

HAPPY NOVEMBER, AMBASSADORS!

Hello and happy VBF Global Ambassador Month of Awareness! November was our month of recognition, awareness, and celebration of the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation's Global Ambassador Program community.

The VBF Global Ambassadors are a network of advocates for the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation (VBF) who work together to raise awareness about vascular birthmarks, anomalies, and/or related syndromes (VBARS) all while cultivating a supportive community. We are organized into six fundamental committees, which are led by members of the VBF Global Ambassador Council. Our council comprises the most active advocates within the VBF Global Ambassador program who donate extra commitment time towards maintaining program engagement. Each committee initiative serves the purpose of expanding our reach to the VBARS community, as well as to those unaffected. Our six committees include Regional & Virtual Meet Ups, Fundraising, Awareness, Ask/Accept Anti-Bullying, the VBF Parent Advocacy Network, and the Teen committee. The VBF Global Ambassador Program demonstrates VBF's incredible mission, provides helpful resources to our network, and highlights Dr. Linda Rozell-Shannon's vision.

Register to become a VBF Global Ambassador today!

<https://birthmark.org/become-an-ambassador/>



The **Regional and Virtual Meet Ups** committee organizes, facilitates, and encourages members of the VBF Global Ambassador community to connect through channels beyond social media, such as virtual meetings and in-person local meet ups. Our goal is to keep our ambassadors engaged with one another through quarterly Zoom events, community gatherings, or simply by connecting those within similar geographical regions.

Meet ups not only keep the VBF Global Ambassadors updated with the latest VBF events and resources, but they also act as a way to leverage community involvement and check in with our community. Our hope for this committee is to further cultivate online friendships and provide a fun way to support those affected who may live in close proximity.

Council members Katie Cloyd and Emma Albert lead this committee. They facilitated some amazing initiatives this month, such as Month of Awareness Zoom calls for those within the neighboring countries of the United States, and an international call for those in different time zones around the world.

The **Fundraising** committee helps our community raise donations for the VBF, through online and in-person events, which go directly towards our mission of networking those affected by a VBARS to the appropriate medical professionals for evaluation and/or treatment. The VBF educates physicians and affected families regarding treatment options, supports relevant research, mobilizes medical missions, and empowers those living with vascular birthmarks.



One in every ten babies is born with a vascular birthmark, anomaly, or related syndrome, yet many children and adults lack an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan that can save lives. VBF has networked into treatment over 125,000 patients on 6 continents, in over 150 countries, and in all 50 US states during our 29 year history. Donations can help transform lives, one birthmark at a time. These funds go toward many initiatives, but the main event is our annual conference and clinic. This conference brings together patients and their families with the world's leading experts on vascular anomalies. The VBF is the only charitable organization for birthmarks that provides free laser treatments, free ultrasounds, free dental exams, free clinic appointments, and free hotel accommodations to affected families.

Several fundraisers provide support for our mission, such as the Purple Polka Dot Race, Wishlist by AM Fashion Show, Enchanting Magic by Nick, [Give2myVBF](#), Facebook Fundraising, AmazonSmile, and more!

Council members Ava Pyles and Lindsey Benedict lead this committee. They will be launching more VBF Global Ambassador swag and challenging our community to raise funds to support the VBF's mission, all while giving you the tools on how to host fundraisers moving forward.

The **Awareness** committee is designed to help educate, spread VBF resources, and expand the VBF Global Ambassador program by connecting ambassadors with areas of interest in the VBF network. November's Global Ambassador Month of Awareness played a huge role in our awareness initiatives and continues to spread the word about the VBF and all there is to offer. Did you know the VBF also hosts an International Month of Awareness for Vascular Birthmarks, Anomalies, and Related Syndromes during the entire month of May?



The VBF also celebrates an International Day of Awareness on May 15th, which is marked by a U.S. Congressional Resolution! Individuals and families join in on this day to raise awareness and understanding of vascular birthmarks by sharing their stories and pictures through many social media outlets. Our support groups and committees play a critical role in connecting our community with others who have shared experiences and who may be seeking information and education. Join our movement as our global community helps to promote awareness and acceptance of VBARS!

Council members Sarah Diaz and Alana Dolcemascolo lead this committee. You will find "Testimonial Tuesdays" highlighted on our VBF Global Ambassador Instagram, [@vbf_global_ambassadors](#), which will spotlight ways the VBF has helped those within our community.

The **Ask/Accept Anti-Bullying** committee promotes a 'Bully-Free' zone and raises awareness in regard to handling bullying, acceptance, and providing support within the community. Creating a safe environment for those within our birthmark community and those not affected is of great importance. This committee is supported by many initiatives geared towards creating an understanding and educating others about VBARS.

[Our Ask/Accept Anti-Bullying pledge](#) was created as a way to acknowledge that our community does not support bullying or any activities that promote bullying, especially towards individuals with a vascular birthmark and/or their affected families. By standing up against bullying, we can make a difference together. There are many other ways to continue spreading the message of tolerance and hope, one of which is Buddy Booby Read-Along events. The first read-along was launched during the 2006 VBF International Day of Awareness and has since been repeated in hundreds of classrooms, libraries, bookstores, and hospitals. This book, and many other birthmark positivity books, continues to be a wonderful tool to create worldwide acceptance for the 1 in 10 individuals born with a vascular birthmark. Join us in the movement to stop bullying, promote acceptance, and model best practices within our community.



Council member Isabella Swanson leads this committee. Our main goal is to continue gathering signatures for our Ask/Accept Anti-Bullying Pledge. Can you help us reach our goal of 2022 signatures by the end of the month? Stay tuned for several other helpful tools, such as how to talk openly about ways we can address and prevent bullying.

The **Parent Advocacy Network** Committee helps to directly link and network parents and families of those affected by a vascular birthmark, anomaly, and/or related syndrome. Our monthly Parent Advocacy Network Zoom calls are 60-90 minute facilitated virtual sessions established to provide psychosocial and community support to affected families. This series explores a different topic each month beyond diagnosis and treatment options and features tools to equip you in this birthmark journey. We invite parents to join even if they are not seeking answers. Your experience may help others find answers.

VBF Parent Advocacy Network
Zoom Session on **Tues., Nov. 29 @ 8 PM ET / 5 PM PT**
Topic: Parenting a Child Affected by VBARS-
Family Impact & Resiliency



Hosted by Child Life Specialist
Leslie Graff, M.S., C.C.L.S.
PRE-REGISTER AT: birthmark.org/pan

The Zoom calls are led by Leslie Graff, M.S., C.C.L.S., Psychosocial and Developmental Expert. Leslie has been the VBF Child Life Specialist for more than 15 years and is the mother of four sons, one of which has a Port Wine Stain Birthmark. [Pre-Register at birthmark.org/PAN](https://birthmark.org/PAN)

This committee is led by council member Madelyn Solnikowski, the mother of Ruby, who has 5 hemangiomas. This committee will be sharing words of encouragement to parents and families within the community and explaining how the VBF has assisted them along their child's birthmark journey.

The **Teen** Committee is the VBF Global Ambassador's newest addition! This committee's main goal is to connect the youth and teens of our community and serve as an outlet for the rising generation. This committee allows the younger members of our Global Ambassadors to create friendships and bond with those who walk in similar shoes throughout their birthmark journeys.

This committee is led by Maille McNicholas who will be sharing VBF's VBARS educational fact sheet on different birthmark types, celebrating World Kindness Day with our community, and hosting a Zoom call specific to our youth and teen ambassadors.

Our VBF Global Ambassadors invite you to join all of the ongoing initiatives by following us on Instagram @vbf_global_ambassadors as well as our Facebook Group "Vascular Birthmarks Foundation Global Ambassadors." If you would like more information about how to get involved, please email VBF's Global Ambassador Coordinator, Chelsea Vincent, at chelsea@birthmark.org.

Thank you for continuing to support the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation and the VBF Global Ambassador Program. This incredible foundation has enabled those affected by VBARS with the resources necessary to find a home within this community while also leading those affected to appropriate medical professionals for accurate diagnoses, evaluations, and treatment options. On behalf of the Global Ambassador Program, we appreciate your advocacy and extend the invitation to join our program!



-Chelsea Vincent
Global Ambassador Coordinator