

FALL 2014

The Sounding Board

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

IN THIS ISSUE

DAN FRYE

provides a CBVI VR update

JERILYN HIGGINS

introduces the 2014 NFBNJ scholarship recipients: Alex Anderson & Donjeta Sahiti

MARY JO PARTYKA

reports on New Jersey's first BELL program

ALL THE INFO YOU NEED FOR:

*NFBNJ State Convention Registration
After the Holidays Party*

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

DAVID DENOTARIS

Tells how he transforms obstacles into opportunities



Live the Life You Want

THE SOUNDING BOARD
Fall 2014

Katherine Gabry, Editor
Jerilyn Higgins & MaryJo Partyka, Co-editors

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

Joseph Ruffalo, President
State Affiliate Office 254 Spruce Street Bloomfield, NJ 07003
e-mail: nfbnj1@verizon.net

Letters to the President, address changes, subscription requests, letters to the Editor and articles should be sent to the State Affiliate Office or e-mailed to **choirnfb@gmail.com**. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit all articles for space and/or clarity considerations.

Please Note: The deadline for the Spring issue is April 1, 2015.

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

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

JACOBUS TENBROEK LEGACY SOCIETY

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

Mission Statement

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

The National Federation of the Blind Pledge

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

The Sounding Board

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

Hundreds of readers receive our publication via e-mail, and we also encourage registration with Newsline Online, which sends publications, sections of publications or articles you select to your e-mail address for downloading. We're pleased that the New Jersey Talking Book and Braille Center airs excerpts from *The Sounding Board* on Audiovision. *The Sounding Board* is also available for download in its entirety from our website at www.nfbnj.org. 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

After the Holidays Party Announcement.....	1
NFB State Convention Info & Registration: <i>Transforming Dreams into Reality</i>	2
Presidential Message, by Joe Ruffalo	4
A CBVI Update, by Daniel Frye.....	6
First-Time Convention Attendees Share their Experiences, by Mary Jo Partyka.....	8
From Our Archives: Transforming Obstacles to Opportunities, by David DeNotaris.....	9
How to Submit Resolutions.....	10
Introducing the 2014 NFBNJ Scholarship Recipients: Alex Anderson & Donjeta Sahiti, by Jerilyn Higgins.....	11
Acquiring Knowledge & Information through Braille Audio Devices, by Mikayla Gephart.....	12
Fall 2014 Legislative Report, by Lynn Reynolds.....	13
Bell Program – Highlight of the Summer, by Mary Jo Partyka.....	14
Let BELL Ring Forever! By Amy Albin.....	17
Mentoring Massage: Sharing Experiences for Success, by Karrie Osborn.....	19
NFBNJ Receives Grant from Wells Fargo.....	20
NFB of New York Launches NFB Live.....	20
It’s Time for Fall Clean Out ... Think GreenDrop! by Mary Jo Partyka.....	21
A Tribute to Someone Else.....	21
Be a Part of the NFB’s 75-Year Story!.....	22
Tech Tips.....	23
Did You Know	24
NFBNJ Member Recognition.....	25
From the Kitchen of the Garden State Chapter, by Liz Morgan.....	26
NFBNJ Contact Info.....	27



You are cordially invited to the
National Federation of the Blind of NJ's 6th Annual

After the Holidays Party

Saturday, January 10, 2015
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Knights of Columbus Hall
98 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 3, 2015.

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, Meatballs, 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!***

**National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey
38th ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION**

November 7, 8, 9, 2014

HOLIDAY INN

151 Route 72 East, Manahawkin, NJ 08050, 609-481-6100 (Use code FNB)

Access Link accessible.

Join us at this year's convention!

TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO REALITY

Featuring JEANNIE MASSAY, NFB Nat'l Board Member & President, NFB of OK, & other experts on Braille, education, employment, technology, legislation, senior concerns, and more!

FRIDAY, NOV. 7

9:00 AM to 7:00 PM—Exhibit Hall

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM—Senior, Diabetes, Tech Div. Meeting, Tech Workshop

1:00 to 5:00 PM—LET'S GET TO WORK: Employment Skills Seminar, co-sponsored by the NJ CBVI featuring: Are You Work-Ready?

Friday Evening—Dinner—open to all, Resolutions meeting, Fashion Show, Music & Dancing hosted by the Braille & Parents Divisions

SATURDAY, NOV. 8

8 AM to 5 PM—Presentations by national rep Jeannie Massay, Dan Frye—NJ Commission for the Blind, Library for the Blind, BELL Program Leaders, Beep Baseball reps; Exhibit Hall; networking; door prizes; and much more. Saturday Evening—Banquet, Scholarship Awards, Silent & Live Auctions!

SUNDAY, NOV. 9

8:30 to 11:30 AM—Breakfast Business Meeting—open to all—Chapter, Division, & Committee Reports, Resolutions, Elections.

PRE-REGISTER & SAVE \$25 PER PERSON!!!

If we receive your registration by Nov. 1, each pre-registered person will be eligible for a special drawing of a cash prize AND will also receive express registration service at the Convention.

SPECIAL ROOM RATE—\$89 PER NIGHT (plus tax)

Includes breakfast! Limited refrigerators available; reserve early.

Call 609-481-6100 to reserve your room right now. Use code FNB.

***** NFBNJ MAILING LIST & PRE-REGISTRATION FORM *****

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

I will attend the Convention.

I cannot attend the Convention, but please put my name on the mailing list for more information.

***** PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY *****

Name/s _____

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

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

REGISTRATION	Pre-Reg.	Walk-In	How Many?	TOTAL \$
REG.-ADULT	\$15	\$20		\$
REG.-CHILD 16 & under	Free	Free		
LUNCH Fri., Nov. 7 ADULT or CHILD	\$10	\$15		
DINNER Fri., Nov. 7 ADULT or CHILD	\$30	\$35		
LUNCH Sat., Nov. 8 ADULT or CHILD	\$10	\$15		
BANQUET Nov. 8 ADULT or CHILD	\$35	\$40		
TOTAL ENCLOSED (Make check payable to NFB of NJ)				\$

I would like my agenda in: Large Print Braille E-File

For more information, please contact

Joseph Ruffalo, NFB of NJ President, at 973-743-0075

*Come to the TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO REALITY Convention...
you'll find what you need to succeed!*

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

With love, hope, & determination, we transform dreams into reality.

Live the life you want; blindness does not hold us back.

Can't come to the convention, but want to be placed on our mailing list?
Just fill in the form and mail or e-mail to:

NFB of NJ, 254 Spruce St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003 nfbnj1@verizon.net

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Greetings Fellow Federationists!

Although the weather's turning colder, our hearts remain warm as we work together to change what it means to be blind. The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can have the life you want; blindness does not hold us back. Together, with love, hope and determination, we transform dreams into reality.

Since the last issue of *The Sounding Board*, our members have been sharing the gifts of the Federation. We continue to build and strengthen our chapters and our affiliate by providing information that provides education, hope and a sense of belonging.

With these goals in mind, we hope you'll join us for the NFBNJ's 38th State Convention – *Transforming Dreams into Reality* – Friday, November 7 through Sunday, November 9 at the Holiday Inn in Manahawkin. The pre-registration form is available on our website at www.nfbnj.org, and the entire agenda will be posted soon. To make a hotel reservation, call 609-481-6100 and use code FNB. The room rate is \$89 per night, plus tax, and includes a full breakfast the following day for all registered guests in the room.

A highlight of the convention will be an Employment Skills Seminar on Friday from 1 – 5 p.m. The NFBNJ and the New Jersey Commission for the Blind have been working together to bring you this seminar. Details will be distributed via e-mail and posted on the state website. Another highlight will be the establishment of the Deaf-Blind Division of the NFBNJ. Thanks to Alice Eaddy for all the work she's done in leading this effort.

New Jersey's first BELL - Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning – program was held this past summer at the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc., in Perth Amboy. Thanks to all who donated funds, time and talent. Please read more about this exciting program in this issue.

Over the past few months, the NFBNJ has realized the benefits of networking. First, ETS – Educational Testing Services, in Princeton – asked me to conduct two presentations regarding the philosophy of the Federation, to represent our members and to provide useful information regarding hiring a person with vision loss. In another instance, the affiliate received a phone call from the manager of a Wells Fargo Bank in Toms River. After some discussion about the goals, purposes and objectives of the NFBNJ, I forwarded the Spring issue of *The Sounding Board* and our mission statement, and shortly thereafter, we were invited to submit a proposal for a foundation grant. I'm

proud to announce that we received a grant in the amount of \$1,000! Networking WORKS!

Nearly 60 members, friends and family attended the 74th National Convention of the NFB held in Orlando in early July. Congratulations to all attendees and special congratulations to first timers Solomon Bryant, Jane Degenshein, Trisha Ebel and Anthony Lanzilotti. Their impressions are featured in this publication. We're less than nine months from the 75th anniversary celebration of the NFB. I hope you'll plan to join members from around the country and around the world in Orlando in July 2015.

This month is busy for the NFBNJ. Many of our chapters are conducting Meet the Blind Month activities to let the public know that with proper skills, techniques and opportunities, we can compete with our sighted peers. On October 3, five members participated in a GreenDrop event in Cherry Hill. An article highlighting the GreenDrop program and how you can participate is in this issue. The Glasstown and South Jersey Shore chapters received a grant to support their work with the 75 Days Project. The goal of this project is to build 75 chapters and to strengthen 75 chapters across the country. Both chapters are working with leaders throughout the country to meet this goal.

Thousands of listeners across the country have enjoyed the variety of news and views aired on ThruOurEyes, the internet radio station started by the Northeast Chapter in March 2005. Unfortunately, due to funding constraints, ThruOurEyes broadcasting has been temporarily suspended. We sincerely regret this situation, but hope to be back on the air in early 2015. If you would like to support ThruOurEyes, please send your donation to NFBNJ, 254 Spruce Street, Bloomfield, New Jersey 07003. Checks should be payable to NFBNJ, and in the memo section, write ThruOurEyes.

As you can see, the past few months have been busy and productive. Thanks to all our dedicated and hardworking members who share our dream of making a difference.

Sincerely,



Joe Ruffalo, President

Upcoming Important Dates

- November 7 - 9: State Convention, Holiday inn, Manahawkin
- November 13: BELL Presentation at Rutgers
- November 16: Begins the Federation's 75th Anniversary year
- January 10: 6th annual After the Holidays party, Belleville Knights of Columbus
- January 26: Great Gathering In, Washington D.C.
- April 1: Deadline for the Spring issue of *The Sounding Board*

A CBVI UPDATE

By Daniel B. Frye

Since I will have the pleasure of comprehensively addressing the members of the New Jersey affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind during your 38th annual convention in Manahawkin this November about the first year of my service as Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI or Commission), I will restrict this semi-annual column to discussing only two notable facts about our Vocational Rehabilitation program. I will first share with you some remarkable statistics that quantify our organization's success in putting blind and vision-impaired people to work during the last Federal fiscal year, and I will then comment on the improving partnership that CBVI and the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey (NFBNJ) are experiencing, as evidenced by our joint sponsorship of an Employment Skills Seminar to be held in conjunction with the affiliate's State Convention.

As many of you will be aware, the Federal fiscal year begins on the first day of October. For agencies such as ours, early autumn is the time when we stop to evaluate our progress during the last 12-month period. And while I am the first to say that numbers alone rarely tell the whole story, certain statistics definitely please our Federal partners and do indicate a fair measure of accomplishment in specific areas.

At the time of this writing, I have only preliminary information about our productivity levels from our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. The news, at first blush, is quite positive: We found employment for 331 blind and vision-impaired consumers during the last year. Putting this figure into historical context, the last time that the Commission closed over 300 consumers in a single year was 2007, when we helped 303 people find jobs. All but 10 of our 331 successful closures were in competitive employment; these 10 were closed out as home-makers, down from 14 home-maker closures last year. Just over half of our competitively placed workers (51%) are holding down full-time employment (35 hours or more per week), an increase of 2% over this same measurement from the previous Federal fiscal year. While this 51% figure may warrant improvement, it is noteworthy that our agency reached a low of 39% as recently as 2011, so we have seen dramatic improvement in this particular category. Further, a noticeable segment of our successfully served consumers secured entrepreneurial oriented work, with four becoming managers in our Business Enterprises New Jersey (BENJ) program and 10 embarking on a variety of self-employment ventures. Finally, four of our vocational rehabilitation counselors exceeded 30 or more successful placements each, a tremendous achievement in positively influencing multiple lives in a finite amount of time.

To be sure, further analysis of these numbers will need to occur in the weeks and months ahead to determine if our quality kept up with our quantity, but congratulations are definitely in order for the members of our Commission-wide VR team. I am mindful that significant achievements are not realized in a vacuum; instead, all hands, from VR counselors to independent living staff—from fiscal team members to eye-health nurses—and every other position at the Commission, deserve some of the credit for our collective success. Mostly, however, the people that deserve the recognition for this accomplishment are the 331 blind or vision-impaired consumers who decided to enter the integrated, competitive workforce.

Second, in an effort to continue the positive employment momentum into the next year, CBVI and the NFBNJ will be co-sponsoring an Employment Skills Seminar on Friday afternoon of the NFBNJ State Convention. The objective of this 4-hour program is to better prepare job seekers to manage all aspects of the pre-employment experience. The following descriptive language about this jointly sponsored event was circulated to almost 600 active VR consumers of the Commission. It reads, in pertinent part:

The purpose of this collaborative venture is to provide interested blind or vision-impaired job seekers with useful information about, and critical skills for, finding competitive, integrated employment. This interactive seminar will focus on the roles and responsibilities of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors in the job-search process; concentrate on providing advice from Human Resources (HR) specialists, including tips on resume writing, interviewing, and the like; disseminate information about the diverse varieties of blindness skills training available and vital to potential candidates for employment; acquaint seminar participants with first-hand testimony and strategies from successful blind and vision-impaired employees; and much more. Come and network with VR professionals, HR specialists, and other blind and vision-impaired people to hone your job-seeking skills and possibly make that all-important connection necessary to finding work.

As I trust will be apparent from the foregoing two areas of focus, CBVI is working hard to help blind and vision-impaired residents of New Jersey find employment and settle into the mainstream of productive, satisfying lives. We value opportunities to work on this universal objective together with the members of the NFBNJ whenever possible.

FIRST-TIME CONVENTION ATTENDEES SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Compiled by Mary Jo Partyka

Editor's Note: *This article was compiled from the thoughts of those who attended their first NFB National Convention in July 2014 with funding support from the Jernigan Scholarship Fund. The full impressions from each can be found at www.nfbnj.org.*

“What a whirlwind of education, inspiration and friendship! After attending this week-long convention, I realized that what I was doing for our community of blind individuals was just a small part of what needs to be done for them and vowed to continue in this direction with even more drive and desire,” enthused Jane Degenshein, who serves as president of the Senior and Technology divisions.

Patricia Ebel said she was busy from morning til night running from one workshop or meeting to another. Both Patricia and Jane reminisced about their time spent at New Jersey's exhibit table. “We met people from six foreign countries and 10 states and learned their life stories,” commented Jane. Patricia, Jane and Solomon Bryant also noted the number of people who attended the convention and their ability to travel from place to place.

Both Patricia and Solomon were enthusiastic about the number of vendors selling blindness-related products and items from the individual state affiliates. Jane, Patricia and Anthony Lanzilotti all felt that the convention proved to be a good source of information, which they brought home to share with blind people in their community, thereby paying it forward so that others could learn and also pass it on. Anthony stated that he attended seminars on legislation, the Vehicle Donation Program and GreenDrop and learned about changes in accessible voting machines and JAWS 16. According to Anthony, “I am fortunate to have such overwhelming support from such a wonderful organization. We are truly a family which will not only forever stand united but will also remain an unstoppable force in the lives of blind people.”

As with anything else, there were some experiences that proved challenging. Patricia commented that she and Jane often got lost when they were looking for meeting rooms and restaurants. However, Patricia realized that when she stopped and made herself relax, getting lost was less upsetting. Solomon stated that he was challenged when his wife experienced a small accident in the hotel. He related that his mentor, Rick Fox, helped him through this unexpected event.

There was an element of both sadness and excitement surrounding this convention. As Jane said, “Being at the banquet and witnessing the passing of the presidential torch from Dr. Marc Maurer to Mr. Mark Riccobono was an emotional experience. But it brought memories of the past and anticipation about the organization's future into the forefront.”

It is clear from the experiences of Patricia, Jane, Anthony and Solomon that the convention met their expectations, and all said they planned to return next year.

**FROM OUR ARCHIVES:
TRANSFORMING OBSTACLES TO OPPORTUNITIES
By David DeNotaris**

Editor's Note: *David was nominated and selected to deliver the commencement address when he graduated with his master's degree from Montclair State University in 2004. Today, David serves as the Director of the Commonwealth of PA's Department of Labor and Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services in Harrisburg. David is also a past president of the National Council for State Agencies for the Blind. David teaches Sunday school, and he and his wife Mariann, along with their three children, live in Hershey, PA. David's message is as poignant today as it was then.*

Good Morning President Cole, family and friends, special guests, and congratulations to all my fellow graduates of the class of 2004! It is my honor and pleasure to have the opportunity to address you on this very special day. Today is truly a celebration of accomplishments. Just like you, I have been blessed with many wonderful opportunities; many of them have arrived disguised as obstacles. I was born with a rare eye disorder, Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). Experts attempted to impose negative limiting labels that meant a blind person could never achieve in school, work, life, etcetera. Never believe the experts when they say you're going to fail! In my opinion, it is the three "F's" that make a person successful—faith, family and friends. Faith in God, a family that encourages, and friends that help celebrate our successes and our challenges.

My parents were first generation from Italy; they didn't have advanced degrees, just a great work ethic, determination and love for their life and children. My father, Dante DeNotaris, believed that nothing was impossible. He taught me a lesson when I was eight years old that I am privileged to share with you today. I received a telephone call from my dad. He said, "David, when I come home from work we are going to play catch." I was filled with worry, doubt and trepidation. I knew I couldn't see a baseball, football, soccer ball, and I was afraid when I couldn't play I was going to let him down. When Dad came home, he presented me with a giant beach ball. It was so big I couldn't get my arms around it. Dad knew all I could see is contrast—light on dark and dark on light. He would hit the ball up in the air and I was able to see the red, yellow, blue, and green against the light blue sky and I was able to reach up and catch the ball. My dad said, "David, stop and realize I am not just teaching you how to play catch I am showing you that you can do anything you want, you just have to figure out how!"

We must focus on our potential, not our problems; opportunities, not the obstacles. We do have the ability to transform a mess into a positive message, and a test into a testimony. My dad would emphasize that education was the key! I recall him saying, "I don't have a degree, but I do have a library card." I remember him stressing literacy; he

was always reading something. A story that has left a positive lasting impression on me happened when he was in the Navy on a ship in WWII. The commanding officer caught him reading under the covers in the middle of the night. He was reading the dictionary with a flashlight. My father impressed upon my family that no matter where you are in life you should always be observant and never stop learning.

My family and professors ignited the passion for lifelong learning in me. We have access to more information than ever before. We must harness the information and inspiration so we can reach our destination! Network, not net-think or net-sit—it takes work. I have been fortunate to network with many exceptional people and organizations. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired provided me with the technology and resources to excel in school and at work. The National Federation of the Blind afforded me the opportunity to observe, meet and learn from the most successful blind individuals from throughout the country. They helped me recognize the misconceptions about blindness. They proved to me my loss of eyesight can be reduced to a mere inconvenience once the proper skills, tools and techniques are learned and mastered. My national fraternity, Phi Sigma Kappa, demonstrated that friendship, education and moral character are the building blocks that all great families, communities and accomplishments are built upon! Our time here at MSU was truly an eye opening experience. The people we met, the books we read, and the experiences we enjoyed have enriched, enlightened and improved the quality of our lives. Fellow classmates, family and friends: I challenge you. We can leave here confident knowing the news is good, the future is bright, and we can achieve our heart's desire. We just have to invest our time figuring out how! God Bless MSU and may God Bless America!

HOW TO SUBMIT RESOLUTIONS

"Do you think we, as NFB members, should take a stand concerning an issue of importance to the blind, work toward changing a government policy or creating new regulations for a law? If you do, consider writing a resolution!"

Resolutions are the policy statements of our organization. Written by individuals in regard to important issues, resolutions are sent to the Resolutions Committee for drafting and revising. At the committee's Friday evening meeting at the State Convention, resolutions are discussed and voted on. If they pass, they're presented for a vote by those at the Convention. Passed resolutions are sent to the appropriate people for action.

What do you think are the most important issues facing the blind of NJ? The NFBNJ is *your* organization, and we need your input. ***Send your resolutions*** to Ryan Stevens at rysteve@comcast.net ***by October 26*** for consideration for this year's State Convention. If you have questions, please contact Ryan by phone at 856-240-1497 or by e-mail.

**INTRODUCING THE 2014 NFBNJ SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:
ALEX ANDERSON AND DONJETA SAHITI
By Jerilyn Higgins, Scholarship Chair**

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey's Scholarship Committee is pleased to recognize Alex Anderson and Donjeta Sahiti as 2014 scholarship winners. Alex and Donjeta will receive their scholarships at the State Convention in November. Based on their past histories, it is anticipated that both will achieve throughout their educational and vocational journeys.

Alex is a former LEAD – Leadership, Education, Advocacy and Determination – student who earned a 3.90 grade point average throughout high school. Alex demonstrated leadership qualities throughout his high school years through his membership in the National Honor Society and his involvement with a community project coordinated with students from his high school. He enjoyed participating in a jazz band and was a soloist on the keyboard. Alex is an active member in the newly established South Jersey Shore Chapter in Atlantic County.

As a blind person, he has become adept at using skills and techniques such as reading and writing Braille, using screen readers to obtain information on the computer, navigating around campus with a white cane and using his iPhone. He is a freshman at Brandeis University and his educational goal is to earn a degree in English. His vocational goal is to pursue a career in law, or to write and/or teach at the college level. Alex has determination, desire and a can-do attitude which has assisted him through his latest surgery. He states that an important issue facing the blind community is the lack of awareness on the part of our sighted peers. They must learn that blindness is a characteristic, not a tragedy.

Donjeta Sahiti graduated from Lyndhurst High School with a grade point average of 4.139. Donjeta was actively involved in student government, serving as treasurer, and she was also a member of the National Honor Society. She has assumed the role of an attorney during mock trials and donated her time to tutoring underclassmen in English and history. Donjeta, who is a freshman at Seton Hall University, plans to earn a degree in history and then attend law school. She would like to practice law.

Donjeta stated that the most important issue facing the blind community is for the public to accept blind people. Each visually impaired person must utilize all adaptive tools, techniques and skills to become an independent individual, and once accomplished, must share with others.

Congratulations, Alex and Donjeta!

ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE & INFORMATION THROUGH BRAILLE AUDIO DEVICES

By Mikayla Gephart

Editor's Note: *Mikayla is a member of the South Jersey Shore Chapter, the Technology Division and the National Association of Blind Students. She submitted this essay for the Onkyo Braille Essay contest, which was sponsored by two Japanese companies: the Onkyo Corporation, an electronics manufacturer, and the Braille Mainichi, a newspaper. The contest was administered in the U.S. by the NFB on behalf of the World Blind Union.*

I am 14 years old, and was born blind. I have Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, which in simple terms means I do not have the cable to make the TV work. My eyes do not work because the Optic Nerve is not there. However, that does not affect my smile! I have been told that I have one of the prettiest smiles around, and I like to use it often. Being in the eighth grade at a typical public school, you have to have a positive attitude to get through the day.

My parents introduced Braille to me at a very young age. The alphabet was sung to me along with the Braille code so I could make the connection. They sang it to the tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down." Such as, Letter A is easy to do, easy to do, easy to do, Letter A is easy to do, just press 1; Letter L is easy to do, easy to do, easy to do, Letter L is easy to do, just press 1, 2, 3. This was good because I loved music and singing. Learning the letters of the alphabet with the Braille code in the form of a song was wonderful and really gave me the edge I needed to get ready for school. My introduction to Braille came very early on in my life. I was introduced to a Braille Writer, which is a heavy piece of equipment, much like the old fashioned typewriter, I am told. Although I was only 3 years old, I memorized the alphabet with the Braille code, and then had to work on getting the strength so I could write in Braille on my Braille Writer.

The importance of listening became extremely important, as I realized that I could hear stories on tape with a tape player and a CD player. Borrowing books on tape from my local library and listening to them became a huge part of my life. It enabled me to hear stories of princesses and fairytales that I learned to love. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) through the New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center is another avenue whereby I would receive books on tape, and now they can be downloaded to the technology equipment I have. One of my earliest memories is having a tent set up in my room when I was 3 or 4 years old, listening to one of the tapes. I pretended I was actually in the story, it was wonderful. Now, I get many books from the National Library Service from BARD, which I download.

I have a Victor Reader, which is a piece of equipment that plays audio books, in the form of a CD. In 5th grade, I started ordering my schoolbooks and books for pleasure so I can listen to them. What a pleasure it is when you just feel like lying in bed and listen to

something to get ready for a test the next day. I also have a Victor Stream, which is a smaller piece of equipment that I can download descriptive movies and books, and record notes. I use the Victor Stream in class to record my homework, which is used with a headset; I received it in 6th grade. For my Victor Stream, I have books from Learning Ally and Bookshare.

Through elementary school, I used my Braille Writer to write, and also to do my math, using the Nemeth code. I still use the Braille Writer for math. I also started to use the laptop with Jaws for basically everything my sighted friends would use it for. The computer course in school was rather difficult as they were not set up for me, but then I started to receive technology instruction from a blind person who really could show me how it all works. Practicing on the computer with the Jaws Software was important so I could get the speed up.

The Braille Note was introduced to me in the 6th grade, which I was able to read and write Braille on, and have it print out for the teachers so they could read it. I became proficient on the Braille Note, and even today, it is one of my most favorite pieces of equipment. The 8th grade has brought even more technology into my life, and I now use an iPad with a keyboard and a Focus 40 Blue Braille Display. This enables me to do my work with the keyboard, and I am able to send my work via e-mail to my teachers. The Focus 40 Blue Braille Display enables me to read anything that Voiceover is speaking in Braille.

The technology that keeps coming to the blind has made life much easier to keep up with the sighted. I have, OF COURSE, an iPhone 4S that is my best friend. Everyone sends texts today. Without an iPhone with Siri, I would be left out. I am happy to be who I am.

FALL 2014 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Lynn Reynolds

The NFB has continued to focus on the three main issues presented to our Representatives at the Washington Seminar earlier this year. Numerous requests have gone out to our members to contact our elected representatives and ask for their support in co-sponsoring the bills we have in place for the Fair Wages Act and The TEACHE Act.

I would like to thank everyone who made the contacts either by phone or by e-mail. These contacts are all extremely important as we attempt to keep our issues in their minds along with all of the other issues that are presented to them. We need all of you to continue to make these contacts going forward. A new Congress is being elected this November, which means, essentially, that we will start anew with reintroducing these bills and as Federationists do, we will continue the fight to “change what it means to be blind.”

To be added to our Legislative list, please contact me by telephone at 908-251-5510 or by e-mail at lhr1827@optonline.net or send Brian Mackey your e-mail information.

BELL PROGRAM—HIGHLIGHT OF THE SUMMER**By Mary Jo Partyka,*****with contributions from Mikayla Gephart, Amy Albin and Lana Savron-Abbott***

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey's first Braille Enrichment through Literacy and Learning (BELL) program was held at the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development (PRAHD) in Perth Amboy July 21 - August 1. The following students attended the program: Ethan Rieger, (Toms River) grade 2; Ryan Abbott, (Piscataway) grade 1; Gedaliah Goldman, (Teaneck), grade 1; and Jillian Milton, (Middletown) grade 7. The person who spent the greatest amount of time planning before and during this year's program was Barbara Shalit who is a certified Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Ms. Shalit, who recently retired from the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, gauged the needs of our prospective students, determined which types of equipment and supplies would be the most suitable for them, and prepared lessons for the group and for each individual student every day. Other Federation leaders who assisted with the BELL program included: Joe Ruffalo, president of the NFBNJ, Jerilyn Higgins, vice president of NFBNJ and an instructor of Activities of Daily Living (ADL), and the two coordinators, Holly Miller, president, Parents of Blind Children-NJ, and Mary Jo Partyka, president of the NFBNJ's Braille Division.

During the first week of the program, Ms. Shalit focused on the nature of Braille and spent the balance of the time in BELL teaching the students letters of the alphabet, one-word signs and contractions. The students learned about two pioneers in the Braille field, Louis Braille and Helen Keller, and were so fascinated with their life stories that they wanted to hear them several times during the course of the program. Everything in the classroom was labeled in Braille and the students helped to make a physical map of the classroom. Prior to the start of BELL, the team purchased books and other materials to enhance the children's Braille learning. In addition to Braille, the students participated in various group lessons such as learning compass directions, making Braille Twister boards and decorating their white canes, bookmarks, and bells. The students also participated in ADLs including: identifying currency, pouring liquids, spreading peanut butter and jelly on bread, cutting vegetables, making sandwiches, and making pudding. The students used their canes during indoor and outdoor sound scavenger hunts, in particular games, and usually when walking from the classroom to the gym. Sleep shades were used during these and other activities.

Prior to the beginning of the program, the BELL team and Yvonne Lopez, the director of PRAHD, thought it would be a good experience for our students and the children from the facility's summer program to take part in some joint activities. All of us were excited about this venture and it worked out well. Both sets of children participated in a music

program, a food-preparation activity where they made s'mores, and a story hour in which the book "Keep Your Ear on the Ball" was read. (This book was written by former 4th grade teacher Genevieve Petrillo about her blind pupil, David DeNotaris, a former resident of New Jersey who is now the Director of the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in Harrisburg.) The children also enjoyed a Christmas in July celebration in which Santa Claus appeared—cane and all. The sighted children were able to view our classroom and to observe how our students used Braille and mobility skills. Our students and the children from the PRAHD summer program experienced the words and actions of the Braille Rap Song.

The PRAHD staff really extended themselves to support our program. In addition to being courteous and helpful to everyone, they prepared treats for our students, and Yvonne Lopez presented the children with gifts on the last day. Our students made thank-you cards for Yvonne, but she and her staff deserved much more for their efforts to accommodate us and meet our needs.

This year, we were fortunate to receive a 3-day visit from Natalie Shaheen, Director of Education at the National Center in Baltimore, who observed our program in action. She worked with the children and gave us some ideas about how we could work with them most effectively. We benefited from her presence, her knowledge and her expertise.

Another unique feature of our BELL program was the use of blind and sighted volunteers who served as mentors and role models to the students. Here are some examples of how the volunteers participated in BELL. Michael Halm brought his Seeing-Eye dog, Xavier, to the program, which fascinated the children. Ward Biondi showed the children how a typical musical scale would look in Braille and played songs for the kids to sing. Jessica Scanell used her skills as a certified elementary school teacher to interact with the children and to help them with their individual work. Peggy Kane helped the children make green gooey "oobleck" to accompany their reading of a Dr. Seuss book and assisted them with their individual Braille work. Holly Miller's mom, Joyce Baker, used her extensive child-rearing experience to handle this rambunctious bunch. Renee West assisted with logistics, loved interacting with the children, and was especially taken with their Twister antics. Dan Frye shared his experiences as a blind child and adult and read a story to our students and to the children in the PRAHD summer program. Briel Knight, a recent education major graduate, helped organize and worked directly with the children. Sal Lopez brought a male perspective, working one-on-one with the students, both in the classroom and in the outdoor play area. Mikayla Gephart attended our National Convention and participated in a Braille workshop in which she learned about the changes in the Braille code as reflected in the Unified English Braille Code. Since 7th grader Jillian Milton, who was proficient in Braille, asked about the

changes in the code, Mikayla explained them and showed her how to use this new information. "I loved seeing everyone grow in skills and attitudes throughout the Day," Mikayla enthused.

Volunteer Amy Albin, a high-school sophomore, said that she was grateful when Joe Ruffalo and Barbara Shalit asked her to get involved with the BELL program. "When I met the three boys on the first day of the BELL program, I was drawn to their youthful energy and eagerness to learn. Recognizing the needs of each individual student was a key component that made BELL so successful," related Amy. Amy also observed that, although she felt rewarded for the opportunity to work with the BELL students, the students also taught her. Noting the children's short attention spans the first day, she was able to empathize with elementary school teachers who instruct approximately 20 students each day, year after year. The other volunteers were also grateful to have the chance to work with the students.

The children's parents were excited about the things their children were learning in BELL and expressed a commitment to work with their children so they could continue to practice Braille and have a less difficult start when school began again. After the first week of the program, Lana Savron-Abbott, Ryan's mom, expressed her feelings in writing. "What a wonderful time Ryan had at BELL Camp! Ryan was excited to find out what would happen during the final week of BELL and his enthusiasm was so infectious that it spread to the rest of his family. I purchased supplies to duplicate the egg-carton game, based on the activity they did the first day of the program," Lana explained. She said that Ryan couldn't wait to come back to the program. Similar sentiments were expressed by the other children. According to parent Dr. Liba Schaffer Goldman, parent of Gedaliah, "He can't wait to come back next year. We traveled 66 miles each day and spent \$200 on tolls and gas. But the experience was well worth the money," she stated. According to statistics calculated by Joe Ruffalo, the staff, volunteers, and parents spent a total of 163 hours and traveled 4,040 miles in this year's BELL Program.

On the last day of the program, the families were invited to their children's graduation ceremony. After their pizza party, the students demonstrated their ability to learn the Braille letters and contractions visually as they positioned their bodies on the Twister boards to mimic the Braille letters their parents and staff called out. They also made their parents participate in this exercise. But the thing that gave the children such joy on their graduation and every other day of the program was their chance to tell others what they did independently and to ring their bells. Needless to say, they did it with enthusiasm. In her article about BELL, which follows this article, Amy Albin reflects their sentiments with this quote, "Let the bell of equality, the bell of opportunity, the bell of empowerment, ring forever."

LET BELL RING FOREVER!

By Amy Albin

Editor's Note: *Amy Albin is a sophomore at Morristown High School who enjoys reading and writing, and singing and listening to music. She would like to study math or psychology in college. The BELL team, students and parents thank Amy and all the volunteers for their time, effort and commitment to drive the Braille vehicle onto the road of literacy and learning.*

On the first day of an experience that would cause anyone tremendous joy, one of the first questions the boys asked me was, "What should my name be?"

"I'd feel really awkward if they called me Miss Albin," I joked. "I'm hardly an adult yet." We decided on Miss Amy.

When Joe Ruffalo, president of the New Jersey chapter of the NFB, and Barbara Shalit, the head teacher of BELL, both asked me to volunteer as a mentor, I was grateful for such an opportunity and worked with the students for a total of 30 hours this summer. By that time, I had written a paper and composed and delivered some passionate speeches on the importance of nationwide Braille literacy. I did a great deal of talking, but here was my chance to take practical action.

Running for two weeks, this program, which took place at the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development in Perth Amboy, was designed to teach blind students ages 4 - 12 Braille, daily living skills, and positive attitudes toward blindness. I did not teach those lessons, but I observed the students engage in activities such as pouring and sandwich-making. They were also exposed to different ways of folding paper money.

During the first week, three boys, aged 5 - 7, came to the program and a 7th grade girl joined them the following week. On the first day, when I met the boys, I was drawn to their youthful energy and eagerness to learn. I know they learned a great deal, and I hope I was instrumental in contributing to that end.

In the weeks and months before the BELL program started, I was eagerly anticipating my role as a teacher and mentor. I expected that I would be teaching Braille and having discussions with the students. For the most part, I was right. Many of the activities were group-based. But a crucial aspect of the program was to allow each student to work one-on-one with a teacher/volunteer to learn the concepts appropriate to his or her level of understanding. I enjoyed working with the students in this way. Ms. Shalit would often e-mail me the lesson plan in advance, so I would know with whom I was working, and what material we would cover that day. I took turns teaching different

students. While I was helping the BELL kids to learn, I remembered how much I disliked learning Braille as a young child, so I did my best to make the lessons entertaining. That strategy worked beautifully and my students truly seemed to enjoy what they were doing. Recognizing the needs of each individual student was a key component that made BELL so successful.

I also assisted the teachers by reading many short stories to the students. If I had to guess, their two favorites were about Helen Keller and Louis Braille. The students loved those books so much that I read them aloud on multiple occasions. While reading stories, I tried to instill positive attitudes about blindness by saying that it is not “bad” to be blind.

I love the fact that the kids were so enthusiastic and eager to learn. I find that some students in middle and high school are just getting by and thinking, “Why do I need to be here? When will I ever need to know this subject?” The children at BELL were different; they were still at that young age where every new experience was wonderful and exciting. There was one boy who, to my knowledge, had received no prior Braille instruction before entering BELL. At the end of the first day when his family came to pick him up, he passionately demonstrated how to put paper in the Perkins Braille and write the first letter of his name. He got his mom excited to teach him Braille and learn it herself. I loved the entire program, but if I had to choose one favorite moment, it would be at the end of that first day, when I knew that we at BELL had started a new, exciting chapter in that student's life.

I feel immensely rewarded that I taught something to the BELL students, but they taught me as well. For one thing, I can better empathize with elementary school teachers. The students at BELL reminded me of just how short kids' attention spans can be. I said to myself, “If four kids are this energetic, imagine teaching 20 rambunctious kids five days a week, year after year!” Teachers deserve much more credit than American society bestows on them.

Once again, I feel greatly privileged for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young blind people. I am tremendously grateful to Ms. Shalit and Mr. Ruffalo for asking me to contribute to the BELL program. Additionally, I thank the wonderful teachers and the NFB as a whole for making BELL what it is, a truly remarkable success. I hope that the BELL program will continue to empower the blind year after year, and that I can contribute as much as I possibly can. Let the BELL of equality, the BELL of opportunity, the BELL of Excellence, forever ring throughout America.

MENTORING MESSAGE: SHARING EXPERIENCES FOR SUCCESS

By Karrie Osborn

Editor's Note: *This article is reprinted with permission from Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals, Massage and Bodywork Magazine. Rania, a former LEAD student, has worked hard and realized a successful outcome. Congratulations, Rania!*

Rania Ismail takes great pride in helping new massage students navigate their journey. She counsels them on the realities of practice management and gives them pep talks when doubt impedes their success. She shares her own struggles as a former student. And she tells them that being blind is not a hindrance to her work, or theirs.

"I mentor blind massage students from all across the country," says this 28-year-old MT from Hackettstown, NJ. Some students need a study buddy, some need a mentor, and some just need a friend who understands their struggles. Blind since birth, Ismail is able to be all that and more.

It was because of her own experience as a blind massage student that Ismail knew she wanted to give back to her profession. When she enrolled in massage school in 2007, things didn't work out very well, she says. Disillusioned, but not ready to give up, Ismail searched for another, more accommodating program to complete her training. One of her first questions this time was how many blind students the school had trained. She knew she had found the right program when she interviewed the Institute for Therapeutic Massage. Today, Ismail tries to show other blind students how to battle through similar roadblocks.

"Sometimes the students just need someone in their corner; someone to be their cheerleader. It feels good to help someone else achieve the same goal I was after." Ismail tells blind massage students to explore their options and don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask if the school has had blind students, ask to speak to blind alumni and let your instructors know what you need.

Some of her best advice for blind massage students is derived from her own real-world experience. "Have instructors e-mail all your handouts and PowerPoints ahead of time. Ask to be the demo model so you can feel what the instructor is trying to teach. And have good and patient practice partners."

Ismail, who knew she wanted to help people since she was a young teenager, volunteers her chair massage for local fundraisers, health fairs, and nonprofits. She calls her mentoring work "very gratifying" and is proud each time another one of her students graduates. But she's not ready to stop there. With a thriving practice at a local full-service day spa, Ismail still dreams of one day taking her expertise and opening a practice that employs other blind therapists. "It will be my way to give back."

NFBNJ RECEIVES GRANT FROM WELLS FARGO

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey has been awarded a \$1,000 grant by Wells Fargo to support the organization's mission of promoting the general welfare of the blind of New Jersey and the nation and cooperating with the National Federation of the Blind's National Office in its various activities.

"At a time when donations from the public and private sectors are down due to the economy, we truly appreciate the support Wells Fargo has provided," said Joe Ruffalo, President of the NFBNJ. "We will use this grant for education and outreach activities."

The grant was awarded as part of Wells Fargo's *Community Connections* program, which provides local branch managers the opportunity to make a \$1,000 charitable contribution on behalf of Wells Fargo to a nonprofit of their choice. "Our local branches see which nonprofits are out in the community making a difference every day," said Wells Fargo Area President Michael Stephanelli. "We use this as an opportunity to celebrate and say thank you to the NFBNJ for all of the value they have provided to our community over the past year."

Wells Fargo & Company is a nationwide, community-based financial services company with \$1.2 trillion in assets. Founded in 1852 and headquartered in San Francisco, Wells Fargo serves one in three households in America.

NFB OF NEW YORK LAUNCHES NFB LIVE

The NFB of New York, with the help of over a dozen other affiliates, has started a pilot project – NFB Live – to facilitate communications and information exchange among blind persons around the United States and the world. This project consists of an online chat community where NFB members and non-members can participate in events, presentations and activities in real time. All that is required is a computer, an internet connection and a headset.

Our site and chat rooms are easy to access with a minimum amount of effort. We have specialized technical support staff that are willing to assist anyone interested in our events. We can assist anyone requiring help in accessing our site and chat rooms.

Anyone can register with NFB Live by filling out the registration form at:

<http://www.nfblive.org/join.htm> <<http://www.nfblive.org/join.htm>

If you have any questions, Feel free to contact carl@nfblive.com. If you have any technical questions, please contact our technical support staff at: support@nfblive.com.

IT'S TIME FOR FALL CLEAN OUT ... THINK GREENDROP!

By Mary Jo Partyka

School has started, fall is here and it's time to put away those summer clothes and pool toys and get ready for the cooler weather. In the process of clearing away those summer items, you may decide to donate some of them to a worthy cause, but are unsure which cause is most appropriate. One very worthy source for your donations is the GreenDrop program.

According to Linda De Berardinis, New Jersey's GreenDrop coordinator, "The GreenDrop program was established in 2013 and has demonstrated great success." Stephanie Witt, the coordinator for the GreenDrop program for the National Center in Baltimore, tells us that this program raises funds while promoting awareness about blindness through the collection of donated clothing and household items. The funds raised are transmitted to the NFB's general fund which supports Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) students, veterans, and seniors as well as ongoing efforts to improve equality for the blind.

The following types of items are acceptable for donation to GreenDrop: clothing and shoes, household items, kitchenware, games and toys, small appliances, electronics, sporting goods, books, videos and CDs, and baby items. To review the entire list of products, visit our state website at <http://nfbnj.org>. For more information, contact Linda DeBerardinis at 856-764-7014 or ldeber@comcast.net. You can also contact Stephanie Witt, coordinator of the NFB's GreenDrop program, at 410-659-9314, ext. 2423, or switt@nfb.org.

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 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?

BE A PART OF THE NFB'S 75-YEAR STORY!
SHARE YOUR UNIQUE STORY THROUGH WRITING, VIDEOS AND PICTURES
Submitted by the NFB Communications Committee

Dynamism is defined as something that has “energy and a strong desire to make something happen.” Who does that sound like? YOU! As a member of the National Federation of the Blind, you want to make a difference! Have you encountered a situation where you, as a blind person, were misunderstood or criticized for your ideas because someone thought you couldn't do something? What actions did you take to change that situation? Are you creative in how you maintain your independence? Do you have a funny story of how you accomplished something? Are you a parent of a blind child? Share your unique story through writing, videos and pictures!

The Communications Committee, in collaboration with the Writer's Division, the Public Relations Committee and the Social Media Committee is seeking stories, along with videos and pictures, which reflect the NFB philosophy. These stories may be selected and highlighted in the *Braille Monitor*, on Facebook/Twitter or in a Kernel book. Stories are being compiled into a book to celebrate NFB's 75th Anniversary!

Have you used the white cane for other tasks instead of mobility? For example, do you play pool with it? Talk about the unique ways you clean the house, cook, wash the car, garden, and play games or sports. Do you like to bowl? Share a video of getting that strike! Do you like to work with your hands, such as, construction, mechanics or knitting? Do you like to fish, hunt or play golf? Share how you accomplish your activities at home, in the community or on the job.

The Inquiring minds of the world want to know what the blind can do! For samples of the stories that we are looking for, read the April issue of the *Braille Monitor*: <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm14/bm1404/bm1404tc.htm>
Unlimited submissions of stories, pictures and videos can be submitted to: nfbdynamism@nfbnet.org

Please attach word document stories, JPEG formatted pictures and clearly identify who/what is in the picture. Videos can be downloaded free at www.dropbox.com. Once registered, upload video and click share. The link to this file can be copied and pasted into the email.

Deadline is January 31, 2015. Get those creative juices flowing! On your mark, get set, GO!

TECH TIPS

NEED YOUR BRAILLEWRITER OR EMBOSSEY REPAIRED? For more information, contact Knick at the Braille Depot, 107 Trimble Avenue, Clifton, NJ, 973-272-7667, knick@brailledepot.com

<http://www.VoiceOver-Easy.net> was developed to provide a detailed, step-by-step tutorial for blind and visually impaired users of the voiceover assistive technology found in iPhones and iPads. The site offers the course material free to those who wish to use it for self-study, or for instructors who might wish to use it as the basis for classroom-led instruction. No previous knowledge of or experience with iPhones, iPads or Voiceover is necessary. There are no pictures, diagrams, or ads on this site. All lessons have been developed using text only. Glossary is included. At the end of each lesson, questions/exercises reinforce key concepts. Jane Degenshein tells us the site is easy to use and the lessons have a flow.

Frustrated with your I-device, Mac or AppleTV? Are you a new user and want quick, efficient answers? Then join a list where questions are always answered, and we are always patient with you. Subscribe here apple4beginners-request@freelists.org

www.iAccessibility.com is a new website related to accessibility for iOS systems. Please be aware that the website is in its infancy stage and will be adding more content to improve the site. Feel free to share the link with anyone who uses an iOS device or with people who may be assisting an individual with an iOS device. Check back frequently for updates and improvements. iAccessibility.com, operated by Teltex, provides all content on the website to assist in better improving access to iOS devices. For questions, contact Teltex directly at 816-655-6704, 816-655-6700, or 1-800-647-8557, 816-655-6710 FAX, 816-655-6711 or 1-800-647-8558 TTY.

KNFB READER RELEASED! K-NFB Reading Technology and Sensotec has released their image capture and read iPhone app called the KNFB Reader, now available on Apple's App Store on iTunes. The link to the app is [KNFB Reader in the Apple App Store](#). Snap a picture and hear the text read aloud. This app is fast, accurate, and efficient. According to James Gashel, vice president of business development at [K-NFB Reading Technology](#), the KNFB Reader app has been optimized for use on the iPhone 5s but can also be used on the iPhone 5 and 5c. The current version of the app is able to recognize and speak text in English and 11 other languages. For more information about the KNFB Reader iPhone app send an email message to support@knfbreader.com or visit knfbreader.com. Follow [@KNFBReader](#) on twitter and like it on [Facebook](#).

DID YOU KNOW ...

Beep Baseball in New Jersey – Douglas Winthrop is the contact person for the New Jersey Lightning, New Jersey's first beep baseball team for blind and visually impaired athletes. Contact Doug at dwinthrop1@gmail.com or 732-267-2751 for more info.

GreenDrop website is <http://www.nfbpickup.org/>. You can find a link to schedule a pickup, or you can call 1-888-610-4632 to speak to a representative.

Vehicle Donation Program – The NFB accepts vehicles, boats (on trailers), RVs and motorcycles for its vehicle donation program. To date, the program has received 252 vehicles from 42 states. You can help promote this program by telling your family and friends, and getting the word out in your community. The donation process is easy. Call 1-855-659-9314 or visit www.nfb.org/vehicledonations for more information. Make sure you have the title number and the VIN. For more information, please contact Anthony Lanzilotti, the chairperson of the program for New Jersey, at 267-414-4010 or tti777@gmail.com. You can also contact Stephanie Witt from the National Center at 410-659-9314, ext. 2423, or switt@nfb.org.

A Group in the Planning - My name is Alexander Scott Kaiser. I'm a young blind adult with cerebral palsy. I am forming a group for blind and visually impaired individuals who have cerebral palsy. This group's purpose is to provide support, education, information, advice, mentoring and legal advocacy. From problem-solving rehabilitation training issues to civil rights challenges unique to those with both CP and visual impairment, this group will provide support from others who understand. Meetings will be held by conference call on the first Sunday of the month, starting December 7, 2014, at 07:59 p.m. Eastern time. To access the conference, dial 567- 704-0447 and use access code 999999#. If you are interested in joining the group, contact me by postal mail at Alexander Scott Kaiser, 2720 Middle Way Lot 129, Forks Township, PA, 18040, send me e-mail at alexander.scott.kaiser@bluebottle.com or call me at (848) 205-0208. An in person meeting will be held at the 2015 NFB National Convention in Orlando.

The NFB releases a new video on its YouTube channel every Tuesday. These videos vary in length and style, but always feature some aspect of the NFB. The videos provide another way to learn about the NFB and about blind people living the lives they want.

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon.com. It lets patrons shop for products and donate to their favorite charitable organization. Amazon.com donates 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organizations – like the NFBNJ– selected by its customers. Please visit <http://org.amazon.com> for more info.

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

NFBNJ MEMBER RECOGNITION

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

Sharon Alfonso, a member in the Northern Chapter, established a Braille tutoring program following the monthly meetings. A huge success!

Krystle Allen, member of the Northeast Chapter, is a substitute teacher and founder of the non-profit organization Eyes Like Mine.

Jessica Calvo, is planning her wedding for November. Jessica teaches Spanish at Verona High School.

Mark Colasurdo, a biological engineering student at Cornell University, completed a successful internship in the state of Washington.

Caryn Fitzpatrick, Rick Fox and **Jon Gabry** were featured on Weekend on Today in New York with Pat Battle to promote the iCanConnect/NJ communications technology program.

Jon Gabry had four pieces of artwork on display at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Sammi Hashash, a candidate for the rank of Eagle Scout, participated in and won first place in the World Indoor Rowing Competition held at Boston College.

Shafeka Hashash, interned for two months this summer in Palestine.

Ali Huesen, known as Chef Ali, participated at the NBC Health Event at the Meadowlands and offered his talents at a recent fund raiser for Ability Beyond Sight.

Kevin Sisco designed an incryption algorithm for the government to secure electronic information including the internet. Recently, Kevin was interviewed on a local radio show featuring his consulting company.

Brian Woolbert is ranked first in his freshman class at the Charter Tech High School for Performing Arts.

Congratulations to grandmas **Jane Degenshein** (granddaughter), **Linda Halm** (grandson), and **Lynn Reynolds** (granddaughter).

Congratulations to newlyweds:

Kevin Sisco and **Christine Crotty** will be married in October.

Ivis and **Alberto Trejo** were married on June 21.

FROM THE KITCHEN OF THE GARDEN STATE CHAPTER

These recipes were submitted by Liz Morgan, a member of the Garden State Chapter and the Technology Division, a former LEAD student, a graduate of JKTC and last year's Braille Award recipient at the State Convention.

HEALTHY HOME-MADE CHICKEN RICE & VEGETABLE SOUP

This is a Morgan family favorite that's served as a hearty meal during the fall and winter.

Ingredients:

5 cups water	½ onion (chopped finely)
1 (14.5 oz) can chicken broth	3 stalks celery (chopped)
1 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves cut into cubes	2 cubes chicken bouillon
3 carrots (chopped)	1/3 cups uncooked white rice
	Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan over high heat, bring the water and chicken broth to a boil.
2. Add chicken, carrots, onion, celery and bouillon. Reduce heat to low.
3. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes or until the vegetables are soft.
4. Add more water as necessary, add the rice and allow to simmer for another 15 minutes or until the rice is tender.

BANANA CREAM PIE

Ingredients:

2 medium ripe bananas (sliced)	2 pkg. (4-serving size each) JELL-O vanilla fat-free, sugar-free instant pudding
1 ready-to-use reduced-fat graham cracker crumb crust (6 oz.)	2 cups thawed Cool Whip free whipped topping, divided
2 ½ cups cold fat-free milk	

Directions:

1. Place half of the bananas on bottom of crust. Set remaining banana slices aside.
2. Pour milk into large bowl. Add dry pudding mixes. Beat with wire whisk for 2 minutes or until well blended and thick.
3. Gently stir in 1 cup of Cool Whip. Spoon half of the pudding mixture into crust.
4. Top with remaining banana slices, and cover with remaining pudding mixture.
5. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours or until set and thickened.
6. Serve topped with the remaining 1 cup whipped topping.

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

Mark Riccobono 410-659-9314

NFB State Affiliate*President*

Joseph Ruffalo 973-743-0075

First Vice President

Jerilyn Higgins 973-239-8874

Second Vice President

Mary Jo Partyka 609-888-5459

Secretary

Brian Mackey 609-953-6988

Treasurer

Tom Ferry 973-694-5922

Board Members

Linda DeBerardinis 856-764-7014

Alice Eaddy 856-765-0601

Dan Facchini 201-906-8655

Rebecca Irvin-Bryant 973-732-6559

Anthony Lanzilotti 267-414-4010

Lynn Reynolds 908-251-5510

NFBNJ Chapters*At-Large Chapter*

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

Joe Ruffalo 973-743-0075

Capital Chapter

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

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

Central Jersey Chapter

Second Sat., Grace Lutheran Church, Perth Amboy, 9:30 a.m. - noon
Jerilyn Higgins 973-239-8874
jdhiggins3@verizon.net

Garden State Chapter

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

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

Glasstown Chapter

First Sat., Inspira Fitness Center, 1430 W Sherman, Vineland 9:45 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

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

Northern Chapter

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

Rebecca Bryant 973-723-6559
rirvin14@optonline.net

South Jersey Shore Chapter

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

Anthony Lanzilotti 267-414-4010
Tti777@gmail.com

NFB of NJ Divisions*Association of Blind Merchants*

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

Association of Blind Students

Shafeka Hashash 551-697-1568
snh278@nyu.edu

Association of Guide Dog Users

Vincent Chaney 732-251-8650
vgc732@optonline.net

Association of Senior Blind

Jane Degenshein 973-736-5785
 Jdegen16@outlook.com

Braille Division

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

Diabetes Division

Vincent Chaney 732-251-8650
 vgc732@optonline.net

Parents of Blind Children

Holly Miller 732-542-3633
 pobcnj@gmail.com

Technology Division

Jane Degenshein 973-736-5785
 Jdegen16@outlook.com

Programs, Projects & Committees*Adopt Adaptive Equipment*

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

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

BELL Program

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

Holly Miller 732-610-5478
 pobcnj@gmail.com

Blind Children's Resource Center

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

Braille Mentoring Program

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

Building Chapters & Membership

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

Deaf-Blind Committee

Alice Eaddy 856-765-0601
aseanj@netzero.net

GreenDrop

Linda DeBerardinis 856-764-7014
 ldeber@comcast.net

Legislative Coordinator

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

NFB Newsline

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

Press Core Committee

Tara Carty 973-650-4438
 sugarfreet@gmail.com

Scholarship

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

Thru Our Eyes/Internet Radio

Lenny Azzarone 888-572-0141
 www.ThruOurEyes.org
 lenny@digitalvdo.emmcloud.com

Vehicle Donation Program

Anthony Lanzilotti 267-414-4010
 tti777@gmail.com

CHAPTER AND DIVISION UPDATES CAN BE FOUND ON THE NFBNJ WEBSITE

Deadline for the Spring 2015 issue is April 1, 2015.

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