

IN FOCUS

Time to Play Ball!

It's that time of year again, when people in the Midwest start shaking off the dregs of winter and gearing up for "America's pastime": baseball. As beloved a sport as baseball is today, it was a sport that only sighted people could play and enjoy for the first 125 years of its existence. People who were blind or visually impaired could only dream of playing baseball.



Kids ages four to 18 enjoyed learning about beeper baseball from the MSOE Men's Baseball Team and staff from Vision Forward.

But in 1964, Charles Fairbanks, a telephone engineer, changed that by creating a ball that contained a small, sound-transmitting device that emitted a beeping noise. The leather exterior of the ball featured a small group of speaker holes, allowing the sound of the beeps to escape. This little invention rendered baseball an accessible sport overnight!

Vision Forward is working to make sports and recreation opportunities more accessible for youth who are blind or visually impaired. With the help of members of the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) Men's Baseball Team, a group of students got the chance to experience the joys of baseball

through an afternoon of playing beep baseball at MSOE's Kern Center. The kids learned the rules of the game, how to hold a bat and the importance of honing their listening skills.

This summer our Youth Sports Camp, to be held July 11-13 on the Marquette University campus, will provide an opportunity for kids with vision loss to enjoy a variety of sports and recreational activities that help them learn new skills, develop existing skills, build friendships and socialize with peers.

With the help of volunteer coaches and Marquette student volunteers, students will participate in beep baseball, swimming, track and field, goalball, yoga, judo and other sporting activities.

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Terri Davis

As the long days of winter ease into spring we witness the delight that the first warm days bring to our community. The outdoors are filled with people riding bicycles, running, playing tennis, working in the garden and soaking up the warmth of the sun.

Recreation and leisure activities are important for all of us. They promote good health, connect us to others and help us relax. Imagine for a moment that you have vision loss. How would you participate in recreational activities? What would make life enjoyable for you?

At Vision Forward our overall goal is to enhance life in a variety of ways for people who have vision loss. We work in partnership with our clients to identify ways of making activities accessible so they can participate in and enjoy them.

One young woman, a participant in last year's sports camp, shared the impact of our services on her life through the poem displayed at right. This lovely poem confirms for us that a little vision goes a long way in helping people achieve the goals that they have established for themselves.

We are proud and honored to help the dreams of others become reality.

May this spring bring new energy to your goals and aspirations so you too can help others realize their dreams.

Happy Spring! •

Play Ball, continued

Research shows that sports and recreational activities are important to the health and well being of all people, no matter the age or ability. However, the significance of our efforts is elevated by the fact that 70 percent of school-age youth with vision loss in the United States do not participate in even a limited physical education curriculum, due to the lack of specialized education, time and resources granted to public school teachers.

Our overall goal is to allow youth to experience and enjoy the common activities of being a kid, while empowering them to improve their health, have fun and be physically active.

If you or someone you know would like to participate in or volunteer for our Youth Sports Camp, **please contact Claire Egan, School Age Manager, 414-615-0104 or cegan@vision-forward.org.**

To support the Youth Sports Camp with a financial or sports equipment donation, **please contact Jenny Hauser at 414-615-0128 or jhauser@vision-forward.org •**



An Athlete's Poetic Reflection on Sports Camp

By Xin Ju Hippe, Age 13

I laugh

I splash

I swim through water clear

I get advice

I learn with peers

Yoga, soccer, goal ball,
track meet

Team work, friendship,
perfecting advocacy

I know I found my place
at Sports Camp

They support me

They give me a chance

Even though I cannot see

They lead me to a door

They give me a key

Arthur L. Ebert Endowed Scholarship



“We established this scholarship as a lasting tribute to the memory of my grandfather and his commitment to expanding opportunities for blind and visually impaired people.”

– JULIANNA EBERT

The Arthur L. Ebert Scholarship has been established at Vision Forward Association to honor the late attorney who invested his life and career in the Milwaukee community. The scholarship, established by his granddaughter Julianna Ebert and her husband Frank Daily, is a tribute to Mr. Ebert’s dedication to family as well as his life of service.

Mr. Ebert, who was born in Milwaukee in 1897 of immigrant parents, graduated with a law degree from Marquette University Law School at the age of 21 and practiced law in the same downtown Milwaukee office for more than 60 years: five years as a law clerk and the rest as a lawyer with his own firm, Ebert & Ebert.

In addition to practicing law, Mr. Ebert had a special interest in providing assistance to individuals who were blind and visually

impaired and those with other disabilities. In his free time, he served as a volunteer, guiding blind individuals to operatic productions and coordinating Christmas parties, which included escorting Santa and distributing gifts and silver dollars to young children who were blind. He was a member of the North Side Milwaukee Lions Club and served on the executive board of the Badger Home for the Blind.

Mr. Ebert was an inspiration to Julianna as well as to her father, uncle and brother, all of whom followed him into the practice of law. She says her grandfather “applied a great deal of human insight as well as his intellect and learning to his law practice. He focused his efforts on finding ways for the law to solve people’s problems.”

Vision Forward is pleased to be able to honor Mr. Ebert’s life and service by granting scholarship funding to students who are blind or visually impaired. **Please visit www.vision-forward.org/scholarship for more information. Scholarship application deadline is June 30, 2016.** •

Save the Date for Dining in the Dark!

Sunday, November 6, 2016 • BACCHUS • 925 E. Wells Street

A Little Vision Goes a Long Way!



Left to right: Lori Robel, Dawn Wangard, Lisa Konkel, Kathy Bostrack, and Tiffany Sotski

It is often said that we all wish we could see the world through the eyes of a child. Unfortunately, that view isn't always a clear one for the kids at Vision Forward. That's why in 2002 a little vision went a long way when a group of moms whose kids were attending the Children's Program worked together to help create our biggest fundraiser, **Feast for the Senses**. The work of the original committee still carries on today to benefit the Children's Program at Vision Forward.

Longstanding committee members include: Kathy Bostrack, Lisa Konkel, Lori Robel, Tiffany Sotski and Dawn Wangard. Together these women have turned this event into a well-oiled machine that generates over \$100,000 to benefit our smallest treasures, the visually impaired children who receive services at Vision Forward.

Vision Forward is very grateful to these dedicated moms for their volunteer commitment, despite their busy and hectic lives, to make this event unique and wonderful year after year. They hold a very special place in our hearts!

The committee can always use more help obtaining auction items, soliciting sponsors or selling tables for events. **Please contact Kelly Lynch, Volunteer/Events Coordinator, klynch@vision-forward.org or 414-615-0161 if you are interested in getting involved.** •

**IT'S ALL ABOUT ENJOYING
THE RIDE
THE FEAST
IS BACK.**

FEAST FOR THE SENSES 2016
Thursday, May 5, 2016 • 5pm
Harley-Davidson Museum
400 W. Canal Street in Milwaukee

For reservations and more information:
Jenny Hauser, Donor Manager
jhauser@vision-forward.org
414-615-0128

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!





**Jacci Borchardt,
Program Director,
(right) demonstrates
the Eye-Pal Ace Plus,
a portable magnifying
device that converts
text to speech.**

Technology Creates Possibility

Thank you to all who attended the grand opening of the new Technology and Education Center (TEC). It was a wonderful turnout and a fabulous opportunity to learn more about the cutting-edge products that can enhance people's ability to live independently. If you were unable to attend the event, we would love to schedule a time to give you a tour of the new space and share the many offerings available. **For more information please call: Cory Ballard, Assistive Technology Specialist, 414-615-0124.**

Thank you to the following TEC sponsors:

The ROS Foundation • Elizabeth Elser Doolittle Charitable Trusts • Industries for the Blind, Inc. • Bert L. and Patricia S. Steigleder Charitable Trust • The Brookby Foundation • Nona Graves and Dennis Ameden • River Run Computers, Inc.

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

eSight Enhances and Maximizes Remaining Sight



Vision Forward is committed to providing innovative technology to expand opportunity for our clients with vision loss. As a result, we have recently created a new partnership with eSight that will help our eligible

clients make the most of their remaining vision.

eSight eyewear are digital glasses designed to enhance and maximize the effectiveness of your remaining eyesight.

The eyewear is hands-free, mobile and works at all distances. Users can adjust the contrast, invert the colors, and magnify up to 14 times on what they'd like to see. eSight users can also have their prescription lenses built right into the eyewear.

eSight can be used to do just about anything from shopping independently in a mall, to recognizing a friend in a crowd, to typing on a computer keyboard.

Know someone who could benefit from eSight? Contact Jacci Borchardt, Program Director, 414-615-0121 or jborchardt@vision-forward.org.



912 Hawley Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213

Visit vision-forward.org!



- Learn more about our programs and services
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OUR MISSION

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



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VISION CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, October 1, 2016

8:30 am - 3:30 pm
Medical College of Wisconsin
8701 Watertown Plank Road
Milwaukee, WI 53226

Join us for the Vision Connections Conference and:

- Learn how to live with your vision loss.
- Access information, support and training.
- Experience products that can help make everyday life easier.

Visit our website www.vision-forward.org for details and registration information.

Here's what 2015 participants had to say:

"We were not aware of all the low vision apps available."

"Great conference — very positive."

"Accept my vision change & use tools available as aides. Very important content. Great professional speaking skills, definitely knowledgeable."

"I was very impressed with this session. I'm glad I attended and will visit Vision Forward."