

# BEST NEWS

Blind Early Services TN - Newsletter for Caregivers and Providers



## DON'T MISS WHITE CANE DAY AND BEST FEST 2022!

A nationally-recognized event, White Cane Day (also known as White Cane Safety Day or White Cane Awareness Day) came about in 1964 through a joint resolution by US Congress after urging by the National Federation of the Blind to promote training, safety and awareness around the use of the white cane. In recent years, the focus of White Cane Day events has shifted from safety to independence and equality.

Blind Early Services TN, in partnership with the Preds Foundation as a 2022 Helper Grant recipient, will host its first annual White Cane Day as a fun and family-friendly community awareness event. Through immersive educational opportunities, our goal is to highlight the capability of people who are blind or low vision and empower participants to be advocates of accessibility.

BEST's White Cane Day event will take place Saturday, December 10th from 10am to 2pm in Liberty Hall at the Factory in Franklin. Admission is free and participation is open to the community.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

OCTOBER RELEASE  
**JAIMEE KADISH  
BEST TOGETHER  
PODCAST**

NOVEMBER 2  
6:30PM-7:30PM CT  
**PARENT CONNECT  
VIRTUAL SUPPORT  
GROUP MONTHLY  
MEETING**

NOVEMBER 12  
10:30AM CT  
**SENSORY STORY TIME  
TN STATE MUSEUM**

NOVEMBER 29  
7:00PM CT  
**NFB TN PARENT  
DIVISION MEETING**

DECEMBER 10  
10:00AM-2:00PM  
**BEST'S WHITE CANE DAY  
6:00PM-10:00PM  
BEST FEST  
THE FACTORY  
FRANKLIN, TN**

### WHITE CANE DAY

10AM - 2PM  
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PREDS FOUNDATION, IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES, FUN, GAMES AND HOLIDAY CHEER FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY ALL AGES WELCOME



### BEST FEST 2022

6PM - 10PM  
ANNUAL FUNDRAISER GALA PERFORMANCES BY KATE KELLY, JP WILLIAMS, STEVEN MCMORRAN & JADE JACKSON FEATURING BLESSING OFFOR

TICKETS ON SALE SOON AT WWW.BLINDEARLYSERVICES.ORG

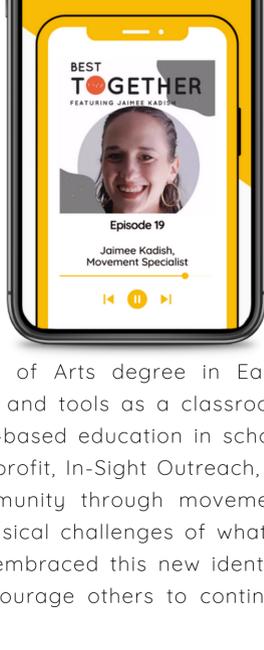


BEST Fest, now in its second year, is our organization's annual fundraising gala that includes dinner, drinks, optional bourbon tasting, an incredible silent auction and live music by local artists connected in some way to the community of individuals living with blindness. This year's concert includes live performances by Kate Kelly, JP Williams, Steven McMorran from this season of NBC's The Voice, Jade Jackson and features Blessing Offor. Tickets for BEST Fest are on sale now using the link below or by using the QR code above. Seating will be available for up to 300 people. You don't want to miss it!

**FOR VOLUNTEER, SPONSORSHIP AND SILENT AUCTION DONATION OPPORTUNITIES, SEE OUR FLIERS BELOW!**

## Listen Now to Jaimee Kadish on the BEST Together Podcast

Jaimee Kadish is a Southern California native from Santa Monica where she spent her youth playing a variety of team sports. She began her journey in movement training by attending Los Angeles County High School for the Arts where she studied classical modern dance, ballet, jazz and improvisational techniques. She pursued higher education in dance performance, completing her Bachelors in Fine Arts degree at California State University, Long Beach. After being diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa, a progressive eye condition, she pivoted her focus from dance performance to kinesiology and functional movement training. With a passion to deepen her knowledge of supporting young children through movement, she



expanded her education, earning an Associate of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. While developing her skills and tools as a classroom teacher, she recognized the need for movement-based education in school and program settings. She founded her new nonprofit, In-Sight Outreach, to empower the visually impaired and blind community through movement literacy. After understanding the mental and physical challenges of what it means to be visually impaired herself, she has embraced this new identity with compassion and curiosity and aims to encourage others to continue their journeys alongside her own.

## The Department of Education Wants to Hear From Parents of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired



As project officers in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Rebecca Sheffield and Eric Caruso work with grant-funded projects and centers across the United States to support the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Both came to OSEP after working in the field of visual impairments (Eric as an orientation and mobility specialist and Rebecca as a teacher of students with visual impairments). Thus, a big part of their work involves focusing on the needs of students with visual impairments, blindness, and deafblindness. Over the summer, Rebecca and Eric began having conversations and collecting stories from families and teachers across the United States to better understand the special education experiences of students who are blind or low vision. OSEP's policy guidance document Educating Blind and Visually Impaired Students; Policy Guidance, was published in 2000, and though some more specific guidance documents have been published since then (e.g. - Eligibility Determinations for Children Suspected of Having a Visual Impairment under IDEA, 2017, and OSEP Dear Colleague Letter on Braille, 2013), they recognize that there are still many questions and concerns for which families, schools, and districts would like more support.

On November 3rd and 9th, in partnership with APH's FamilyConnect, families of learners who are blind/low vision - including students themselves! - are all invited to share their feedback in online listening sessions.

The November 3rd session will focus on families of children served in early childhood/preschool and K-12 school systems (typically ages 3-21).

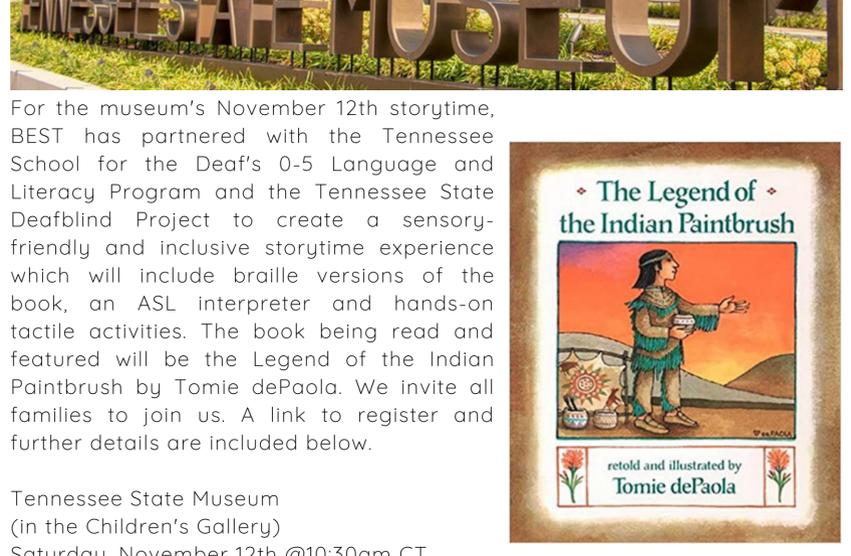
The November 9th session will focus on families of infants and toddlers served in early intervention systems.

Discussions will range from challenges working with schools and service providers, to technology, braille, accessibility, orientation and mobility, and the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). OSEP encourages you to consider local and state policies as well as OSEP policy documents and share your thoughts about what's missing and what could be clarified, with particular focus on how they can support you at the national level.

Additionally, there will be a separate listening session for professionals who serve students with visual impairments in partnership with the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness on November 2nd. Link to registration for all three sessions are below. If you have any questions about registering, please contact APH's FamilyConnect at connectcenter@aph.org.

## JOIN BEST FOR A SENSORY STORYTIME AT THE TENNESSEE STATE MUSEUM

The Tennessee State Museum offers a Tennessee Storytime every Tuesday and Friday mornings at 10:30amCT. For parents, grandparents and caregivers with young children under the age of 6, this is an interactive and fun way for children to learn about and listen to books related to our state's people, culture, and history. After the reading, families can take advantage of Tennessee-themed activities and crafts related to the books and explore the museum. Videos of past books being read can be found on the museum's website.



For the museum's November 12th storytime, BEST has partnered with the Tennessee School for the Deaf's 0-5 Language and Literacy Program and the Tennessee State Deafblind Project to create a sensory-friendly and inclusive storytime experience which will include braille versions of the book, an ASL interpreter and hands-on tactile activities. The book being read and featured will be the Legend of the Indian Paintbrush by Tomie dePaola. We invite all families to join us. A link to register and further details are included below.



Tennessee State Museum  
(in the Children's Gallery)  
Saturday, November 12th @10:30am CT  
1000 Rosa Parks Blvd, Nashville TN

## WHAT WE'RE LOVING THIS MONTH!



This light-up sensory and musical toy by Tsomtto is great for children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), the most common vision impairment diagnosis in young children. It can provide opportunities for cause-and-effect and motor skill development while the "music off" option is great for children who find both music and lights together over stimulating.