

**THE SOUNDING BOARD**  
**Fall 2008**

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Published in print, by e-mail, on the Web and through Newsline by  
**The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey**  
**www.nfbnj.org**

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254 Spruce Street  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
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Letters to the President, address changes, subscription requests, letters to the editor and articles for *The Sounding Board* should be sent to the State Affiliate Office or e-mailed to specialk38@aol.com. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit articles to comply with space considerations.

***Please Note: The deadline for the Spring/Summer issue is March 1, 2010.***

*Sounding Board* subscriptions cost the Federation about six dollars per year. Members are invited and non-members are requested to cover the subscription cost.

Donations should be made payable to the  
**National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey**  
and sent to the State Affiliate Office.

*The Sounding Board* has been printed by Budget Print of Bloomfield, NJ. To subscribe via Newsline, please contact Bill Dougherty at 800-792-8322

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*If you or a friend would like to remember the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:*

*“I give, devise and bequeath unto the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey, 254 Spruce Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, a non-profit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_ (or “ \_\_\_ percent of my net estate ” or “The following stocks and bonds: \_\_\_”) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons.”*

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## PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Greetings Fellow Federationists,

Even though the peaceful, relaxing, dog days of summer are coming to an end, our work for the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey continues to heat up. Since the last issue of *The Sounding Board*, our members have been involved in several important endeavors.

First, an update on the proposed staff and funding reductions that were the main concern of the blind of New Jersey this past spring: Through the concerted efforts of the members of the NFB of NJ and other organizations, we were successful in holding down the staff reductions which were targeted for 54 positions. By e-mailing the Senate and Assembly chairs of the committees, making phone calls, participating in forums and generally making our concerns known, the staff reductions were only four positions. However, the funding reductions targeted at \$610,000 will remain at \$610,000. This is an enormous concern and remains a problem that needs to be solved. Throughout the nation, state and in our local communities, funding has been reduced and we must make every dollar count. With the funding reductions, programs could be diminished, reduced or even eliminated. We must keep an eye on the target and act when necessary. Please contact our Legislative Coordinator Lynn Reynolds to be added to our legislative e-mail list. Lynn's contact information is lhr1827@optonline.net or 908-251-5510. Yes, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The National Federation of the Blind's National Convention was held in Dallas, Texas June 29 through July 5, 2008, with 65 members of the NFB of NJ in attendance. The March for Independence was a huge success with over 1,000 marching for opportunity. Read the articles from Beatrice and Evelyn and GET INVOLVED! One of the many highlights of going to a National Convention is to witness the reaction of a first-timer. Please read Beatrice's article and reflect on how you can get to the next National and/or State Convention. IT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE! Additional highlights of the National Convention can be found in the *Braille Monitor* and *Future Reflections* and by visiting the Web site at nfb.org.

White Cane Safety Day is October 15, 2008 and all NFB of NJ chapters are preparing to conduct activities throughout the fall, specifically targeting the month of October, to educate the sighted that this nation's blind are capable, that we want to participate in all that society offers, and that we are first-class citizens. Be sure to read Marc Maurer's article on page 15 for the history behind this annual event. Also note that the NFB is offering a free white cane to any blind or visually impaired individual who requests one (page 5).

The NFB of NJ will conduct its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual State Convention Friday, November 7 through Sunday, November 9, 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Clark. The theme for this year is **HIGH HOPES!** Our national representative is Pam Allen, Treasurer of the NFB, President of the Louisiana affiliate and Director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind. There is more detailed information, as well as a registration form, on pages 29-30 of this issue. I urge you to consider pre-registering since there will be a reduced rate for all who pre-register. At this year's convention we plan to announce the preparation and the establishment of a new chapter and four new divisions. **WE ARE MOVING FORWARD!**

As I mentioned in the last issue of *The Sounding Board*, the tape version of our magazine has been discontinued; however, the publication can be read via Newline. I strongly suggest that all tape readers and all blind and visually impaired citizens of our nation and state subscribe to Newline. A free Newline subscription will provide you with the reading of not only *The Sounding Board*, but also over 260 newspapers, several magazines, Associated Press releases, grocery ads, television listings and information pertaining to blindness issues. Sign up today by contacting the NFB at 410-659-9314, extension 3 or Bill Dougherty at the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped in Trenton, 800-792-8322.

We hope you find this edition of *The Sounding Board* inspiring and motivating, and when you're finished reading it, please pass it on! Once again, thanks to all for your involvement and continued support in changing what it means to be blind. Remember:

*The more we try, the more we succeed.  
Everything is impossible until you do it.  
Keep believing. Keep dreaming. Keep learning.  
Let's work together. Let's make a difference!*

Sincerely,

Joe Ruffalo  
President  
National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

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## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

By Lynn Reynolds, Legislative Coordinator

We were kept busy with many Legislative Alerts sent to us from the National Center regarding many issues. Bills were introduced into the House and Senate regarding raising the earning limits, books for higher education, quiet cars and the appropriations for the funding for the NLS transformation from analog to digital. At press time, we are urging the Appropriations Committees from the House and Senate to approve \$34.5 million for the NLS. If approved, the total appropriations for the library would be \$47 million. If, in the 2010 budget, another \$29.1 million is approved, then the total needed to implement all the changes will have been met. I can only stress how important it is to keep in contact with our representatives; we are our best advocates.

The major issue we faced in the state was the budget, which, when originally proposed, would have cut 54 jobs from the CBVI as well as reduced funding. Thanks to all those who contacted the two key state legislators. I sincerely believe that our efforts helped to preserve almost all those positions.

I will continue to forward all messages from the National Center to you. To be added to my e-mail list, please contact me at lhr1827@optonline.net. I would like to thank all of you for your work in the things we ask you to do.

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## FREE WHITE CANES TO BE PROVIDED NATIONWIDE

**Editor's Note:** *This article has been condensed from the original received via e-mail from the National Center.*

The National Federation of the Blind has announced an initiative to ensure that any blind person in the United States and Puerto Rico who needs a long white cane will have one, regardless of ability to pay. The NFB will provide a free cane to anyone in the fifty states, the District of Columbia or Puerto Rico who is blind or has low vision and who uses or desires to use a white cane in order to travel independently. This historic initiative is the largest effort ever of its kind to provide white canes to individuals who are blind or have low vision.

It is estimated that 109,000 of the 1.3 million legally blind people in the United States use a white cane. By supplying canes free of charge, this program provides the opportunity for all blind Americans to have a white cane and to participate fully in society.

Canes are available in the following lengths: 53, 55, 57, 59, 61 or 63 inches. Individuals may request one free cane in any six-month period. For more information, please visit [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org).

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## MY FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Bea Oliveti

**Editor's Note:** *Bea, who was born totally blind, is an administrative assistant for the Town of West New York's Department of Public Works. She's also the corresponding secretary for the Northeast Chapter. Bea received a Jernigan Scholarship/First Timer to attend the National Convention in Dallas.*

It all started one day at a chapter meeting. One of the members of my chapter volunteered me to be the Imagination Fund coordinator for the chapter. I was a bit apprehensive because I didn't know what that entailed, but then my chapter president explained the responsibilities: distributing the March for Independence materials to the other members; making inquiries to the National Center about the march; figuring out how to go about fund-raising on behalf of the chapter; and being the team captain for my chapter for the march. I figured that if I was going to do all this work, then I wanted to actually go to the convention and march as well!

At first, the prospect of traveling without anyone from my family was overwhelming! I had traveled independently only one other time and that was to my aunt's house in Florida. Once I arrived, I was immediately enfolded into the arms of my overly protective Cuban aunt, so I don't really count that as an independent travel experience.

My concerns included how I would find my luggage and how I would get to the plane at each airport. Luckily, I had mentors who reassured me. Then, when I arrived at the airports, personnel from the airlines assisted me with any of my concerns. Yes, rest assured, I arrived in Texas and then back in New Jersey with my correct luggage!

There were many events at the convention that made me feel invigorated and left me with a tremendous sense of acceptance. It was exciting to see the KNFB reader demonstrated. This machine works via a mobile phone and enables those of us who are blind to read print documents. I also marched in the March for Independence! Just imagine close to a thousand blind people marching to raise money that will benefit programs that help train and educate people who face our same set of circumstances daily. What an invigorating and empowering feeling! The last day was very moving. A group of parents of blind children spoke, and at the end, Lauren, a girl who is blind, spoke. Prior to her speech, her father introduced her. Even more moving than her father's introduction was the fact that I could relate to what Lauren was saying, especially when she described how she went from having no friends to acquiring more of them as she improved her own skills through her affiliation with the NFB!

I know that there are people sitting at home right now reading *The Sounding Board* who are apprehensive about going outside their comfort zone, but I highly recommend going to at least one National Convention. You'll learn so much, and the whole experience will make you feel so much more confident in your abilities! Try it, you'll see!

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## **BLIND SENIOR HAS NO PROBLEMS NAVIGATING CLIFTON HIGH**

**By Danielle Shapiro, for *The Herald News***

**Editor's Note:** *This article has been reprinted with permission from the original which appeared in The Herald News, April 20, 2008. © 2008 Herald News (Passaic Co., NJ) Danielle Shapiro*

CLIFTON – Jessica Calvo has gotten used to being the girl in high school who stands out. Like thousands of her peers at Clifton High School, she struggles through the crowded hallways, juggles homework and friends, and is getting excited about college in the fall. Unlike her classmates, Jessica, 18, does all that without seeing a thing. Jessica is blind.

But she does not let her disability define her. She can't see and that's how it has been since birth and she's not one to wallow in self-pity.

"I've never felt like my blindness is a problem," said Jessica, a senior. "I just have to deal with things in a different way. But I can do anything anyone else can do. Well, maybe (not) drive or something."

Born with a condition called microphthalmia, in which her eyes never fully developed, Jessica can only sense light or dark. In every other important way, she's just like any teenager – and she excels in school. With all A's and B's, she ranks 78 out of 755 seniors and she recently was named Student of the Month.

A slim girl with manicured nails, shoulder-length curly brown ringlets and an animated nature, Jessica navigates Clifton High School's busy hallways with her trusty guide dog, Hetty.

She loves going to the movies, especially comedies; friends explain what's going on when dialogue stops. She loves the mall, and relies on friends for confirmation that a new T-shirt is, indeed, a cute fit. Her preference in guys is for those of the taller, more muscular variety. But she's not too picky. Personality matters most, she said.

She's also active in her Catholic church where she often plays guitar, and Jessica loves to swim. With Hetty resting quietly at her feet, she even helps teach a class of special education students at Clifton High how to read.

Yes, read.

She does it by showing her students cards with simple words written on them that are etched in Braille. During a recent class, Jessica sat with students one at a time, reviewing words and helping them learn nouns and verbs. These students all have serious cognitive impairments putting them academically far behind others their age.

Francine Jaeger, the main classroom teacher whom Jessica has assisted since September, said that because Jessica's always had to look for different ways to learn, she excels at teaching others with disabilities.

“She’s creative,” Jaeger said. “And I think she’s creative because she’s had to be her whole life.”

Jessica said that in the fall she plans to attend Caldwell College, a private Catholic liberal arts school in Essex County. She wants to get her bachelor’s degree in elementary school special education. Her parents, Ruth and Hector Calvo, think this is a fine fit for their daughter. Already a babysitter for some of her toddler nieces and nephews, she’s great with children, her father says.

“Since I don’t have a fifth sense – vision – to occupy my brain, there’s more room for the other four senses,” Jessica said.

Four senses that she has put to good use thus far. Kathleen Olier, a learning disabilities teacher-consultant at the high school and Jessica’s case manager, said she is extremely motivated. Jessica ruled out going to a special school for the blind, preferring Clifton High, which, with more than 3,000 students, is the largest high school on a single campus in the state.

“I don’t even see Jessica as being blind,” Olier said. “She has fit in beautifully.”

Jessica has taken drama and excelled in chemistry and French. She also took, and passed, classroom driver’s education in her sophomore year. Why? Because everyone else had to, Olier said.

“There’s never a question that she can’t do it,” she said. “She doesn’t think that way.”

Over the years, Jessica’s had an ever-evolving collection of gadgets to help her. To read textbooks, she gets CDs from Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, which play on a special CD player that allows her to scroll to specific pages and chapters. To take notes, Jessica carries a small computerized machine called a BrailleNote. It’s outfitted with a regular keyboard, and she can read what she’s typing with a small “screen” on which Braille words pop up. At home, she has JAWS for Windows, an audio system that reads words out loud from the computer screen. Jessica is so proficient with the software that the computer reads too fast for others to follow.

“She likes to do everything fast,” said her mother, Ruth.

In elementary school she had what was called a Perkins Brailier, a simpler machine with just six keys. Jessica would write her homework assignments. Her father, who learned to read Braille to help her in school, typed them up, leaving in all her mistakes.

“I didn’t like that at all,” Jessica said. “But I guess he did the right thing.”

And to pick out her clothes in the morning, the always-put-together teen uses a color detector. When pressed onto a shirt or pants, it says the color out loud. Her mother taught her, when she was younger, what colors complement each other, Jessica said.

“She’s very picky,” Ruth Calvo said. “The first thing she asks is the color. She said, ‘I want to be the first blind person to match.’”



Since last summer, Jessica's had one more less-mechanized trick in her book: Hetty, her 2-year-old yellow Labrador retriever. Hetty, a Seeing Eye dog, has been a boon to Jessica's confidence and independence. Jessica hated using a cane, having to practically bump into something before she knew to navigate around it.

Before, she had to count lockers to find her classrooms, or memorize how many ramps she passed before entering one of the high school's four wings. Now Hetty, who is quickly learning Jessica's routine, leads her to class, around other students in the hall, and stops her at curbs and stairways.

Zahava Schaefer, an orientation and mobility instructor at the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired who has worked with Jessica for about 10 years, said it's unusual for a high school student to get a guide dog.

The process includes an interview and a visit to the high school by staff at The Seeing Eye Inc., a dog guide school in Morristown. At the beginning of the school year, a video played for all students at Clifton High explained some of the rules required when around guide dogs. For example, you are not allowed to pet them when they are working, which is any time they are wearing a harness.

"I'm thrilled for her," Schaefer said. "She's really blossomed with Hetty."

Though Jessica's family has never treated her like a blind girl and offered lots of support, it hasn't shielded her from every challenge.

Getting a part-time job has been hard. Although highly capable on the computer, she needs special software, not something most offices have. And sometimes other people think her blindness is an indication of other problems.

"A lot of people don't get it," Jessica said. "A lot of people think that because you're blind that socially you have other problems."

She said she feels that her peers will assume she doesn't talk about what they talk about; she feels they are intimidated. Her mother says some people seem uncomfortable when they see her. And her father noted that Jessica didn't like guys to see her with her cane.

"I was embarrassed," Jessica said.

Olier said Jessica has had a significant effect on other students showing them how thoroughly normal life can be for people with disabilities.

Jessica said there's not much she regrets about being blind. If she could see, she'd be happy to have a job and a driver's license, and maybe she'd play soccer or softball. She'd love to see the people she loves, but Jessica said she does not sit around and sulk about it.

"I would like to see, but I'm happy the way I am," she said. "I'd like to see, to see what seeing is like. Not because I'm unhappy."

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## **GRAD STUDENT WITH DISABILITY IS ADVOCATE FOR BLIND**

**By Candice Leigh Helfand, for the Newark *Star-Ledger***

**Editor's Note:** *This article has been reprinted with permission from the original which appeared in the Newark Star-Ledger, June 21, 2007.*

**Name:** Evelyn Valdez **Age:** 25 **Residence:** Hillside

**Education:** Valdez is a graduate student at Kean University, earning her master's degree in special education. She earned her bachelor's degree at Kean in 2005, in early childhood education.

**Marching for a cause:** Valdez – who is visually impaired – will be one of over 1,000 people to participate in the National Federation of the Blind's March for Independence. The march, to be held July 3 in Atlanta, is the first nationwide fundraiser held by the Federation and will serve as the introduction to its 67<sup>th</sup> annual convention. The marchers will walk five kilometers from the Marriott Marquis Hotel to Centennial Park, where several inspirational speeches and an awards ceremony will take place.

"It will be a great statement to see individuals with white canes and Seeing Eye dogs all marching," Valdez said. "It's getting the message out there, to all of the sighted public, that we can travel independently, and do the same things anybody else can do, except we're using a tool to help us get around safely."

John G. Pare, Director of Public Relations for the Federation, agreed. "It's not so much the marching, because that's not hard to do, but it's symbolic of the fact that blind people can do and perform on the same level as their sighted peers," Pare said.

He added that Congressman John Lewis – a key member of the civil rights movement in the 1960s – and former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young will lead the march, along with Federation President Mark Maurer.

**Making a difference:** Valdez raised \$1,025 in a two-month period, money that will go toward programs that bring blind people together, especially kids.

"The philosophy is that blindness is a mere nuisance, and we're not going to let it get in the way of accomplishing everyday goals and long-term objectives," Valdez said. "And to continue these programs, we need appropriate funding for it."

Pare added that the march will also further civil rights for the blind.

"The Federation helped with a portion of the Help America Vote Act, which specifies that every polling place have machines accessible to blind people, so that they can vote both privately and independently," he said.

**Tied to her work:** Valdez currently works at A.P. Morris Early Childhood Center, also in Hillside. And her blindness has helped her make a connection in the classroom.

“There’s a student in class who is totally blind, and they hired me because I know Braille,” Valdez said. “It’s great, too, because being visually impaired myself, I can relate to the student in various ways.”

Valdez feels it is very important to spread the message, wherever possible, that blindness does not add up to incapability.

“Students think that, because we can’t see, we’re not able to get around,” she said. “I’m trying to teach them otherwise.”

**Want to help?** Log into <http://www.marchforindependence.org> for more information about the march and the Federation.

**Family:** Parents, Maria and Freddy; and a brother, Chris, 23, who recently returned home from a second tour in Iraq with the Marine Corps.

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## GAIL BAUMAN: DON’T QUIT IS HER MOTTO

By Dana Ard, for the *Gem State Milestones*

**Editor’s Note:** *This article is reprinted from the Winter 2007 issue of the Gem State Milestones, the publication of the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho.*

At age 65, when most people’s careers are winding down, Gail Bauman’s career — the one she waited for all of her working life — is flourishing. Gail has been working as a psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR) worker for Human Supports of Idaho for two years. Her struggle to find employment, and her eventual victory, should provide hope and encouragement to everyone who strives to find equality in the workplace.

Gail hates to admit it, but she was born and raised in California, graduating from Livermore Union High School. Although she lost most of her hearing at age 3, as a result of measles, she didn’t get her first hearing aids until her senior year of high school. She learned to read lips, and didn’t have problems in the classroom unless the teacher turned away to write on the chalkboard. Gail’s family did not give her any leeway because of her hearing loss. This was basically good, unless Gail’s poor hearing caused her to misunderstand.

Following high school, Gail tried to find work. She finally found employment as a psychiatric technician at Agnew State Hospital in San Jose. Her work there was short-lived, as she left to marry her first husband and begin raising a family.

In 1964, at age 21, Gail began to notice problems with night blindness, and four years later, she had the diagnosis of Retinitis Pigmentosa. With decreasing vision, the hearing problems were compounded, as Gail found it increasingly difficult to read lips. She had to give up driving, and because an ophthalmologist told her that her vision wasn’t bad enough for her to attend a training center, she continued to raise her three children with no skills of blindness. Fourteen years after her

diagnosis, Gail was finally able to enter the orientation center in Seattle. She became fluent with Braille and became a competent traveler. In 1983, while at the center, she began to learn sign language.

In 1984, Gail began her college education at Spokane Community College. She received her A.A. degree from Shoreline Community College and transferred to Seattle University where she received her bachelor's degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling. She looked for work for a year, and after being encouraged to get her master's, she enrolled at City University in Seattle, obtaining her master's in applied behavioral science in 1993. Sadly, although she applied for any job that related to her field, Gail could not find permanent employment.

In 1999, with the assistance of the regional representative for the Helen Keller National Center, Gail participated in a three-month internship in order to get more experience as a case manager. Again, no permanent employment could be found. However, Gail met her current husband, Dusty, who was one of a group of hearing culture students with vision loss attending the center. They were married in 2000. In 2001, Gail received a cochlear implant for her left ear from New York University Medical Center, as she no longer had speech discrimination in that ear. In 2001, Gail and Dusty moved to Boise. Gail continued to dream of a job working as a case manager. She took classes to improve her technology skills, as well as some short courses at BSU to strengthen her counseling skills. But, after nearly four years of effort, she was becoming discouraged, believing she might never work. One day, in October of 2005, she met a woman at a conference for service providers who told her about an opening for a PSR worker with Human Supports of Idaho. Gail applied and was hired. Many technology challenges had to be overcome. Because PSR workers are paid by Medicaid, the paperwork is complex and requires countless hours of training both to use the computer and Braille Lite, and to understand the forms themselves. Transportation continues to be a challenge, as Gail has to travel to see clients in their homes. Because of Gail's tenacity and the commitment of Human Supports of Idaho, Gail finally has the career of her dreams. John Keys, from Human Supports, was honored at Treasure Valley Chapter's Community Recognition Dinner in October.

When asked what advice Gail would give to other blind job seekers she said, "Don't quit." Keep trying different ways to get into your field. Do some kind of volunteer work. You need to practice your skills and show the employer what you can do.

Gail continues to show what she can do not just to her employer, but to all of her clients with mental illness. Recently, her company hired another blind person. Gail not only has a job to be proud of, but she has helped create opportunity for others who are blind and deaf-blind as well.

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## **SAVVY SCIENTISTS: FEDERATIONISTS OF THE FUTURE**

**By Mary Fernandez**

**Editor's Note:** *Mary is treasurer of the New Jersey Association of Blind Students, a member of the Central Chapter and a freshman at Emory College in Atlanta. Mary has participated in the LEAD program sponsored by NJCBVI and administered by Heightened Independence and Progress. She was a mentor for this new program.*

For more than half a century the National Federation of the Blind has created programs that aim to empower the blind so that they become a productive part of society. In recent years, a major focus has been youth, which makes perfect sense since teenagers are the next generation of leaders. Programs such as *Rocket On* and *Youth Slam* have had an overwhelming success in creating opportunities for blind youth that we never thought we would have. The basic concept behind these programs is to instill a positive attitude and confidence in blind teens, so that we can face the competitive world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics with the realization that there are no limits.

But what if we take that same concept a step further? What if, instead of blind youth, we have blind children exposed to the STEM fields? What if we not only bring the child but also one of the parents? Thus, with the imagination that characterizes the Federation, the Junior Science Academy was born. Thirty blind elementary school students, ages 8-12, would be brought to the National Center in Baltimore, where they would be involved in different science- and technology-related activities. While the children would be in class, the parents would attend workshops and participate in activities that would help them better understand blindness. These lessons would teach them how to best deal with their child's blindness so that the positive attitudes that surrounded them at the center would not be lost once they returned home. The challenge, of course, was to accomplish all this in four and a half days!

From the moment they arrived on Wednesday afternoon, the students were given a cane and encouraged to travel independently. It was vital that they began to do things on their own since the rest of the week their parents would not be there to hold and guide them during the day. During that night's dinner, they were taught to carry their own plate, find a table and get their own drinks. It was astonishing for me to see how quickly they learned. After getting over their initial trepidation, they soon faced all the challenges we threw at them head on and every single student succeeded.

For the next two days the hours were crammed with activities. They learned about the solar system, alternative energy and different biomes. The best part was watching them interact while doing the different activities. They helped each other figure things out, and each group of students developed an almost immediate sense of partnership. Even those who were shy came out of their shells and were soon having fun.

While their children were doing all sorts of messy science things, the parents were also doing some interesting activities. Anyone who has ever gone to an NFB

workshop knows that one never walks away without doing something under the infamous sleep shades. Parents were taught mobility and cooking under them and by the end of the day, they all changed. It would be a lie to say that every parent walked away with a better perception of blindness; rather it is more accurate to say that every one of them was given something to think about. One mother recounted how terrified she was while using the knife under the shades; afterwards, I asked her if she still had all her fingers. She obviously did, and then proceeded to tell me that although it was scary she had done it. And if she could, then her son certainly could learn too.

On Saturday, all the students went to North Bay, an outdoors science reserve, where they hiked and identified different birds. Then we went to see animals, most of which were dead. They got to feel a Canadian Water Buffalo, a duck, a live turtle and a live snake. I passed on the snake and admired from afar the fearless hearts of those children.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly going into the bay and, later, on the zip line. The zip line proved not only to be a fun little ride but also a confidence booster for many of the children. There were a few who were absolutely horrified at the thought of trying it, but through encouragement, promises and a little push from the mentors, sometimes almost literally, they all went on the zip line and loved it. Afterwards, they all chattered on about how great it was, making it quite clear that they were extremely proud at their own daring.

The Junior Science Academy was an exhausting event both physically as well as emotionally. At some points we felt that we were not making the impact we had hoped for. However, it truly was a success. Perhaps, not 100 percent of the parents fell in love with the NFB – I mean, we are a bit radical and all – but even those who didn't had still been exposed to our philosophy and a positive attitude towards blindness. Furthermore, they had met successful, blind role models, and in their minds they had a different image of what their child might be like when they grew up. But most importantly, the children were exposed to the NFB and I think it's safe to say they were duly impressed. They all walked out with a cane in their hands, heads high and happy that they had come to this awesome science camp.

Knowing that we made a difference in the lives of more than one child gave us, the mentors, a sense of accomplishment and humbled us at the same time. Personally, I was amazed at the potential in each of those children; they each brought something different to the group, but together they proved to be determined, courageous and, most importantly, willing and able to take on every challenge we threw their way. So fellow Federationists, fear not, for we have met a mere fraction of our future leaders. And I can vouch that they are going to be braver, smarter, better and a lot more radical than we were!

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## **WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY: A SYMBOL OF INDEPENDENCE**

**By NFB President Marc Maurer**

**Editor's Note:** *This article has appeared on many Internet sites and in NFB publications. Its message is always timely.*

In February of 1978 a young blind lady said, "I encounter people all of the time who bless me, extol my independence, call me brave and courageous, and thoroughly miss the boat as to what the real significance of the white cane is."

The National Federation of the Blind in convention assembled on the 6th day of July, 1963, called upon the governors of the 50 states to proclaim October 15 of each year as White Cane Safety Day in each of our 50 states. On October 6, 1964, a joint resolution of the Congress, HR 753, was signed into law authorizing the President of the United States to proclaim October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day."

This resolution said: "Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives, that the President is hereby authorized to issue annually a proclamation designating October 15 as White Cane Safety Day and calling upon the people of the United States to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

Within hours of the passage of the congressional joint resolution authorizing the President to proclaim October 15 as White Cane Safety Day, then-President Lyndon B. Johnson recognized the importance of the white cane as a staff of independence for blind people. In the first Presidential White Cane Proclamation President Johnson commended the blind for the growing spirit of independence and the increased determination to be self-reliant that the organized blind had shown. The Presidential proclamation said:

"The white cane in our society has become one of the symbols of a blind person's ability to come and go on his own. Its use has promoted courtesy and special consideration to the blind on our streets and highways. To make our people more fully aware of the meaning of the white cane and of the need for motorists to exercise special care for the blind persons who carry it, Congress, by a joint resolution approved as of October 6, 1964, has authorized the President to proclaim October 15 of each year as White Cane Safety Day. Now, therefore, I, Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States of America do hereby proclaim October 15, 1964 as White Cane Safety Day."

With those stirring words President Johnson issued the first White Cane Proclamation which was the culmination of a long and serious effort on the part of the National Federation of the Blind to gain recognition for the growing independence and self-sufficiency of blind people in America, and also to gain recognition of the white cane as the symbol of that independence and that self-reliance.

The first of the state laws regarding the right of blind people to travel independently with the white cane was passed in 1930. In 1966, Dr. Jacobus

tenBroek, the founder of the National Federation of the Blind, drafted the model White Cane Law. This model act – which has become known as the Civil Rights Bill for the Blind, the Disabled, and the Otherwise Physically Handicapped – contains a provision designating October 15 as White Cane Safety Day. Today there is a variant of the White Cane Law on the statute books of every state in the nation.

From 1963 (and even before) when the National Federation of the Blind sought to have White Cane Safety Day proclaimed as a recognition of the rights of blind persons, to 1978 when a blind pedestrian met with misunderstanding regarding the true meaning of the white cane, is but a short time in the life of a movement. In 1963, comparatively small number of blind people had achieved sufficient independence to travel alone on the busy highways of our nation. In 1978 that number has not simply increased but multiplied a hundredfold. The process began in the beginning of the organized blind movement and continues today. There was a time when it was unusual to see a blind person on the street, to find a blind person working in an office, or to see a blind person operating machinery in a factory. This is still all too uncommon. But it happens more often and the symbol of this independence is the white cane.

The blind are able to go, to move, to be and to compete with all others in society. The means by which this is done is that simple tool, the white cane. With the growing use of the white cane is an added element - the wish and the will to be free, the unquenchable spirit and the inextinguishable determination to be independent. With these our lives are changed, and the prospects for blind people become bright. That is what White Cane Safety Day is all about. That is what we do in the National Federation of the Blind.

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### **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FUND**

The Association of Blind Citizens operates the Assistive Technology Fund (ATF), which can provide funds to cover 50 percent of the retail price of adaptive devices or software. Applicants must be legally blind and a resident of the United States to qualify for this program.

The products covered by this program must retail for a minimum of \$200 with a maximum retail price of \$6,000. Persons eligible to apply for assistance must have a family income less than \$50,000 and cash assets than \$20,000. Applicants selected will be asked to provide tax returns, bank statements and any other documents that the ABC board or its designee would deem necessary to assess financial need for the grant.



To apply, send an e-mail to [atf@blindcitizens.org](mailto:atf@blindcitizens.org). Include your name, address, phone number, and a brief (500 words or less) description of the device you wish to purchase and how it will help you achieve employment or increase your independence. Do not use attachments; type the information in the body of the e-mail. Please note that requests are accepted only through e-mail and that the deadline is December 31. For more info on the Association of Blind Citizens, go to [http://www.blindcitizens.org/assistive\\_tech.htm](http://www.blindcitizens.org/assistive_tech.htm).

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## **NFB OF NJ MEMBERS ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS THROUGH LETTERS**

**Editor's Note:** *As a result of two recent incidents, NFB of NJ members Sue Tillett and Sumara Shakeel have written letters advocating for the equal treatment that sighted folks would receive in similar situations. In the first incident, Sue and a friend weren't allowed to enter Cafe Lalo, 201 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York City, an ice cream parlor, due to Sue's guide dog Wonder. Sue says, "I appreciated my friend writing a letter, too ... it felt really good to have a sighted person join in our ongoing advocacy instead of the letters always coming from the blind person." Here are the letters Sue and her friend Cheryl wrote; Sumara's experience follows:*

Dear Mr. Lalo,

Last Saturday night, June 28<sup>th</sup>, my friend and I entered your ice cream parlor and were told that I could not bring my dog in. We calmly explained that she is a guide dog and that an ordinance requires service dogs to be allowed in all public places. Again we were told that she could not come in. We asked to speak to the owner and were told that you were not there. Although there is a stiff fine for merchants who violate this ordinance, we decided not to press charges this time because we didn't want to turn our vacation into an unpleasant event.

It is important that you be familiar with the law and that your establishment be a welcoming place for everyone, including persons with a disability who use service animals. It is your responsibility to see to it that every person on your staff is also familiar with the law, and this needs to become an integral part of your orientation for every new member of your staff.

I do hope that this matter will be quickly resolved, and that I will hear from you soon. The next time I am in New York I will be looking forward to coming in and sampling from your list of deliciously tempting flavors.

Sincerely,  
Sue Tillett, and Wonder

To Whom it May Concern,

I need to bring to your attention a troubling incident that took place at Café Lalo on Saturday night, June 28, at around 9 p.m. My friend, Sue Tillett, her Seeing Eye dog and I came to the café and were denied entrance. The young woman who first greeted us said we could not come in with a dog. We explained that it was a Seeing Eye dog and that guide dogs are permitted in all public establishments. She went to get another staff member who came and told us that we were not permitted to enter. We explained that Seeing Eye dogs are permitted by law and asked to speak with the manager.

We were told that the manager was not on the premises so we requested the manager's name and phone number. The staff members declined to provide the information. Such an illegal and disrespectful incident is troubling.

We are not filing a formal complaint about this incident, but I am sending a copy of this letter to the New York Commission on Civil Rights in case the situation is not rectified. As the manager of a public establishment, you are responsible for training your staff and ensuring that they comply with non-discrimination laws and ADA regulations. If you need help reviewing the laws or finding resources to train your staff, please let me know.

We trust you will take the steps necessary to ensure that such discrimination does not recur at your café.

Sincerely yours,  
Cheryl Mitchell

***Sumara writes:***

*My experience was only one of many small ones endured by the blind on a daily basis. I could have treated it as just another act based on false misconceptions and carried on about my business; however, it is such seemingly small incidents that reflect the widespread societal beliefs that the blind are inferior in our ability to care for ourselves – let alone manage our children, community and job responsibilities. I chose to share it with our readers because I believe that it is important for us to routinely examine our own attitudes and beliefs about blindness as they are eroded over time by society's repeated negative messages that are based on false notions about blindness.*

*This is why it is so important to remain active in our great movement. I am a graduate of the Louisiana Center for the Blind and spent some time teaching cane travel at the Colorado Center for the Blind; these are two of our three NFB affiliated training centers. From time to time, blind people's experiences are used during our philosophy classes to stimulate discussion and help shape healthy attitudes about blindness. Perhaps this will aid readers in defining or redefining their own philosophy.*

To whom it may concern:

I often travel by air and have flown with most of the major airlines with the exception of American Airlines. While making travel plans for a recent trip from Newark International Airport to Dallas/Fort Worth, I decided to purchase a ticket with your airline as it offered a comparatively reasonable fare and has a reputation for good service. I found my outbound flight to be pleasant and uneventful, as I had hoped. The crew was courteous and unobtrusive, and this was to my satisfaction. However, I was deeply disturbed with the treatment I received during my return trip on Flight 558 from Dallas to Newark. As you can see from the enclosed flight itinerary, my seat number was 12F, and I had specifically chosen this row and seat at the time of reservation. However, your airline personnel at Dallas changed my seat number to 7A during the check-in process without informing me of the change. I understand that this is a fairly common practice, but what troubles me so greatly is that I was given a seat at the front of the aircraft based on the assumption that I required special care. I happen to be blind and find that airport and airline personnel sometimes believe that the blind must be “taken care of” by being seated at the front of the aircraft, asked to board before the other passengers, and told to ride on electric carts through the airport as if we are unable to walk. Some choose to accept such accommodations due to poor travel skills or additional disabilities, but most do not opt for this.

Upon boarding the plane, I located the seat listed on my itinerary and settled down for the trip; but shortly after, another passenger arrived to claim that seat. It was at this time that I discovered the seat number on my boarding pass (also enclosed) was not the same as that on my itinerary. At first, I felt quite foolish as I thought I made an error while checking my itinerary. However, it quickly became obvious that the original seat had been changed at check-in time. I was dismayed to discover that I was seated behind another blind passenger who was in a bulk head seat; it appears that the blind passengers were placed in close proximity of one another so that we could be “taken care of” and so that the crew could keep an eye on us. This would have been perfectly acceptable and highly appreciated if we were children, but this is not the case. I am an adult who travels quite frequently without the use of electric carts and without the help of airline personnel to baby-sit me. Assistance in the way of verbal information is always appreciated and respectfully declined when not needed. I intentionally choose seats further back on the plane because this is my preference, and it has not been an issue with other airlines. This incident would be seemingly minor to most people because the average person is not subject to it. It is assumed that the average sighted person does not need special care unless otherwise indicated. This rule of thumb is not always applied to the blind. I felt belittled and was the uncomfortable focus of

attention for a short period of time. I should mention that the two flight attendants who served me, Maria and Robert, were very kind and respectful.

I hope that taking the right of choice away from the blind is not a regular practice with your airline, and that you will act to try and prevent such future occurrences. I would like to include American Airlines in my future travel plans, but will certainly think twice before booking a flight with you.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Sumara Shakeel

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## **NEWS FROM THE NJ LIBRARY**

**By Anne McArthur**

### **Adam Szczepaniak, Jr., Named Director of New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped**



The New Jersey State Library is pleased to announce the appointment of Adam Stephen Szczepaniak Jr. as Director of the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped. Adam replaces Faith Lundgren, who retired June 30, 2008.

Adam has been serving as the library's assistant director for the past year. Prior to this, he served as librarian for the Maryland State Dept. of Education for seven years. He has held positions at the University of Maryland, the University of Alabama, the State University of New York, Johns Hopkins University, and the U.S. Army's General Samuel Wood Scientific Technical Library. He holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Maryland and is a member of the American Library Association and the Library Administration and Management Association. He has had numerous articles published in the Maryland Medical Journal.

### **Nintendogs Programs Donated**

At the May 13 American Sign Language Story Hour at the Library for the Blind and Handicapped, a "virtual dog" program was given to the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf (MKSD) and the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (ESC) School.

The surprise gifts were presented by Pete Campione, the founder and owner of the Kindred Souls Canine Center of Howell, in conjunction with Bright and

Beautiful Therapy Dogs of Morris Plains. Since last October, Mr. Campione has been coming to the monthly Story Hour with therapy dogs to interact with the children. He has taught the children about caring for dogs and safety around dogs, and each child has written an essay on their favorite dog. The Nintendogs program will provide each child the experience of actually owning a dog and doing all the things involved in caring for the dog. The dogs are programmed to be amazingly lifelike and respond individually to the way they are manipulated.

### **Volunteers' Efforts Appreciated, by Mary Jo Partyka**

In a time when people have so many commitments and obligations, it is heartwarming to know that volunteers in Mercer County, ranging from teenagers to senior citizens, take time out of their schedules to enhance the services already provided by the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped. In conjunction with National Library Week (April 13 to April 19) and National Volunteer Week (April 27 to May 3), the Friends of the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped sponsored an appreciation dinner to honor these men and women who serve us so tirelessly. According to Library staff, the volunteers contributed a total of 3,499 hours of service to people with print disabilities. In addition to reading for Audiovision (the Library's radio reading service), volunteers have acted as guides at the Library Festival and help to ship books out to patrons. Other volunteers, who have disabilities, come to the Library every week and rewind cassette tapes. At the Appreciation Dinner, the volunteers received praise from Director Faith Lundgren, State Librarian Norma Blake and from the Friends. As members of the Friends, we honor all of you because we realize that your involvement contributes to the excellent service we receive from the Library.

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### **NFB OF NJ CHAPTER NEWS**

**Editor's Note:** *Contact information for all Chapters, Programs, Associations and Divisions is located on pages 31-32 of this issue.*

### **CAPITAL CHAPTER, by Mary Joe Partyka, President**

Since I wrote my last article for *The Sounding Board*, we've had some prospective new members who were dealing with adjustment to blindness issues. To help us get more familiar with the perspective of newly blind people, we asked Susan Vanino from Heightened Independence and Progress to speak to us, and her talk was very helpful and informative. I also submitted a grant to sponsor a career

fair in Mercer County for blind students but, unfortunately, the Lawrenceville School's Social Ventures Club did not select us. Despite the fact that we were not selected for this grant, the experience was valuable, especially if we decide to do something like this on the state level.

Our chapter decided not to participate in the Septemberfest this year because the items we have been selling were also sold by other vendors and we were just breaking even. For our Meet the Blind Month event, each of us will speak at a nursing home where blindness is much more prevalent and an issue which should be addressed. We also had our annual picnic this summer.

Our newest project is to add a technology seminar to our meeting agenda, and we invited blind persons throughout the community to participate. This will be separate from our meeting. Our meetings and the technology seminars are held at the Lawrenceville Library located at 2751 Brunswick Pike in Lawrenceville. The meetings are from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and the technology seminars will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., provided there is enough interest in this topic. We do not have meetings in July, September, November and December. Please contact me for more information.

### **CENTRAL JERSEY CHAPTER, by Jerilyn Higgins, President**

We meet the second Saturday of the month when possible or an alternative Saturday when the church is available. We are now meeting at the Grace Lutheran Church, 600 New Brunswick Ave., in Perth Amboy., 10:15 a.m. til noon. All are welcome to join us.

This past June we had a successful fundraiser at Applebee's in Edison.

We are planning our October Meet the Blind Month activity. It will be held at the Metuchen Country Fair on Main Street in Metuchen on October 4, 2008. Please contact Jerilyn Higgins for more info.

### **CUMBERLAND/SALEM CHAPTER, by Anna Jordan, President**

We held our first fundraiser: a coin drop. Each member saved loose change in a large jar for a 3-month period. The total raised was \$40.

Four members, one of whom was a scholarship winner, attended the National Convention in Dallas. We gathered a lot of helpful information, and the excitement of participating in the March for Independence was an experience to remember.

Activities for Meet the Blind Month are being planned. We are currently accepting new members and want to welcome new member Eddie Staggs. Meetings are held every third Monday of the month at the Tri-County Independence Living Center in Millville, NJ, which is AccessLink accessible.

**GARDEN STATE CHAPTER, by Ed Godfrey, President**

Greetings! This past January, we decided to host a pasta party, which was to be an awareness event as well. We reserved space at the local VFW, which also provided the steam tables and a soda bar, complete with bartender! The date was set for May 4. We advertised in the local paper, displayed flyers in supermarkets and put an ad on the *South Jersey Magazine* Web site. The dinner was catered by a reputable caterer, and we served various pastas, meat balls, salad, and rolls and butter. Several members brought a variety of desserts, plus we had coffee and tea. Our chapter collected door prizes, plus we had three baskets to raffle. We had a table with NFB literature, plus Kernel books. People of all ages were welcome. We had 54 seats set up. We prayed for 34 adults so we could break even ... and 60 showed up! We were complimented on the food and the decorations. It seemed as if everyone had a great time. Our pasta dinner was a success!

Six of our members attended the National Convention in Dallas Texas.

Our chapter is involved with the Macy's Shop for a Cause. This will take place on September 20 at Macy's department stores all over the country.

Our annual picnic will be under a pavilion at James G. Atkinson Memorial Park, Sewell, in September. Everyone is welcome. Please call Ed Godfrey if you'll be attending.

On October 4, several members of our chapter will be attending a book festival in Collingswood. This event will focus on reading for children. We will be handing out our literature telling children and adults about Braille.

Our Meet the Blind Month activity is set for Sunday, October 5, in front of the Walmart in Cinnaminson. We will hand out literature, expose people to Braille and raise funds for the chapter. This activity has been a real success in the past.

The Garden State Chapter meets on the third Saturday of each month (except July) in Conference Room A, Fifth Floor, John F. Kennedy Hospital in Cherry Hill. The meetings run from 10 a.m. to noon, and afterward, those who wish can join us for lunch in the hospital cafeteria.

**NORTHEAST CHAPTER, by Dan Facchini, President**

As usual, the Northeast Chapter has been busy with fundraising and getting the national word out through ThruOurEyes.org. In July we had our annual chapter barbecue, and a good time was had by all. Now we're looking forward to another fall season of Meet the Blind Month activities and, of course, the State Convention.

We hope to soon be moving into a new meeting hall in Secaucus. The plans are being worked on, and we are very excited and hopeful about bringing in new members as a result of the move.

ThruOurEyes is moving along steadily. Our members and volunteers are always working hard and trying to make it bigger and better. We encourage other chapters

and divisions to get involved by doing a show or a contact page, so please go to the site for more info: [www.thrououreyes.org](http://www.thrououreyes.org).

The Northeast Chapter meets the third Saturday of the month at 39 Monona Avenue in Rutherford. Please contact Dan Facchini for more info.

### **NORTHERN CHAPTER NEWS, by Rick Fox, President**

**Northern Chapter on the Move: Meet the Blind and Money, Too!** Our Northern Chapter is active and growing. You know it by the events of the last three months and our plans for the next three.

On Saturday, June 7, we held our first Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser. Every chapter member participated in one way or another. A turnout of about 40 big eaters made the fundraiser a resounding success, in terms of our finances and chapter development.

Nine Northern Chapter members, including five first-timers, attended the National Convention in Dallas. Their spirit and eagerness to learn and share inspired many who came to know them.

On September 20 and 21, we plan to represent the NFB at the Bloomfield Harvest Fest, an annual street fair that attracts about 50,000 visitors. There will be good music, good food, and the hope and uplift of the NFB philosophy and members prominently displayed. If you would like to participate in this event, please call Rick Fox. If you would like to get involved in our Northern Chapter, this growing agent of change and hope in Essex, Hudson and Union counties, call the same person. We meet on the third Saturday of the month at Beth Israel Hospital, 201 Lyons Avenue, Newark from 10 a.m. to noon. Enter the building at the Patient Pickup Entrance across from the main entrance.

### **OCEAN COUNTY CHAPTER, by Mary Dockery, President**

Membership in the Ocean County Chapter has doubled in our first six months! We didn't meet in July or August, but concluded the first half of our year by concentrating on getting to know each other.

Our Vice President Mike DiAngelo obtained complimentary tickets to Blue Claws stadium on July 9. The weather was great, the game exciting and the seats were right behind the first base dugout. The Blue Claws won by two runs. The month ended with a picnic at the Knights of Columbus picnic grove. Perfect weather, plenty of food and excellent company resulted in a wonderful get together. Although August was vacation time for our chapter, our board was still busy planning activities.

Our first Meet the Blind Month activity is scheduled for September 13, when we will host Freeholder Jerry Little, the liaison for people with disabilities. On September 16, our chapter will host a training presented by our county election board. This will enable us to vote independently for the first time in November.



We have invited nine support groups in the county to join us for this training. We're so excited about bringing together the blind groups in our county that we're doing it again on October 18 for our second Meet the Blind Month activity: Our first rap session (support group) run by Susan from HIP in Hackensack, NJ. Our year will conclude with a Thanksgiving dinner, and then a Christmas party. On January 1, our new officers will be installed.

We're also pleased to announce that our treasurer, Doug Winthrop, won our Name the Newsletter Contest. For his winning entry, *The Informative Eye*, Doug received dinner for two at his favorite restaurant, Tiffany's.

We meet the second Saturday of each month at the Denny's restaurant on Brick Boulevard in Brick.

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## **NFB OF NJ PROGRAMS, ASSOCIATIONS & DIVISION NEWS**

### **ADOPT ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT, by Lynn Reynolds and Ed Godfrey**

We are still looking for unwanted equipment that has been gently used or may need some repair. For example, we have a donation of laser printers and scanners. At the time of this writing, two CCTVs have recently been placed.

If you have any equipment that you no longer need and would like to donate it, or if you need a piece of equipment, please call Ed Godfrey or Lynn Reynolds.

We try to match the list of needs to the list of donated items and set up the contact. Please understand that since there is no charge for any of the items, any repairs needed are the responsibility of the person who accepts the item.

### **ASSOCIATION OF BLIND MERCHANTS, by Lynn Reynolds**

As members of the Randolph-Sheppard program, we're focusing on transforming the development of our businesses to improve and move them into the future by opening new opportunities for new operators throughout the country as well as in our state. The average age of operators is in the 50s, and many will be retiring in the next 5 – 10 years, so it's important to build on what we have in place now to open new opportunities for younger blind people who would like to own and manage their own businesses. There will be much discussion on many levels to come up with solutions.

The National Association of Blind Merchants sponsored the BLAST conference April 16 – 19, 2008 in Memphis, TN. This conference was for all those involved in or with an interest in the Randolph-Sheppard program, as well as any entrepreneurs who were looking for motivation to improve their businesses.

We are working on issues on the state level that deal with training and developing a stronger presence to make a difference in the enhancement of our

program. Five members of our division are on the State Committee of Business Enterprise Operators. We are working to keep our program moving to higher levels in training and expanding our opportunities.

For more information on the Randolph-Sheppard program, please feel free to contact Nicky Gacos, Dan Facchini, Jack Truehaft, Anna DeSantis or me.

### **ASSOCIATION OF BLIND STUDENTS, by Evelyn Valdez, Vice President**

The New Jersey Association of Blind Students (NJABS) consists of blind high school and college students who share issues relevant to blindness, such as access technology and accommodations available for test-taking, and also participate in fundraising projects such as our upcoming Tupperware party which has been tentatively scheduled for October 4, 2008 at the Grace Lutheran Church in Perth Amboy. Further information about this fundraising event will be forthcoming, but if you have any inquiries, please contact Quintina Singleton. NJABS also has a monthly teleconference the third Sunday of the month at 8 p.m. The call-in number is 712-580-7704. The board members and our membership engage in discussion with agenda-related items scheduled for that month. We hope to increase our membership, so if you want to know more about NJABS, our list serve (njabs-talk@nfbnet.org) and what we are all about, contact Quintina Singleton.

### **DIABETES DIVISION, by Vincent & Michele Chaney**

The NFB of NJ is proud to announce the formation of a Diabetes Division. Can you answer these questions: What is Hemoglobin A1c? Is it true that there are good and bad carbohydrates? How does protein affect your kidneys? We will be covering topics such as these as well as diabetes management, pumps, ways to test your blood, how to draw insulin, diet and any other topics that you would like to discuss.

We invite anyone an interest in our group to come and join us. Meet other people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes who are living with blindness and diabetes who have a "Can Do" philosophy. To join, simply e-mail [mcs732@optonline.net](mailto:mcs732@optonline.net) and in the subject line put Diabetes Division or call 732-251-8650.

In September we will have our first meeting over the phone. We will send out information on the date and time. Also, to let a cat out of the bag, we will have our first Diabetes Workshop at the State Convention. We look forward to meeting and talking to many of you this fall.

### **DIVISION TO PROMOTE THE USE OF BRAILLE, by Mary Jo Partyka**

**Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest Starts Soon!** The New Jersey Association to Promote the Use of Braille (NJAPUB) has been in operation for almost a year. Although the group did not meet, we had a conference call during

which we decided to encourage New Jersey blind students to enter the National Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest. Contest information is available on [nfb.org](http://nfb.org). This event is sponsored by the National Association to Promote the Use of Braille and the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, and runs from November 2008 to January 2009. In addition to any prizes you may win at the national level, your child's efforts will also be acknowledged by NJAPUB.

NJAPUB sponsors a Braille Mentoring program where a newly blind person can receive Braille lessons from an experienced Braille user. Please contact me if you are interested and we will try to match you up with someone who lives near you so the learning can begin. If you would like to discuss Braille or have questions about how to read and write it, our organization discussed the idea of starting a Braille link program similar to the NFB-link program where people can either call or e-mail each other to discuss Braille. If you would like to participate as a mentor or a mentee in this program, please contact me or Sue Tillett.

### **EBAY PROJECT, by Michele Chaney, Project Chair**

September 23 is the first anniversary of when the NFB of NJ went live with a pilot program on Ebay! Ebay is a way for us to raise money by selling products on Ebay auctions. Now, we're ready to move forward to the second stage of the project with all our members getting involved.

How can you help to make this a successful project? Donate! When you donate an item to be sold on Ebay, a percent of the total sale price is returned to you and a percent is donated to the NFB of NJ to continue its good works. We'll be meeting soon to determine what the percents will be, so be on the lookout for updates!

So ... do you want to make some money? Look around for items you would like to turn into cash. When you have an item to sell, get in touch with the Ebay Contact Person in your Chapter or Division. If you don't know your Ebay Contact Person or don't have one, send an e-mail to [nfbnjebay@aol.com](mailto:nfbnjebay@aol.com) or [nfbnj@yahoo.com](mailto:nfbnj@yahoo.com) or call 732-251-8650 or 973-743-0075. This will be a win-win project for all as you'll make some money *and* you'll be helping the NFB of NJ. We look forward to having a great selling year!

### **POBC-NJ, by Carol Castellano, President**

Parents of Blind Children-NJ is in its seventeenth year of providing information and support to families and teachers so that they can ensure the best education and development for their blind children! Our members continue to do guest speaking at schools, churches and civic organizations, and to serve on state and national boards. Our Web site continues to garner praise and imitation across the country!

This year we again had a lot of national exposure. We were the lead state for the NFB's Parent Leadership Program at the National Convention in Dallas, and we

were an integral part of the planning for our National Organization of Parents of Blind Children's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. I was asked to make the farewell presentation to outgoing NOPBC President Barbara Cheadle and also to present the first Dan Ryles Memorial Award to Dan's mother, Dr. Ruby Ryles. I also got the opportunity to address the whole convention! That was a true thrill and a highlight of my NFB/POBC career!

In April we received a call from a reporter at CBS TV News who was looking for a comment on a new medical treatment for a certain kind of blindness. The reporter and a camerawoman came out to Madison to interview my daughter Serena and me. The interview was about 15 minutes long but got edited down to about one minute. Luckily, we were pretty good at speaking in soundbytes.

We also assisted with educational research that the National Federation of the Blind is doing. The research team of Joanne Wilson and Rosy Carranza came up from Baltimore to visit several NJ students in their school settings. We thank the Hashash, Tumminello and Mullin children and families, Commission teachers Karen Sireno, Terry Cerutti and Bobbi Gackowski, and all of the classroom teachers for allowing us to observe them at work.

On the state level, we sent out an Alert in response to the threat of a drastic cut to the Commission's budget. I am happy to report that thanks to the hard work of Federationists and families, the cut was reduced from a loss of 54 staff positions to only 4. That is advocacy in action!

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## **NFB OF NJ RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

**By Mary Jo Partyka**

Do you have an issue which is of grave concern to you and your chapter members as a blind person in New Jersey? Are there situations in New Jersey which must be addressed?

If you can answer "yes" to either of these questions, you and your chapter members are encouraged to put your ideas into the form of a resolution which will be reviewed by our Resolutions Committee. Our resolutions are policy statements concerning crucial issues, and after these resolutions are passed, they are forwarded to New Jersey representatives so that our views will be known and acknowledged. If you would like to send in a resolution, please send it to me by October 23 so that our committee can edit the resolutions and put them in the appropriate language. All resolutions are subject to committee approval and no resolutions will be accepted after the October 23, 2008 deadline.

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*National Federation of the Blind of NJ's*

## **32nd ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION**

**November 7, 8, 9, 2008**

**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL**

**36 Valley Road, Clark, NJ 07066, 732-574-0100 Access Link accessible**

### **H I G H H O P E S**

*\* Hopes \* Imagination \* Goals \* Hiring \**

*\* History \* Opportunity \* Philosophy \* Expectations \* Skills \**

**HIGH HOPES** will feature Pam Allen, President of the NFB of Louisiana, NFB National Treasurer and Director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind, along with other influential policy makers and experts on Braille, education, mobility, employment, technology, legislation, senior concerns and more!

#### **Friday, Nov. 7**

**10 a.m. to 7 p.m.** — Exhibit Hall

**1 p.m. to 5 p.m.** — Division and Committee meetings; workshops on Braille, technology, mobility, blind children and students, diabetes and more.

**Friday Evening** — Hospitality sponsored by the Vendors, Resolutions Committee meeting, and entertainment hosted by the Northern and Northeast Chapters of the NFB of NJ.

#### **Saturday, Nov. 8**

**8 a.m. to 5 p.m.** — Presentations by Pam Allen, the Commission for the Blind and other experts in the blindness field, Exhibit Hall, networking opportunities, door prizes and much more.

**Saturday Evening** — Banquet, Scholarship Awards and Live Auction!

#### **Sunday, Nov. 9**

**9 a.m. to 12 p.m.** — Business Meeting — open to all — Resolutions, Elections.

#### **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR SPECIAL PRE-REGISTRATION RATES!!**

Also, if we receive your form by Nov. 1, each pre-registered person will be eligible for a special drawing of a cash prize AND will also receive express registration service at the Convention. Fill in the form on the next page.

*Special room rate of \$85 per night includes breakfast!*

Call the hotel at 732-574-0100 to reserve your room *right now*.

Special rate guaranteed til Oct. 20. After Oct. 20 rate may increase.

Childcare will be available on Saturday only, by request.

Please call Joe Ruffalo at 973-743-0075 by OCT. 22 to request childcare.

**NFB OF NJ STATE CONVENTION**  
**\*\*\*MAILING LIST & PRE-REGISTRATION FORM\*\*\***

**Please mail to NFB of NJ, 254 Spruce St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003**

\_\_\_ I am coming to the Convention.

\_\_\_ I cannot come to the Convention, but please put my name on the mailing list for more information.

**\*\*\* PLEASE PRINT \*\*\***

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Please list names of all attending, including children, on separate sheet.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

<b>REGISTRATION</b>	<b>Pre-Reg.</b>	<b>Walk-In</b>	<b>How Many?</b>	<b>TOTAL \$</b>
<b>REG.-ADULT</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>\$15</b>		
<b>REG.-CHILD 16 &amp; under</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>		<b>00</b>
<b>LUNCH Nov. 8 ADULT</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>\$15</b>		
<b>LUNCH Nov. 8 CHILD</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$13</b>		
<b>BANQUET Nov. 8 ADULT or CHILD</b>	<b>\$26</b>	<b>\$30</b>		
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED (Make check payable to NFB of NJ)</b>				<b>\$</b>

**I would like my agenda in: \_\_\_Large Print \_\_\_Braille \_\_\_Disk \_\_\_E-File**

Lunch and Banquet tickets will be collected at the meals. Pick up or purchase tickets at the Registration Table. A limited number of box lunches will be available on Friday at a cost of \$13.

**Come to the HIGH HOPES Convention. You'll find what you need to succeed.**

The National Federation of the Blind — changing what it means to be blind.

**Imagine a future full of possibilities!**

**For more information, please contact Joseph Ruffalo, NFB of NJ President, at 973-743-0075 or your NFB Chapter representative.**

*All volunteers, please report to the registration table upon arrival.*

**NFB OF NJ CONTACT INFORMATION****NFB National Center**

<i>President</i>	Marc Maurer	410-659-9314
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**NFB State Affiliate**

<i>President</i>	Joseph Ruffalo	973-743-0075
<i>First Vice President</i>	Jerilyn Higgins	973-239-8874
<i>Second Vice President</i>	Mary Jo Partyka	609-888-5459
<i>Secretary</i>	Quintina Singleton	732-428-4932
<i>Treasurer</i>	Tom Ferry	973-694-5922
<i>Board Member</i>	David Mostello	609-799-8424
<i>Board Member</i>	Dan Facchini	201-906-8655
<i>Board Member</i>	Lynn Reynolds	908-251-5510
<i>Board Member</i>	Ryan Stevens	856-858-3518

**NFB of NJ Chapters***Capital Chapter*

Mary Jo Partyka, President	609-888-5459	choirnfb@gmail.com
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*Central Jersey Chapter*

Jerilyn Higgins, President	973-239-8874	jdhiggins@rcn.com
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*Cumberland/Salem Chapter*

Anna Jordan, President	856-696-3905	ajjordan29@comcast.net
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*Garden State Chapter*

Ed Godfrey, President	856-848-6372	egodfrey137@comcast.net
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*Northeast Chapter*

Dan Facchini, President	www.ThruOurEyes.org 201-906-8655	danfb@verizon.net
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*Northern Chapter*

Rick Fox, President	973-743-6107	richardfox1@comcast.net
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*Ocean Chapter*

Mary Dockery, President	732-349-2456	mary-ob43@comcast.net
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**NFB of NJ Divisions***Association of Blind Merchants*

Lynn Reynolds	908-251-5510	lhr1827@optonline.net
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*Association of Blind Students*

Quintina Singleton, President	www.njabs.org 732-428-4932	qmsingleton@comcast.net
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*Diabetes Division*

Vincent & Michelle Chaney 732-251-8650 msc732@optonline.net

*Division to Promote the Use of Braille*

Sue Tillett 609-924-748 suetillett@verizon.net

Mary Jo Partyka 609-888-5459 choirnfb@gmail.com

*Parents of Blind Children*

www.blindchildren.org

Carol Castellano, President 973-377-0976 blindchildren@verizon.net

**Programs and Projects***Adopt Adaptive Equipment*

Lynn Reynolds 908-251-5510 lhr1827@optonline.net

Ed Godfrey 856-848-6372 egodfrey137@comcast.net

*Blind Children's Resource Center* www.blindchildren.org

Carol Castellano 973-377-0976 blindchildren@verizon.net

*Braille Mentoring Program*

Sue Tillett 609-924-7489 suetillett@verizon.net

Mary Jo Partyka 609-888-5459 choirnfb@gmail.com

*Ebay*

Michele Chaney 732-251-8650 msc732@aol.com

*Imagination Fund/March for Opportunity*

Evelyn Valdez 908-206-8701 tweetybaby19@comcast.net

*Legislative Coordinator*

Lynn Reynolds 908-251-5510 lhr1827@optonline.net

*NFB Newslines*

<http://www.nfb.org/newsline1.htm>

William Dougherty 800-792-8322

*Scholarship*

Jerilyn Higgins 973-239-8874 jdhiggins@rcn.com

*Thru Our Eyes/Internet Radio*

Lenny Azzarone 201-794-1942 lvdman@optonline.net

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Submissions deadline for the Spring/Summer 2010 issue of *The Sounding Board* is

**March 1, 2010**

Articles received after this date will be held for the Fall/Winter 2009 issue.

***CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB AT***

[www.nfbnj.org](http://www.nfbnj.org) [www.blindchildren.org](http://www.blindchildren.org) [www.throureyes.org](http://www.throureyes.org) [www.njabs.org](http://www.njabs.org)

To receive *The Sounding Board* and other information via e-mail,  
please contact Quintina Singleton at [qmsingleton@comcast.net](mailto:qmsingleton@comcast.net).