

FALL 2013

# The Sounding Board

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

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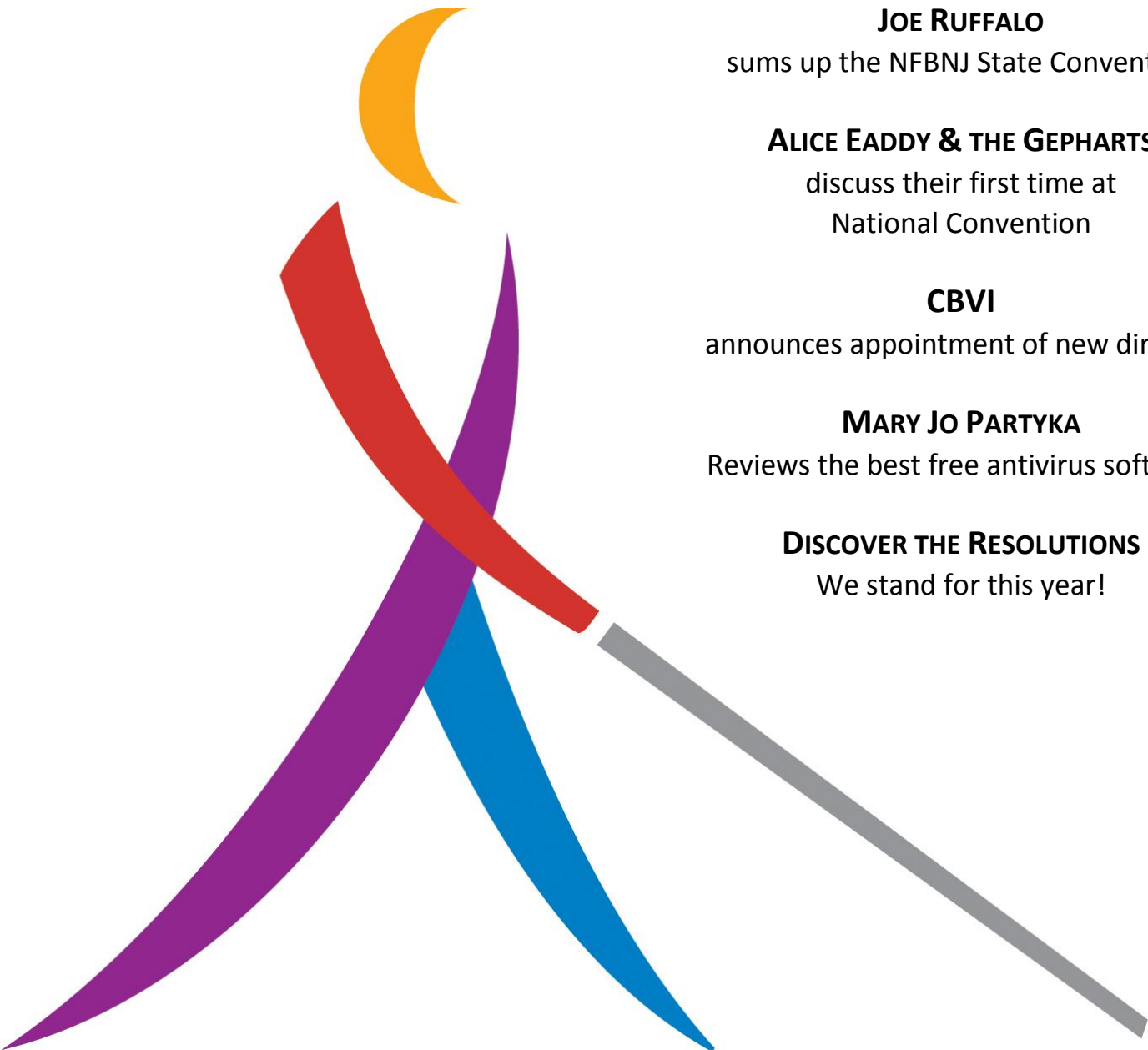
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We stand for this year!



**THE SOUNDING BOARD**  
**Fall 2013**

*Katherine Gabry, Editor*  
*Jerilyn Higgin & MaryJo Partyka, Co-editors*

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***Please Note: The deadline for the Spring issue is April 1, 2014.***

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

*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."*

## **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 Newline 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](http://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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You are cordially invited to the  
National Federation of the Blind of NJ's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual

## After the Holidays Party

Saturday, January 11, 2014

1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Knights of Columbus Hall

94 Bridge Street, Belleville, NJ

*Access Link accessible*

\$22 per adult; \$12 for children 6- 12 years; free for children 6 & younger

Please include a separate sheet with attendees' names & phone numbers.

All payments must be received no later than January 4, 2014.

Make your check payable to NFBNJ and mail to:

Joe Ruffalo, President

NFBNJ

254 Spruce Street

Bloomfield NJ 07003

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

*We'll have door prizes, a sing-along & a special appearance by jolly old Santa!*

**Special note:** If you would like an attendee to receive a gift from Santa, please bring a wrapped gift labeled with the name of the recipient.

### MISTLETOE MAGIC MENU

Holiday Tossed Garden Salad with vinaigrette dressing

Chicken Savoy, Eggplant Rollatini, Sausage & Peppers, Pasta with Vodka Sauce

Assorted Cold Cuts and Potato Salad

Chicken Fingers

Rolls and Butter

Homemade Holiday Desserts

Coffee, Tea and Assorted Soft Drinks

Cash bar will be available

*Please join us in celebrating the holiday season!*

*We look forward to seeing all of our members, family and friends!*



## PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

### Greetings Fellow Federationists!

As the leaves fall, and we grab the rakes and prepare for winter, we celebrate another successful year in changing what it means to be blind. We are moving forward with progress as we continue to work together in making a difference!

The NFBNJ celebrated the achievements of its members at our 37th State Convention held November 8 - 10 in Manahawkin, NJ. The theme for our convention was "Who We Are Makes A Difference!" Each attendee received a blue ribbon with these words and was given two additional ribbons to give to others in their community who are making a difference. Throughout the weekend, many hotel staff wore their ribbons proudly.

We thanked New Jersey Department of Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez for her presentation on Friday; Jim Gashel the national representative and his wife Susan for their assistance; Dan Frye, Executive Director of the NJ CBVI and his wife Renee West as they joined us throughout the weekend; and our dedicated and hard-working members. Our membership is the driving force that provides the energy, education and encouragement to keep pushing beyond barriers. In fact, during my presidential report, I highlighted the meaning of the word "member": Motivate, Educate, Motivate, Believe, Encourage, Respect. As you can see, motivate is mentioned twice. First, you must motivate yourself, and then you can motivate others.

The following accomplishments from our members were highlighted:

**Mikayla Gephart** attended the National Convention as a first timer, attended a technology camp sponsored by the NJ CBVI and was elected to her school's Student Council.

**Hank Miller**, who attended the National Convention as an old timer, plays in the school band and serves on his school newspaper.

**Liz Morgan** won first place in the 2013 Braille Readers Are Leaders adult contest.

**Brian Mackey** won third place in the 2013 Braille Readers Are Leaders adult contest.

**Serena Cucco** received her social work state licensure this past March.

**Paul Grier** graduated from Columbia University and is employed as a chaplain in a senior rehabilitation center.

**Evelyn Valdez** became employed in Washington, D.C. with the Veterans Administration.

**Anthony Lanzilotti**, a college student, is an intern for two state assemblymen.

**Alice Eaddy**, the chairperson of the Deaf-Blind Committee, recently became employed.

**Carol Castellano** was honored and received the Society Award from Douglas College. **Ben Vercellone** enrolled in the Louisiana Tech University master's program. **Tara Carty** and **Dan Facchini** met at the 2009 State Convention and were married this past September. **Kevin Sisco** and **Christine Crotty** met through the White Cane List and are engaged.

As you can see, our members network, get involved and share with each other to continue growing and changing attitudes and lives.

This year's State Convention was hosted by the Glasstown and South Jersey Shore chapters of the NFBNJ. Both chapters, which were established less than two years ago, worked hard and long to achieve the goals of the convention. Thanks to the Glasstown Chapter for organizing the tricky tray auction and to the South Jersey Shore Chapter for organizing the horserace, music and dancing, and the candy sale.

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

Special note: Are you making your plans to attend the National Convention in Orlando in 2014? Information pertaining to the First Timer Scholarship, dates and location of the hotel will be available shortly.

Enjoy making a difference!

### Upcoming Important Dates

- January 3 to 5: BELL planning meeting, Baltimore
- January 11: After The Holidays party, Belleville, Knights of Columbus
- January 22: Thru Our Eyes interview with Dr. Maurer, Year End In Review
- January 24 to 27: Legislative Committee meetings, Baltimore
- January 27 to 30: Washington Seminar
- February 2: Super Bowl, Go Giants and Jets!

Sincerely,



Joseph Ruffalo, President



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Lynn Reynolds, Legislative Coordinator

The National Center Governmental Affairs Team has been sending requests to all states asking for a Call to Action since the Washington Seminar. As of this writing, these are the updates for the issues for which we've been advocating:

**HR-164** is the Space Available Act which would provide military transport to disabled military veterans on a stand-by basis. This was included in a version of the National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed in June. The Senate bill, S-346, will also hopefully be included in the Defense Authorization Act this fall.

The **TEACHE Act** does not have a bill introduced at this time. There has been conversation between the stakeholders – higher education and publishing companies – that will lead to a bill that will be introduced this fall.

The **Workforce Investment Act** was passed in Committee in the Senate. We have encouraged action to contact our Senators to consider the following two points when this bill comes for a full Senate vote: 1) Strike Title V, Section 511, which would incorporate the subminimum wage language of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) into the Rehabilitation Act, and 2) Remove the language that would transfer the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Thanks to all who have made calls when a Call to Action is circulated. To be added to the Legislative Alert list, send your e-mail address to: [lhr1827@optonline.net](mailto:lhr1827@optonline.net).

### NFBNJ RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE 2013 STATE CONVENTION

*Please visit [nfbnj.org](http://nfbnj.org) to view these resolutions in their entirety:*

**Resolution 2013-01**, authored by Vincent Chaney, concerns Dusty's Law advocacy and addresses the need for legislation for the protection of guide dog teams.

**Resolution 2013-02**, authored by Rick Fox, concerns the exclusion of blind employees from the New Jersey Commission for the Blind's technology training contract and calls upon CBVI to investigate this matter and to redress this situation, insuring that qualified blind people have an equal opportunity at Advancing Opportunities under the Commission's RTAC contract.

**Resolution 2013-03**, authored by Holly Miller, addresses the need for all schools to procure, offer and deploy only accessible educational technology and to urge schools to work with the NFBNJ to insure that all blind students have equal access to educational technology and information.

**Resolution 2013-04**, authored by Carol Castellano, welcomes and congratulates Dr. Dan Frye on his appointment as Executive Director of the New Jersey CBVI. We look forward to a future of good communication and partnership – working together toward the goals of equal opportunity and first-class citizenship for the blind of New Jersey.

## **THE SEEING EYE APPLAUDS NJ SENATE FOR PROCLAMATION SUPPORTING SERVICE ANIMALS AND CALLS ON NJ ASSEMBLY TO PASS DUSTY'S LAW**

**Editor's Note:** *This article was reprinted from the original written by Michele Barlak of The Seeing Eye with her permission.*

On August 14, The Seeing Eye participated in NJ's first Assistance Animal Recognition Day, an event established through a resolution created by Senator Donald Norcross and signed into law by Governor Chris Christie. The proclamation of this event highlights the following: (1) the essential role that Seeing Eye® dogs and other service animals play in the lives of NJ residents who are disabled and promotes awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals in public places; (2) the need for pet owners to control their animals in the presence of service animals, and for local governments and law enforcement agencies to increase their efforts to better protect service animals; and (3) alerts the public to the harm that can be caused when pet owners misrepresent their dogs as legitimate service animals. New Jersey is one of the few states that makes it a crime to misrepresent pets as service animals.

Each month many businesses contact The Seeing Eye to express concern about customers fraudulently claiming they have the right to be accompanied by their pets or emotional support animals. These pets are often reported to be disruptive and poorly behaved, jeopardizing the access rights of those individuals who truly rely on their dogs to live independently.

"Although pet owners may enjoy having their dogs with them everywhere they go, the experience may not be as pleasurable for the dog," cautioned Peggy Gibbon, Director of Canine Development at The Seeing Eye. "Without the benefit of extensive preparation and training like that given to Seeing Eye dogs, an ordinarily well-behaved pet dog can quickly become stressed or fearful when forced to go into an unfamiliar setting."

Assistance Animal Recognition Day comes on the heels of the Senate's passage of Dusty's Law, a bill sponsored by Senator Anthony Bucco, and spearheaded by The Seeing Eye after one of its puppies named Dusty was attacked and seriously injured while walking with his volunteer puppy raiser. Dusty was unable to complete Seeing Eye dog training due to the psychological damage caused by the attack and his puppy raiser sustained permanent injuries in the attack. The bill (A-4105), which would penalize the owners of dogs who attack guide dogs and puppies in training, was passed by the NJ Senate in 2013 but has yet to be heard in the Assembly committee for Law and Public Safety.

"The Seeing Eye applauds the efforts of Senator Norcross and the NJ legislature for designating the second Wednesday of every August as Assistance Animal Recognition Day," said Seeing Eye President & CEO Jim Kutsch. "It is our hope that the NJ Assembly will follow the Senate's lead by hearing and passing Dusty's Law, which would offer real protection to guide dogs and puppies in training."

## FIRST-TIMER ATTENDS 2013 NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Alice Eaddy

**Editor's Note:** *Alice Eaddy, who is deaf-blind and uses a guide dog, is a former teacher and the mother of two adult children. Alice attended the National Convention in Orlando this past summer on a First-Timers Scholarship. Alice uses a cochlear implant, which has helped her in her many endeavors. She is a member of the board of the state affiliate, vice president of the Glasstown Chapter, assistant secretary of the New Jersey Guide Dog Users Association, secretary of the Diabetes Division and coordinator of the state affiliate's 2013 Meet the Blind Month campaign. "I don't let my handicaps stop me from doing anything that I set my mind to," she says. As you'll see from this article, she's a great example of someone who espouses the NFB philosophy.*

Dreams do come true. You can do it! Within this organization I've succeeded at many new things and found a lifelong butterfly loving "friend" in the NFB. My "friend" has watched me blossom and come of age as my duties and roles continue to evolve as people's expectations for me change. Taking heed, I'm pioneering for the future, paving a new road of excellence and involvement. I appreciate the fact that the NFB as a whole has enlightened me and openly accepted and inspired me to stretch my boundary limits and push the envelope.

At the National Convention, I attended the deaf-blind seminar, where one of the goals was to identify deaf-blind people in every state and begin to form a Deaf-Blind Committee and/or Division in all 50 states. In addition to taking on the challenge of chairing and establishing the NFBNJ's Deaf-Blind Committee/Division, I also agreed to help the states of Georgia and California form similar deaf-blind organizations.

I can assure you that I am on my way. Others see me at different plateaus than I dreamed for myself, but I don't waiver when they ask me to do more or go further. I have trust in my NFB family and they have a similar trust in me. I go; I do; and I complete whatever I am charged with, with a smile and a happy heart. The idea that *I am somebody* is truly indicative of who I have become during my years within the NFB. I am now the epitome of my State Convention's motto this year: *Who we are makes a difference.*

So to the NFB I can truthfully say: Onward and upward! We shall overcome the shackles that bind our minds and in turn control our bodies. Rise up, I say, as the future is ours and upon us to free the next generation even more. Advocate, educate and continue to promote the security, equality and opportunity philosophy.

To those who have not followed the NFB and attended convention: Break free and dare to become, with others behind and beside you! You have no choice but to grow and spread your wings, and your whole outlook will be changed. I always wanted to be as outgoing and as mentally and socially successful as my children. I have now achieved that.

## **WE FOUND OUR WAY TO CONVENTION**

**By Mikayla and Marsha Gephart**

**Editor's Note:** *Mikayla Gephart is a 13-year-old who lives in Marmora and attends Upper Township Middle School where she's a member of the choir and the student counsel. Mikayla and Marsha are active members of the South Jersey Shore Chapter.*

Marsha Gephart and her daughter Mikayla had wanted to attend an NFB National Convention for some time, but never had the means to do so. Although she helped Mikayla apply for a Jernigan Fund First Timer Scholarship, which she eventually won, Marsha found a unique way to locate additional funds so that all of Mikayla's convention expenses would be met. At the suggestion of NJ Affiliate President Joe Ruffalo, Marsha contacted doctors' offices, mothers' clubs, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs and Elks Lodges for support, and her efforts proved rewarding: Their convention expenses were covered.

"This was my first time, and it definitely will not be my last!" Mikayla said. She attended technology seminars, a self-defense class and a meeting for professionals in blindness education, which she was allowed to observe because of her desire to be a teacher of the blind. "One of the best parts of the convention," Mikayla said, "was meeting others from all over the country. The helpfulness of everyone there was amazing. Being part of the NFB has changed my life for the better."

## **CBVI ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR**

**By Pam Gaston**

On behalf of the NJ State Department of Human Services, Frank Scheick and F. Marcus Stabile, Esq., Interim Executive Directors of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind, are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Daniel Frye as the new Executive Director of NJCBVI. Dr. Frye started October 21, 2013, and fills the vacancy created by Vito DeSantis' retirement last June.

Dr. Frye comes to NJCBVI from Maryland, where he served as a management and program specialist with the Rehabilitation Services Administration with the U.S. Department of Education. There, he was responsible for the national administration of the Federal Randolph-Sheppard program and the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults. Prior to his employment with the U.S. Department of Education, he served in successive management positions on the national staff of the NFB and as national advocate for the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand.

Dr. Frye earned his Juris Doctorate at the University of Washington School of Law and his bachelor of arts degree at Erskine College in South Carolina. He is a certified mediator and has authored several publications and articles.

I hope you will join us in welcoming Dr. Frye to our agency.

## **SPORTS JAMBOREE FOR BLIND AND WHEELCHAIR PARTICIPANTS**

**By Brian Mackey**

**Editor's Note:** *Brian Mackey is NFBNJ secretary, Garden State Chapter board member, At Large Chapter secretary and producer of ThruOurEyes with Joe Ruffalo.*

Are you blind or a wheelchair user who would like to participate in sports activities? Are you age 30 or younger? If you answered "yes" to these questions, you may be interested in attending the International Sports Jamboree sponsored by the Verizon West Virginia Pioneers. This annual sporting event takes place during the third weekend of July at North Bend State Park in Cairo, West Virginia. Competitions include a 40-yard dash, beepin air gun, team relay, beepin basketball free-throw, golf putting contest, beepin horseshoe toss, beepin Frisbee toss, jam toss, bowling and the bicycle race.

For further information about the Sports Jamboree, please visit their website at [http://verizonwvapioneers.org/?page\\_id=110](http://verizonwvapioneers.org/?page_id=110) or contact Jamboree chairperson Fran Nutter at 304-623-3148 or [frannutter@aol.com](mailto:frannutter@aol.com).

## **SENIOR COMMUNITY INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES COMPANION PROGRAM**

The Senior Community Independent Living Services (SCILS) program supports seniors (age 55 and up) who live with a significant vision impairment in achieving maximum independence and fuller participation in social, educational, recreational and employment activities. The program pays someone of their choosing to provide support, assistance and companionship for up to 4 hours a week. Activities can include reading mail, driving to medical appointments, writing letters, helping with shopping, organizing and labeling food, light housekeeping, organizing closets and cabinets, and driving to recreational opportunities such as a senior center or a beauty or barber shop.

Participants identify their own "companion." Companions must be at least 18 years old; must satisfactorily complete a state and federal background check; be legally allowed to work in this country; and complete a training orientation. Companions are not required to possess a driver's license. Once a companion has been identified and has successfully completed the background checks, the participant will work with the program staff to develop a plan whereby the companion will provide services. Companions are paid \$15 per hour; this rate is not negotiable.

To find out more about the SCILS program contact the NJ Division of Disability Services at 609-631-2450 or toll free at 888-285-3036.

**CAROL CASTELLANO, CLASS OF '73: AUTHOR, ADVOCATE, TEACHER AND CO-FOUNDER OF PARENTS OF BLIND CHILDREN-NEW JERSEY**

**Editor's Note:** *This Douglass Society honoree bio is reprinted with permission and courtesy of the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College.*

Carol Castellano is the Director of Programs for the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children and is an author, advocate and president emerita of Parents of Blind Children-NJ, an organization she co-founded. As a tireless advocate, she has been integral to state and national efforts to eliminate discrimination and prejudice against the blind and to help achieve security, equality and opportunity for blind people. Carol writes frequently on the education and development of blind children. Her articles and books explore helping blind children progress from early literacy experiences to full participation in the classroom, as well as teaching children the skills needed for an independent life.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Carol graduated from Douglass College with high honors in English literature. Her early career in publishing in New York City led to teaching in a Manhattan private school before her first child was born, a daughter named Serena. Arriving four months early and weighing less than a pound and a half, Serena spent nearly eight months in the neonatal intensive care unit. When Carol and her husband, Bill Cucco, Class of 75, brought their newborn home, she was blind and far behind in her development. It was during this time that the new parents were introduced to the National Federation of the Blind and the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children. Carol felt an immediate affinity to the organizations because they advocated the idea that blind children have a right to a full and satisfying life.

Serena's premature birth proved to be a turning point in Carol's career. She began researching and writing articles on the prevention of premature birth and was invited to join a select group of parents, physicians and ethicists to discuss the difficult issues of decision-making in neonatal intensive care. The proceedings of this conference resulted in a landmark article, the first ever to be authored by both physicians and parents, in the medical journal *Pediatrics*. Soon Carol began publishing pieces about raising a blind baby and, later, about her daughter's school years. Carol's advocacy secured the way for Serena to attend public school in New Jersey. Serena graduated from college and recently earned a master's degree at Rutgers.

Carol raised awareness about threats to education resources as a member of the Statewide Consumer Advisory Board of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and advocated for better services through the creation of the New Jersey chapter of Parents of Blind Children more than 20 years ago. On a national

level, Carol served as vice president and then president of the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, before becoming the Director of Programs in 2011. She was also the first sighted person to serve on the National Federation of the Blind Scholarship Committee.

Carol is the author of four books, *The Bridge to Braille: Reading and School Success for the Young Blind Child*, *Because Books Matter*, *Making It Work: Educating the Blind/Visually Impaired Student in the Regular School*, and *Getting Ready for College Begins in Third Grade: Working Toward an Independent Future for Your Young Blind Child*. For more than two decades, Carol has co-edited *In Touch*, POBC-NJ's newsletter, and conducted parent seminars and educator training in states across the country. After several years of service on the advisory committee, Carol served for two years as Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator for The College of New Jersey's Teacher of the Blind/Visually Impaired Program where she developed curriculum and co-taught courses.

Carol has served on the State Human Services Advisory Council and the State Rehabilitation Council and has collaborated on many projects with the New Jersey Commission for the Blind. She is the recipient of the Diana Cuthbertson Parent-Professional Collaboration Award from the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, the New Jersey Commission for the Blind Mary O'Donnell Advocacy Award, and the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children Twig Award.

### WHERE THE BLIND WORK

**From the NFB Website: <https://nfb.org/wtbw-main>**

What kind of work are blind people doing? How do they do it? Why should employers hire a blind person? Blind people are working in a wide variety of jobs doing work that people mistakenly believe requires sight. Blind students are often "tracked" into certain fields, whether they are interested in them or not. This information is taken from the *Where the Blind Work* listing.

The Jernigan Institute, Employment Committee and the Writers Division have a joint project, and we need your help. We're building an employment resource of job descriptions and need your information concerning how, you, as a blind person, are able to compete within the job market. *Where the Blind Work* is an informational resource that can assist youth as they plan for future employment and adults who are looking to change jobs and/or careers. We will accept a description of your present job, or one that you've been engaged in recently, or both.

If you would like to fill out a questionnaire or to read about what jobs blind people are performing, please visit the website: [www.nfb.org/wtbw/main](http://www.nfb.org/wtbw/main).

**NFB'S KRAFTERS DIVISION****By Joyce Kane**

**Editor's Note:** *NFBNJ President Joe Ruffalo will interview Joyce on the December 18 edition of ThruOurEyes. Check out the ThruOurEyes website at [www.throureyes.org](http://www.throureyes.org).*

I am happy to tell you that the NFB Krafters Division has just celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary! In the first five years, we've spread across the USA, including Alaska, and we have members in Canada, India and South Africa. Last year we provided 53 different classes via telephone conference calls, SKYPE and e-mail. Our origami teacher lives in South Africa and gives classes via e-mail.

We have Monday Night Chats that cover so many different topics! For example: how to take credit card payments for your sales at a craft show, how to make baskets and the different tools and materials that can be used, the different kinds of scissors available, and what kinds of adhesives and glues work best for which projects.

We have a listserv that folks can join and ask questions and help each other out. Most of our teachers are visually impaired/blind or have taught blind folks crafting. Hey, some of us blind folks have taught the sighted crafting, too. I teach crafting every year in a Girl Scout Camp in Connecticut, and all the girls are sighted. I get paid for it, too!

Where else can you meet blind crafters who will share their love of crafting, teach others and learn how to craft? Where else can you take 53 classes a year and not have to get a ride, have another blind person put into words what your hands are supposed to be doing and, here comes the best part, it costs you \$10 per year to become a paid member of the NFB Krafters Division and get all of this for free.

I'm excited to share this information about NFB Krafters Korner on your show with folks. Please tune in on Wednesday, December 18!

**ATTENTION NEW JERSEY CRAFTERS!**

Pathways to Independence in Kearny offers a Crafters Guild for artists and crafters who are blind or visually impaired. The program is funded by CBVI. Program coordinators sell the work of the artists and crafters at arts and crafts fairs. One hundred percent of the sale price is returned to the artist or crafter. Some of the work sold by the Crafters Guild includes fine art paintings, prints and notecards, hand-painted notecards, crochet blankets, leather works, woodworking, caning, sewing and jewelry. For more information on this program, or if you're interested in selling your art work, please contact Sue Sherry at Pathways to Independence: 732-910-0211.



## JERNIGAN INSTITUTE CONDUCTS STEM-X PROGRAM

**Editor's Note:** *Portions of this article were reprinted from the nfb.org website and from two parents whose children attended this exciting program.*

One of the highlights of this past summer was the STEM-X program conducted by the Jernigan Institute. STEM-X stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math to the Extreme. This inquiry-based program provides students with learning opportunities in disciplines ranging from engineering and robotics to the science of cooking. The program was held on the campus of Towson University, near Baltimore, July 29 - August 3, and served 50 blind high school students from around the country.

The "X" in the program's title draws inspiration from the aerospace community where, historically, programs and missions have utilized the letter as an abbreviation for exploration, and as a statement that the effort seeks new solutions and new discoveries that surpass previously assumed barriers to scientific advancement.

According to Hannah Hashash, whose son Sammi attended STEM-X this past July, "This was a time of many firsts for Sammi and an eye-opening experience for the whole family. We drove down that Monday, and as we got closer to our destination, I could tell Sammi was becoming more anxious. He worried about not knowing anyone at the program. But Sammi is always up for a challenge. I was thrilled when we'd call to check on him, and he'd tell us he'd call us back later because he was eating and wanted to hang out with everyone. He made friends within his group and with the others. It was his 'I'll show you attitude' that opened the door."

What did the Stem-X program accomplish for Sammi and his family? According to his mother, STEM-X gave them a young man more confident in his own skin, who now had an experience similar to going away to college: Making new friends, sleeping in a dorm, packing and unpacking, relying on mobility skills and focusing just on himself as an individual, away from his siblings. Although Sammi learned science techniques that will be invaluable to him and his sighted chemistry teacher, his mother's observations showed that he also learned the socialization skills that will help him throughout his life.

According to parent Ke Hong, "The STEM-X program was great. My daughter Kristie enjoyed it very much. This program provided the visually impaired high school students with a great opportunity to learn about sciences and technology in ways that are suitable for them. Hopefully, the participants came away with greater interests in STEM. Also, the mentors did a great job by sharing their experiences and acting as role models for the students."

Based on these assessments, it sounds like the STEM-X program was a stimulating and memorable experience for everyone.

**COMPLETE REVIEWS OF THE BEST FREE ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE AVAILABLE**  
**Submitted by Jane Degenshein and**  
**Condensed by MaryJo Partyka from an article by Stacy Fisher, About.com Guide**

One nasty virus could expose your financial information or stop your computer from working at all. What you need is the best antivirus software possible on your computer. Many companies offer free versions of their popular antivirus programs for home users. Below is an alphabetical list of sources for the best free antivirus protection.

1. **avast! Free Antivirus 8** has fully functioning antivirus and antispyware engines protecting your PC from threats from the Internet, your files, e-mails, and even instant messages. avast! Free Antivirus 8 supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP.
2. **AVG Free Antivirus 2013** is a full-fledged antivirus and antispyware tool, and includes an e-mail scanner, link scanner, scheduled scanning options, automatic updates and more. Works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. Free download at [avg.com](http://avg.com). Free Virus RemovalPC-Cleaner.[sparktrust.com](http://sparktrust.com). Quick Virus Removal in 2 minutes. "No-Cost" Download.
3. **Avira Free Antivirus 2013** protects you from viruses, Trojans, worms, spyware, adware and various other kinds of malware, making it a fully functional anti-malware tool and certainly one of the best free antivirus programs. Works on Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. Avira also makes Avira Free for Linux.
4. **Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition** is incredibly easy to set up and configure, uses very little system resources so it won't slow down your computer, and doesn't constantly suggest that you upgrade to their premium offerings. Fully supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP.
5. **Comodo Antivirus 6**, which protects you from several threat sources, works on Windows 7 and Windows Vista. It ranks as a best free antivirus solution almost solely because of its Defense+ technology that, by default, assumes unknown files are threats instead of safe. Although it sounds like it might cause problems, Comodo Antivirus utilizes some other technologies to make the whole process silent but still very effective.
6. **Immunet FREE Antivirus 3** is a unique, cloud-based antivirus program, much like Panda Cloud Antivirus and Kingsoft Antivirus. Immunet FREE Antivirus 3 protects

your computer from bots, worms, viruses, Trojans, keyloggers and spyware. Works on Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. You must also be connected to the Internet at all times. You never have to update it, it has completely free telephone-based support, and it can be run alongside some of the other best free antivirus tools in this list, increasing your overall protection.

7. **Kingsoft Antivirus 2012** is a cloud-based antivirus program like Panda Cloud Antivirus and Immunit FREE Antivirus. Kingsoft Antivirus keeps an eye out for malware locally, when downloading files, while chatting on IM and more. Works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. Kingsoft Antivirus 2012 ranks among the best free antivirus programs, especially among the cloud-based ones, because it also protects you when you're not online, a premium offering with some of the other cloud services.
8. **Microsoft Security Essentials** is a fantastic antivirus program that protects you from all sorts of malware, updates automatically and is incredibly easy to use. Supports Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. The anti-malware protection in MSE is part of the built-in Windows Defender tool in Windows 8.
9. **Panda Cloud Antivirus Free 2** protects you from several kinds of malware threats - viruses, worms, Trojans, adware. What makes Panda Cloud Antivirus Free 2 one of the best free antivirus programs is that it does its job from "the cloud," meaning the hard antivirus work that typically slows down a computer is done on computers elsewhere on the Internet, freeing up your computer to work like it should and protecting you from malware even better. Supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. Tip: Panda Cloud Antivirus Free tries to install a toolbar and change your browser's home page and default search provider during the installation process. Uncheck these boxes before continuing if you don't want them. None of these changes is required to use Panda Cloud Antivirus.
10. **FortiClient 5** is an antivirus, web filtering, firewall, parental control, optimization, (and then some) program that's powerful enough for a business to use. It's more accurately referred to as a "threat management" tool. Works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. FortiClient is easy to set up, automatically updates its virus definition files, does a full system scan once a week, and much more, all without you ever having to worry about it.

## NEW BLOG FOR TEACHERS OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

**Editor's Note:** *This article was reprinted with permission from its author Edward C. Bell, PhD CRC and NOMC. Dr. Bell is the Director of the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University.*

The team at the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University needs your help promoting our newest resource for educators, prospective teachers, employers and anyone who works with blind children and adults. This new resource, a blog for teachers of the blind, features:

- The latest research on blindness to help teachers to better answer questions from educators and the general public, which will improve the opportunities available for blind students and professionals;
- Methods for teaching Braille and cane travel that will increase the effectiveness of instruction, allowing blind people to lead active, truly independent lives;
- Philosophy-rich speeches and articles leading the public to see blind people as equal participants in their training, education and employment;
- Perspectives from current students and alumni about why they find it rewarding to teach blind students and adults, encouraging others to join the growing profession; and
- Interviews with experienced professionals, which will create nationwide networking opportunities for teachers of the blind that will foster collaboration on the latest, research-based instructional methods.

This new resource is available at: <http://www.pdrib.com/blog/>. We are asking that you please subscribe to the blog via RSS or e-mail and fan us on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/PDRIB210>). Then, as we add new posts, please share them with your social networks, teachers and friends.

## LOOKING FOR A JOB?

*Here are two sources that may prove helpful:*

**FIRST**, the Sierra Group has designed a nationwide website called RecruitDisability.org to help combat the high unemployment rate among people with disabilities. The site links millions of unemployed and underemployed Americans with disabilities to employment opportunities.

The RecruitDisability job board already includes the resumes of thousands of job seekers with disabilities and open positions nationwide. Job seekers can post for free! Please visit RecruitDisability.org for more information on employment opportunities. You can also learn more about the Sierra Group programs at: <http://www.thesierragroupfoundation.org>. – *submitted by Serena Cucco*

**SECOND**, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has posted a list of federal employment resources that provide quick and efficient access to information and technical assistance related to the employment of individuals with disabilities within the federal government. You can find these resources on the RSA website at:

- <http://rsa.ed.gov/resources.cfm> (Resources by Program tab)
- <http://rsa.ed.gov/programs.cfm?pc=basic-vr> (shows state grant information)
- By searching <http://rsa.ed.gov> for "employment"
- On <http://rsa.ed.gov/display.cfm?pageid=433> (bookmarkable link)

## A TRIBUTE TO SOMEONE ELSE

### Author Unknown

We were saddened to learn recently of the death of one of our most valued acquaintances, Someone Else. Someone's passing created a vacancy that will indeed be difficult to fill.

Else was with us for many years and for every one of those years did far more than a normal person's share of work. Whenever leadership was needed, this wonderful person was looked to bring results. "Someone Else can work with that group," we all said.

Whenever there was a job to do, one name was on every list: Someone Else! And it was common knowledge that Someone Else was generous toward volunteer organizations. If there was a financial need, everyone just assumed that Someone Else would make up the difference.

Were the truth known, we all expected far too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a model to follow, but we wonder WHO is going to do all those things that Someone Else did?

## **ARE YOU PACKED AND READY FOR A NATURAL DISASTER?**

**By Kathy Rawa**

**Editor's Note:** *Kathy Rawa is president of the South Jersey Shore Chapter.*

After Hurricane Sandy, all of us are looking at life and survival in a different manner. This past July, I had the pleasure of meeting David Fisher, of GrabPak, at a local event in Egg Harbor where I saw various types of survival kits, including those pertinent to guide dog users. Because I expressed concern about how blind persons would be able to identify items in the kit, Mr. Fisher took it upon himself to purchase a Braille label maker, to learn basic Braille, and to label the items in Braille and large print. The kits are equipped with a 5-year shelf life, food and water, a light stick with a lanyard for an individual to put around his neck so he can be found more easily in the dark, a crank-powered flashlight, a rescue whistle, an AM/FM radio, a solar blanket, a rain poncho, sunscreen and bug repellent towelettes, a folding white cane, a crank-powered cell phone charger, and a hygiene kit with items such as deodorant, toothbrush and tissues. Mr. Fisher was one of the vendors at this year's State Convention in Manahawkin, and he displayed some of his products and explained their importance to interested persons. For more information, please visit his website at [sales@grabpak.com](mailto:sales@grabpak.com).

### **NJ ALERT: SIGN UP FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS**

The State of New Jersey has created NJ Alert, a free, voluntary and confidential emergency alerting system that allows State Emergency Management officials to send e-mail or text messages to cell phones and other e-mail enabled devices during an emergency event. Sign up for NJ Alert by going to <http://www.state.nj.us/njoem/>.

### **Special Needs Registry**

NJ residents with special needs are encouraged to add their personal information to the Special Needs Registry. Learn more about this program by calling 2-1-1.

### **Disaster Readiness Guide Available**

To help people with disabilities prepare for natural disasters and other emergency situations, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has created a guide booklet entitled *Prepare for Emergencies Now: Information for People with Disabilities* which can be accessed at <http://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs>. Large print and braille versions are also available by calling 1-800-480-2520 or e-mailing [fema-publications-warehouse@fema.gov](mailto:fema-publications-warehouse@fema.gov).

### **NFB OFFERS NEW DONATION PROGRAM**

Would you like to donate to a worthy cause and receive a financial benefit on your next income tax return? Do you have or know anyone who has a car they are trying to sell or find a home for? If you can answer “yes” to either of these questions, you may be interested in becoming involved in the NFB’s Vehicle Donation Program. In March 2013, this program was launched in partnership with an agency called Vehicles for Charity. The agency processes all the vehicle donations, and the NFB receives \$500 for each donated vehicle. Vehicles that can be donated include: cars, vans, RVs, motorcycles, trucks, tractors and boats. The vehicle doesn’t have to be running, but it must have an engine and be towable. The title to the vehicle must be in the donor’s name, and the donor must provide information about the title and the condition of the car when contacting the Vehicle Donation Program. Upon providing this information, a representative will contact donors to schedule vehicle pickups. If you would like further information on this program, please call 855-659-9314 or visit the website at [www.carshelpingtheblind.org](http://www.carshelpingtheblind.org).

### **ADOPT ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT UPDATE**

**By Lynn Reynolds and Ed Godfrey**

Greetings to all! This past August, the NFBNJ forwarded e-mails looking to provide a home for two CCTVs. Within minutes, both CCTVs were adopted. The Adopt Adaptive Equipment program was established years ago. According to our records, we’ve found homes for dozens of pieces of equipment that were no longer needed by the original owners and donated to our program. We’ve made a home for CCTVs, Braille writers, copiers and computers.

The procedures follow: If you have useable and working equipment that you want to donate, or if you’re in need of equipment, please contact us. We’ll match the donor and the person in need. It’s up to each of you to make arrangements to pick up the equipment. All transactions are at no cost.

Cash donations are also accepted and should be mailed to: NFBNJ, 254 Spruce Street, Bloomfield, NJ, 07003. On the memo line, please write AAP.

Once again, this is a free program. The needed list is always longer than the donor list, however, please contact Lynn or Ed with your request. Contact info follows: Lynn Reynolds – phone: 908.251.5510, e-mail: [lhr1827@optonline.net](mailto:lhr1827@optonline.net)  
Ed Godfrey – phone: 856.848.6372, e-mail: [egodfrey137@comcast.net](mailto:egodfrey137@comcast.net)

Thanks to all who have made their equipment available to be adopted, and thanks to those who have adopted the equipment.

**FYI INFORMATION TIDBITS**

- **DO YOU LIKE TO WATCH MOVIES** but have difficulty following the action? If so, you might enjoy watching video-described movies. You can download movies on your computer provided you don't have a pro Sendspace account from Sendspace. The website is [www.blindmicemart.com](http://www.blindmicemart.com). It's Blind Mice Megamall. They have a movie vault for members only so it's all free; just sign up with an e-mail and password.
- **MICROSOFT** offers a new service for computer users with disabilities. Call 1-800-936-5900 for more information.
- In July 2007 at the National Convention, I learned about a company from Normal, Illinois called **EN-VISION AMERICA** that created a product called **SCRIPTALK**. A ScripTalk Station provides talking prescription labels for any drug container or a pill bottle of any shape or size. It will read all of the personal information found on the bottle itself. On March 28, 2013, WalMart decided to expand this service to all of its participating pharmacies across the U.S. For more information, contact En-Vision America at 1-800-890-1180, extension 158. – *submitted by Jimmy Hulme*
- Are you, or do you know anyone who is, struggling with the deficits caused by a **COMBINED VISION AND HEARING LOSS**? Do you live in New Jersey? If you can answer "yes" to these questions, you may be interested in helping us to form a Deaf-Blind Committee. To get involved in this committee, please contact Alice Eaddy, NFB Deaf-Blind Committee Chairperson, at 856-765-0601, or by e-mail at [aseanj@netzero.net](mailto:aseanj@netzero.net).
- **FOCUS GROUP ON RUNNING FOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIPS:** Have you ever contemplated the possibility of running your own food-related business separate and apart from the establishments run by the Business Enterprise Program (BEP)? Or perhaps you would like to make a prize recipe for jam, candy, etc., and sell your product to the public? If so, you're invited to participate in a focus group to determine how to make your entrepreneurship become a reality. Please contact Annemarie Cooke at Elijah's Promise, Promise Culinary School, which can be reached by calling 732-545-900, extension 121 or e-mailing [aec732@gmail.com](mailto:aec732@gmail.com). Please put the words "Focus Group" in the Subject line.



**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 has taught activities of daily living for many years and is the instructor for adaptive kitchen skills for the NJ Foundation for the Blind in Denville. In her spare time, Jerilyn loves to cook for her family.*

**Corn Bake***Ingredients:*

- 1 box Jiffy corn bread mix (8.5 ounce size)
- 1 15-ounce can of corn niblets
- 1 can of creamed corn
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 large eggs

*Directions:*

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees
2. Into a large bowl, empty the corn bread mix. Add the softened butter, stir and add the sour cream, eggs and the corn niblets and the can of creamed corn. Stir until all ingredients are fully incorporated.
3. Pour into a 9-by-13 inch pan
4. Bake for 40 minutes for corn bread and 20 minutes if you are making muffins

**Apple Crisp***Ingredients:*

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 6 apples, cored and sliced into bite-sized pieces | ½ cup granulated sugar |
| ½ cup flour                                       | ½ cup brown sugar      |
| ½ cup butter, softened                            | 1 tsp cinnamon         |
|   | 1 cup quick oats       |

*Directions:*

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Arrange apples in buttered 9 x 13 baking pan
3. Combine all other ingredients in a bowl and mix well. The mixture should be crumbly.
4. Sprinkle apples with some additional brown sugar. Spoon the crumb mixture over the apples, covering them as thoroughly as possible. Bake for 40 minutes.

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Fourth Thurs, 8 p.m.

*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  
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*Glasstown Chapter*

First Sat., Trinity Episcopal Church,  
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*Northeast Chapter*

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at 11 a.m. www.ThruOurEyes.org

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*Northern Chapter*

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**CHAPTER AND DIVISION UPDATES CAN BE FOUND ON THE NFBNJ WEBSITE**

**Deadline for the Spring 2014 issue is April 1, 2014.**

**CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB AT**

www.nfbnj.org www.blindchildren.org www.thruoureyes.org

To receive *The Sounding Board* and other information via e-mail,  
please contact Brian Mackey at bmackey88@gmail.com