

NAPVI has been in existence for 25 years, and is the only national, non-profit organization that strives to serve families of children of all ages and ranges of visual loss.

By affiliating with NAPVI, CHS can receive support and information regarding:

- National and local resources
- Conferences at national and local levels
- Funding
- Technical assistance and training re: Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), support, networking, and leadership skills
- Legislative information at the federal and state levels

President's Message, October 2004

From My Heart...

Hello Everyone and Welcome! This is the first issue of the first newsletter of Child's Hope for Sight so I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself.

I am the mother of a beautiful 3 year old girl, Kimberly, who is blind due to retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Kimmie was born three months premature, weighing 1lb., 14oz., about the size of a Beanie Baby, and could fit into the palm of your hand. As with most micro-preemies, she had many critical medical issues to overcome during her 2 month stay in the NICU.

At three months old, my daughter was first diagnosed with ROP. ROP affects nearly all low birth weight infants and can lead to blindness. Kimmie underwent three surgeries to try to stop the progression of the disease. At five months old, the physicians said there was nothing more they could do and that she would be blind.

This was the 1st time I learned of the full severity of what ROP could do. Stunned I asked the doctors, "What do I do now, where do I go, who can help me?" They gave me the names of a few places, however in my shock; I did not write them down and was not given any further direction. I went home a complete disaster and devastated.

Within a few months, I purchased a used computer, and desperately started to search the internet for information. The most valuable thing that I discovered was an online support group for parents of blind and visually impaired children. I cannot even describe the overwhelming relief that I felt to finally connect with other parents that had children with visual impairments. It was a relief to share stories, ideas, and to learn that some of my daughter's issues and delays were typical for blind children.

I wanted to create that kind of support locally where families could physically come together and where the children could meet and play together.

Over a year ago I started to form CHS and it has since grown in size and scope. We have joined with other families and professionals in Virginia and have now become an affiliate of the National Association of Parents of Visually Impaired Children (NAPVI).

My vision as Kimmie's mother and founder of CHS is to create a network of resources where individuals can come together for fun activities, support and information regarding the unique needs of children with visual impairments. As well as raise awareness and to help educate individuals and community about visual impairments.

Please join me in this goal!

- Dawn Peifer, President & Founder



Dawn Peifer, John, Kimmie, and Jacob Drudge
(Pictured from left to right)

Biographies of Founding Board Members

Dawn Peifer – Dawn is the mother of a beautiful 3 year old, Kimmie who is blind due to ROP. With the support and assistance of her family and friends, Dawn founded CHS several years ago (please refer to p. 2 "message from the president"). Dawn works full time in the health care field. Dawn, her husband John, and daughter, Kimmie, and Jacob reside in the Richmond area.

Kristin and Rob Puryear – Rob and Kristin are parents to Jessi (7 y.o.) and Lydia (5 y.o.), two terrific girls. Jessi was born at 26 weeks, and has low vision due to ROP. Kristin has a background in social work and is currently a stay at home mother. Rob works in Human Resources for a financial institution.

Kristin and Rob joined Dawn in her efforts to create a statewide organization because they feel strongly that more education, information, and support are needed for families of children with visual impairments. Kristin, Rob and their family reside in the Richmond area.

Jennifer Lange – Jennifer received a liberal arts degree from Emory University. She pursued a career in Development, and worked for several non-profit organizations. Five years ago, following a family member's diagnosis of macular degeneration, Jennifer became a sales distributor for a manufacturer of assistive technology/video magnifiers.

Jennifer joined CHS because through her work she discovered that many families are overwhelmed and unaware of the resources available to them. Jennifer hopes that CHS will help to meet these needs. Jennifer, her husband Adam, and two children reside in the Richmond area.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER, 2004

- 11/6/04 The American Council of the Blind of Maryland (ACBM) and the NAPVI are hosting a forum which includes a **panel reporting on the status of special education programs for visually impaired children & a parent training session on building collaborations around your child.**
Where: The Tremont Hotels & Suites
222 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, MD
Time: 10:45-3:30p.m.
To register: Send name, address, phone, email, and child's name and age to:
Jean Vogelman at JAVogelman@obs.org or call at 215.877.0313
- 11/12/04 **Wrightslaw Special Education Law**
(presented by Tidewater ASA & Commonwealth Autism Service)
Where: Virginia Beach Higher Education Center
1881 University Drive, VA Beach VA
Cost: \$125
Register: Contact Commonwealth Autism Service at 1.800.649.8481
- 11/20/04 **Saturday Seminars at VRCBVI** for adults with visual impairments and their technology service providers. Various technology related topics. For more info. please contact: Carol Kroger at 804.371.3326 or email kogercd@dvbi.state.va.us

MARCH, 2005

- **Rainbow Olympic Games.** It is a 2 day sporting event held annually in Richmond, VA for children and adolescents ages 6-21 with medically diagnosed visual and/or physical disabilities. See www.rainbowgames.com or call 804.559.5782 for more information.
- **Annual Easter Egg Hunt** for Blind or Visually Impaired Children
Where: Meadowood Church of God
325 Azalea, Ave., Richmond, VA
Time: Noon (Rain or Shine)
Contact: Linda Jackson, 434.589.3998

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the Annual NAPVI conference, August 12-14, 2005
(go to www.napvi.org for more information)

RESOURCES

The Hadley School for the Blind

Offers tuition-free distance education to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for blind people and their families. *Check out the Family Education Programs*

Contact:

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.

Richmond, VA 23227

1.800.622.2155 (to contact an office in your region)

www.dbvi.org

Virginia Rehab Center for Blind & Vision Impaired

401 Azalea Ave.

Richmond, VA 23227

1.800.323.4238 or www.vrcbvi.org

Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia

Contact them if you have a child age birth-3years old and you have concerns about possible developmental delays. You may qualify for a free developmental evaluation of your child.

Contact: 1.800.234.1448 for an office near you

www.infantva.org

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

Places to get free Braille

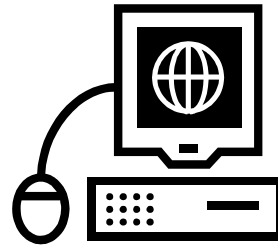
- *The American Action Fund*, 1800 Johnson St., Baltimore, MD 21230; 410.659.9314 ext. 361; www.actionfund.org
- *The Braille Institute*, 741 North Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90029; www.brailleinstitute.org
- *HotBraille* At no cost, type your message into a web page at www.hotbraille.com. The site translates your words to Braille, and then mails your letter to the addressee within a few days. A great place for persons who don't know Braille to write to friends who read Braille.
- *The Rose Project*, Seedlings Braille Books for Children and UPS. Encyclopedia articles in Braille for students in grades 1-12 delivered in 5 days. Contact: Seedlings, 1.800.777.8552; www.seedlings.org

Please Join Us for CHS Board Meetings

Dates: 10/28, 1/27/05,
4/28/05,
Future dates TBD

Where: Weinstein JCC
5403 Monument Ave
Richmond, VA 23226
Senior Lounge

Phone: 804.288.6091



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



We need your help to write the newsletter!

Please send us the following to include in the newsletter:

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

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

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 regions of Virginia:

- Bristol Region
- Fairfax Region
- Roanoke Region
- Staunton Region

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

Dawn Peifer, 804.938.1624 or

dpeifer@childshopeforsight.com

KEEP UP TO DATE on public awareness and advocacy activities...).

Join **Choices for Children** today. CFC is a field-initiated campaign consisting of individuals and organization representing adult consumers, parents, and students with visual impairments, and professionals who teach and assist them.

Go to www.afb.org/idea.asp to find the membership form for Choices for Children or contact CFC chair, Mary Ann Siller from AFT at siller@afb.net.

To obtain biweekly electronic legislative newsletter go to www.afb.org/info_documents.asp?

CHS
PO Box 605
Chesterfield, VA 23832

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Child's Hope for Sight Join Today!

If you would like to join CHS and be on our membership, 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 Membership:

____ Family (\$10 annually) ____ Professional (\$20 annually)

____ **Joint membership-CHS and 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 23832