

# PERSPECTIVES

An Informational Publication from Junior Blind

## Junior Blind STEPs Out to Reach More Young Adults

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



**The STEP Mobile Learning Program provides blind or visually impaired students with much-needed transition workshops.**

Junior Blind's innovative Student Transition & Enrichment Program (STEP) is hitting the road with the STEP Mobile Learning Program – increasing our outreach to young adults throughout California. Jay Allen, Junior Blind's COO, commented that with the tremendous support of the Department of Rehabilitation and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the “wandering” version of STEP, the STEP Mobile Learning Program will offer one or two day workshops twice a month to young adults living in traditionally underserved counties in Central and Southern California including San Bernardino, Kern, Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kings, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, San Benito, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura.

“We knew there was a need in many communities for a program like STEP,” commented Michael Martinez, Director

of Transition Services. “The students can't always come to us, so with the support from Department of Rehabilitation and ARRA, we are now able to take the program to them.”

Like the original STEP, the STEP Mobile Learning Program is also designed to help teens and young adults who are blind or visually impaired to explore their career options and learn how to successfully transition into college or the workforce. Students learn how to prepare cover letters, resumes, and ability statements, as well as how to interview effectively. They also benefit from guest speakers with disabilities who have successfully transitioned into the workforce. Workshops provide students with hands-on training with assistive technology devices and software allowing them to search the Internet for career information, educational opportunities and job postings.

As with all of our programs, Junior Blind links students with resources in their community. The STEP Mobile Learning Program staff is bilingual, providing classes in Spanish as needed.

To learn more about STEP or the STEP Mobile Learning Program, please contact Michael Martinez, Director of Transition Services, at (323) 290-6282 or [mmartinez@juniorblind.org](mailto:mmartinez@juniorblind.org).



**JUNIOR  
BLIND**  
OF AMERICA®

Junior Blind of America  
5300 Angeles Vista Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90043  
(323) 295-4555  
(800) 352-2290  
(323) 296-0424 Fax  
[www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org)



## Leadership Team

Miki Jordan, M.S.  
*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 Training and Residential Programs*

Carmen Garcia  
*Vice President of Operations and Human Resources*

Donald Ouimet, M.Ed.  
*Vice President of Programs*

Corina Casco, M.S.W.  
*Associate Vice President of Children's Services*

Laura V. Campaña, M.A.  
*Director of Infant & Early Childhood Program*

Frank Cardenas  
*Director of Recreation Services*

Shirley Manning  
*Director of Davidson Program for Independence*

Michael Martinez, M.A.  
*Director of Transition Services*

Jackie Prohett, R.N.  
*Director of Nursing Services*

Lisa Rueda, Psy.D.  
*Director of Program Development*

# First 5 LA Grant Helps Junior Blind Children and Families Succeed

Junior Blind is honored to have received a grant from First 5 LA! With this support, Junior Blind will develop the Family Strengthening Project, a training curriculum designed to enhance our Infant & Early Childhood Program specialists' ability to help families succeed.

"We are thankful to First 5 LA for its remarkable commitment to our students and their families," says Miki Jordan, Junior Blind's President. "The Family Strengthening Project is a two year capacity-building curriculum that will further reinforce Junior Blind's excellent support of our families amidst the overwhelming challenges of raising a disabled child."

Junior Blind's Infant & Early Childhood Program provides a wide range of services for children with visual impairments and other disabilities. A key component of our services is helping parents support their child's development and success.

First 5 LA is a unique child-advocacy organization created by California voters to invest tobacco tax revenues in programs for improving the lives of children in Los Angeles County, from prenatal through age 5. First 5 LA champions health, education and safety causes concerning young children and families.

To learn more about the Infant & Early Childhood Program, please contact Barbara Christian, Admissions Coordinator, at (323) 290-6296 or [bchristian@juniorblind.org](mailto:bchristian@juniorblind.org).



## Junior Blind has volunteer opportunities!

### Children's Residential Program

- Help teach independent living skills to Junior Blind residents ages 5-21 who are multi-disabled. We welcome volunteers skilled in arts and crafts and music.

### Davidson Program for Independence

- Braille Classroom: Help teach adult students to read and type Braille (Grade II Braille competency needed).
- Independent Living Skills Classroom: Help teach adult students home management skills.

### For more information, please contact:

Debbie McBeth

Phone: (323) 290-6291

Email: [dmbeth@juniorblind.org](mailto:dmbeth@juniorblind.org)

\* Please note that we request a commitment of six months or more. Background check and TB test required.

## Brandon's Home Away from Home is Music to his Parents' Ears



**Like most typical teenage boys, Brandon enjoys listening to his music.**

Each weekend, Brandon leaves the Children's Residential Program at Junior Blind and returns home to spend time with his mom, dad and older brother.

"We love

having Brandon home for the weekend. It was a very difficult decision to enroll Brandon in a residential program, but we knew that sending him to live at Junior Blind would be the best thing we could do for him," says Brandon's mother Manami.

Brandon came to Junior Blind four years ago when he was 13 years old. Born with a seizure disorder, hypotonia (low muscle tone), developmental delay and cortical visual impairment, he required care and attention beyond what his family could manage.

"Brandon has come a long way since living at Junior Blind," says Manami. "Thanks to the highly specialized services he receives, he has become more independent, he listens and understands more than ever before, and he has become better at expressing his needs."

When Brandon returns home for weekend visits, his independence and strong will are undeniable. "He loves to listen to his music really loud and when I tell him to turn it down, he pretends he doesn't hear me. But, when he hears me walk into his room, he turns it down. Only to turn it up again when I leave," Manami explains joyfully.

Brandon's behavior brings a smile to his mother's face—not because she appreciates that her son occasionally breaks the rules but because it's a reminder that despite his disabilities, Brandon is still a typical teenage boy.

### Learn more...

Junior Blind's **Children's Residential Program** provides children like Brandon, who have moderate to severe disabilities, with a loving environment and specialized care that is critical to their development.

Deciding to place a blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled child in a residential program can be one of a parent's hardest decisions to make. Junior Blind reassures families about the program's many unique features and benefits:

- 1:2 staff-to-student ratio to foster growth and development (1:1 ratio available if necessary)
- On-site medical office and nursing staff
- Serves children ages 5 to 21
- Family focus with open invitations to visit the campus, encouragement of home visits, access to family support groups, and family camp opportunities at Camp Bloomfield
- Community-based outings and on-campus recreational activities in our aquatics center, gymnasium and specially adapted sensory playground
- Individualized instruction in orientation and mobility, independent living, cognitive development, communication, behavior and socialization tailored to each child's skill level

To learn more about the Children's Residential Program or any program at Junior Blind, please contact Barbara Christian, Admissions Coordinator, at (323) 290-6296 or [bchristian@juniorblind.org](mailto:bchristian@juniorblind.org).



## New Vice President of Programs Fits Right in at Junior Blind



**Junior Blind proudly welcomes Donald Ouimet as the new Vice President of Programs.**

Junior Blind is proud to welcome our new Vice President of Programs, Donald A. Ouimet! With more than 30 years of experience in education, specializing with children who are visually impaired and multi-disabled, Don is now responsible for overseeing and supporting all of Junior Blind's programs.

"All I have ever wanted is to make a difference in the lives of kids and adults with disabilities," Don asserts, "and I feel fortunate to be able to bring my experience and expertise to an organization that shares my values. All of us at Junior Blind want to give our students the best education possible and help them achieve all of the independence they can."

As the leading provider of comprehensive and integrated programs for children and adults who are blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled, Junior Blind works to ensure that our students have access to the highest quality of services necessary to reach their maximum potential. Each student's best interest is at the heart of all of our programs, and we strive to attract the most qualified, experienced, and compassionate staff possible.

After touring the campus, Don knew Junior Blind was where he needed to be. "I was familiar with Junior

Blind previously, but witnessing first hand the scope of the programs and level of care provided to students, was what sealed the deal for me," Don recalls.

"Like me, Junior Blind considers every student's individual accomplishments as an achievement for the agency as a whole," he continues. "Successes for the children we serve may seem small or of minimal consequence, but they are neither. A child who greets someone with a 'hello' or locates a single Braille character demonstrates the same magnitude of achievement as mastering geometry or writing an award-winning essay. These skills make a huge difference in the quality of life for those we serve and their families."

Prior to joining Junior Blind, Don was school director of the Oregon School for the Blind, as well as teacher, program coordinator and an administrator at Maryland School for the Blind. He holds a master's degree in special education from the University of Maryland and certificate from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry Teacher of the Visually Impaired Program. Don is a frequent lecturer and has developed training programs including "Implementing a Career Education Program for Students with Visual Impairments/Multiple Disabilities."

We are pleased to have Don join Junior Blind's executive team and know his contributions will be felt throughout all of our programs.



**Don's extensive experience and heart-felt commitment to the children and adults we serve make him a great fit at Junior Blind.**

## Camp Bloomfield Continues to Provide Campers with Lasting Memories



**New and returning campers, alike, can count on having a great time at Camp Bloomfield.**

Junior Blind's 2010 summer program at Camp Bloomfield may have ended, but the memories made there will last a lifetime. Camp Bloomfield is a magical place for

campers and staff alike. Nearly 900 participants experienced the wonder of Camp Bloomfield this year, including camp staff from all over the world.

"I had the best summer of my life. Camp has opened up my eyes to have a whole new perspective on life," asserted Nemo, a camp counselor from Australia.

New programming made this summer's camp sessions an exciting trip for returning campers. During the Youth Development session, Junior Blind introduced five Paralympic Sports activities in collaboration with the United States Association of Blind Athletes. Campers enjoyed tandem cycling, judo, swimming, track and field, and Goalball – a team sport developed especially for the blind.

In fact, this summer marked the first annual Youth Goalball Tournament at Camp Bloomfield. The recreation staff officiated over the event, ensuring that all the international certification requirements were met. For many children, this was their first time competing in a team sport.

"We were amazed by the transformation and excitement the campers experienced with this tournament," commented Frank Cardenas, Director of Recreation Services.

For over 50 years, Junior Blind's Camp Bloomfield has provided children and youth who are blind, visually

impaired or multi-disabled with a natural and safe environment to develop self-esteem, build independence and fully experience the joys of childhood.

Nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains in Malibu, this 40-acre campground offers various week-long camp sessions for children of all ages and disabilities. Family camp sessions are also offered. The largest of its kind in the Western United States, Camp Bloomfield serves hundreds of campers each summer and is accredited by the American Camping Association.

For more information about Camp Bloomfield, please contact Frank Cardenas, Director of Recreation Services at (323) 295-4555, ext 261 or [fcardenas@juniorblind.org](mailto:fcardenas@juniorblind.org).

## Reminiscing at Camp Bloomfield

Earlier this year, more than sixty former campers and staff arrived at Camp Bloomfield for a reunion with Nadia Kaplan, the first ever camp director and widow of our agency's beloved founder Norman Kaplan. The Camp Bloomfield alumni enjoyed singing camp songs, sharing stories, and experiencing the wonder of camp all over again.

"Being at Camp for those few short hours brought back such wonderful memories...and the chance to re-connect with old friends," exclaims former counselor Peggy. "As an educator and former counselor it is encouraging to see so many of our visually impaired students and campers as successful adults."



**Nadia Kaplan enjoys another summer day at Camp Bloomfield with former campers and staff.**



## Junior Blind Makes the Grade

At Junior Blind, our mission and reward are helping children and adults who are blind, visually impaired or multi-disabled achieve their personal goals toward independence. We strive for excellence in all of our programs and are pleased to share some of our latest outcomes with you.

### Early intervention can make a big difference...

Researchers estimate that nearly 85% of early learning depends on vision, affecting young children who have visual impairments and other disabilities. Our Infant & Early Childhood Program (IECP) intervenes early to help infants increase visual functioning, sensory awareness, communication and social skills aimed at improving their development. In the 2009-2010 fiscal year, 92% of the infants served by IECP met their personal goals for strengthening their ability to explore and understand their environment.

### A special child needs a special school...

Junior Blind's Special Education School (SES) provides some of our community's most involved children with a setting especially designed to meet their unique needs. Caring for children ages 3-21, SES is a nonpublic school that focuses on providing students who are multi-disabled with the independent living skills necessary to participate actively in community life and develop a positive self-image. At the end of the 2009-2010 school year, 82% of the students met their personal goals related to communicating their needs and preferences.

### Complex needs sometimes call for specialized care...

The population of children with multiple disabilities is on the rise, and their needs are increasingly complex. Junior Blind's Children's Residential Program (CRP) is the only facility in California dedicated to caring for youth who are blind and multi-disabled. The students in CRP have three to six disabilities on average. In the last fiscal year, we were proud to see 100% of residents transitioning out of CRP achieving the inde-

pendence necessary to move to less restrictive environments.

### Unemployment doesn't have to be the end result...

Young adults who are blind or visually impaired have found a wealth of resources and opportunities through Junior Blind's Student Transition & Enrichment Program (STEP). With the historically high rates of unemployment among the blind or visually impaired, our students are exploring their education and career options at Junior Blind, while receiving the work experience necessary to realize their dreams. In the last fiscal year, 98% of students were able to locate career resources essential to finding and obtaining a job, 100% were able to write a strong resume and interview effectively for employment or college admission, and 100% had a continuation plan in place that included finishing high school, enrolling in college or trade school, or gaining employment.

### Finding Pathways to independence...

Junior Blind's Davidson Program for Independence (DPI) has helped thousands of adults, 18 and older, who are blind or visually impaired gain independent living skills and pre-vocational training. Students prepare for employment and a fully productive life through this comprehensive residential program at our Los Angeles campus. Last year among graduates of DPI, 93% enrolled in a GED, post-secondary education, vocational or employment activity prior to completing DPI and 92% were proficient in the daily living skills necessary to lead an independent life.



## Share our Vision

Junior Blind helps children and adults who are blind, visually impaired, or multi-disabled achieve independence through out specialized services. We offer programs to thousands of infants, children, teens and adults each year.

### Children's Services

- Infant & Early Childhood Program
- Children's Residential Program
- Special Education School
- After School Enrichment Program
- Vision Screening Program

### Youth and Adult Services

- Student Transition & Enrichment Program
- Blind Veterans Training
- Davidson Program for Independence
- Advanced Assistive Technology Training

### Recreation Services

- Camp Bloomfield
- Visions: Adventures in Learning

To learn more about our programs, visit [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org) or call (323) 295-4555.

## SAVE-THE-DATE!

Calling all Junior Blind families! Mark your calendar for upcoming Junior Blind events you don't want to miss.

### Halloween Carnival Saturday, October 23, 2010

Enjoy a frightfully good time at Junior Blind's Halloween Carnival! Fun for the whole family includes a costume contest, games, prizes, and a haunted house. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Yesenia Rivas at (323) 290-6298 or [yrivas@juniorblind.org](mailto:yrivas@juniorblind.org). Admission is free.

### Family Resource Day Saturday, November 13, 2010

Get the information you need at Junior Blind's Family Resource Day! Workshops, seminars, support groups, vision screenings, adaptive equipment demonstrations and a vendor fair will round off your day of learning. A complimentary BBQ lunch and dessert bar will help you stay energized. Childcare, recreation and games for children of all ages will be available, so bring the family! For more information or to RSVP, please contact Corina Casco at (323) 295-6394 or [ccasco@juniorblind.org](mailto:ccasco@juniorblind.org). Admission is free.

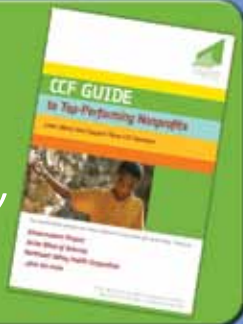
### Holiday Carnival Saturday, December 4, 2010

'Tis the season for holiday fun with the family at Junior Blind's Holiday Carnival! Enjoy an afternoon of games, prizes, and a family photo with Santa. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Yesenia Rivas at (323) 290-6298 or [yrivas@juniorblind.org](mailto:yrivas@juniorblind.org). Admission is free.

**All events take place at Junior Blind's campus located at 5300 Angeles Vista Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90043. Visit [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org) for more information or call (323) 295-4555.**

**Visit us on the web at [www.juniorblind.org](http://www.juniorblind.org)!**

*Junior Blind named a  
"Top-Performing  
Nonprofit" by the  
California Community  
Foundation*



*Junior Blind featured  
on SoCal Cares, a  
special segment  
produced by KCET's  
award-winning news  
program SoCal  
Connected.*



**Junior Blind thanks the California Community Foundation for this prestigious recognition. Please visit our website to see an excerpt of the report.**

**Junior Blind is honored to be chosen as a non-profit making a real difference. To view the segment, visit our website or tune in to KCET. SoCal Cares was made possible by the generosity of Junior Blind and KCET supporters Albert and Janey Sweet and the Occidental Entertainment Group Holdings.**