

FLORIDA LIONS

Conklin Center

for the blind

# transitions

developing the potential for independence

FL LIONS CONKLIN CENTER FOR THE BLIND

405 White Street, Daytona Beach, FL 32114

386.258.3441 • [www.conklincenter.org](http://www.conklincenter.org)

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## Accreditation Renewed

Florida Lions Conklin Center has been reaccredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services (NAC) through December 31, 2016. This five-year accreditation is the longest possible term, and is affirmation by a team of experts in the field of vision services of the Center's excellence in program services, professional staff and governing board. The process focuses on services provided, which were described by the review team as "unique and can be viewed as a model in the field of vision rehabilitation."

This is the seventh time that the Center voluntarily conducted the rigorous self-evaluation since 1982. Going forward, accreditation will be even more important as it will be a requirement for any agency that receives funds from Florida's Division of Blind Services.



## Hope for Lydia

When Lydia was born her parents were told by an ophthalmologist that she would be totally blind. That's because Lydia has Albinism which caused her eyes to be translucent and lacking pigment. At one month of age Lydia was referred to the Conklin Center where Early Intervention Specialist, Stacey Mayernik, conducted an evaluation and discovered that Lydia visually responded to light and seemed to react to her face. Initially, her parents did not have much hope that Lydia would see and seemed resigned to her blindness. Discouraged by the doctor's severe diagnosis, for several months they kept saying that they didn't think she could see anything.

But knowing the importance of early vision stimulation and encouraged by her evaluation, Ms. Mayernik persisted and instructed them to encourage Lydia's vision using brightly contrasted objects, shiny materials, and toys that light up. She showed them how to help Lydia interact with her environment through touch and to use descriptive language to develop concepts that would help her brain to process what images she might be seeing. During weekly sessions over many months, she loaned the family (Mom, Dad and Grandma) equipment and taught them interactive activities using sound, smell, tactile, and movement to do with Lydia that would promote



normal development of eating skills, language, self help and mobility.

Then the most amazing things started to happen! Lydia began to reach out for silent objects and pick them up. She started to visually track toys and people moving around the room. She even enjoyed looking at pictures in books and was able to visually find the textured spots to feel without the help of her mom. She could see shapes on her light box and hand them to her grandmother. She began to crawl and find tiny items on the carpet. She could even see her brown Cheerios® on her white highchair tray and pick them up to feed herself!

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# From the Executive Director

*Dear Friends,*

*It is wonderful to be able to share Lydia's story with you. Each year, Stacey Mayernik, our Early Intervention Specialist works with about 50 children and their family members. It is so important to show parents how to help their visually impaired children learn the things that other children pick up visually. Research shows that 80% of early learning is acquired by sight.*

*Because the needs of our students – both children and adults – are unique, the most effective teaching format is one to one. It is also more costly than a classroom setting. With children, teaching takes place in the home; adult students complete a personalized training program in the Center with the goal of holding a job and living on their own. You help make this possible through your kind support.*

*Usually at this time of year, I ask you to join us for the annual Conklin Center Walk held in June. Please note it's been moved to October 6 to coincide with White Cane Awareness Day held across the country. I hope you will join us.*

*Besides asking you to support the walk in the fall, I am going to ask you to make a contribution to help our students today. You might make a Tribute Gift in honor of Mother's Day or Father's Day using the enclosed envelope. Please consider joining our Four Seasons Club by making an automatic monthly contribution via credit card using our safe and secure process. This helps ensure a stable source of income for the Center while reducing fundraising costs. Every gift matters when someone needs our services.*

*Thank you from all of us at the Conklin Center. Best wishes for a wonderful summer.*

**Robert T. Kelly**  
**Executive Director**



## Hope for Lydia continued from front page

Now 15 months old, Lydia is walking and talking. She brings out her favorite books from the toy box and turns the pages while pretending to read. She is learning colors, shapes, numbers and alphabet letters by sight. She especially enjoys doing crafts with glitter and glue. She loves to walk barefoot on the grass in the backyard and wears her sunglasses whenever she is outside. A recent visit to a new ophthalmologist revealed that Lydia has measureable vision functioning of 20/100. While this is still outside of the range of "normal" vision (20/20 to 20/60) it is great news for a child who was expected to be blind. There is hope that her vision will be further improved by prescription glasses on her next visit to the eye doctor when she turns age two.

The lack of pigment in eyes is rare and can lead to total blindness. Would that have been Lydia's

fate? We don't know for sure, but do know that early vision stimulation can help the brain make new pathways. Luckily Lydia didn't have to find out thanks to our Early Intervention program and a family working together to help Lydia develop her full potential.

Lydia will continue to receive Early Intervention services monthly until she turns three.

Regular screenings of children's vision are important to detect eye problems. When caught early successful treatment is often possible. The American Academy of Ophthalmology ([www.geteyesmart.org](http://www.geteyesmart.org)) recommends children's vision screening by a pediatrician, family doctor or other trained health professional at birth, 6 months to one year, 3 to 3 1/2 years of age and upon entering school or, of course, any time a problem is suspected.

## Misconceptions & Myths About Blindness

There are many misconceptions about blindness.

### **Myth - Somehow the other senses of people who are blind develop super powers.**

What is true is that loss of eyesight means learning to do familiar tasks differently. Through training and hard work people who are blind learn to rely on and use their other senses in new ways.

For example, in Orientation & Mobility instruction, when learning how to travel along a new route, one of several skills used to scan the area - instead of vision - is to listen to the sounds in the environment. Students develop the ability to identify what the sounds are, where they are and how to use them to traverse their route. They also learn how to identify the surfaces under their feet (by feeling the surface with their feet and how it changes) or by trailing the walls with their hand (as sensory touch) and how these changes identify location. While walking along a hallway or on a sidewalk, the sounds, surfaces, and walls will continue to change giving clues to the environment and helping find the way to the desired destination.

### **Myth - People who are blind are in total darkness.**

According to the American Foundation for the Blind, only 18 percent of people who are visually impaired are classified as being totally blind and the majority of them can differentiate between light and dark.

The term legally blind defines vision in the better eye as being no better than 20/200 with the best possible correction or a visual field of 20 degrees or less. "Legal" refers to the determination of the person's eligibility for government benefits resulting from their visual impairment.

Low vision or impaired vision refers to diminished sight that is severe enough to impede everyday activities, but some useful sight still remains. Low vision cannot be fully corrected but individuals can often benefit from the use of assistive optical devices such as magnifiers.

The following are useful resources for more information about vision loss:

[www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)  
**American Foundation for the Blind**

[www.lowvision.org](http://www.lowvision.org)

[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)  
**National Federation of the Blind**

## Upcoming Events

### **WHITE CANE AWARENESS WALK OCTOBER 6**

Please note that the Conklin Center's walk, usually held in June, has been moved to October 6. You will receive more information soon.



## Events Update

### **NIGHT FOR SIGHT 2012**

was a success thanks to our fun-loving guests and awesome volunteers. "I don't even like to gamble, but I come every year because I have so much fun!" was overheard from one of the guests. With your help, \$19,000 was raised to provide training and support to children and adults who are blind with additional disabilities. Thank you.



### **2012 MOTORCYCLE GIVEAWAY**

David Lambert of Shelby, Ohio is the lucky winner of the 1959 Harley Davidson. David will be back to pick up his prize at the end of April. Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2012 drawing. You are helping children who are blind get the best start in life and helping multi-impaired adults develop their potential to build an active, self-reliant life.

# Donor Spotlight

- **COBB COLE ATTORNEYS AND STAFF** started a tradition nine years ago with Casual for a Cause where participants make a donation on the day designated each month to be able to wear casual garb to work. This resulted in a gift of \$240 to the Center!
- **THE MUSIC INDUSTRY CLUB AT DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE** held a holiday concert in December and selected the Conklin Center to share in the proceeds. Thanks M.I.C. for the gift of \$450.
- The Early Intervention program received a grant of \$1,500 from **CVS CAREMARK** to promote independence for children with disabilities.
- **THE HARPER FAMILY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.** awarded a grant of \$4,000 for Supported Employment/Supported Living services for Conklin Center graduates living in the community.
- Our friends at the **IRON HORSE SALOON** donate space every year to display the motorcycle for the annual drawing and also donated \$1,713 to the cause.

## Tribute Gifts October 2011 to March 2012

### IN HONOR

- ❖ **Cody Cameron**  
Lillian & Bruce Bentley
- ❖ **Roger E. Christensen**  
Carolyn C. West
- ❖ **Mary Lynn Danielski's birthday**  
David J. Danielski
- ❖ **DG Dean Hess**  
Cape Coral Lions Club  
Dade City - Heritage  
Park Lions Club  
Plant City Lions Club  
Sebring Breakfast Lions Club
- ❖ **PGD Robert Respass**  
Gainesville University  
City Lions Club
- ❖ **Glenn & Karen Reichard**  
Lions Shel and Carol Reichard
- ❖ **St. Anthony**  
Constance Schmidt
- ❖ **Doris Schott**  
Glenn E. Brown
- ❖ **DG Jerry Skufe**  
Gainesville Lions Club  
Jacksonville First Coast  
Lions Club
- ❖ **Danny Strain**  
Larry D. Tarver
- ❖ **DG Doris Turlo's visit**  
Beverly Hills Lions Club
- ❖ **Amy Williams**  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Shepherd

### IN MEMORY

- ❖ **Carl Barcus, father**  
Charles F. Barcus
- ❖ **Alfred Bjorsted, husband**  
Balbina Bjorsted
- ❖ **Rose Borriello, wife**  
Mr. Frank Borriello
- ❖ **Betty Jean Dias**  
John C. Dias
- ❖ **"Duke" Dickson**  
Cypress United Methodist Church
- ❖ **Lion Trudy Dott**  
Angie Alvarez  
Margaret T. Hiner  
Miami Lakes Lions Club  
Mrs. Lou-Rene Myers  
Allan & Betty West  
Irene West  
Leslie & Barbara West
- ❖ **Anne Farland, wife**  
Robert W. Farland
- ❖ **Scott Girvin**  
Emo & Chuck Murphy
- ❖ **My Grandfather**  
James Varghese
- ❖ **Bobbie Hayden**  
Volusia County Lions Club
- ❖ **Elisabet T. Heisler**  
Mr. Edmond Heisler
- ❖ **Timothy C. Herbert**  
Cynthia R. Chartel
- ❖ **Norman & Lorraine Hessel**  
Charlie Horse Restaurant
- ❖ **Iredell Hilliard**  
Volusia County Lions Club
- ❖ **Phyllis Jones**  
Robert B. Thornhill
- ❖ **Doug LaMoreaux, uncle**  
Dave LaMoreaux
- ❖ **Mildred R. Lockwood, mother**  
Mrs. D.L. Wooldridge
- ❖ **Linda May**  
Adrian & Deb Winstead
- ❖ **Claire Meyrick**  
William R. Meyrick
- ❖ **Nancy McNulty**  
Suzanne R. Leclair
- ❖ **John H. Munz**  
Clifford J. Munz
- ❖ **Ora Mae Norris**  
Stephen & Vera Frederick
- ❖ **Felix Ottolini**  
Arlene Ottolini
- ❖ **PDG Dolores Painter & Lion Earle Painter**  
Jeff Painter
- ❖ **Departed Palm Coast Lions**  
Lion and Mrs. Robert F. Novotny
- ❖ **Parents & Sisters**  
Helen R. Hill
- ❖ **Joseph & Irene Rembaum**  
Nancy Rembaum  
Ronald & Phyllis Rembaum
- ❖ **Hazel Rhein**  
Philip W. Rhein

- ❖ **Steve Roby**  
Larry Tarver
- ❖ **Bruce Rossmeier**  
Bikers Against Drunk Drivers -  
BADD
- ❖ **Fred Sexton**  
Nathalene C. Sexton
- ❖ **Tommy Sims**  
Karen Medema
- ❖ **Gerald Starck**  
Marion Ruesink
- ❖ **Frederick Teffner**  
Carolyn Harris
- ❖ **Frances P. Thompson**  
Melayn Dorfler
- ❖ **John Thompson**  
Margaret Gill
- ❖ **Michael Turlo**  
Mount Dora Lions Club  
Orange Blossom Gardens  
Lions Club  
Mary Pezzo
- ❖ **Rose Ann Wehner**  
Bennie M. Banks  
Connie L. Krites  
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Neitzke  
Mr. and Mrs. Pete Rauch  
Wilma Sheets
- ❖ **Kenneth & Virginia Wilson**  
Thomas & Annie Hull
- ❖ **Margarete Wundschock**  
Orange Blossom Gardens  
Lions Club
- ❖ **Martin R. Yokel**  
Katherine Buczkowski