

The Window

The Maryland School for the Blind

www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org



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We like to share our successes with you, however, if you would like to be removed from The Window mailing list, please call 410-319-5722 or send an email to taiishap@mdschblind.org

PRODUCED BY THE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
FOR FRIENDS OF
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Julia Stockberger

ONE YEAR HAS MADE A VERY BIG DIFFERENCE FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLD JULIA STOCKBERGER.

It was hard to imagine a year ago, that today, one of Julia Stockberger's favorite activities would be reading Disney or Hannah Montana stories to her mother, teachers or other children.

The bright and inquisitive 4-year-old Julia, spent last year dividing her time between The Maryland School for the Blind's Early Childhood program and her local Baltimore County school developing the fine motor and other skills that students who are blind or visually impaired need before they can even begin to learn braille.

"Julia is very smart and has always been interested in learning new things," notes her mother, Jennifer Roth. "But this year, her second in the program, she has progressed incredibly well, especially with the support she receives at both schools."

Julia's teachers agree wholeheartedly, so much so, that she will attend kindergarten full-time next year at Battle Grove Elementary School.

"I can tell you, Julia is a much different child this year," affirms her MSB teacher, Michelle Hoffman-Horseman. "Like many students, she had to deal with the many challenges and frustrations involved in learning how to read and write braille." Now, she is actually reading better than some of the sighted students at her public school.

Born prematurely and blind, Julia spent the first three months of her life in the hospital. At five months old, she was enrolled in MSB's Infant and Toddler program, which provides a full



Julia and her mom Jennifer in the Beaston Early Learning Center.

range of family counseling, parent training, special instruction, playgroup, social work, therapeutic consultation and diagnostic evaluation services in the child's home or other areas, such as a day care center, relative's home or hospital.

MSB's infant and toddler services—designed for children from birth until age three, who have suspected or diagnosed visual impairments—are part of a statewide early

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

With every March comes the first warm days and the first signs of spring. It truly is a time of hope and renewal, discovery and growth, and the incredible promise of the reawakening world around us.

As someone who has spent his entire professional career in educational settings for children with visual impairments, I am amazed at how many days we experience many of the same qualities of spring right here on campus. Whether it is a student who gains a new skill or discovers a new possibility, a new piece of technology for our students, or enhanced learning facilities, I experience that same feeling of hope and promise.

That really is what makes The Maryland School for the Blind such a special place. Through our on-campus programs and our outreach services in each of Maryland's county school systems and Baltimore City, our mission is to ensure

that every student who is blind, visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities reaches her or his fullest potential. Our goal is to make sure that they have the knowledge and skills needed to be successful, independent and well-rounded contributing members of their communities.

To see hope, discovery and growth shape the lives and futures of these young Marylanders is to know, without question, that you have chosen the right career.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Bina, Ed.D.
President
The Maryland School for the Blind



MSB STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Carolyn Kilgore, NAMED NEW CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The Maryland School for the Blind appointed Carolyn Kilgore as Chief Development Officer this past September.

A key member of our strategic planning and operational team, she immediately started working with the current staff to enhance fundraising initiatives, plan and implement major gift campaigns, secure grants and increase media exposure.

"I'm excited to be raising funds at such an important, nationally renowned school with a history of meeting the educational needs of blind, visually impaired and multiply disabled children in Maryland for almost 157 years," she affirms.



Prior to joining us, Kilgore served for eleven years as Chief Development Officer of Mosaic Community Services, Inc., a community mental health program affiliated with Sheppard & Enoch Pratt Foundation. She was responsible for all facets of grant writing, fundraising, business development, marketing, public relations and special events.

Kilgore completed her graduate studies in community organization at the University of Maryland. Her undergraduate studies were completed at the University of Minnesota in psychology and social work. A Minnesota native, she and her husband have lived in Baltimore for over 30 years.

DONATE ONLINE – www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please donate to MSB. Donations may be made via our website at www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org, by calling us at **410-444-5000 extension 1207** or by check payable to **The Maryland School for the Blind, 3501 Taylor Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21236**

Donate a vehicle today!
It's easy.
Call 1-866-MSB-MYCAR

intervention program that give children the start they deserve at no cost to the families, thanks to state funding and the generous contributions of donors. "There's alot involved in preparing a child to read and write braille for the teacher, the parents, and of course, the child," adds Hoffman-Horseman. "Julia has come a long way in a very short period of time."

The Maryland School for the Blind's goals are to equip students with visual impairments with the skills and independence they need to return to and be successful in their local schools. Offering long term, short term, or part time placement, the average length of stay of MSB students is 4-5 years before they are mainstreamed back into their local schools. Assigned to a general education kindergarten next

year, Julia will be the only student with visual impairments in the class. She will continue to receive additional vision support and orientation and mobility instruction from Baltimore County vision teacher, Julie Gaynor.

"A very good partnership between The Maryland School for the Blind and Baltimore County has benefitted Julia tremendously," confirms Gaynor, who looks forward to Julia spending the full day at Battle Grove Elementary next year.

Julia's mother feels much the same way. "The Maryland School for the Blind has been there for us for a long time" notes Roth. "We will miss her teachers. But Julia has come so far. This will be a new experience for her, and I think it will be a good one."

Major Gifts Serve as Launch Pad for New Independent Living Facility

Two prominent names in Maryland philanthropy have taken the lead in funding a critically needed new independent living housing for The Maryland School for the Blind (MSB).

Started in 1984, MSB's Independent Living Program is designed to teach students the living skills needed to achieve, in a real life setting, at a maximum level of independence by the time of graduation. The school is currently seeking a total of \$240,000 to upgrade existing residential units for the program and build one of the highest priority buildings, a 4 bedroom, 2 bath home for independent living skills instruction.

With a history of supporting central Maryland educational and civic organizations, The Middendorf Foundation was first, announcing a start-up donation of \$75,000. The non-profit organization, headquartered in Baltimore, has supported MSB since the early 1960's.

Additional support followed with a two-year, \$100,000 commitment pledged by L.H. Cranston Company, a well-known electrical, mechanical and plumbing contractor.

The new facility will increase the overall capacity of MSB's Independent Living Program by 6-8 students, providing an equal number of slots for male and female students, and create

approved accessible options for students in wheelchairs. MSB will continue to raise funds through grants, gifts and donations to further expand the program.

Work is scheduled to begin in the late summer of 2010.



L.H. Cranston president, Norm Hatmaker and MSB president, Dr. Michael Bina.

The Maryland School for the Blind is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that depends on your support and donations to help students become successful, independent adults. Please consider making a contribution to make a difference in a child's life.

The New Beaston Early Learning Center Now Open

Outgrowing the lower level of Newcomer Hall, The Maryland School for the Blind's Early Childhood program moved this past January to its new home on campus—the newly renovated, technologically readied Beaston Early Learning Center.



Visually impaired students and sighted peers in the science room of the new Beaston Early Learning Center.

“This truly represents a significant move up,” notes Early Childhood Coordinator, Karen Frank. “For one thing, we now have our own space. But, more importantly, the building’s design and its improvements will make it easier to meet the specific needs of the very young student.”

A former dormitory, the Beaston Early Learning Center has been updated with a new kitchen, a laundry room, cabinetry, wiring and outlets for computers and assistive technology. The former bedrooms are also being used to separate the students into smaller, less easily distracted reading, writing, listening, mathematics and discovery (sensory skill) groups.

“The staff did a wonderful job of setting things up in a short period of time,” adds Frank. “And the parents like it too, especially the convenient pick-up and drop-off zone.”

The Early Childhood program serves students from age three through kindergarten and enrolls both visually impaired students and sighted peers.

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@msb1853

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The Maryland School for the Blind

Grant Received from the United Way

The United Way of Central Maryland awarded The Maryland School for the Blind a grant of \$4,995 to purchase a MountBatten Braille Writer Learning System.

The MountBatten Braille Writer reinforces recognition of braille characters—utilizing speech output to allow experiential learning. It also makes it possible to introduce pre-braille activities and play for young children long before they are physically able to use traditional mechanical braille writers.

This new piece of technology is an invaluable asset for our Early Childhood program visions teachers, whose primary focus is assuring school readiness. This technology will help prepare visually impaired and blind pre-school children throughout Baltimore County for kindergarten, and the introduction of braille instruction. United Way giving codes for MSB are on our website at www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org.

MSB BOARD MEETING

MSB's Board of Directors will hold their annual board meeting and retreat on May 14th and 15th.
410-444-5000 extension 1201

Mark Your Calendar

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April 15, 1pm & 7pm

May 7, 6pm

May 4-6, 7pm

May 19

May 31

June 7

Spring Concert

Lions Club Basket Bingo

School Play: The Jungle Book

Founder's Day

Memorial Day (campus closed)

Graduation