

SPRING 2014

The Sounding Board

The Publication of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

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describes his vision for CBVI



THE SOUNDING BOARD
Spring 2014

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To subscribe via Newsline, contact Maria Baratta, 800-792-8322.

JACOBUS TENBROEK LEGACY SOCIETY

Help build a future full of opportunity for the blind by becoming a member of the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society. Your legacy gift to the National Federation of the Blind can be made in the form of a will or a living trust, an income-generating gift, or by naming the NFB as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. You can also become a member of the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society by making a legacy gift to your state affiliate. By committing to support an NFB affiliate, your gift will benefit both local and national programs, since all bequests made to affiliates are split evenly with the NFB national treasury. In addition to having the satisfaction of contributing to the future success of the NFB's mission, tenBroek Legacy Society members also receive a specially designed thank you gift and other benefits. For additional information, please contact Lou Ann Blake at the NFB Jernigan Institute by e-mail at lblake@nfb.org, or by telephone at 410-659-9314, extension 2221.

Mission Statement

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey, Inc. is an organization of blind and interested sighted people who plan and carry out programs; work to improve the quality of life of the blind; provide a means of collective action for parents of blind children; promote the vocational, cultural and social advancement of the blind; achieve the integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality with the sighted; and take action that will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the blind.

The National Federation of the Blind Pledge

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity and security for the blind; to support the programs and policies of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.

The Sounding Board

The Sounding Board is the magazine of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey. We publish *The Sounding Board* twice a year. Our hope is that through *The Sounding Board*, our members can keep current with local, state and national news and issues of concern. We also aspire to provide a source of hope, inspiration, pride and camaraderie through the personal stories in our publication.

About 300 readers receive our publication via e-mail, and we also encourage registration with Newsline Online, which sends publications, sections of publications or articles you select to your e-mail address for downloading. We're pleased that the New Jersey Talking Book and Braille Center airs excerpts from *The Sounding Board* on Audiovision. *The Sounding Board* is also available for download in its entirety from our website at www.nfbnj.org and is broadcast on our radio station, ThruOurEyes.org. We encourage our readers to share *The Sounding Board* with family members, teachers, professionals, neighbors and any other interested parties. We estimate our circulation to be in the thousands, as readers from across the country regularly report that *The Sounding Board* influences their lives. We hope you enjoy this issue.

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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
of PARENTS OF BLIND CHILDREN-NJ



Saturday, May 31, 2014

6:30 - 11 pm

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

Donation: \$30
POBC & NFB Members: \$20
Children: \$10

Free dance lesson at 6:30 pm
with Jim Reitter, Swing Dance Plus

Dessert and Coffee

For TICKETS & INFORMATION contact CAROL CASTELLANO
973-377-0976 or blindchildren@verizon.net

Make your check payable to POBC-NJ
23 Alexander Ave., Madison NJ 07940

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Greetings Fellow Federationists!

Spring is here at last! This is the time of year for bringing forth new ideas and new opportunities. It's a time to renew our support to each other as we all work together to make a positive difference and change what it means to be blind.

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. We all know that low expectations create obstacles between blind people and their dreams. Every day we in the NFB raise the expectations of blind people. You *can* have the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back. Together, with love, hope and determination, we turn dreams into reality. Our local, state and national programs work with you and for you creating and changing laws, providing skills training, teaching Braille, exploring technology and raising expectations. A fine example of our efforts is the recent enactment of Dusty's Law. The New Jersey Association of Guide Dog Users, under the leadership of Vincent Chaney, worked with The Seeing Eye staff, trainers, and past and current students, as well as several communities, to ensure this law's unanimous (134 – 0) passage. An article highlighting the introduction of this law is in this issue.

In January, the NFBNJ hosted its annual After the Holiday Party at the Belleville Knights of Columbus. That day, NFBNJ and the Knights of Columbus also conducted a GreenDrop drive. Members of both organizations, along with residents of Belleville and members from two local churches collected household goods. GreenDrop collects donations of clothing and household items and then sells the goods to thrift stores on behalf of the NFB. The proceeds support the NFB's programs. In May, a Morris County Cub Scout troop will assist the NFBNJ in another GreenDrop drive. You, too, can conduct a similar drive with your school, church or civic organization. You can find out more about GreenDrop in this issue.

In January, Mary Jo Partyka, president of the NJ Association to Promote the Use of Braille, Holly Miller, president of Parents of Blind Children – NJ, and I attended a 3-day workshop on the Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning, or BELL, program at the National Center. We're proud to announce that the first BELL program for New Jersey will be conducted July 21 - August 1, 2014. We're confident the program will be a huge success thanks to Mary Jo and Holly, as well as Barbara Shalit, instructor, and Jerilyn Higgins, activities of daily living teacher, and all our volunteers. Find out more about the BELL program in this issue, and join us on the road to literacy!

Also in this edition of *The Sounding Board*, you'll find information on the issues presented at the Washington Seminar. All of these issues inspire us TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE and to contact our legislators when the call to all is provided.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind has established a Strategic Design Planning Team to provide a plan for the agency for the next three to five years. The team consists of CBVI administrators, managers, staff and leaders in the consumer groups. Please read the article by Dan Frye in this issue.

Tara Carty has been appointed chair of the NFBNJ's new Press Core Committee, which informs the public of our programs and projects, as well as the successes of our members. Each chapter and division has been asked to assign a member to this committee.

The National Convention will be held July 1 – July 6 in Orlando. Be on the lookout for the agenda so that you can scope out the many activities and plan your three hours of sleep every other day. For those not attending this year, I hope that you'll read the agenda and consider making plans to attend next year.

The NFBNJ will conduct its 38th annual State Convention at the Holiday Inn in Manahawkin, November 7 – 9, 2014. As information is finalized, we will forward.

Members of the NFB and the New Jersey affiliate staged a protest at the Mays Landing Campus of Atlantic Cape Community College on April 17 to combat discrimination by ACCC against Anthony Lanzilotti, a blind student studying criminal justice and cyber security. An article appears in this issue, and you can see a video online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJSZNsM0n9g>.

Finally, I want to thank Kathy Rawa for her time and dedication as president of the South Jersey Shore Chapter.

In summary, thanks to our dedicated, hardworking and committed members who are making a difference!

Upcoming Important Dates

- May 16: GreenDrop Program/Cub Scout collection, Kinnelon
- May 31: Parents of Blind Children's Swing into Spring Dance, Madison
- June 21: Wedding Bells for Ivis Alvarez and Alberto Trejo
- July 1 – 6: National Convention, Orlando
- July 21 – August 1: BELL program, Perth Amboy
- October 1: Deadline for articles for the Fall issue of *The Sounding Board*
- October 1 - 31: Meet the Blind Month
- October 25: Wedding Bells for Kevin Sisco and Christine Crotty
- November 7 to 9: State Convention, Holiday inn, Manahawkin

Sincerely,



Joseph Ruffalo, President

A CBVI UPDATE

By Daniel B. Frye

Editor's Note: *Dan Frye is the executive director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired.*

As I near the 6-month mark of my tenure as the new executive director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CBVI), I am proud of where this agency is and where it is headed. Much of my initial work has involved getting to know the broader blind and vision-impaired constituency in this state and developing a solid rapport with the senior management team and front-line staff of this organization. Toward this end, I devoted much of the first several months of my responsibilities to traveling throughout New Jersey to meet consumer groups and other allied service providers. Similarly, I visited each of CBVI's regional offices to introduce myself and my ideas to the CBVI family.

In addition to participating in this natural orientation exercise, managing the day-to-day administrative obligations and policy questions of this state-wide agency, responding to consumer concerns and compliments, and introducing some fresh, internal communications and cultural initiatives to our staff, my most important work for CBVI thus far has included being thoroughly engaged in working with our staff and external partners to develop a new, long-term strategic plan for the Commission. Specifically, our process has been strengthened through the participation of several leaders from among the affiliate of the NFBNJ, including President Joe Ruffalo and POBC-NJ representative Carol Castellano. This effort will, when fully realized, help to lay the foundation for what basic values CBVI will stand for and what primary services we will be able to provide.

Instead of chronicling further what I've tried to accomplish during the short time that I have had the privilege of serving the blind and vision-impaired community of New Jersey, since six months is no time at all in the institutional history of an organization with over 100 years of heritage and heart, I'd like to leave you with my current version of my broad vision for CBVI. This set of principles will inform much of what the Commission will strive to achieve through the creation of a practical and useful strategic plan. These points also represent the fundamental building blocks of what I hope to achieve as the new CBVI executive director. To be sure, my vision will evolve and become better defined as I continue the prerequisite learning associated with leading a dynamic organization and interacting with consumers who will share with me their perspectives, but I feel confident in outlining this blueprint for you as a respectable starting ambition. Here, in part, are some of my immediate priorities for the forward momentum of CBVI. CBVI should be an agency that:

1. Promotes an increased sense of self-confidence and high expectations of and for our consumers, emphasizing that nothing inherent in blindness need limit

personal or professional achievement. Realizing this objective will involve adoption of innovative and unconventional efforts to effect systemic cultural and social change in the general public's thinking about the capacity of blind and vision-impaired people to participate in the world as contributing, self-sufficient, fully integrated people, who are valued and accepted as equals.

2. Leverages the diverse services currently offered through CBVI (education, VR, IL and eye-health) to create programs and solutions for consumers, thereby maximizing our organizational advantage of offering a life-long array of services and promoting improved interdisciplinary cooperation, which promises to make our offerings increasingly unique and rich.
3. Offers a "Cadillac Service Model" of supports to promote the education, training, career-readiness and solid employment outcomes of our consumers so that they may achieve social, political and economic self-sufficiency. Such a model relies on the principle of quality over quantity in service delivery.
4. Engages, in particular, the business community about the capabilities of blind and vision-impaired consumers so that these cultivated allies affirmatively want to work with CBVI to employ qualified blind and vision-impaired candidates. CBVI must target business as a secondary customer of our agency, promoting blindness education and blindness-specific consulting as attractive deliverables to offer this community.
5. Becomes an agency that values transparency with its internal and external stakeholders through:
 - A. Valuing the contributions of all staff and creating a work environment that relies on open communications, encourages critical thinking and constructive feedback, cultivates staff professional development, and instills within all CBVI staff a true sense of organizational mission;
 - B. Acknowledging that consumers and other interested CBVI stakeholders should be instrumental in influencing the shape of the services and programs that we offer; and
 - C. Acquiring and earning recognition as an authority on blindness, low vision, vision loss and eye health, such that local, state and federal entities within New Jersey look to CBVI as an expert of first resort in our field.

As I grow into this position, I look forward to developing a fruitful and robust relationship with the members of the NFBNJ. Please be in touch with me to offer your ideas and suggestions about measures that CBVI should potentially take to serve the blind and vision-impaired community well. Together, we'll create new opportunities in the areas of training and employment — opportunities that just may transform dreams into exciting realities for our blind and vision-impaired consumers.

SPRING 2014 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Lynn Reynolds

On January 28, 2014, 11 members of the NFBNJ affiliate met with our senators and representatives to discuss issues designated this year by the NFB that impact the blind community. Below are updates of the issues that were presented.

Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act: Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act allows employers to pay workers with disabilities less because of the false assumption that they are less productive than non-disabled workers. As a result, workers with disabilities have been unfairly excluded from the federal minimum wage for nearly 75 years, and today some 400,000 disabled workers are working for subminimum wages, some for only pennies per hour. This old-fashioned provision breeds low expectations and discourages Americans with disabilities from reaching their full potential. H.R. 831 phases out the use of the 14(c) Special Wage Certificates over a 3-year period, thereby ending the era of segregated, sub-minimum wage work and guaranteeing workforce protection of a federal minimum wage to workers with disabilities. The bill currently has 70 co-sponsors. A letter written by NFB President Marc Maurer to President Obama in support of this legislation appears after this article.

We are also fighting to remove Section 511 of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act included in the Workforce Investment Act reauthorization bill. Section 511 would authorize vocational rehabilitation agencies to use the antiquated, discriminatory subminimum-wage provision of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act to provide training and employment that costs more, produces poorer outcomes, and actually teaches skills that need to be unlearned in order for an individual with a disability to obtain competitive integrated employment. We have sent a template of a letter for all members of our affiliate to use when writing letters to urge Senator Cory Booker to support removal of Section 511.

The Technology, Education and Accessibility in College and Higher Education (TEACH) Act: Electronic instructional materials have replaced traditional methods of learning in post-secondary education, but the overwhelming majority of e-books, courseware, web content and other technology are inaccessible to students with print disabilities. The law mandates equal access in the classroom, but fails to provide a prescription to schools for how that applies to technology. The TEACH Act creates accessibility guidelines for electronic instructional materials that will guide the market, give clarity to schools and protect blind students' rights to critical course material. The TEACH Act has been endorsed by 10 disability groups and the Association of American Publishers, the lead trade association for the U.S. Publishing

industry. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduced the Technology, Education and Accessibility in College and Higher Education (TEACH) Act (S. 2060) on February 27, 2014.

Equal Access to Air Travel for Service-Disabled Veterans (H.R. 164 and S. 346): The Space Available Program allows active-duty military, Red Cross employees and retired members of the armed services to travel on military aircraft if there is space available. These bills reverse the exclusion of 100 percent service-disabled veterans who were discharged before retirement and entitle them to the program's privileges. As of February 21, 2014, we now have 210 co-sponsors on H.R. 164, and 18 co-sponsors on S. 346. We must continue to build co-sponsor support for both the House and Senate versions of the Space Available Bill to ensure that our language is included in this year's version of the National Defense Authorization Act.

The Air Carrier Technology Accessibility Act Amendments: Legislation is needed to address the barriers to equal access created by inaccessible technologies being deployed by air carriers, specifically in the areas of mobile apps and inflight services. Just before the Washington Seminar, we learned that Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa has introduced the Air Carrier Accessibility Amendments Act, which calls on air carriers to ensure that the mechanisms used to select inflight services are accessible to the blind, and that audio description is included in in-flight entertainment. We believe that this legislation should also include requirements to make mobile apps accessible as well. We are working to get legislation introduced in the House to accomplish this goal and with Senator Harkin's office to see if an amendment related to app accessibility can be added to S. 556 at a later time. We believe that Representative Takano of California will take the lead on the House bill, and we are working with his office to find a Republican member to join with his office in introducing the House companion bill.

Update on Dusty's Law: Dusty's Law was unanimously passed by the New Jersey State Legislature on January 6, 2014 and signed into law by Governor Chris Christie on January 21, 2014. An article written by New Jersey Association of Guide Dog Users President Vincent Chaney also appears in this edition of *The Sounding Board*.

I would like to thank all of you who have been making contacts when we need action to be taken. If you would like to be added to my e-mail list for legislative updates, please send me your e-mail information. I can be reached by telephone at 908-251-5510 or by e-mail at lhr1827@optonline.net.

NFB RESPONDS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FAIR WAGES FOR WORKERS
By Marc Maurer, President, National Federation of the Blind

Editor's Note: *Marc Maurer sent the following letter to President Obama 2/3/2014:*

In your January 28th State of the Union Address and via a conference call with Vice President Biden and Secretary of Labor Perez on January 29, it was announced that all contractors would be required by executive order to pay their federally funded workers at least \$10.10 an hour under any new contracts. The NFB, the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans, urges you to include workers with disabilities in this executive order, affirmatively and explicitly. We further urge you to announce that you will sign the Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act (H.R. 831) if and when that legislation reaches your desk. With a Republican sponsor and substantial Democratic co-sponsorship, this nonpartisan piece of legislation will responsibly phase out the discriminatory practice of paying workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage.

Our respect and prayers go out to Americans like Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg, who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom and equality we seek to enjoy as American citizens. We are thankful that Sergeant Remsburg is recovering from the wounds he suffered in service to this great nation. But we must point out that his value to our society is not a function of the restoration of his eyesight and ability to walk, but of the simple fact that he is a human being with determination, belief in himself, love for the United States and aspirations for his future. There are millions of others who actively seek to serve this nation we love with our unique talents and strengths, whether or not we can benefit from technology or medical intervention that will mitigate or eliminate our disabilities. Some of us may be blind in both eyes; others may not be able to hear; some may be unable to walk; some may have developmental disabilities that require innovative interventions; and still others may have other disabilities that require them to perform everyday tasks a little differently. We seek to have our different characteristics embraced as respected contributions to our nation's diversity, not as badges of inferiority that condemn us to a life of low wages and low expectations. We are no less valuable, we are no less capable, and we are no less American than any other citizen.

We wholeheartedly agree with you when you say, "The America we want for our kids – a rising America where honest work is plentiful and communities are strong; where prosperity is widely shared and opportunity for all lets us go as far as our dreams and toil will take us – none of it is easy. But if we work together; if we summon what is best in us, the way Cory summoned what is best in him, with our feet planted firmly in today but our eyes cast towards tomorrow – I know it's within our reach." We believe that this America includes people with disabilities, and we ask you to demonstrate that you believe it as well.

DUSTY'S LAW ANNOUNCEMENT

By Vincent Chaney, President, New Jersey Association of Guide Dog Users

The New Jersey Association of Guide Dog Users, NJAGDU, the largest organized group of guide dog users in New Jersey and a proud division of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey, is honored to announce that Dusty's Law 2C:29-3.2 was signed by Governor Chris Christie on January 21, 2014.

The bill was passed unanimously by the Law and Public Safety Committees of the NJ State Senate (5-0) and Assembly (11-0), and by both full houses of the State Legislature: Senate (38-0) and Assembly (79-0).

The NJAGDU wishes to thank everyone who supported Dusty's Law through this advocacy movement. The positive reinforcement gained by asking family, friends and contacts to get involved generated phone calls, e-mails and letters to the NJ State Legislature that eventually resulted in the passage of Dusty's Law. Participating in this unified effort along with the NJAGDU and the NFBNJ were Roger Woodhour (who was also attacked, along with Dusty), the Seeing Eye, 4H, many guide dog users and a number of NJ communities.

While the legislation has been passed, our work on Dusty's Law continues, as our network of individuals now needs to publicize the law within their local communities. Local police and animal control officers need to know about the law in the areas where we live, work or frequently visit. An attack or interference of a service animal or guide dog is now a criminal offense and not just a matter for an animal control officer. We urge everyone to communicate with others the dangers to the guide dog team when there is an attack or interference. An altercation could affect both of the guide dog team members and expose them to traffic or dangerous conditions which would have been avoided if the guide dog team was not distracted or disoriented.

The NJAGDU, NFBNJ, Seeing Eye and advocates of this law are planning to promote the new law through letters, pamphlets and visits to their local media, newspapers, libraries, veterinarians, pet stores, animal shelters, groomers, businesses, restaurants and stores which they patronize. We hope all will continue to share the impact of Dusty's Law with family, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

Dusty's Law (New Jersey state law 2C:29-3.2) may be viewed in its entirety at: http://lis.njleg.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=638865&Depth=2&depth=2&expandheadings=on&headingswithhits=on&hitsperheading=on&infobase=statutes.nfo&record={1903}&softpage=Doc_Frame_PG42

**ATLANTIC CAPE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISCRIMINATES AGAINST BLIND STUDENT,
BANS HIM FROM FREELY ACCESSING CAMPUS**

Federation Members to Protest College's Actions

By Chris Danielsen, NFB Director of Public Relations

Members of the National Federation of the Blind, the nation's oldest and largest organization of blind people, and its New Jersey affiliate held a protest at the Mays Landing campus of Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC) on Thursday, April 17. Blind people from New Jersey and surrounding areas gathered to protest discrimination by Atlantic Cape Community College against Anthony Lanzilotti, a blind student studying criminal justice and cyber security there. Mr. Lanzilotti has been denied even the most basic accommodations and at times has not been allowed on campus or to use campus facilities unless he is accompanied by a sighted person. He has also been prohibited from using campus laboratories because ACCC claims that this violates the fire code. ACCC has also refused to procure or create accessible copies of Mr. Lanzilotti's textbooks and course materials, a service routinely provided to blind students by other colleges and universities. If he wants his print textbooks to be scanned and converted to electronic files that can be read aloud by text-to-speech software or on a Braille display, he must do the scanning himself, and he cannot use campus facilities to do so unless he meets the requirement of having a sighted person with him. Mr. Lanzilotti is planning to file suit against the college.

Dr. Marc Maurer, President of the National Federation of the Blind, said: "Blind students sometimes face challenges in the college setting, including lack of access to textbooks and course materials, but the vast majority of institutions of higher education make at least some effort to accommodate these students. Atlantic Cape Community College has not only refused to make the minimum effort to accommodate Mr. Lanzilotti, but has added insult to injury by segregating him from his fellow students and restricting his access to the campus and its facilities. Mr. Lanzilotti is not a child and does not need a chaperone. The National Federation of the Blind intends to make ACCC's outrageous discrimination against Mr. Lanzilotti known to the public and to do everything else in our power to assist him in fighting this discrimination. The laws of the United States and the State of New Jersey are firmly on Mr. Lanzilotti's side, and we will see that they are followed."

THE PAC PLAN – THE LATEST AND GREATEST

By Ryan Stevens

Greetings once again to my fellow Federationists throughout the New Jersey Affiliate! This is your friendly neighborhood PAC Plan chairman, and this is my latest update on how we're doing with our contributions to this very important program.

As most of you know, PAC stands for Pre-Authorized Contribution, and the plan is an easy way for NFB members to make regular donations to our organization. It's easy because it's a one-time process to sign up, and it's easy on the wallet because you can contribute as little as \$5 a month. It's important because it helps fund the programs and activities that are so vital to the success of blind people, such as scholarships that help blind college students obtain the knowledge and skills they need to become employed, taxpaying members of their communities. PAC also helps fund our work to eliminate the barriers faced by blind people which prevent them from keeping pace with their sighted peers, in their everyday lives from school to work to shopping.

In terms of our ranking among the states, since November, we've gone from 30th to 26th. We now give \$393.50 per month from 27 contributors. I wish to thank the members and chapters who have helped us get to this level; however, we can definitely do more. It would be fantastic if NFBNJ was putting \$500 every month into PAC, and it's not as difficult as it seems. If we got 23 new contributors at the minimum \$5 level, we'd be over the top, and we'd nearly double the number of donors. With eight chapters and eight divisions, we need only one or two people from each to get there. I'm asking the chapter and division presidents to make PAC a regular topic at your meetings, and I'm encouraging individual members to invite their friends and family members to sign up.

Here's how easy that process is: If you have a checking account, you can sign up with PAC. Signing up involves nothing more than filling out a short form with the following information: Your name and address, your bank's name, the routing and account numbers of your checking account, how much you wish to contribute each month, and which day of the month you want the money withdrawn. If you have paper checks, the routing and account numbers appear on them at the bottom. You can also get your account number from your monthly statement and the routing number by calling your bank. If you would like a PAC Plan form, simply request one from your chapter or division president, or you can e-mail me at rysteve@comcast.net. After NFB processes the form, your contribution will be automatically taken from your account each month, and you don't need to do anything else.

Making these regular tax-deductible contributions would show how important the National Federation of the Blind is to you, and would demonstrate how proud an affiliate New Jersey is, so as the song says, please ... get on the PAC Plan. Sign up today!

WHY USE THE WORD “BLIND”?

By James H. Omgig

Editor’s Note: *This article first appeared in the January 2008 newsletter of the NFB of California. We’re printing a condensed version. Jim worked first as a lawyer and later with Dr. Kenneth Jernigan at the Iowa Commission for the Blind. He also headed the blindness rehabilitation program in Alaska and published several books. Read the entire article at <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm09/bm0901/bm090107.htm>*

People who cannot see are blind, and the word “blind” is perfectly acceptable – in fact, it’s absolutely essential – when one is referring to the lack of eyesight. Here is the short answer for why Dr. Jernigan taught us to do what we do.

Federationists have long recognized that to understand blindness correctly and to know how to properly educate or rehabilitate blind people, one must be aware of the fact that blind people as a class are a minority in every negative sense of that term. It is the erroneous and negative public attitude about blindness that is the real problem with which we must deal. From infancy, we have been taught that to be blind is to be helpless, incompetent and inferior. Members of the general public have believed it, and most of us have come to believe it, too. In time, blindness professionals also bought into the erroneous stereotyping and the low expectations that accompany feelings of inferiority.

We must change those erroneous public attitudes – the myths, misconceptions and superstitions – first, of course, in ourselves and then in the broader society.

We also understand fully that these very negative and mistaken attitudes have found their way into the educational and vocational rehabilitation systems. These very mistaken beliefs about blindness drive the professionals' efforts to get their customers to deny their blindness at any price. These mistaken beliefs must be eliminated as a key component of any high-quality education or rehabilitation program for the blind.

Finally, Federationists have come to know the fundamental truth that blind people are nothing more than normal people who cannot see, and that if we receive effective training, we can participate fully in society and compete on terms of absolute equality with our sighted colleagues. We have also learned that for any blind person truly to become empowered and free, a process of what is commonly called “adjustment to blindness” is essential. Learning to use the word “blind” with ease and comfort and accepting blindness as a normal fact of life is a significant ingredient in the process, as it is commonly understood that you cannot change what you are not willing to acknowledge.

This brings us back to the ultimate truth. If you are blind, you are blind. Accept it. Admit it. The very first step in this process is to learn to be able to say, with neither shame nor embarrassment, “I am blind.” Like other minorities, we have a job to do: We must learn to accept our blindness and then work with concerted action to make it respectable to be blind.

ONE DREAM, ONE CHANCE, AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED**By Jessica Scannell**

Editor's Note: *Jessica, a former LEAD student, graduated from Montclair State University with a degree in family and child studies, and a K-5 teaching certificate, and a 3.631 GPA. She was on the Dean's List every semester. After nine months at the Louisiana Center for the Blind, Jessica is back in New Jersey. She currently serves as secretary of the NFBNJ's Northeast Chapter.*

In every person's life, opportunity comes knocking. It's up to you whether or not you choose to reach out and see what this opportunity will offer you, or just let it slip away. I was blessed by the wonderful fortune of being able to be a student at the Louisiana Center for the Blind from March to December, 2013. It took me a long time to fulfill my dream. However, with hard work, networking and determination, I decided I was going to do whatever I could to make my dream possible. Once I was accepted and arrived at this wonderful place, I knew I would do everything in my power to make my dream of total independence a reality. I'm grateful for the support of my friends at the New Jersey CBVI, the NFBNJ and the NFB in making this adventure a reality.

When I was exploring my options, I realized LCB was the right choice from the moment my family and I walked into the Center. My parents were comfortable knowing I would be receiving the best training there, and I was happy knowing I would never really be leaving home. I knew from that moment on, LCB would be my new home and family for the next year of my life.

While I was a student at LCB, there were many skills I learned both inside and outside of the classroom. I became much more confident using my long white cane to get around the town of Ruston. A great time for me to apply my mobility skills occurred when I walked the one mile there and one mile back to my apartment each day. I also had the opportunity to hone my skills when my friends and I took cabs to go shopping or when we walked to a new restaurant or our favorite bakery. I became adept at budgeting my money as time passed, and learned how to use it wisely so I could go shopping for the things I needed and still have money left over to use with my friends when we wanted to go out and have some fun on the weekends. I learned how to use Microsoft Word and became very efficient at finishing my assignments and getting them in on time. In the past, I hesitated to ask questions of my professors, but as time went on, I started asking questions which unlocked another key to success in my current projects and brought me another step closer to attaining complete independence.

Woodshop was one of the first classes where I truly learned the meaning of the

word confidence. Each day I was presented with a task, and I learned how to become more comfortable using tools and how to break things down step by step, thereby making the tasks easier. I quickly learned it was not about how fast I completed a project; it was more about the time I put into it and the pride I felt having completed it.

LCB didn't allow me to shy away from things that frightened me because I was blind. Instead, the staff took me and my classmates on fun trips that not only allowed me to face my fears, but also gave me the opportunity to conquer them head on. Because of this new independence, I forgot about being scared and focused all my attention on having a good time with my friends. As I participated in each new activity – horseback riding, rock climbing, white water rafting, zip lining – I began to realize I could accomplish things that I never thought I could do, and I loved every minute of it.

I had the pleasure of living with two roommates with whom I am still friends today, and I lived by myself for a while as well. I realized I like my space, but having a friend to talk to, go shopping with, and clean my room with is a nice bonus.

Before I graduated, I had to complete several projects including preparing meals for the staff and students, doing a PowerPoint presentation and doing my “out of town” route. Once all my projects were completed, I began to look forward to graduation day. It was nostalgic for me to realize I would be leaving a place and many people who had come to mean so much to me in the past nine months. On my graduation day, I received my Freedom Bell on which is pictured an eagle on the middle of a bell. The wings of the eagle signify independence and a new chapter in every graduate's life. On the bottom of the bell, the inscription reads, “Together we are changing what it means to be blind.” I was sad to leave all my friends behind, but I realized we would never be parted. I felt so much joy and pride that day because by receiving that bell, I knew I had the keys to achieve success in any career I chose, and would be living a wonderful and fulfilling life in any place fate decided to take me.

While attending LCB I had the greatest role models in Pam and Rowland Allen. Pam is the executive director of the Center, and her husband Rowland was my mobility instructor. They were my second parents while I was there, and not a day goes by that I don't thank them for all the wonderful values and skills they instilled in me. I am also grateful to them for allowing me to share their world with them. I am so happy that I decided to attend the Louisiana Center for the Blind. It is one of the best decisions I've ever made in my life.

IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE!
BRaille LITERACY EDUCATION REVISITED
By Amy Albin

Editor's Note: *Amy Albin, Morris Plains, is a freshman at Morristown High School. She attended the BISM Independence 101 program in Baltimore in 2013. While attending BISM, she became aware of the lack of Braille literacy in this country. In this article, she shares the speech that she wrote for a school assignment and recited at two school tournaments concerning the need to advocate for Braille literacy.*

According to a report called *The Braille Literacy Crisis in America*, published by the National Federation of the Blind in 2009, only 10 percent of blind children in the U.S. are taught to read and write Braille. In an article entitled *Making Change with a Dollar*, Dan Frye, former editor of the Braille Monitor and currently executive director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, states that "by comparison, at the height of its use in the 1950s, more than half of the nation's children were learning Braille." Many students and parents find themselves battling with school districts to obtain the Braille instruction to which they are entitled. The reduction in the number of children learning Braille is due to a number of factors that include a shortage of teachers, an emphasis on vision and technology, and a myriad of misconceptions surrounding Braille.

Statistics from the report say that "in 2003 there were approximately 6,700 full-time teachers of blind students serving about 93,600 students," or one teacher for every 14 students. Since the most effective way to teach Braille to a blind student is on a 1:1 basis several times per week, the 1:14 ratio of teachers to students is not acceptable. In addition, many teachers of the blind are not comfortable with the code themselves.

Another problem is the emphasis on technology. Although technology provides children with new ways of communicating, it does not enable them to learn the basic, fundamental elements of spelling and grammar because they are not actually writing and reading each word. However, if these children learn Braille, they can use computers with Braille displays which, along with speech, will enhance their learning. In a telephone conversation with Joseph Ruffalo, president of the NFB of New Jersey, I learned about a blind man who has a doctorate degree. He is clearly very intelligent, however, since this man has never learned Braille and has never read or written anything, he could not pass a fourth grade spelling test! Technology is an extraordinary tool that enhances communication, but it cannot replace true literacy. Instead of using screen readers, blind people can use computers with displays that produce Braille so that they can read and write independently.

Finally, there are many misconceptions about Braille. People say it isolates children from their peers, it's too difficult to learn, and it's always slower than print. The first point is utterly ridiculous and unfounded. Blind people who can read and write are on equal terms with their peers because they are literate and independent. Second, Braille is rather challenging to learn, but, like print, it is completely doable if you begin at an early age. I began learning when I was four, and I've now been reading fluently for many years. Besides, print is also challenging for young sighted children to learn, which is why they need to be continually drilled with the alphabet. Third, while Braille is somewhat slower than print in some cases, people can teach themselves to read very quickly. One Braille reader actually took a class in speed reading, and it was not a class specifically for blind people.

There is no valid reason to deprive the blind of the right to literacy. Blind people who can read and write Braille put themselves on equal terms with their peers because they are literate and independent. Statistics indicate that 85 percent of blind people who become gainfully employed know how to read Braille.

Since literacy is key to a proper education, concerted action must be taken to assure that every blind person who needs Braille instruction receives the amount that he or she requires. According to the Braille Literacy Crisis report, the NFB strives to have a law passed by 2015 requiring all teachers of the visually impaired throughout the nation to pass a national certification test, which confirms that they are proficient with the literary Braille code. Literacy advocates like myself hope that this law and other incentives will ensure that Braille teachers have the knowledge and skill to give their students proper Braille instruction. The NFB proposed a Braille literacy bill, which serves to make sure that each blind child will have appropriate Braille instruction and will be able to utilize it according to his or her needs. Thirty-three states have formally adopted such bills. There are a number of ways you, too, can help end the Braille literacy crisis. If you are interested in working with children, learn Braille and become a mentor to them. Spread the word and make your opinions known to local government officials. Tell them that you heard a speech from a blind person who was fortunate enough to be among the 10 percent of all blind children in the U.S. who was lucky enough to learn to read. I shouldn't have to be lucky. Every capable human being is entitled to literacy. Do we really need a report to tell us that such a low literacy rate is unacceptable? If we want a nation and a world where everyone, including the blind, has the opportunity to be literate and to live up to his or her full potential, we must act now.

It's time for change!

BELL PROGRAM: BRAILLE ENRICHMENT THROUGH LITERACY & LEARNING***Program to Start Summer 2014 at PRAHD in Perth Amboy*****By Mary Jo Partyka**

Editor's Note: *Several articles in this issue point to the need and importance for children to learn Braille. This year, our state affiliate is taking a leap by initiating its first BELL program. The coordinators of this program are Holly Miller, president of Parents of Blind Children-NJ, and Mary Jo Partyka, president of the NJ Association to Promote the Use of Braille. Barbara Shalit, who has worked with the NJ Commission for the Blind for many years, will plan the curriculum and serve as head teacher. Jerilyn Higgins, a certified rehabilitation teacher, will teach daily living skills.*

"This place is terrific! The kids are going to love it," enthused Holly Miller, as we finished our tour of the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development (PRAHD), the site for New Jersey's first BELL – Braille Enrichment through Literacy and Learning – program. The program is designed to provide intensive Braille instruction to blind/low vision children during the summer. The first BELL programs took place in Maryland and Georgia in 2009. By 2013, 19 states sponsored BELL programs.

According to the 2014 BELL curriculum, the goal of the program is to "provide children ages 4-13 with two weeks of concentrated instruction in Braille and nonvisual learning through hands-on activities." In addition to Braille, children will also learn daily living skills, which will help them learn ways to do things that sighted people take for granted, such as distinguishing among different types of currency, pouring liquids, telling time and preparing snacks. In addition to these activities, the children will be taken on local field trips where they can "let their hair down" and have fun. Inherent in the lessons is the NFB philosophy which professes that blind children can do anything sighted children can through the use of alternative techniques. The majority of BELL staff and volunteers are blind and will serve as role models for the students.

The program will be held at the PRAHD located at 100 First Street in Perth Amboy, July 21 - August 1, 2014. There is no cost to attend the program but parents will be required to transport their children to and from the facility. The program will provide the children with snacks and lunch on Fridays. Children will be expected to bring their lunches Monday through Thursday.

For more information or to sign up for New Jersey's BELL program, please visit <https://nfb.org/bell-program>. To donate to BELL, please send your tax-deductible contribution payable to NFBNJ (please write BELL program in the memo), 254 Spruce Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003.

PRAHD PROUD TO HOST BELL PROGRAM

By Yvonne Lopez

On Behalf of the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc., I would like to express my excitement in working with the BELL program this summer. PRAHD will serve as the host-site location for the BELL students, and the agency as a whole is looking forward to working with such a worthwhile program and cause. As part of this new partnership, I would like to provide a brief overview of PRAHD and its programs.

PRAHD was founded in 1974 by a group of community activists and leaders seeking to create a non-profit organization that would support individuals in need. Over the past 40 years, PRAHD has evolved and grown into a premiere provider of comprehensive human services throughout Middlesex County and the State of New Jersey. Currently the agency operates in Middlesex, Union, Ocean, Hudson and Bergen counties and serves approximately 17,000 clients annually. PRAHD boasts a wide array of programming that targets education, youth development, preventative health services, respite care, affordable housing, benefits access, senior services and disaster relief.

PRAHD is dedicated to “developing human potential and promoting self-sufficiency through programs designed to improve the social, economic, health and education status of the community in a culturally sensitive environment.” Agency programming addresses the full spectrum of unmet human services needs with the principle goal of developing individual sustainability and self-sufficiency. Clients of the agency’s programs are predominantly represented by the minority population and low- to moderate-income community. Due to the agency’s excellence in operations and programming, PRAHD has developed a stellar reputation throughout the community and has earned the support of corporations, private foundations and government bodies on all levels. PRAHD’s agency vision is to “empower the individual to reach their highest potential and participate meaningfully in their community.”

NFB FREE SLATE & STYLUS PROGRAM

Do you need a new slate and stylus? Are you learning Braille and need to practice writing? Are your old labels looking a little shabby? We have the answer!

The NFB has started a new program whereby you can receive a free 4-line, 28-cell, Whozit metal slate and a round plastic stylus. The slate and stylus is the only device you can fit into your pocket/purse to take down notes, phone numbers, and the names of people you meet as readily as a person using a pen and paper. We believe Braille is vital to all blind individuals and should be available in every facet of a blind person’s life. If you have questions, please e-mail us at nfb@nfb.org. You can order your free slate by visiting <https://nfb.org/free-slate-program>.

**CALLING ALL BRAILLE READERS, TEACHERS & PARENTS:
IT'S TIME FOR THE BRAILLE BOOK FAIR 2014!**

It's that time again to sort through your Braille books and donate those gently used volumes to the 2014 Braille Book Fair sponsored by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children. This year's coordinator is Krystal Guillory. This event will take place on Thursday, July 1, from 5-7 p.m. Our primary goal is to get more Braille books into the hands of children, youth and beginning adult readers. The top picks are print-Braille picture storybooks, cookbooks and poetry books. Every year, despite generous donations, most of our books for young children are gone in less than 20 minutes. So, please search through the boxes in your basement and spare room and send your books via UPS to: Elaine Moore - Area HR Manager, c/o 2014 NFB Convention Braille Book Fair, 8901 Atlantic Ave, Orlando, FL 32824. For more info, please contact Krystal Guillory at 1-318-245-8955 or kguillory@lcb-ruston.com.

GREENDROP PROGRAM

After this long winter, spring is finally here – a time to clean up and do new things! If you have some gently used household items for which you'd like to find a new home, you may be interested in donating them to the GreenDrop Program. NFB has partnered with GreenDrop in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, New York, Virginia, Delaware and the District of Columbia to collect clothing and household donations. The items will be sold to thrift shops, with profits going towards programs at NFB.

In New Jersey, GreenDrop is available in the following counties: Bergen, Burlington, Essex, Gloucester, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Sussex and Union. GreenDrop will be making phone calls, sending e-mails and sending mailings requesting donations to homes in the areas they serve. GreenDrop personnel are also working hard to expand both the locations for future sites and the areas where GreenDrop trucks will do pickups at homes.

The following items will be accepted as donations: clothing and shoes, household items, children's games and toys, small appliances, electronics, sporting goods, small furniture, and books, CDs and videos. To review the entire list of products that can be donated, please visit our state website at www.nfbnj.org. All proceeds from the donation of these products will assist the National Center for the Blind in its projects and programs which will benefit the entire blind population of the United States.

The number to call for information or GreenDrop pickups is 888-610-4632.

NATIONAL HEARING TEST OFFERED FREE IN MAY

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, and this May, a free hearing screening is being offered by telephone. This screening will help you to determine if you need to go for a complete hearing evaluation. The screening is made possible by a grant from NIH/NIDCD.

This convenient, private and clinically valid screening test can be taken in the comfort of your home simply by calling 1-866-223-7575 and following the instructions. Left and right ears are tested and the results are given at the end of the call (for example, “within normal range” or “slightly below the normal range”). PLEASE pass this information on as widely as possible and take the test. Information about the test is available at the National Hearing Test website: <https://nationalhearingtest.org/>

ICANCONNECT PROVIDES COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY FOR THOSE WITH COMBINED VISION AND HEARING LOSS

By Kathy Gabry

Communication is essential for staying healthy, holding a job, managing a household and participating in the community. Modern technology allows most people to communicate through phones and computers, but for people who have a combined vision and hearing loss, special equipment may be necessary to make a phone call, send an e-mail, text or access the Internet. The iCanConnect/NJ program ensures that individuals who have a combined hearing and vision loss and who meet income criteria can access telephone, advanced communications and information services.

A wide range of communications technology—hardware, software, applications—is available to suit the varying needs of those who have a combined hearing and vision loss. Some products are available to the general public, such as telephones or computers, while others include specialized equipment, such as screen enlargement software, screen readers or braille displays. A program specialist can help you identify equipment that will meet your needs, and training is available once your new equipment arrives.

The iCanConnect program is sponsored by the Federal Communications Commission and is available in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In New Jersey, the program is provided through a partnership between the New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired and the Center for Sensory & Complex Disabilities at The College of New Jersey. To learn more about eligibility requirements for iCanConnect and download an application, go to <http://www.icanconnect.org/new-jersey> or call 609-771-2711.

TECHIE TIPS

- **NEED YOUR BRAILLEWRITER REPAIRED?** For more information, call Mr. Robert Simon at 915-307-7733.
- **WINDOW-EYES** is now free to people who have Office 2010 or higher installed on their PC. Window-Eyes is a screen-reading software similar to JAWS, and it functions fully in all PC environments including the desktop, on the web and in all the MS Office products. The retail version of Window-Eyes and other GWMicro products are still available, as there are some differences between the level of tech support and training materials that come with the free version, but it is the same screen reader. You can read more at: www.gwmicro.com or download the program at www.windowEyesForOffice.com *Submitted by Omar Atin.*
- **THREE EXCELLENT RESOURCES FOR i DEVICES** – First is <http://www.applevis.com>. There you will find podcasts concerning apps, lists of apps in different areas of interest and information for other i-device users than those with the iPhone. Another resource which is especially good for those just starting to use their i-device is the book *Getting Started with the iPhone* by Anna Dresner, available from the National Braille Press in Boston. The book is available in several different formats for everything from your iPhone to your computer to that daisy player you have. It's also available in Braille. Finally, I found this link enlightening: How blind people use an iPhone. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlQWyp13beE&feature=youtu.be> *Submitted by Jane Degenshein*
- **SIRI LINKS** - Here is a link to a list of questions you can ask Siri. Although this appears to be a full list, the number of things you can ask Siri is only limited by your imagination or need:
<http://techblog.tv/full-list-of-siri-commands-how-to-use-siri/>
- **SIRI LAUGHS** - For those of you who like to laugh, here are 95 Funny Siri Commands: <http://osxdaily.com/2013/12/29/funny-siri-commands/>
- **IPHONE VOICE OVER GUIDE IN HTML FORMAT** – Here is the voiceover guide for the iPhone in handy HTML format:
<http://help.apple.com/iphone/5/voiceover/en/iph3e2e4218.html>

DID YOU KNOW ...

Blind Veterans – NFB is reaching out to blind veterans across the country. If you know any blind veterans who could benefit from our programs, please contact Joanne Wilson at jjwilson@nfb.org or 410-659-9314, extension 2335.

Changes in Social Security Procedures – Beginning in **August 2014**, **Social Security Number Printouts** will no longer be issued through the Social Security field offices. If you lose your card, you'll need to apply for a replacement. In addition, beginning October 2014, Social Security field offices will stop providing benefit verification letters, except in emergency situations. Benefit verifications are available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount, or by calling 1-800-772-1213.

Finding Accessible Transportation - Easter Seals Project ACTION offers resources to assist travelers with disabilities in finding accessible transportation services within the U.S. and abroad. Visit the website at <http://www.projectaction.org/Resources/Publications/FindingAccessibleTransportation.aspx> *Submitted by Trisha Ebel*

The Federal Department of Transportation's Rules for Passengers with Disabilities can be found at <http://www.dot.gov/airconsumer/disability>. This site has various DOT rules in different formats that you can download or call DOT at 202-366-2220 to request a copy. *Submitted by Alice Eaddy*

Complaints & Grievances for People with Low Vision – For those who have low vision and are looking for a place for resources and a place to comment about technology, check out the following website: <http://lowvisionrants.com/>

The Middle Atlantic Blind Golf Association (MABGA) is a non-profit organization that has been providing blind and visually impaired individuals the opportunity to enjoy the game of golf since 1948. MABGA currently has over 120 totally blind/visually impaired golfers and coaches, with another 85 junior blind golfers. A blind golfer is paired with a sighted golfer known as a coach. MABGA members participate in approximately 40 golf outings each year. In August, MABGA holds its annual Pro Am Tournament where blind golfers are partnered with local PGA professionals. In September, MABGA holds its Annual Fund Raising Charity Tournament. To learn more, visit www.mabga.org or contact Mario Tobia at mariotobia@comcast.net or 856-866-2911. *Submitted by Brian Mackey.*

How to File ADA Complaints – Employment complaints should be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: 1-800-669-4000 Voice or 1-800-669-6820 TTY. Complaints against a state or local government or public accommodation or commercial facility (such as a restaurant, doctor's office, hotel) should be filed with the Department of Justice/Civil Rights Division, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Disability Rights Section – NYAV, Washington, DC 20530, or ADA.complaint@usdoj.gov or by fax at 202-307-1197

Mackey Enterprises LLC is a **data entry and basic bookkeeping company**. If you have data entry projects involving Microsoft Word or Excel, or any basic bookkeeping projects using Microsoft Excel or QuickBooks that you want someone else to do, turn to Mackey Enterprises LLC. Our typical hourly rate is \$20/hour, but this can be negotiable. To learn more, contact Brian Mackey at 609-953-6988 or bmackey88@gmail.com.

Donate Your Vehicle – The NFB gets an average of \$350 for each donated vehicle, and the proceeds support the National Center in carrying out programs and projects to benefit the blind. Your donation may be eligible for a tax deduction. For more information, visit www.carshelpingtheblind.org or call 855-659-9314. If you'd like to help advertise the program by placing stickers in prominent places, please contact Anthony Lanzilotti at 267-414-4010 or tti777@gmail.com.

The Senior Community Independent Living Services program supports seniors (age 55 and up) with vision impairment in achieving independence and participation in social, educational, recreational and employment activities. Companion services are available up to four hours per week. Companions provide transportation, assist with grocery shopping, perform light housekeeping, read mail and transport to recreational opportunities such as the beauty salon or a senior center. Participants are responsible for finding their own companions. For more information, contact the NJ Division of Disability Services at 888-285-3036, prompt #6.

Prescription Information: CVS Pharmacy now provides ScripTalk talking prescription labels for prescriptions ordered for home delivery through its online pharmacy, CVS.com. ScripTalk labels are free to CVS.com pharmacy customers who are blind or have low vision. To request that the labels be attached to your prescriptions ordered through CVS.com, call 888-227-3403. To obtain your free ScripTalk reader, call Envision America at 800-890-1180. It is recommended that you call CVS.com first.

Facebook Group for Blind Students - *Pathway to Our Dream* is a Facebook resource page for high school and college students who are blind. The administrators answer questions, help students research testing requirements, offer advice on how to secure accommodations from their schools, refer students to other resources including the NFB and its student divisions, and help with resume editing. The link for the mobile version (optimal for screen readers) is <https://m.facebook.com/groups/639707646049109?refid=18>

Submitted by Katie Shelton

NFB's Senior Division Conference Calls spotlight topics of interest to those losing vision later in life. The conference call number is 712-432-1500, the access number is 759-633, and then press the pound key. Upcoming calls are set for Wednesdays, May 8 and June 4, at 3 p.m. The May topic is *Blindness: A Family Dynamic*, hosted by Fatos Floyd, and the June topic is *Cooking by Touch*, facilitated by Jennifer Wenzel.

NFBNJ MEMBER RECOGNITION

Editor's Note: *Please share your story – or your friend's story – of success! When one person achieves, others are inspired to succeed.*

Congratulations to Kevin Sisco, who writes: Some time ago I designed an encryption algorithm. Simply put, this is technology for securing anything electronic, including the internet. It was published! The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) published this technology, and it is in use. Shortly after, I was able to get a second one published. I felt so inspired that I created a third, and that one, too, was published! Now, the first of the three I am not quite clear on how it is being utilized. However, I know that the second one is being used to secure connectivity to the web. The third, which I am most proud of, is being used as a layer of security for the power grid! I write all of this, not to brag, but to demonstrate that blindness does not have to be a major obstacle.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor's Note: *The following letter was received from Joe and Arlene Naulty, the NFB of Florida:*

Wow! We're so impressed and blown away by this professional and beautifully prepared publication of the NFBNJ! Your activities, your staff, the support from members across the state and the general positive tone of the publication are amazing.

Joe Ruffalo, when we met you 30 years ago, we were very impressed with your personal presentation and the interest you showed in Joe Naulty who was very new to the life of increased vision loss. Then we moved to Florida in 1985. It took some time, but Joe did get involved with the NFB in Florida.

Your appointment of Alice Eaddy to the DeafBlind Committee was a gift of the highest value. She is a leader and a strong supporter of the DeafBlind, and we look forward to her increased involvement in the DeafBlind Division. Alice knows that information is power; when we share information, we all get stronger.

Thank you for your support of the DeafBlind Division and thank you for your leadership. It is indeed an honor to have known you all these years. Be well. May God bless you with good health and the strength to carry on your mission with the National Federation of the Blind.

FROM THE KITCHEN OF THE CAPITAL CHAPTER

The recipes for this issue were submitted by members of the Capital Chapter.

Tangy Chicken

This recipe was submitted by Susan Constantini, a board member of the Capital Chapter member. Susan is an expert at using the iPhone and enjoys shopping and buying nice things.

Ingredients:

1 pound thin chicken breasts	An envelope of onion soup mix
1 can whole cranberry sauce	A bottle of Russian salad dressing

Directions:

1. Mix together: cranberry sauce, Russian dressing and the envelope of onion soup mix. Pour over chicken.
2. Cook chicken mixture at 350 degrees for approximately 20 minutes and serve.

Crème Brulee

This recipe was submitted by Ben Constantini, vice president of the Capital Chapter and webmaster of our Facebook page. Ben enjoys cooking and this recipe is delicious.

Ingredients:

2 cups heavy cream	1 tablespoon vanilla extract
5 egg yolks	½ cup light brown sugar
½ cup sugar	

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 275 degrees.
2. Whisk the cream, egg yolks, sugar and vanilla extract together in a bowl. Mix it all up until it gets nice and creamy. Pour this mixture into four 7-ounce ramekins. Place ramekins in a large baking pan. Fill the baking pan with hot water, about halfway up the sides of the ramekins.
3. Bake for 45 minutes to an hour. After 45 minutes, check every 10 minutes: Stick knife in the ramekins, and if it comes out clean, the dessert is done.
4. Remove ramekins from the baking pan, set on the counter and let cool for 15 minutes. Refrigerate and chill overnight.
5. Sprinkle a thin layer of the light brown sugar on top of each ramekin. Completely cover the custard. Put the ramekins under the broiler on the top shelf for 1 to 2 minutes to melt the sugar. Serve and enjoy!

NFBNJ CONTACT INFORMATION**NFB National Center***President*

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Anthony Lanzilotti 267-414-4010

Lynn Reynolds 908-251-5510

NFBNJ Chapters*At-Large Chapter*

Conference call the last Thurs. of each month, 8 p.m., except in July 712-432-0180, enter code 460994

Joe Ruffalo 973-743-0075

Capital Chapter

Third Sat., Hamilton Twp Public Library, 10 a.m. - noon

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

Garden State Chapter

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

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

Glasstown Chapter

First Sat., Trinity Episcopal Church, 800 E. Wood St., Vineland 11 a.m.

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Northeast Chapter

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

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Northern Chapter

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

Rebecca Bryant 973-723-6559
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South Jersey Shore Chapter

Third Sat., Ocean City Free Public Library, Ocean City, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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CHAPTER AND DIVISION UPDATES CAN BE FOUND ON THE NFBNJ WEBSITE

Deadline for the Fall 2014 issue is October 1, 2014.

CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB AT

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