

Creating opportunities for adults with disabilities since 1974



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## MAY 2021 E-NEWSLETTER

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### A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Greetings and great news!

I am so happy and excited to let you know that we are approaching the finish line on all of the renovations. Everything is expected to be completed by the end of May. Can't wait for everyone, especially our participants, to see the improvements!

We've also set a **tentative** date for reopening our site-based programs - **June 14, 2021**.

When we first reopen, we will not open at full capacity as there are many considerations to reopening. To start, we will offer our participants options for attending site-based programs 2 days per week. On the other days, we will continue to offer virtual and in-home services. This will allow us to follow all guidelines from state and local authorities regarding capacity, social distancing and the sanitization of common areas and vehicles. Another challenge we face is staffing. We lost staff during the pandemic and have to replace about 30 positions to get back to full staffing. We are actively recruiting to find the right candidates!

The House of Champions Clubhouse will also be reopening with a revised schedule to start off and gradually going back to full operating hours.

It's a start and we're so anxious to begin welcoming back our participants!

Vocational Visions managers and program staff will be contacting our participants, their families and / or care providers to discuss their return. We'll be asking who has, or has not, been vaccinated but that is strictly up to each individual to disclose or not disclose. Our licensing agency has told us we must allow participants to attend the program even if they are not vaccinated.

Thanks for your continued patience and support for Vocational Visions!



[Email Joan](#)

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## EMPOWERING POSSIBILITIES OC

### 1 DAY TO GO

### MAY 20, 2021



24 HOURS.  
10 ORGANIZATIONS.  
1 CAUSE. **MAY 20.**

This **Thursday, May 20, 2021** is this year's Empowering Possibilities OC event which is a collaborative online giving day for 10 Orange County nonprofit organizations with the mission to serve those in our community with disabilities. VV is so excited to be part of this special day and funds raised for VV this year will go toward the much-needed building renovations that are well on their way to being completed. We have been posting daily pictures of our renovation progress for the last month on our [Facebook](#) page as we gear up to this very important fundraiser.

Please follow the link below this **Thursday, May 20, 2021** and help us create a welcoming and beautiful day program

environment for those we care so much about. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 and we are blessed to have a \$5,000 match opportunity.

**Don't forget to save **May 20<sup>th</sup>** on your calendar!**

**PLEASE CLICK HERE ON MAY 20th TO  
DONATE**

Click on the 30 day participant countdown video below to see smiling faces of some of the participants that we serve as they help us with our countdown to this important fundraiser.



Check out our new building signage at our Pala building. Doesn't it look wonderful?



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**NEW PARTICIPANT INTERNSHIP  
AMY EARLIX**

We are excited to share that ADP program participant Amy Earlix officially started an internship opportunity that was put on hold for the last year due to the pandemic. She rocked her interview with Disability Rights California (DRC) and is thrilled to be an intern for them.

Initially, she will be working from home using the laptop they provided her. Amy is currently in training and enjoying watching webinars and familiarizing herself with the functions of her new work laptop.

Amy's primary role will be to assist the DRC staff with revising their extensive self-advocacy library of resources so that it is more accessible to those with IDD and those with low literacy. Congratulations Amy!



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## DONATION APPRECIATION WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VAN VV PARENT BONNIE WOOD

VV parent Bonnie Wood's son, Mark Van Ryne, recently passed away. He was a beloved participant at VV for 13 years in our Emeritus program.

Even while grieving, the practicalities of daily life are always beckoning. Mrs. Wood knew she no longer needed the wheelchair accessible van that she used to take Mark out into the community. She explains:

"I'd always thought about giving the van to VV and, when the time came, it just felt so good! I wanted to give back to VV what they gave to Mark and our family. The staff made sure every day was packed with appropriate activities with his peers in a safe and friendly manner. Mark loved the frequent outings!"

If you read our newsletters regularly, you know that our spotlighted employees often say that more wheel chair accessible vans for our Alambre building programs would really help us to get more participants out into the community more frequently. Thanks to Mrs. Wood's generosity, we have a beautiful van that can carry one driver, one wheelchair and four additional passengers which will be perfect for a group outing when we reopen. Mrs. Wood's kind words and amazing donation mean so much to us.



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## PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT **BEN MOORE**

This month we are shining our participant spotlight on Ben. Ben joined VV in 1990 and he participates in our DTAC Pala program.

Ben lives in a very active group home in Laguna

Beach. He has enjoyed many memorable activities with his group home (even during the pandemic). Ben would like to share some examples below.



His group home has worked with a company named [\*\*Mayu Silk Art\*\*](#) over the past few years. The company has a mobile service where they come on-site and make silk painting art projects. They have made face masks, pillow cases and Ben made an amazing scarf.



Ben used a chopstick to write his sister's name on the scarf while it was still wet. But, the scarf is not for his sister. The scarf will be auctioned off at his group home's next annual gala.



When Ben isn't designing one of a kind art pieces, he is probably watching sports, going to Angels games, talking about Godzilla (or Star Wars) or listening to Justin Timberlake.



Ben loves Lightning McQueen from the **Cars** movies. For his birthday, Lightning McQueen came to visit him making his special day even more special.



As busy as Ben is, he is still excited to come back to VV when we reopen. He has certainly missed his friends and activities at VV. Looks like we'll be opening real soon Ben.

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT KOOSHAN KHOSRAVI



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 Kooshan Khosravi who joined VV in 2018. He initially worked as a Job Coach in our ADP program. He moved into our Supported Employment program as a Job Developer and was recently promoted to Assistant Manager.

Congrats on the promotion! Let's learn more about Kooshan in our Q & A below.

**Question:** How did you first find out about VV?

**Answer:** When I was in high school, I found out about Vocational Visions through Atrem. I was very interested and passionate about this field, so after graduating from UCI, I applied for a position.

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**Question:** If someone you know or just met has never heard of VV, what would you share with them to help them to understand what VV is about?

**Answer:** I would share the story of one of our participants who used to work at Albertsons many years ago but had to leave after the store was bought by another company. Recently, his old manager saw one of our job coaches and asked if our client would be open to being hired by their branch. She said she really enjoyed working with our participant and would love to have him work for them again under the support from Vocational Visions. So once we let our client know, he started his job a couple of days later. This experience really stuck with me to prove that VV can help people with disabilities become the best employees and make their lives so much better.

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**Question:** What is your favorite part of your job at VV?

**Answer:** Being able to help our participants and making sure they are happy and independent is the best part of my job.

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**Question:** What is something that could be added, removed or changed to make VV better?

**Answer:** I think if we could do more marketing to business owners to let them know that our clients have so much to offer, this would benefit VV and our participants at the same time.

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**Question:** Did you volunteer or work with people who are uniquely abled before working at VV?

**Answer:** In high school I had a friend with intellectual disabilities. I

enjoyed hanging out with him since he was a really nice guy and I helped him with his studies.

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**Question:** Are there any interesting, unique or fun facts about you that you would like to share with us?

**Answer:** I'm certified to coach children soccer teams by U.S. Soccer (Federation) and I can also coach high school soccer teams in California.

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**Question:** What is your motto for life or a quote that really resonates with you?

**Answer:** I just follow the basic principle of treating others the way you want to be treated and also being as kind and helpful as possible.

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While Kooshan hasn't been here long, he is well liked by our participants and his recent promotion shows he has proven his value to our organization quickly. Congratulations Kooshan on your new Assistant Manager position in Supported Employment.

*Congratulations  
Kooshan*

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## MAY CALENDAR

Deafness Awareness Week	May 3 - 9, 2021
Empowering Possibilities OC Giving Day	May 20, 2021
Global Accessibility Awareness Day	May 21, 2021
VV Board of Directors Meeting	May 26, 2021
Memorial Day *	May 31, 2021

\* Vocational Visions is closed on this day

**SAVE  
the  
DATE**

Enchanted Evening 2022  
**All You Need is Love**

Saturday, April 30, 2022  
Hyatt Regency  
John Wayne Airport, Newport Beach



## EARN DONATIONS FOR VV WHILE YOU SHOP

Give back with  
**amazon smile**  
You shop. Amazon gives.

Click on this link to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to go right to the page to select **Vocational Visions** as your charity for Amazon purchases.

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

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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.

