



# WINDOW THE

## MSB'S EARLY LEARNING CENTER BUILDS A STRONG FOUNDATION

The Early Learning Center at The Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) is getting rave reviews from parents across the state of Maryland. The Preschool and Kindergarten programs, which are open to children ages 3-5 with and without disabilities, help prepare children for school-age programs.



*"The room designs mirror real life. They have a grocery store, and an art gallery. I gave my son Zeke a coin the other day and he told me all about his bank at school. My daughter Zara developed a love of reading that continues to this day! I'm so pleased."*

– Jedidah Wamiti, parent of typical peers



Dawn Edwards' son Sam is nonverbal, gets nourishment through a feeding tube, and has mobility challenges in addition to his visual impairment. "At MSB, Sam can get the therapy and other services he needs right there in the classroom every day," she said. "The school has the resources and professional staff to meet his needs, and it just felt like a really good fit. Since he's been going to MSB, he's more social and engaged. His communication skills have increased."





Established in 1985, the Early Learning Program’s goal is to create an optimal learning environment that serves students’ individual needs. Children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional physical or learning disabilities learn beside classmates without disabilities. The program has a high ratio of educators to students. The current class of 32 students includes 19 who are blind or visually impaired, 16 with no disabilities, 4 teachers, and 5 paraeducators.

Both of Jedidah Wamiti’s children have been part of MSB’s Early Learning Program as typical peers. “My daughter Zara attended the program for three years and thought it was awesome. She was a bit reserved at first, but quickly opened up and became a social butterfly! She’s 8 now, and has developed a real love of reading. I credit MSB for this because she had such a good foundation to build on,” she said. Wamiti’s son Zeke just turned 5 and is currently in the program. She believes the program offers a great opportunity to learn empathy.



*“The world created within the school building allows the children to explore, learn and make believe regardless of their visual or physical impairments.”*

– Jessica Weston,  
mother of child with multiple disabilities

The Early Learning Center’s award-winning building design mirrors the real world. The miniature town setting is child-sized and accessible for students with disabilities. The program meets the Maryland Early Learning Standards and is licensed through the Office of Child Care. Students who are blind or visually impaired do not pay any tuition for the services they receive and the typical peer program is a fraction of the cost of any daycare or pre-school in the state.



## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT & CEO

Greetings!

Because of you, MSB is making a tremendous impact on students' lives earlier than ever!

When you start early the gains can be unbelievable! That is why five years ago we invested in the future of our students' by designing and building a LEED Silver certified, state of the art, Early Education Center with key interventions and play based learning built right in. The design of the interior has won numerous architectural and student centered awards. As you see on the cover, this building is a one of a kind jump start for students of all abilities.

Our Early Learning Program is entirely unique in the region with a 1-1 ratio of blind and visually impaired children to typical peers. By working, learning, and playing together they gain important social skills, independence, empathy, coping skills, and are prepared to enter kindergarten at or above grade level skills.

Your support of MSB is makes this program a free reality for parents and students!

Sincerely,



W. Robert Hair, Superintendent, CEO



## MSB MAKES HISTORY!

MSB is very proud to have hosted the first official competitive blind youth soccer match in the United States on the only official blind soccer field in the country! The match between the MSB Bees and the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind Chiefs took place on September 24 and resulted in a victory by the Bees as they overcame the Chiefs by a score of 2-1.

MSB is playing an integral role in creating awareness of the sport both nationally and internationally. The school has hosted several instructional training camps for players and coaches and is planning another in the spring of 2020.

Several other schools for the blind across the country have followed MSB's lead and are now fielding soccer teams for competitive play. The goal is to grow the sport in the United States and ultimately field a national blind soccer team that can compete at the Paralympic level in the 2028 Paralympic games in Los Angeles.

According to Tim Taylor, MSB Soccer Coach, "Some of these athletes (who played in this game today) may very well be on the Paralympic soccer team eight years from now."



The MSB Bees soccer team enters the field.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Please support The Maryland School for the Blind in the United Way Campaign

### United Way Designation numbers for MSB:

UW Combined Charity Campaign for Baltimore City: **#3051**

UW of Central Maryland: **#3051**

UW Combined Federal Campaign of Central MD: **#3051**

UW of the National Capital Area: **#7344**

UW Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area: **#58365**

Maryland Charity Campaign: **#7176**

CFC-Chesapeake Bay Area: **#58365**

Remember to ask your family, friends, and co-workers to consider making their United Way contributions to the school as well!

The **Legacy Circle** honors those donors who have included The Maryland School for the Blind in their estate planning. If you're among those who have included our organization in your estate plans, we wish to express our gratitude by inviting you to become a member of The Legacy Circle.

Contact **Marlo Jacobson 410-319-5728** or [marloj@mdschblind.org](mailto:marloj@mdschblind.org).

**Our valued friends in The Legacy Circle are those who:**

- ❖ include MSB in a will
- ❖ name MSB as a beneficiary in a life insurance policy
- ❖ name MSB as a beneficiary in a retirement plan
- ❖ create a charitable trust



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ON TWITTER @MSB1853

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Lori Adamo – Paraeducator

Congratulations to Lori Adamo, a Paraeducator in MSB's Early Learning Program, who has been named the Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB) 2019 Outstanding Paraprofessional for Students with Visual Impairments.

Annually the organization recognizes the contributions of remarkable individuals nationally who work with students who are blind or visually impaired. The winners are chosen by Principals of Schools for the Blind from across the country.

Adamo has been on the staff at MSB since 2006. She works with both disabled and non-disabled children from 3-5 years of age. She was unanimously nominated for the national award by members of the MSB education staff for her dedication to her students and their families and for exceeding the expectations of the job. Over the past 13 years, she has been a leader and mentor to her peers, often taking on additional responsibilities at the school.



Lori Adamo works with two students from MSB's Early Learning program.

**For more information or to support MSB, visit our website**

[www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org/support-us](http://www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org/support-us)