Building Promising Futures for All

The Story of Jackson Giving at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
TO ALL WHO ARE PART OF JACKSON

The generous gifts of Jackson to the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center have been impacting lives in Middle Tennessee for five wonderful years.

Jackson has given struggling young readers at our Reading Clinic the gift of fluent reading that will open up learning for a lifetime. Jackson also has partnered with TRIAD to help two of Nashville’s cultural institutions welcome families of children with autism and other developmental disabilities.

The impact of these gifts has been remarkable not only in the lives of program participants but also in the lives of family members, future teachers, and staff at Nashville Children’s Theatre and the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere.

Above all, on behalf of the children and families you’ve reached and all of us at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, we want to express our deep gratitude to Jackson.

Elisabeth Dykens, Ph.D.
Director of Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, Annette Schaffer Eskind Chair

The Reading Clinic is a blessing because [my daughter] is improving with each session. Without the scholarship, she would not be able to attend. This experience has helped her self-esteem and self-worth. She was headed down a road of giving up on reading. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for the tutors, the scholarships, and the time you have given her.

~Mother of Reading Clinic Student

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THE GIFT OF READING

Founded in 1994, the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Reading Clinic provides intensive one-on-one instruction for children who are struggling to read. Students in Special Education at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College, as well as experienced classroom educators, tutor children using methods of reading instruction that have been proven to help children acquire reading skills.

In 2011 and 2013, Jackson generously provided funding for scholarships to children who would otherwise have been unable to receive this critical intervention. Multiple year support is crucial, since we are committed to helping students progress, which may require more than a single year of tutoring.

Children learn to read so that they can read to learn. This means that they are able to go on to secondary education and further. The broader gain of increased literacy in children will be positively reflected in their primary and secondary education, job and career choice and satisfaction, as well as in lifetime earnings.

Our Reading Clinic serves not only children with reading disabilities but also children with autism and intellectual disabilities. With literacy, these children can gain life skills such as taking the bus, reading signs, ordering from a menu, completing job applications, reading work or health materials—all tasks that are impossible without learning to read.

THE TUTORING HELPED ME WITH MY SPELLING AND READING. I’M MORE CONFIDENT BECAUSE I’M GETTING BETTER AT READING AND FASTER. MY TUTOR MAKES WHATEVER WE DO FUN.

~READING CLINIC STUDENT
THE GIFT OF BELONGING

Our community’s cultural organizations aspire to serve everyone, including children with disabilities, but doing so requires staff training and expert advice on program modifications needed for those with autism or other disabilities.

The Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD) at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center has partnered with Nashville cultural organizations to create awareness and understanding of autism and to provide professional development and resources that helps each organization include children with autism and their families.

Begun in 2013, TRIAD’s community partnerships have enabled over 42,000 people to attend 39 different modified events. TRIAD has provided 23 staff trainings, which were attended by 527 persons, constituting over 1,000 hours in program development, and TRIAD developed 115 support resources.

AT TRIAD, WE’RE WORKING TO CREATE A DYNAMIC NETWORK OF ARTS, RECREATION, AND EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS UNITED IN THE GOAL OF MAKING NASHVILLE A WELCOMING PLACE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN DOING SO, WE HOPE TO BE A MODEL FOR THE NATION.

~LAUREN WEAVER, TRIAD COORDINATOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
ZOOPER HEROES CAMP 2016 WAS A ROARING SUCCESS—THANKS TO JACKSON!

The Nashville Zoo at Grassmere and TRIAD partnered on the Zooper Heroes Camp. Ten campers who ranged in age from 7 to 15 years took part. A variety of disabilities were accommodated, including autism, ADHD, visual impairments, and cerebral palsy. Through this partnership, made possible by Jackson’s gift, 52 Zoo staff and volunteers were trained.

Each camper had individualized goals, ranging from making new friends to being near animals. For example, before taking part, one camper had a fear of birds. Thanks to the supports that TRIAD and Zoo staff developed, this camper was able to successfully go into Lorikeet Landing, where birds fly around and above the visitors. His mom was so grateful her son had this experience since their family is now able to go to parks or walk past bird nests in the yard without her son running away.
The partnership of Jackson with the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center has been life-changing for all touched by the unique Reading Clinic and TRIAD’s Community Engagement Program.

Just as Jackson partners with families to create long-term financial plans, so the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center seeks philanthropic partnerships of three or more years to maximize our capacity to serve families whose children have disabilities and to serve our community.

Through Jackson’s continued philanthropy, it would be possible to give young students the lifelong gift of reading.

It would be possible for hundreds more children and families touched by disabilities to be welcomed into our community’s cultural, recreational, and educational organizations while augmenting the knowledge and skills for their professional staffs.

We welcome a new opportunity to explore with Jackson creative ways to build promising futures for all.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA THE BURDEN THIS [SCHOLARSHIP] LIFTS OFF OUR FAMILY, BECAUSE WE COULDN’T AFFORD THE SERVICES. WOULD YOU NOT DRIVE 1,000 MILES A WEEK FOR YOUR CHILD TO RECEIVE CANCER TREATMENT IF YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD SAVE HIS LIFE? IT’S THE SAME THING. IT’S HIS LIFE.

~GRANDPARENT OF READING CLINIC STUDENT

Building Promising Futures for All
Nashville is remarkable for many reasons. Among them is the fact that some of the most prominent arts, education, athletic, and community organizations across the city have been able to quickly develop accessibility, acceptance, and inclusivity initiatives focused on better supporting individuals with autism and other disabilities and their families. In this way our hometown is taking the initiative in learning how to be a stronger and more reliable community for everyone.

—Pablo Juárez, TRIAD Director
The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center is a place where science brings hope. We have been transforming lives by translating research into practice for over 50 years. Behavioral scientists, neuroscientists, educators, pediatricians, and geneticists work together to unravel the mysteries of development and developmental disabilities.

We focus on genetic syndromes, autism, learning disabilities, and mental health disorders. We study strengths as well as challenges. We help train the next generation of researchers, health care professionals, teachers, and service providers.

We are a national Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center and a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and we have a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities training program. We are one of only a few centers nationwide to have all three major components of this national developmental disabilities network.

The Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD) is the Center’s fourth major component. TRIAD is dedicated to improving assessment and treatment services for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their families while advancing knowledge and training.

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