VOICE OF VARIETY
Hello Friends of Variety,

As I look back over the last two years, I am astounded at all of the positive steps we have taken together to serve children with disabilities throughout the Delaware Valley. I have outlined some of the highlights below.

We are serving more children in more programs, both at our Camp and Developmental Center in Montgomery County and in our programs in Philadelphia. This Summer we are building independence and self-confidence in over 200 kids per day in our Camp programs. In the City of Philadelphia our partnership with Philadelphia Youth Networks Work Ready Summer Program is teaching over 60 kids the skills they will need to be gainfully employed in their future.

Administratively, we have hired a Communications Coordinator to help us spread the word about all the wonderful things that are happening every day. We have also added three new board members who were carefully selected for their talents and expertise. Tangi James-Boone brings organizational development experience, Stephanie Diacopoulos brings her years of experience assisting individuals with disabilities in starting and developing their careers and Jerry Bollenbach will aid us in building new relationships and further developing old ones!

We recently invested in a brand new website that is easier to navigate and tells our story in a brighter more exciting way. If you haven’t checked it out yet, please go to www.varietyphila.org to see the website and learn more about all the great things happening at Variety – the Children’s Charity of the Greater Philadelphia Region. It has been an exciting two years and in an effort to make sure we capitalize on the great strides forward we have achieved, Variety has begun the process of working with Fairmount Ventures to develop a strategic plan. This plan will provide us with the clarity and direction required to provide the best services needed by the children and families we serve well into the future.

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 all provided over the last two years.

Sincerely,

Angus Murray
CEO
Variety-the Children’s Charity
By giving nourishment, attention, and care to a seed you will grow a garden. However, every type of plant, vegetable, and tree needs individualized care in order to grow to its full potential. Some need enriched soil while others require a specific method for harvesting. Constructing a garden is not as simple as watering seed-filled soil, which is why our garden is one of the best in the area.

The Variety garden is unique because of all the different purposes it serves. For example, a portion of our produce is used for our very own vegetable stand. Every Saturday and Sunday we set up our stand at the edge of our camp and sell our fresh produce to the public. Last year one of our camp's neighbors, Barbara Toddes, stopped by the stand and was impressed by our home-grown operation and presented Variety with another opportunity.

Barbara happens to be the Nutrition Program Director at the Philadelphia Zoo. After speaking to our Facilities Manager, she realized there was a chance for both Variety and the zoo to benefit from a partnership. Our garden grows specific types of vegetables and plants to feed the vast amount of species they care for. Whether feeding people or animals the Variety garden provides valuable resources.

We also had a lot of help growing such a beautiful garden. Our friends at Greener Partners send multiple staff members to give us agricultural education on the best way to grow certain vegetables. In return, we send a group of Vocational students to their farm to help them to harvest and organize their own produce for their Community Supported Agriculture program. Another example of a positive relationship that has resulted from the garden.

The kids are involved in all aspects of the garden from harvesting, to planting, and even learning about the business-side of how the garden is utilized. It has become a physical representation of the way our camp operates. At Variety we give nourishment, attention, and care to every child no matter what their needs are. We realize it’s not as simple as giving a child information and expecting them to grow. Variety is a special garden where extraordinary kids are grown to their full potential.
August

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**FirstTrust Day at the Zoo**

Our friends at FirstTrust bank sponsored a trip for the campers to visit the Philadelphia Zoo. Anyone attending camp the week of August 1st had the opportunity to see all the exhibits the zoo has to offer. From African Plains to Tortoise Trials the zoo had so much for the kids to enjoy.

**Outdoor Movie Night**

We held an outdoor showing of the Disney hit movie Inside Out at our camp. Campers, families, and community members all came out to watch the movie and support Variety. It was a cozy night spent watching a good movie with some good friends.

**Prom**

Acme was kind enough to sponsor an extravagant prom for overnight and day campers the week on August 4th. They provided plenty of food and decorated our rec hall for the event. Evans Entertainment offered us a DJ for the night while Wave Reviews did hair and makeup so the kids could look their best. Best of all, Secrets Limousine Service gave a ride around our campus to the prom king, queen, prince, and princess.
Sunshine Games

For 17 years we’ve honored the memory of former beloved Variety counselor Annie Madden by hosting the annual Sunshine Games. This year’s event was once again a special day of remembrance filled with positivity from our campers, our staff, and our supporters. The games were Olympic themed meaning Olympic rings, a podium, and an opening ceremony, complete with a running of the torch, were all included in this year’s activities. We also had a dunk tank, train rides, relay races, and much more for everyone to enjoy. Annie Madden Day was once again a special day for a special cause.

Community Day

Community Day is another one of our biggest events of the summer. It is a unique experience for our campers to spend time with the heroes of the community. Firefighters, Police Officers, and other leaders of our area showed up to support Variety and the kids we serve. The reactions from the kids when meeting their idols showed everyone why a day like this is so important. It was extraordinary to see so many members of the community come together. It was even more extraordinary for the community to feel united for positive reasons.
Donate

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.