

HIGHLIGHTS

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From the desk of the Executive Director

Dear Friends of OVV,

The children and staff have returned from spring break. Special Friends Day, held on April 5th, was a great opportunity for friends and family of OVV to see the work the children do every day to become great communicators! The children love having their friends and family in the building. They enthusiastically showed off their work and loved introducing their teachers to their special friends. It is such a joy to watch the excitement and love that our children share about OVV.



Graduation is right around the corner! It is always a special time for us honoring the children that have worked so hard and will mainstream to their private or public school. Hope to see you at graduation. It is always bittersweet ... we are so proud of our graduates but at the same time, we will miss them and their families.

Our 16th Annual Gala was on March 2nd at the Hyatt Regency! It was a lovely evening with over 450 generous supporters and sponsors. It was such an honor to meet so many friends of Ohio Valley Voices. The highlight of my evening was to honor Kathy Lutz as our Distinguished Volunteer and Eli Jackson as our Distinguished Alumni. Kathy is a dear friend and has been a fierce leader and advocate of OVV for over 18 years. Eli Jackson, a 2020 OVV graduate, has grown into an amazing, young man who followed his dream and became a police officer for West Chester Township. We are so proud to see him successfully give back to his community and OVV. Happy Spring! Maria Sentelik

Gala
Honorees:
Kathy & Eli



Program Update

Toddlers



The toddlers have been busy learning! The theme in the center rooms and activities change monthly. Two of our fan-favorite themes this past quarter were the "Transportation" and "Birthday" themes.



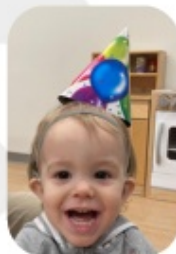
For the transportation theme, the rooms were decorated with all sorts of cars, trains, boats, and planes. The books and toys were endless making the theme so enjoyable and fun for all! The kids did not want it to end until they were introduced to the next theme, the birthday theme. The birthday theme was a huge hit with a lot of singing, present opening, balloons, and birthday treats. The toddlers loved celebrating birthdays every day.



The toddlers learned to listen to important words associated with the themes then were prompted to repeat them as well as form phrases and sentences.



Our younger toddlers have been working on their first words while the older toddlers have been working on simple phrases and even sentences! We have been practicing talking and listening skills. These skills include hearing their name and understanding directions.



Program Update



Every day, the pre-school children participate in circle time where they discuss the days of the week, talk about the weather, and sing the alphabet song. When talking about the weather which was mainly cold this past quarter, the kids got to dress up their weather man in appropriate attire. The preschoolers love to point out the first letter in their name when they sing the alphabet song.

The children are practicing their vocabulary with a focus this quarter on community helpers. A dentist, a police officer, a fire fighter, and a veterinarian all came to the preschool rooms to discuss their jobs. Our preschoolers loved dressing up as community helpers in their dramatic play area and enjoyed reading books to reinforce the vocabulary.

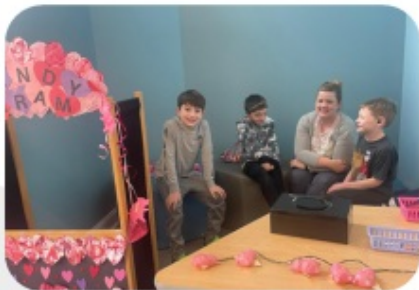
The preschoolers have been working on different experiments this quarter. Some of the favorite experiments were making a snow globe in a jar, oil and color watered, floating fish, blubber, snow cotton candy, and an egg-periment. In addition to the experiments, they loved all of the craft projects too!

Our preschoolers continued their work on thematic literacy. This quarter the focus was on adjectives and learning to change your voice based on the character. The all time favorite was reading *The Little Blue Truck* where the truck gets stuck in the mud. The children made mud then reenacted a truck getting stuck in their newly made mud! Not to spoil the secret, but the frog flexed and got the truck out of the mud.



Program Update

Early Elementary



We enjoyed Dr. Seuss Week and the 100 Days of School. We have been enjoying spring activities like kites, gardening, and bug catching!



Each morning our kindergarten, first, and second graders work on handwriting, journaling, rhyming, phonemic awareness, and sight words. Our children receive small group instruction to focus on literacy and reading. We celebrated our 100th day of school by doing collections of 100 items and dressing up like 100 year olds.



They enjoyed playing musical instruments especially imitating rhythms by playing the drums. In February, the early elementary children learned about heart health and related activities such as jump roping. In math, the children are learning about money, mostly by using coins. They decided to have a candy gram sale for OVV so our entrepreneurs learned about more than just coins and hearts. The other children and staff purchased candygrams and the early elementary children did all the work, including making the deliveries. It was great fun!



Every Monday, the kids enjoy having a mystery reader for story time and complete activities about the book topic. We have had very creative mystery readers that bring snacks and activities which correlate with their book.



APRIL 2024

A Night In Paris



Ohio Valley Voices' 16th Annual Gala was a fabulous evening! Our guests enjoyed *An Evening in Paris* starting with cocktail hours filled with festive fellowship while perusing the silent auction. While enjoying a delicious dinner, the program honored Kathy Lutz and Eli Jackson, spotlighted the Ballein Family, and our host WCPO's Steve Raleigh, was the auctioneer for our live auction. After the program, our guests danced the night away with the Sly Band while other guests enjoyed a relaxing lounge decorated by Everything But The House and exquisite drinks served by mixologist Molly Wellmann. It was a very gratifying and enjoyable evening!

Thank you to our sponsors, donors, and constituents! We raised almost \$325,000 with your generous support! A huge thank you to our volunteers and staff who decorated, managed the silent auction, helped at registration, and in so many other ways to make the evening run so smoothly! Thanks to all that made our gala truly unforgettable and successful event!

You will not want to miss the next Ohio Valley Voices Gala, our 25th Jubilee Celebration! Mark your calendars and Save the Date for March 1, 2025!



Special Friends Day



We celebrated Special Friends Day on April 5, 2024. Our center-based children invited their loved ones to witness firsthand about our programs, meet our staff, and completed activities together.



Our Special Friends enjoyed a snack while our Executive Director, Maria Sentelik, gave an overview of our vision, successes, and a deeper understanding of being deaf and the use of cochlear implants. Then we were all blessed to hear one of our OVV alumni, Katie Hodapp speak about her experiences at OVV, her successful mainstream to her current school, and her future goals and aspirations. Katie had the entire audience in tears at the joy of her successes!



Then the children were able to share a craft with their special friends. We decorated vases, made glue, ice cream sundaes, slime, and many more activities!

Now we all know what makes special friends day so special and memorable!



Distinguished Volunteer



Kathy
Lutz

"Kathy Lutz has been honored as Ohio Valley Voices Volunteer of the Year. In March 2006, Kathy started her volunteer work with OVV by serving on our board, advocating for our children, and passionately helps OVV grow into the amazing organization that it is today. Kathy serves as a guide and role model for our directors, in particularly Maria Sentelik our Executive Director. She is an amazing human that shares her time, talent, and treasures with Ohio Valley Voices. We are blessed to have Kathy as a member of our board and a dear friend to OVV. She is extremely deserving of this award. Thank you Kathy!"

Distinguished Alumni

Eli
Jackson



Ohio Valley Voices alumni, Eli Jackson is profoundly hearing impaired. Pictured above in 2008, Eli dreamed of becoming a police officer. As a six-year-old child with hearing loss, becoming a policeman did not seem possible; but Eli would not give up on his dream. With a cochlear implant and the ability to talk, Eli was accepted into the police academy and graduated in 2023. He is now a valued member of the West Chester Township Police force.

Eli came back to OVV for a tour of our newly renovated space and to visit with our staff. He wanted to visit with the team who helped him overcome the obstacle stopping him from reaching his dream. The children of OVV enjoyed seeing Eli as a police officer and saw that their dreams can be reached.

Eli diligently worked to overcome the enormous barrier of learning to talk while being deaf. He is a courageous, motivated individual who pursued his dreams and made them come true. Officer Eli Jackson was honored as a Distinguished Alumni at OVV's 16th Annual Gala on March 2, 2024. After receiving his award, Eli gave a touching speech filled with gratitude and hope. The gala guests were honored to listen and responded by giving him a standing ovation.

3rd Annual Pickleball Tournament

Swing for
Speech

Ohio Valley Voices is hosting our 3rd annual Pickleball Tournament, which will be held on Sunday, April 28th where every swing supports our children. Participants build their team and compete against pickleball players from every corner of our area. They won't only be battling for first place on the court; they'll also be competing for the distinction of the top fundraiser! The team/player who raises the most money will take home the Philanthropy Award along with other awesome prizes. Whether you're new to pickleball or a seasoned pro, this Pickleball Tournament is for you!

<https://ohiovalleyvoices.givecloud.co/events/pickleball2024>



The Philanthropy Award is back up for grabs! The competition is simple, set up your own fundraising page and be the participant who raises the most money before the Pickleball Tournament! In addition to receiving the OVV Philanthropy Award, the winner will also receive a gift card to Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse and a bottle of champagne! Get started today by creating your personalized fundraising page at <https://ohiovalleyvoices.givecloud.com/fundraisers/create>

New this year, we have added two incredible raffle opportunities! Even if you are not signed up to play in the tournament on April 28th, you can still join the fun by entering one or both of these raffles!

Tickets are \$10 each or 6 for \$50 per raffle!

<https://ohiovalleyvoices.givecloud.com/events/pickleball2024raffles>

Cincinnati Reds Tickets

And this One Belongs to the Reds! Grab your friends or have a family day at Great American Ballpark! Four amazing seats for the Reds to take on the Cubs on Sunday, June 9th. Conveniently park without any hassles. Sit back and enjoy some popcorn and peanuts while you Root! Root! Root for you home team!

- 4 tickets to the Cincinnati Reds vs. Chicago Cubs Sunday June 9, 2024 at 1:40pm Section 130, Row P, Seats 1-4
- 1 parking pass
- \$50 Reds gift card for snacks and merchandise

Package valued at \$425



Staycation Getaway!

Why travel far? You can have a staycation getaway just across the river? Cruise into your BMW Escape Weekend. Then you can stay at Hotel Covington for an evening and walk to Braxton Brewing Company for dinner and drinks. Enjoy a getaway and a staycation all wrapped up in one package!

- One night stay at Hotel Covington
- BMW Escape Weekend
- \$50 gift card to Braxton Brewing

Package valued at \$685

Meet Our New Staff



Norah Williams
Toddler/Extended Day Aide

Thank You to Our Supporters

Financial contributions from our community ensure that OVV can provide exceptional services to all children who are deaf and hard of hearing to learn to talk and listen!

Abby and Patrick McNeerney
Adam Anderson
Adapt-a-Pak, Inc.
Advocates for Deaf Education
Alan and Monica Riney
Albers Family Fund
Andrew and Elizabeth McAllister
Bernard Casey
BlueStar
Bob and Debi Gerbus
Brent and Stephanie Matthews
Bridget Go
Brooks Wilhelm
Cari and Chris Van Pelt
Cassidy Schiller & Associates, Inc.
Chris Chirumbolo
Clayton and Meredythe Daley
Colin Crotty
Dan and Barb Molloy
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Tom and Donna Anderle
Tony Fairchild
Tracey Stofa
Turner Construction Company
Turner Construction Foundation
Walter and Jean Schum
Wendy and Brian Pace
William P. Anderson Foundation

Financial contributions from our community ensure that OVV provides exceptional services to all children who are deaf and hard of hearing to learn to speak and listen!

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Ohio Valley Voices | 6642 Branch Hill Guinea Pike, Loveland, OH 45140
www.ohiovalleyvoices.org

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