

# INSIGHTS

WINTER ISSUE - 2013

## 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.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2013/2014

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\* Delta Gamma Alumnae

## *From the Desk of Debbie Naucke*

*Executive Director*

### hope *noun*

: the feeling of wanting something to happen and thinking that it could happen  
: a feeling that something good will happen or be true; someone or something that may be able to provide help ...

It is a common word in our vocabulary, used liberally and almost taken for granted. Unimaginable to be without. It is a word deeply embedded in the minds of the staff of the DGC. While seemingly undervalued at times and lost in the push to quantify outcomes and demonstrate impact, there is a culture of hope at the Delta Gamma Center, captured beautifully by 2e Creative in this rendition of our logo, that is essential to successful outcomes.

Read the story of Eleanor on page 5 to glimpse at her mother's moment of hope. While it describes a profound moment for Sarah, the parts of her blog that are excluded describe in dramatic and beautiful prose her early grief, and as time goes on, the shifting perceptions of her feelings toward her daughter and her many gifts. Her journey is a story of hope. We hear countless such stories. We believe it is important to build services within a culture of hope, and there are several key ingredients. We have some exciting new additions currently underway in these key areas, as follows

**Direct services** - We are currently engaged in starting a new service – low vision evaluations and expanding vision screening – for children under 3 years of age. When launched in January, 2014, These services will be key to truly reaching our goals of early identification and appropriate service to enhance visual function and participation in all aspects of their family and community life

**Sense of community** - the opportunity to share experiences with people who can truly understand is vital. Technology is making it possible to provide new parent support and training opportunities.

**Creating linkages** - we want the children we serve to fully participate in their communities. Mark your calendar for March 15th! **Feel the Beat** will bring children & guest artists together in an unforgettable music performance.

**Advocate for needed resources** - DGC has specialized resources for families, and soon a short video on our website will highlight resources at our facility. Broader awareness and advocacy will be a priority this year as we strive to make our community leaders aware of visual impairments and assure a commitment to funding for basic services.

It is my hope that you will join us in this journey. Stay tuned for more information on some of the initiatives, or call to get involved!

# Make a difference in the life of a child

## Volunteers Needed!!!

Buddy Builders, ages birth to 3 years  
first Wednesday of the month  
from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

and GRADS (Group Recreation and  
Developmental Support) program, ages 6  
through high school  
the first Saturday of the month  
from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

If you are interested in volunteering  
for either of these programs, please go to  
[www.dgckids.org](http://www.dgckids.org) and fill out the volunteer  
form or email [info@dgckids.org](mailto:info@dgckids.org) for more  
information.



Happy 2nd Birthday Olivia  
Buddy Builders

## CENTER STAFF

### Administration

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

### Program

Debra K. Chapuis,  
*Family Support Services Coordinator*  
Linda Cooper  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*  
Nancy Crawford,  
*Physical Therapist*  
Karen Eckert,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired &  
Mobility Specialist*  
Patti Griesbaum,  
*Occupational Therapist*  
Patricia Hamill,  
*Physical Therapist*  
Brandi Hotop  
*GRADS Facilitator*  
Daniel Hurwitz,  
*GRADS Coordinator*  
Julie Johnson,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*  
Christine Krekow,  
*Speech Therapist*  
Becky Lambert,  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired &  
Mobility Specialist*  
Calla Massman,  
*GRADS Facilitator*  
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*

## Eye for Style



*Seated:* Barbara Vickroy, Marie Oetting, Shirley Hulverson and Audrey Behrens *Standing:*  
Martha Skinner, Marilyn Griesedieck, Nancy Schlueter, Phyllis Westin and Dorothy Hanpeter

The 2nd Annual **Eye for Style**, luncheon and fashion show was a sold out success. Over 225 guests enjoyed an afternoon of shopping, lunch and fashion at Forest Hills Country Club, raising \$11,535 to support services for children and their families. A special thank you to the Planning Committee, chaired by Betty Smith and Joann Clay.

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# History of White Cane Day

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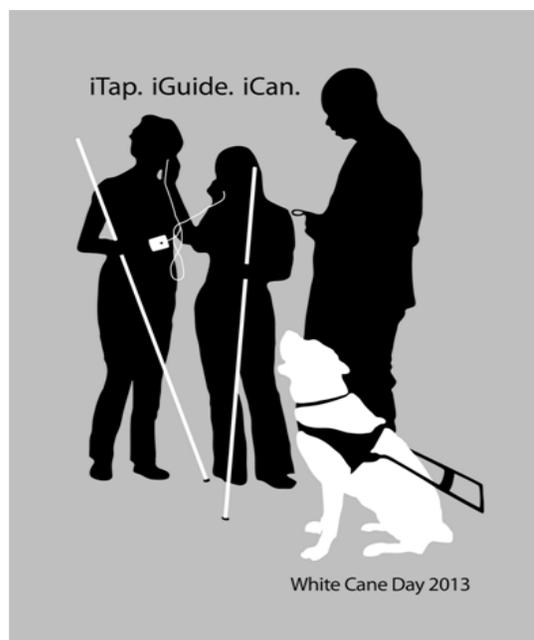
**by Rebecca Lambert**

*Teacher of the Visually Impaired & Orientation and Mobility Specialist*

October 15th is not a big holiday or even on the radar for most people but for the Delta Gamma Center and other groups who serve individuals who are visually impaired and blind it IS an important date. October 15th is White Cane Day. Since 1964, it is a day to celebrate and bring awareness to White Cane Safety. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the first White Cane Safety Day Proclamation which stated “The white cane in our society has become one of the symbols of a blind person’s ability to come and go on his own. Its use has promoted courtesy and special consideration to the blind on our streets and highways. To make our people more fully aware of the meaning of the white cane and of the need for motorists to exercise special care for the blind persons who carry it....” In 2011, President Barack Obama included this date to be Blind Americans Equality Day.

A little history of the white cane may be in order. The white cane is first noted in 1921 by James Biggs, who had painted his walking stick white to be more visible to others as he tried to navigate in his neighborhood. In 1931, a Lions Club International member, George Bonham, watched as a man who was blind attempted to cross a street with his black cane that was barely visible to motorists against the dark pavement. The Lions then decided to paint the cane white to make it more visible. The Lions Club International then began a program promoting the use of white canes for people who are blind. The first white cane law was passed in 1930 in Peoria, IL granting blind pedestrians protections and the right-of-way while carrying a white cane.

*For more information about White Cane Day and White Cane Travel Tips for Little Ones, please go to our website:  
<http://dgckids.org/resources/white-cane-travel-tips-for-little-ones/>*



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**More Help  
More Hope  
More Smiles**



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The Delta Gamma Center has been a proud member of the United Way of Greater St. Louis for fifteen years. Funds from the United Way go towards Early Intervention Services. United Way helps 1 million people by partnering with more than 170 nonprofits to provide valuable programs and services to families and individuals. This year’s campaign raised \$72,254,028.

**A special thank you to all who contributed to this year’s campaign!**

# Volunteer Spotlight

On September 10th, the Delta Gamma Center recognized the volunteers that devote their time and energy to the Center. This year's special honorees were:

### Volunteer Service Award

Bill Hansen  
Scott Swartzbaugh  
Scott LaPresta  
Heather Backes  
Blair Rudert

### Jean Anderson Award

Kary Bachert

### Shining Light Award

Joe Toohey

### Professional Service Award

Greg Barth - Photography  
Jim Rooney - Mercy Optical

### Community Service Award

Mimi Ravarino  
St. Louis University ΔΓ Chapter  
Eta Theta

### Visionary Award

Ruth Spence Nelson  
Gretchen Ross

### Tree Lot Chair

Blair Rudert

### Run For Sight Chair

Katie Hunter

### Holiday House Chair

Georgia Relich

### Ride To Unite Co-Chairs

Jennifer LaPresta  
Courtney Rakers

### Eye For Style Co-Chairs

Betty Smith  
Joann Clay

# Mark Your Calendars



## SHINING TREE LOT & HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

### Location

McCarthy Building Companies  
1341 N. Rock Hill Road  
St. Louis, MO 63124

### Hours of Operation:

November 29 - December 21  
Monday - Friday 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Saturday 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM  
Sunday 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM

*Featuring holiday boutique items, live wreaths, greenery  
and a great selection of Christmas Trees*

# Run For Sight

## Sunday, May 4, 2014

### "A LITTLE SWEAT FOR A LOT OF GOOD"

### 8:30 AM

### Union Station



For More Information Contact Stacey Hutchens at  
314.776.1300 ext. 108 or [shutchens@dgckids.org](mailto:shutchens@dgckids.org)

# Our Community Heros!

## FOUNDATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

Bausch & Lomb  
Boeing Employee's Community Fund  
Cardinals Care  
Delta Gamma Foundation  
John L. Donnell Fund  
Jon Thomas NKH Foundation  
Microsoft Matching Gifts Program  
Monsanto Fund  
Peabody Energy Matching Gifts Program  
Saigh Foundation  
Stupp Bros. Bridge & Iron Co. Foundation  
U.S. Association for Blind Athletes  
Variety, The Children's Charity of St. Louis  
von Gontard Family Foundation

## CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Concord Lions  
District 26M2 Lions Eye Foundation  
Maplewood Lions Club  
St. Mark Presbyterian Church

## CORPORATIONS

2e Creative  
Beyers Lumber  
Lighthouse for the Blind - St. Louis  
McCarthy Building Companies  
Strategic Technology Group

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# Meet Eleanor

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*by Sarah Mason*  
*Proud Parent of Eleanor*

## *Why isn't she looking at me?*

When Eleanor was four months old, we took her to her first ophthalmologist. "She has Nystagmus," he told us. "She isn't visually responsive. My guess is that she will probably be able to perceive light and where it is coming from, and possibly where larger objects are located, but that's about it."

Brian and I were taken aback and extremely confused. My mind flashed with brief memories of seeing other babies her age engaged in direct eye contact. Eleanor had never seemed to see me. To look at me. We never had that breastfeeding moment of baby in mother's arms hypnotically gazing at one another in complete and perfect love. But I had just ignored it. Her eyes would adjust...she could see, I told myself.

But that moment in the doctor's office confirmed it. She couldn't see like we see. The doctor left for a moment to grab some paperwork and there we were, the three of us, in complete silence. The only thing I remember hearing or feeling was my heart now all the way in my head, pounding in my ears.

The ophthalmologist walked back in and handed us a brochure for Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments. He confidently told us that contacting this organization was our next best step.

I still remember the first day we had a visit from someone with the Delta Gamma Center, when Jo, Eleanor's teacher of visual impairments, stopped by to perform Eleanor's first assessment. She walked in with a box full of toys of all shapes, color, texture, tones, contrast, glimmer, gleam, light-up capabilities, etc. She shut all our blinds and curtains, turned our baby away from any leaking light, got out a flashlight and a huge shiny Christmas ornament and held both up in front of Eleanor creating a disco display of light and color on our living room floor. And we thought, who **IS** this crazy woman!?

While Eleanor sat in her bouncy seat, Jo sat right in front of Eleanor watching her extremely closely. Jo studied her for a long while, holding different things up for her to see, while moving them around from side-to-side and up-and-down. Watching Jo, I immediately appreciated how methodical, intuitive and focused she was in discovering what she could about Eleanor. Her procedure was so full of thought and attention; more than I had ever seen of any medical doctor. After trying a number of different items, Jo held up a little light-up spider in front of Eleanor, and that was when we saw it. **Eleanor reached out to touch it!**

As tears filled my eyes, Jo turned to us with a smile beaming on her face. "She saw it." she said. It was the first time that we had ever seen Eleanor respond to anything visually. I was overwhelmed with joy, but also filled with curiosity. What else could Jo tell us and show us?

At the end of our first day, I motioned to Jo's silver Braille necklace and asked, "What does that say?" "**HOPE**", she smiled. It couldn't have been more fitting - in that moment, **WE** had hope. We knew we were not alone. We knew we were in good hands.



# Reaching for the Stars

**by Daniel Hurwitz**  
*GRADS Program Coordinator*

On November 2nd, Challengers I and Challengers II visited the Planetarium at the St. Louis Science Center to watch “The Little Star that Could” and learn about how astronauts train to go into space. The film presentation, which explains star and planet formation, has recently been adapted to be accessible for people who are blind and visually impaired thanks to funding from Lighthouse for the Blind. The adaptations are extensive, starting with a model of the Planetarium so the children could better orient themselves to the unfamiliar space.



Prior to the film, children were introduced to bean bag representations of the planets in the movie, each heated to a different temperature. During the film, children were presented iPads and tactile books to help them follow along with the film. The trip ended with a chance for the GRADS to try out daily activities of an astronaut. In the afternoon, the groups were visited by two geologists from Washington University who presented rocks from the moon and earth for the children to examine.



# Toys for the Holidays

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



## Tips for Selecting Toys for Children with Visual Impairments

Finding the right toy can be a daunting experience for even the savviest shopper. At The Delta Gamma Center, we understand your frustration. Rather than specific toys we feel it is important for parents and caregivers to understand what makes a good toy. Below are some things to keep in mind when searching for the perfect toy.

1. Child’s favorite color, reflective, high contrast, sound, music or texture
2. Toys at child’s developmental level
3. Toys that develop independent and imaginative play
4. Toys with moving parts that are fun to wiggle and press
5. Multi-textured toys
6. Simple cause and effect, pull or push something and a sound is made
7. Avoid toys that can be over-stimulating, such as those that make sounds, light up and vibrate at the same time
8. Avoid toys with small parts that are not firmly attached



*Dakin*



*John Thomas*

# Assistive Technology Review: Pictello



**by Julie Johnson**  
*Teacher of the Visually Impaired*

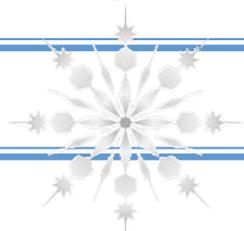
Pictello, created by AssistiveWare for Android and iOS tablets, is a talking picture book app created for children of all ages with disabilities.

This app has been recommended by speech pathologists and teachers of the visually impaired because of the customizable voice-over feature and its text-to-speech capabilities paired with personal photographs and videos. An important feature of the app is the 92 text-to-speech voice options in 27 languages, including the choice for the child or caregiver to record his or her own voice.

Pictello is interactive and tells a sequential story through pictures. The student activates the text-to-speech voice option in the story when he or she touches the corresponding picture in the middle of the screen. This challenges a child to maintain visual attention on the photograph while also bringing his or her hands to midline to activate the application. A child with no vision can also benefit from this app when he or she touches the screen to activate the text-to-speech voiceover feature.

Pictello is a great purchase for both parents and teachers. Many caregivers use this app as a picture schedule for children to use within their routine throughout the day. Experts in the areas of autism, visual impairments, and speech language pathology recommend this app because of its consumer friendly design to create social stories, which can be a great tool to help a child transition from one activity to the next while also facilitating opportunities for creative storytelling. It is also recommended by orientation and mobility specialists to use with children who are learning routes around different environments within their daily schedule.

## Holiday Challenge



### HELP THE DELTA GAMMA CENTER WIN \$100,000

We are happy to announce that we are part of the Crowdrise Holiday Challenge. The team that raises the most throughout the Challenge will get \$100,000 for their cause. As a friend of the organization, you know the impact that a Challenge like this can have for the children and families we serve and we are looking for all the help we can get.

We are out to raise as much money as possible for the Delta Gamma Center so we can win the \$100,000 grand prize donation.

Please go to [www.crowdrise.com/dgckids/](http://www.crowdrise.com/dgckids/). Then please, please, please go one step further...Click "FUNDRAISE FOR THIS CAMPAIGN." In seconds, you will have your own fundraiser that you can share with all of your family and friends.

## STAY CONNECTED

Have you moved or need to change your contact information? May 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 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  
1750 S. Big Bend Boulevard  
Richmond Heights, MO 63117

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## Leave A Legacy

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You are probably well aware a will can be used to protect your loved ones, but did you know that it can also be used to support the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments?

For many people, philanthropic giving is a lifelong commitment that provides both personal satisfaction and financial benefits.

Now, through the Delta Gamma Center's Planned Giving Program, you can give a gift that benefits you and your family, while ensuring programs for children who are blind or visually impaired are available for generations to come

The Delta Gamma Center has a number of programs where bequests or other planned gifts can be directed.

**OPERATING FUND:**

Produces investment income sufficient to balance the annual budget and to fund ongoing operations and programs.

**BUILDING RESERVE FUND:**

Provides a ready source of funds for repair and/or replacement of buildings, furniture, fixtures and equipment necessary for the effective operation of the Center and its programs.

For more information, contact **Cassandra Cooke, Director of Development**  
at 314.776.1300 ext. 109 or at [ccooke@dgckids.org](mailto:ccooke@dgckids.org)

