



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Karen Z. Huetter, Dir. of Development
610-866-8049, x. 224
khuetter@viablservices.org
Sharla Feldscher, for Rocco
215-285-4868, cell
sharla@sf-pr.com



**VIABL ROCCO FIORENTINO HONORED WITH HELEN KELLER AWARD
PRESENTED BY VISUAL IMPAIRMENT & BLINDNESS SERVICES
ON NOVEMBER 11, 2008**

PHILADELPHIA (October 27, 2008) – On Tuesday, November 11, 2008, Visual Impairment & Blindness Services (VIABL) will honor 12-year-old humanitarian and jazz musician, Rocco Fiorentino, with the 2008 Helen Keller Award for Independence. Rocco, a resident of Voorhees, NJ, will receive the award at the VIABL Annual Dinner and Volunteer and Community Recognition Event. The agency also celebrates its 80th birthday at the event, which will be held at the Green Pond Country Club in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

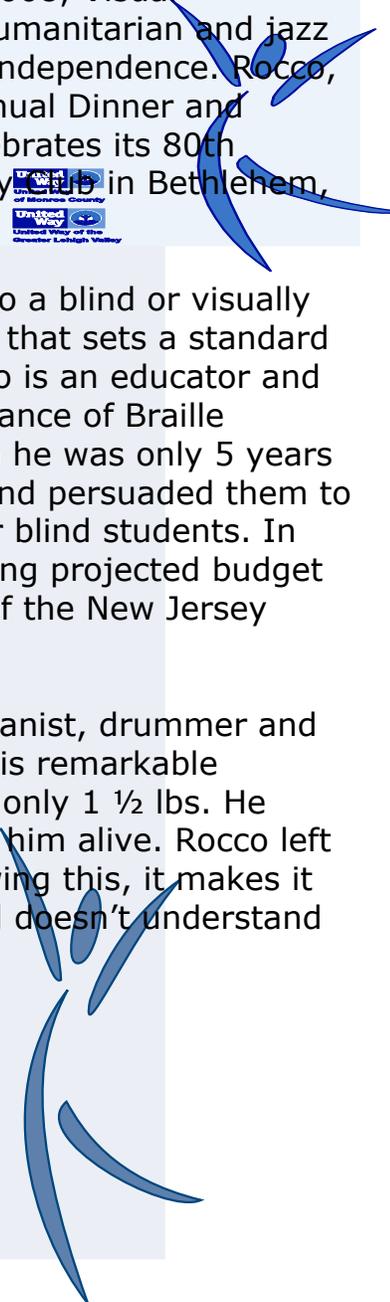
SERVING NORTHAMPTON AND MONROE COUNTIES
HEADQUARTERS ■ 260 East Broad Street ■ Bethlehem, PA 18018 ■ Phone: 610-866-8049 ■ Fax: 610-866-8730
MONROE BRANCH ■ 4215 Manor Drive ■ Stroudsburg, PA 18360 ■ Phone: 570-992-7787 ■ Fax: 570-992-7772
www.viablservices.org



Each year, the Helen Keller Award for Independence is presented to a blind or visually impaired individual whose lifestyle reflects a level of independence that sets a standard for others. As an Ambassador for The Little Rock Foundation, Rocco is an educator and activist for the blind, influencing decision-makers about the importance of Braille education and building awareness about living without sight. When he was only 5 years old and eight years old, he spoke to New Jersey State legislators and persuaded them to dedicate a total of \$1.2 million to Braille education and services for blind students. In 2008, he spoke at the NJ State Assembly Budget Hearings protesting projected budget cuts and, because of this, he saved the jobs of 50 staff members of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Rocco Fiorentino is also an accomplished jazz musician – singer, pianist, drummer and composer who was recently seen on “The Today Show.” His talent is remarkable considering that he was born four months premature and weighed only 1 ½ lbs. He became blind because of the high levels of oxygen needed to keep him alive. Rocco left the hospital six months later, after having 10 surgeries. And, knowing this, it makes it even more incredible that this young man awakes with a smile and doesn’t understand negative thinking.

SERVING NORTHAMPTON AND MONROE COUNTIES
HEADQUARTERS ■ 260 East Broad Street ■ Bethlehem, PA 18018 ■ Phone: 610-866-8049 ■ Fax: 610-866-8730
MONROE BRANCH ■ 4215 Manor Drive ■ Stroudsburg, PA 18360 ■ Phone: 570-992-7787 ■ Fax: 570-992-7772
www.viablservices.org





VIABL
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT
& BLINDNESS SERVICES

An advocate for all children who are blind, Rocco is honored to have won several national awards this year including the Volvo for Life Award (finalist) and Build-A-Bear's Huggable Hero Award, winning a total of \$20,000, for his family's Little Rock Foundation and his educational scholarship. Please visit www.musicbyrocco.com to hear Rocco sing, to view his television appearances and to sign up for his e-mail list.

The VIABL Annual Dinner and Volunteer and Community Recognition Event begins at 5 pm with a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner at 6 pm. Bobby Gunther Walsh will act as master of ceremonies. Tickets are \$65 per person. For more information or to reserve tickets, please call the agency at 610-866-8049, x. 224.

SERVING NORTHAMPTON AND MONROE COUNTIES
HEADQUARTERS ■ 260 East Broad Street ■ Bethlehem, PA 18018 ■ Phone: 610-866-8049 ■ Fax: 610-866-8730
MONROE BRANCH ■ 4215 Manor Drive ■ Stroudsburg, PA 18360 ■ Phone: 570-992-7772 ■ Fax: 570-992-7772
www.viablservices.org



Pre-paid reservations must be made by November 5, 2008.

Visual Impairment & Blindness Services provides programs and services designed to prevent, prepare for, and manage loss of vision in an effort to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents of Northampton and Monroe Counties in Pennsylvania. These programs and services include Client Services providing Escorted Transportation; Low Vision Services, Eye Care Clinic for working poor and low income families. Other programs include Prevention of Blindness Services providing free vision screenings for children and adults, and educational programs about eye care and eye safety. For more information, please call 610-866-8049, x. 224.

###

SERVING NORTHAMPTON AND MONROE COUNTIES
HEADQUARTERS ■ 260 East Broad Street ■ Bethlehem, PA 18018 ■ Phone: 610-866-8049 ■ Fax: 610-866-8730
MONROE BRANCH ■ 4215 Manor Drive ■ Stroudsburg, PA 18360 ■ Phone: 570-992-7772 ■ Fax: 570-992-7772
www.viablservices.org



Changing I CAN'T into I CAN!