

Creating opportunities for adults with disabilities since 1974



[Donate Now](#)



OCTOBER 2020 E-NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Greetings everyone!

The pandemic has certainly given us reasons to be isolated and to feel frustrated, inconvenienced, annoyed and all sorts of emotions. Being an optimist, I have been trying to find the good things that have come from this very unique and challenging situation. Lots of people I talk to have told me how they have learned how productive they are working from home. Some have taken the time to reflect on their priorities when this is all over and others have used this time to get long-delayed things done. Although we would rather be open and seeing our participants and co-workers every day, we have used this time to get things done!

We have used some of this time to convert so much of what we do manually to electronic format. Case notes and service delivery records, staff payroll, nursing reports and personnel files are just a few of these accomplishments.

We have also undertaken renovations in our facilities while they are closed. The restroom renovations are well underway with completion projected in early November. Beginning in December, we will be starting another round of renovations to address so many long overdue facility issues and we expect to be completed by the end of February. Once all this is done, we are hoping it will be a time when it is safe to look at beginning the gradual reopening process. We can't wait for all this to happen and for our participants to return to programs in our updated and improved facilities.

We will be posting our 2019-2020 Annual Report on our website in October. Now that our annual audit is completed and has been accepted by the board, we can finish up the report!

We continue to provide alternative services via Zoom classes (check out the schedule posted each day on Facebook), phone calls, and dropping off activity kits to our participants. Very soon, we will offer at home and outdoor services to our participants and their families who want this level of service. It will be available to participants who live with their family or in their own home. Let us know if you are interested in this level of service/support.

Thanks for supporting Vocational Visions! Be well!



[Email Joan](#)

DSP RECOGNITION WEEK 2020

THANK YOU STAFF

We had so much fun celebrating our hard working VV staff for DSP (Direct Support Professional) Recognition Week 2020. Our virtual celebration activities included daily themed raffles and online appreciation boards. Thank you to the families and participants who shared their words and videos of thanks for our staff (if you didn't get a chance to, but would like to, go to the link below and click on 'Add to board').

[Participant to Staff Online Appreciation Board](#)

On Friday, September 18, we offered a free drive through lunch

and goody bag pick up for staff (including freshly baked cookies from [High Park Tap House](#)). It was so nice to say hello and thanks in person. We love our DSP staff and appreciate their incredible efforts to make a difference in the lives of our participants in mostly new and unique ways during the pandemic. Here's a few of our employees stopping by to pick up their goodies:





EAGLE SCOUT SERVICE PROJECT TITUS GONZALEZ

Titus Gonzalez, a Life Scout for Boy Scout Troop 918, reached out to Vocational Visions recently to let us know that he wanted his Eagle Scout Service Project to benefit our organization. You see, Titus' aunt, Lupita, has been a participant of Vocational Visions since 2001 and Titus wanted to do something special to support the organization that has been supporting his aunt for so long.



Titus' goal was to collect 65 colored and 65 regular boxes of pencils and other craft supplies over the course of four two hour donation events outside of Walmart in Foothill Ranch. Titus knows that COVID-19 safety precautions require that participants not share art supplies when our facilities reopen, similar to what we are seeing in schools nationwide. Titus wanted to be sure our participants had enough supplies to go around.

We're excited to share that Titus and his scout group exceeded their goals.



At the end of his project, Titus' donation collection efforts netted:

- 1,200 pencils
- 150 pens
- 100 packs of crayons
- 113 packs of colored pencils
- 65 packs of markers
- 144 dry erase, Sharpie and highlighter pens
- 148 bottles and sticks of glue
- 19 notebooks
- 31 coloring books
- 24 bottles of paint
- 17 packs of card stock, construction and copy paper

Altogether, over 2,250 items / packs were donated. We also received a check for \$192.56 from the life scout project which were financial donations from shoppers.

To Titus and his fellow scouters of Troop 918 who helped out, we extend a great big thank you. What a great community response

too.



PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Bailey Nippél

In this issue, we are highlighting Bailey Nippél who has been attending our ADP program since 2016. We want to find out what she has been up to these past few months that our facilities have been closed to in-person programming.



Bailey is a busy young lady who loves being involved in a variety of activities. Her hobbies include dance, bike riding, crafts and, most recently, she has started learning to golf.

She has really enjoyed the daily connection with her VV friends with our virtual activities such as yoga, Pictionary and bingo. She has also enjoyed the learning opportunities via Zoom but, alas, nothing compares to being with her VV family in person. She cannot wait to be back together again.

Always eager to be involved with a new activity, Bailey was all in

when the opportunity arose to deliver 388 thank you bags as part of the Back the Blue program led by LAPD wives. Bailey and her mom made handmade thank you cards and she invited neighbors and friends from church to create cards as well.



The bags were filled with the cards and donated goodies. Bailey was on the team that delivered these gifts to the Harbor Station in Los Angeles to bless those who protect and serve and keep us all safe. She knows how hard these officers work and how much they sacrifice as her Uncle Ron has served as an officer for 33 years, the last 26 as an LAPD motor officer.



Bailey with Officer Ron and his Support Team

Bailey is so happy doing things that help others. From projects like this, thanking those that serve our communities, to packing meals for refugees in Sudan and playing with, and caring for, neighborhood babies (as well as her friends with physical disabilities), she is always on the lookout for the next project or opportunity.

Thank you Bailey for generously volunteering your time and talents.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

GHASEM MOUSAVI

Our organization is blessed to have a wonderful staff of Direct Support Professionals who provide guidance to our participants. This month, we would like to highlight Ghasem Mousavi, an ADP job coach who has been part of our Vocational Visions family since July of 2007.



Question: For the first time in 13 years, you find yourself coaching in different ways and using different means during the pandemic. What are some highlights of being a job coach during the pandemic?

Answer: I really enjoy leading the Monday morning Zoom exercise activity. I am still assigned to my same group as before the pandemic and I have been staying very connected with them. I make sure to remind them to practice safety measures and we do many activities together from a distance. Sometimes, I get to say hi in person when I drop activities off to them. I enjoy giving them reading, coloring and puzzle activities that I pick out for them.

Question: How often do you call your participant group members?

Answer: I normally call them before 9:00 am Monday - Friday and remind them of our Zoom schedule for the day. I also ask them to reach out to me with their comments on their experiences in our Zoom classes throughout the day. I'm so proud of them.

Question: What is something challenging, rewarding or surprising that has come out of working at VV during these unprecedented times over the last few months?

Answer: Even though we are further apart physically, I feel that our human connection within our ADP family is stronger than before. We share more time in large groups via Zoom and we've each had a chance to get to know all of the participants and job coaches in ADP better. I also believe our participants have shown more self-confidence and independence. We job coaches can learn from them now. It is amazing for me.

Question: What do you miss most about our in-person programming at VV?

Answer: I miss the in-person face to face communication because I think it is the best way of communicating despite all of the new technology. Body language is an important part of communication and it can give us hope and energy.

Speaking of hope and energy, anyone who has seen Ghasem in action knows that he exudes positivity and encouragement everywhere he goes. He really is a cheerleader for our participants and staff.

DONATION APPRECIATION

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the following two local businesses for recently donating hand sanitization products to our organization:

[Blinking Owl Distillery](#)

[RPP Products, Inc.](#)



*Thanks to your helping hands,
we have germ-free hands!*

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM)



October is
National Disability
Employment
Awareness Month

Each October, our nation observes National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) to recognize America's workers with disabilities and to remind employers of the importance of inclusive hiring practices.

Workplaces welcoming of the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, are a critical part of our efforts to build an inclusive community and a strong economy. Join us in celebrating the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities. This year's theme is **Increasing Access and Opportunity**.

[Click Here to Read More](#)

CALENDAR

NDEAM	Entire month
Down Syndrome Awareness Month	Entire month
Learning Disabilities Awareness Month	Entire month
Board of Directors Meeting	Oct 28, 2020

SAVE
the
DATE

Enchanted Evening 2021

Saturday, April 24, 2021

Hyatt Regency

John Wayne Airport, Newport Beach

FACEBOOK BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISERS



Do you use Facebook to keep up with friends and family? Did you know that Facebook has a birthday fundraiser feature making it super easy to support one of your favorite charities in honor of your birthday? We have been blessed to receive donations through this feature and are very appreciative. Click on the link below to learn more.

[How to Create a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser](#)

EARN DONATIONS FOR VV WHILE YOU SHOP

Link your **Ralphs Grocery Store** shopper's card to **Vocational Visions**:

[Ralphs Community Contribution Program](#)

Then, swipe your shopper's card, or enter your associated phone number, whenever you shop at Ralphs and Ralphs will make an annual donation to us.



Shop smile.amazon.com & select **Vocational Visions** as your charity.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to us.

Give back with
amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.