



DINING IN THE DARK WITH BLIND CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER

By James Reed
Photos by Bleu Cotton Photography



To inspire additional empathy among those gathered at its fundraising gala, the Blind Children's Learning Center invited 515 guests to don blindfolds as they dined in a darkened Marconi Automotive Museum. The dinner from Anaheim White House was delicious, as attendees came to appreciate the difficulties that the visually impaired face.

Blindfolds came off and the lights came up for a concert by Kodi Lee, an alum of Blind Children's Learning Center and the 2019 champion of the popular "America's Got Talent" television program.

Lee performed to a wildly supportive and enthusiastic audience, displaying the talent that wowed the judges and viewing audience on the show. The third annual Vision Beyond Sight emphasized the work the center does with blind and visually impaired children.

Carol Trapani, vice chair of the BCLC board and chair of the event, gave a dynamic and moving speech about her daughter's experience at BCLC. Lucie, who is 18, has been going to BCLC since she was an

infant. Carol is a star in the local commercial real estate industry as a Senior VP with CBRE.

The event raised nearly \$250,000 through sponsorships, ticket sales, and a live fundraiser.

The revenue will provide direct services to hundreds of children and families, as well as fuel a new strategic plan to offer more comprehensive and continuous care to meet emerging needs and support a greater number of families. The presenting sponsor was the Thompson Family Foundation, and the business and real estate industry was well-represented at the event, including sponsors Don and Victoria Thompson, FivePoint's Emile Hadad and Lynn Joachim, Jack Toan of Wells Fargo, and Jared Moriarity, McDermott + Bull.

The mission of Santa Ana-based Blind Children's Learning Center is to prepare children with visual impairments for a life of independence through early intervention, education, and family support. Families



1. Dining in the dark
2. Kodi Lee performing
3. Christine Park and Chirs Hsiung
4. Lily and Chris Gabora
5. Taniv Appa, Alpa Patel, Aparna Patel, Asha Mehta
6. David, Loriann, and Ali Bartholomew, with Cassie and Kayle
7. Brent Lamb, Jared Moirarty and Rick Warner
8. Alex, Carla and Nick Farnsworth
9. Madeline Hall, Victoria and Don Thompson

receive counseling and practical education to nurture their visually impaired child from birth to age 22. Early intervention helps babies establish a path to independence by promoting healthy development early in life. Developing a strong academic foundation and ongoing support helps children from preschool through high school graduation reach their full academic potential through adaptive means.

The 16th Annual BCLC Destination Independence 5K Walk is still scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2020. The event unites BCLC families with the community at large for a walk, carnival, and lunch party that will change lives forever.

Covid-19 impact: Based on strict guidance and careful attention to the fact that BCLC provides critical services to a vulnerable population, we have implemented the following policy for maintaining public health:

To families receiving services, we are transitioning all services to “Telehealth” format. We remain committed to providing essential early intervention in order to promote healthy development and adaptive skills. Additionally, we will be sending learning and activity plans to students so that adaptive learning can continue in the home. Please continue to look out for updates from BCLC and your service provider(s) directly.

One day of specialized education can change the life of a child with visual impairments. Thank you for continuing to support our children and families. Essential services at BCLC support the health and education of children at severe risk of delays. We are working diligently to make sure those we serve continue reaching important milestones.

blindkids.org