I promise to be a good investment with your gift.

KAITLYN SIEKERT

First Scholarship Winner!

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH AT www.vision-forward.org

Visit us after December 1st to view the new site!

DREAM PROVIDES YOUTH WITH VISION LOSS

SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES

Kaitlyn Siekert, a senior at Marquette University studying Biomedical Science, approached Vision Forward last fall with an idea for a youth sports camp. Staff were eager to collaborate with her and begin planning.

Being legally blind since birth, Ian had benefited from a similar camp when he was young and never forgot the impact it had on his life. He dreamt of providing this same type of opportunity for other youth. His vision coincided with the goals of the Youth Program at Vision Forward: providing meaningful opportunities for youth of all ages who are blind or visually impaired so they can have the same experiences as their sighted peers.

The program called Lelyn’s Passions, is designed to provide meaningful opportunities for youth of all ages who are blind or visually impaired so they can have the same experiences as their sighted peers.

With the support of Vision Forward and Ian’s inspiration and commitment to giving back, this passed youth summer with youth involved in a variety of sports, including swimming, track and field, self-defense and goalball.

Vision Forward and Ian are already making plans for the 2016 Youth Sports Camp in July. Look for details on our website. To learn more about opportunities for youth with vision loss, please contact Claire Egen, School Age Manager, at 414-615-0104 or cegan@vision-forward.org.

InFocus Fall 2015

If you, your organization, or someone you know would benefit from receiving InFocus publications, please let us know.

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Visit our website at vision-forward.org

“I was not opening him up, but the opening was so small that she couldn’t verify if I still had not opened his eyes. So around 5:00 p.m., they came and took Lelyn out of the room. We sat there in complete suspense not knowing what was about to happen. We had my whole family in the room when the eye doctor came over and evaluated Lelyn since he still had not opened his eyes. The pediatrician and nurse came in and said that they had called down to the clinic to have the eye doctor come over and evaluate Lelyn since he still had not opened his eyes.

"We had my whole family in the room when the eye doctor came back in with his partner and all she kept saying to us was “He’s a healthy baby, he’s a healthy baby.” Finally, I looked right at her and I told her to get the point. “Why has Lelyn not opened his eyes?” She got very quiet.

She got very quiet. She doesn’t know what she’s talking about, it’s not opening his eyes? How is this virtually possible? I’ve never heard of this ever happening. What do you mean? She must be wrong. She doesn’t know what she’s talking about, it’s not opening his eyes? But if it was just Lelyn, I would have been able to help it.

“My son had a great time at the camp and really enjoyed it. I think it was important for him to see other kids who are like him since he often feels like the only one with vision loss. The counselors and staff did a great job with all the kids. Thank you so much for putting this camp together!”

PARENT OF A YOUTH PARTICIPANT

InFocus Fall 2015

Page 5

Vision Forward Association

912 North Hawley Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213

Enroll in Vision Forward’s InFocus newsletter:

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Visit our website at vision-forward.org

"The Words That Changed My World"

Vision Forward Association has been providing early intervention services for young children, ages newborn to six years, since 1967. We have long known that vision loss has a pervasive effect on early childhood development, making it critical for infants to receive services as early as possible. The following is a poignant and heartwarming account by Stormi Schmidt, the mother of a child receiving services through our Children’s Program, who shares the story of her son Lelyn.

The pediatrician and nurse came in and said that they had called down to the clinic to have the eye doctor come over and evaluate Lelyn since he still had not opened his eyes.

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It’s that time of year when change is all around us — the falling temperature, the changing leaves, the transition back to school, the loss of a dear friend. Change is constant, happening daily in all of our lives.

Here at Vision Forward we embrace change because we know that it often brings opportunities and possibilities, as well as transitions that help us adapt and regain balance. Change also is necessary for us to be able to support and meet the varying needs of our clients.

This issue of our newsletter celebrates some positive changes that impact those with vision loss. On our cover, Storni Schmidt shares the story of her son Lelyn and how our service has helped him learn to live in a world he cannot see.

Our new Technology and Education Center (TEC) will provide individuals of all ages with access to and training on assistive technology that can help them learn new ways of doing things. And the implementation of Universal English Braille (UEB) will bring international braille consistency and help people continue to read and stay connected.

We know that change can be challenging and frightening, but so can vision loss. Our services work with change to help remove the fear and negative impact of losing vision. Our goal is to help clients make adaptations that allow them to continue to succeed and live lives that matter. What could be more important?

We invite you to immerse yourself in the stories of change and success we share in this newsletter and to come visit us at our office — explore the possibilities and to see how we look forward to seeing you.

LEAVING A LEGACY

BOB SCHLYTTER

Visiting Forward lost a cherished friend, Robert (Bob) Schlytter, on September 6, 2015. Bob was a true visionary who influenced the community through his engaging smile, genuine kindness, charm and generosity. Bob invested much time with Vision Forward, immersing himself in our mission to provide services to those with vision loss. He was a man who lived by his own often spoken phrase “Give the gift,” and he went out of his way to help others.

Bob was great at connecting people with causes and introduced many of his friends to Vision Forward. He also served as an advisor on our capital campaign, made our Mobile Store Van a reality, and strongly supported our new Technology and Education Center (TEC). Bob’s legacy will live on and his generosity will continue to touch the lives of people he never met — individuals who are blind and visually impaired — for many years to come.

Thank you, dear friend. You will be missed, but never forgotten.

For more information, please contact Jenny Hauser, Donor Manager, 414-615-0128 or jhauser@vision-forward.org.

VISION CONNECTIONS

Vision Forward was honored to host the Vision Connections Conference at the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on October 17. The day was filled with great information, resources and connections for individuals living with vision loss.

Special thanks to our conference speakers: Dr. Kimberly Ravn, FEIB & the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, Thomas Perly, Chicago Lighthouse For People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, Sarah Joy Schmidt, her son Lelyn’s advocacy story and many more.

For questions related to UEB, please contact Mr. Rick Roszkowski, rroszkowski@vision-forward.org.

Thank you to our vision forward store sponsors!

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VISION FORWARD TO TRANSITIONS TO NEW BRAILLE FORMAT

In November of 2012, the members of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted to adopt Unified English Braille (UEB) to replace English Braille American Edition in the United States. UEB will be implemented on January 4, 2016.

UEB offers a more accurate representation of print materials and will now be universal across the world. The United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support for specialized math and science symbols, computer-related symbols, foreign alphabets, and visual effects (bullets, bold type, accent marks, etc.).

Vision Forward is transitioning our braille communications and braille instruction to meet the UEB criteria. Contact Clare Egan, School Age Manager, at 414-615-0124 or cegan@vision-forward.org with questions related to UEB.

Join us for a Vision Forward Store special event

MULTI-SENSORY MONDAY

November 16, 2015  •  9:00 am – 7:00 pm

A

other Phil Di Mio will sign copies of his book, “Brinocular Macarooning as a Sightless Person.” Enjoy special promotions and the debut of this year’s holiday chocolate selection. Learn more about Vision Forward Store at www.vision-forward.org/store.

#GivingTuesday

S

upport organizations like Vision Forward with #GivingTuesday. It’s a 24-hour fundraising event where charities, families, businesses, community centers and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and give. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to learn more about how you can support Vision Forward and #seeingdifferently.
It’s that time of year when change is all around us — the falling temperature, the changing leaves, the transition back to school, the loss of a dear friend. Change is constant, happening daily in all of our lives. Here at Vision Forward we embrace change because we know that it often brings new opportunities and possibilities, as well as transitions that help us adapt and regain balance. Change also is necessary for us to be able to support and meet the varying needs of our clients.

This issue of our newsletter celebrates some positive changes that impact those with vision loss. On our cover, Stenri Schmitt shares the story of her son Lelyn and how our service has helped him learn to live in a world he cannot see. Our new Technology and Education Center (TEC) will provide individuals of all ages with access to and training on assistive technology that can help them learn new ways of doing things. And the implementation of Universal English Braille (UEB) will provide braille literacy and help people continue to read and stay connected, eliminating the difference in literacy between the blind and sighted.

We know that change can be challenging and frightening, but so can vision loss. Our services work with change to help remove the fear and negative impact of losing vision. Our goal is to help clients make adaptations that allow them to achieve success and continue to live lives that matter. What could be more important?

We invite you to immerse yourself in the stories of change and success we share in this newsletter and to come visit us to experience firsthand the positive results. We look forward to seeing you.

Tori Davis

**VISION FORWARD TRANSITIONS TO NEW BRAILLE FORMAT**

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UEB offers a more accurate representation of print materials and will soon be universal across this entire world. Vision Forward is excited to provide support for specialized math and science symbols, computer-related symbols, foreign alphabets, and visual effects (bold, bold type, accent marks, etc.).

Vision Forward is transitioning our braille communications and braille instruction to meet the UEB criteria. Contact Claire Egan, School Age Manager, at 414-615-0104 or cegan@vision-forward.org with questions related to UEB.

**LEAVING A LEGACY**

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Bob was great at connecting people with causes and introduced many of his friends to Vision Forward. He also served as an advisor on our capital campaign, made our Mobile Store Van a reality, and strongly supported our new Technology and Education Center (TEC). Bob’s legacy will live on and his generosity will continue to touch the lives of people he never met — individuals who are blind and visually impaired — for many years to come.

Thank you, dear friend. You will be missed, but never forgotten.

Bob Schlytter

**VISION CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE**

Vision Forward was honored to host the Vision Connections Conference at the Medical College of Wisconsin on October 17. The day was filled with great information, resources and connections for professionals throughout the state.

Special thanks to our conference speakers: Dr. Kimberly Krueger, PhD and Luke Scriben, Chicago Lighthouse For People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. Chicago Lighthouse was honored to host our presentations: "Binoculars: Masquerading as a Sighted Person." Author Phil Di Meo will sign copies of his book, "Sensory Mond" today, Saturday, December 5, 2015.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to learn more about how to connect with us.

Jenny Houser

**DINING IN THE DARK**

Sunday, November 1, 2015

BACCUS Restaurant

1111 W. State St., Madison, WI 53703 - 608-256-8484

www.dininginthedarkmke.org

Presenting Sponsor: Cardinal Capital Management, Inc.

For more information, please contact Jenny Houser, Donor Manager, 414-615-0128 or jhouser@vision-forward.org

**VISION FORWARD STORE**

Join us for a Vision Forward Store special event

**MULTI-SENSORY MONDAY**

November 16, 2015 • 9:00 am – 7:00 pm

Author Phyllis A. Duggan will sign copies of her book, "The Shopper: Questioning as a Sighted Person.

Enjoy special promotions and the debut of this year’s holiday chocolate selection. Learn more about Vision Forward Store at www.vision-forward.org/store/

**FEAST FOR THE SENSES**

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Hilton Madison Monona Terrace, Madison, WI

For information or to purchase tickets, please contact Jenny Houser, Donor Manager, 414-615-0128 or jhouser@vision-forward.org
We invite you to immerse yourself in the stories of change and success we share in this newsletter and to come visit. What could be more important?

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He was a man who lived by his often spoken phrase: “No Eyes” … The delivery person came into the room with papers in his hand. He asked how we were doing, and you could tell.1

Campbell has developed a new course, "Transitions to New Braille Format." It’s a 24 hour fundraising event where people sign up online, and everyone who registers will receive a personal sponsorship number to solicit donations from friends, family, and colleagues for a chance to win. You will be invited to attend the event virtually. Visit our website for more information. Thanks also to Vision Forward staff Dr. Heather Hinson, Vision Therapist. Participants heard representatives from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Special Education, and Adult Services.

#GivingTuesday and Seethingsdifferently

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The Vision Connections Conference aimed to provide information, resources and connections for people who are blind or visually impaired. The event included workshops, panel discussions, and networking opportunities. It was organized by Vision Forward, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired.

EXHIBITORS

A limited number of exhibit space is available. Please contact Vision Forward at 414-615-0128 for more information.

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DREAM PROVIDES YOUTH WITH VISION LOSS

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When Ian Kloehn, a senior at Marquette University studying Biomedical Science, approached Vision Forward last fall with an idea for a youth sports camp, staff were eager to collaborate with him and begin planning. Being legally blind since birth, Ian had benefited from a similar camp when he was young and never forgot the impact it had on his life. He dreamt of providing this same type of opportunity for other youth. His vision coincided with the goals of the Youth Program at Vision Forward: providing meaningful opportunities for youth of all ages who are blind or visually impaired as they can have the same experiences as their sighted peers.

With the support of Vision Forward and Ian’s inspiration and commitment to giving back, this past summer youth had the opportunity to try out their future athletic goals. In addition to swimming, track and field, self-defense and goal ball. The pedestrian and nurse came in and said that they had called down to the clinic to have the eye doctor come over and evaluate Lelyn since he still had not opened his eyes.

So around 5:00 p.m., they came and took Lelyn out of the room. We sat there in complete suspense not knowing what was about to happen.

We had my whole family in the room when the eye doctor came back in with his partner and all she kept saying to was “He’s a healthy baby, he’s a healthy baby.” Finally, I looked right at her and told her to get the point. “Why has Lelyn not opened his eyes?” She got very quiet.

First Scholarship Winner!

Kaitlyn Siekert, a sophomore at Edgewood College, was selected to receive the 2015 Vision Forward scholarship.

Kaitlyn has faced and overcome numerous challenges in her life due to her disabilities. She has persevered throughout the years and is on a path to realize her dream of becoming a Child Life Specialist — a career she chose because of her personal experiences with the Child Life Specialist at Children’s Hospital Wisconsin.

“I promise to be a good investment with your gift.”

Kaitlyn Siekert

First Scholarship Winner!

that was assigned to her family when she had childhood cancer. Vision Forward congratulates Kaitlyn and wishes her future academic success.

This scholarship is awarded each July to an individual from Wisconsin who is blind or visually impaired and looking to pursue a college degree.

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH AT www.vision-forward.org

Visit us after December 1st to view the new site!

InFocus Fall 2015 Page 5 vision-forward.org
“I promise to be a good investment with your gift.”

KATLYN SIKEERT

“Please contact Claire Egan, School Age Specialist — a career she chose because of her childhood cancer. This scholarship is awarded each July to an individual from Wisconsin who is blind or visually impaired so they can have the same experiences as their sighted peers. The pediatrician and nurse came in and said that they had called down to the clinic to have the eye doctor come over and evaluate Lelyn since he still had not opened his eyes. So around 5:00 p.m., they came and took Lelyn out of the room. We sat there in complete suspense not knowing what was about to happen. We had no idea what was going to happen, but I guess I was naive. As a parent, you have all these hopes and dreams and expectations for your child. You never think that something could happen, but I guess I was naive. You can read all the books, do everything right, have all the tests come back perfect and, guess what? Something still can happen and it is completely out of your control.”

Then the words that changed my world came out of her mouth. The doctor had taken opening Lelyn’s eyes, but the opening was so small that she couldn’t verify if there were globes behind his lids. Overwhelmed by what was just said, I made everyone leave the room, so I could feel all the walls closing in on me, and I broke down. What? He doesn’t have eyes? How is this actually possible? I’ve never heard of this ever happening. What do you mean? She must be wrong. She doesn’t know what she’s talking about, is all I was thinking. As a parent, you have all these hopes and dreams for your child. You never think that something could happen, but I guess I was naive.

There are globes behind his lids.

They were globes behind his lids.

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Empower, educate and enhance the lives of individuals impacted by vision loss through all of life’s transitions.