

2012 *Annual Report*

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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 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.

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.

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, adaptive equipment, and support for blind people and their families, the members of the NFB and those who help us with our work 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.

President's Message

Dear Friends:

When the National Federation of the Blind was founded in 1940, the prospects for blind Americans were bleak. The overwhelming majority of blind people were not only unemployed, but also impoverished. It was still common to see blind people on street corners, either selling pencils or simply begging. Those blind people who had no family to care for them faced the very real possibility of starvation. The NFB was founded, first and foremost, as an advocacy organization to improve the lives of blind people and ultimately to help create a society in which the blind would be treated equally and have equal opportunities to succeed. Our original motto, "equality, opportunity, and security," reflected these priorities. Now, thanks to the efforts we have undertaken with the support of people like you, for which I express my profound gratitude, the situation of the blind in America has dramatically improved. The sight of a blind person begging for subsistence is rare. It is now possible to find blind people working in almost all of the careers and professions of modern society. More blind people than ever before have the tools and training they need to be independent and successful.



Marc Maurer

Yet, there is still much work to be done. The unemployment rate among blind people stubbornly remains at around 70 percent. Modern technology, while it presents us with access to more information than we have ever had, also presents formidable barriers when not properly designed to allow us to use it. And outdated attitudes, assumptions, and laws still hamper our progress.

One such law is Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The FLSA was passed in 1938 to improve working conditions and wages for all Americans, but Section 14(c) excludes the blind and other Americans with disabilities from these protections. Specifically, it allows the Secretary of Labor to issue Special Wage Certificates to certain employers of people with disabilities. These certificates allow these employers to pay their workers less than the federal minimum wage. At the time the law came into being, it was commonly believed that workers with disabilities could not be as productive as so-called "able-bodied" workers. Since our founding, the National Federation of the Blind has rejected this myth, and the disability rights movement that has grown and prospered in our wake has also come to reject it. There are even laws on the books now that specifically allow the disabled into the mainstream workforce and prohibit discrimination against us, the most familiar of which is the landmark Ameri-

cans with Disabilities Act. But Section 14(c) of the FLSA remains in force, trapping some 300,000 workers with disabilities in dead-end jobs that, in some cases, literally pay them pennies per hour.

The employers who perpetuate the subminimum wage system, many of whom receive lucrative government contracts and philanthropic donations that bring in millions of dollars, claim that they could not operate if forced to pay their workers competitive wages and that their workers would therefore be left to spend their days in idleness and despair. From listening to their arguments, you would think that all the progress I have just described had never occurred. But Americans with disabilities today don't have to choose between pennies per hour and sitting at home collecting public benefits. Proven strategies exist that allow workers with even the most severe disabilities to find competitive, remunerative employment. Techniques have been found that allow people with disabilities to perform jobs that would have been unimaginable even a few decades ago. It is long past time for an outdated law based on outdated assumptions to be changed. If the blind and our brothers and sisters with other disabilities are to walk the last miles along the road to true equality and independence, then the barriers that still block our progress must come down. Altering or abolishing laws or practices that are discriminatory is not the only step to ending discrimination, but history teaches that it is an essential step. Slavery was not abolished until the Thirteenth Amendment prohibiting it was ratified, nor were women granted universal suffrage until the Nineteenth Amendment became law. Jim Crow segregation did not die until the Supreme Court and the Civil Rights Act dealt it fatal blows. The plight of workers with disabilities cannot and will not meaningfully change until Section 14(c) is stricken from the books. In 2012, we made significant progress toward achieving this goal. What started as our single voice calling to have the law changed has grown into a chorus of fifty organizations of people with disabilities making this demand. Eliminating subminimum wages was not even a meaningful part of the conversation about disability rights before we began to speak out, but by the end of 2012 the National Council on Disability, a federal agency that advises government policymakers, had issued a report recommending that subminimum wages be phased out. With your support, we will continue this battle in 2013, and we will not desist until the law is changed.

As readers of these reports well know, the National Federation of the Blind is also securing a bright future for blind Americans by making sure that blind children receive a quality education. To that end, we continued to expand our landmark Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) program in 2012 to include eighteen such programs in eleven states. The BELL program allows young blind children to learn about Braille and how they can apply it to everyday tasks, such as reading a recipe and labeling the ingredients to cook it. We also launched our National Reading Media Assessment, a new tool to help teachers of children who are blind or who have low vision to determine whether their students should use Braille, print, or both. We also continued to provide innovative training in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects to

blind youth. In 2012, we tried an approach that we have never attempted before: we let the students tell us what they wanted to learn and enabled them to design their own courses of study. The result was Project Innovation, a STEM academy in which blind children from ages seven to eleven worked with blind high school students acting as mentors to conduct their own investigations and experiments in scientific subjects. Our innovative young scientists designed experiments that ranged from building a space elevator prototype; to constructing a hovercraft; to exploring the effect that different candies, flavorings, and other additives have on the freezing temperature of ice cream. At the end of the session, the students participated in the Innovation Expo. It was truly inspiring to watch these young innovators show off their experiments and teach their peers—and all of us grownups, too—what they had learned.

Access to information is critical to the blind as well as to our sighted peers, so we were proud in 2012 to continue to enhance and expand our NFB-NEWSLINE® service. Last summer, we launched an NFB-NEWSLINE® app for the iPhone and other devices running Apple's iOS operating system. The app, which allows NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers to read their favorite newspapers, magazines, and TV listings on their iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch, is a smash hit with NFB-NEWSLINE® users. We also added emergency weather alerts to NFB-NEWSLINE® in collaboration with Accu-Weather®, and of course we continued to add new publications and content sources to the service.

We are able to do all of the things I have described, and so much more, with the support of members, friends, and volunteers like you. We're reaching out to our nation's blind veterans; helping them adjust to vision loss and get the benefits and services that they deserve. We are working with government agencies, technology companies, and large and small businesses to ensure that blind people have access to the same technology and digital information as our sighted peers. We are also helping seniors adjust to vision loss, providing canes and other tools to enhance the independence of blind people, and even continuing to help Santa Claus over the holidays by sending Braille letters from him to blind boys and girls. We will continue to do all of these things with your help, but that help is more critical than ever in these economic times. I thank you for what you have done and ask for your continued support as we continue to move forward toward a bright future for all blind Americans.

Sincerely,



Marc Maurer, President
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



*The NFB strives to spread
the word that the blind are
normal individuals who can
compete on equal terms with
their sighted peers.*

Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities

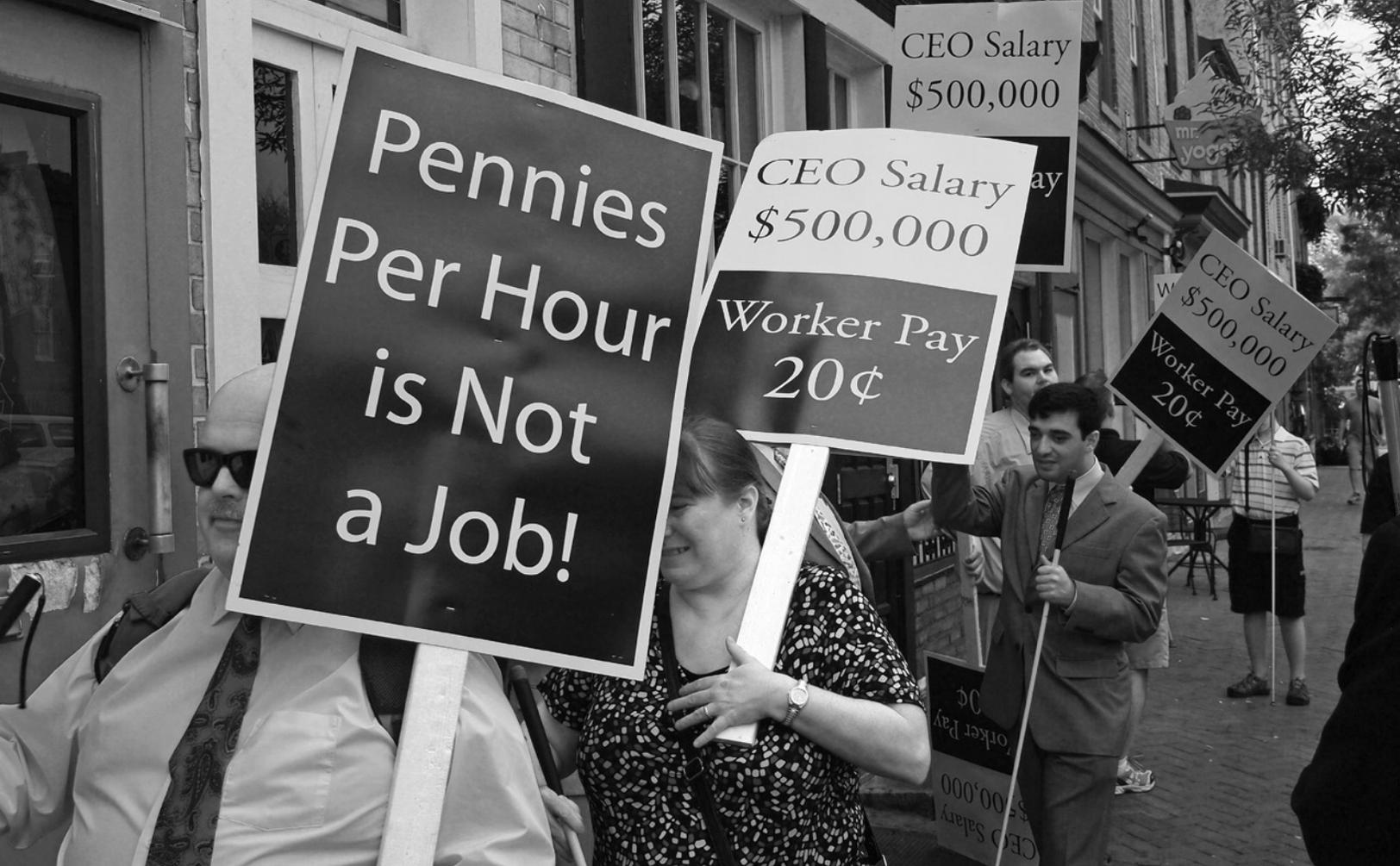
The National Federation of the Blind is, at its core, a grassroots civil rights movement consisting of blind people, our family members, and friends. Our movement is founded on the principles of equality and full participation of blind people in every aspect of society. Although we have made significant strides toward achieving equality of opportunity, many barriers to our full participation as American citizens continue to exist. Most notable are the barriers that blind people face in our efforts to obtain competitive, integrated employment. Although laws prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment are in place, ignorance about the true employment capacity of the blind, lack of awareness about assistive work technologies among employers, the deficiency of proper educational and training opportunities for blind workers, and the overwhelmingly low vocational expectations for the blind held by society all contribute to an unemployment rate of over 70 percent for working age blind adults. Members of the NFB accept the responsibility and welcome the opportunity to play a part in developing strategies to address all of these issues effectively, but our ability to be successful is significantly hindered when we are denied the same fundamental rights as every other American citizen.

In 1938, policymakers, acting on a laudable but misdirected desire to integrate people with disabilities into the workforce, implemented Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a provision that authorizes the U.S. Department of Labor to issue Special Wage Certificates to employers, permitting them to pay workers with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage. As a result of the erroneous belief, commonly held in 1938 but long since disproved, that people with disabilities cannot be productive employees, employers are permitted to pay workers with disabilities subminimum wages that are supposedly based on their productivity. This denial of fundamental wage protections to workers with disabilities, although masked as a

compassionate offering of a work opportunity that would otherwise not be available, leaves over 300,000 people with disabilities employed at subminimum wages, some as low as three cents per hour.

Members of the National Federation of the Blind are faced with over seventy years of institutionalized thinking that people with disabilities lack the ability to fully participate in the workplace, and we fight every day to demonstrate to the world that blind people have capacity. Because we have dared to believe in ourselves, today there are blind lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, members of the clergy, automobile mechanics, computer programmers, farmers, and more. The truth is that there are any number of jobs that match the unique skills, talents, interests and abilities of people with even the most significant disabilities. Moreover, assistive technology exists that allows people with disabilities to perform job tasks with the quality and efficiency of non-disabled employees. Although the diversity of jobs and the availability of assistive technology have made it possible for individuals with all disabilities to be productive employees, society's negative attitudes and low expectations continue to severely limit opportunities for competitive employment. And as long as it remains legal to pay workers with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage, there will be those who exploit these misconceptions in order to justify employing workers with disabilities at subminimum wages, leaving hundreds of thousands of individuals in segregated work environments that are separate and unequal.

Despite research demonstrating that segregated, subminimum wage work environments teach workers with disabilities obsolete skills and unproductive work habits that must be unlearned in order for them to become competitively employed, along with well-documented cases of subminimum wage employees working



in poor conditions that are not acceptable in any modern workplace, advocates of Special Wage Certificates argue that the answer is simply better enforcement of compliance with current federal and state rules. But perpetuation of the current system is acquiescence in the face of discrimination. Slavery, the denial of the right to vote for women, and other forms of discrimination against classes of individuals based solely on a characteristic that the individuals possessed were once lawful. Society eventually realized that the only way to eliminate such discrimination is to make it unlawful. Section 14(c) of the FLSA, enacted out of ignorance about the true capacity of people with disabilities, is fundamentally morally wrong. The only way to correct this injustice is to repeal this discriminatory provision.

In 2012, the National Federation of the Blind made significant progress toward achieving this goal. What started as our single voice calling to have the law changed has grown into a chorus of fifty organizations of people with disabilities making this demand. Eliminating subminimum wages was not part of the conversation about disability rights before we began to speak out, but by the end of 2012 the National Council on Disability, a federal agency that advises Congress and the President on disability issues, had issued a report recommending that subminimum wages be phased out.

We are the voice of the nation's blind, and we will use our voice to speak out against people, policies, or programs that seek to exploit us or reduce us to a status of second class citizenship. We look forward to a day when all blind Americans have wage security, real opportunity, and true equality.

For more information on this important issue, please visit www.nfb.org/fairwages.





Program and Service Accomplishments

Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards

Each year the National Federation of the Blind distributes Dr. Jacob Bolotin cash awards at its annual 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 a basis of equality. The Jacob Bolotin Award Program is funded through the generosity of Dr. Bolotin's nephew and niece, Alfred and Rosalind Perlman. The late Mrs. Perlman established the Alfred and Rosalind Perlman Trust to endow the award program. Mrs. Perlman also wrote *The Blind Doctor: The Jacob Bolotin Story*. The book was published by Blue Point Books.



Dr. Jacob Bolotin (1888-1924) was a blind physician who 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 fifth annual Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards, with a total cash value of \$80,000, honored five innovators in the blindness field on Thursday, July 5, 2012, as part of the National Federation of the Blind annual convention in Dallas. The ten NFB affiliates conducting the Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) program this summer were given a joint award in the amount of \$30,000 for their critically important work bringing Braille and literacy into the lives of blind children and their parents. The DAISY Consortium was awarded \$20,000 for its solid record of accomplishment in making reading accessible to the blind. A \$15,000 award was given to Baker & Taylor for its industry-leading example in making its e-book products accessible. Henry "Hoby" Wedler was awarded \$10,000 for his extraordinary work in making chemistry accessible to the blind, and Ann Cunningham was awarded \$5,000 for her efforts in tearing down the barriers to art appreciation and participation by the blind.

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 \$120,000 is awarded to the thirty winners. The scholarships are presented at the banquet of the National Federation of the Blind convention, which in 2012 took place in Dallas, Texas. This year's scholarship class included two tenBroek

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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 2012 winner of this scholarship, Chrys Buckley, spoke movingly of the importance of the mentors and friends gained over her week at convention, and about her future plans to get her doctorate.

The members of the 2012 scholarship class were a diverse group studying a broad range of disciplines including special education, public policy, pediatrics, law, finance, and music. They represent the best and brightest our country has to offer; and just as important, they represent the future leadership of the National Federation of the Blind.

Here is the complete list of 2012 scholarship winners and the awards they received:

\$3,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: Cody Bair, Brandon Biggs, Nallym Bravo, Robert Campbell, Jordyn Castor, Christopher De Jesus, Michael Foster, Sierra Gregg, Rachel Grider, Brandon Trey Lewis, Alyssa Munsell, Valeria Paradiso, Emily Pennington, Briley Pollard, Rylie Robinson, April Scurlock, Jennifer Shields, Michael Sipes, Rose Sloan, Kyra Sweeney, and Brandy Wood.

\$3,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Memorial Scholarship: Stephanie O'Donnell.

\$5,000 Larry Streeter Memorial Scholarship: Harriet Go.

\$5,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: Kimie Beverly, Matthew Bowers, and Monica Villarreal.

\$7,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: ShaQuantaey Mack and Brandon Terry.

\$10,000 Marvin and Mimi Sandler Scholarship: Elizabeth Troutman.

\$12,000 Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship (donated by the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults): Chrys Buckley.

NFB-NEWSLINE®: Revolutionizing Access to Information for the Blind in the 21st Century

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. NFB-NEWSLINE® is an audio information service that provides access to over three hundred local newspapers; six national newspapers; ten international newspapers; four Spanish newspapers; thirty-eight magazines; and blindness specific publications, including the *Braille Monitor*, the *Matilda Ziegler Magazine*, and *Future Reflections*.

In addition to newspapers and magazines, NFB-NEWSLINE® provides access to interactive TV listings, job listings, and weekly advertisements from Target Corporation. With the addition of Nevada in September 2012, NFB-NEWSLINE® operates in 45 states.

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The NFB-NEWSLINE® mobile app for iPhone and all iOS devices was released to the public in June 2012. The NFB-NEWSLINE® mobile app allows NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers to read all their favorite newspapers and magazines from their iPad, iPhone, or iPod Touch. The NFB-NEWSLINE® mobile app is compatible with all iOS devices running iOS version 4.3 or later.

In July 2012, a new feature called My Newspaper was launched, which allows subscribers to create a personalized newspaper containing the sections from different periodicals that interest them the most. For example, a subscriber can select the Business section from the *Boston Globe*, the Sports section of the *Chicago Tribune*, and the Technology section of the *New York Times*, etc., to create a customized newspaper. A user's My Newspaper feature can be accessed through all access methods—telephone, computer, and the NFB-NEWSLINE® mobile app.

In the fall of 2012, an emergency weather alert service was added to NFB-NEWSLINE®. This service is provided in collaboration with AccuWeather®, and it brings emergency weather alerts to NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers based on their zip code. NFB-NEWSLINE® is the

first information access service for the blind to provide instantaneous independent access to emergency weather alerts. The new AccuWeather® emergency alert feature provides announcements on tornadoes, wildfires, flash floods, snowstorms, hurricanes, and other natural disasters or severe weather conditions. The new emergency weather alert system is a service that provides safety instructions and timely information to blind NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers.

In December 2012, a new Breaking News Online category was added to NFB-NEWSLINE®. The Breaking News Online section carries breaking news from the BBC, CNN, Fox News, and the *Huffington Post*. The Breaking News publications are similar to the Associated Press and United Press International news wires in that they are constantly updated throughout the day.

In 2012 a total of sixteen new publications were added to the NFB-NEWSLINE® service: two publications to the new Breaking News Online section, three publications to the international newspapers list, three publications to the blindness-specific publications section, and eight local newspapers.

This year 5,778 new subscribers signed up for NFB-NEWSLINE®, bringing the total number of subscribers to 99,995. During 2012, a total of 2,066,527 calls were made to NFB-NEWSLINE® over the telephone. NFB-NEWSLINE® provided 37,608,752 minutes of news to subscribers. Over the same time 2,181,375 newspapers were e-mailed to subscribers. In 2012 TV listings were accessed 588,456 times, and magazines were accessed 243,924 times. From the time that the NFB-NEWSLINE® mobile app was released in June 2012 to the end of the year, the NFB-NEWSLINE® service was accessed 97,664 times using the mobile app on iOS devices. NFB-NEWSLINE® service was accessed a total of 334,282 times on the Web in 2012.





Braille Programs

In 2012, 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.

NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL)

The NFB BELL program, which was developed by members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland in 2008, provides two weeks of Braille instruction to blind and low vision students who can benefit from additional Braille education in the summer months. This unique program brings together successful blind mentors and students, enabling the students to

foster a positive attitude about Braille and an understanding that Braille is an invaluable tool for completing a wide variety of tasks. During the program, students expand their understanding of the uses for Braille in their daily lives by engaging in authentic real-world activities, such as using Braille while cooking to read recipes and identify or label ingredients. Students also do a great deal of learning through games. For example, students who are just being introduced to Braille play “Braille Twister” to practice the dot patterns used to form the various letters of the alphabet. In addition to serving blind students, the program provides parents with training and resources so they can ensure their blind children grow up to be successful adults. In the summer of 2012, eleven states hosted eighteen NFB BELL programs, which served blind students all over the United States. The students who attend the NFB BELL program leave excited about Braille, eager to learn more, and connected with dozens of blind adults who can answer any question they may have about Braille!

Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest

2012 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Braille Readers Are Leaders program, a popular Braille initiative of the National Federation of the Blind that has expanded to serve blind adults. Our three-fold purpose is to promote the joy of reading for pleasure, to inspire a pride in Braille as a viable literacy medium equal to print, and to demonstrate the importance of independent reading in the development of Braille literacy skills. Good readers have confidence in themselves and in their ability to learn and to adapt to new situations throughout their lifetimes. Among employed blind people, it is estimated that 85 percent are proficient Braille readers. All adults, whether proficient or new Braille readers, were invited to participate in this year’s contest, and nearly 150 people did. Also in 2012, work began on transforming the K-12 piece of the program into a more authentic experience for today’s digital natives. When completed, the refreshed program for K-12 students, BRL360,

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



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will provide an online community for Braille readers around the country through which they can share and celebrate their growth in literacy.

Braille Reading Pals

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 2012 nearly 400 families participated, starting their children off on a long life of Braille reading.

Braille is Beautiful

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

In December the National Federation of the Blind once again offered a special service for children who read Braille. For the sixth 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 nearly 300 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 of the Library of Congress (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 2012 the program has submitted the names of 1,424 individuals to the Library of Congress, indicating that they have successfully completed the certification courses in literary, mathematics, and music transcribing or proofreading.

National Reading Media Assessment and Dual Media Book

In 2012 the NFB Jernigan Institute and the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University launched the National Reading Media Assessment (NRMA) for use by teachers of blind and low vision students. The NRMA is a research-based, standardized assessment tool designed to determine the appropriate reading medium/media for students who are blind or have low vision. It was developed to ensure that the reading medium is appropriately identified for

both current and future need and to ensure that student success is facilitated by correct identification of literacy needs. The NRMA is an accurate, easy-to-use tool that will clearly identify the reading medium or media of blind children or those with low vision. This tool will determine whether each child who is assessed should be taught Braille, print, or both. With the NRMA, teachers can evaluate pre-readers and students in grades K-12 who have an identified visual impairment and who have enough visual function to identify print letters or shapes by sight. Teachers can complete, save, and print assessments using our new electronic assessment interface.

Another new resource for parents and teachers of blind children was created in 2012—*Integrating Print and Braille: A Recipe for Literacy*. This free book was edited by long-time NFB leader and educational advocate Sharon Maneki. It shares practical wisdom from teachers, parents, and successful blind adults about techniques and strategies for teaching and learning print and Braille together to achieve literacy.

NFB Jernigan Institute

As we celebrate the close of the ninth year of operating the NFB Jernigan Institute, the words of Dr. Marc Maurer at the grand opening of this forward-looking venture still ring true: “The number of people who have sacrificed to build the National Federation of the Blind Research and Training Institute is outstanding, and I appreciate all of the sacrifices. Why have we asked all of us to give so much? It is because we believe that there are things worth knowing that we have not yet learned and plans worth making we have not yet found the resources to create. What does the future hold for us, and how do we believe it will be put into concrete form? In specific details we are still exploring what it will be, but in the overall approach this question is easy to answer.”



Fueled by the individual experiences and dreams of blind people around the country, the NFB Jernigan Institute serves as an important tool for expanding the horizons of independence and building on the legacy of the Federation. The continued evolution of programs, research, and development undertaken through our Institute requires as much sacrifice and determination as the building of the physical structure did a decade ago. The impact of our work has been highlighted in other sections of this annual report, since the Jernigan Institute is simply an extension of the National Federation of the Blind. Below are some of the other accomplishments we have achieved during the past year.

Project Innovation

In the summer of 2012, the National Federation of the Blind held the first-ever Project Innovation. This pioneer science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education program focused on fostering a sense of innovation and autonomy in young students by allowing them to determine their course of study during the week of the program. Students ultimately focused on one discipline, designing an investigation within that area and showcasing it at the Innovators Expo. Student investigations ranged from the construction of a space elevator prototype, to the construction of a hovercraft, to the effect the addition of various candies and additives have to the rate at which ice cream freezes. The program primarily served students aged seven to eleven, but it also offered a handful of high school students the opportunity to participate in the student-centered, inquiry-based learning while simultaneously refining their skills in the areas of leadership and mentoring as they worked hand-in-hand with younger students. The parents and chaperones who accompanied the younger students also had an opportunity to learn a great deal through a variety of workshops and hands-on activities.

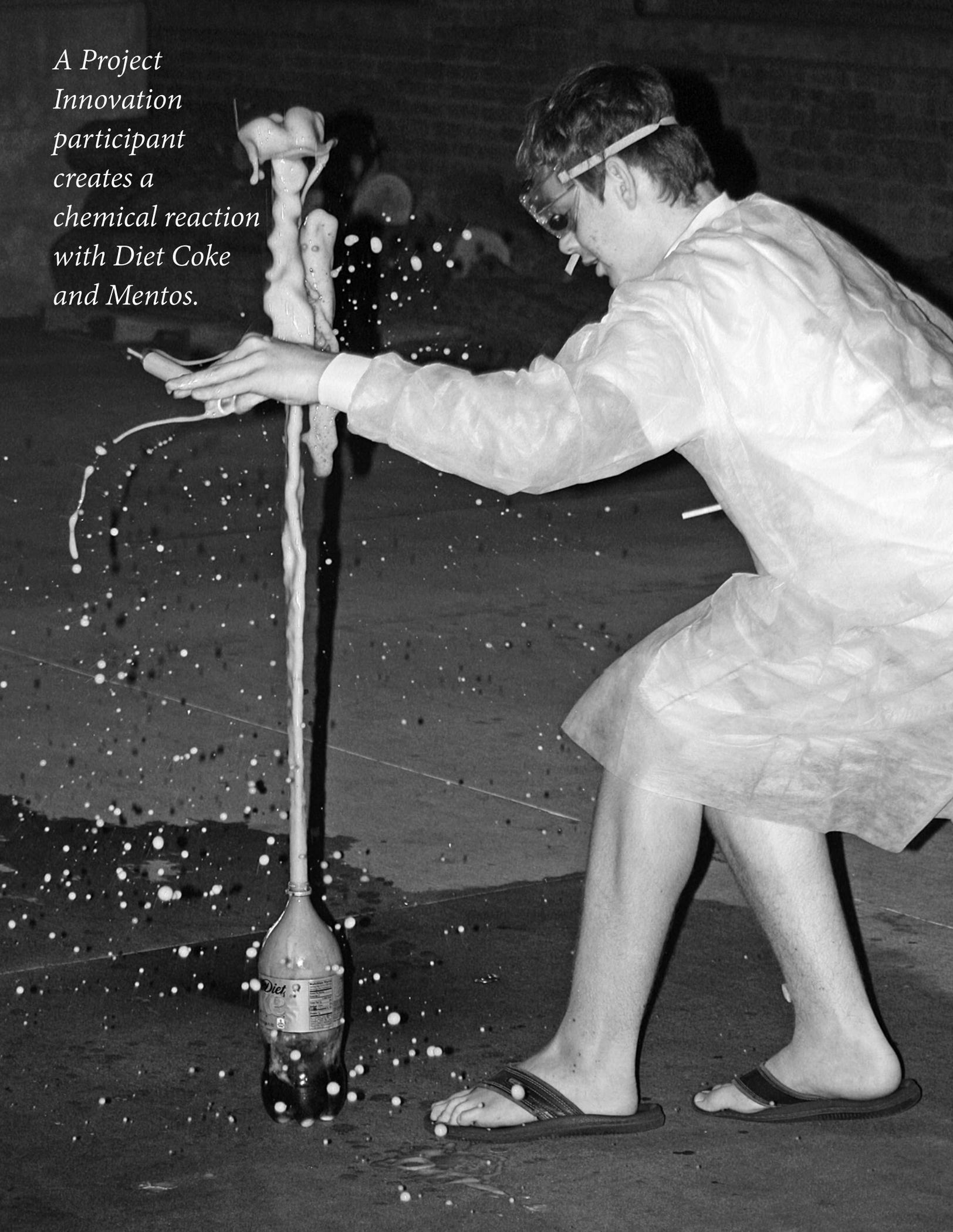
Access Technology and Nonvisual Access to Voting

The NFB continues the operation of the International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind (IBTC)—a one-of-a-kind evaluation center that houses over \$2.5 million worth of technology for the blind. Our technology center continues to evolve as we make progress on achieving mainstream access to devices available to the general public. Mainstream smartphones, PDAs, and e-book readers with varying levels of nonvisual access are continually added to our collection, and the progress we have seen in mainstream access is both exciting and disappointing. Many technologies used in education and business do not come equipped with nonvisual accessibility. When universities implement technologies without requiring that those technologies include accessibility, blind students are shut out of full participation in their classes and forced to rely on a second-class system of education.

In addition to the tens of thousands of dollars in new hardware and software added in 2012, the IBTC received a facelift. The north end of the space was re-floored, rewired, and redesigned to allow us to produce Braille for the blind of the nation more effectively. Documents for the Braille Certification, Braille Enrichment, and Braille Pals programs, as well as dozens of other programs and services, are produced in this streamlined and updated Braille production area.

NFB's access technology team works closely with blind consumers, as well as technology producers and large organizations implementing technology, to ensure that the accessibility of products is prioritized. This unbiased technology expertise is unparalleled and provides an invaluable service to the blind of the nation. Our access technology team has made dozens of appearances around the country to promote nonvisual access and to share best practices in accessibility.

*A Project
Innovation
participant
creates a
chemical reaction
with Diet Coke
and Mentos.*





The NFB continues to provide leadership in promoting and protecting the right to a secret, verifiable ballot for every blind voter. Through a protection and advocacy grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL), the NFB operates the National Center for Nonvisual Election Technology, where voting technologies are displayed and tested for nonvisual access. Consistent with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the NFB conducts outreach activities, in conjunction with protection and advocacy organizations, to ensure that blind people facing barriers in voting receive timely and appropriate assistance. Likewise, the NFB continues to track progress in voting through its voter hotline (operated on Election Day during the recent presidential election). Surveys done after the election confirm that there is a significant need for continued outreach and advocacy for the blind in many polling districts. Finally, the NFB continues to promote active participation in the voting process by ensuring that blind people have access to information about how to register to vote and by encouraging blind people to participate as poll workers on Election Day.

Leadership and Advocacy in Washington (LAW) Program

The NFB works daily to build leadership among the blind, and the next generation is no exception. Through our NFB Leadership and Advocacy in Washington (LAW) Program, we help blind students (grades six through nine) find their own voice through a unique and empowering leadership experience. This year twenty-three students from fifteen states came together to learn about leadership and advocacy through a four-day experience utilizing a variety of educational resources only available at the NFB Jernigan Institute. The LAW curriculum incorporated authentic historical documents from the Jacobus tenBroek Library, allowing students to examine historical problems faced by the blind

Accomplishments

and how the problems were overcome through a variety of social change approaches. The students were equipped with Apple iPads and iPods (fully accessible using the built-in speech and support for refreshable Braille devices) as tools for providing authentic learning experiences while giving the students an opportunity to utilize technologies they are likely to encounter in their home classrooms.

Each student was accompanied by a chaperone, either a parent or teacher, who attended parallel learning sessions geared toward empowering the adults to better prepare their children for success with the tools and knowledge to maximize their independence. Students and chaperones benefited from interaction with successful blind mentors and a number of NFB leaders who volunteered their time to share their experience and expertise.

On the final day of the program, the students traveled to Capitol Hill, where they met with their members of Congress to share their frustration with inaccessible technology and to discuss their dreams of a future full of better opportunities for the blind.

Teacher Excellence

Blind children can thrive when they have teachers who have high expectations and positive attitudes about blindness. The NFB Jernigan Institute has made a commitment to teacher excellence by providing professional development opportunities for teachers and by establishing a unique teacher enrichment program. In 2012, the first Teacher Leader Seminar was held. This one-of-a-kind weekend conference brought together professionals in the field of educating blind children to develop their skills in a variety of areas while expanding their network of professional contacts and utilizing social media tools to share their learning. The Teacher Leader Seminar will serve as a model for the Jernigan Institute to develop future professional development activities for teachers.

The NFB Teacher of Tomorrow program is a one-year enrichment program for pre-service teachers of blind students. This program provides intensive exposure to blind adult role models, investigation of critical issues facing blind students, and an unparalleled opportunity to cultivate professional contacts. Leveraging assets unique to the NFB—the International Braille and Technology Center, the NFB national convention, a nationwide network of blind professionals, and new educational assessment tools—the Teacher of Tomorrow program ensures that new teachers of blind students are best prepared to step into the classroom and help blind students maximize their independence.

Jacobus tenBroek Law Symposium

Dr. Jacobus tenBroek was the founder and first President of the National Federation of the Blind. His legal scholarship helped to set the stage for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and was instrumental in changing the understanding of disability from arguments about special privilege to a civil rights issue. In honor and advancement of his legacy, the NFB Jernigan Institute established a law symposium in his name. Since the inaugural Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium in 2008, disability rights lawyers and advocates have traveled annually to the Jernigan Institute from throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe to hear nationally and internationally recognized disability rights advocates discuss the current status of disability rights and how the struggle continues for the right of people with disabilities to live in the world.

The Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium is an innovative forum for discourse around the status of disability law in the United States. Over one hundred and fifty advocates representing more than eighty academic, government, corporate, and advocacy organizations attended the 2012 symposium. The organizations represented included Disability Rights

Iowa, the American Diabetes Association, the National Association of the Deaf, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Disability Rights Advocates, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, National Disability Rights Network, Google Inc., and Yale Law School. International organizations represented at the symposium have included the National University of Ireland, Galway; the City of Paris; and ARCH Disability Law Centre (Canada).

Through the discussions that occur at the symposium, relationships are built and collaborative efforts are established that help to advance opportunities for people with disabilities. The law symposium has also become an excellent forum for young law students with disabilities to get to know experienced professionals in disability law, including lawyers with disabilities. The symposium has established an ongoing forum for mentoring and dialogue that cannot be found anywhere else in the country.

Jacobus tenBroek Library

The Jacobus tenBroek Library is the only research library on blindness run by the blind. The cornerstone of the library collection is the set of personal and professional papers of Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, which were made available to the NFB by his wife Hazel tenBroek—herself a significant contributor to the organized blind movement. The library continues to be this nation’s premier library collection on the nonmedical aspects of blindness—achievements of the blind, educational resources, rehabilitation practices, civil rights, literature by the blind and about the blind, music and art by the blind, and dozens of other areas of interest to scholars.

During the past year, the NFB continued to build this one-of-a-kind collection to make it available via the Internet to everyone around the world. Researchers can access the holdings of the tenBroek Library through our fully accessible online portals. The Cane Tip (<http://archon.nfb.org/>) is our database for finding aids that describe the manuscript and archival collections held by the library, including the papers of Dr. tenBroek, Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, and a number of other personal collections, in addition to the NFB Institutional Archives. The Blind Cat (<http://webopac.infovisionsoftware.com/nfb/>) is our online public access catalog (OPAC) where researchers can search our robust collection of published materials including print, talking book, Braille, and digital formats.

A significant advancement during the past year was the formalization of the Jernigan Institute Oral History Program. Although the activity of recording and preserving the history of the movement has long been a priority of the library, the recorded interviews are now organized, and members of the Federation have been given tools to assist in capturing interviews with people who have made significant contributions to the organized blind movement. Nine new interviews with Federationists such as members of the NFB Scholarship Committee, the editors of the *Braille Monitor* and *Future Reflections*, and two current NFB officers were conducted and archived last year.





Our Donors

We would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions given in 2012. 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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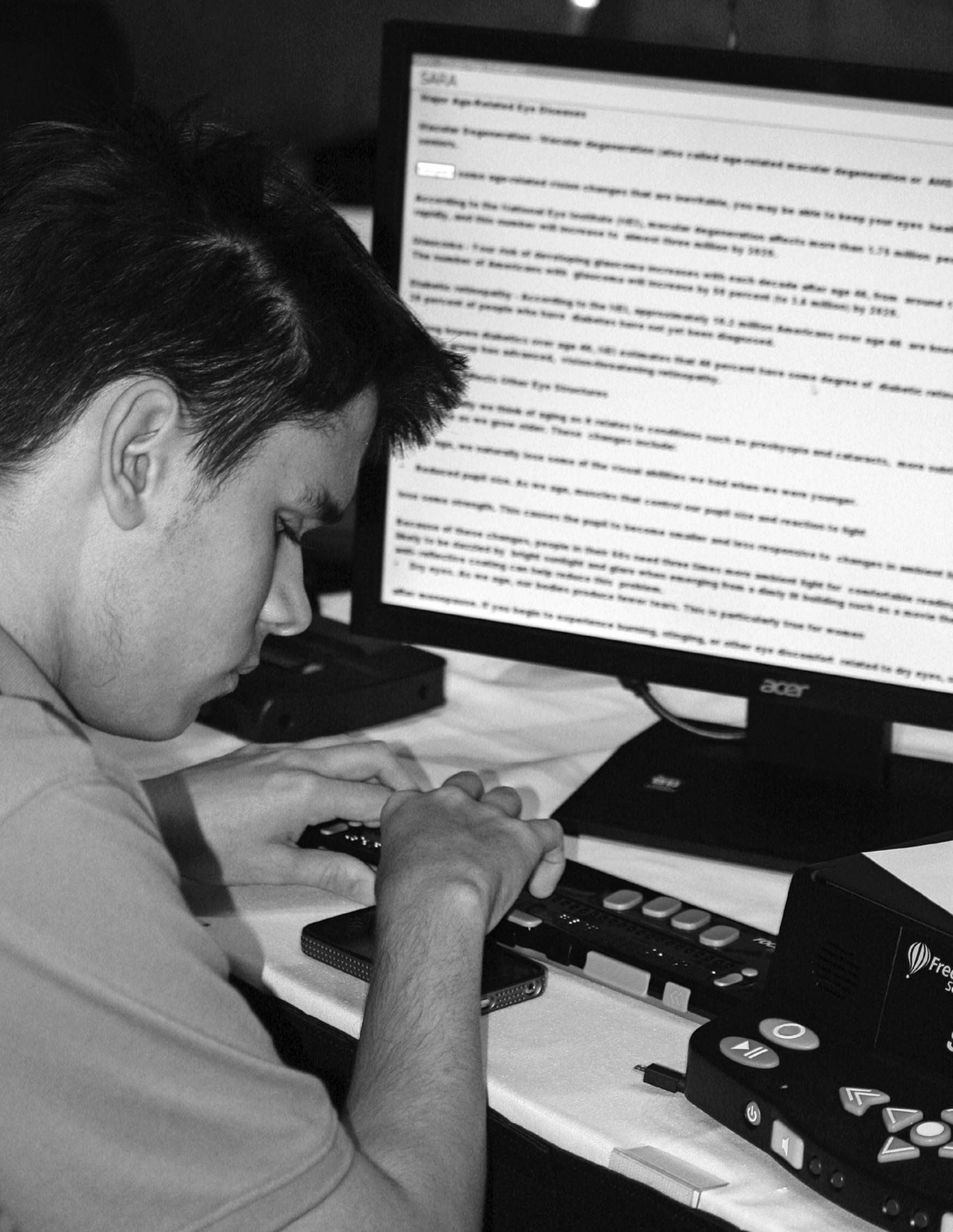
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SARA

Major Age-Related Eye Diseases

Macular Degeneration - Macular Degeneration (also called age-related macular degeneration or AMD) causes age-related vision changes that are inevitable, you may be able to keep your eyes healthy.

According to the National Eye Institute (NEI), Macular Degeneration affects more than 1.75 million people in the United States, and this number will increase to almost three million by 2028.

Glaucoma - Your risk of developing glaucoma increases with each decade after age 40, from around 1 percent at age 40 to 10 percent at age 70. The number of Americans with glaucoma will increase by 58 percent (to 3.8 million) by 2028.

Diabetic Retinopathy - According to the NEI, approximately 18.2 million Americans over age 40 are known to have diabetes, and 10 percent of people who have diabetes have not yet been diagnosed.

Long-term diabetes over age 40, NEI estimates that 68 percent have some degree of diabetic retinopathy. This is a serious eye disease that can lead to blindness if not treated.

Other Eye Structures

As we think of aging as it relates to conditions such as presbyopia and cataracts, more subtle changes occur as we grow older. These changes include:

- **Reduced pupil size.** As we age, muscles that control our pupil size and reaction to light become less strong. This causes the pupil to become smaller and less responsive to changes in ambient light.

- **Decrease in tear production.** As we age, our tear glands produce fewer tears. This is particularly true for women.

Many of these changes, people in their 50s need three times more ambient light for comfortable reading. This is due to the fact that the lens of the eye becomes less transparent with age, and the eye's ability to focus light on the retina is reduced.

- **Dry eyes.** As we age, our bodies produce fewer tears. This is particularly true for women.

After menopause, if you begin to experience burning, stinging, or other eye discomfort related to dry eyes, you may want to use artificial tears.

acer

Free S

Friends \$1,000-\$2,499, *continued*

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The Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society

The Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society honors friends of the National Federation of the Blind who are helping build a future full of opportunities for the blind through their commitment of a legacy gift to the organization. Legacy gifts can be made in the form of:

1. A will or living trust
2. A life-income gift
3. Making the NFB a beneficiary of a life-insurance policy or retirement plan

Enrollment in the Legacy Society is simply a matter of advising the National Federation of the Blind, in writing, that you have included the NFB in your estate plan. Members of the Legacy Society will receive:

- Special recognition in NFB publications (If a donor wishes to remain anonymous, the National Federation of the Blind will honor this request.)
- A specially designed "thank you" gift
- Copy of NFB publications, and
- The satisfaction of contributing to the future success of the NFB mission

Below is a list of current members of the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society. Two current members have chosen to remain anonymous. The National Federation of the Blind would like to thank all of these individuals for their commitment to our organization and our mission:

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Christopher S. Danielsen
Parnell and Kim Diggs
James Gashel
Ever Lee Hairston
Barbara Kirsh
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Anil Lewis

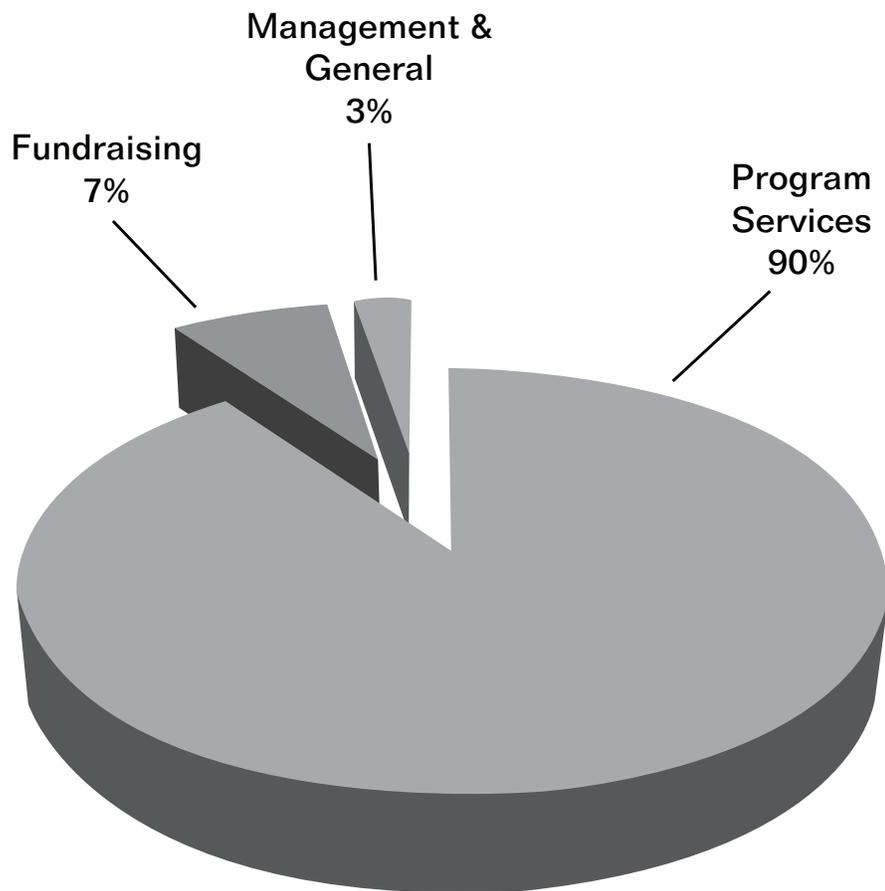
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Andrew P. Virden
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Financial statements presented have been audited by Rosen, Sapperstein and Friedlander, Chartered. Complete audited statements with accompanying notes for the National Federation of the Blind can be obtained by contacting the offices of the National Federation of the Blind, 200 East Wells Street at Jernigan Place, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, (410) 659-9314.

The National Federation of the Blind, a tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is eligible to receive contributions that 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, 2012



**Program Services, Fundraising,
and Management and General Expense
as a percent of Total Expenses**

REVENUE AND GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support:	
Contributions	\$14,551,923
Donated Services	4,990,489
Government Grants	126,243
Total Public Support:	19,668,655
Revenue:	
Sales - Independence Products and Publications	394,753
Investment Income (Loss)	1,413,838
Royalties	3,613
Total Revenue:	1,812,204
Total Revenue and Gains and Other Support:	\$21,480,859

EXPENSES

Program Services:	
Blindness Integration	\$9,399,987
Civil Rights, Advocacy and Self-Organization	6,318,931
Nonvisual Access Technology, Methods and Systems	4,261,470
Total Program Services:	19,980,388
Supporting Services:	
Management and General	582,389
Fundraising	1,620,419
Total Supporting Services:	2,202,808
Total Expenses:	\$22,183,196

Changes in Net Assets	\$(702,337)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$27,068,695
Net Assets - End of Year	\$26,366,358



The National Federation of the Blind meets the rigorous Standards for Charity Accountability set forth by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.



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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.

Donate a Vehicle – You can donate a vehicle to the National Federation of the Blind by calling 1-855-659-9314 or by visiting www.nfb.org/vehicledonations.

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.

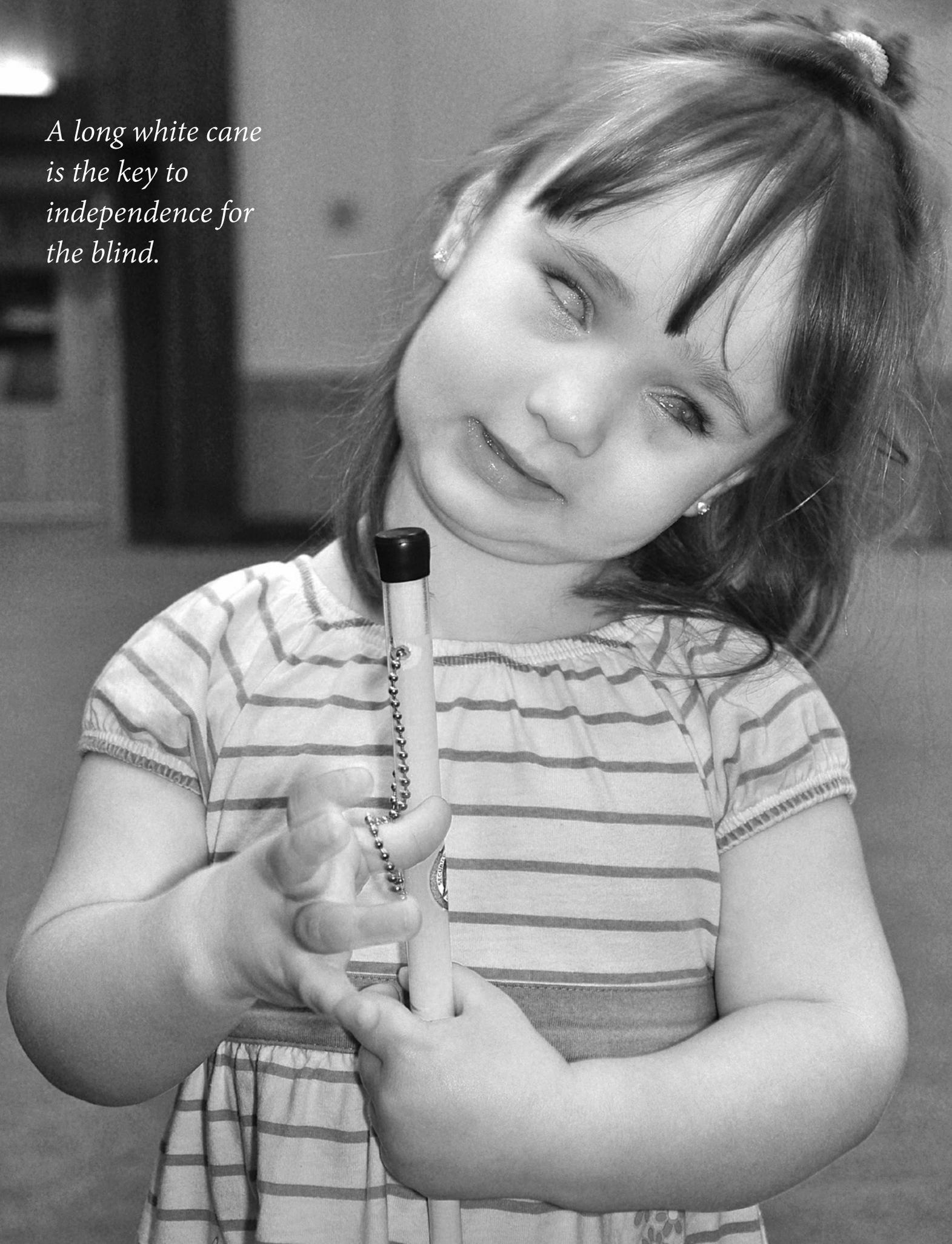
Matching Gifts – Matching gifts are made by companies in order to encourage charitable giving by their employees. For more information on this type of program, contact the human resources department at your place of employment.

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.

*A long white cane
is the key to
independence for
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.

Spread the Word – You can help the National Federation of the Blind by spreading the word that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on equal terms with their sighted peers, and by connecting blind persons who need help with our organization.

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

You can also help by sharing information about the National Federation of the Blind and its programs on social media. Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nfb_voice or become a fan on Facebook at facebook.com/NationalFederationoftheBlind.



**National Federation
of the Blind**

(Voice of the Nation's Blind

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*Thank you
for your
continued
support!*



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