

HAPPY JULY, AMBASSADORS!

Summer is here, and I hope you are enjoying the amazing weather! 2021 is halfway over, and although the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation has many amazing events in the upcoming months, I want to take a moment to reflect on some of the remarkable things we've done as a community this year.

First and foremost, the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation International Month of Awareness (MoA) was spectacular, as the VBF Global Ambassadors took awareness and fundraising to new levels. VBF had their largest levels of engagement with the Buddy Booby Read-Along, #PutOnYourBirthmark, and #MoreThanABirthmark. The VBF Global Ambassador Council put in hundreds of hours of volunteer work, preparing events for MoA. We kicked off with a Monday Motivation video by the VBF Global Ambassador Council, leading into an IG (Instagram) Live with focus on the Ask/Accept Anti-Bullying campaign led by Eric Pixley and Izzy Swanson. Our IG Live sessions give VBF Global Ambassadors the opportunity to engage with thousands of followers about various topics including starting school, addressing awkward social interactions, and how to explain what a vascular birthmark is.

VBF Ambassador Mikaela Battagli did a VBF Ambassador 'IG Takeover' where she shared her daily routine and some of her experiences regarding anti-bullying and acceptance. Ambassadors Michelle Chiu and Alana Dolcemascolo took the lead on awareness and fundraising, with additional takeovers, preparing fact sheet videos, and encouraging users to tag VBF on social media. Ambassador Izzy Swanson took a trip to visit Ava Pyles and they held an in-person IG Takeover together, showing that our virtual community is creating meaningful in-person friendships.

The highlight of MoA was May 15, the International Day of Awareness for Vascular Birthmarks. The Virtual and Regional Meet Up committee hosted our most amazing Zoom call ever! Ava Pyles and Chelsea Vincent led the event, working with their committee to develop "Birthmark Bingo"- highlighting key vascular birthmark terms and phrases. The call was attended by over 80 people, and lasted over 90 minutes. Dr. Linda's opening remarks inspired our community, and she expressed how continuously proud she is of the VBF Global Ambassadors.



In addition to raising awareness digitally, we launched a new logo and t-shirt. To date, we've sold over 100 shirts that have raised almost \$1,000 in donations to VBF! There were record fundraising events held by our VBF Global Ambassadors (including Birthday Facebook Fundraisers and challenges). These events help VBF serve its mission: ensuring every family has an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment plan. This year's VBF International Month of Awareness was our largest ever, reaching almost 100,000 and raising more money than we ever have.

Just How Global is the VBF Global Ambassador Program? We are GLOBAL! The VBF Global Ambassadors Facebook Group is represented by 1,100 members across 91 countries! Just 55% of the members in our group are from the United States. The United Kingdom, Philippines, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, India, and Malaysia round out the top 10 most represented countries, making up 25% of our members.

Why is this important, you might ask?! Our global outreach allows us to bring awareness of vascular birthmarks all over the world! Your posts, comments, pictures, fundraisers, and stories are traveling to almost 100 countries, and this network will continue to grow. If you know someone interested in becoming an ambassador, contact me (Scott Cupples) at ambassador@birthmark.org or send me a message on Facebook.

What's on the Horizon for VBF? We have more events, programs, and clinics happening than ever before! Here is what is coming up on the VBF 2021 schedule:

Purple Polka Dot Race. The Purple Polka Dot Race (PPDR) was founded by VBF Board Member Jody Lee in 2015 to honor her daughter, Meghana, who was born with a port wine stain birthmark. Today, the race is one of the largest and most successful national events held to raise awareness and funds for VBF's mission.

The 2021 PPDR will be held on Sunday, August 15 in Washington Township, Michigan and virtually. Last year, we had over 700 participants; we aim to surpass that goal this year. We ask that ambassadors join our virtual team (Team Beautifully Marked) or create your own team! [Register](#) and join the fun!



July VBF Facebook Live. On Wednesday, July 7 at 3 pm, join Dr. Linda of VBF and Dr. Kenneth Truitt, Chief Medical Officer at Venthera, for a special VBF Facebook Live: "An Investigational Topical Drug for Vascular Malformations."

VBF Milan Clinic. The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation is proud to host the 2021 VBF Milan Diagnostic and Laser Clinic on Friday, July 16, 2021 with Dr. Giacomo Colletti and Dr. Linda Rozell-Shannon at the Colletti Studio in Downtown Milan, Italy. [Register](#) now!

A graphic titled "2021 VBF Clinics" with a light blue background. It features three images: Houston at night, NYC skyline at night, and the Duomo di Milano in Italy. Text boxes provide details for each clinic: Houston (Free Laser Clinic Only, December 4), NYC (Free Diagnostic and Laser Clinic, October 9), and Milan (Free Diagnostic and Laser Clinic, July 16). The website birthmark.org/conferences is listed at the bottom.

2021 VBF Clinics

Houston
Free Laser Clinic
Only

NYC Super Clinic
Free Diagnostic
and Laser Clinic

Milan
Free Diagnostic
and Laser Clinic

Houston
December 4

NYC
October 9

Milan, Italy
July 16

birthmark.org/conferences

August Parent Advocacy Network. Parent Advocacy Network Zoom: "Preparing to Send My Child to School" with Leslie Graff, M.S., C.C.L.S. is Tuesday, August 3 at 6 pm ET. Sending a child to school is scary for parents. Sending a child with a birthmark to school presents an additional host of challenges, from social acceptance to medical accommodations. Join VBF Board Chair and Patient Advocate Corinne Barinaga and Psychosocial and Developmental Expert Leslie Graff as they explore this topic and provide tools for you and your family on this journey. Email emily@birthmark.org for an invite.

VBF Ambassador Zoom in August. After a summer of fun in the sun, we are meeting back up again in August! Watch for an announcement in July with a date and invite details. We can't wait to see you there!

VBF Superclinic in NYC. The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation along with Dr. Roy Geronemus, Dr. Robert Rosen, and Dr. Stuart Nelson present the VBF 2021 Conference/Clinic in NYC on Saturday, October 9, 2021 at the Laser Skin and Surgery Center of New York.

Our Clinic is the only one of its kind in the world. We offer lectures from the top experts in the field on the latest in research and treatment options, as well as individual appointments with our multidisciplinary team of expert specialists who provide an informal diagnosis and treatment plan to every individual and family. All registrants receive a free night of lodging in the Shelburne Hotel and free parking. Email Gina Rothe, VBF Project Associate, at gina@birthmark.org for more information.



Wishlist by AM Night of Fashion and Fun. Mark your calendars! The annual Wishlist by AM Night of Fashion and Fun will take place at The Terrace in Paramus, New Jersey on November 18 from 6:30pm -10:30pm. It features a fashion show (with members from our community as models!), music, dancing, dinner and drinks, raffles, and a photographer. Tickets will be available in July; we are working on creating a VBF Global Ambassador Table and hope to see you there!

In the meantime, we are asking for your help for donations for this event; no donation is too small! These can include tricky tray baskets, items to be added to baskets, gift cards, or funds donated directly to the foundation. The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation is a registered 501c3. All contributions are tax deductible. For donation inquiries, please email VBF Director of Communications, Emily Lang, at emily@birthmark.org.

VBF Texas Free Laser Clinic. The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation is proud to host the 2021 VBF Texas Free Laser Clinic on Saturday, December 4, 2021 with Dr. Paul Friedman at the Houston Dermatology and Laser Surgery Center in Houston, Texas. [Register](#) now!

Supermom and VBF Global Ambassador Shirts. VBF recently launched two shirt lines, our VBF Global Ambassador Shirt and our Birthmark Supermom shirt. \$10 from each purchase goes to VBF. To purchase a Global Ambassador shirt, [click here](#). To purchase a Birthmark Supermom shirt, [click here](#).

Wrap up. The VBF Ambassadors are up to 1,100+ on the Facebook group, so if you meet someone in the birthmark community who would benefit from being in our group, invite them to join us! If you are interested in participating in social media events such as VBF Instagram Live, Monday Motivation, VBF Fact Sheet videos or Ambassador Takeover, or simply want to provide content for our TikTok page, contact me, Scott Cupples, on Facebook or at ambassador@birthmark.org. We are always looking to add volunteers to our committees!

The VBF Global Ambassador program is here to help the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation carry out its mission to serve the birthmark community, and every single one of you play an important role. We are a community of people affected by vascular birthmarks, whether we are living with one or supporting a family member or loved one. I'm proud to say that we are growing in both numbers and impact, as we continue to spread awareness across the globe! Thank you all, for all that you do.



-Scott Cupples