

THE SOUNDING BOARD
Fall 2012

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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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**You're Invited to the NFBNJ's
4th Annual After the Holidays Party!**

**Saturday, January 12, 2013, 1 – 5 p.m.
Holiday Inn • 36 Valley Road • Clark, NJ (Access Link accessible)
\$25 per adult and \$10 for children under 12**

Make your check payable to NFBNJ and please include each attendee's name, phone number and meal choice. Mail to:

Joe Ruffalo/National Federation of the Blind of NJ
254 Spruce Street
Bloomfield NJ 07003

All payments must be received by December 31, 2012.

For additional information, call Joe at 973-743-0075.

We will have door prizes, a silent auction, a sing-along and a special appearance from jolly old Santa! Special note: If you would like a gift from Santa, please bring a wrapped gift labeled with the name of the recipient.

MISTLETOE MAGIC MENU

Chef's Holiday Salad with Cranberry Vinaigrette
Entrée (choose one):

Stuffed Chicken with Spinach and Ricotta Cheese

Honey Glazed Salmon with Cilantro Olio

Jr. Rib Eye topped with Garlic and Crisp Onions

Vegetarian dinner is available upon request

Warm Rolls and Butter

Fresh Seasonal Vegetables

Baked Sweet Potato with Cinnamon Butter

Chef's Tiered Holiday Desserts

Freshly Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffees, Herbal Teas and Assorted Soft Drinks

Special children's menu: Chicken Fingers and Fries

Please join us in celebrating the holiday season!

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Federationists,

As we approach the holiday season, I hope that everyone has made it through Hurricane Sandy and is back to normal. At the State Convention, the membership passed a motion to establish the Sandy Relief Fund for members who had assistive technology and/or equipment damaged or lost during the storm. If you are in need or would like to donate to the Sandy Relief Fund, please contact Jane Degenshein, chair, at 973-736-5785 or jdegen16@comcast.net.

The 36th Annual State Convention was held during the Sandy clean-up and right after a nor'easter that dropped a foot of snow in some places in New Jersey. Despite the storms, the convention was well attended, spirits were high, and true inspiration, motivation, education and imagination were well represented throughout the weekend.

I had the honor of announcing three recent marriages. During my Presidential Message, a marriage proposal by Alberto Trejo to Ivis Alvarez was nervously presented and celebrated by all.

The convention featured a wide array of agenda topics. A Possibilities Fair was sponsored by the host division, Seniors. Seniors demonstrated the visual and non-visual skills, techniques and methods of independently completing activities of daily living utilizing numerous technological devices. Seniors also presented the "Senior Alphabet" and a senior theme song. Additional agenda topics included the New Jersey Talking Book and Braille Center, Dusty's Law, the Goodwill Protest and Boycott, I Love Braille, Good Training Equals Good Employment, Parents Update, Networking Leads to Employment and Creating Jobs.

We would like to thank National Representative Kevan Worley from Colorado, Eric Guillory, Director of Youth Services at the Louisiana Center for the Blind, Evelyn Valdez, a student at LCB, Mary Fernandez, a paralegal from Baltimore, and Ruth Sager, from Baltimore, President of the National Association of Senior Blind for traveling to New Jersey and sharing their knowledge, support and guidance to make a difference.

Thanks to all who donated door prizes and created baskets for our banquet auction. These gifts were greatly appreciated and the proceeds will assist the affiliate in sponsoring NFB programs. Thanks to the vendors who made the convention a huge success. Thanks to Beatrice Oliveti for her years of service as board secretary. Bea chose not to seek re-election; Brian Mackey was elected to this position.

The state affiliate cruise to Bermuda is approaching. For additional details, please visit the state website at www.nfbnj.org. For information about raffle tickets to sell and/or purchase, please contact Mary Colasurdo at 609-971-6820.

Thanks to all who shared stories, made contributions and remembered Dr. Ed Lewinson, a member of the NFB for 45 years who passed away last year. The Northern Chapter celebrated with a dinner prior to the opening of convention to celebrate the chapter's accomplishments and to honor Ed as an advocate, leader and mentor to many. The state affiliate honored Ed throughout the convention weekend.

Congratulations to the state scholarship winners for 2012: Michael Foster, Jason Capati and Susan Vanino are intelligent and motivational, and have all demonstrated the drive to succeed. The scholarships presented were in honor of Ed Lewinson. In addition, the Louise Facchini Memorial Scholarship was established and presented. The Joe/Rose Memorial Scholarship was also highlighted as this fund assists members in attending the National and State conventions.

Special note: The dates for the Washington Seminar are February 4 – 7, 2013. Please pay special attention to the messages forwarded by Lynn Reynolds, coordinator of legislative action. As I stated at the convention, we are all on the Legislative Committee as we all have the opportunity to change attitudes and make a difference. Please contact Lynn at lhr1827@optonline.net or 908-251-5510. When you receive legislative alerts, please share them with others on your e-mail lists.

In the next edition of *The Sounding Board*, members will share their experiences participating in NFBNJ and will share reasons why they're active members.

Upcoming Important Dates

- December 28: Deadline for cruise raffle tickets; mail checks to Mary Colasurdo
- December 31: Deadline for the After The Holidays Party payments
- January 12: After The Holidays Party, Holiday Inn, Clark, and the drawing for the Bermuda Cruise
- February 4: Washington Seminar
- April 1: Articles due for the Spring 2013 issue

Once again, thanks to all who are making a difference in changing what it means to be blind.

Yours in Federationism,



Joseph Ruffalo, President

MY EXPERIENCE AS A FIRST-TIMER AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Kathy Rawa

Editor's Note: *Kathy is president of the South Jersey Shore Chapter of the NFBNJ and was awarded the Jernigan First Timer's Scholarship.*

I became involved with the National Federation of the Blind just a little over a year ago. Last year I attended the NFB Leadership/Membership Building training in Baltimore, which was sponsored by the Imagination Fund, and that's where I began to learn about the four important "ships" that would change the direction of my life: friendship, partnership, relationship and leadership.

After last year's State Convention in Clark, I was starting to get the gist of those four ships, but they were still too far off shore for me to see them clearly. Joe Ruffalo told me I hadn't seen anything yet. And then the opportunity of a lifetime was dangling before me: the possibility of attending the NFB National Convention in Dallas. I remembered the Jiminy Cricket song "When You Wish upon a Star," and so I did. In May, I received notification that I had been chosen to receive a Jernigan Scholarship to attend my very first National Convention! My guide dog Dorito and I had a lot of things to prepare to make this a successful trip.

Many people attending their first National Convention don't have the help I did, which made this event more exciting and meaningful for me. My mentor, Joe Ruffalo, told me the National Convention could be overwhelming. There are many seminars and activities that a first-timer must attend to get the true meaning of the convention. Some dear friends – Michele Chaney and Linda DeBerardinis – made sure I was on track to do it all. Michele reviewed my required agenda, arranged my schedule and plane reservations, and Linda made sure I had all the requirements so that I could complete my obligations as a Jernigan Scholarship winner.

When my guide dog Dorito and I arrived at the Hotel Anatole, I felt that I had reached the Land of Oz! The hotel and lobby were unbelievable. Statues, skylights that reached up to the heavens, and beautiful trees and pools of water that made me feel I was truly in a very special place. Tours were also available for these beautiful gardens, statues and architecture.

As the convention began, the tapping of white canes, seemingly synchronized in time, reminded me of the Rockettes in Radio City Music Hall. I could hear the variation of sounds throughout the hotel, lobby and atrium. It was music to my ears as it mixed with the sounds of water, birds, different strides of people walking, the voices of the children, handlers speaking to their guide dogs ... all voices blending just as an orchestra begins preparing for a concert.

We gathered in the Grand Ballroom where the General Sessions were to be held. All 52 affiliates and several other nations were represented by the voices of those

representing each state. Some people sang the names of their states, while others sang registration sites or the locations of seminars. The most touching was the veterans' presentation when everyone sang the national anthem, and I had the most powerful feelings with *God Bless America*. The video presentation of all the military represented with their theme songs was so beautiful. These were truly the most powerful and moving moments I felt at the convention, especially seeing all those who have served our country beginning with WWII to those coming back from Afghanistan or Iraq.

Music was presented by Max Baca and David Farias, from New Mexico. Their voices filled the room with lively tones and energized us all. I could feel the unity of other cultures. Seeing everyone singing and sharing conversations demonstrated the partnership between those from different states and countries. I also enjoyed the Salsa Night. The music and dance lessons were great fun, and the performance of Jessica Bachicha was breathtaking. She has a voice from the heavens.

My stay at the Hotel Anatole was enriched by my roommates, Noel Nightingale, an attorney from Seattle, and Leslie Hamric, coordinator of the At-Large Chapter from Chicago. I was reminded of another lesson – friendship – as we shared life's experiences and guided each other throughout the convention. I saw people I had met at Leadership Training, and I was honored to meet Dr. Maurer, Fred Schroeder and many other people I had read or heard of in the *Braille Monitor*.

There were so many interesting and informative seminars sponsored by the different divisions. The divisions I attended included the First Timers, Rookie Roundup – Seniors Division, Community Service and At-Large Chapter, to name a few. The Presidential Report by Dr. Maurer was inspiring and gave a whole, clear picture of what leadership means. The accomplishments and areas of study of the 30 scholarship winners were impressive. An important session I attended was the NFB's Resolutions of 2012. These issues were new to me, and attending this important meeting was very educational. I brought back all the information to our South Jersey Shore Chapter in Ocean City, NJ.

I reported on the activities of the NJ Association of Guide Dog Users at the National Association of Guide Dog Users, in the absence of Vincent Chaney, who is president of NJADGU. I was honored that Vinny selected me to represent our division. (*Editor's Note: Vincent's speech is available online at www.nfbnj.org.*)

I truly feel blessed to have been given this opportunity of a lifetime. The whole experience enriched my life and soul, and I feel it has definitely made me into a better person. Thank you all so much from the bottom of my heart for allowing Dorito and me to go to the National Convention in Dallas and learn more on how to "change what it means to be blind."

THE JOURNEY TO BRAILLE

By Melissa Wiley, GeekMom.com, reprinted with permission

Editor's Note: *The following has been condensed from the original article. For the full article, please go to <http://www.wired.com/geekmom/2012/05/braille-is-important/>*

My eight-year-old son, Steven, has oculocutaneous albinism, a condition in which a lack of pigment in the eyes and skin causes varying degrees of poor vision, light sensitivity, and vulnerability to sunburn. My son's vision is only mildly affected, but even so, he must wear dark glasses every time he sets foot out-of-doors.

My friend Holly Miller's 11-year-old son, Hank, also has albinism, and in Hank's case, the effects on his vision are severe. He is legally blind. By the time Hank entered second grade, Holly and her husband Jeff were aware that reading the printed word was an exhausting and difficult experience for their son. They realized he needed to learn Braille, the tactile reading and writing code for the blind. For three years, Holly and Jeff worked to convince their New Jersey school district that Hank was a candidate for Braille instruction — three years of IEP meetings, expensive outside assessments with reading specialists, and frustrating roadblocks. Finally, as a last resort, they took the matter to court. In May 2012, an administrative law judge ruled that Hank "was improperly denied instruction in Braille" and the school district must begin providing that instruction in the upcoming academic year.

I asked Holly to share the story of Hank's journey toward Braille.

MW: How did you come to the decision that Hank needed to learn Braille?

HM: While Hank is able to see print and read for short periods of time, his eyes fatigue very quickly. After just a few minutes he suffers a significant drop in speed, comprehension, and retention. It's physical work for him to read. The more energy he has to expend to see the words, the less he is able to absorb what he's reading. After extensive evaluations, we determined he had no reading or learning disabilities — the only thing holding back his reading ability was his vision.

In the very early years of school, printed materials use a large font and the reading tasks are quite short for all children. As the grades advance, the print gets smaller and denser. The assignments become more robust. Visually impaired kids start to fall behind. We didn't want that to happen to Hank and felt Braille was the appropriate intervention.

Unfortunately our school district and the state Commission for the Blind did not agree. What made it so frustrating was that we were seeing the signs as early as second grade. We asked the district to conduct evaluations to determine if there was a problem and if Braille would be an appropriate remedy. They did perform some evaluations but not complete ones. Our biggest complaint was that the district would

not perform any sustained reading tests. We felt this was critical to assessing Hank's abilities and highlighting any weaknesses. The district failed to do that.

We had outside assessments done and provided reports with detailed data. The district stood firm in their position that Braille was not appropriate because they viewed Hank as a "sighted reader." Initially I was sure that the school district simply needed more information to understand why we felt Braille was so important. I wasn't looking for a fight.

Eventually it became clear that other people had decided what was best for our child and we were not being given the opportunity to have meaningful participation in the decision-making process. Once it reached that point, we felt there was no other choice than to take it to the legal arena.

MW: But doesn't new technology make Braille obsolete?

HM: On the contrary. Today's technology makes Braille even more available and portable than ever before. Instead of large paper Braille volumes, there are now refreshable Braille displays for computers and also small, portable Braille notetakers.

MW: Why Braille, though? What about audio books and other recorded materials?

HM: Audio books are wonderful; I have enjoyed them myself when riding in the car or cleaning the house. Listening is not reading, though. You don't learn spelling, or punctuation. Listening is a passive activity whereas reading is active. It activates the same areas of the brain, it allows for skimming or a quick double back to recheck a phrase you didn't quite catch. Audio books can be a very useful option for a blind student, but they should be an option, not the only alternative available.

MW: I'm so glad the ruling came down on Hank's side. Where do things go from here?

HM: Hank will receive Braille instruction in school five days a week. Frequent and intense instruction is critical to success. The district will (also) be responsible for providing appropriate equipment. This typically includes a Braille notetaker, a Braille printer, a Perkins manual Braille writer, and for on-the-go-notes, a slate and stylus.

MW: What advice do you have for other parents and students in your situation?

HM: Trust your gut and don't give up! If you think your child's needs aren't being met, you can change it! The most important thing is to educate yourself on how the system and the IEP process work. Get a copy of the special education laws (<http://www.wrightslaw.com/>) specific to your state and read them. Yes, it's boring. Do it anyway. There are many great books out there about how to make your case effectively.

Document everything. If it's not in writing, it didn't happen. Keep your letters clear, concise and professional. Go ahead and write that very, very angry letter. Then

delete it and write something that sounds like you are a sane, reasonable parent. Assume anything you write to your school will one day be read by a judge, and think about what impression you want to leave with that judge.

Find a local or online support group specific to your child's needs. The been-there-done-that-crowd will have a wealth of knowledge for you. We have gotten tremendous help from the NFB. Initially it was emotional and informational support. Once we knew it would have to go to court, they were also able to provide invaluable legal support. Unfortunately preparing a winning case can be expensive. Many parents are forced to give up even though they are absolutely right about their child's needs. We hope that our case can be used as an example and other school districts will be convinced to provide appropriate services.

LETTERS LEAD TO CONVENTION DONATIONS

By Marie Griffin

Editor's Note: *Marie Griffin and her daughter, Liz Morgan, a former LEAD student, are current members of the Glasstown Chapter. Please consider following her practice to educate the public and to make a difference.*

It was a blessing for my daughter Liz and me to have found the NFB. Liz has developed so many skills and self-confidence and taught me a lot as well. Liz and I are constantly spreading the word about the NFB and all the great things that they do for the blind community. A few weeks ago, I decided to send letters to about a dozen area businesses. I wrote about the NFB and how my daughter lost her sight. I informed them of our Annual State Convention and all the good that it brings to our members.

I requested their help in the way of donations of any kind. I am very happy to report that I received two responses. The first was from the plant manager of General Mills/Progresso Foods, in Vineland. They have generously donated four cases of soup to be auctioned at the convention! Additionally, when we picked up their donation, the gentleman we spoke with said that he is looking forward to a long, continuing relationship with us! WOW! That really made me excited!!! This is great, and all it took was a letter introducing us and asking for help.

Next, I just received a check from a neighbor who happens to own a roofing company. The letter I sent to him was a little more personal, since I know him. He sent me a check for \$25 payable to the National Federation of the Blind!

It's a wonderful feeling to know that even though we are in such a horrific state of the economy, there still are people who are willing and able to help. I'm glad that I did what I did, and have been able to give something back to the NFB.

NEW JERSEY AGDU SUPPORTS PROPOSAL FOR DUSTY'S LAW
Press Release received from Vincent Chaney, President, NJAGDU

TRENTON (November 26, 2012): Did you know that if a blind person and his/her guide dog are attacked by an aggressive dog that the police can do nothing about it now? Help us change this! The New Jersey Association of Guide Dog Users, a division of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey (NFBNJ), today announced its support of Assembly A. 2728 and Senate S. 1907, designated as "Dusty's Law." The organization is urging legislators and citizens of New Jersey to support the legislation, which would allow the police to intervene when a guide dog or guide-dog team is attacked by an aggressive dog.

Under current law, if a guide dog, guide-dog handler, guide-dog puppy in training, instructor or volunteer puppy raiser is attacked or interfered with by aggressive dogs, the issue is not handled as a police matter but is turned over to an animal control officer. Animal control officers may not be available or on duty during weekends or evenings, leaving the blind individual and his or her guide dog vulnerable without recourse or protection.

Ginger Kutsch, advocacy specialist at The Seeing Eye, said, "Attacks and interference with guide dog teams grossly interfere with a blind person's ability to walk freely and safely within the community or anywhere else the team wishes to go." She added, "Police response is important because the imminent danger to a blind individual whose guide dog is being attacked or subjected to interference is potentially far greater than that of pet owners who do not require the services of their dogs to travel safely and independently. Moreover, people who are blind cannot use vision to avoid other dogs or to defend themselves or their guide dogs."

Senator Anthony Bucco, District 25, said, "I have seen firsthand the tremendous benefit that specially trained guide dogs provide to those who are visually impaired. Unfortunately there has been an increase in the number of attacks, by aggressive dogs, on guide dogs and their owners. Dusty's Law will provide greater protection under the law for guide dogs and their owners by allowing police to intervene and aid owners in the event of an attack."

Dusty's Law is named for a 9-month-old German shepherd puppy being raised as a potential Seeing Eye guide dog. Dusty was attacked by a pit bull and as a result underwent four hours of surgery, lost four teeth, required 96 stitches, and underwent trauma that made it impossible for him to complete the program. Roger Woodhour, Dusty's volunteer puppy raiser, who was raising his 26th puppy, was also attacked and lost the tip of the middle finger of his right hand. Details of the story can be found at: http://www.northjersey.com/news/072610_Woodcliff_Lake_seeing_eye_dog_recovering_after_pit_bull_attack.html?page=all

The bill would also allow for restitution for the affected handler and guide dog and would apply to working guide dogs, guide dogs in training and puppies in training.

To read the Assembly A. 2728 bill, visit:

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/A3000/2728_I1.HTM.

To read the Senate S. 1907 bill, visit:

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/S2000/1907_I1.HTM.

Vincent Chaney Jr, president of the New Jersey Association of Guide Dog Users, said, "We whom have chosen to independently travel with our guide-dog partner teams have needed Dusty's Law for many years to be able to engage our New Jersey police officers in instances of attack or when subjected to interference. We request all New Jersey citizens to advocate for these bills to become law by contacting their senator and two assembly-persons today."

**COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE
FOR THOSE WITH BOTH VISION AND HEARING LOSS
By Allen Reposh, Training Coordinator for NDBEDP/NJ**

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) is a federally funded grant program authorized by the Federal Communications Commission and mandated by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010. The purpose of the NDBEDP is to provide free telecommunications equipment to people with both vision and hearing loss who are in need of such equipment. Under the program, low-income individuals who are considered both deaf and blind are eligible to receive free telecommunications equipment. Applicants must provide verification of their status as low-income and deaf-blind.

In New Jersey, a three-way collaborative effort is implementing the NDBEDP: The Center for Sensory and Complex Disabilities at The College of New Jersey, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Division of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. Through passionate teamwork, these three agencies are managing the program and ensuring that eligible New Jerseyans who are deafblind will obtain the free telecommunications equipment that they need.

You may be asking yourself, "Is this program for me?" Well, if you have a combination of vision and hearing loss, and if you cannot afford to purchase telecommunications equipment that enables you to use a telephone, e-mail, access the Internet, or use other types of communications technology, then this program may be for you. For more information regarding the NDBEDP, please feel free to contact me at reposha@tcnj.edu or 609-771-2575.

GOOD JOBS NOT GOOD WILL FOR THE BLIND

Based on an article forwarded from the National Federation of the Blind

For a number of years now, the NFB has been pushing Congress to repeal Section 14c of the Fair Labor Standards Act. This act makes an exception to paying the minimum wage. The argument at the time the law was enacted in 1938 went like this: Everyone knows that disabled people cannot work competitively. They sit at home enduring empty days that stretch into empty lives. If well-intentioned charities could organize workshops where such pitiable folk could gather, they could be given simple, repetitive work activities that would fill their days and give them meaning, especially if the shops could manage to pay them a pittance for their efforts.

This was such a heart-warming concept that soon the federal government got into the act by stipulating that certain kinds of contracts should be reserved for bidding only by these specialized employers. Also, for-profit companies could get into the subminimum wage part of this plan by agreeing to hire groups of disabled workers who could assemble widgets for them at these reduced wages.

This system has lasted for 74 years. These “sheltered workshops” solicit funds from the general public and even pull down grant money. In fact, 46 percent of their income is from public funds. They pay no taxes, and they solicit contracts from companies made to feel good for employing workers with disabilities.

Although federal law requires that certain goods and services procured by the federal government be purchased from these sheltered workshops in order to provide workers with disabilities with employment, these workers do not have the same protections that other American workers have. Over 300,000 workers with disabilities do not receive the federal minimum wage; 50 percent earn less than half the minimum wage, and 25 percent earn less than one dollar an hour. Meanwhile, because the requirement is that only 75 percent of the line workers must be disabled, most of the management is not disabled, and so there are no limits placed on their salaries. Top management in these charities often earn well into six figures.

We’ve convinced some shops to pay at least the minimum wage and begin offering benefits; these shops have become more efficient and are still making enough money to continue operating. However, a number of shops argue that they’re training workers who will be able to move on to competitive employment once they’ve learned the skills they are being taught. The trouble with this argument is that 95 percent of those working under certificates of exemption never leave sheltered employment, and research validates that few if any workers, disabled or non-disabled, acquire competitive job skills by performing menial tasks in sheltered, segregated, subminimum-wage work.

We must set higher expectations and provide real training and support for all people if they are to become fully participating members of society. People with

disabilities should have the right and most have the ability to work in the same jobs earning the same wages as nondisabled workers. There are many examples of individuals with significant disabilities who, when provided the proper training and support, have acquired a competitive job skill to earn at least the minimum wage.

Last summer, the NFB's national office called for a boycott of Goodwill Industries across the country. Goodwill Industries has long been a household name associated with providing jobs and training for the disabled, and most Americans are probably familiar with Goodwill-operated thrift stores, but they probably don't know that for many years, many Goodwill Industries shops have reaped a significant amount of their income directly from the sweat of the workers they are supposed to serve. Goodwill Industries is not the only entity guilty of participating in this legal but immoral discrimination. Other employers run what are almost always segregated workplaces that employ workers with various disabilities. But Goodwill was actively pressuring Congress to keep Section 14c, and, while many of its sheltered shops were paying the minimum wage or above, many were not. Goodwill has the respect of the general public, so we decided to conduct informational pickets about the situation to broaden the boycott and encourage the Goodwill programs that were already doing the right thing to pressure their colleagues to tighten their operations and do the same.

Members of the NFBNJ joined our brothers and sisters around the nation on August 25, 2012. Armed with picket signs and one-page fliers stating our case, we went to work. Informational protests were conducted in Woodbury Heights, Pennsauken, East Brunswick and Jersey City. The four locations distributed over 450 informational protest flyers highlighting the unfair, discriminatory and immoral practice of paying workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage.

Although the day was successful, our work is not done. Fifty organizations representing people with disabilities have joined us in urging Goodwill Industries in the U.S. to do what the organization has already done in Canada: Insist that all workers be paid at least the minimum wage. If Canada can manage to do business by doing what is right, Goodwill Industries in the U.S. should be able to do the same. We must eliminate this discriminatory provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and it is up to all of us to do it. The Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act of 2011 (H.R. 3086) would phase out Section 14c of the FLSA over a 3-year period, leading to the eventual repeal of this unfair, discriminatory, immoral provision. Call or e-mail your member of the U.S. House of Representatives today, and ask him or her to co-sponsor this legislation. The number for the Capitol switchboard is 202-224-3121. Ask your friends, neighbors and family members to do the same. This is another way in which we can work together and change what it means to be blind.

WORD OF MOUTH**By Mary Fernandez**

Editor's Note: *Mary is a frequent contributor to the pages of The Sounding Board. She's a former LEAD student, a leader in the National Federation of the Blind in New Jersey and Georgia, a college graduate and an employed person.*

I jumped out of the cab in front of Union Station in Washington, D.C. and quickly made my way to the ticket counter. I had already missed the train I wanted, but it still looked like I would make it on time for my first-ever job interview. Once on board, I had every intention of relaxing, but after exactly five seconds, my thigh started twitching. Take a deep breath ... and then my foot started tapping. Okay, I'll call my mom! Well, that took only 10 minutes. I listened to some relaxing music. I ignored the 5-year-old that lives in my head and at times asks annoying questions like "Are we there yet?" I might as well think about things that might help me during the interview. Only problem was that I wasn't even sure that I was qualified to be a paralegal, which brought me back to my resume. Did I include everything? Did I fix that spelling error? I still had 15 minutes to go on the train, so I gave up and just let my thigh twitch. Hopefully there was no one staring at me and my peculiar behavior, but if they were, hopefully they had nothing to do with the decision to hire me.

After what seemed like three hours (but was really 30 minutes), we arrived at Baltimore Penn Station and I took a cab to the offices of Brown Goldstein & Levy. The ride was short, and I arrived the requisite 15 minutes early. I took a seat in the gorgeous lobby and utilized every tool I had ever learned to control stage fright. After a while, my twitching subsided, though my heart was still racing.

The interview lasted close to two hours. With every person I spoke with, I realized what a wonderful opportunity it would be to land this job. By the end of the interview, I was exhausted, and my heart rate had picked up again. This time, however, it was just pure, unadulterated excitement.

During my senior year at Emory University, after a rather dramatic epiphany, I realized that my plan for the future — the plan I had so carefully sculpted the last four years — had crumbled. I decided to try working for a year or two, and then go to law school, something I had wanted to do since I was 7. I officially began my job search in November 2011 and didn't get an interview until June 2012. Like all my fellow graduating students, I thought I was an expert on job searches. I started by crafting a good resume which was not only succinct but also demonstrative of all my hard work and achievements during my four years in college. Even though the end result was a resume that had a strong foundation — including a double major, learning a third language, interning every summer, doing significant academic

research and being published, and serving the community – and needed only a few tweaks depending on the specific position, it didn't cut it for about 50 jobs. I've since learned that the government isn't always hiring, especially when the economy's in a recession. Despite that, I did find some incredible resources that every student with a disability should explore. The first was the Workforce Recruitment Program, which is for college students and recent graduates with a disability. There is an application process, and a recruiter will come to college campuses that have requested them to interview candidates; the end result is a database in which resumes and applications are posted along with the interviewer's thoughts about the applicants. This data base is accessed by government agencies and private contractors interested in hiring individuals with disabilities.

I also became a frequent attendee at career fairs. Of all the career fairs I attended, the most adventurous was a career expo for people with disabilities in Washington, D.C. I decided to use AirTran U, which allows college students under the age of 23 to fly for a significantly reduced rate. When I arrived at the Atlanta airport, I was informed that AirTran U had been suspended when Southwest Airlines took it over. If I wanted to get to DC for the weekend, it would cost me about \$800. I was crushed, but I was also determined. I was starving from running around all day, so I decided to get a bite to eat and work the phone. After a few calls, I discovered that a good friend's father works for Delta. This amazing man set everything up so that I could fly to DC and back to Atlanta for the best price I've ever gotten on a round trip ticket. The career expo was extremely informative and opened my eyes to many realities about looking for a job, but the most valuable lesson I learned that weekend was on personal connections and building relationships.

Eventually, getting a job did not come about from spending entire weekends on usajobs.gov, or applying to every job announcement for which I might possibly be qualified. Like my trip to DC, it came down to personal connections. Soon after I graduated, I fell into a pitiful funk. I had a college degree and was back home living with my mother. I adore my mother and I would not be anywhere close to where I am without her, but I had pictured myself in a position where I might be able to help her out after I graduated. After seeing me mope around for long enough, she finally asked about my job search, and I explained all the Internet resources I was exploiting. She thought that would eventually get me results, but if I wanted a job in the next two months, I should probably consider picking up the phone and connecting with people. After a minute of thinking this over, I decided that she was, as always, right. I called everyone I knew who has a job. I also focused on people who knew me, who knew my capabilities, who had worked with me in the past, and who are well-connected. Most importantly, I always expressed my gratitude to anyone

who cared enough to take time out of their busy day to help me.

And then something truly amazing happened. People started calling me with potential employment opportunities, one of which was an e-mail from Brown Goldstein & Levy, where my resume had miraculously landed. The only other time I have screamed so loudly was when I got an invitation from the White House to spend an evening with my idol Michelle Obama and President Obama, who wanted to interview me! When you've been rejected again and again by people who don't have a clue about you, you start hoping to have just one minute face to face with them so you can show them that you are awesome. That's why when I got a request for an interview I not only jumped for joy but I also screamed it out.

My friends and I often speculate that technology has not only changed the way we do things, but the way we interact with people. I pride myself on the fact that while I love texting and will log on to Facebook at least once a week, I still talk on the phone for the majority of my communication. I like e-mail, too, because taking more than five seconds to write something that is more than 160 characters long results in a closer connection with the person on the other side. But, even I had forgotten about the importance of networking in the true sense.

A lot of us think of networking as meeting people for a minute or so, exchanging e-mail addresses and e-mailing or texting when you need something and think they might be able to help. But networking is more than that. It's about building relationships with people, letting those relationships grow, and then, when you're searching for employment, contacting them. They will not only know who you are, but be proud that you've graduated, that you're searching for a job, and that you want to become a responsible citizen. I was fortunate that my mother gave me that little kick I needed to get going. Although the economy is improving, now more than ever, it's important to connect with people. As young blind professionals, or students, we struggle with not only getting an interview, but with all the misconceptions that will inevitably arise when you walk into an employer's office. I was extremely fortunate that Brown Goldstein & Levy is a law firm that not only knows people with disabilities, but has time again stood with us to fight for our rights.

I found my ideal job. It took many months and incredible amounts of perseverance. It took support from my friends, and one particular friend who, when I would start getting a bit hysterical after my 20th, and 40th and 60th rejection letter, would assure me that I was really a rock star and that there was a job waiting for me. That same friend was proved right when the e-mail with the job offer arrived. It took a reality check from my mother who reminded me that while it might seem like technology runs the world, there are people behind those technologies who are looking for employees. It took a measure of luck. But in the end all it really took was a phone call.

SSP SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE IN NEW JERSEY
By Kathy Gabry, SSP-NJ Program Director

If you are blind or visual impaired and also have a hearing loss, you may be eligible to use a support service provider, or SSP. An SSP is a trained professional who provides visual and environmental information, human guide services and access to communication. You could say that the SSP acts as the eyes, ears and mobility guide for a person who does not see or hear well.

The SSP model originated out of the need to support individuals who attended the national conventions of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind, a national organization that promotes the interests of the deafblind community. Since the 1980s, SSPs have provided supports that allow deafblind delegates to fully engage in all aspects of these conventions.

In New Jersey, SSP services are provided through SSPNJ, a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Center for Sensory and Complex Disabilities at The College of New Jersey; the program is funded by CBVI.

Here are some comments from those who use SSP-NJ services: “The SSPs are great. I am really happy and more relaxed that I have people to help me interact in the community.” “The SSPs help me be independent.” “When I became deaf-blind, I started working with an SSP. We went to the mall, shopping. They led me through the stores. I really enjoyed that and appreciated it. It’s a great relief for my husband so I do not have to depend on him.” “My SSPs know what they are doing, and they are very skilled.”

Because SSP-NJ is a consumer-driven program, individuals using our services select and schedule their own SSPs, up to 16 hours of SSP services each month. SSPNJ services are offered at no charge to those who are eligible: You must be an adult (over the age of 18 and out of the K-12 school system); eligible for services from the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired; preparing for work, looking for work or working; a New Jersey resident living in the community; and capable of directing and managing an SSP.

For more information on SSP services, please contact me at gabryk@tcnj.edu or call 609-771-2587.

LIONS CLUB ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER RAISES FUNDS TO HELP THE BLIND
By Christy Potter Kass, reprinted with permission from TheAlternativePress.com

Editor's Note: *Jane Degenshein is a member of the At-Large Chapter, the coordinator of the Talent Showcase at the State Convention, a participant in the Leadership Building Seminar and President of the New Jersey Association of Senior Blind.*

WEST ORANGE, NJ - Watching Jane Degenshein and her friends eating dinner together, you hear their conversation, bursts of laughter, talk of plans for upcoming trips to plays and museums, their next book club meeting.

Degenshein is so animated, so enthusiastic, so happy, that it's startling when she gets up and reaches for her white cane. She taps in front of her, carefully maneuvering through the tables and chairs until she takes a friend's arm.

"There is life after blindness, and it's a lot of fun," she says, heading for a post-dinner cup of coffee.

Degenshein and her friends sat at a table on one side of the room during the Lions Club Annual Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser Tuesday night, as inconspicuous as any other table, yet the unspoken center of it all.

"Every penny of what we raise tonight goes to help the blind," said Roger Schneider, past president of the West Orange Lions Club, as he carried plates of food to those waiting at the tables. "Most of the people in our club don't have people in their family with visual impairments. They do this just for the joy of giving back."

The Lions Club, with a chapter in West Orange for some 60 years, has always had the blind community as its primary focus. The club supports sight programs and services including vision screenings, eye banks and eyeglass recycling. They provide eye care services to those at risk of losing their sight, and raise donations through campaigns like SightFirst and Campaign SightFirst II.

In West Orange, dwindling club membership has meant fewer fundraising events, and now the Lions are down to just their Annual Spaghetti Dinner, but hungry residents turned out to eat their fill of spaghetti, meatballs, garlic bread and salad, plus plenty of desserts.

"It's a good turnout tonight," said Chapter President Joanne Kennedy, surveying the crowd. "I think people enjoy coming out and knowing they're supporting a good cause."

Mayor Rob Parisi joked with other diners, teenagers eyed the dessert table and a Lions member moved through the crowd selling raffle tickets. It had all the spirit of an old-time town festival, with the added knowledge that the funds raised would go to help those who didn't have one of the gifts that so many take for granted.

Degenshein waves away any hints of pity. Though her nearly sightless eyes can't discern looks of sympathy, she can sense them, and she's not having it.

"I'm here to let everyone know that it's OK to be blind," she says. "Your life is not over."

The longtime resident of West Orange said she knew she would eventually lose her sight due to Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), a group of genetic eye conditions that leads to incurable blindness. She is one of five children, and three who have the gene and the disease. The other two have the gene but not the disease.

Degenshein didn't start really losing her eyesight until she was 35. While she was pregnant with her third child, her eyesight failed to the point where she could no longer drive or read or do any of the things she had always done.

Her older two children had trouble adjusting, she said, as they remembered what it was like when their mom could see. Her youngest daughter only knew what it was like to have a mommy who's blind.

Degenshein admits she hasn't always had the positive attitude about being blind that she has now. For the first couple of days, she says, she was upset, uncertain, at a loss to figure out how she was going to handle the life she'd always known.

"A couple of days after I lost my sight, I called my husband at work and I was crying," she said. "I told him I didn't know what I was going to do. He told me 'You're going to figure it out. You've always had a positive attitude and you're going to have a positive attitude again. You're just going to figure out how to get there.'"

Buoyed by such sound advice, Degenshein decided she was going to get her spark back. She began to teach her children how to help with things around the house. She showed her oldest daughter how to help her balance her checkbook and write out checks to pay bills. Since she could no longer read to her daughter at night, her daughter started reading to her instead.

"I'd get my pillow and blanket and she would read to me," Degenshein remembered. "Then I'd fall asleep and then she'd fall asleep."

She also took that same infectiously positive spirit to her work. She has been a music teacher for years, and now teaches some computer courses as well. Her vision is not completely gone - she can still make out faint shapes, objects and colors. Light is a struggle for her, and the sun glaring off a window can make it impossible to see anything. On rainy, cloudy days, she can see a little better - a fact she turned into a positive when talking with a student one day several years ago. The boy was complaining about the rainy day and she told him how she can see better when it's cloudy and rainy.

"I told him that whenever he was facing a stinky day, he just needed to remember that for some people, it's a much better day," she said. "He still e-mails me to this day and he still talks about that."

It's a good snapshot of the way Degenshein views life in general, a lemonade-out-of-lemons mentality that has enabled her to continue to enjoy her life, her family and her friends, despite the loss of her eyesight. She even calls her blindness "liberating."

"I can't judge you on how you look," she says. "I can only judge you on how you treat me."

A few years ago, she founded a group called ECHO (Eyes Closed, Hearts Open) that has grown to nearly 40 members. They meet every month, and take day trips (with a little help from Access Link) to places like the Turtle Back Zoo, the Edison Museum, even the Paper Mill Playhouse, where a narrator helps them "see" what's happening on stage. They even have a book group and a team at West Orange's Relay for Life.

It was at an ECHO gathering at a local restaurant that Schneider said he overheard their conversation and, deducing that they were blind, wondered how they were able to have so many outings.

Schneider talked with Degenshein that day, and ECHO and the Lions Club linked up. Since then, the club has donated \$500 to ECHO. Many of the group's members attended the Spaghetti Dinner with Degenshein.

"We do the same things any social group does," she said. "We just can't see any of it."

The white canes and guide dogs were a part of the scenery at Tuesday night's Spaghetti Dinner, as neighbors both sighted and sight-impaired enjoyed each other's company. And that is just as Degenshein thinks it should be. The woman with the indefatigable spirit was among her friends, enjoying her life, blindness not slowing her down at all.

"Everybody has something," she said simply. "This is my something."

PRESCRIPTION-READING DEVICE NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL BLIND AMERICANS

If you have difficulty reading prescription labels, ScripTalk Station may be for you. Under En-Vision America's Pharmacy Freedom Program, eligible individuals can get a free ScripTalk Station reader that allows them to hear their prescription label information. Participating pharmacies attach a small RFID, or radio-frequency identification device, label to each prescription. The RFID label includes all the printed information that's available to a sighted person, including warnings, dosage information, side effects, script number and doctor's name. The ScripTalk reader provides a safe, private, independent way for the blind and visually impaired to manage their medications, and it helps pharmacies comply with ADA regulations in serving their patients. At press time, the following pharmacies in New Jersey are participating in the ScripTalk program: The Walmart Pharmacy at 220 Enterprise Drive in Rockaway, 973-361-6709, and the Fenny Pharmacy at 135 Newark Avenue in Jersey City, 201-333-2223. Walmart home delivery also provides this service: 1-800-273-3455. To sign up for ScripTalk Station, call 1-855-SpeakRx or 1-800-890-1180.

NEW JERSEY CBVI LAUNCHES I-PAD™ PILOT PROJECT

**By Christine Hinton, Supervisor, Meyer Instructional Resource Center
and Amy Ricciardi, Coordinator, Educational Services**

As the mainstream educational environment acknowledges the need for changes in the way we think about reading and comprehension related to technology, it is important that the needs of students with visual impairments are met through new strategies for both students and teachers. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is currently conducting a statewide 12-month iPad™ Pilot Project for 15 students with low vision. The students received their iPads on June 26, 2012 at an event attended by Jennifer Velez, Commissioner of the NJ State Department of Human Services, and Vito DeSantis, Executive Director of CBVI.

Each year CBVI's George F. Meyer Instructional Resource Center has a challenge when charged to provide over 800 book titles for visually impaired students throughout New Jersey, resulting in thousands of reproduced pages. Large print textbooks provided to students in grades K - 12 are all reproduced 11 by 17 inches in size and the print size ranges from 18 to 24 point fonts. After enlarging the texts, the books are produced in several volumes, otherwise, the weight and size of the book would be too large for the student to use. These enlarged textbooks often do not fit on an average school desk and at times students must tear out the pages being covered in class to make using the books manageable.

The basis of this Pilot Project is to provide iPads to five CBVI students from each of the three regional offices who have ordered large print books from the agency in the past and who are in the ninth through the 12th grade. Each of the students possesses some technological experience with downloading and reading electronic books. They are required to use electronic textbooks for 50 percent of their school book requirements.

Student input on the use of the device including the device itself, apps, hypertext (markup language used to interpret and compose text), non-linear hypertext (information that is presented in a nontraditional linear format) and Interactive Text (text that requires readers to interact with the text to achieve an outcome) will be explored.

Some of the presumptive outcomes of this project are that the students will be provided immediate access to text with customized print size to accommodate their individual visual disability; enabling the student's independence in obtaining documents and text in a timely manner; enhancement of the student's functional capabilities in the educational setting; and reduction of the number of devices that a student would need in the classroom.

The use of the iPad will allow our students the ability to utilize the same equipment as do the other students, thus ensuring inclusion and equality in accessing most books.

WTOE RADIO/TV ANNOUNCES NFB WEDNESDAY NIGHT LINE-UP

WTOE Radio/TV at www.thruoureyes.org has scheduled a series of broadcasts not to be missed, so mark your calendar and tune in for the NFB live streamcast each Wednesday night at 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Following is the line-up of our NFB “sluggers”:

Leading off the first Wednesday of each month is the Echevarria Travel Show. Cheryl Echevarria and her guests share ideas and techniques to help blind and visually impaired individuals travel more effectively, more safely and more often.

On the Bright Side hits the ball out of the park the second Wednesday of each month with the effervescent banter of co-hosts Jane Degenshein and Jerry Moreno. If you’re looking for a pick-me-up or just some good old fashioned encouragement, motivation and inspiration, tune-in for this spirited and uplifting broadcast. This is good stuff with personal stories, anecdotes, trips down memory lane, tech tips and a book corner. Special guests pinch hit in key situations.

Next in the NFB power line-up on the third Wednesday night of each month is ThruOurEyes with NFB Board of Directors member and NFBNJ President Joe Ruffalo serving as program anchor. Joe provides insight into pressing issues and concerns of the NFB, engaging national guests with expertise in subjects important to the blind and visually impaired. Given the direct impact and benefit to you and your well-being, these broadcasts need to be marked as a high-priority on your calendar.

Batting clean-up on the fourth Wednesday of each month is Looking Good without Looking hosted by Linda Zani Thomas and Johanna Baccan, MD (Makeup Diva). Do blind folks really care about how they look? You bet we do! And this show provides expert advice on beauty, style and current fashion trends modeled on the system created by Fashion Diva Linda Zani Thomas, producer of the Fashion Show conducted at the 2011 NFBNJ State Convention. If you want to feel good, look good! Be there every month with Linda and Johanna.

About WTOE Radio Network programming: The WTOE Radio/TV Network supports broadcasts devoted to entertainment, education and health issues tailored to the needs of the blind and visually impaired. A loyal and vibrant community of sighted individuals finds value in this programming as well. Following are various options for accessing and/or listening live to these broadcasts:

- Use your phone and dial 1-347-215-7037 (toll charges may apply)
- With internet access for live or previous shows: www.thruoureyes.org or for JAWS and other screen reader users: <http://m.thruoureyes.org>
- To watch live shows go to: <http://www.thruoureyes.org/simulcastfeed.html>
- To call toll free with a suggestion, comment or a shout out: 1-888-572-0141.

I-AM MASSAGE THERAPY & SKIN CARE CLINIC: A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY

**By Nancy L. De Siervo, Founder/Executive Director
and Joseph Ruffalo Jr., Senior Program Administrator**

Since its founding in 2009, I-AM Massage Therapy & Skin Care Clinic has served as a social agent in the community, working with local and statewide community-based organizations dedicated to the advocacy, education, physical well-being and independence of individuals with sensory disabilities who seek to further develop their skills, abilities and talents, and begin to live better lives.

I-AM has created a road map to personal and economic freedom, and is prepared to lead by example through its innovative Train-and-Hire Program, in which participants with disabilities can embark on a path toward sustainability with dignity. People with disabilities are first and foremost *people*; people with a full range of emotions, hopes and dreams, and people who want to – and can – work, and contribute significantly to our society. As the hidden talents of this underrepresented population are unveiled, the community will soon come to realize the powerful place, purpose and contribution to society that people with disabilities possess.

I-AM Massage Therapy & Skin Care Clinic has assembled an exceptional staff and advisory board of highly skilled and qualified industry professionals who are dedicated to offering superior attention to the success of its program participants. Our Train-and-Hire Program is a unique four-step program featuring traditional instruction, one-on-one coaching, mentoring and tutoring, assistive technologies, three-month internship, and a two-year paid apprenticeship.

Senior Program Administrator Joe Ruffalo's life and work express his commitment to the blind and their struggle for equality in society. In 1976 Joe learned that retinitis pigmentosa would slowly claim his eyesight, and his life was about to change dramatically. Through the NFBNJ he found fraternity and empowerment, empathy and accomplishment, and this was the beginning of Joe's own growth and achievement. He has been president of the NFBNJ since 1993. Joe is also a certified massage therapist and served as a consultant to the Somerset School of Massage.

New Jersey's first-ever sensory disabled mobile service team consists of Odvar Wilson, Silvana Fabara, Otis Kerr, Raymond Santos, Rania Ismail, Kency Mionez and Terri McCall.

I-AM's massage team is available 7 days a week and available for off-site functions and celebrations such as spa parties, networking functions, sporting events, corporate functions, golf tournaments and conferences, within a 20-mile radius of Bergen County. If you are blind or visually impaired and would like to become part of the I-AM team, please contact us directly for training and employment opportunities: 201-493-0987 or www.iammassageskinclinic.com.

GETTING ON THE PAC PLAN

By Ryan Stevens

Greetings to my fellow Federationists throughout the state! Many of you know me as one of the members of the NFBNJ's Board of Directors. One of my other responsibilities is as the statewide PAC Plan chairman. A couple of times a year, the PAC Plan gets mentioned on the national presidential release, and you may have wondered what exactly it is and why it's important. "PAC" stands for "Pre-Authorized Contribution," and the plan is the easiest way for NFB members, family and friends 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. The plan is important because it helps fund the programs that are so vital to the success of blind people.

If you have a checking account, you can get involved with PAC. Signing up entails 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, and of course, how much you wish to contribute each month. 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. You can e-mail me at rysteve@comcast.net to receive a PAC Plan form. Once NFB processes your form, your contribution will be automatically taken from your account each month, and you don't need to do anything else.

What programs does PAC help to fund? One of the most important is scholarships. Rewarding blind college students for their hard work helps to bring new members into the organization and to increase the number of successful blind people making a difference out in the world. Another vital mission of the Federation that gets help from PAC is our fight against discrimination. It indeed takes money to make sure that websites are accessible and that blind people do not lose educational and employment opportunities.

With such big projects needing funding, you're probably wondering how such a small monthly donation makes a difference. If 50 of us in the Garden State make an average contribution of \$8 a month, that builds to almost \$5,000 per year; and that's just in one affiliate. Imagine the impact if our actions inspired the same level of involvement in the other 51. So as the song says, please ... get on the PAC Plan. Sign up today!

FYI INFORMATION TIDBITS

- **Looking for donations:** I am in communication with someone who is traveling to Rwanda in early 2013 to teach grade two Braille. He is looking for donations of Braille and large print books, Braille paper, white canes, slates and styluses, abacuses for the blind, a Perkins braille and an embosser. If you or anyone you know would like to donate items to this cause, please contact Dawn Brady at DVSBrady@aol.com. Greatly appreciate it! This will do a world of good. – *Submitted by Dawn Brady*
- **CCTVs now available at the Bloomfield Public Library:** The Lions Club has donated three Magnasight Explorer CCTVs for use at the Bloomfield Public Library. Two of the 22-inch units are located in the adult section, and one is going to be set up in the children's library. The library is located on 90 Broad Street in Bloomfield. For additional information, contact Catherine Wolverton at 973-566-6200 extension 203. – *Submitted by Debbie Bloomer*
- **Call NJ 2-1-1- for community assistance:** NJ 2-1-1 points to community resources and services for almost any need, from where to turn if unemployment benefits run out to where the nearest food bank is located. NJ 2-1-1 provides free, confidential access to over 17,000 critical services and resources via landline, cell phone and the Internet. If you're looking for health and human services, government programs and disaster preparedness and recovery information, 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, every day. For more information, call 2-1-1 or go to www.nj211.org.
- **PUSH Beverages and NFB Team Up to Support Braille Literacy:** On July 1, PUSH Beverages launched their new PUSH-2-O bottled 20-ounce water. The new PUSH-2-O label contains a message encouraging drinkers to learn more about and donate to Braille literacy. This message, designed by the NFB, reads "Support Braille literacy for the blind: Text Braille to 85944 to donate \$5 to the National Federation of the Blind. Learn more at www.nfb.org." The NFB logo is also included. PUSH Beverages is a full-line beverage company with over 30 carbonated and noncarbonated drinks available in 12-ounce, 20-ounce and 2-liter packages under the PUSH®, PUSH-2-O® and TRIBE TEA® Brands. PUSH Beverages, new to the market in 2008, is currently sold in 22 states in the eastern United States and looking to spread west in the near future.

FROM THE KITCHEN OF JERILYN HIGGINS

Editor's Note: *Jerilyn is an active member of the NFBNJ and serves as first vice president, chapter president, scholarship chairperson and co-editor of The Sounding Board. She is a Northern Region mentor in the LEAD program and has taught activities of daily living for many years in several programs. In her spare time, Jerilyn can be found in the kitchen cooking. This recipe has been in her family since she was a little girl. Her aunt made it, and Jerilyn's still making it every fall!*

Pumpkin Bread**Ingredients:**

You will need 3 coffee cans	1 teaspoon nutmeg
3 cups flour	3 cups granulated sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda	1 cup vegetable oil
4 large eggs	2/3 cup of water
1/2 tsp salt	1 can 15 oz , of Libby's pure-pack pumpkin
1 tsp cinnamon	nuts, optional

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees
2. Stir flour and baking soda together
3. Mix eggs, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, sugar and vegetable oil
4. Add flour mixture to the egg mixture, stir gently
5. Add water and mix well
6. Add pumpkin and mix well
7. Grease coffee cans to third line (you can also use two 9" by 5" loaf pans)
8. Pour mixture into cans to the third line
9. Bake for 60 minutes
10. Let cool before cutting

PLEASE NOTE: CHAPTER AND DIVISION UPDATES CAN BE FOUND ON THE NFBNJ WEBSITE AT WWW.NFBNJ.ORG

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NFB of NJ Chapters*At-Large Chapter*

Last Thurs, 8 p.m., except July, Nov
712-432-0180, enter code 460994

Capital Chapter

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

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choirnfb@gmail.com

Central Jersey Chapter

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

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Garden State Chapter

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

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Glasstown Chapter

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

Lydia Keller 856-696-3518
lydiakeller@comcast.net

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

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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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