

# JUNIOR BLIND Perspectives

An Informational Publication from Junior Blind of America

## Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges: All Children Benefit From After School Enrichment Program

### Our Mission:

Helping children and adults who are blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled achieve independence.



part is that it brings blind and sighted kids together—giving them a chance to learn from and with each other.”



In our last newsletter, we told you about the pilot of our new After School Enrichment Program. Thanks to generous support from The Eisner Foundation, the Los Angeles Times Family Fund, a fund of the McCormick Foundation, the Max Factor Family Foundation and others, the successful pilot program has expanded to serve dozens of children every day.

Led by Joan Marason, our After School Enrichment Program brings sighted, blind, visually impaired and multi-disabled children together to participate in academic, physical and social enrichment activities.

*“Our After School Enrichment Program gives children the opportunity to learn important skills that will help them at school and in life,” says Debra. “And, the amazing part is that it brings blind and sighted kids together—giving them a chance to learn from and with each other.”*

The program offers activities, such as cooking to teach the importance of nutrition; sports to increase physical fitness; and a structured homework period to ensure children have the support they need to understand and complete assignments.

“A child’s learning doesn’t have to end with the school day,” says Debra. “There are so many benefits to participating in our After School Program and I am overjoyed that so many children in our community will be able to experience it.”

**To learn more about our After School Enrichment Program, please contact Joan Marason, Program Manager at 323.295.4555, ext. 245 or [jmarason@juniorblind.org](mailto:jmarason@juniorblind.org).**



**JUNIOR  
BLIND**  
OF AMERICA®

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“Our After School Enrichment Program gives children the opportunity to learn important skills that will help them at school and in life,” says Debra Adams, vice president of programs. “And, the amazing

## ***Leadership Team***

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*President and Chief Executive Officer*

Jay Allen, M.A.  
*Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer*

Laura M. Hardy  
*Senior Vice President of Development and Marketing*

Kami Mann, M.B.A.  
*Senior Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer*

Debra Adams, M.A.  
*Vice President of Programs*

Carmen Garcia  
*Vice President of Operations*

Corina Casco, M.S.W.  
*Senior Director of Children's Services*

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*Director of Recreation Services*

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Melinda Docter, Ed.D.  
*Principal, Special Education School*

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*Director of Maintenance*

Shirley Manning  
*Director of Davidson Program for Independence*

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*Director of Transition Services*

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*Director of Human Resources*

Lisa Rueda, PsyD.  
*Director of Program Development*

Ernesto Vasquez  
*Director of Residential Services*

Judith Harris  
*Associate Director of Child Development Programs*

# **Families Connecting with Families International Conference**



The 2009 Families Connecting with Families International Conference, co-sponsored by the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI), Junior Blind of America and The Braille Institute, will be held from **Friday, July 17 - Sunday, July 19 in Costa Mesa, California.** This conference is designed to meet many goals that support the growth and lifelong skills needed by children and youth with visual impairments. Join us for outstanding panel discussions and workshops targeting infants, children and teens. To register, please visit our Website at [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org).



Conference features include:

- Interactive sessions and panel discussions to address parents' most pressing interests
- Networking with other families and professionals
- Free daycare program for children and activities for teens
- Fun for the whole family with special receptions and events

**Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa  
3050 Bristol Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626**

**Please register today at [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org)!**

## Calling All Campers!

Summer camp sessions are about to get started at Camp Bloomfield...and there's something for everyone! Families, friends and Junior Blind students are invited to take part in the independence-building activities that can only be found at camp. Hiking, swimming, horse-back riding and more all await!

Bring your family or a sighted buddy and experience the fun of the great outdoors!

**To register, please contact:**

**Frank Cardenas, Director of Recreation at  
323.295.4555, ext. 261 or [fcardenas@juniorblind.org](mailto:fcardenas@juniorblind.org).**



Maya flashes a smile before setting out on a 20-ft. rock wall climb.

## 2009 Camp Bloomfield Sessions

Session	Date	Age
Buddy in Training "B.I.T." Camp	June 23-28, 2009	5-14
Family Camp # 1	July 2-5, 2009	All Ages
Adult Camp	July 9-12, 2009	18+
Elementary Camp	July 16-22, 2009	5-10
Multi-Disabled Camp	July 26-28, 2009	All Ages
Junior Camp	August 1-7, 2009	11-13
Teen Camp	August 11-17, 2009	14-17
Family Camp # 2	August 21-24, 2009	All Ages

## Reaching New Heights!

Two years ago, Rachel Flowers prepared for her first week of Teen Camp at Camp Bloomfield.

Blind since birth, Rachel had never spent more than one night away from home.

A talented musician, Rachel blossomed at camp, learning how to be independent and push her potential to even greater heights.

Jeannie, Rachel's mom noticed the change in her daughter almost immediately.



Rachel plays a tune for some friends at Camp Bloomfield.

"When Rachel came home from camp, she was confident...even outspoken. It was such a great experience for her. I just wish I had sent her sooner!" she says.

# It's All About the Athletes at the 2009 Junior Blind Olympics!

On Saturday, April 18, 2009 more than 600 family members and volunteers joined to cheer on the hundreds of athletes who competed in Junior Blind's 5th annual Junior Blind Olympics (JBO). The event, co-hosted by the Optimist Blind Youth Association, provided children ages 6-19 with an opportunity to test their physical abilities in activities, such as archery, shot put, soccer throw, rowing, long jump, 100-yard dash and rock climbing. Athletes came from all over California, as well as Arizona, Utah and even Canada, making this year's event the biggest and best yet.

The day was made possible with the addition of Chumash Casino Resort as the event's Olympic Sponsor, as well as the support of returning Medallion Sponsors HBO and CVS Caremark, parent company of CVS/pharmacy. In addition, CVS Caremark Charitable Trust presented a check for \$35,000 to help fund Junior Blind's recreation programs, which include Camp Bloomfield and Visions: Adventures in Learning. Thank you to all who participated in making this incredible day such a huge success! To check out more photos of our athletes, please go to [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org).

*Thank you to our sponsors and supporters!*

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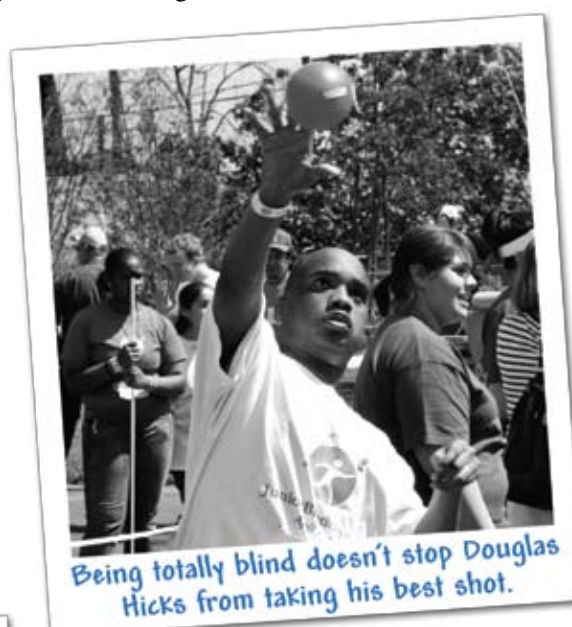
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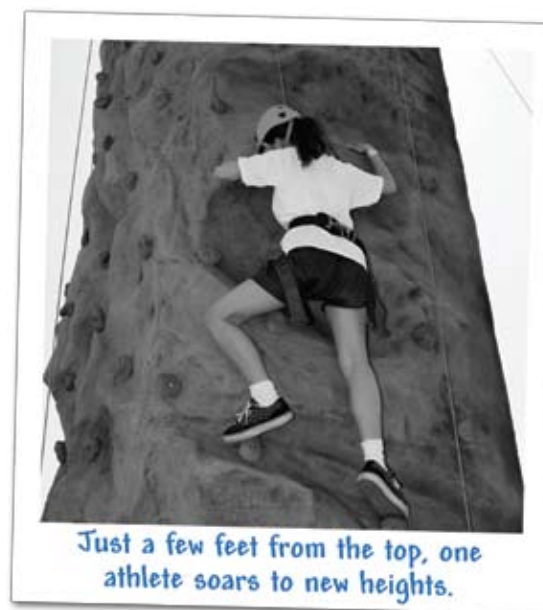
To learn how to become a JBO Sponsor, please contact Debbie McBeth at 323.295.4555, ext. 267 or [dmcbeth@juniorblind.org](mailto:dmcbeth@juniorblind.org).



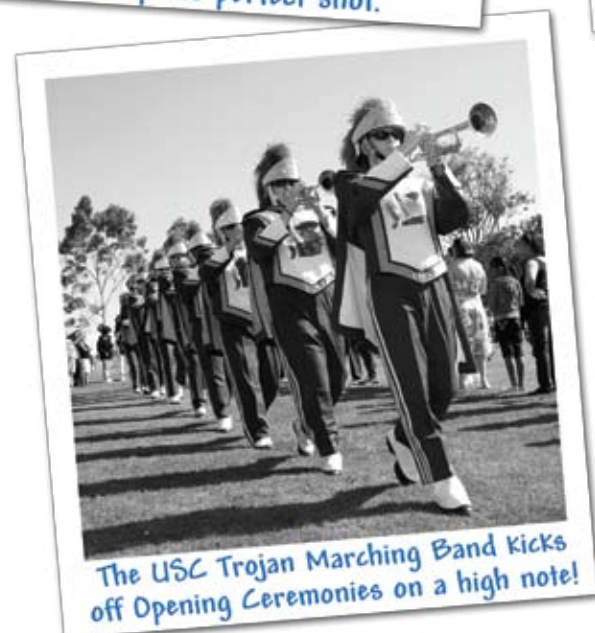
First-time Olympian, Joseph Hanna lines up his perfect shot.



Being totally blind doesn't stop Douglas Hicks from taking his best shot.



Just a few feet from the top, one athlete soars to new heights.



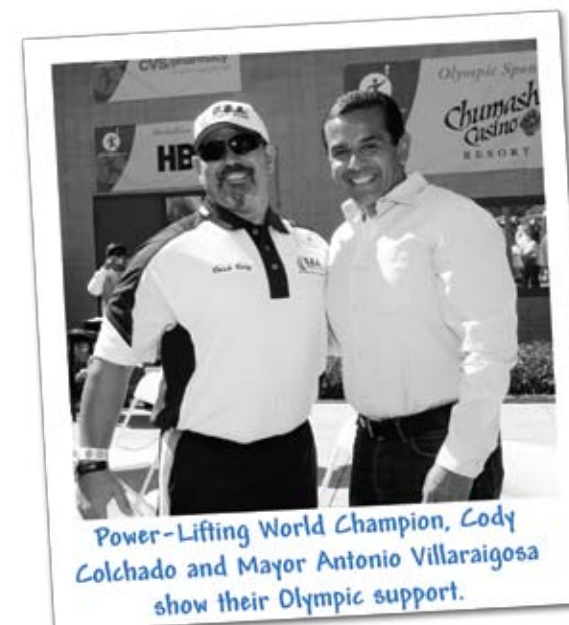
The USC Trojan Marching Band kicks off Opening Ceremonies on a high note!



Best buds, Sebastian (left) and Nathan show off their winning medals.



Traveling all the way from Canada, Justin Wack goes the distance in the long jump.



Power-Lifting World Champion, Cody Colchado and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa show their Olympic support.

## Welcome Leena Bandy, New Braille Teacher



*Leena (left) is impressed by her students' commitment and progress.*

Junior Blind's new Braille Instructor, Leena Bandy, knows the importance of Braille. She can read it in four languages! By becoming a teacher, Leena hopes to inspire her students to learn Braille and understand the impact it can have on their lives.

*Currently, fewer than 10 percent of the 1.3 million Americans who are legally blind read Braille but out of all those who are legally blind and are employed, 90 percent are Braille literate.*

"It's difficult and it can be frustrating but it's such an important skill to have," says Leena. "I'm happy that I can use the understanding and experience I have to help others improve their lives...and their chances of getting a job."



*"It helps to have a good teacher, a good environment and good company." —Christina Raffee*

Leena's students feel her passion and it's making an impact on how they approach the subject.

Christina Raffee is trying to learn Braille for the second time and she's succeeding.

"When I tried to learn a couple of years ago, I found it really frustrating," she says. "But now, I'm excelling. It helps to have a good teacher, a good environment and good company."

Another student, Lauren Frye is only one month deep. Her vision loss was progressive, beginning 20 years ago with a diagnosis of retinitis pigmentosa. Up until ten years ago, Lauren had enough vision to drive and until five years ago, she could read large print books. Now, she can see only shadows.

With a master's degree in City and Regional Planning and her own Urban Planning Company, Lauren realizes it was essential to learn Braille in order to continue doing her job.

"A huge part of my job is reading maps and I just can't do that without knowing Braille," she says.

As she taps away on her Braille typewriter, she explains how far she has come in just four weeks. "Before I came to Junior Blind I didn't even know what the letter A was in Braille. Now, I'm able to write letters to my daughters. I even taught them what I know so they can read them."

Like Christina, Lauren was frustrated as first. "I cried my first two day of class but Leena told me that I was doing great and I was being too hard on myself."

Alec Smale, an advanced student in the class offers help and encouragement to the "newbies."

"It's tough at first but believe me, it's worth it," he says.

## Target Awards Grant for Early Childhood Literacy

Committed to improving early childhood literacy, Target awarded a generous grant to help fund Junior Blind's Child Development and Vision Screening Programs.

"Early childhood literacy is a critical area of focus for Junior Blind. We are so grateful to have Target's support as we work to provide our children with the resources they need to succeed academically and in life," says Laura Hardy, senior vice president of development.

Serving children who are blind, as well as those who are at risk for losing their vision, Junior Blind is dedicated to providing children with the opportunity and tools necessary to read.

"At Target, our local grants are making a difference in the communities we serve," says

Laysha Ward, vice president, community relations, Target. "We're proud to partner with Junior Blind of America as part of our ongoing commitment to give back to the communities where our guests and team members live and work."

Since opening its doors, Target has given 5 percent of its income to organizations that support education, the arts, social services and volunteerism. Today that translates to more than \$3 million every week.

Thank you to Target for an outstanding commitment to our students and the community!



## Take a STEP Toward Greater Independence!

The only program of its kind in Southern California, Junior Blind of America's Student Transition & Enrichment Program (STEP) is designed to help teens and young adults identify areas of career interest and successfully transition to college or the workforce. In addition to learning skills for independent living, students develop work-readiness skills through individualized instruction, group seminars and internships opportunities that are matched to their interests, abilities and goals.

***Sign up for STEP Summer Sessions!***

### **STEP Session I**

Monday, June 22 - Friday, July 10, 2009

### **STEP Session 2**

Monday, July 20 - Friday, August 7, 2009

**To register, please contact Michael Martinez,  
Director of Transition Services at 323.290.6282  
or [mmartinez@juniorblind.org](mailto:mmartinez@juniorblind.org).**



## SAVE THE DATES!

**Special Education School Graduation**

Friday, June 19, 2009

**Children's Residential Program Prom**

Friday, June 19, 2009

**Families Connecting with Families International  
Conference**

Friday, July 17 – Sunday, July 19, 2009

**Family Resource Day**

Saturday, September 26, 2009

**Professional Development Day Open House**

Thursday, October 8, 2009

**Halloween Carnival**

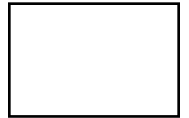
Saturday, October 24, 2009

**Holiday Carnival**

Saturday, December 12, 2009

*All events will take place at Junior Blind's campus at  
5300 Angeles Vista Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90043  
except the Families Connecting with Families International  
Conference.*

Junior Blind of America  
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Sample mailing Address