



Sightless Children Club News

Summer 2021

Important Reminders:

Summer

Highlights:

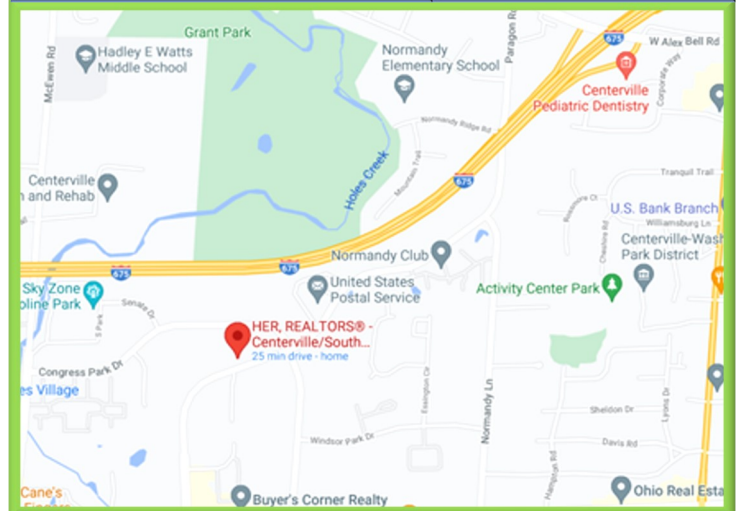
- The next SCC club meeting will be Sept. 20, 2021. Please save the date!
- Remember to share amazon smile with your friends and family



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Ahhh Summer... Time for flip flops, ice cream, and long-awaited vacations! While club members are enjoying a break from monthly meetings, the SCC Board has already begun work on next year's SCC projects. The board's first priority was to locate a site for future club meetings. After looking into several possibilities, we are pleased to announce that meetings will now be held at the HER Realtors Training Facility located at 7625 Paragon Rd., Centerville, OH. HER Realtors have generously offered this lovely facility for our monthly meetings at no charge. The facility includes a large meeting room complete with a Smart TV, Wi-Fi access, a spacious kitchen, and other amenities. We certainly appreciate HER's *generous* support!



Blindness and fear didn't stop this woman from becoming a star swimmer. Vivian Stancil has taken the pools and people of the National Senior Games by storm

The Incredible Vivian Stancil

Vivian Stancil was 50 years old, blind, 320 pounds and afraid of the water. That's when she did something that might sound shocking to those who don't know her but makes perfect sense to those who do: She decided to take up swimming.

Stancil is a person with the type of infectious laugh that makes you smile for hours after talking with her, even if you're not exactly sure why. Like her laughter, her optimism is contagious.

It was that optimism that caused Stancil to view a doctor's warning about her health not as a threat, but as a challenge to commit to a brand-new lifestyle. If you don't make a change, he warned 50-year-old Stancil, you won't make it to 60. That was exactly the "game on" moment she needed to begin turning around her health.

She talked with her friends about possibilities to get more physically active. Running was not a viable option; she was too heavy. Any type of team sport

Swimming, however, seemed like it had potential. She just needed to get over her fear. "I would stand on the deck with tears in my eyes when [my instructor] said, 'jump, Vivian!' And I said, 'I can't,'" Stancil recalled. "He said, 'Don't make me have to come up there and get you.'"

She made it through the first session, then another, and then another. Soon, Stancil was a regular at the pool and eventually lost more than 100 pounds. Her coach suggested that it was time for her to take her swimming to the next level, and she did: She signed up for the **National Senior Games**, presented by Humana.

"I won my first medal, and then I started going to competitions in Irvine, San Diego and Pasadena, and all over the place," she said.

Collecting medals felt amazing, but what really kept Stancil coming back was the camaraderie and support that she encountered at each of the Games.

"[Competing in the Games is] like a prescription for me. It's medicine," she said. "I don't come in first place, but people will be hurrah-ing me on: 'Come, on Vivian! Come on!' And they even will come up and hug me and kiss me and everything."

In 2016, Stancil was recognized as a "Humana Game Changer" because of her fierceness, dedication; and ability to serve as an inspiration for all seniors. As a Humana ambassador, Stancil is a well-known figure at the Games, whether it's among

Humana staff or fellow competitors that have become her close friends.

While Stancil makes what she does look easy, swimming while blind takes an enormous amount of preparation. She swims at least three times a week, often four. She arrives at competition venues four days ahead of time so that she can get a feel for the pool and the lane lines. Even when she's well prepared, it can be hard. She occasionally runs into hiccups, including one memorable moment in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when she was trying to get through a door but ended up falling through a window.

But for every precarious window, there are even more doors of opportunity when you walk (or swim) through life with a positive mindset. Despite the challenges, Stancil insists that she doesn't entertain the idea of giving up and never will. Swimming, she said, is her destiny.

So is helping people. Stancil runs a prayer ministry at her church, where she says she is blessed with the opportunity to touch people's lives. She also runs a charity called the **Vivian Stancil Olympian Foundation**, which offers swimming lessons free of charge to low-income children who wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to learn.

Helping others is Stancil's way of giving back to the world. She didn't get to where she is today by herself and is eager to share the credit with the people in her life who encouraged her,



or ball game would be prohibitively difficult; diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa at the age of 19, she is totally blind.

Fire Safety for the Vision Impaired

Summertime often means an increased risk of accidental fires, so it is a good time to reevaluate your fire safety measures.

Prevention

The first essential aspect of fire safety is prevention. FEMA and the U.S. Fire Administration offer tips for fire prevention for the visually impaired:

- Don't wear loose-fitting clothing around an open flame.
- Don't leave hot pans unattended.
- Always set a timer when cooking food in the oven.
- Don't overload electrical outlets.
- Never use the oven to heat your home.
- Properly maintain chimneys and space heaters.
- Make sure pot handles are facing in (away from the front of the stove) so that they can't be knocked off or pulled down.
- Keep cooking surfaces clean and free of grease buildup.

Preparedness

Many of the techniques people use to prepare for a fire emergency work for the visually impaired as well. For example, the visually impaired should have an escape plan in place and should practice the route, being sure to stay low to the ground. However, because of their unique challenges, there are some additional steps that should be taken. For example, if a visually impaired person has a service animal, they should be sure to practice their escape plan with the animal. Also, when possible, the visually impaired should live on a ground floor and near an exit.

- Plan and carry out regular fire drills. Practice at least two exit routes from your home in order to leave as quickly as possible if you smell smoke.
- Have essential items ready to go. Consider keeping a jacket, slip on shoes and a robe next to the door, with your mobility cane and keys or key card.
- Know how to navigate stairs safely; practice walking up and down unfamiliar stairways with and without your cane, to make the navigation process easier.
- Enlist an escape buddy to help you get out of the building.
- Report to building staff, once you are safely out of the building, so they can let you know when it is safe to return.
- Plan for a safe location you can go to while the incident is dealt with.
- Remember that smoke, fire, and carbon monoxide detectors are a must. It's also important for the visually impaired to know that special smoke alarms exist for their needs. Normal high decibel alarms can overload a visually impaired person's senses, causing them to become disoriented during a fire. There are smoke alarms available that pause between alarm cycles so the visually impaired can hear instructions or listen for orders from a firefighter.
- During a fire, the visually impaired should follow their escape plan, crawling to stay low and checking doors with the back of their hand for heat before opening them (If a door is hot, use your second exit). Once the visually impaired person is out, they should stay out and call 911 if no one has done so.

Children

For visually impaired children, preparation and practice are essential. The most important lesson parents can teach children is to "get low and go." Practicing "get low and go" will teach them the importance of getting low to the ground as quickly as possible and to stay low as they make their way to an exit. SafeKidsUSA offers a four-step plan to help parents of visually impaired children prepare for a fire:

- Step One: Create an escape plan with at least 2 ways out of each room.
- Step Two: Establish a meeting place outside the house.
- Step Three: Call 911 once you're out of the house.
- Step Four: Practice the plan. Parents should also be sure to do their part by regularly checking smoke alarms. It's a good idea to familiarize children with the sounds smoke alarms make. Be sure to test them at night to make sure the child will wake up to the sound of the smoke alarm.



Tell Me Something GOOD!

Ohio Technical College PowerSports Graduating
Class of 2021

Congratulations *Valedictorian* Zechariah Van Buren!

