



Blind Children's Learning Center
18542-B Vanderlip Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92705
714.573.888
www.blindkids.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Carolyn Baker
714.573.8888 x 2102
carolyn.baker@blindkids.org

One Mother's Dream Comes True and Changes the Lives of Hundreds of Blind Children

10th Annual Destination→ Independence 5K Walk Raises Funds for Blind Children's Learning Center



Santa Ana, Calif. (May 12, 2014) – Jaimie Haver dreamed of a day when hundreds of families would gather at her son Jack's school - Blind Children's Learning Center - to celebrate the victorious accomplishments of the Center's students with visual impairments. On Saturday, May 17 this strong, determined mother will be living her dream at the 10th Annual Destination→ Independence 5K Walk presented by the Blatchford Group, Letner Roofing and LISI to benefit Blind Children's Learning Center.

Haver launched the Center's first 5K Walk in 2004 uniting mothers of children with visual impairments to be the driving force for this annual event which cumulatively has raised more than \$700,000 in support of the Center's mission to prepare children with visual impairments for a life of independence.

The Ruff Ryders motorcycle club is returning to kick-off the walk at the Center's Santa Ana, Calif. site. Motorcyclist, Gentry Forde's son Braylen was born blind with multiple disabilities. He unites his fellow riders to join him roaring their engines to announce the start of the walk. More than 400 walkers will move through neighboring streets returning to the campus for a family carnival.

Haver's son Jack was born prematurely and developed Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), a potentially blinding eye disease that is always a risk for premature babies. He also faced multiple other health issues. Haver and her husband Darren were grateful the doctors kept him alive and thrilled when they were able to bring him home from the hospital, but they were not prepared for the challenges they would face.

-more-

At the age of two Jack couldn't eat solid foods. He struggled with communication and could only say one word. Socially he was terrified of other children. He began receiving services from Blind Children's Learning Center and within three weeks after he entered the program he ate his first solid food – a banana. He said "mama" for the first time and he continued to grow and thrive.

Today, Jack is a confident, energetic 14- year- old who loves adventure. He's experienced skiing, rock climbing, tandem biking and has even gone zip lining.

"Doctors kept our son Jack alive but the Center gave him a life. They gave us hope. We can never repay them for what they have done for our family, but we are going to try to make a difference for other children with visual impairments and their families," said Haver.

Details and registration information for the 2014 Destination →Independence 5K Walk are available online at www.blindkids.org. Walk day registration begins on Saturday, May 17 at 7:30 a.m. at Blind Children's Learning Center located at 18542-B Vanderlip Ave., Santa Ana, Calif. A musical performance by the Center's students will be at 8:30 a.m. and the Walk will begin at 9 a.m. For more information call 714.573.8888.

###

About Blind Children's Learning Center

Blind Children's Learning Center, a non-profit agency, provides services for children with visual impairments. Founded in 1962 by six adults who were blind, the organization was originally called "Services for the Blind Orange County." The founders quickly discovered the key to helping a person with visual impairments was to start working with them at a very early age. Today the agency serves children and their families through a Global Infant Development Program, Bright Visions Early Childhood Center (onsite preschool) and Outreach Services with the mission to prepare children with visual impairments for a life of independence through early intervention, education and parent support. For more information please visit www.blindkids.org