

Independence!

Stories of life-transformation exclusively for friends . . . made possible by supporters.

Never Give Up Hope

Christopher has had to fight the first seven years of his life to overcome a number of disabilities, including seizure disorder, visual impairment and global developmental delay. When Christopher entered the world, he and his mother encountered numerous complications during delivery.

Thanks to your support, Christopher has found an organization that can meet his needs and help him grow. For the last four years, Christopher and his parents have worked with Junior Blind's Special Education School to provide a nurturing environment where he can maximize his independence.

Christopher's milestones have been unforgettable and with each one, his family and ours rejoice for his success and for your support that makes his progress possible.

"It seems unfathomable now," says Nicole Abshear, Christopher's first teacher at Junior Blind, "but

when Christopher first got here, we couldn't make it from the car to the classroom without stopping and sitting every few steps."

Now, Christopher walks with complete independence. It took time, patience, encouragement and lots of hard work for Christopher to make such a major accomplishment.

Since he is severely tactile defensive, visually impaired and has low muscle mass, a walker-like mobility device was initially needed to help guide Christopher in the right direction, while providing him with support.

Increasing Christopher's mobility also helped him strengthen his functional vision. As he gained the independence to move around, he learned how to maximize his vision. Now, Christopher sees lights and shadows and really enjoys playing with special sensory toys, such as light boxes.



Amazingly, Christopher has also learned how to say some words. His first word was "Mamma." And just last week, while his parents were tucking him into bed, he said, "I love you."

"It was incredible," says Kathy, Christopher's mom. "Can you imagine hearing I love you from your son for the first time when he is seven years old? It melted our hearts."

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Sharing Our Vision

Can you imagine finding out that your child has autism? Or cerebral palsy? Or Down syndrome? At Junior Blind, most of the children we serve, have not just one disability...they have multiple disabilities. And, these are in addition to being blind or visually impaired.

Without your support, children like Christopher and Samantha, whom you will read about in this newsletter, might have missed out on one of the most important things we can give our youth—a chance to learn. It is not uncommon to hear from parents that, “before Junior Blind, we had nowhere else to go.”

Although it’s not noted in the article, Christopher’s parents

searched for six months to find a school that could support their son’s needs. Finally, they found Junior Blind’s Special Education School.

For children like Christopher, who have multiple disabilities, there is so much that goes into their growth and success—from a nurturing environment to individualized attention. Thanks to your dedication and generosity, our children receive the quality care they need to build better lives and brighter futures.

With your help, Junior Blind’s Special Education School remains the only state-certified non-public school in California that meets the educational needs of multi-disabled blind children through

age 21. Because of this, our parents do whatever it takes to ensure their children are enrolled at Junior Blind, even if it means driving more than two hours each way to get here.

There are many children like Christopher and Samantha, who have been given a great start at life because someone believed in them. And, with your continued support, even more children and families will have that same chance.

Sincerely,

Miki Jordan
President



Reasons to Give to Junior Blind

Premature births have increased by 36 percent since 1980, putting more newborns at risk for blindness and multiple disabilities.

60 percent of visually impaired children have other disabilities including mental retardation, autism, seizure disorders and cerebral palsy.

Junior Blind has a five-decade track record of success, helping those who are blind or multi-disabled achieve independence.

Junior Blind can offer all of its services at no cost to families, but only with your support!

To learn more, please visit www.juniorblind.org.

Building Independence . . .

Born with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, seizure disorder and blindness, Samantha spent many years fearing the unknown. And, severely tactile defensive, “Sammie” dislikes the texture of most foods, making eating one of her biggest challenges.

When Sammie first came to Junior Blind, she was so physically weak and scared of her environment, she was wheelchair bound. But now, at ten years old, Sammie can stand up with the help of her walker. Sammie has come such a long way that she spends most of the school day up and about exploring her surroundings.

“Once Sammie started to make her way around the classroom, she began showing us what her likes and dislikes were,” says Ms. Griggs, Sammie’s teacher. “It was

One Step At A Time

an exciting step because it enabled Sammie to actively participate in her progress.”

Using a voice output device, Sammie, who is nonverbal can tell her teacher if she wants to go outside, play, use the restroom and much more. She has also begun to discover the power of facial expressions, giving great big smiles to show her teacher when she is happy.

“Sammie smiles most when she is doing activities that involve sensory stimulation. She loves scents, sounds and story time,” says Ms. Griggs.

With your help, Sammie will continue along this

incredible path toward greater independence. And, if given the continued individualized instruction at Junior Blind’s Special Education School, there may come a day when she will walk all by herself.

“Each day, Sammie does something that brings her one step closer to independence,” says Ms. Griggs. “We believe in her and most importantly, she believes in herself.”

From all of us at Junior Blind, thank you for believing in our children!

Never Give Up Hope

(continued from front)

Christopher’s ability to fight on is indescribable—it’s hard to imagine any seven year old with the amount of resilience he has.

“But, it’s all about never giving up hope,” says Kathy. “If I could

say one thing to the wonderful people who support Junior Blind, it would be, ‘thank you for not giving up hope.’”

A Call to Give, A Legacy Created

A dedicated supporter for more than twenty years, Lenore Krusell recently made her way to visit Junior Blind's beautiful eight-acre campus.

"I was so impressed with the campus, school, people and equipment..." says Lenore. "It made me feel so good to see where my donations are going and that I am supporting such a wonderful organization."

A former P.E. teacher and physical therapist, Lenore has always enjoyed helping people. So, when she learned about the children whose lives are changed every day through Junior Blind's services, she was immediately inspired to give.

"Throughout my entire life, I have always believed that you

should share what you have," says Lenore.

A few years ago, Lenore decided she wanted to make an even greater commitment by remembering Junior Blind in her estate plans. Guided by her open heart, she realized that making provisions for the charities she loves was simple, easy and everlasting when done through a gift made in a trust or a will. At Junior Blind, we appreciate Lenore's thoughtfulness, as gifts like this help ensure that our children and families will be helped for years to come.

As Lenore prepares to celebrate her 91st birthday, she continues her commitment to our children who are blind and multi-disabled through her support of Junior Blind's services.



Lenore and her beloved rescue dog Mitzi.

When asked what she likes best about her age, Lenore says with a chuckle, "That I'm here and that I can still give to those who are less fortunate."

Lenore was so moved by what she saw when she visited Junior Blind's campus that she invited the ladies from her tennis group to join her for a tour. To learn more about how you can share your commitment to Junior Blind with groups or clubs, please read the article below.

Do you like to read, cook, or knit?

Perhaps you are a member of a book club, cooking club, or knitting club. If you are a member of a club, we invite you to consider challenging your fellow members to match your contribution to Junior Blind. When you combine

your gifts together in honor of your club, you can have double, triple, or quadruple the impact on changing the lives of the children Junior Blind serves.

For decades people just like you have come together to share

their interests and contribute to Junior Blind and we hope you will too.

For information, please contact: Wendy Santana at 323.290.6290.