



# INSIGHTS

SUMMER ISSUE - 2014

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### BOARD MEMBERS:

The Delta Gamma Center welcomes Robyn Huhn, Lauren Kloepfenger, David Lucky and Constance Wagner to the 2014-2015 Board of Directors.

We thank Cara Brouder and Lisa Sullivan for their years of dedicated service in the areas of administration and resource & development.

## *From the Desk of Debbie Naucke*

*Executive Director*

Dear Friends -

Our vision for children who are blind or visually impaired is that they are fully participating members of their family and community, which is essential to having a high quality of life. However, visual impairment or blindness can create barriers of all sorts such as access to recreation, isolation from others, independence to make choices, friendships, and more.

Our services need to be a catalyst to that vision. Services that focus on building skills and providing opportunities for kids to be included in activities that are a typical part of childhood is clearly of upmost importance. But forging a strong positive connection between children with visual impairments and the community is also important. This was highlighted in a recent survey of area professionals who rated "outreach to the community to change the societal limitations placed on children with visual impairments" as a top regional priority.

In this issue, readers can learn about our recent expansion of vision screening services, a small but important community service that provides early identification of vision concerns (now at an even earlier age); possibly preventing lifelong visual impairment. Coverage is also included on our new Young Friends Group that will help to create community ambassadors for broader awareness. As we move into a new (fiscal) year, new avenues of community outreach are being explored to help the community become better acquainted with visual impairment. Ultimately, however, change is often the "power of one."

You can be the power of one! Think about ways to include and engage people with visual impairments in your community. See individuals who are blind as a person first with capabilities and gifts to share. Is there someone with a visual impairment that would like to join your social or school group but has been left out? When you encounter someone, do you speak to them first since they may not be able to see you? Are you sharing this message with others? These are only a few examples to get you thinking. As a supporter, you can play a vital role in helping to forge connections. You are part of our DGC community, so let us know if we can help and be sure to share your stories with us!



*Debbie Naucke, Anne Mitchell, Danny Hurwitz, Mary Clare Lord & Debbie Chapuis receiving the Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis Outstanding Recreation Program Award.*

# Volunteers Wanted!

The Delta Gamma Center is always looking for great volunteers!

**Buddy Builders**, a parent-child class, meets the first and second Wednesday of the month from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**Explorers**, meets the first Wednesday evening of the month from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM and the first Friday morning of the month from 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM  
Activities include music, crafts, stories and games.

**Group Recreation and Developmental Support (GRADS)**, meet the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM.  
Activities include time for enjoying friends, and recreational activities that build new skills and confidence

**General Office Support Volunteers** will help with various projects in our office to support the work and mission of The Delta Gamma Center.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these programs, please contact Stacey Hutchens at (314) 776-1300 or [shutchens@dgckids.org](mailto:shutchens@dgckids.org) for more information.

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."*  
- Mohandas Gandhi

## MISSION

The mission of the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments is to help children who are blind or visually impaired reach their full potential through family-centered and specialized services and support.

# Young Friends Group @ Delta Gamma Center

**by Jenna Lolli**

*Board Member*

*Young Friends Group Chairperson*

The Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments invites philanthropic individuals in their 20's, 30's and 40's to join a recently established Young Friends group. Delta Gamma Center Young Friends are committed to supporting the Centers' mission to help children who are blind or visually impaired reach their full potential. Young Friends support includes volunteerism, fundraising and community awareness while networking and socializing with other like-minded young leaders in the St. Louis Community.

Today, Young Friends involved with the Delta Gamma Center are continuing a tradition spanning more than 50 years of service in St. Louis. Delta Gamma Center's Young Friends Group is inviting other philanthropic oriented young adults to learn more about this nationally recognized organization founded by the Delta Gamma alumnae from Washington University in St. Louis and the important services it provides to children with visual impairments and their families.

***"Being a member of the Young Friends Group is a great way to contribute my time and talents to an important cause in the St. Louis Community"***

- Allison Guidry, *Young Friends Group Vice Chair*

To join the Young Friends Group, please visit our website [www.dgckids.org/support](http://www.dgckids.org/support) and donate \$25 to become a Young Friends Member and get an exclusive PuraVida Bracelet.

For more information about upcoming events contact Jenna Lolli at [jennalolli@gmail.com](mailto:jennalolli@gmail.com).



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# Why I became a Delta Gamma

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*by Maddie Hanlen*

I have a little sister named Lulu who is seven years old as of August. Lulu is one of the happiest little girls you will ever meet. She's always running around, loves jumping on trampolines, and can rarely be caught staying in one place for a long time. The only time Lulu isn't running around is when Mickey Mouse is on the TV, and in that case you better not interrupt her. Lulu is originally from Haiti; my family adopted Lulu when she was seven months old.

Lulu was born with hydrocephalus, a buildup of fluid inside the skull, which, after three months of not receiving treatment, caused extreme swelling of Lulu's head and severe brain damage in Lulu's case. The pressure from the fluid disabled Lulu physically and also caused her eyes to stay sundown. So not only could Lulu not see, she could not move, she could not communicate to anyone around her, and she showed no sign of life aside from blinking and breathing.

The World Pediatric Project is an organization that funds treatment for children like Lulu. With their help, Lulu was brought to my family in St. Louis to receive treatment for her condition at Children's Hospital. With her visual impairments, her doctors recommended my family to the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments to begin her growing journey through therapy.

At the Center, Lulu was placed in occupational, physical, speech and language therapies. It was there that she was introduced to glow-in-the-dark toys in the light up room, and there that she became a drumming queen in group therapy. The Center taught Lulu how to use her senses, starting with even the simplest thing like learning how to play with toys. A lot of days were hard work for Lulu, but if it weren't for the amazing staff at the Delta Gamma Center, Lulu would be nowhere near the girl she is today. She has gone beyond all of her doctor's expectations.

Another huge reason for Lulu's growth is the Delta Gamma Center's family support services helping us teach her how to continue growing outside of the Center into our household by supporting my family through raising a child with visual impairments.

Lulu went from a lifeless little girl to a girl who steals the spotlight every time she walks into a room.

Going into recruitment at Mizzou in fall of 2011, I could not imagine how by the end of the week I would choose one chapter out of the fourteen amazing chapters at the university. I entered my recruitment journey with no expectations and a fully open mind. But on the fourth day of the week, I sat alongside the other potential new members listening to each sorority's philanthropy; and it was in the Delta Gamma house where I heard about the Foundation and the Mu chapter's support for the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments in St. Louis and other similar organizations. As I listened, I pictured Lulu and all of the amazing opportunities made available to her through the Delta Gamma Center. It was that day that I realized that this was my philanthropy; this was my home.

The Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments creates so many opportunities for children in need along with their families, and my family.



*Maddie and Lulu*

2<sup>nd</sup> Creative has produced many marketing pieces for the Delta Gamma Center; invitations to Holiday House, posters for Run for Sight and Ride to Unite and our Annual Report.

Recently they have been the recipient of several awards for their work on the 2012 Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments Annual Report.

Here are just a couple of the honors they have received:

*Academy of  
Interactive & Visual Arts*  
**The Communicator Awards**  
2014 Award of Excellence

*Hermes Creative Awards*  
**Platinum Winner**  
Pro Bono Promotions

## Congratulations!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the staff and the families we serve, THANK YOU for all the amazing work you have done.



*Dakin and Dad*

**by Noreen Conte**  
*Vision Screening Coordinator*

## Envisioning a bright future!

Very few children complain about vision problems because they have no way of knowing that their vision is not normal. To them, it is “normal” because it is the only vision they have ever known. Most parents presume that their child’s pediatrician will discover any eye problems but unfortunately, studies have shown that these providers identify as few as 25% of children with serious vision problems such as amblyopia. It is not always easy to recognize amblyopia unless the child has a highly noticeable problem such as a misaligned eye or they become upset when you try to cover their good eye with your hand or a patch. Early vision screening is essential because amblyopia is difficult to recognize.

Amblyopia is when the blurry eye doesn’t receive attention and isn’t used. It gets weak and if it isn’t treated early may eventually become functionally blind. Detection of eye abnormalities is extremely important in infants and children (under age 6) as irreversible vision loss (amblyopia) can be prevented before the visual pathways are fully developed. The earlier the child is treated, the better the chances are for restoring normal vision. Every child should have vision screening between 6-12 months, around three years, and another before starting school

Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments wants to provide vision screening early, when referral and treatment is most effective. We have expanded our preschool vision screening to include free vision screenings for children 6 months to 3 years. Agencies/groups serving children that may be at higher risk of having undetected vision concerns are our highest priority.

Vision screening is as simple as having the child’s picture taken. It takes only moments per child, requires no preparation, does not require eye drops, is totally painless, and can be used with non verbal children. Results are instant and shared immediately. It detects the indication of six different visual conditions, including those that can lead to amblyopia if left untreated.

If an agency would like to request vision screening please contact Noreen Conte, RN at 314-776-1300 ext 121. We are also providing individual screenings by appointment at the Center two Thursday per month, for the general public. Call for an appointment at 314-776-1300.



*Johanna with Mom*

# Leave a Legacy of HOPE!

Careful estate planning can help you protect and provide for the needs of your family and loved ones. Some people also choose to remember their favorite charities or causes in their wills.

Writing a will can offer both you and your loved ones peace of mind. Make sure to consult with a qualified attorney before writing or updating your will.

We are grateful to all those who remember the Delta Gamma Center in their estate gift planning. These wonderful people continue their partnership with the Center through their loving gifts. Their goodness insures that our children will continue to be provided with educational, developmental and recreational support.

Please let us know if you are remembering the Delta Gamma Center in your will or other estate plans. Every gift, no matter the size is important and does make a difference in the lives of the children we serve.

Please visit [www.dgckids.org/support/planned-giving](http://www.dgckids.org/support/planned-giving) to review the Delta Gamma Center's planned giving brochure or call Cassandra Cooke, Director of Development, at (314) 776-1300 ext. 109 and she will be happy to send you a brochure or answer any questions you may have.

Our legal title is **Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments** and our federal tax ID number is **43-0725282**.

## Not sure what is involved with Planned Giving?

Rosanne Horan, an Estate Attorney at Compass Law Group and DGC Planned Giving Committee Member will be hosting a free seminar for those who are interested in learning more about Planned Giving. For more information or to sign up, contact Cassandra Cooke, Director of Development, at 314.776.1300 ext. 109 or at [ccooke@dgckids.org](mailto:ccooke@dgckids.org).

### CENTER STAFF

#### Administration

Deborah A. Naucke, Executive Director  
Cassandra Cooke, Development Director  
Stacey Hutchens, Development Associate  
Tom Meyer, Accountant  
Sharon Niethe, Office Manager  
Flora Robinson, Facilities/Housekeeping

#### Program

Debra K. Chapuis,  
*Family Support Services Coordinator*  
Nancy Crawford,  
*Physical Therapist*  
Laura Cooper  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*  
Noreen Conte  
*Vision Screening Coordinator*  
Karen Eckert,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired & Mobility Specialist*  
Patti Griesbaum,  
*Occupational Therapist*  
Patricia Hamill,  
*Physical Therapist*  
Brandi Hotop  
*GRADS Facilitator*  
Julie Johnson,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*  
Christine Krekow,  
*Speech Therapist*  
Becky Lambert,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired & Mobility Specialist*  
Lisa Rohr,  
*Early Intervention Program Coordinator*  
Margaret Russell,  
*Occupational Therapist*  
Jo Russell-Brown,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*  
Lindsay Wayne,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired & Mobility Specialist*

## In Memoriam



This issue of **INSIGHTS** is dedicated to the memory of

**Doris "Scotty"  
MacConnell Draper**

**1925-2014**

For her years of dedicated service and support to the Delta Gamma Center.

# Run For Sight 2014

We had a successful event and amazing weather on May 4th. Nearly 900 runners and walkers of all ages and skill levels were in attendance. A record number of family teams came out to support the event (50 teams).

The Family Teams are the heart of the Run For Sight! Our top five teams were:

Team Margaret  
Kitsmiller Kids  
Team Jackson  
Joshua's Joggers  
Team Reese Cup

Special thanks to all the fundraising teams for their hard work and support!

**We love our sponsors!** The 22nd Annual Run for Sight would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors.

Albert & Helen Ravarino Foundation	Lighthouse for the Blind
The Frane Family	Express Scripts
McCormack Baron Salazar	Children's Hospital St. Louis
AB Mauri	Everbank
Cockriel & Christofferson	The Soffer Family
Ernst & Young	Brown & Crouppen
Scottrade	MannaPro
Midland Optical	Kohl's Cares
Team Margot	Monsanto
Crown Vision	Danielle & Geoff Uy
v-Fluence	Big River Running
Big Shark	Union Station
2 <sup>e</sup> Creative	Scrap Mart



## Mark Your Calendars



*Fashion Show and Luncheon*  
*Thursday, August 28, 2014*  
*10:30 am to 2:30 pm*  
*Forest Hills Country Club*

**For information about tickets and sponsorship opportunities  
contact Stacey Hutchens at  
314.776.1300 ext. 108 or [shutchens@dgckids.org](mailto:shutchens@dgckids.org)**



### Saddle up to celebrate cycling for everyone

**A FREE EVENT** - Registration is **REQUIRED**  
LABOR DAY WEEKEND  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 2014  
10:00 AM @ FRANCIS PARK

#### 5 Mile Race Course

Grab your bike and join cyclist, celebrities and elite competitors for a 5 mile ride on the closed race course.

#### Kids Challenge

A friendly 1/4 mile race for 7-12 year olds with and without adaptive cycles.

#### Pancake Breakfast (\$5)

Join us for breakfast. Served 9:30 - 11:30

**For more information or to register, go to [www.dgckids.org](http://www.dgckids.org)**

# Jackson's Birthday Gift to the Delta Gamma Center

## STAY CONNECTED

**by Jo Russell-Brown**  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*

The children at the Delta Gamma Center have Jackson Kendall to thank for the wonderful children's books that were recently added to our children's library. Jackson is NOT your ordinary 5 year old. When he was only 4 and contemplating turning 5, he talked with his mom about having a birthday party. Typically birthday parties are a time when the birthday kid is the center of attention and receives lots of gifts from family and friends. When Jackson and his mom began to plan the party, they had a different idea. You see, Jackson's little sister Olivia receives vision services from the Delta Gamma Center's Early Intervention Program, and Jackson knows all about DGC.

Jackson was not quite 3 when his baby sister began to receive home visits and as she grew she began to attend the Buddy Builder's Playgroup with her mom and brother. Jackson was home for those early home visits and also attended Buddy Builder's Playgroup until he began preschool. He accompanied his mom at the Run For Sight planning committee meetings and watched his mom and dad give back with their time and talents. Jackson became a part of the Delta Gamma Center Family and learned from his parents that you are never too young to say "thank you" and give back in your own way.

It should come as no surprise what this remarkable little guy did. Jackson, with the help of his mom, sent out party invitations; but instead of a gift for himself, he requested that they bring a book for a child with a visual impairment that would go to the Delta Gamma Center's Children's Library. Jackson arrived at Buddy Builder's Playgroup in May with a BIG box filled with special books that appeal to all the senses... vision, hearing, touch and smell!

All of us at the Delta Gamma Center send out a big "THANK YOU!" to Jackson for his kindness and generosity. You are an amazing five year old!



*Jenn, Olivia and Jackson Kendall*

Have you moved or need to change your contact information? Can we update our records and include you in our email updates?

If so, please notify Stacey Hutchens, Development Associate, at 314.776.1300 ext. 108 or [shutchens@dgckids.org](mailto:shutchens@dgckids.org)



Become a fan of the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments on Facebook and get updates on what's happening at the Center.



Let us know what you are up to. Give us a Tweet @DGCKids.

## DGCKIDS.ORG

For information regarding family support, early intervention services, and upcoming programs, check out our web page.



To make a secure donation to the Delta Gamma Center, please visit [www.dgckids.org/support/](http://www.dgckids.org/support/)

Thank **YOU** for your Support!



Delta Gamma Center for Children  
with Visual Impairments  
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LIGHTHOUSE  
for the BLIND  
ST. LOUIS, MO.

## Feel The Beat

This past March, seventeen youth, ages 11-18 with and without visual impairments and other disabilities came together and performed a musical program called "Feel The Beat"

Music has a universal power that goes beyond rhythms, melodies and lyrics. Music has the power to inspire, to connect, to teach, to guide us through challenging times and to lift us up in times of celebration. Music has the power to enrich our lives, to transplant us to far off times and places, to fill us with hope. Feel the Beat is the culmination of a two-month collaboration that harnesses the power of music and gives voice to a remarkable group of young people.

The participants supported and empowered each other to share their stories through music. Through the process of writing and rehearsing original songs, they learned about themselves and about each other. They developed friendships and gained the confidence to step out onto the stage and beyond.

*Feel the Beat* reminds us about what can be accomplished with the right partners and support.

*A special thank you to STAGES, St. Louis, Rockin Chair, John L. Donnell Fund, Valerie Marvin Walch Endowment Fund, The Mimi Fishman Foundation and the Productive Living Board.*

