

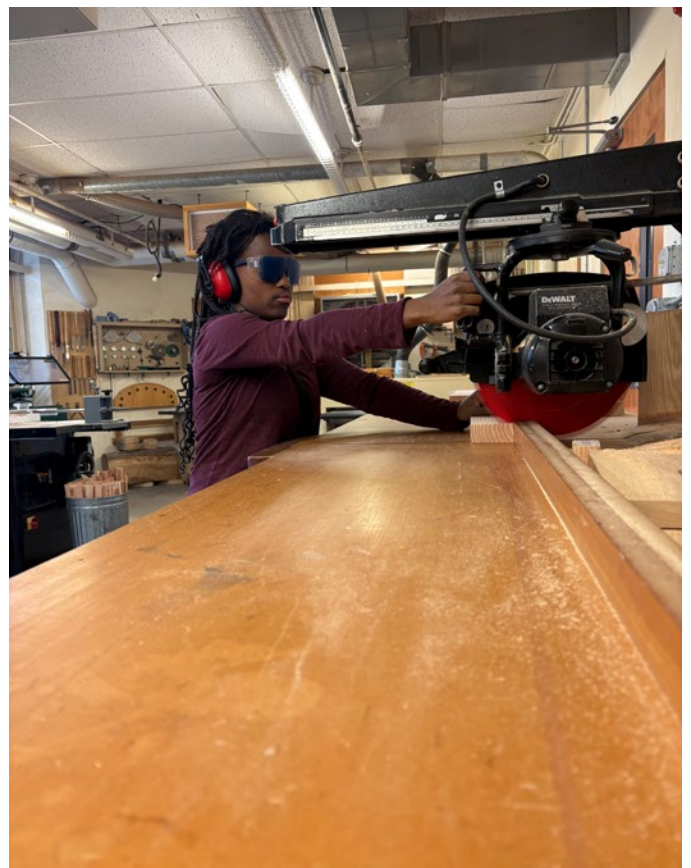
SEEDS OF INDEPENDENCE

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE IDAHO COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Building Garden Boxes, Growing Our Community

Made Possible by the Boise Bench Lions Club
Thanks to the generous support of the Boise Bench Lions Club, students at the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired have embarked on an inspiring woodworking project—building garden boxes for our courtyard.

This special edition newsletter celebrates the partnership, the skills our students are gaining, and the beautiful garden that will soon flourish under their care. Inside, you'll discover the story behind this project, meet the dedicated participants, and learn how community support makes transformative experiences possible.



INSIDE YOU WILL FIND

OUR STORY

A LETTER FROM ICVBI
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IN ACTION

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A PHOTO STORY:
CAPTURING THE JOURNEY
FROM RAW LUMBER TO
GARDEN BOXES

GROWING FORWARD

TRANSFORMING OUR
COURTYARD
GET INVOLVED &
STAY CONNECTED



CONTACT
INFORMATION

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HELLO & WELCOME



A LETTER FROM ICBVI

Dear Friends and Community Supporters, It is with tremendous gratitude that we share the story of an extraordinary project taking shape in our woodworking shop.

Thanks to the generous donation from the Boise Bench Lions Club, our students at the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired are building beautiful garden boxes for our courtyard. This project represents so much more than carpentry. It embodies the spirit of community partnership and the belief that every individual deserves opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute meaningfully.

We approached the Lions Club because we knew that a hands-on woodworking project would provide invaluable learning experiences for our students.

The garden box project allows students to develop practical skills in measurement, tool use, and construction—all adapted with techniques that work for individuals with visual impairments. More importantly, it gives them the pride of creating something that is both lasting and beautiful.

Watching our students measure lumber, operate tools safely, and assemble these boxes has been truly inspiring.

THE FINISHED GARDEN BOXES WILL TRANSFORM OUR COURTYARD INTO A THRIVING GREEN SPACE WHERE STUDENTS CAN CULTIVATE VEGETABLES, HERBS, AND FLOWERS.

This project serves to strengthen the bond between ICBVI and our broader Idaho community.

The Lions Club's investment goes beyond dollars—it's an investment in human potential and dignity.



In the following pages, you'll see our students in action and learn about the impact this project will have. We hope their dedication and enthusiasm inspire you as much as it inspires us every day.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Efren Moreno

FROM VISION TO REALITY

Every garden box begins with precision. Students carefully measured lumber using adaptive tools, including tactile rulers and audio measuring devices. Instructors guided each participant through safe cutting techniques on the table saw, building confidence with every cut.



MEASURING & CUTTING

The ICVBI woodworking shop buzzed with activity as students learned to read woodgrain patterns by touch and how to select the best boards for their projects.

Many students discovered a love for the tactile feedback of woodworking. Feeling the wood being transformed from rough to silky smooth beneath their hands was deeply rewarding.



EACH COMPLETED BOX REPRESENTED HOURS OF LEARNING, PROBLEM-SOLVING, AND TEAMWORK.

ASSEMBLY & TEAMWORK

The final stage brought everything together. Working in pairs, students pre-drilled holes, applied wood glue, and drove screws to assemble multiple sturdy garden boxes.

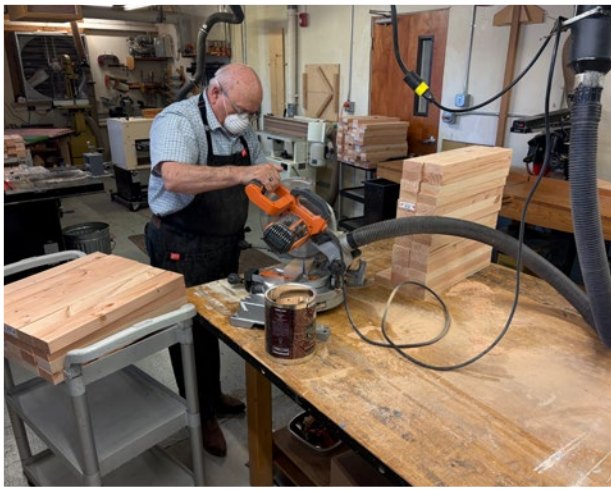
Communication and collaboration were essential. Each completed box represented hours of learning, problem-solving, and teamwork. The pride on students' faces as they lifted their finished creations was unmistakable.

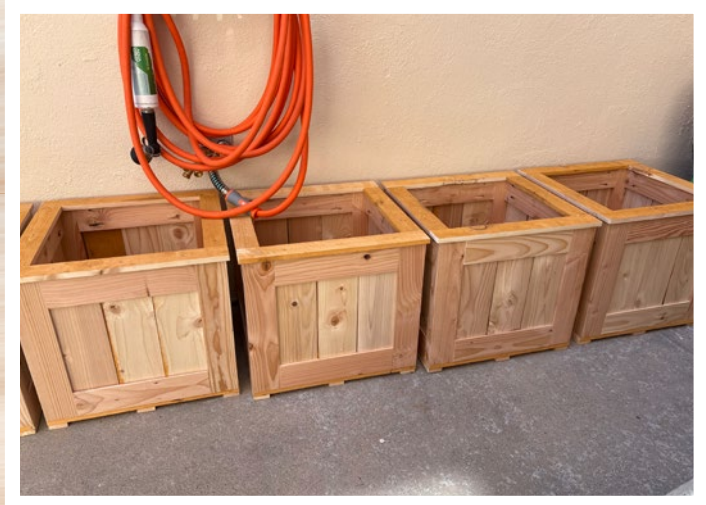
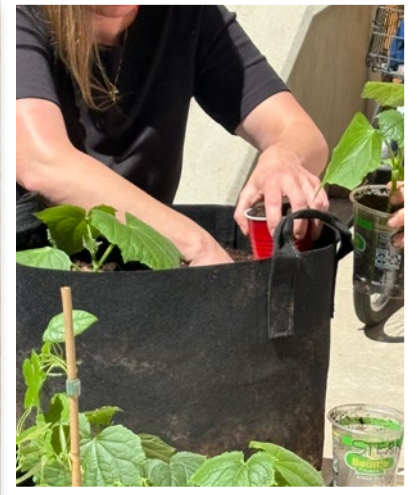
At ICBVI, we believe that vision loss is never a barrier to learning hands-on skills. Our garden box project showcased innovative adaptive woodworking techniques that em-

power students to work safely and independently.

Beyond technical skills, students developed problem-solving abilities, spatial awareness, and teamwork. Many expressed pride in creating something tangible that will benefit their community for years to come.







THANK YOU

Boise Bench Lions Club

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Boise Bench Lions Club for their generous donation that made Seeds of Independence possible. Your commitment to serving those with visual impairments reflects the true spirit of Lions International. Your contribution funded all materials, tools, and adaptive equipment needed for our students to gain

hands-on woodworking skills while creating something beautiful for our community courtyard.

The Boise Bench Lions Club has been serving our community since 1951, and this partnership exemplifies their dedication to improving lives. Because of donors like them, our students are empowered with new skills and confidence.

GROWING FORWARD



THE COURTYARD GARDEN WILL ALSO SERVE AS A PEACEFUL RETREAT FOR REFLECTION, RELAXATION, AND CONNECTION WITH NATURE DURING BREAKS FROM VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

What began as an empty courtyard space is now becoming a vibrant garden sanctuary. The handcrafted garden boxes built by our students will soon be home to a variety of plants that nourish both body and spirit.

The transformation extends far beyond the physical space. Our courtyard will become a living classroom where students can practice horticulture skills, engage their senses, and enjoy the therapeutic benefits of working with plants and soil.

This project represents a profound shift in how we utilize our outdoor spaces for learning and wellness.

Our garden plans include fresh vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, and leafy greens that students can harvest and enjoy.

We'll also cultivate aromatic herbs including basil, mint, cucumber and Black-eyed Susans—plants that engage multiple senses.

& LOOKING AHEAD

The tactile experience of gardening offers unique benefits for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Feeling the texture of leaves, smelling fragrant herbs, and tasting fresh produce creates meaningful sensory connections. Students will learn sustainable gardening practices they can apply at home, fostering both independence as well as self-sufficiency.

Research shows that gardening reduces stress, improves mood, and promotes overall mental wellness. For our students, these benefits are amplified by the pride of growing food they helped make possible. The courtyard garden will also serve as a peaceful retreat for reflection, and also relaxation.

WE ANTICIPATE OUR FIRST HARVEST THIS SUMMER, WITH PLANS TO EXPAND THE GARDEN PROGRAM BASED ON THIS SUCCESSFUL PILOT.

THE SEEDS OF POSSIBILITY HAVE BEEN PLANTED!



**YOU'RE
INVITED**

**COME JOIN US FOR A
GARDEN PARTY IN OUR
NEWLY-IMPROVED
COURTYARD!**

WHEN: May 26: 12:20 -2:35

Lunch will be provided.

*For more info, contact:
Efren Moreno 208.639.8361*

CONTACT US:

IDAHO COMMISSION FOR THE
BLIND AND VISUALLY IM-
PAIRED

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OFFICE HOURS:

Monday–Friday

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM