



# Foundation Chronicle

Aug./Sept. 2003

*See how far we have come... Imagine how far we can go. Share Our Vision.*

Vol. XIX – No. 2

## Everyone is a Winner at Summer Games



The 8th Annual Camp Bloomfield Summer Games took place on June 29 at Camp Bloomfield. The event kicked off the 2003 camp season at Camp Bloomfield, the largest residential camp for children who are blind or visually impaired in the USA. At the Summer Games, 75 kids who are blind or visually impaired ages 5-12 teamed with 75 sighted buddies and competed in Olympic-style events – track and field, archery, and aquatics, and awards were presented to all participants.

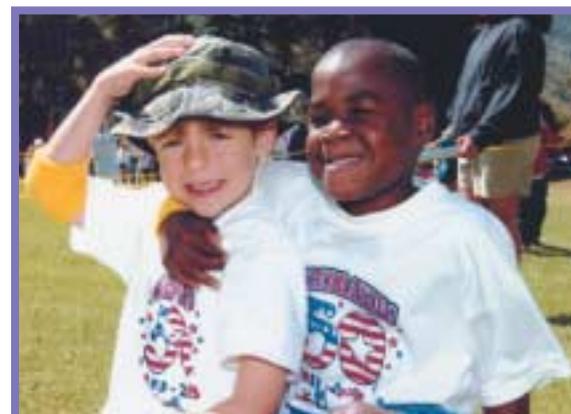
“Kids who are blind or visually impaired met new friends and became reacquainted with friends made at past events, and kids who are

sighted gained a better understanding of vision loss. We are proud to present this annual event where everyone is a winner. Proceeds from the event assist the Foundation in providing camp and recreational opportunities to 1,000 youth each year,” said President Bob Ralls.

Special guests joined the hundreds of community spectators in attendance.

Laurie McDermott, a comedienne, told jokes and introduced the camp counselors by their funny nicknames. Jenesagrace Samson, 13-years-old and the daughter of a former camper, sang the National Anthem. SUPERVISION, “the blind wonder of hip-hop,” entertained during lunch and quickly developed a large fan club. Members of The Really Spontaneous Theatre Group, Jim Meskimen and Tait Ruppert, kept everyone laughing throughout the day with their witty play-by-play commentary. The USC Marching Band led the Parade of Champions, and Malibu City Councilman Andy Stern concluded the event.

Once the events were over, the medals were distributed, and the campers began to unwind, the topic of discussion was how many days until next year’s event. Thank you to all campers, buddies, volunteers, speakers, entertainers, sponsors, Board of Directors, donors, attendees, and staff for making the event such a big success!



### Key to Programs

Camp Bloomfield

Visions: Adventures in Learning

Infant-Family Program

Special Education School

Children's Residential Program

Davidson Program for Independence



## Family Resource Library

In March, the Infant-Family Program hosted the grand opening of our Family Resource Library. We now have parent videos, sibling books, Braille materials, and adaptive toys that

we can loan to our families. Brothers and sisters can enjoy the books that teach them how to use sign language or how to deal with their feelings about having a sibling with special needs.

Mary Goldman, Director of the Infant-Family Program, explained, “The library is a dream come true, and we are grateful for a generous grant from South Central Los Angeles Regional Center and for many gifts from private donors.”



# From the President

Robert B. Ralls, M.S.



As the Foundation for the Junior Blind celebrates 50 years of service to children and adults who are blind or visually impaired and their families, it is gratifying to recognize the impact that this special organization has had in the lives of so many.

The Foundation began in 1953, in response to the recreation and socialization needs of a small number of blind youth in Los Angeles. Today, the programs and services of the Foundation are offered to over 6,000 young people who are blind or visually impaired and their families throughout California.

Our priority has been and always will be to provide services that enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to obtain the skills, tools, confidence, and capability to meet the challenges of independence, school, work, and family. Multiple programs and services for infants, toddlers, children of all ages, adults, and their families are based at our beautiful Los Angeles campus (children's and adult residential and educational centers, outstanding recreational and aquatic facilities, and dining hall) – used seven days a week. The facilities in Los Angeles have been totally upgraded to position the organization for the delivery of services for the next half century.

It is important to recognize that the hallmark for the Foundation has been and will continue to be a commitment to students and their families by caring and dedicated staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and supporters. The dedication to serving others by everyone in the Foundation family has been a driving factor in the success of this special organization.

Dedication, caring, and commitment will enable the Foundation to successfully address the challenges ahead and implement the vision for the future. Thank you for sharing our vision.

Best regards,

Robert B. Ralls, M.S.  
President



## International Vision Loss Symposium – A Big Success



From left to right, Board Chairmen, Denny Scott (AFB) and Jonathan I. Macy, M.D. (FJB), and Presidents Carl Augusto (AFB) and Bob Ralls (FJB) smile with the extraordinary Maya Angelou, who gave a memorable keynote presentation on opening night.

symposium, “Vision Loss in the 21st Century – Everybody’s Business,” that took place February 19-21 in Beverly Hills.

“Our international forum allowed us the opportunity to bring vision loss and blindness into the mainstream consciousness – if only for three short days. Thanks to everyone’s participation in the symposium, we can work toward our goal to ensure

The Foundation for the Junior Blind (based in Los Angeles) and the American Foundation for the Blind (based in New York) collaborated and hosted a tremendously successful international

that every individual who is blind or visually impaired has the chance to realize his or her fullest potential,” said Bob Ralls, President of the Foundation for the Junior Blind.



Ali Landry, special friend of the Foundation for the Junior Blind, was master of ceremonies for the Foundation’s luncheon.



Ray Charles charmed the crowd when he received a “Lifetime Achievement Award.”

## Matching Gifts

Would you like to make a contribution even larger? Check to see if your company makes matching gifts. Please contact our Development Department for more information by phone at (323) 295-4555, or via email to [info@fjb.org](mailto:info@fjb.org). Thank you for sharing our vision.

**Messages...** Awhile ago, we asked you, our donors, supporters, and friends, to send messages to our campers. We would like to share some of the messages. They can be found along the bottom of pages 2 through 7.

*“Even without vision, you can still become a visionary.  
Have a great time at Camp Bloomfield.”*

# The Monarchs: Networking, Jazz, and Philanthropy

It was an evening to remember...more than 50 people gathered at the Regency Club in Westwood on June 5, for "An Evening of Networking, Live Jazz, and Philanthropy," hosted by The Monarchs, the Foundation's newest support group.

This was the premier event for The Monarchs, a group of business professionals working to fulfill both professional and philanthropic goals, and it was a great success. Jason Russell, President of The Monarchs and a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, said, "I am very pleased with the turnout at this event and the enthusiasm for both The Monarchs and the Foundation. This event gives us every indication that the future of The Monarchs is secure, and we look forward to better serving the Foundation now and in the future."

Guests enjoyed live jazz, a silent auction, stimulating conversation, and sumptuous hors d'oeuvres while they

enjoyed the view from the penthouse suite. Thanks to our guests and the generosity of our event sponsors: Enenstein, Russell & Saltz, LLP, RE/MAX Beverly Hills, Sunset Boulevard & Westside Properties, and Alperstein, Simon, Gillin & Scott, LLP, more than \$4,000 was raised to support the programs and services provided by the Foundation for the Junior Blind.

For more information about The Monarchs, please contact Elesha Mavrommatis by phone at (323) 295-4555, ext. 267, or via email at [emavrommatis@fjb.org](mailto:emavrommatis@fjb.org).



Monarchs members and guests discuss the Foundation's next 50 years with President Bob Ralls.

## The Future of Camp Bloomfield

Jonathan I. Macy, M.D., *Chairman of the Board*



In 1958, Camp Bloomfield opened to serve the recreation needs of young adults who were blind. Currently, Camp Bloomfield serves more than 1,000 participants each year, and is located on 40 acres near the Pacific Ocean in Malibu.

The camping program provides activities to enhance skills in independence, to provide adventure, challenge and risk-taking in a safe environment, to develop leadership, to allow parents and other family members to become partners in growth and development, and to experience friendship, fellowship and fun.

Four years ago, the Board of Directors of the Foundation for the Junior Blind met with staff and other experts to develop a Strategic Plan. A major component of that plan emphasized the future of Camp Bloomfield. We proposed priorities, such as, adding new camping sessions with a focus on diversity, career development, sports, independent living skills, and access to technology. The goal is to establish Camp Bloomfield as the leading camp resource for blind youth in the United States.

A subcommittee of the Board, headed by Harold Davidson, Dan Dworsky, Robert Held, and Sandy Weiss, has already volunteered many hours. The legal team at Latham and Watkins has been an invaluable asset, and an architecture design firm, Levin & Associates, has been chosen. Prior to construction, we are making steady progress through the variety of relevant governmental agencies. A tentative start date for renovation is January 2005, with construction taking one-to-two years.

The camp project is a cornerstone of the Strategic Plan to expand the Foundation's development. While establishing a long-term endowment growth plan, major gift fund raising and planned giving must provide a growing percentage of private support. We look forward to the continued participation of our Foundation's extended family in all of our efforts. See how far we have come...Imagine how far we can go!

## Thank You to Corporations & Foundations

The Foundation for the Junior Blind would like to thank the following Corporations and Foundations for their support of our programs over the past few months:

**The Aaroe Associates Charitable Foundation**

**Amateur Athletic Foundation**

**The R. C. Baker Foundation**

**Change A Life Foundation**

**Community Development Commission**

**Ellison Educational Equipment, Inc.**

**Elks of Los Angeles Foundation**

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**Two Funds of the McCormick Tribune Foundation – LA Times Family Fund & KTLA Charities**

**Northrop Grumman Corporation**

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**The Louis and Harold Price Foundation Inc.**

**The Rose Hills Foundation**

**Gloria & Joseph Simons Fund**

**The Skirball Foundation**

**Sidney Stern Memorial Trust**

**Verizon**

**Weingart Foundation**

*"Summer camp is great with hiking, swimming, horseback riding, funny campfire songs...wow. Can I join you?"*



# Fun on the Golf Course Supports a Worthwhile Cause

Although rain threatened on April 28 at the Via Verde Golf Club in San Dimas, all 18 holes of the Fifth Annual Allison Plat Memorial Golf Tournament were completed due to bursts of sunshine. 120 golfers enjoyed a memorable day that included a barbecue lunch, hole-in-one contest, raffle prizes, silent auction, and awards dinner.



Allison Plat

Tournament co-chairs, John and Trudie Plat, were proud of the day's success and all who participated in the tournament including the golfers, volunteers, and over 70 sponsors.

Proceeds from this annual event support the work of the Foundation for the Junior Blind and the Foundation's Infant-Family Program. The tournament was created to honor the memory of a special little girl, Allison Plat. In 1989, Allison was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy/Cortical Visual Impairment and was referred to the Foundation, where she received services from the Infant-Family Program.

Jay Allen, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Foundation for the Junior Blind and also a golfer who played in the

tournament, said, "We are honored that the Plat Family and their wonderful committee organize this annual event, and we are grateful for their support. The committee is made up of inspirational friends of the Foundation, and we thank you."

Winners for the "Mixed First Place" were Godwin Iwunze, Carol DeGoff, Art Feggins, and Greg Jones. Winners for the "Women's First Place" were Rose Woodall, Jan Gerck, Cynthia Honsberger, and Bonna Rasmussen. And winners for the "Men's First Place" were Jim Brunson, Kenny Vaughn, Alex Garza, and Doug Czenzek. Congratulations to all of the winners.

Save the date for next year's tournament: April 26, 2004.



The Allison Plat Memorial Golf Tournament Committee presented a check for \$24,000 to the Foundation for the Junior Blind (left to right): Trudie Plat, John Plat, Jill Stone, Don Falkenberg, Susan Falkenberg, Leanne Baroldi, Debbie Powell, and Joni Berg.

## A Big Thanks to Our Golf Tournament SPONSORS

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- Bonna Rasmussen
- Jan Gerck
- Susan & Don Falkenberg
- Sylvia Marshall
- Jody Schweiner
- Dominick Ranalli

## STEP Toward the Future

This summer was the second summer for our Student Transition and Enrichment Program. A total of 40 young adults who are blind or visually impaired ages 16-22 attended one of the two three-week sessions that took place during June and July. During each session, the young adults learned interviewing and job-seeking skills and also participated in

job-shadowing internships in a variety of industries that included law, teaching, and retail.

According to Tim Richard, STEP Coordinator, a common remark heard throughout the summer was, "These experiences have prepared me to seek employment in the real world. Thank you for this opportunity."

*"When I was a teenager, I went to camp in the spring to help prepare for the summer campers. It was a wonderful place."*

# VISIONS Visits Sea World in San Diego



The group quickly put on their official Sea World t-shirts.

On May 24 and 25, a Visions: Adventures in Learning trip took place. Sixteen youngsters, parents, volunteers, and Foundation staff spent the weekend at Sea World in San Diego.

A tour of Sea World was provided by exceptional staff. Everyone was able to put their

hands into the baby shark tank and pet the sharks. We all learned something about the remarkable marine life. The kids also got to pet the Clydesdale horses and meet the new colt that was born early this spring. A highlight of the trip was the sleeping accommodations: next to the manatees and other marine life. Everyone was given special Sea World t-shirts to commemorate the trip.

The community service component of this Visions trip was the donation of canned goods to the San Diego Mission. During the weeks leading up to the trip, staff from the Foundation for the Junior Blind collected non-perishable items, and each Visions participant also brought canned goods on the trip. On May

25, the group distributed the food to the mission, and Mission volunteers were touched by the generous donation. Thanks to all who contributed - we really made a difference.



One Visions participant was eager to "meet" the sea turtle.



Our website recently celebrated its second anniversary. During the two years that the site has been live, we have welcomed over 63,000 visitors. The average time spent on the site is more than two minutes, and the average visitor views more than three pages. The site also received five awards this year.

Accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, the site has clear navigation and interactive content. Experience the site for yourself at [www.fjb.org](http://www.fjb.org) and remember that you can donate online.

## Join Our Legacy Society

We invite you to join our Legacy Society and make a gift that keeps on giving. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary this year, we are also planning for the next 50 years. YOU can help by placing the Foundation for the Junior Blind in your will, which will allow children who are blind or visually impaired to attend camp and other life-changing experiences. If you have any questions about any of our planned giving options including wills, bequests, or charitable gift annuities, please contact our Development Department by phone at (323) 295-4555, and thank you for sharing our vision.

## Get Ready for Our Holiday Adopt-A-Family

Make a family's holiday season a little brighter by participating in our Adopt-a-Family Program this holiday season.

"The past year was very hard for our family, and your gift showed us people care." These words echo in the thank-you notes written by the families of the Adopt-a-Family Program. More than hard work and love are needed to offset the financial challenges of some of our families.

When you adopt a family for the holidays, you create smiles that will shine all year long. To participate this year, please contact our Development Department by phone at (323) 295-4555.



*"Make memories to look back on many years from now."*



# THE VISION RIDE IS COMING: NOVEMBER 16, 2003!

We have created our first annual Vision Ride, an exciting event for motorcycle riders and enthusiasts that will take place on Sunday, November 16. This event will help raise funds to support, educate, motivate, and build self-esteem in each of our students.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Marcia K. Salvary, Director of Development, by phone at (323) 295-4555, ext. 220, or via email at [msalvary@fjb.org](mailto:msalvary@fjb.org).

For updated event news and registration specifics, please visit the Vision Ride website at [www.visionride.org](http://www.visionride.org) and join the ride!



## City of Los Angeles Honors Foundation's 50th Anniversary at Volunteer Luncheon

The Foundation for the Junior Blind recognized and thanked over one hundred volunteers on May 14, and also received recognition from the City of Los Angeles for providing 50 years of service to the Southern California community.

Bobbie Parks, wife of Councilman Bernard Parks of the 8th District, attended the luncheon and presented a resolution on behalf of the City of Los Angeles to Robert Ralls, the President of the Foundation for the Junior Blind. Mrs. Parks read from the resolution, "The City of Los Angeles is proud and honored to recognize this

exceptional organization for its amazing impact on the people served as a result of its programs and services. The work that the Foundation for the Junior Blind does is truly a shining example for others to follow."

Volunteers help students in their day-to-day lessons, accompany them on walks, and become friends. Volunteers are also instrumental in helping students build independence skills and self-esteem. Last year, over 1,200 volunteers donated 20,000 hours to the more than 6,000 individuals and families served by the Foundation.

Bobbie Baker and her group of volunteers from Grobstein, Horwath and Company have taken 11 children under their wing and become a family each holiday season. Bobbie and her team host a party full of music, decorations, food, and a Santa with bags full of gifts.

Tiffany Parker has been involved with the Foundation for 14 years. She attended family camp because both of her parents are visually impaired, and she felt at home at Camp Bloomfield. She later returned as a counselor. "The counselors were so caring that one day, I hoped to become one of them. For me, it was life-changing. The children show so much courage, bravery, and acceptance, that you cannot help but be inspired," said Tiffany.

The Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2003, and as programs have grown, so has the need for volunteer involvement. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact the Development Department by phone at (323) 295-4555, or via email at [info@fjb.org](mailto:info@fjb.org).



Bobbie Parks presents City of Los Angeles resolution to President Bob Ralls.



CRP volunteers with Debra Adams (left back row), Director of Residential Services.



Karol Schnaufer, Director of Recreation Services (right), and Tiffany Parker.

*"Listen to the birds and smell the flowers."*

# Nadia Remembers

Norman Kaplan along with his wife, Nadia, and a group of volunteers started the Foundation for the Junior Blind in 1953 to provide recreational programs for children who were blind.

At the international symposium that took place in Beverly Hills in February 2003, Nadia Kaplan was the recipient of the "Norman Kaplan Lifetime Achievement Award." As part of our year-long 50th anniversary celebration, we have invited Nadia to share some memories.

It was a great day when the Foundation moved from its old storefront on Santa Monica Boulevard, that was home for the first years of its

existence. The new facilities were on Wilshire Boulevard, a finer-looking building, but still not adequate to accommodate the hundreds of children that poured into the place for Friday night dances and Saturday recreational classes. On Saturdays, I was assigned to a small room for my Space Travelers, an active group of 6 and 7-year-olds. Norm eventually made arrangements with a church a few blocks away to use their gym, since he saw how constricting our area was. So, with my volunteer assistants, 20 to 25 children, books, craft supplies, sports equipment, records and a record player, we all trudged down Wilshire Boulevard each Saturday morning to the church. The year was 1961.

## Third Annual DPI Alumni Association Dance

The highlights of the third annual alumni dance on April 5, sponsored by the Davidson Program for Independence Alumni Association (DPIAA), were dancing, eating, and socializing. More than 60 DPIAA members and their friends assembled and enjoyed this festive event that was also a fundraiser.

Kelly Hill, DPIAA President, explained, "We wish to raise funds so that we can provide scholarships for alums and current students, and we are also in the process of creating a mentorship program to assist current students."

Jay Allen, the Foundation's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, was in attendance and noted, "This type of event is extremely gratifying because it reinforces our mission of helping students build self-esteem and independence skills and also allows us to watch our students return to the outside world with goals and a sense of purpose."



Norman Kaplan at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Foundation's current home in the Windsor Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles.



Nadia Kaplan with Harold Davidson, Foundation Board Member, and President Bob Ralls when she received the "Norman Kaplan Lifetime Achievement Award" in February 2003.

## Join Our New Board of Visionaries

As part of our 50th anniversary celebration, we are excited to announce the creation of our new Board of Visionaries. This Board will allow the Foundation to lay the framework for the next 50 years so that students who are blind or visually impaired can continue to learn independence skills and gain self-esteem.

Financial support from the Board of Visionaries will expand our Visions: Adventures in Learning program and provide life-enriching experiences for young people who are blind or visually impaired, expand our Infant-Family Program into new communities, help adults

who are newly-blind or visually impaired to find hope and independence for a brighter future, create two new classrooms in our Special Education School, and expand our Camp Bloomfield program for children and teens who are blind or visually impaired.

This Board will consist of individuals who contribute a specific amount each year, and in addition, the Board of Visionaries will provide input to the Board of Directors, review the Foundation's Strategic Plan, monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and sponsor and plan one annual event.

Our goal is to welcome 50 founding members to this new Board during our 50th anniversary celebration year. The Board of Visionaries is under the direction of Michael Grobstein, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, and Linda Falcone, Vice President of Development for the Foundation for the Junior Blind.

If you would like to join, know someone who might like to join, or would like additional information, please contact Linda Falcone by phone at (323) 295-4555, ext. 265, or via email at [lfalcone@fjb.org](mailto:lfalcone@fjb.org).

*"When you believe in yourself, miracles are possible. Enjoy camp and you may choose to return as a camp counselor!"*

## Board of Directors

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## Since We Were Last in Touch...

**Throughout 2003:** The Foundation for the Junior Blind is celebrating 50 years of providing unique and life-changing programs and services to the Southern California community. Please check our website often for updated event information at [www.fjb.org](http://www.fjb.org).

**February 19-21:** The international symposium, Vision Loss in the 21st Century – Everybody's Business, took place in Beverly Hills. Over 800 attendees participated in this memorable event.

**April 28:** The 5th Annual Allison Plat Memorial Golf Tournament took place.

**May 14:** All volunteers were thanked at the annual volunteer recognition luncheon. Honorees and photos are featured inside this issue.

**June 29:** The 8th Annual Camp Bloomfield Summer Games took place at Camp Bloomfield in Malibu. Check out event highlights inside this issue.



## Until We Meet Again...

**September:** Children's Eye and Health Safety Month: More than 100,000 people incur eye injuries each year, and more than half of the victims are children, therefore, now is the time to teach your children about the importance of taking proper care of their eyes with regular visits to the eye doctor.

**November:** National Diabetes Month: More than 16 million Americans have Diabetes, yet only half are aware that they have symptoms. In people ages 25-74, Diabetes is the number one cause of blindness.

**November 16:** The first annual Vision Ride will take place. Motorcycle enthusiasts will participate to raise funds to support the Foundation for the Junior Blind. More information can be found online at [www.visionride.org](http://www.visionride.org).

## We Encourage Your Feedback...

Debbie Laskey, M.B.A., Vice President of Marketing  
Foundation for the Junior Blind, 5300 Angeles Vista Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90043  
Phone: (323) 295-4555 • Fax: (323) 295-3021 • Email: [dlaskey@fjb.org](mailto:dlaskey@fjb.org)

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## Wish List

The Foundation depends on gifts from caring people like you. Here are some different ways that you can support our programs. The items below cost between \$10 and \$75 each. For further information or to make a specific donation, please call the Foundation at (323) 295-4555, ext. 230.

### Audio Books

### Batteries

### Braille Alphabet Blocks

### Cooking Pots and Pans

### Musical Toys

### Pop-Up Surprise Toy

### Rainfall Rattle

### Sleeping Bags

### Tactile Ball



## Foundation for the Junior Blind

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