Voice of Variety

Want to submit a story to our newsletter? Contact Matt Gregory at matt.gregory@varietyphila.org
Dear Friends of Variety,

We are less than a month away from the time of year we’ve all been looking forward to: the start of camp. We love having our kids back on campus because it’s just not the same without them. As first day of camp quickly approaches we can reflect on how far we’ve come as an organization.

I’m extremely proud to report that our financial standing continues to improve. We are receiving more and more community support with each passing day in terms of donors, volunteers, and general help from the public. We have so many kids signed up or on a waiting list for camp programs that we are still looking for quality to staff to support our 3:1 staff to child ratio. We are excited about the future direction of our camp programs and hope to continue to meet the needs of the children we serve.

In this edition of Voice of Variety, you can read about our At-Play and Black Hat Bash events at the Philadelphia Zoo. You can also find out more about our Variety VIP of the month, Paul McGovern, who was our Golden Heart of Variety honoree at the Black Hat Bash. We’ve also included a short recap of Fox 29’s coverage of our greenhouse and our brand new VarietyWorks program.

As usual you can find out about our upcoming events such as Deloitte’s Day of Impact or The First Annual Bill McDonald Golf Outing. We’ve added more information on our Alumni Association and a small “wish list” of items we need to give our kids the best experience possible. As always, we appreciate any contribution or support we receive.

We are introducing a new portion to the newsletter called “Variety Stories”. We want YOU to send us any story related to children with disabilities that you want shared in future newsletters. Whether it’s about a friend or your own personal story we want to share it with all our other readers!

If you have any questions, concerns or just want to chat about anything Variety, please feel free to contact me via email at angus.murray@varietyphila.org or phone (610) 584-4366 x 203. Thanks for all the support you have provided and continue to provide to our kids!

Variety VIP of the Month

Paul McGovern

Paul McGovern has been an instrumental part of Variety’s revival. His expanding list of contributions to this organization continues to move our organization in a positive direction. He has personally spearheaded the effort to connect Variety with Deloitte’s Day of Impact which allows us to receive vital volunteer help at a crucial time in our year preparing for camp. His participation on the finance committee and our board has led to countless pieces of valuable advice concerning both general and financial issues. Lastly, his personal financial donations will give a few kids the chance to attend our overnight camp. Paul has been helping Variety for a number of years and we can’t thank him enough for all the support he has given us over the years.
On May 20 we showcased our best black hats to the lions, peacocks, and every other animal at the Philadelphia Zoo. We held our inaugural Black Hat Bash event honoring Paul McGovern in the Rare Animal Conservation Center at the zoo in addition to offering Variety families an exclusive visit to the zoo. Families and Black Hat Bash guests spent their time visiting all the exotic exhibits with the chance to stop by the Watering Hole beer garden for drinks or the Tiger Terrace for delicious food. Whether you wanted to relax with the turtles or monkey around with the primates there was something for everyone who attended.

At the Black Hat Bash, we were able to bring the zoo to our guests by hosting a more formal event in the Rare Animal Conservation Center. This building is home to an assortment of endangered animals such as giant elephant shrews, blue-eyed black lemurs, and naked mole-rats. Guests could enjoy dinner at their table only feet away from watching these rare animals play around in their habitats.

Attendees had the chance to dance, drink, experience the photo booth, or bid on any of our fabulous silent auction prizes like the all-inclusive trips or the original zoo-themed art work done by our students. Our MC, Mike Jerrick of Good Day Philadelphia, did a terrific job introducing our Golden Heart of Variety honoree Paul McGovern, who followed the Fox anchor with some kind words of his own. We can't thank Paul enough for all the work he has done over the years to help support Variety and the children we serve.

Our visit to the zoo was a huge success. Families and Black Hat Bash guests both got to survey the zoo exhibits while the BHB guests had the added bonus of attending a gala-like event in a non-traditional setting. Seeing our families being able to appreciate the zoo at their convenience and our BHB patrons have a great time dressed in their best black hat made this event uniquely extraordinary. Make sure to tell your friends about next year's event and don’t forget your hat!
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**Deloitte Day of Impact**

On June 9th over 100 Deloitte employees will be visiting our campus to volunteer their time to help us get ready for camp. Without their dedicated efforts we would not be able to give our children the experience they deserve. Thanks Deloitte!

**AMC Plumbing & Heating Golf Outing**

Our good friends at AMC are hosting their annual golf outing at Talamore at Oak Terrace on June 19. All proceeds benefit Variety – the Children’s Charity and you can register here: [http://www.amcontheweb.com/help_us_give_back.htm](http://www.amcontheweb.com/help_us_give_back.htm)
GOOD DAY PHILADELPHIA IN THE GREENHOUSE

A greenhouse is a glass building in which plants are grown that need protection from the cold weather. At Variety our greenhouse is not the only thing protecting the plants, our children are. At our greenhouse the children are taught to plant, harvest and then how to sell the produce to local neighbors. We have also teamed up with the Philadelphia Zoo to help feed the animals with our fresh produce grown in the greenhouse.

This month Fox 29 stopped by to see how the greenhouse was operating. During the segment, the kids were working together to create centerpieces for the Black Hat Bash at the Philadelphia Zoo. Some were placing soil in the flower pots, while others were planting the flowers. We truly gave Fox 29 a glimpse into how our greenhouse provides students with more opportunities to grow in the community.

Our students plant seeds in our greenhouse and care for them until they turn into full plants. Once they become plants, we harvest them and move into the kitchen where our produce is turned into food. After the produce is turned into bread or other goods, the students then sell it to our local neighborhood stores.

This program is giving children opportunities to learn a variety of jobs in an everyday world. The more we teach them the more successful they can be. We want to see their growth just like the plants in our greenhouse. Our children might start off small like a seed but in no time they develop into the flower you patiently watched grow.

Bill McDonald Golf Charity Classic

Sometimes there is a love that has the power to make a difference. The First Annual Bill McDonald Golf Outing has been founded on this type of love. The relationship between Bill and his grandson, Will Taylor, was beautiful and powerful and one so strong that even though Bill passed away shortly after Will’s fifth birthday in 2016, it still has the power to represent amazing things.

Will’s summer of 2016 was spent at the Variety Club, this offered the perfect opportunity for him to continue his education throughout the summer in a fun and active environment. The Variety Club helps to foster camper’s independence while giving them the chance to make friends, to have new experiences, and to be a part of something special.

Where: Linfield National Golf Course, in Limerick, PA
When: Monday August 14
Time: Noon - 8pm
To Register: Contact kevmccloskey1@gmail.com
For more information visit: varietyphila.org/bill-mcdonald-golf-charity-classic/
Nature activities have been run on picnic table near the greenhouse, but now that space is for vocational students. In order to give our kids an opportunity to spend programming time learning about nature we want to create a nature center in the fire circle.

We have classes where an outside party comes to campus to teach adaptive yoga to our campers. Without mats, our children will have to do all their yoga poses in the grass.

We have planned a sensory friendly group art project where our students will shellac various things about camp to picture frames. Any old frame will do and we don’t need them to match.

The help we offer children and families is only possible because of the help we receive from donors. The generous contributions from individuals and corporations allows us to continue the work we’ve been doing for over 50 years. Anything you can contribute will directly benefit at least one child in some way. Visit our website to learn even more on the ways you can help us help the communities we all live, work and play in.

To donate visit: http://varietyphila.org/

**WISH LIST**

Here’s a few items we could really use. If you have any interest in donating one of the items below contact Heather Johnson at heather.johnson@varietyphila.org

**Gazebos**

Nature activities have been run on picnic table near the greenhouse, but now that space is for vocational students. In order to give our kids an opportunity to spend programming time learning about nature we want to create a nature center in the fire circle.

**Yoga Mats**

We have classes where an outside party comes to campus to teach adaptive yoga to our campers. Without mats, our children will have to do all their yoga poses in the grass.

**Picture Frames**

We have planned a sensory friendly group art project where our students will shellac various things about camp to picture frames. Any old frame will do and we don’t need them to match.
Variety Stories

Have you heard an inspiring story about a child with a disability lately? Do you want to share your own personal story?

We’re accepting any and all stories related to children with disabilities. We want to share these testimonials with our readers to raise awareness on a variety of disability issues. We hope to inspire action to assist in enriching the lives of children and young adults with disabilities through social, educational, and vocational programs that nurture independence and self-confidence, and prepare them for life. You never know how the story you share could affect someone else.

To share your story, please email Matt Gregory at matt.gregory@varietyphila.org. Please limit the story to a maximum of 500 words and we strongly encourage you to include any related pictures. Thank you!!

Emily Spottswood

I am shy, but at Variety I meet lots people and make new friends. The counselors help me to be more confident talking with people I don’t know or just met. I like talking to the counselors because they listen to me and help me understand about boys. I have learned lots of things because of Variety like how to plan a menu or use an ATM at the bank. And that hippos are big and like to eat lettuce.

“Variety Club Camp is my safe place where I feel free to be me. And I don’t have to worry about Regular ED kids teasing me.”
Variety’s Overnight Camp program is a fun-filled educational experience open to children and young adults ages 7-21 with a developmental and/or physical disability. Our Overnight Camp aims to create an atmosphere of warm acceptance and guidance, and encourage participation at whatever level the camper is able. If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact us at 610-584-4366 or Camp.Director@varietyphila.org

Campers will:

- Focus on improving social skills in a natural play, inclusive and accepting environment by jumping on teachable moments and consistent positive reinforcement.
- Develop independence by meeting the camper at his or her individual level and engaging and practicing activities of daily living skills.
- Improve self-confidence by trying new activities and expanding on existing skills.

Alumni Association

The Alumni Association is an offshoot organization offered to people who have enjoyed Variety programming as youth. This group seeks to empower alumni to maintain friendships, develop networks, and support the mission and vision of Variety - the Children’s Charity.

Benefits:

- Monthly social opportunities, on campus and in the community
- Education and resources of supports for adults in the disability system, such as social security, waiver funding, OVR, providers etc.
- Legislation and outreach information regarding disability law
- And more!

For more information, or to join the Association, please contact the Director of Programs Heather Johnson at 610-584-4366 x 230 or heather.johnson@varietyphila.org
Facebook Group: “Variety-the Children’s Charity of the Delaware Valley Alumni Association”