

THE SOUNDING BOARD
Spring 2010

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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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SWING INTO SPRING

Featuring
REEDS, RHYTHM, & ALL THAT BRASS

18-piece Big Band Concert and Dance
to Benefit the Programs of the

BLIND CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTER
PARENTS OF BLIND CHILDREN-NJ
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND of NJ

Sat., May 22, 2010

7 - 11 pm

St. Vincent's School Auditorium
26 Green Village Road, Madison, NJ

Donation: \$30

(NFB & POBC Members \$20; Kids \$10)

Free dance lesson at 7 pm!

Dessert and Coffee



For TICKETS & INFORMATION please RSVP to

CAROL CASTELLANO

973.377.0976

or blindchildren@verizon.net

Make your check payable to

POBC-NJ

And mail it to 23 Alexander Ave., Madison NJ 07940

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Greetings Fellow Federationists,

I'm proud to announce that through the efforts of our hundreds of members, the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey continues to change what it means to be blind. I'd like to highlight just a few of our many recent activities and events.

First off, I'm thrilled to announce a first for New Jersey: We have four national scholarship winners! Congratulations to Mary Fernandez, Melissa Lomax, Jessica Scannell and Quintina Singleton. As a second-time winner – another first for New Jersey – Quintina is considered a TenBroek Fellow. A short biography on each student will be posted at the State Affiliate website – www.nfbnj.org – and the student website – www.njabs.org. We are very proud of these four Jersey girls!

And here's some more exciting news: Parents of Blind Children-NJ and the State Affiliate are sponsoring a big band evening with swing music on Saturday, May 22, with proceeds to benefit the programs of POBC-NJ and the NFBNJ. Bring your dancing shoes and a hearty appetite!

Our At Large Chapter celebrated its first anniversary in April. A huge thanks to Quintina Singleton, Linda DeBerardinis and to the chapter's members for their involvement. The objective of this chapter is to introduce and/or re-introduce the NFB to those who cannot participate in a local chapter due to transportation issues, dates of local chapter meetings or work schedules. The chapter has 42 members on the mailing list, and 18-24 participants join our monthly conference call. For more information, please contact me at 973-743-0075 or nfbnj@yahoo.com.

Each year, there is a fundraising activity to support the worthy education, technology and training programs funded by the NFB's Imagination Fund. I strongly urge you to participate in this year's activity: the Race for Independence. You can follow the Race and other exciting news, such as the NFB Blind Driver Challenge, on Facebook, Twitter (www.twitter.com/nfbvoice) and YouTube (www.youtube.com/nationsblind). For more info, visit www.raceforindependence.org or call 410-659-9314, ext. 2371.

One of the exciting programs supported by the Imagination Fund is right here in New Jersey. ThruOurEyes, an Internet radio show established by the Northeast Chapter, has just celebrated its fifth anniversary. I've had the pleasure of hosting hundreds of shows on ThruOurEyes, and so has my sister, Jane Degenshein. Through a change in programming, Jane is now hosting a show titled "On the Bright Side," with Jerry Moreno, a former NFBNJ member and currently chapter president in North Carolina. For information on show times, show themes and how to listen, visit www.throureyes.org. Congratulations to Lenny, Lori, Quintina and many other staff who devote much time to running this successful program.

I'm writing this presidential message on the tenth anniversary of my dad's passing. I was fortunate to be at his bedside, holding his hand as he took his last breath. Before he died, he asked me to establish a scholarship for members of the NFBNJ to assist with their education and/or to make it possible for families to attend national or state conventions. I'm proud to announce that the Joe and Rose Ruffalo Memorial Scholarship Fund has awarded over \$10,000 to our members. If you would like to consider contributing to this scholarship, please contact me.

Important Dates

- The National Convention will be held in Dallas, Saturday, July 3 through Thursday, July 8. Please visit www.nfb.org for additional information.
- Our 34th annual State Convention will be held Friday, November 5 through Sunday, November 7 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Clark. You can be sure that the agenda committee is planning another informative experience. We will also honor the 100th anniversary of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- Due to the overwhelming success of this year's holiday party, our second annual After the Holiday Party will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Clark, January 8, 2011.

Please consider providing State Secretary Quintina Singleton your e-mail address so that you continue to receive all the national, state and local news as it happens. In addition, you may elect to receive *The Sounding Board* via e-mail, which will save our affiliate some money and may even save a tree or two.

Finally, thanks to the more than 25 contributors who have written articles for this edition. Many of the authors in this issue represent the next generation of leaders. Also, we're pleased to announce that *The Sounding Board* has a new look. We've changed the font from Times to Calibri, which we think is crisper and more easily read, and we've redesigned the cover. Let us know how you like our new appearance.

When you've finished reading this issue, please share it with family members, teachers, neighbors, friends, doctors and co-workers. Show them how we're changing what it means to be blind. Remember: When we all do, it becomes doable!

With best wishes in moving forward,



Joseph Ruffalo, President

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

By Lynn Reynolds, Legislative Coordinator

This year's Washington Seminar was held February 1 - 4, 2010. A group of 23 members from our state affiliate, including 11 members of the LEAD program, attended. On Monday, we traveled to Washington, D.C. We attended seminars to familiarize ourselves with the issues, and on Tuesday, we presented those issues to the staff members of our congressional representatives.

Below you'll find a sample letter that was e-mailed to a staff member thanking him for meeting with us and also reminding him to sign on to our issues. Included in the sample letter is a summary of each issue. Please read the letter to become familiar with the issues. You'll also find a thank you e-mail that was sent to one of our representative's aides.

First, the letter, from Joe Ruffalo to William P. Isenberg, Legislative Assistant to Congressman Steven R. Rothman:

Dear Mr. Isenberg:

My name is Joseph Ruffalo, and I am President of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey representing over 1,200 members from our state.

On February 2, I and several members from the NFBNJ met with you to thank Congressman Rothman for supporting and co-sponsoring the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act and the Blind Persons to Work Act. In addition, we provided informational materials pertaining to the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind to review our position on issues that are important to the blind community. I am hoping that Congressman Rothman will consider co-sponsoring the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind, H.R. 4533.

1. We urge Congress to ensure the safety of blind and other pedestrians by passing the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act which has been introduced. H.R. 734 was introduced by Congressmen Towns and Stearns and, in the Senate, S. 841, by Senators Kerry and Specter. This bill would require the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to:

- Begin a study within 90 days of its enactment to determine the most practical means of assuring that blind and other pedestrians receive essentially similar information to that which they now receive from sound emitted by internal combustion engines;
- Determine the minimum amount of sound necessary to offer sufficient information for blind pedestrians to make safe travel judgments based on

appropriate scientific research and consultation with blind Americans and other affected groups;

- Within two years of beginning the study, promulgate a motor vehicle safety standard to address the needs of blind and other pedestrians by requiring either a minimum level of sound or an equally effective means of providing the same information as is available from hearing internal combustion engines; and
- Apply the standard to all motor vehicles manufactured or sold in the United States beginning no later than two years after the date it is promulgated.

For additional information, please contact: Jesse Hartle, Governmental Programs Specialist, National Federation of the Blind, 410-659-9314, e-mail: jhartle@nfb.org.

2. We urge Congress to work with blind Americans to support and co-sponsor H.R. 4533, Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind, which mandates that consumer electronics, home appliances, kiosks and electronic office technology provide user interfaces that are accessible through non-visual means. This legislation should:

- Mandate that all consumer electronics, home appliances, kiosks and electronic office technology be designed so that blind people can access the same functions as sighted people through non-visual means and with substantially equivalent ease of use;
- Create a commission comprised of essential stakeholders to establish standards for non-visual accessibility of electronic devices intended for use in the home or office;
- Endow the Department of Justice with the authority to enforce the regulations promulgated by the commission established by this legislation; and
- Authorize the commission to reexamine and rewrite standards periodically as consumer electronic technology continues to evolve.

For additional information, please contact Lauren McLarney, Government Programs Specialist, National Federation of the Blind, 410-659-9314, e-mail: lmclarney@nfb.org.

3. We urge Congress to co-sponsor, promote and facilitate H.R. 886 by contacting Michaeleen Crowell in Congressman John Lewis's office. (In the Senate, please contact Senators Dodd and McCain.) The bill, S. 2962, will transition blind Americans from recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance benefits to income-earning, tax-paying, productive members of the American workforce by enacting legislation to:

- Replace the monthly earnings penalty with a graduated three-for-one phase-out (i.e., a \$1 reduction in benefits for each \$3 earned above the limit);
- Replace the monthly earnings test with an annualized earnings test in an amount equal to 12 times the Substantial Gainful Activity amount; and
- Establish an impairment-related work expense deduction for blind Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries equal to the amount applicable for this deduction when determining an appropriate income subsidy under Medicare Part D, or 16.3 percent of earnings, whichever is greater.

For additional information, please contact Lauren McLarney, Government Programs Specialist, National Federation of the Blind, 410- 659-9314, ext. 2207, e-mail: lmclarney@nfb.org.

If I can be of any assistance, please contact me by phone, 973-743-0075, or via e-mail, nfbnj@yahoo.com, as I am looking forward to having a safe community and workplace and contributing to all that the country offers.

Respectfully,
Joseph Ruffalo, President
National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

Since our visit to Washington, Representative Rothman has signed on to the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind. Carol Castellano's thank you e-mail follows:

Dear Mr. Isenberg,

Would you kindly pass along my gratitude to Congressman Rothman for cosponsoring H.R. 4533, the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind, along with H.R. 734, the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act, and H.R. 886, the Blind Persons Return to Work Act. His support of these issues will mean more opportunities and a better life for blind Americans.

Best wishes,
Carol Castellano, President
National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

I would like to ask that all of you follow up with phone calls and e-mails encouraging your Congressional members to sign on to the bills which they have not yet signed on to, and to thank them for their support. Our representatives need to hear from the people living in their districts. Don't forget that our two senators

represent the entire state, so contact both of them. Before you call or send e-mail, please contact me for an updated list of representatives who are supporting these issues.

As you are all aware, our new governor took office in January. New Jersey is facing financial challenges that will impact services for the blind citizens of our state. We will be contacting all of you when we need calls to be made to our state legislators.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who take the time to make the contacts when the Legislative Alerts are sent out. It is our responsibility to advocate for ourselves. Please e-mail your contact information to me at lhr1827@optonline.net so you can support these important issues.

A TRIP TO WASHINGTON

By Melissa Hurff

Editor's Note: *Melissa is a second-year student at Gloucester County College. She plans to work at the Colorado Center for the Blind this summer. Our good wishes are with her as she will bring excitement and encouragement to all she teaches.*

This was my fourth Washington Seminar, and it was just as great as ever. The other times I attended, I went with the New Jersey LEAD program for high school students; this year I attended independently, as a college student. Compared to attending as a high school student, this time I feel that I gained different information and used different strategies. I was able to understand the issues better, and I was able to talk to the congressmen more comfortably, without being nervous. I was also able to advocate for all the issues more proficiently and, most importantly, I was able to try to make changes for not only myself, but for every other blind individual in America.

The most pressing issue for me was the Technology Bill of Rights. Every day I am faced with situations in which I need to use technology that is not accessible; therefore, I was able to use my own personal experiences when I was advocating this issue to the congressmen.

Representing blind college students at the Washington Seminar gave me such a wonderful and reassuring feeling. I was proud to do it. I didn't just skip a few days of college classes for nothing; it was an excellent excuse! I would give up a lot of things to help reach equality, opportunity and security for the blind.

A LIGHT OF HOPE
By Priscilla Garces

Editor's Note: *Priscilla is a senior at Seton Hall University who hopes to earn a master's degree in international affairs. She is working toward a goal of full independence and hopes to transmit her power of knowledge to future generations.*

I've been blind since birth, and so I've learned to live life in a different way. Although I'm not able to see exaggerated sensationalism that I hear is often portrayed everywhere, I am able to read and become informed about anything I desire, just as equally as the sighted. Braille literacy is very beneficial, especially as I head for a career in the field of international affairs.

I'm hoping to make a positive difference by participating in events sponsored by the NFB, and the Washington Seminar was one of these events. Since this was my second Washington Seminar, my experience told me that there would be a lot of hope intertwined with challenges. I definitely remember my first seminar. I got lost a number of times, and I didn't have the initiative or confidence to try things because I was just too afraid. Also, I don't think I took things too seriously back then.

As a college student, I had an internship as a bilingual translator with the U.S. Senators from New Jersey, Senator Lautenberg and Senator Menendez. I learned many valuable skills from this experience and was able to apply them when I visited Congress during this seminar. Having some work experience has helped me shape a clearer vision for the future, and I hope to show others that taking things seriously always pays off in the long run.

In preparing for the Washington Seminar this year, I heard Dr. Maurer speak. He was inspirational and reminded me that I was not alone in this world. Other speakers, like Anil Lewis from the Scholarship Committee, also inspired me to keep persevering and succeeding. I also enjoyed meeting many new friends who share the same experiences.

Events such as the LEAD program, my first National Convention and the two Washington Seminars have two important aspects in common: self-confidence and accepting yourself. As a striving leader, I have encountered many challenges throughout my life. Sometimes it was difficult to accomplish my goals because I felt a lot of discrimination. Some people thought I was not capable just because I have a visual impairment. This visual challenge is a small nuisance for me since I am able to prove to others that I *am* able to accomplish my goals. Even though I know I am different in certain ways, I am confident that I can contribute to society just as equally as anyone else. For this reason, I thank the National Federation of the Blind with all my heart. Because of the NFB, I've been confident enough to pursue my education and develop skills such as Braille, independence and dealing with my

blindness. All of these experiences have helped me grow strong and mature because each difficult challenge is a positive lesson.

MEET OUR NEW STATE BOARD MEMBERS

By Kathy Gabry

Editor's Note: *Linda DeBerardinis and Michelle Chaney were elected to our board in November 2009. In this issue we feature Linda; look for Michelle in the Fall edition.*

Linda Jo Mazarella DeBerardinis was born and raised in Philadelphia, and moved to the Garden State about 20 years ago. She now calls Delran home. She worked for Amtrak for many years, and even met her husband there. "I feel lucky to be married to a good man who is very supportive," Linda says. She also feels blessed to have two beautiful daughters and three wonderful granddaughters.

Her children made very good subjects for her passion: photography. Prior to becoming blind, Linda took photos of everything – from statues to animals, and from people to scenery. She would frame her favorite prints, or decoupage them to all kinds of wood.

Linda's other interests include all kinds of animals, being outdoors and traveling. Her two favorite places to vacation are Colorado and Sanibel Island. She visited Colorado in 1982 and was awed by the beauty and enormity of the majestic Rocky Mountains. Sanibel Island is just off the West Coast of Florida, near Fort Myers. She's visited this island with and without her sight, and every year she finds it more enchanting. It is a wildlife-protected island where the maximum speed limit is 35, which adds to the relaxed beauty of the island. Linda loves waking up and hearing unusual birds singing!

Linda lost her eyesight overnight from a brain tumor operation; her optic nerve was injured during the surgery. She was 39 years old. In 1993, after being blind for about a year, Linda found the NFB, and things haven't been the same since. She went to her first meeting as a timid woman, guided by her mother, but soon her natural "people person" instincts took over. She loves making people laugh and helping others, and feels she has found a perfect fit with the NFBNJ. Today she attends every National and State Convention, is treasurer for her chapter, is on the State Scholarship and Building Membership committees, and recently was elected Board Member of our affiliate. She says, "My dedication and love for this wonderful organization can never be measured, and I am very grateful to those who have encouraged me along the way. It's now my turn to encourage others and give back what I have learned. I am a true Federationist!"

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT BEING A BLIND PERSON

By Agnes Allen

Editor's Note: *In 2009, the NFB of Connecticut sponsored a writing contest with the theme "What I Like About Being a Blind Person." The winning essay was written by Agnes Allen, a longtime teacher from New Jersey.*

The concept of whether I like or dislike being a blind person has never given me pause for serious reflection. Would I love to see the faces of my daughters or the smiles of my nine grandchildren? Of course I would! Have I wished I could view the heavenly universe with its stars at night, the bright sky or springtime flowers? Indeed I have! But the reality is that I cannot see any of these things.

I accepted this long ago as a child of five when sight was first denied me. Perhaps this acceptance entrenched itself deeply in my psyche through the process of osmosis.

A loving family, school for blind children, a welcoming and forward-looking college and university conspired to build my self-esteem, which ultimately led to my well-being as a blind person. The opportunities I enjoyed fostered feelings of usefulness and self-worth. Through them I could reach out to others and give back what I had received.

Were it not for the positive direction in which my life unfolded, I could have remained a helpless and dependent individual, unhappy with blindness and a burden to family and society. This was not the case.

I chose two significant ways to illustrate how faith in God and becoming Braille literate provided the motivation to reach my major goals.

A strong religious faith has lent itself to overcoming major obstacles inherent in blindness. Without faith, no other achievement in life would have meaning. In addition to blindness, God willed that I deal with, and accept, a major hearing loss. Hopefully my core values have wielded a healthy influence on my family, friends, students, my clients and many members of the blindness community.

At the Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind in Pittsburgh, I mastered the art of reading and writing Braille. This major accomplishment laid the foundation for my future education. With Braille, I gained much independence and success. I became a competitive student, competent teacher, practicing social worker, proficient proofreader, responsible mother of three and a caring grandmother. As Grandma, I read stories to my grandchildren who did not seem amazed that I could read those dots with my fingers, but who simply enjoyed listening to "The Tickle Tree" or "The Five Little Monkeys." Can there be a more bonding experience? I could go on and on singing the praises of Braille and its advantages. I have described two of many areas

which have made the condition of blindness more bearable, yes, and even comfortable.

In a word then, to be blind has not been the end of the world, but has led to the entrance to a whole new world, which, if I could see, I would never have known. Within this world I have encountered many people and demonstrated to them the joys and happiness of a person who just happens to be blind.

MY STORY

By Mary Fernandez

Editor's Note: *Mary is a psychology and music major at Emory College. Her academic goals include getting a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. She has also started working on establishing a school for blind children in Colombia. Here is her story.*

I was born in Colombia in 1989. When I was two years old, my mother left Colombia to come to the United States in search of a new life for my brother and me. A year later, she received a call from my grandmother who told her that it would be only a matter of time before I became completely blind. Instead of breaking down, my mother used this as an incentive to work even harder to bring us to the U.S.

At the age of seven I arrived in the United States, a completely blind girl with few social graces and absolutely no education. In Colombia I did not go to school because they thought that teaching me would be impossible since I had no sight. I remember being so jealous of my brother when he walked into our house with all his books.

Being able to go to school here was truly one of the most magical things for me. I am addicted to learning. I think that if I could, I would go to school as a career, but unfortunately they don't pay you for that. Learning Braille and having books to read opened a plethora of new worlds for me.

As my educational career progressed, I, like all other blind students, faced challenges. I was starting to realize that many people did not expect much of me, and many underestimated my abilities. I can only be thankful that my mother was always there for me, and never backed down because she knew what I could do.

When I started high school, I began participating in a truly wonderful program, the LEAD program. This was the first time that I met blind adults with successful careers and normal, everyday lives. Thanks to LEAD, I found the NFB, and in 2006 I participated in the Rocket On Program. At that point I began to understand the significance of the NFB. There were thousands of blind people in this country who were making such great social changes!

In college, I've discovered reserves of strength and determination I never knew I

possessed. All those NFB advocacy and leadership seminars are coming into great use! As I continue to grow as a student, a blind individual and a woman, I'm beginning to think of these aspects of myself not as separate, but as the whole that makes who I am. I am a blind woman who is and always will be a student. I learn every day and only a little bit of that knowledge comes from the classroom.

I would like to thank those who were and continue to be essential in my growth: the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey, the Scholarship Committee and Joe Ruffalo. From the moment I met him, Joe always expressed nothing but sincere support. He believed in me, although I barely knew him. Sherlock Washington, Ohmney Romero and Evelyn Valdez, my LEAD mentors, opened my eyes to the fact that the professional career I had dreamed about was not only a dream, but a potential reality. And of course, I'm so grateful for my mother, because without her unconditional love, her incredible courage and her conviction that her daughter would succeed, I would not be here today. I promise I will not disappoint any of you; I will give back as much as I received.

NEW TACTILE, BRAILLE BOOK ON EARTH'S BIOMES AVAILABLE
From the Education Department at the Jernigan Institute

The National Federation of the Blind is pleased to announce the release of a new tactile book created with the support of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. *Touch the Earth: A Multimedia Book about the Earth's Biomes* was written by Amy Hansen and conceptualized by Elissa Levine. It includes tactile graphics created by Noreen Grice.

This book aims to educate middle school students while also providing guidance for teachers on how to incorporate the book into classroom instruction. Each book contains contracted Braille and large print, along with tactile and visual graphics to illustrate important concepts in both a tactually and visually friendly way. Each book also comes with a colorful tactile map of the continents of the Earth.

Touch the Earth is available exclusively through the NFB Independence Market. The cost is \$20 per book. To place an order, call 410-659-9314 or visit <http://secure.nfb.org/ecommerce/asp/product.asp?product=854&cat=47&ph=&k>.

One free copy of the book is also available to schools and libraries for the blind across the country for their collections. Please contact Mary Jo T. Hartle, Director of Education for the NFB's Jernigan Institute, at 410-659-9314, ext. 2407, or by e-mail at mhartle@nfb.org to request a free copy for your institution.

GROCERY SHOPPING MADE EASY

By Debbie Bloomer

Editor's Note: *Debbie Bloomer, who is married to Northern Chapter president Rick Fox, is employed with the NJ CBVI as an Education Counselor.*

For most of my adult life, grocery shopping fluctuated between a challenge and a nuisance. I tried many different methods, ranging from going with friends and family members to finding a volunteer from my church, to showing up at the store and getting help from customer service. All of these had their advantages and disadvantages. Going with family and friends was partially a social time, and we shared recipes and other food preparation ideas while shopping. When I shopped with the volunteer from church, we developed a friendship, which lasted long after we stopped shopping together. Getting help from customer service gave me more flexibility to choose the time that I shopped, and the store employees knew the store very well. However, they were often rushed because they had other jobs to do. At one point, a friend told us about a local market that delivered. So, for a while we called in our orders, and they brought the groceries to our house. Although the selection was limited, it was very convenient.

About five years ago, Peapod came to our area. A year later, our local ShopRite started an online shopping and delivery service. They are both very convenient. I utilize both, depending on which of their advantages work for me on a particular shopping day. Both allow you to create a master list, which makes subsequent shopping experiences go more quickly. Both have procedures for using coupons.

For those of you on a special diet, Peapod has an extensive list of categories for sorting food. For example, if you are on a low sodium diet, you can sort by sodium. Therefore, if you are looking for cold cereal, just write cold cereal in the edit box, and a list of cereals will appear in order of least to most sodium.

The fee for Peapod is lower than my local ShopRite.

When ordering from Peapod, the order has to be submitted the previous day. When I order from my local ShopRite, they require only a 4-hour lead time. Also, they'll call me to discuss any questions about my order or to inform me about items that are out of stock.

In conclusion, both of these online services have revolutionized shopping for me. They have made getting groceries much easier, and they have increased my knowledge of available items. For example, I can look at every canned soup in the store if I choose to. It also gave me a practical reason to become more proficient with my adaptive software.

There are over 50 ShopRites with online shopping in New Jersey. (Some of them don't have the home delivery component.) To find out if there is a ShopRite in your area that has online shopping, go to www.shoprite.com and click on the Shop Online link. Then click on the ShopRite from Home link. From there, fill out the form with your state, city and zip code to find the nearest participating store.

Peapod delivers in numerous parts of the state. Go to www.peapod.com and click on the link Groceries for Your Home. Put in your zip code to see if there is a Peapod in your area. Happy shopping!

WORKFORCE INCENTIVES PROGRAM

By Annmarie Cooke, Workforce Incentives Coordinator

If you are a blind or visually impaired New Jersey resident who holds a Ticket To Work from the Social Security Administration, and you want to work full- or part-time, then the NJ CBVI may be able to help you through its Workforce Incentives Program. An employer who hires a Ticket To Work holder who meets certain milestones over a five-year period could get up to \$30,000 in cash back, no strings attached!

If you're interested in using your disability status to leverage your getting and keeping a job, contact Annmarie Cooke, Workforce Incentives Coordinator, at the Commission's offices in Newark: annmarie.cooke@dhs.state.nj.us ; telephone: 973-648-3082. You must be an active or past client of the Commission to qualify for this program.

KUDOS FOR CHUCK PHELAN AND HIS BRAILLER REPAIR SERVICE

By Sarah Weinstein

Editor's Note: *Sarah, a former LEAD student, is a member of the Central Jersey Chapter and a college student.*

For many weeks and months, I was having a lot of problems with my Perkins Braille. I found a name of a person who was able to repair it from *The Sounding Board*. His name was Chuck Phelan. Before I asked him to repair it, I asked to have a loaner from the Library for the Blind in Trenton. When I finally got the loaner Braille, Chuck came to my house to fix the old one. I really enjoyed the service of Chuck coming to my door and fixing the Braille. I owed him only \$1.64. Now my Perkins Braille is working very well!

For more information about this service, please contact Chuck Phelan, Braille for the Blind Volunteer Repair Service, at 908-647-9226 or 908-229-0041 or via e-mail at fixnBraille@juno.com.

BE AN EXAMPLE
By Debbie Azzarone

Editor's Note: *Debbie is an active member of the Northeast Chapter of the NFBNJ. Her basement is the home of the chapter's radio show, ThruOurEyes.*

We all know the Golden Rule – Do unto others as you would have done unto you – but the trick is to incorporate this rule into our daily lives. Not long ago, I heard New York's Governor David Paterson being interviewed on the radio. He believes that he's faced more discrimination being visually impaired than he has being a Black man, and he's faced as much discrimination about his blindness from members of his own Black community as from the general population. This hurts and surprises him because he had thought that if any group would be more understanding, it would be the Black community with which he identifies. They, better than anyone, know what discrimination does to the heart and soul. The struggle of working as hard as you can and still not being quite "good enough" is a common thread that runs through many groups of people, and whether it is because of race or physical disability, the pain is equally felt.

This made me take a really hard look at our own visually impaired community. I have met and admired many blind and visually impaired people, and despite their own problems, they are always the ones to lend a word of encouragement or to praise the successes of their fellow blind. They have mastered the art of being a light in the darkness. It comes as no surprise, then, that these are also the same people who receive the help and support they need when their time of trouble comes around. They know there is no greater gift that we can give ourselves than the tremendous feeling of love we get when we spend our lives lifting up others. Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly.

Unfortunately, as in any population, there are also those who try to lift themselves up by stepping on the backs of others. There's that "What's in it for me?" attitude, and then there are those who make themselves seem superior by making others look inferior.

In considering Governor Paterson's rational, I say, we, of all people, should know better than that. There is not one of us who hasn't fallen short from time to time in dealing with our disabilities. If you say you never have, I think you better look a little harder in the mirror. Coping with all of life's challenges is a tightrope act; sometimes we make it to the other side with grace and ease, but other times we slip and stumble a little. Sometimes that balancing pole we use, which can also be referred to as our defense mechanism, is not so pretty. Who of us has not used anger, self-pity, seclusion, drugs or alcohol to help us through? But when we forgive each other for

our stumbles and lend each other another kind of balancing pole made of love and encouragement, those fears begin to subside and a sense of hope returns.

If we can't treat each other with patience and understanding, how can we expect others to? If we live by the example of respect that we ask for, we will be much more likely to receive it.

We are all in this life together. We belong to an organization that is dedicated to the advancement and awareness of blindness issues. It would be a monumental task to fight for these things alone, but when we join together, there is nothing we can't achieve. Look around and grab an arm, lend a kind word, rejoice in others' successes, forgive imperfection, and through the lifting up of others, you will be surprised how far you can go with a little help from your friends. Be good to each other!

2010: A CENTENNIAL YEAR FOR CBVI

By Pamela Gaston, Outreach Coordinator, CBVI

Editor's Note: *Pam Gaston is a frequent contributor to The Sounding Board. The information in the next two articles is informational, educational and inspirational.*

In April 1909, Governor Franklin Fort and the New Jersey State Legislature mandated that an agency be established "to provide any and all means which shall be deemed feasible for ameliorating the condition of the blind," and so the New Jersey Commission for the Blind was established in 1910 under the leadership of Lydia Young Hayes.

The formation of a single agency to administer to the needs of New Jersey's blind population was the culmination of a wave of social conscience that swept the country in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This was in no small part inspired by the advocacy of media figure Helen Keller. As a result, significant strides were made toward equalizing opportunities for people who were blind.

Throughout 2010, the Commission will commemorate its centennial anniversary by sharing in a variety of events and activities presented by groups and organizations working cooperatively with the Commission to address the needs, issues and concerns of New Jersey's blind and visually impaired residents. The aforementioned events and activities will be held in addition to a 100th Anniversary Awards Luncheon and Blindness Awareness Month activities during October 2010.

The Concordia School for the Blind at St. Joseph's, The Little Rock Foundation, The State Library Talking Books and Braille Center, and the NJ Affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind are just a few organizations planning events in recognition of the 100th anniversary.

An integral part of the centennial celebration will be presenting historical snapshots through the personal reminiscence of people who share a connection with the Commission, either through employment or the agency's influence on their personal life experiences. We are particularly interested in hearing from individuals who have memories from the first 50 year period, however, whether from 1929 or 2009 your contribution will still be welcomed. Photos or artifacts that might help depict your anecdote or some stage of the past 100 years would also be appreciated.

All of New Jersey has reason to be proud of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, not only because we were one of the first states to establish an agency for people who are blind, but also because our state remains a front-runner in the field of services for persons with vision loss and in the prevention of blindness.

To join the CBVI Centennial Listserv or for further information, please e-mail Pamela.Gaston@dhs.state.nj.us .

LYDIA YOUNG HAYES – CBVI'S FIRST CEO
By Pamela Gaston, Outreach Coordinator, CBVI

"Education concerning the blind should be two-fold: the education of the individual regarding his responsibility to the community and the education of the community to promote understanding of the capabilities of the individual." -- Lydia Young Hayes

Lydia Young Hayes, the first Director of the NJ Commission for the Blind, was born on September 11, 1871, in Hutchinson, Minnesota. When Lydia was eight years old, while playing in a field on her parent's farm, she was thrown by a bull. This serious accident resulted in several injuries, including the loss of her eyesight. Her parents were determined that Lydia should continue to learn and grow, despite her blindness. After a chance meeting with Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher, her parents sent her to live with her uncle so that she could attend the Massachusetts School for the Blind, better known as the Perkins Institute, where Sullivan received her education.

After graduating from the Perkins Institute, Lydia studied at the Kindergarten Normal School of Boston University. She opened a private nursery for sighted children but she spent much of her time volunteering as a home teacher for blind adults.

Around that time, a wave of social consciousness was sweeping across the nation, due to the vigorous human rights advocacy efforts of Helen Keller and the subsequent media attention she received. As a result, significant strides were made toward equalizing opportunities for people who were blind.

In 1904 Massachusetts officially recognized the importance of providing "home education" for blind adults. Lydia Hayes was the first person asked to be one of the

program's two official teachers, by Helen Keller and the other members of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

It was Miss Keller who personally visited New Jersey and appeared before the state legislature giving testimony on the need for (in her words) "a state Commission for the Blind." In 1909, Governor Franklin Fort followed up on Keller's recommendation to invite Lydia Hayes to accept the responsibility to lead New Jersey's state agency for the blind.

It was unusual for someone female, blind and as young to be selected for such an important job. As the Commission's first director, her initial task was to develop and organize a program of services for NJ residents found to be blind. In April 1910, with New Jersey ranking third in the nation for population density, the Commission for the Blind began providing education and training for NJ's blind residents. During that first year, 750 people were registered for services.

Throughout her career, Lydia Hayes fought vigorously for people who are blind and remained firm in her assertion that their right to a productive and fulfilling life was not something she would ever consider negotiable.

Unfortunately, during that time, not everyone agreed with Lydia's philosophy. As a matter of fact, blind children were often a source of a family's shame, often shut away and segregated from daily interaction with others. Those who were lucky enough to be able to attend school were sent to separate educational institutions, such as the New Jersey Institution for the Feeble-Minded, in Vineland, where blind students were shut away from their peers and referred to as "inmates."

Mostly due to Lydia's determination, New Jersey, unlike other states, began providing state support and supervision of Braille classes in public schools. Along with her colleague, Janet Gilchrist Patterson, she established the first classes where both blind and sighted children could learn together, side by side at a school located on Washington Street in Newark. The program was nationally recognized as innovative, and people from around the country came to see how Lydia ran her program for blind and sighted children.

After retiring in 1942, Lydia moved back to Minnesota to live with her nephew and his wife, Helen Schultz, a deaf-blind woman who was also her adopted daughter. She died at the age of 72, on February 8, 1943.

References:

Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women; First Syracuse University Press, 1997;

Joan Burstyn, Editor

The Unseen Minority; American Foundation for the Blind Inc., 1976; Frances A. Koestler

Manuscript Group 1635, Mary and Louise Curcio Collection, The New Jersey Historical Society

Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States, 1789-1978, Meckler Books;

1978; Robert Sobel and John Raimo

SAVE THE DATE: FFNJB SPONSORS CBVI ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On Wednesday, October 27, 2010, the Fund for the NJ Blind, Inc. will sponsor "A Celebration of Partnership and Progress," a day-long event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This event will include information on CBVI as well as other state, federal and community-based services and programs; a display and demonstration of state-of-the-art assistive technology; resources pertinent to achieving educational, independent living and employment goals and the CBVI 100th Anniversary Awards Luncheon!

To receive further information, including an exhibitor's package, please send an e-mail to pamela.gaston@dhs.state.nj.us with "Oct. 27" in the subject line.

MUSEUMS OFFER TOURS FOR BLIND/VI VISITORS**Newark Museum**

The Newark Museum offers monthly guided tours for blind and partially sighted visitors using verbal imaging techniques. Specially trained docents guide blind and partially sighted museum guests to the area featured in a specific month, describe an object and its back story, and offer similar objects that can be held to stimulate the senses. Textiles, fragrances, small sculptures and household items are typical of the touch part of the tours.

The tours are free with suggested museum admission. Pre-registration is required. Please call 973-596-6613 to pre-register.

Submitted by Ellen Greenberg

American Museum of Natural History

The museum's Science Sense Tours held monthly in the museum galleries. Specially trained museum tour guides highlight specific themes and exhibition halls, engaging participants through extensive verbal descriptions and touchable objects. Science Sense is free with museum admission, and the tours are available to individuals or groups. Space is limited and advance registration is required. Upcoming programs include: Dinosaurs, Wednesday, June 23, which will be a paleontological adventure through the 4th floor fossil halls featuring dinosaurs and mammals; Rose Center for Earth and Space, Saturday, July 24, where you will explore astrophysics and geology in the Bullman Hall of the Universe and Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth; and Dioramas, Sunday, August 22, which will provide information on the art of creating the museum's famous animal dioramas.

To register, please call 212-769-5250 or e-mail accessibility@amnh.org.

NEWS FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARY TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE CENTER
By Anne McArthur

Digital Update

TBBC has received just over 1,400 digital players from the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Handicapped (NLS). As of February 15, approximately 500 titles in digital cartridge format have been added to our collection, with from two to 10 copies per title. Initially, we will be able to loan only two titles to a patron at any given time. As the collection grows, the book limits per patron will increase.

TBBC has issued digital players to every TBBC veteran member who signed up for one. Most of the non-veteran customers on our waiting list for digital players have also received one. If you want a digital player and haven't received one, please contact TBBC at 1-800-792-8322. You will be impressed by the voice quality and the ease of use of both the player and the digital books. Remember, you can also keep your cassette player for as long as there are cassette titles you want to listen to in that format.

Currently there are over 17,000 digital titles available for downloading, as well as digital copies of the 42 magazine titles available from the NLS program. If you plan to download books from the online BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) database of NLS, and are not already signed up, please register at <https://nlsbard.loc.gov/NJ1A/ApplicationInstructions.html>.

The Get Together: TBBC's Virtual Book Club

Relax, put your feet up, and spend the afternoon with Karen, our own Oprah, and her friends at *The Get Together*, a virtual club for people who enjoy good conversation about good books. You'll feel like you're sitting around your own kitchen table with this lively group of book lovers who put the excitement and enthusiasm back into literary analysis and character examination.

Tune in soon at <http://www.audiovision-nj.org/asx/bookclub.asx> ... and keep the coffee hot! NFB's ThruOurEyes Internet radio will broadcast *The Get Together* in June, September and December. See <http://www.thruoureyes.org/lineup.html> for more info. If you'd like to attend the next Book Club in person, call 1-800-792-8322 and ask for Karen Carson.

New Online Newsletter at NJSL Talking Book & Braille Center

Stories, news, links and anything that may be of interest to children, teens, their parents and teachers can be found in the NJSL TBBC Online Youth Services Newsletter: <http://www.njlbh.org/ysnewsletter/>. Do you have news or a website you think children and teens would be interested in? Information about a scholarship, club or program? Please forward all information to Elizabeth Burns, the Children's Librarian, at eburns@njstatelib.org.

FROM THE KITCHEN OF JERILYN HIGGINS

Editor's Note: *Jerilyn has introduced the NFB to many who have become leaders in the organization. She has served as State Treasurer, Second Vice President, Secretary, Board Member and is currently First Vice President. She is also the President of the Central Jersey Chapter, committee chair for the state scholarship program and co-editor of The Sounding Board. She is employed by a senior program where she assists clients transitioning from dependence to independence and has served as a mentor in the LEAD program for teens with vision loss. If she has any free time, Jerilyn can be found in the kitchen creating her masterpieces. She was a teacher at POBC's first Cooking Without Looking activity in March 2009.*

Zucchini Quiche**Ingredients:**

- 4 large eggs
- ¼ cup Bisquick, regular or whole wheat
- ¼ cup milk
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup parmesan cheese
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 8 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 zucchinis, sliced

Method:

Pre heat your oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, beat the eggs, add the Bisquick, milk, oil and the parmesan cheese. Mix well. Add the pepper and Italian spice, then add the shredded cheddar cheese, the onion and the zucchini. Incorporate all ingredients.

Grease a 10-inch pie pan. Pour mixture into the greased pie pan.

Bake for 45 minutes.

The zucchini can be substituted with a 10-ounce box of frozen broccoli or a 10-ounce box of spinach. Thaw before folding into the mixture.

A Personalized Chocolate Cake

This cake, baked in a large coffee mug, is great to make with the kids, when babysitting or just when you feel like a great chocolaty dessert for yourself.

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 2 Tablespoons oil
- 2 Tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 Tablespoons flour
- 2 Tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 3 Tablespoons sugar
- 2 Tablespoons chocolate chips

Method:

In a large coffee mug, beat the egg, oil, milk and vanilla, and then add the flour, cocoa and the sugar. Mix well.

Lastly add the chocolate chips and stir.

Place mug in the microwave oven and bake on high for 2 minutes.

You can enjoy this delicious dessert right from the mug or you can invert the cake onto a plate and add vanilla ice cream.

NOTICE FOR NEWSLINE USERS WITH E-MAIL Adapted from a Newsline Article

To add your e-mail address to your NFB-NEWSLINE account, call 800-504-7300 or e-mail newsline@nfb.org. Remember that at any time while an article is being read, you can hit the POUND sign followed by 9, and that article will be e-mailed to you.

Many e-mail service providers have placed filters on their servers to eliminate unwanted bulk e-mailings. This means that sometimes the content originating from our e-mail address gets trapped in these filters, and so the article never arrives in the subscriber's mailbox. If attempts to have articles e-mailed to you seem unsuccessful, please check your SPAM or JUNK e-mail folders within your e-mail program. You may find the content there. If this happens, you can add the address nfbnewsline@nfb.org as a safe sender, and this step should ensure that these e-mails get through to you properly in the future. In extreme cases, your e-mail provider may block e-mails to you without notice. If you suspect that this has happened, you should contact your provider's help desk or technical support staff for further assistance.

NFBNJ CHAPTER NEWS

Editor's Note: *You'll find contact and meeting information for all our Chapters, Programs, Associations and Divisions on pages 31-32 of this issue.*

CAPITAL CHAPTER, by Mary Jo Partyka, President

Since the last *Sounding Board*, our Chapter members celebrated the holiday with a wonderful Christmas party at a restaurant called Nick's Café, which is owned by the nephew of one of our Chapter members. Everyone enjoyed the food and the fellowship.

Our Chapter has several new members, and we are acclimating them and teaching them about the importance of the NFB. Our Chapter anticipates doing a fundraising project where we will give out literature to people who join us for dinner at Applebee's restaurant.

CENTRAL JERSEY CHAPTER, by Jerilyn Higgins, President

Our anniversary breakfast was held April 10. We hope to host a legislative breakfast, where we would meet our state legislators and familiarize them with the issues that impact our blind community. We also will have a Meet the Blind activity and fundraiser at the Lions Club Flea Market on June 12 in Metuchen and will be planning our annual Meet the Blind month activity for October.

If you live in Middlesex County, are interested in joining us and are registered with Middlesex County area transit (MCAT), please call Kelly Leary at 732-388-1322 to reserve a ride to the meeting.

Please come out and join us in changing what it means to be blind.

GARDEN STATE CHAPTER, by Ed Godfrey, President

Greetings from the Garden State Chapter! Our Christmas party held at the Mandarin Buffet was a success. Thirty-eight people attended. We sang, won door prizes, socialized with each other and filled our bellies!

Three of our members participated in the Washington Seminar, helping to educate and urge Congress to pass our important blindness issues.

We are planning a fundraiser to assist our members in attending the National Convention in Dallas. We are also starting to plan our annual picnic, which will be held during a warmer month at the Red Bank Battlefield Park, in National Park, NJ.

NORTHEAST CHAPTER, by Debbie Azzarone

The Northeast Chapter continues to grow in numbers and in enthusiasm. We welcomed several new members in the last few months and are looking forward to

finding even more friends this year. We are already “infanticipating” as Hannah Hashash, our long-time member and an active member of Parents of Blind Children, recruited two little, tiny members for us this spring. These twins will be numbers 6 and 7 of the lovely Hashash clan.

We were fortunate to receive another grant from the Imagination Fund as well as one from the Carlough Foundation of New Jersey. These grants will allow us to continue to produce shows on our Thru Our Eyes web radio program. We hope you are tuning in every Wednesday night at 8 p.m. on thruoureyes.org.

Our members are always ready to step up, and this past month was no exception. We designated our monthly Sunshine collection to Haiti Relief. Our members dug deep and we sent the American Red Cross \$100.

Dana Hemming, our legislative liaison, went to the NFB Washington Seminar in February, and her reports are helping to set our goals for the coming year.

NORTHERN CHAPTER, by Rick Fox

The Northern Chapter, the oldest chapter in NJ, meets on the third Saturday of the month at the Newark Free Public Library, 5 Washington Street, Special Services Room, 3rd Floor, from 10 am to noon. The library can be reached via AccessLink, buses, NJ Transit trains and the Newark Light Rail.

Since there’s wireless Internet Access throughout the library, we have regular technology demonstrations during our meetings. We are about to undertake an ongoing chapter project that will involve the hands and hearts of all of our members, and contribute to changing what it means to be blind in Essex and Hudson counties.

We are noted for our fun- and food-filled picnics and parties. If this sounds interesting to you, get involved! See you at our next meeting!

OCEAN COUNTY CHAPTER, by Mary Dockery

Our chapter is now three years old, and we’re continuing to move along. Getting 10 new members at Christmastime was a wonderful present. Terry Hulme is working nonstop on membership lists for Ocean and Atlantic counties. It is obvious that this is long overdue.

We had the pleasure of joining forces with Mary Jo Partyka in presenting a workshop sponsored by the Trenton Diocese. The workshop offered information to people with disabilities, and we provided the blindness information.

We’re also preparing for our resource workshop on September 24 at the Toms River Knights of Columbus, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our goal is to provide information on resources, education, programs, technology and Braille literacy. Please come and join us!

NFBNJ PROGRAMS, ASSOCIATIONS & DIVISIONS NEWS

ADOPT ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT, by Lynn Reynolds

Since the last *Sounding Board*, we've not had any new donations, but we've had a few requests for Braille writers and a computer. At our State Convention, Brian Keene brought some computers he has worked on to give to those who wanted them. We would like to thank Brian for taking the time and some of his funds to make these computers available.

If anyone has a need for equipment or would like to donate anything, please contact Ed Godfrey or me. Please remember that any repairs needed are to be done by the person who receives the item, and arrangements for acquiring an item are to be made by the two parties.

ASSOCIATION OF BLIND MERCHANTS, by Anna DeSantis

To all New Jersey Business Enterprise Managers: Please take note that this year, there will be no Business Leadership & Superior Training Conference (BLAST). Instead, the National Association of Blind Merchants, together with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Blind Entrepreneurs Alliance and other associations of blind merchants, will sponsor the National Randolph-Sheppard Training & Leadership Conference.

The conference will be held June 9-12, at the Crystal City Hyatt Regency Hotel in Arlington, VA. Room rates are \$149 plus tax, and registration for the conference is \$125 until May 10 and \$175 after May 10. The first day will consist of a breakfast and then we will head up to Capitol Hill to meet with some of our legislators to discuss topics that concern us. That evening there will be an opening reception. Throughout the conference, there will be a number of training sessions and a large-scale trade show.

We encourage all Business Enterprise managers to make an effort to attend as this promises to be an excellent opportunity to network with other managers from other parts of the country.

If you would like more information, go to the NABM website at www.blindmerchants.org or call me at 732-462-4604.

ASSOCIATION OF GUIDE DOG USERS, by Vincent Chaney

We are the NJ Association of Guide Dog Users (NJAGDU), a Division of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey. We became a division at the 2009 NFBNJ State Convention, we have our own e-mail list on NFBNET.org, and we meet through conference calls the third Monday of the month.

We are working on the NFBNJ Guide Dog Protection Resolution (Resolution 2009-02, *Sounding Board*, Fall 2009) and access issues of guide dog partners in New Jersey. We are advocates for the guide dog user community and will work to inform public places of the legal rights of those who use service dogs.

Do you know of anyone who would like to join us? We ask you to please pass this information on to them.

We are further developing our network to support each other as guide dog users. When questions come up about working with your guide dog and you're not sure where to turn, our team will be there to help you out. If you have an interest in joining us, if you're considering working with a guide dog and have questions, or would like to help, please contact us.

DIABETES DIVISION, by Vincent Chaney

We're proud to have had our second Diabetes Division workshop at the 2009 State Convention. Many people joined us for hands-on demonstrations and discussions with Jordan Benis and Tina Rockwell, both from Advanced Diabetic Solutions (888-377-6382). Jordan and Tina demonstrated the testing technique that should be used by someone who is blind, and they worked with our members to practice testing, as well as to answer questions. They also donated \$500 to support our work. Throughout the next year, they will join us in meetings, attend our State Convention, attend the NFB National Convention in Dallas in July and provide ongoing support to us throughout the coming year.

Our group meets the third Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. via conference call. Please join us!

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

Since the last *Sounding Board* article, the Braille Division members are attempting to set up a forum with the Girl Scouts to teach them about the importance of Braille. Elizabeth Morgan, Shefeka Hashash and Isabel Rodriguez are in the process of setting up Braille clubs in their high schools to show sighted students what Braille looks like and how it could be used.

On the national level, registration for the Braille Reading Pals Program will begin on April 1, 2010. The Braille Reading Pals Club is an early literacy program that encourages parents to read daily with their blind or low-vision child (ages infant to seven). The purpose of this program is to introduce children from age 0 to 7 to Braille. Children and their parents will receive books and other items each month to enhance the experience. Anyone interested in learning more about this program or registering should contact <http://www.nfb.org>.

POBC-NJ, by Carol Castellano

Greetings from Parents of Blind Children-NJ. We are hard at work planning our Swing into Spring fundraiser which will benefit the programs of POBC-NJ and the NFBNJ. This concert and dance will feature Reeds, Rhythm and All That Brass, an 18-piece big band specializing in jazz and swing classics for your listening or dancing pleasure. Homemade desserts and coffee will top off the night.

On the education front, POBC-NJ members continue to assist parents and teachers of blind children throughout the state with phone and e-mail support, literature and information dissemination, and IEP advocacy. We enjoyed being an integral part of the State Convention in the fall and attending the after-the-holidays party. Three NJ parents took part in the Parent Leadership Program at the Washington Seminar in February and gained great experience going to Capitol Hill. As president of the national parents division, I was invited to become a part of the public advisory council of the National Leadership Center on Sensory Disabilities. I am now planning a week of parent and teacher activities for National Convention. It will be a fabulous one, and I look forward seeing you all in Dallas.

TECHNOLOGY DIVISION, by Michele Chaney

The Technology Committee became the Technology Division at the State Convention. Our constitution states that all should have the opportunity for technology, and our goals are to have classes, demonstrations of devices, tutorials and a private list serve. Our board includes President Michele Chaney, Vice President Vincent Chaney, Treasurer Anna DeSantis, Recording Secretary Mary Jo Partyka, Corresponding Secretary Lynn Reynolds, and Board Members Ryan Stevens, Ed Godfrey and Evelyn Valdez.

In March we had a conference call that focused on how to keep our computers healthy. Each conference call will also provide technological updates.

If you're interested in joining the Technology Division, please contact me. If you decide to e-mail me, write "Technology Division Join" in the subject area, and in the body of the e-mail, please include your full name, address, phone number and e-mail address.

GET CONNECTED!

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LOCATIONS:

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ENROLL: Contact 877-447-6500, ext. 227, or info@4dewitt.com



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Tom Ferry 973-694-5922

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Dan Facchini 201-906-8655

Lynn Reynolds 908-251-5510

Ryan Stevens 856-858-3518

Linda DeBerardinis 856-764-7014

Michele Chaney 732-251-8650

**NFB of NJ Chapters, Meeting Info
and President's Contact Info***Capital Chapter*

Third Sat., Lawrence Library, 2751
Brunswick Pike, Lawrenceville,
10 a.m.

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

Central Jersey Chapter

Second Sat., Grace Lutheran Church,
Perth Amboy, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Jerilyn Higgins 973-239-8874
jdhiggins3@verizon.net

Cumberland/Salem Chapter

Third Mon., Tri-County Independent
Living Center, Millville, 10:30 a.m.

Anna Jordan 856-696-3905
ajjordan29@verizon.net

Garden State Chapter

Third Sat., Kennedy Memorial Hospital,
Cherry Hill, 10 a.m.

Ed Godfrey 856-906-4516
egodfrey137@comcast.net

Northeast Chapter

Third Sat., St. Mathew's Church,
Secaucus, 10 a.m. coffee, meeting
at 11 a.m. www.ThruOurEyes.org

Dan Facchini 201-906-8655
danfb@verizon.net

Northern Chapter

Third Sat., Free Public Library, 3rd Floor,
Newark, 10 a.m. - noon

Rick Fox 973-743-6107
richardfox1@comcast.net

Ocean Chapter

Second Sat., Ocean County Public
Library, Toms River

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NFB of NJ Divisions*Association of Blind Merchants*

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PLEASE NOTE:

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Articles received after this date will be held for the Spring 2011 issue.

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