



National Federation of the Blind
2011 ANNUAL REPORT





We Believe

The real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight. The real problem is the misunderstanding and lack of information that exist. If a blind person has proper training and opportunity, blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance.

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is the largest organization of blind and low-vision people in the United States. Founded in 1940, the Federation has grown to over fifty thousand members. The organization consists of affiliates and local chapters in every state, in the District of Columbia, and in Puerto Rico. Members gather in local chapter meetings each month, and there are state conventions of Federation affiliates every year. All affiliates are represented at an annual national convention. We also do our work through special interest divisions and committees. Blind teachers, blind lawyers, blind entrepreneurs, blind students, blind clerics, blind engineers, blind people in the social sciences, parents of blind children, and others provide each other with information and support.

The Mission

The mission of the National Federation of the Blind is to serve as a means for blind people to come together to work collectively to improve our lives. By providing public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, literature and materials about blindness, specialized aids and tools, adaptive equipment, and support for blind people and their families, the members of the NFB strive to spread the word that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on equal terms with their sighted peers. The National Federation of the Blind consists of blind people throughout the United States working together to achieve democratically adopted goals. Our members meet in local chapters in cities throughout the nation to consider the problems of blindness on the local level and to carry out national programs in their local communities. Because we have pursued this course of action from our inception, we are known as the Voice of the Nation's Blind. Underlying our purpose is the firm belief that blind people must be a primary element in the solutions affecting their lives. By engaging in self-help, mutual assistance, and concerted action, we speak for ourselves and promote our own self-sufficiency.

Our Goal

The goal of the National Federation of the Blind is the complete integration of the blind into society on the basis of equality. The organization works to change widely held but false beliefs that the blind are helpless and incompetent. Our members seek out individuals needing our help in all parts of the nation. To achieve our goals, we conduct programs to educate the public about the true ability of the blind, in every situation, to function at the same level as their sighted peers.

President's Message

Dear Friends:

What will the future be like for blind Americans? It is my belief that with the work of the National Federation of the Blind and the support of friends like you, it will be bright and full of promise. Effort, however, is still needed. It is increasingly evident that one of the most critical areas on which our efforts must be focused is access to the technology that pervades modern life. Unfortunately, many twenty-first-century technologies feature user interfaces that are difficult or impossible for blind people to use. Think about all the things you now do on the Internet—from paying your bills to shopping for things like airline tickets or new shoes. Blind people can't do these things if Web sites are not designed to work with the text-to-speech and Braille technology that we use with our computers. Think of the flat panels on your stove, dishwasher, washing machine, and the copier at your office, which require you to choose from a menu and touch virtual "buttons" that are, in reality, just spots on the panel or screen. Blind people can't use even simple home appliances if they do not incorporate tactile or audio feedback. Think of reading books on your NOOK or Kindle. These devices aren't accessible to the blind, so the promise of e-book technology—which can, if properly designed, provide us with access to the same books at the same price and at the same time that sighted people can get them—is largely denied to us. Access to e-books is increasingly critical because educational institutions at all levels desire to replace paper textbooks with this technology; if the technology is not accessible, blind people will not get an equal education. All of these barriers that confront blind people are needless, because making technology accessible is easy to do and is not costly when accessible design is considered in the design phase rather than as an afterthought.

It is not my wish to start my annual letter to you on a note of gloom, but it is important for all of us to recognize the challenges that modern technology presents to the blind. It must be added that technology has presented the blind with unprecedented opportunity and access to information, as well as challenges. Nonetheless, as technology continues to evolve and change, we must remain vigilant. If not properly designed, modern technology may present an even greater barrier to the full participation of the blind in society than we have ever faced. Inaccessible technology threatens our ability to obtain or maintain employment, to get an education, and even to live independently in our own homes. We must work hard to ensure that the blind are not left on the wrong side of a digital divide.

The good news is that, with the proper expertise, making technology accessible to the blind is neither difficult nor costly. Companies like Apple Inc. have demonstrated that accessibility is achievable and profitable. The National Federation of the Blind is committed to helping publishers, manufacturers, governmental agencies, schools, Web site and application developers, and large and small businesses learn what they need to know to make sure that the technology and information that they produce can be used by the blind. Wherever we can, we collaborate with these players to make accessibility happen. We are also committed to making sure that blind Americans have access to the information and resources they need in order to obtain the technology that will be most useful to them and to cope with accessibility issues that may arise at home, in the workplace, and in the community. To meet these commitments, we have assembled a team of access technology experts at our headquarters in Baltimore that, combined with our members across the nation, give our organization more depth and breadth in the area of technology access for the blind than any other blindness agency or organization in the country. Our team manages resources for blind people across the country to learn about accessible technology, including our landmark International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind, a frequently updated technology resource list, and Web sites and blogs with the latest information and advice for blind technology users. In 2011, the team worked with Travelocity, Ticketmaster, Newegg, and eBay, along with

many others, to certify or recertify their Web sites as usable by the blind. Also, an exciting new partnership with eBay was initiated that trained blind entrepreneurs to use eBay's online buying and selling platform to create their own online businesses. We held our first-ever session on accessibility in e-book publishing, explaining the standards, techniques, and technologies that exist to make electronic books available to blind users of computers and portable devices like Braille notetakers and smart phones. Election administrators, voting machine manufacturers, and officials from the federal Election Assistance Commission attended the Nonvisual Access to Voting Technology seminar, which focused on ensuring that blind people can vote privately and independently with systems that also protect the security and integrity of ballots. We also conducted our second Web Accessibility Training Day for Web site developers, at which businesses, governmental agencies, educators, and others considered the business case for accessibility and ways to ensure access to Web sites and Internet-based applications by the blind. These are just a few of the activities that our access technology team undertook in 2011. We look forward to an equally exciting and innovative 2012 with your help.




Marc Maurer

Those who are familiar with the National Federation of the Blind are well aware of our commitment to the education and advancement of blind children and youth. Our Braille literacy efforts, including our innovative Braille Enrichment and Learning Literacy (BELL) program, allow young blind children to start to learn Braille at an early age. Our youth science academies have become a staple of the educational programs that anchor our NFB Jernigan Institute. But while literacy and education are critical to success, blind youth must also have other blindness skills and the confidence to use them if they are to have the bright future that we imagine for them. That is why we conducted a weekend Youth Leadership Academy in the fall of 2011. The academy allowed each student to learn about blindness from successful blind adults, to meet other teens experiencing vision loss, and to discover how the National Federation of the Blind can help them accomplish their dreams. The program focused on advancing positive attitudes about blindness through discussions among blind peers and mentors. For example, students exchanged stories about how blindness impacted their participation in sports, classroom activities, or school dances. By listening to the broad range of experiences of other students and mentors, the blind teens learned that blindness alone does not determine success. Rather, developing a strong network of support and subscribing to healthy blindness attitudes can make all the difference. Youth Leadership Academy participants also took part in several confidence-building activities, including yoga, grilling over an open flame, gift-wrapping, salsa dancing, and learning how to use a chainsaw. Activities were led by blind instructors, and the students performed these tasks without the use of eyesight. These activities reinforced the themes of leadership, achievement, and

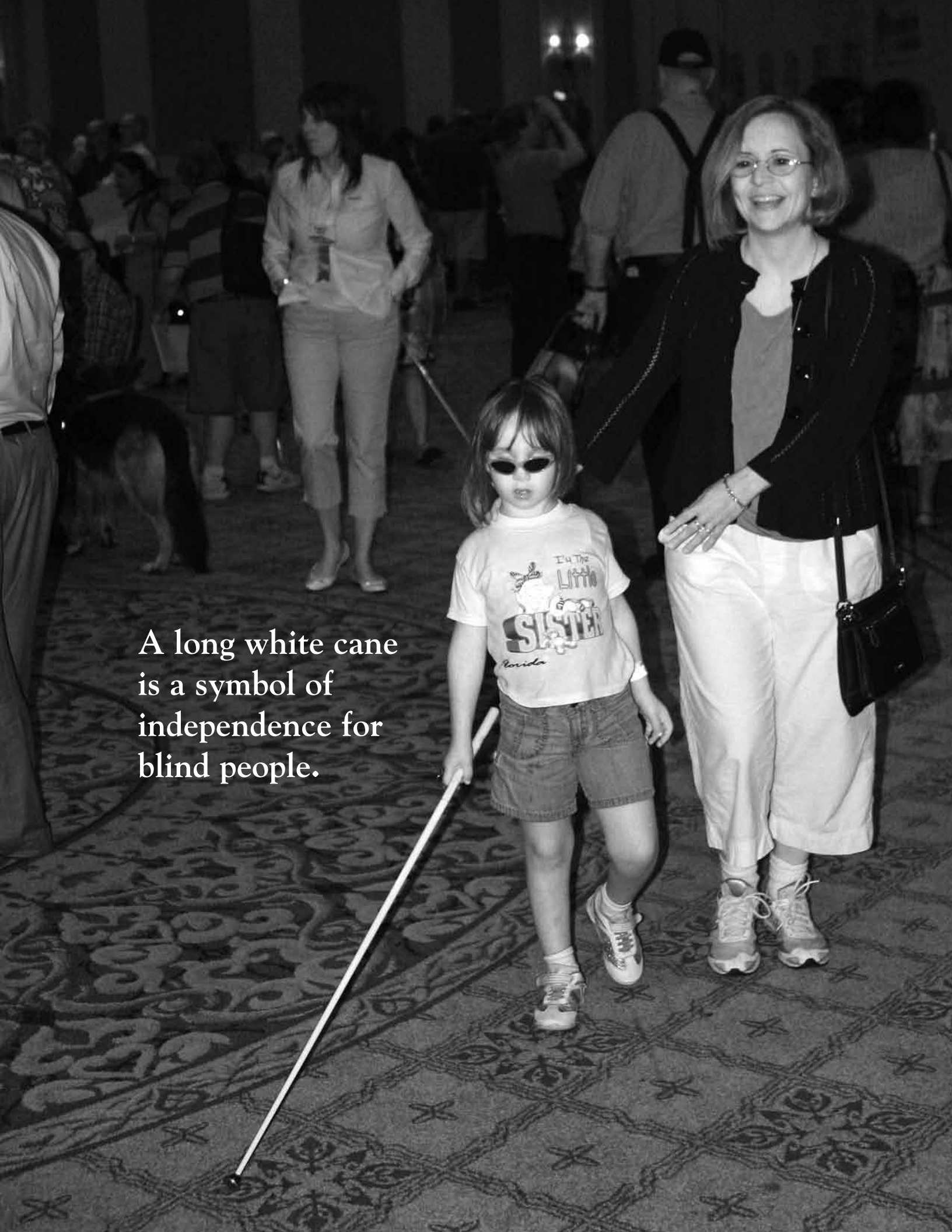
blindness empowerment that were highlighted throughout the weekend. The Youth Leadership Academy encouraged students to challenge personal misconceptions about blindness so that these attitudes do not limit their ability to experience the American Dream. With your help, the National Federation of the Blind can continue to conduct programs like this to support blind youth in their personal quest for success.

We continue to reach out to older Americans who are losing vision. We continue to expand and develop NFB-NEWSLINE®, our free service that gives the blind, and others who cannot read print, free access to hundreds of newspapers and magazines, local television listings, job postings, and advertisements from local merchants in their area. And we continue to promote Braille literacy, provide free white canes, and take other steps to make sure that blind people of all ages and in all walks of life have the blindness skills that they need to thrive. None of these efforts and accomplishments are possible without your faith in blind people and your support for our movement. Once again, I thank each of you for your continued belief in blind people and the National Federation of the Blind. Your contributions as donors and volunteers, and your faith in our organization and in the capabilities of blind people, make it possible for us to build a bright future for blind Americans—a future that is not limited by inaccessible technology, inadequate education and training, and low expectations, but is instead full of high achievement, limitless possibility, and the promise of true equality. Please enjoy learning about, and sharing with others, the dreams that we have worked together to make a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marc Maurer".

Marc Maurer, President
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

A black and white photograph capturing a moment in a crowded indoor space, possibly a convention or event. In the foreground, a young child with short hair and sunglasses is walking towards the camera. The child is wearing a light-colored t-shirt with the text "I'm The Little SISTER Florida" and dark shorts. They are holding a long, thin white cane in their right hand, which is touching the patterned carpet. To the right of the child, an adult woman with glasses and a dark jacket over a light top is walking alongside them, smiling. She has her hand near the child's shoulder. She is wearing light-colored pants and sneakers and has a dark bag slung over her shoulder. In the background, several other people are visible, some standing and some in motion, creating a sense of a busy, public gathering. The lighting is somewhat dim, with a few bright spots from overhead lights.

A long white cane
is a symbol of
independence for
blind people.



Breaking Down the Digital Divide

One of the greatest challenges faced by the blind in the twenty-first century is gaining access to the new technologies that are constantly changing American life. Technology has dramatically improved the lives of blind people and has the potential to break down almost all of the artificial barriers that have separated the blind and others with disabilities from the rest of society. However, including the blind in the technological revolution doesn't just happen; it requires good design and planning on the part of those who develop and manufacture everything from computer software to consumer electronics to home appliances. If accessibility does not become a part of the design of such products, then blind people will lose many of the gains we have made toward achieving our ultimate goal of full and equal integration into American society. The National Federation of the Blind continues to advocate for accessible technology and to work with information technology companies (such as Google, Oracle, Apple, and Microsoft), as well as manufacturers of home appliances and consumer electronics, to ensure that the blind will be able to enter the technological mainstream rather than be left on the wrong side of a digital divide.

While access to technology was once a relatively simple matter, the introduction of the graphical user interface and its integration into many of the technologies that people use today have complicated the lives

of blind Americans. At the same time that technology has offered us unprecedented access to the printed word, the workplace, and even the voting booth, that access is rarely uninhibited and in some cases is nonexistent. Many Web sites and Internet applications are not properly coded to provide output to the text-to-speech and Braille display mechanisms that blind people use to interact with the Web. Since so many things that we do today are accomplished over the Internet—including purchasing goods and services, banking, completing schoolwork, applying for jobs, and much more—it is critical that blind Americans have full and equal access to the Web and other Internet technologies. The use of flat-panel and touch-screen technology in machines that we use every day—everything from office equipment to home appliances like stoves and dishwashers—means that blind people’s ability to retain or obtain employment and to live independently in our homes is jeopardized.

The recent migration from print on paper to e-books holds great promise that the blind can finally have equal access to published information, but most e-book hardware and software (for example, the Barnes & Noble NOOK and the Amazon Kindle), as well as e-book files, are not accessible to those who are blind or who cannot read print due to other factors. As educational institutions at all levels consider migrating from printed textbooks to e-textbooks and electronic course materials and applications, the education of blind students is threatened if the blind do not have equal access to these materials.

New voting technology has allowed many blind people to vote privately and independently for the first time in American history, but all blind Americans do not yet have access to a secure and independent voting process. Many of these accessibility barriers remain despite the fact that laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Help America Vote Act mandate accessibility in education, in the voting booth, and in myriad everyday tasks, including banking, accessing transportation, and the like. Also, most of this inaccessibility is gratuitous; there is nothing about these products that necessitates their inacces-

sibility to the blind. For example, Apple Inc. has made all of its products—including touchscreen devices like the iPhone—fully accessible out of the box, and its iBooks application allows robust access to electronic books. By contrast, other smartphones and e-book readers are not fully, and in many cases not even partially, accessible to the blind. Automated teller machines have been accessible for years, but similar kiosks to provide other goods and services—such as those at airports that provide access to airline tickets and related benefits—have not yet become accessible. Most inaccessibility is due to neglect or a lack of technical expertise, along with the failure to work directly with blind consumers to make sure that products and services are not only technically accessible but can actually be operated by blind individuals with an ease of use equivalent to that experienced by sighted users.

To meet the need for expertise to help businesses, governmental entities, and others make their technology more accessible, the National Federation of the Blind has assembled a team of access technology experts at our headquarters in Baltimore that, combined with our members across the nation, give our organization more depth and breadth in the area of technology access for the blind than any other blindness agency or organization in the country. The team manages the International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind (IBTC), established in 1990, which houses over \$2.5 million in technology specifically designed for use by people who are blind or have low vision. The purchase of this equipment allows the NFB’s access technology team to test and evaluate it, and the IBTC facility is made available to those who visit our national headquarters so that they can receive hands-on demonstrations of the latest assistive technology and make informed decisions before purchasing this often expensive equipment or software. The team also manages the Technology Answer Line, our telephone service for answering questions about access technology, and the “Access Technology” and “Access Technology Tips” blogs. The team also produces a resource list of access technology available in the U.S., as well as a list of usable consumer electronics. In addition, each year at the NFB annual national convention, the team works



with invited presenters to provide informative seminars for convention attendees. These presentations are extraordinarily popular and are usually jam-packed with participants. In 2011, seminars on accessibility of the Android smartphone platform, accessible applications for the iPhone, access to e-books, and the design of accessible Web sites were presented.

The access technology team also works with schools, governmental entities, and large and small companies to help them achieve increased accessibility for their blind students, clients, and customers. In 2011, the team worked with Travelocity, Ticketmaster, Newegg, and eBay, along with many others, to certify or recertify their Web sites as usable by the blind. Also, an exciting new partnership with eBay was initiated that trained blind entrepreneurs to use eBay's online buying and selling platform to create their own online businesses. We held our first-ever session on accessibility in e-book publishing, explaining the standards (such as the highly anticipated EPUB3 standard), techniques, and technologies that exist to make electronic books available to blind users of computers and portable devices like Braille notetakers and smartphones. Election administrators, voting machine manufacturers, and officials from the federal Election Assistance Commission attended the Nonvisual Access to Voting Technology seminar, which focused on ensuring that blind people can vote privately and independently with systems that also protect the security and integrity of ballots. We also conducted our second Web Accessibility Training Day for Web site developers, at which businesses, governmental agencies, educators and others considered the business case for accessibility and ways to ensure access to Web sites and Internet-based applications by the blind.

The expertise of our access technology team also placed its members in high demand to present to conferences, symposia, and corporate events throughout North America. Members of the team presented at the Conference on Technology and Persons with Disabilities sponsored by California State University at Northridge (known as the CSUN conference); the EduCause Mid-Atlantic conference; Blackboard's BbWorld conference; the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind spring conference; the Learning Impact conference in Long Beach, California; the Association for Computing Machinery's Computer-Human Interaction conference (known as the CHI conference) in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; and many more. The team also made a presentation to Pearson Publishing Group on creating accessible textbooks.

For the blind, access to technology is an issue of civil rights and not merely of convenience. The National Federation of the Blind will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that full and equal access is achieved. We believe that much of this work can and will be done through cooperative relationships with technology innovators, and we are committed to reaching out to such innovators and collaborating with them to ensure that products and services that will benefit everyone, including the blind, are created and widely distributed.

Program and Service Accomplishments

NFB Youth Leadership Academy

For many blind teens, opportunities to establish fun and supportive relationships with other adolescents experiencing vision loss do not come along too often. Even rarer are the chances that blind teens have to interact with blind role models who have successfully negotiated completing college, finding employment, and overcoming social barriers posed by misconceptions about blindness. Instead, many blind teens grow up isolated from blindness resources, worried about adulthood, and disconnected from the countless examples of achievement in the blind community.

The National Federation of the Blind recognizes that programs linking blind youth to mentorship experiences can help students address their blindness-related concerns. Left unaddressed, fears or worries about blindness can grow into impediments to success. Last fall, many energetic and motivated blind high school students from throughout the country attended the NFB Youth Leadership Academy. The Academy allowed participants to learn about blindness from successful blind adults, to meet other teens experiencing vision loss, and to discover how the National Federation of the Blind can help them accomplish their dreams.

The Youth Leadership Academy focused on advancing positive attitudes about blindness through discussions among blind peers and their mentors. For example, students exchanged stories about how blindness impacted their participation in sports, classroom activities, or school dances. Some students talked of experiencing exclusion; other students found ways to participate and have fun alongside their sighted peers. By listening to the broad range of experiences of other students and mentors, the blind teens were able to understand that blindness alone does not determine success. Rather, developing a strong network of support and subscribing to healthy blindness attitudes can make all the difference.

Youth Leadership Academy participants also took part in several confidence-building activities. Some of the activities included yoga, grilling over an open flame, gift-wrapping, salsa dancing, and learning how to use a chainsaw. Activities were lead by blind instructors, and the students performed these tasks without the use of eyesight. These activities reinforced the themes of leadership, achievement, and blindness empowerment that were highlighted throughout the weekend. The Youth Leadership Academy encouraged students to challenge personal misconceptions about blindness so that these attitudes do not limit their ability to experience the American Dream. It is the hope of the National Federation of the Blind that programs like this can support each blind student on his or her personal quest for success.

One Youth Leadership Academy student, Somaya Terin, had this to say about her experience: “Baltimore was a wonderful experience, and I was a different person when I came back. The trip made me become more independent and brought me close to blind youth my own age. ... Meeting blind youth who experience the same issues I face is very important to me. When I need to solve problems having to do with my family or my school, my blind friends are right by my side.”

Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards



Each year, the National Federation of the Blind distributes Dr. Jacob Bolotin cash awards at its annual national convention. These awards recognize individuals and organizations working in the field of blindness that have made outstanding contributions toward achieving the full integration of the blind into society on the basis of equality. Named for the pioneering blind physician who practiced in the early twentieth century, these awards are made possible through the generosity of Dr. Bolotin's late nephew and niece, Alfred and Rosalind Perlman. Mrs. Perlman left a bequest to the Santa Barbara Foundation and the National Federation of the Blind to publish her book, *The Blind Doctor: The Jacob Bolotin Story* and to establish an endowment, the Alfred & Rosalind Perlman Trust, for these important annual awards.

Dr. Jacob Bolotin (1888–1924) lived and practiced in Chicago in the early part of the twentieth century. Dr. Bolotin fought ignorance and prejudice to gain entrance to medical school and the medical profession. He became one of the most respected physicians in Chicago during his career, which spanned the period from 1912 until his death, and was particularly known for his expertise on diseases of the heart and lungs. Dr. Bolotin used his many public speaking engagements to advocate for the employment and full integration of the blind into society. Interested in young people in general and blind youth in particular, Dr. Bolotin established one of the first Boy Scout troops consisting entirely of blind boys and served as its leader.

The fourth annual Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards, with a total cash value of \$50,000, honored four innovators in the blindness field on Friday, July 8, 2011, as part of the National Federation of the Blind annual national convention in Orlando. The Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness, housed at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana, was given an award in the amount of \$20,000 for its ground-



breaking leadership in the field of education and rehabilitation for blind people. Awards in the amount of \$10,000 were given to Dr. Cary Supalo, of West Lafayette, Indiana, who has pioneered alternative tools and techniques that allow blind people to participate in the sciences; Jerry Munden, of Charlotte, North Carolina, who spearheaded the development of products that help blind diabetics manage their diabetes independently; and the Braille Institute of America's Braille Challenge[®], a nationwide competition based out of Southern California, which motivates blind students to learn and enjoy Braille.

Scholarships

Each year, the National Federation of the Blind awards thirty scholarships to blind high school seniors and college or graduate school students from the United States and Puerto Rico. The scholarship awards range from \$3,000 to \$12,000, and each year over \$100,000 is awarded to the thirty winners. The 2011 scholarships were presented at the banquet of the National Federation of the Blind annual national convention.

This year's scholarship class included three tenBroek Fellows—winners receiving a second or subsequent scholarship. The winner of the \$12,000 Dr. Kenneth Jernigan Memorial Scholarship, which is named for the outstanding leader and visionary who served as president of the organization from 1968 to 1986, receives the honor of briefly addressing the banquet. The 2011 winner of this scholarship, Kyle Shachmut, spoke eloquently of how NFB leaders had inspired him to speak out against inaccessible technology on his university campus, and about his future plans to keep striving to change what it means to be blind.

The members of the 2011 scholarship class were a diverse group studying a broad range of disciplines including education, social work, physics, astronomy, environmental engineering, and music. They represent the best and brightest our country has to offer; and just as importantly, they represent the future leadership of the National Federation of the Blind.

Here is the complete list of 2011 scholarship winners and the awards they received:

\$3,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: Mary Margaret Winifred Billington, Christine Daniels, Roberto Diaz, Aleeha Miakell Dudley, Heather Edwards, Brenton Fuchs, Diane Graves (tenBroek Fellow), Michelle Hackman, Shafeka Hashash, Carry Joanis, Catherine Lei, Ma'ayan Shira Malter, Daniel Martinez, Ryan T. McBee, Julie Ann McGinnity, Terence M. Meehan, Sylvia Lane Modesitt, Justin M. Salisbury, Sandra J. Sommers, and Matthew C. Yeater. The late Christopher Fountain would also have received this scholarship.

\$3,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Memorial Scholarship: Kristina Vu.

\$5,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: Yasen Angelov, David Schilling Bouchard, Mikaela Stevens, and Kathleen A. Katulak.

\$7,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: Jessica Beecham and Henry "Hoby" Wedler (tenBroek Fellow).

\$10,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Memorial Scholarship: Amber Sherrard.

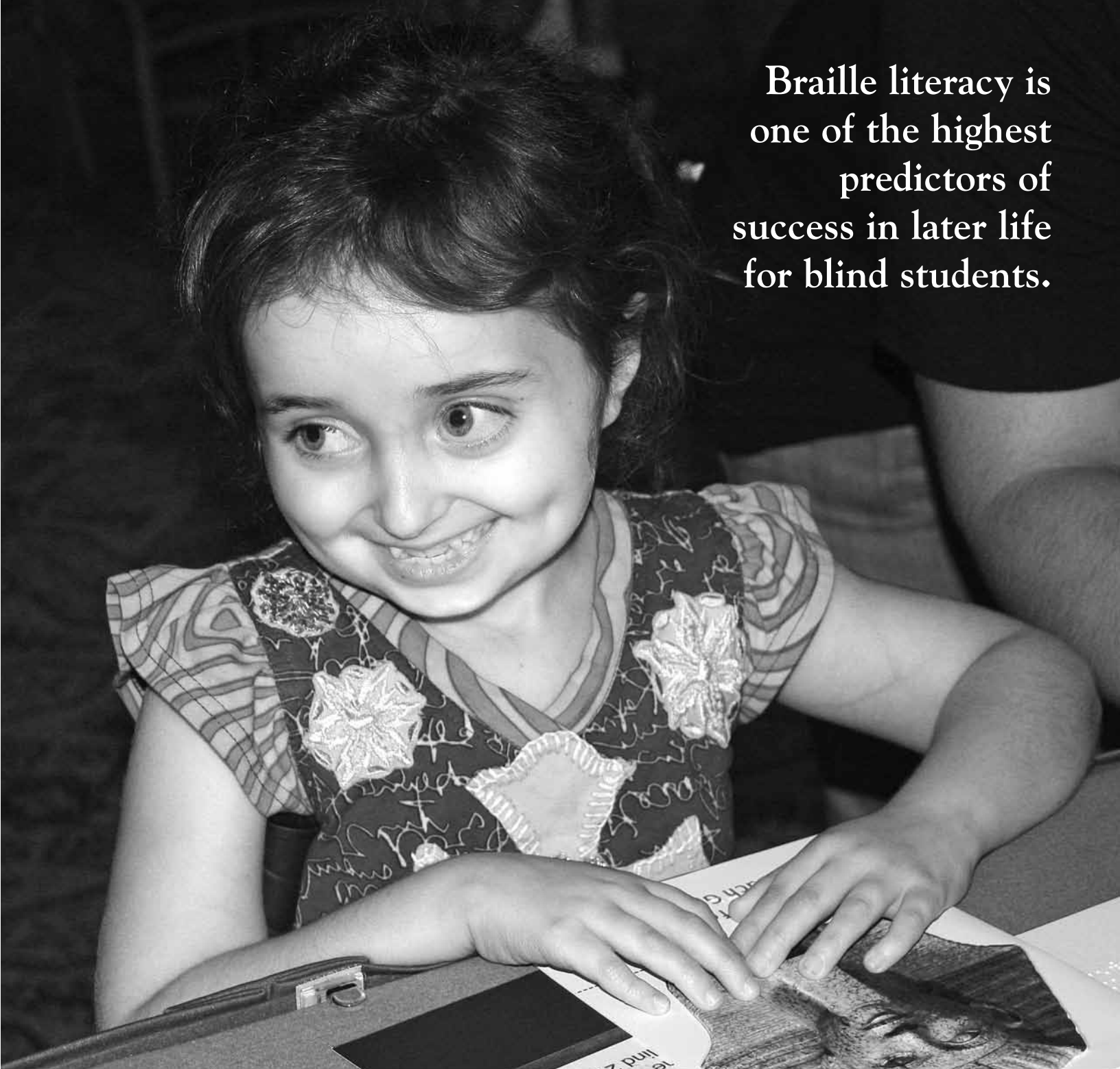
\$12,000 Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship (donated by the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults): Kyle Shachmut (tenBroek Fellow).

NFB-NEWSLINE®: Providing the Blind with Unparalleled Access to Print Information

Since July of 1995, the National Federation of the Blind has operated NFB-NEWSLINE®, the world's largest newspaper service for the blind and print-disabled. The service, free to eligible individuals in the United States, offers access to national and local newspapers, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Washington Post*. NFB-NEWSLINE® also offers magazines, including *Time*, *The Economist*, *The New Yorker*, all three AARP publications, *Rolling Stone*, *Smithsonian*, and *Popular Science*. It also makes available five Spanish-language publications and seven international publications that include *Toronto's The Globe and Mail*, *China Daily*, *The Guardian*, *India Times*, *Jerusalem Post*, *London Telegraph*, and *The New Zealand Herald*. In all, subscribers have access to over 300 publications—as well as TV listings—via the telephone; via computers, Braille notetakers, and other devices with refreshable Braille displays; or via MP3 or Digital Talking Book players.

NFB-NEWSLINE® began providing job listings on its service in 2010, allowing subscribers to access hundreds of thousands of listings from all across the country, searchable by category and keyword. The job listings feature enables subscribers to save their search profiles and individual listings, and allows them to request that a particular listing be sent in an e-mail that contains a link to a Web page containing the position application form.

**Braille literacy is
one of the highest
predictors of
success in later life
for blind students.**



NFB-NEWSLINE® NLS DTB Downloader is an application that creates audio DAISY files of publication content. DAISY is an accessible electronic publishing standard that allows audio content to be presented with navigation features that allow a reader to skip easily to a desired section or article. These files are downloaded to flash memory cartridges used with the new Digital Talking Book (DTB) player that is loaned to patrons of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress (NLS). Podable News, a piece of software that provides MP3 files of publication text for playback on the computer or MP3-playing device, allows subscribers to select individual sections from publications that are of interest, creating a tailor-made audio publication to fit their unique reading preferences. Subscribers can also download text-only DAISY files for use with Braille-aware devices or have these files e-mailed to them.



In April 2011, NFB-NEWSLINE® added the state of South Carolina to its roster of sponsored states, bringing the number of states where NFB-NEWSLINE® is available to forty-four (plus the District of Columbia).

During 2011, NFB-NEWSLINE® partnered with Meredith Corporation, American Diabetes Association, and Target Corporation to provide content to NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers. Meredith Corporation now makes five of its leading publications available on NFB-NEWSLINE®: *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Family Circle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Parents*, and *Fitness*. The American Diabetes Association collaborated with NFB-NEWSLINE® to provide subscribers with its flagship publication *Diabetes Forecast*, which contains information on diabetes prevention and management. NFB-NEWSLINE®, through a partnership with Target Corporation, devised a method to provide subscribers with independent access to Target's weekly ad circular over the telephone as soon as the print publication becomes available.

In 2011, 8,885 new subscribers signed up for NFB-NEWSLINE®, bringing the total number of subscribers to 96,953. Subscribers called into the service 1,920,408 times in 2011 and a total of 35,808,455 minutes of news were delivered to subscribers via touch-tone telephone; the number of minutes used increased by 5.5 percent from 2010. Subscribers received 1,951,000 e-mails containing articles, publications, or job listings. NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers also benefited from a dramatic increase in the variety of publications offered, as twenty-one new publications were added to the service.

Braille Programs

In 2011, the National Federation of the Blind continued its campaign to raise awareness about the critical importance of Braille and to bring it into the lives of blind children and adults who need it.

BELL Program

In schools across the country, blind students—many of whom may have low vision and meet the legal definition of blindness—are receiving little or no Braille instruction. Some children are taught to read large print or standard print with magnification, no matter how slow and laborious this method may be. Others are taught Braille, but only two or three days a week. Children with low vision are actually blind children who can often benefit from Braille instruction.

To address the deficits in the Braille instruction of students in Maryland, members of the state's NFB affiliate developed a program that they named Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL). The Maryland affiliate implemented this program in the summer of 2008. The program flourished and was then adopted by the NFB Jernigan Institute for further development and dissemination. In 2009, the BELL Program doubled in size, improving the lives of children in Georgia and Maryland. The 2010 BELL Program was held at six sites in five states and reached fifty blind children. In 2011, there were eleven BELL Program sites in seven states; and in 2012, it will expand again to fourteen sites in ten states.

The BELL Program is a two-week intensive program designed to introduce students to Braille and other alternative techniques of blindness in a positive way. Students attend the program for six-and-a-half hours each day. Daily instruction covers blindness attitudes, tactile discrimination, Braille reading, Braille writing including the use of the slate and stylus, and nonvisual techniques for daily living. Lessons in each area are made enjoyable by using games and other non-traditional methods that demonstrate to the students how

exciting Braille can be. Braille Twister, Braille musical chairs, drawing with the Braillewriter, and the skit "Captain Whozit Saves the Day" are always a hit with the students. To ensure that students are honing their tactile skills and not using their residual vision, students often wear sleepshades during lessons.

The program also provides a great opportunity for students to interact with blind role models. Adult members of the NFB volunteer their time, assisting with instruction and taking the time to read to the students each day. The bonds that form between participants and volunteers are invaluable in shaping the students' positive attitudes about blindness.

Throughout the day, students ring a bell to celebrate their accomplishments. At the beginning of the program, the adults recognize the students' accomplishments and remind them to ring the bell. By the end of the program students are pointing out each other's successes. Students ring the bell when they learn a new Braille contraction, successfully identify a letter, use their cane to find a drop-off, and realize that, by using alternative techniques, blind people can do the same things sighted people do.



The impact of the BELL Program is not limited to the children; the parents learn a great deal over the two weeks as well. A parent seminar is a crucial aspect of the BELL Program. Parents are children's first teachers, and ensuring that parents of blind children have a positive attitude about blindness significantly increases the chances of success for their blind children. In the parent seminar, the adults learn about the importance of the inclusion of Braille, cane travel, sleepshades, and nonvisual techniques of daily living in their children's education. While attending the program each day, the parents also witness blind adults running activities, reading to their children, and navigating their environment. Just by going about their daily lives, the blind adults demonstrate to the parents how successful their children can be.

After two weeks of mentoring and exposure to positive attitudes about blindness, the children and their parents leave knowing that it is respectable to be blind, and that Braille is an invaluable tool and is crucial to the success of a blind person. Most importantly, after the BELL Program, students and parents are connected to the National Federation of the Blind, a network of 50,000 blind people across the country who are working every day to change what it means to be blind.

Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest and Literacy Program

The Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest and Literacy Program helps blind children and adults become good Braille readers. Good readers have confidence in themselves and in their ability to learn and to adapt to new situations throughout their lifetimes. Braille literacy is one of the highest predictors of success in later life for blind students. It is estimated that 85 percent of all employed blind people are proficient Braille readers, yet only about 10 percent of blind students are currently being taught Braille. The Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest and Literacy Program seeks to increase the success rate of blind students by encouraging them to read Braille. For the third year, along with the

traditional contest and program for blind children in grades K–12, a contest for adults was offered. Adults, whether proficient or new Braille readers, were invited to participate. Around seven hundred people, from infants to adults, participated in the Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest and Literacy Programs in 2011. No other single Braille literacy program in the nation involves so many people with such a wide spectrum of ages, degrees of vision loss, and other disabilities.

Braille Reading Pals Program

The Braille Reading Pals Club is an early literacy program that fosters positive attitudes about Braille for children and their families, and promotes a love of reading by encouraging parents to read daily with their child who is blind or has low vision. Participants receive a print/Braille book to read with their child and to encourage an independent exploration of Braille. Participants also receive a plush "Reading Pal" to accompany reading time and help young blind children develop fun and positive associations with reading Braille. In 2011, nearly 400 families participated, starting their children off on a long life of Braille reading.

Braille is Beautiful Program

This innovative diversity-awareness program teaches sighted students how to read and write the Braille alphabet and increases blind students' acceptance by their sighted peers. The program targets grades four through six; however, it has also been used effectively with younger or older children and in community youth programs, as well as in the classroom. Program kits for instructors, including videos, student workbooks, and Braille materials, are distributed through the NFB Independence Market.

Braille Letters from Santa Program

In December, the National Federation of the Blind once again offered a special service for children who read Braille. For the fifth year, blind children



were able to submit Braille letters to Santa in care of the NFB Jernigan Institute, which sent Santa's replies in Braille and print. This year, the NFB Jernigan Institute staff sent out over three hundred and fifty personalized replies from Santa Claus to all the letters received from blind children and their parents. Each reply was in Braille and print so that parents and children could read together. Proficiency and fluency in reading Braille are best achieved by taking every opportunity to read Braille, and the Braille Letters from Santa Program is another fun way to implement that goal.

Braille Transcribing and Proofreading Certification Program

In late 2006, the NFB Jernigan Institute was awarded a contract by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) to conduct that agency's National Braille Transcribing and Proofreading Certification Program. The NFB Jernigan Institute now conducts all administrative functions of the certification program, including the recruitment, training, and evaluation of individuals wishing to become certified Braille transcribers and proofreaders. The implementation of this program by the National Federation of the Blind has significantly increased the number of qualified Braille transcribers and proofreaders, thus making Braille literature, instructional materials, and musical scores more available to the blind of America. As of December 2011, the program has submitted the names of 1,185 individuals to the Library of Congress, indicating that they have successfully completed the certification courses in literary, mathematics, and music transcribing or proofreading.

National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute

The National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute (NFBJI) was established to explore greater possibilities for blind people, test the limits of independence, and find innovative solutions to the most pressing problems facing blind people in the twenty-first century. The programs, resources, and reach of our institute continue to grow in scope and depth. The dynamic interaction between the concentration of expertise at NFBJI and the widespread resources in our local chapters and affiliates creates previously unimagined opportunities.

Our success, since we first opened the doors in 2004, is evidenced by the fact that model programs that originated at our institute are now being implemented in NFB affiliates across the country. The key element of success for the NFBJI is that it is an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind. It is a resource for turning the hopes and dreams of blind people into reality. Components of the programs and resources of the only research and training institute directed by an organization of the blind are found throughout this report. Therefore in this section we highlight a handful of the 2011 accomplishments that have sprung from our institute and that have not been covered elsewhere.

NFB Youth Slam

“My favorite part of the 2011 Youth Slam was being given the opportunity to interact with such a wide variety of people. I have never been around so many blind individuals and it is particularly empowering to see all their successes despite their struggles.” —an NFB Youth Slam student

The summer of 2011 was the time of the third biennial NFB Youth Slam—a five-day leadership academy in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) designed to engage and inspire the next generation of blind youth to consider careers that are falsely believed to be impossible for the



blind and bring a unified voice to the next generation of blind professionals. Hosted at Towson University in Maryland, one hundred and thirty-five blind high school students were mentored by blind role models during fun and challenging activities meant to build confidence and increase science literacy. The theme for this dynamic educational program was “Driving Change,” with the goal of teaching these future leaders that they have the capacity to achieve feats never before imagined.

With help from dozens of university and corporate partners, NFB Youth Slam provided educational content in ten concentrated areas, including biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, forensics, geoscience, journalism, nanoscience, robotics, and space science. Each student was assigned to one of these areas of study as their main track for the week and spent fifteen to seventeen hours learning and engaging in activities related to their chosen discipline over the five days. In addition to the ten tracks for the students, NFB Youth Slam featured a course for teachers of the blind. In this course, teachers learned about best practices in teaching blind students in various



The Youth Slam
inspires the next
generation of blind
youth to consider
careers that are falsely
believed to be
closed to them.



Photo by Steve Mackay

subjects, particularly how their blind students can function effectively without vision in the STEM classroom. Teachers received direct instruction from fellow educators and also spent a good deal of time observing the students' learning activities.

The blind students also participated in a variety of short courses to supplement the work they undertook in their primary area of study. Short courses included scientific topics, examinations of technology, and discussions about issues that impact blind students today.

Classroom activities concluded with "Pit Row," where each class set up and staffed a booth to share with their peers all of the knowledge they had acquired through the week. The students had a blast learning from and teaching their friends while the adults were astounded by all the knowledge the students managed to acquire in just a week.

The "Final Lap" of the 2011 NFB Youth Slam was a rare and empowering experience for all. Students participated in several fun activities, such as driving bumper cars, learning to change a tire, making car art, constructing rubber band cars, and watching a blind biker's stunt show. The climax of the afternoon's events was each student receiving the opportunity to ride in one of the NFB's Blind Driver Challenge™ cars with a trained blind driver at the wheel. This was the first time the cars had been piloted by blind drivers on city streets. While students rode around the four city streets surrounding the NFB Jernigan Institute, they talked with their blind driver and dreamt of how the world will be different once they put their imagination and commitment into pursuing their dreams.

Leadership and Advocacy in Washington, DC (LAW) Program

“I have also seen many positive changes in Brian. I owe it all to this life-changing experience of the NFB LAW Program. It has given him great confidence and the ability to get out of the house and take back his independence. I tried to provide those skills to him; however, I just couldn’t do what so many of you did for him.” —a parent of a 2011 LAW Program participant



If blind youth are to be effective advocates for themselves and others, they need to engage in leadership training and to learn about the history of legal and governmental systems that impact their lives. The NFB LAW Program has become one of the most sought-after opportunities for blind middle-school-aged students in America. The goal of the NFB LAW Program is to empower the next generation with leadership and advocacy skills, provide hands-on experience with the systems of government in the United States, and give perspective on the advancements of blind people through the unique resources available through the NFB. The program is a four-day seminar for blind students, ages 12–14,

hosted at the NFBJI in Baltimore, and includes a number of trips to our nation’s capitol.

During the 2011 program, students learned the history of the organized blind movement by dealing with source documents and artifacts from the Jacobus tenBroek Library. Students engaged in challenging activities that encouraged them to examine the circumstances that past generations of blind people faced in gaining greater independence and in establishing their rights as equal citizens. They expanded their thinking by applying what they learned to challenges faced in today’s society and making comparisons. Other educational classes taught them about past key legislation that impacts the blind, how those laws came into being, and possible future legislation. Activities held during the program provided useful skills for self-advocacy while also demonstrating the value of collective action.

And the students did not just talk about government—they had the opportunity to observe it in action and ask questions of those working in the halls of power. The students visited the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, toured the U.S. Capitol, and met with a blind employee at the U.S. Department of Justice. Each student also visited the office of his or her own member of the House of Representatives and presented his or her perspective as a blind student in today’s education system.

Parents and chaperones were invited to participate in a separate seminar that focused on topics related to transition goals and blindness skills. Through discussion and interactive sessions, the importance of encouraging age-appropriate behavior for blind youth and helping them to learn practical skills in the home were emphasized. These enthusiastic and newly empowered parents and educators returned home with a great network of contacts and many more resources than when they first arrived in Baltimore.



Jacobus tenBroek Law Symposium

The fourth annual Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium, “Bridging the Gap between the Disability Rights Movement and Other Civil Rights Movements,” took place April 14–15, 2011, and was co-hosted by the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute and the American Association of People with Disabilities. This annual symposium is now the premier event for examination of the intersection of disability and the laws governing our country. Future enhancements to the law will be a direct result of the discourse that occurred among legal scholars, practitioners, and other interested parties who attended this forum. The symposium featured workshops, plenary sessions, and keynote speakers. Over 150 people from throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe attended, representing 85 academic, advocacy, corporate, and governmental organizations.

Former Senator Christopher Dodd headed the list of leading advocates and scholars who made presentations and facilitated workshops. Other presenters included Assistant Secretary Russlynn Ali, Department of Education Office for Civil Rights; Assistant Secretary Kathleen Martinez, Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy; Commissioner Chai Feldblum, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Wade Henderson, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; and Andrew Imparato, senior counsel and disability policy director, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Workshop topics included a jury's perception of disability, high-stakes standardized testing and the Americans with Disabilities Act, advocating for people with disabilities in the criminal justice system, and the impact of reasonable accommodations on the employment of people with disabilities.

Jacobus tenBroek Library

The Jacobus tenBroek Library, named for the founding president of the NFB, is the only research library on blindness run by the blind. The library honors Dr. tenBroek—a scholar of constitutional law and professor at the University of California at Berkeley—by preserving his personal and professional papers and making them available to researchers, along with the organizational archives of the NFB and other unique items. During 2011, the NFB made great strides in building this one-of-a-kind collection and making it available via the Internet to everyone around the world.

In 2011, the tenBroek library completed development of a number of finding aids in order to help researchers make meaningful use of the tenBroek papers and other important collections. The library significantly stepped up its work to digitize books in the library collection to provide increased access to researchers who are blind and others with print disabilities. The central online catalog for the library collection—the Blind Cat (<http://www.nfb.org/theblindcat>)—is rapidly expanding and allowing anyone in the world to quickly examine which unique items on blindness are in the collection. All available historical speeches of NFB leaders are now available on the NFB Web site. In 2011, the Jacobus tenBroek Library was more widely used by NFB members, staff, and outside researchers than ever before, and with the commitment to further development of the collection, this trend is certain to continue.

Creating Business Opportunities

In 2011, the NFB worked closely with eBay, the world's largest online marketplace, to ensure that all of eBay's buying and selling functions were fully accessible to blind individuals. In addition, the training program for individuals to become education specialists trained by eBay became accessible to the blind for the first time, allowing blind entrepreneurs to become experienced sellers and train other blind people on the skills and tools necessary to do the same. Through this initiative to increase accessibility of the world's largest marketplace, a number of blind individuals received training on using the eBay platform, and through their skilled selling, reached the level of Top Rated Seller on eBay. The NFB remains committed to improving employment opportunities and increasing accessibility for the blind. We look forward to building many more meaningful partnerships of this type in 2012.



Our Donors

We would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions given in 2011. It is only because of their generosity that the National Federation of the Blind can continue to fulfill its mission to achieve widespread emotional acceptance and intellectual understanding that the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the misconceptions and lack of information that exist.

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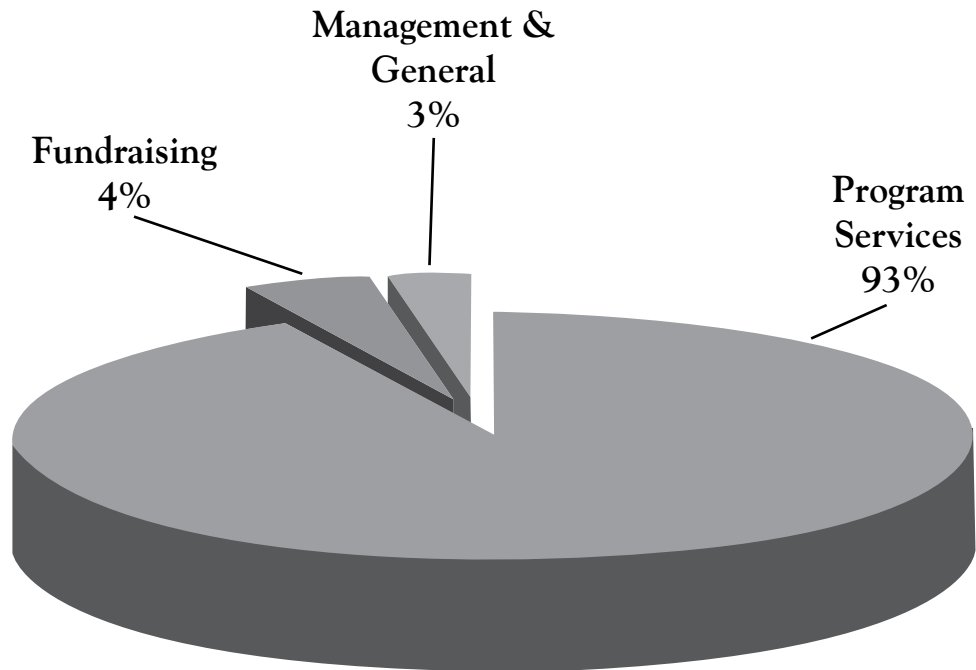
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Donations to the National Federation of the Blind, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, are deductible for computing income and estate taxes. Donors should consult their attorney or financial advisor to discuss the tax implications of any donation they make or contemplate making to the National Federation of the Blind.

Financial Statement

Statements of Activities Year Ended December 31, 2011



Program Service, Fundraising, and Management and General Expense as a Percent of Total Expenses

REVENUE AND GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support:	
Contributions	\$18,585,885
Braille Literacy Project Grant	2,217,090
Donated Services	4,898,322
Government Grants	132,599
<u>Total Public Support:</u>	<u>25,833,896</u>
Revenue:	
Sales - Independence Products and Publications	407,227
Investment Income (Loss)	(137,154)
Royalties	6,218
<u>Total Revenue:</u>	<u>276,291</u>
<u>Total Revenue and Gains and Other Support</u>	<u>\$26,110,187</u>

EXPENSES

Program Services:	
Blindness Integration	\$9,792,075
Civil Rights, Advocacy and Self-Organization	7,616,552
Nonvisual Access Technology, Methods and Systems	5,894,544
<u>Total Program Services</u>	<u>23,303,171</u>
Supporting Services	
Management and General	707,232
Fund Raising	1,088,034
<u>Total Supporting Services</u>	<u>1,795,266</u>
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$25,098,437</u>

Changes in Net Assets	\$1,011,750
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$26,056,945
Net Assets - End of Year	\$27,068,695



The National Federation of the Blind meets the rigorous Standards for Charity Accountability set forth by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance and is Top-Rated by the American Institute of Philanthropy.



**Tactile art makes art
accessible to the blind.**

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NFB

**NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND**

11:09 64F

A large, dark billboard is mounted on the roof of a brick building. On the left side of the billboard, there is a logo consisting of a stylized white figure with arms raised, above the letters "NFB" in a bold, serif font. To the right of the logo, the words "NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND" are written in a bold, sans-serif font, arranged in two lines. In the bottom right corner of the billboard, the time "11:09" and temperature "64F" are displayed in a smaller, sans-serif font. Two spotlights are mounted on the billboard's frame, one on the left and one on the right.

How You Can Help

As you have read in the previous pages, the National Federation of the Blind is a dynamic organization with numerous programs that dramatically improve the lives of blind people and people with low vision in the United States. We could not do this critical work without the generous support of others. Here are some ways that you can help us continue to do this important work:

Donate Online – Contributions by credit card may be given at one time or pledged over a period of time. Credit card donations can be made online at www.nfb.org.

Donate by Mail – Checks should be made out to the “National Federation of the Blind” and mailed to the National Federation of the Blind at 200 East Wells Street *at Jernigan Place*, Baltimore, Maryland 21230.

Honorary or Memorial Gifts – Contributions made to honor a special person, to commemorate a special occasion, or to pay tribute to an individual may be made by family members or friends. These gifts may be made online or by mail.

Bequests – You could name the National Federation of the Blind as the recipient of part of your estate in your will or as a designated beneficiary. You could also consider designating the NFB as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan, thereby giving a substantial gift for a relatively modest annual outlay of funds.

Life Income Gifts – These gifts provide income to the donor or other beneficiaries during their lifetimes, with the remainder being given to the NFB upon the death of the donor or beneficiary.

Appreciated Securities – Gifts of securities can be made by transferring ownership to the NFB. By making a gift of appreciated securities, the donor may claim an income tax charitable deduction based on the full market value of the gift.

Matching Gifts – Matching gifts are made by companies in order to encourage charitable giving by their employees. For more information on this type of program, contact the human resources department at your place of employment.

The following types of gifts are also appreciated, but please contact us first to make sure that your gift will be of use to the National Federation of the Blind:

Real Estate – Gifts of real property may be claimed as an income tax charitable deduction based on the fair market value of the property. Donors may also avoid capital gains taxes and eliminate certain costs associated with the transfer of real estate title.

In-Kind Donations – In-kind contributions of goods and services are welcomed by the National Federation of the Blind.

How Else Can I Help?

Become a Volunteer – Americans today devote millions of hours to helping charitable organizations. You too can make a difference by helping the NFB with your skills and talents. The National Federation of the Blind can match those skills and talents with our volunteer opportunities. For more information on our volunteer opportunities, please call Patricia Maurer at (410) 659-9314, extension 2272.

For more information on making a donation or gift to the NFB, please contact Outreach Programs at (410) 659-9314, extension 2423.

You can also follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nfb_voice or become a fan on Facebook at facebook.com/NationalFederationoftheBlind.



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*Thank you
for your
continued
support!*



NFB
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