

Insights

Newsletter for Blind Children's Learning Center

Kendall Bradley Prepares for a New Adventure

Kendall Bradley is in her senior year at Costa Mesa High School participating in choir and studying her favorite subject English. She's looking forward to graduation in June so she can begin a new adventure at college.

Like any young adult, she's excited about living independently from her family for the first time in her life. However, unlike anyone else in her graduating class, Kendall is blind. She is a determined young lady with a desire to learn, so her lack of sight will not deter her from making her dreams become a reality.

Born premature and due to Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), Kendall lost her sight. At six months old, she and her parents began receiving in-home services from Blind Children's Learning Center. It wasn't long before she transitioned into the Center's on-site preschool (now known as Bright Visions Early Childhood Center). She received a strong educational foundation that gave her the ability and skills at the age of five to successfully mainstream into regular classes at her local public school.

Kendall continued her involvement at the Center through the Youth Outreach Program. She participated in summer camp and the mentor programs. She grew from having a mentor to becoming one to an eight-year-old girl.

Kendall is a strong advocate for Blind Children's Learning Center. She'll tell you the Center is where she learned how to make friends.

"The staff understands how to reach children with visual impairments. They treated me like an actual person, not just a student. They encouraged me to interact with my peers. Now

socialization is important to me and I look for opportunities to make friends," said Kendall.

Kendall loves children and her ambition is to become a teacher of the visually impaired (VI Teacher). She has her course planned to achieve this goal. First she's off to Hatlen Center for the Blind in San Pablo, California. She'll complete their independent living program while doing her general education classes at Berkeley City College. Then she'll transfer to San Francisco State University to study for her VI Teaching credentials.

Tammy Murphy is a Para Educator for the Visually Impaired at Blind Children's Learning Center who works with Kendall at Costa Mesa High School. "Kendall is an amazing young lady! She has had to overcome so many obstacles to get where she is today. She has been an inspiration to me and will be to many others in her new adventure of life," said Tammy.

Suzanne van der Reest is Kendall's aide and has worked with her since she

was five years old. "I'm so proud of Kendall. I've watched her grow into the determined and independent young lady she is today. I'm confident she will accomplish her goal to become a teacher and will change the lives of hundreds of children," said Suzanne.



Tammy Murphy, Suzanne van der Reest and Kendall Bradley

Youth Services - Inspires Independence

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, the Youth Services room on the Center campus is abuzz with activity. It's a fun place to meet and make new friends. Targeted for students with visual impairments ages 12 to 20 years old, the program provides positive and practical experiences while building a young person's self-esteem and independence.



Schedule:

Mentoring - Tuesdays and Thursdays
Daily Living Skills - Wednesdays
Hours: 3:00 PM - 5:15 PM

For more information, contact:

Rosario Sanchez
Youth Services Coordinator
714.573.8888 x 4151
rosario.sanchez@blindkids.org

In Memory of Barbara Riffel



Tricia Houlihan's (Blind Children's Learning Center Deaf-Blind Intervener) mother, Barbara Riffel, supported her work at the Center. She went beyond just supporting Tricia and for more than 19 years, she was a champion for our children, families and staff. She generously shared her professional talents to write procedure manuals and worked to improve the efficiency of our Center. In addition, she was an advocate for our children serving as our liaison at Trinity United Presbyterian Church where she helped secure funds and volunteers for our Center. In 2013, she was honored at the Tustin Community Foundation Community Volunteer Luncheon as one of the Superheroes of Tustin.

Board member, Peggy Blaising, has fond memories as Barbara's personal friend

"We have been blessed these many years by Barbara's expertise in management skills. She has been a volunteer extraordinaire. We will miss her." – Peggy Blaising.

Winter Highlights



Alcoa Inc. employees volunteer to beautify our campus on their corporate workday. Contact Peggy Jensen at 714.573.8888 x 4159 or peggy.jensen@blindkids.org to schedule your corporate workday.



The Turkish American Ladies League (TALL) hosted a holiday party with international, Grammy List Nominee, Demetra George to perform for and with our children.



Disney VoluntEARS hosted a holiday luncheon for our children and brought a special guest!



Alcon employee volunteers believe ice cream is a must for the holidays. They hosted an ice cream party and surprised all the children with gifts. Steve Ambrose is in deep conversation with Jaiden about his favorite ice cream flavor.



**INDEPENDENCE
STARTS ONE STEP
AT A TIME.**

**10th ANNUAL
DESTINATION
INDEPENDENCE
5K WALK**



SATURDAY May 17th, 2014

**For More Information
Visit: www.blindkids.org**

Independence starts one step at a time.

We need you!

Join us and WALK for our kids.

Location: Blind Children's Learning Center Campus

Registration Time: 7:30 A.M.

Walk Kick-Off: 8:30 A.M.

Join Destination → Independence now:

1. Become a Walk Sponsor - contact Carolyn Baker at 714.573.8888 x 2102 or email carolyn.baker@blindkids.org.

2. Register as an Individual, Team or Virtual Walker. Learn more at www.blindkids.org.

Registration Fee: Adult (ages 22 and older) \$20

Youth (ages 5 - 21) \$15

Children (4 and under) FREE

From the Chairperson



Helen Keller once said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart." A unique aspect of Blind Children's Learning Center that always makes me feel proud to be associated with this organization is their philosophy of an inclusive educational environment. Children with sight and with visual impairments learn together in all Bright Visions Early Childhood

Center classrooms (our onsite preschool) with the guiding principles of:

- Encouraging active exploration and independence
- Fostering positive self-esteem
- Recognizing the individual needs of each child

This has been a very successful practice and our students learn to "feel with their hearts." Through the years, we've received positive feedback from many parents. The following is an example.

"Every day my children were surrounded by children who had unique needs. They were all just friends at the same school. I feel they learned that everyone has challenges in life, but that doesn't change who we are as a person. Sometimes we just have to adapt the way things are done," - Mary Porcella, mother of former sighted students at the Center.

If you would like to learn more about Bright Visions Early Childhood Center, I encourage you to contact Rebecca Harrison at 714.573.8888 x 4122 or view the website www.brightvisions.org. Better yet, come for a tour of our Center and see for yourself our students, our professional and caring staff and the wonder that is Blind Children's Learning Center.

Sincerely,
Jeri Konopisos



At Bright Visions Early Childhood Center, children with sight and with visual impairments learn together. Elizabeth and Audrey are preparing for an earthquake drill.

Our deepest appreciation to the following foundations, companies, organizations and individuals who share a greater vision, a finer spirit of hope and have greatly enriched the lives of our children and their families.

Gifts from July through December 2013



18542-B Vanderlip Avenue
Santa Ana CA 92705
714.573.8888
www.blindkids.org

  Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

\$50,000+
Children and Families Comission of Orange County
Robert and Nadine Hall

\$25,000 - \$49,999
The Bruce Ford Bundy and Anne Smith Bundy Foundation
Lorna P Thomas Trust

\$10,000 - \$24,999
Smoky and Kimberly Bayless
Carl E. Wynn Foundation
Lon V. Smith Foundation
McBeth Foundation
QBE First
Jerry Rapport
Wallace Air Cargo Group
Wayne and Jo Ann Moore Charitable Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999
Abbott Medical Optics Inc.
Budget Blinds
Donald L. Schoellerman Foundation
Josephine Herbert Gleis Foundation
Danny Letner
Microsoft Store South Coast Plaza
Mitsubishi Electric United States
MK Electric, Inc.
Tony Montapert and Marion Knott
Ruth Moriarty
Opus Community Foundation
Richard and Elizabeth Steele Fund
John Schmid
State Street IMS
Dr. Donald Studdt
Dr. Frank and Jeanette Villalobos

\$2,500 - \$4,999
Anonymous
Amigos de los Niños
Anaheim Lions Club
Ed and Laura Blatchford
Dr. Herbert and Kathleen Buehler
Cecile Stephens Foundation
Corry & Buehler Physical Therapy, Inc.

John and Sandra Daniels
Desert Community Foundation
Jeff and Mary Hipshman
Mike and Danielle King
Ted and Jeri Konopisos
Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Orange County Society of Ophthalmology
Loren Pannier
Thin Film Devices
Trinity United Presbyterian Church
U.S. Bank
Simon and Judy Zeller

\$1,000 - \$2,499
Anonymous
Newport-South Coast Delta Gamma Alumnae
Raymond and Barbara Alvarado AlvaradoSmith
Michael and Evangeline Andersen
Charles and Phyllis Bell
Jim and Peggy Blaising
Rodney and Judith Boehme
Ronald and Kerry Borrell
Franklin and Patricia Brenner
Gino and Lynne Bruno
C.J. Segerstrom and Sons, LLC
Dan and Debi Callahan
Gregory and Dana Carlson
Coastal Vision Medical
Delta Gamma, Zeta Iota
Tom Dillard
Disney VoluntEars
Frank D'Orsi
Edward and Helen Shanbrom Family Fund
Fred Siegel Foundation
Fry Family Foundation
Global Finance Group
Darren and Jaimie Haver
Chuck Housman
Integrated Prescription Solutions, Inc.
Josephson Werdowatz and Associates, Inc.
Tibor Kelemen
Law Offices of Hiepler and Hiepler
Lewis A. Kingsley Foundation
Long Beach Tattoo Co. LLC

Louise Merage Family Foundation
Greg and Cheryl Maliwanag
Mardek Enterprises, Inc.
Virginia Marshall
Michael and Phyllis Martin
Francisco and Connie Martinez
Christopher Maudlin
Douglas and Sally May
Gene and Rose Mergelmeyer
Microsoft Corporation
Microsoft Store Century City
Microsoft Store Mission Viejo
Lou and Donna Miramontes
Debbie Montgomery
Jill Muckenthaler
Stephan Plotzker
Progressive Electric Service
Progressive Envelope and Printing
Walter and Renate Rados
Barbara Roberts
Roy E. Crummer Foundation
Chris Rufer
John Sorich
Shirley Stannard
Louis Stockton
Alfred Taylor
Turkish American Ladies League
Tustin Community Bank
John Peter Ulrich
Gary and Kathy Veeh
Elaine Weinberg
Wells Fargo - Learning and Development
Wescom Credit Union, WeCare Foundation
William Knight Russell Family Foundation

\$500 - \$999
Michael and Julie Alvarado
Christopher and Nancy Blatchford
Boeing Employees Community Fund
Theresa Busby
Dan Cornwell
Randolph and Becky Cripe
David S. Ascher Charitable Foundation
Edward DeKramer
Edward and Jacqueline Givins

Lisa Hill
KPMG LLP
Yvonne Law
Michael J. Leblanc
Mark and Elaine McClanathan
Dr. Desmond McGuire
Dottie Mulkey
Frederick and Sharon Myers
Dr. Richard and Leigh Nelson
Dr. Robert Patterson and Renee Boblette
Charles Pell
Kennedy and Diane Pola
Ron and Jane Rothschild
Santa Ana North Rotary Club
Donald and Doris Silva
Kathryn Smith
South Coast Auction
Michael and Terri Steponovich
The Miss Deeds Donation
United Road
Dennis and Marian Urschel
Charles and Laura Vickery
Your Dog Trainer
Z' Tejas

\$250 - \$499
Anonymous
AFD Industries, Inc.
Neerja Aggarwal
Alaska Airlines
Timothy Alvarado
Arthur and Kristi Archuleta
Ronald Barger
Scott Blaising
Paul and Marnell Blason
CBRE
Dr. Alexandra Chebil
Franky and Jenny Cheng
Ronald and Noreen Cichocki
Lance Coffey
Shelley Cole
Jo Corbett
Glenn and Brenda Corwin
Russell and Beverley Cox
Dixon Golf, Inc.
Alan and Jean Fohrer
Garnett-Powers and Associates Insurance Services
Dr. David Goodkin and Dr. Karen Wetmore
Jean and Louis Grasso
Robert and Wendy Grime
Howard and Carol Hay
Allen Herman
Yu and Sophia Ho
Craig and Jo Hodgetts
JW Data LLC
Michael and Melinda Kartsonis
Nick Konopisos
Angelo Leara
William Lee
Christopher and Helen Louis
Roland and Helen Matthews
Patricia McClendon
Kenneth and Patricia Meguiar
Eugene and Ave Micco
David and Pat Morehead
Motion Control Engineering
Pacific West Asset Management Corporation
William and Janice Powell
Precision Escalator Products, Inc.
Presbyterian Women
Richard Quinn
R.J. Electric
Mark Richardson
Schools First Federal Credit Union

Harry Selling
Senga Engineering, Inc.
Seven Gables Real Estate
Jeanne Siegel
Stuart A. Silverman
Mary Smith
Target
Linda E. Taylor
Howard and Joan Thompson
Paula Tomei
United Way of San Diego
Gary T. Ward
Justin and Christina Ward
Western Medical Center Auxiliary
Victor Zavala

In-Kinds
Charles Adamo
AlvaradoSmith
ART4KIDS, Inc.
Artemis Defense Institute
Avi Resort & Casino
Nilay Bakshi
Jennifer Bress
Change a Life Foundation
Dutcher Crossing Winery
Fountain Grove Inn
Hafner Vineyard
Improv Comedy Club
Indian Hills Golf Club
Indian Wells Country Club
Island Packers
Diana Jianas
Junior League of Orange County
Michael and Melinda Kartsonis
Mike and Danielle King
Heather Knight
La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts
Linda Mandel
Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament
Microsoft Store South Coast Plaza
Mitsubishi Electric United States
Orange County Woodworkers Association
Pacific West Asset Management Corporation
PGA West
Ruff Ruff & Meow
SeaWorld
South Coast Repertory
Don Steiner
Howie Subnick
Tierra Verde Industries
TowerJazz
Tustin Community Bank
Western National Property Management
Which Wich

*We strive for accuracy and we apologize for any errors or omissions. If you have been listed incorrectly, please contact Carolyn Baker at 714.573.8888 ext. 2102.

