

NATIONAL  
FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND

**2013**  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



**NFB**

National Federation  
of the Blind



## WHAT WE BELIEVE

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can have the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.

## WHO WE ARE

The National Federation of the Blind 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, the District of Columbia, and 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 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 appliances, adaptive equipment, and support for blind people and their families, the members of the National Federation of the Blind strive to spread the word that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on equal terms with their sighted peers. Together, with love, hope, and determination, we transform dreams into reality.

## WHY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND?

As the original and largest nationwide organization of blind people, with seventy-five years of expertise and experience, the National Federation of the Blind is able to speak with authority and legitimacy about what it really means to be blind. While many other organizations purport to speak for the blind, only the National Federation of the Blind can authentically speak for the blind because it is the blind. Other organizations cannot fully represent what it means to be blind in twenty-first century America, how much we are capable of, and the challenges we still face. This is why a strong National Federation of the Blind is important.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Marc Maurer*



## *Dear Friends:*

Aleeha Dudley is a bright young lady. Blind from birth, she graduated from her high school in New Paris, Ohio, with honors, and received a scholarship to the college of her choice, Miami University. She also received a scholarship from the National Federation of the Blind. She was thrilled to go to Miami University because she knew that matriculating there would help her achieve her dream of becoming a veterinarian, since graduates of the zoology program at that institution have a very high rate of acceptance to veterinary school. Veterinary medicine is not a career that is traditionally thought to be open to blind people. But Aleeha knows that blindness does not define her or her future. She knows that a blind person can succeed in a scientific discipline with the proper tools and training. She has seen this demonstrated by the National Federation of the Blind's science programs for young people. Miami University told Aleeha that it would make the modifications needed for her to participate fully in this demanding course of study. Miami University would provide proper textbooks that Aleeha could use, and tactile representations of the complex diagrams she would need to study in order to understand chemistry and animal biology.

Three years after beginning her studies, however, Aleeha is in despair. She has paid her tuition and school bills, and worked and studied hard. But the university has not held up its part of the bargain. Despite advances in technology that make it possible for the university to procure textbooks and course materials that Aleeha can use, these resources have rarely been provided. Sometimes the textbooks have come, but even when this has happened, they have been so late that they have done little good. As for the diagrams, the equations, and the complex information they contain, Aleeha has not had access to these at all. Sometimes she has tried to create them herself, using a sighted person to help. But these tactile pictures, supposedly worth a thousand words, have almost never been available.

Aleeha's dream did not have to become a nightmare. These days, colleges and universities acquire most of their materials in electronic formats. When properly designed, electronic materials can be read aloud with text-to-speech software, displayed on a Braille device, or, in the case of diagrams and pictures, rendered as tactile graphics. Not only are these modifications possible, but the law requires them. The law recognizes that equal opportunity does not exist if there is not equal access to the same educational materials for everyone. But sadly, colleges and universities sometimes fail to meet these legal and moral obligations. Miami University has failed Aleeha.

The National Federation of the Blind is helping Aleeha with her situation, but a more comprehensive solution is needed. Thousands of blind students across the nation are experiencing what Aleeha has experienced, and they will continue to do so if action is not taken. The problem is not merely that some colleges and universities are unwilling to do what it takes to provide an equal education to their blind students, although this is sadly sometimes the case. The larger problem is that some of those who manufacture, publish, and distribute the educational materials and software of today are not providing institutions of higher education with the tools they need to serve both their blind and sighted students. Some of these developers claim that there is no demand from the universities for such content. That is partly because university officials sometimes do not know what provisions they should include in procurement contracts so that the materials they receive provide equal access. In some cases, universities receive assurances that their blind students will be able to access the materials, only to discover later that the students are struggling.

The National Federation of the Blind is working to solve this problem by partnering with content providers, technology developers, and universities to make sure that the needs of blind students are met. We are working with the Association of American Publishers to propose guidelines that will help universities ensure that the technology and content that they purchase are accessible to blind students. We are partnering with companies like Desire2Learn and Blackboard to show them how to integrate accessibility into their learning management systems. We sponsored our first tactile graphics conference in 2013 to explore ways in which new technology can allow the simple production of diagrams and pictures that can be explored by touch.

The National Federation of the Blind is helping Aleeha Dudley and taking the other steps that I have described because we believe in the equality of blind Americans and of other Americans with disabilities. Some people argue that it is not reasonable for the blind to expect equality. They say that, at best, we can expect separate-but-equal solutions to the barriers we face, like the inferior materials that have been provided to Aleeha and other students like her. This attitude stems from a belief, commonly held but not always directly expressed, that the blind cannot and should not expect very much from life. This belief does not come from animosity toward the blind, but from the misconception that our blindness renders us incapable of fully participating in society. But the National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines us or our future. Every day, we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Our message to blind people is this: you can have the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back. Our message to society is that we will not be held back by low expectations and the barriers that they create. We can and we will demand equality in all aspects of life—in education, in the workplace, in leisure pursuits, and in our communities. Sometimes we must battle with an institution or an individual to make equality a reality. But increasingly, the public is receiving and accepting our message.

At the National Federation of the Blind, we also understand that achieving equality requires that we do our part. That is why our access technology team is a resource for entities that wish to make their products and services more accessible to blind people. It is why we continue to operate our NFB-NEWSLINE® service, which provides current information about the world to tens of thousands of blind people every day. It is why we work, in partnership with inventors and engineers, to develop innovative solutions to our problems, like the first mobile print-reading device for the blind and the technology that allowed a blind person to drive a car independently. It is why we created our Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) program to expose blind children to the independence, and the joy, that they can experience by reading Braille. Your support for all of these efforts helps to move us toward the day when blind people will achieve full equality in our society. It helps us to support and serve those who are adjusting to vision loss, whether they are blind children or older Americans. It helps us to make the individual dreams of blind people, and our collective dream of full equality, become reality. I am deeply grateful to all those reading this message who have supported our work by contributing some of their time, talent, or financial resources to our cause. Your support has helped us to achieve great things in 2013, and I promise you that more great things are forthcoming in 2014. Together, with love, hope, and determination, we transform dreams into reality. Thank you for helping us make it all come true.

Sincerely,



Marc Maurer, President  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



# EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR BLIND STUDENTS

A key element of our fight for equality in the National Federation of the Blind is our demand that blind Americans receive a quality education. This demand is rooted in our knowledge that blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance, given the proper training, and does not limit our ability to reach our full potential. But our mission to fight for equal education also stems from intrinsic American values. Our country has a proud history of educating its citizens, although that history also includes discrimination against some. As a nation we have moved to correct some forms of discrimination, such as by race and gender. But how are we faring on taking those lessons and applying them to the future of the blind and other students with disabilities?

Today, technology permeates the classroom, transforming the way colleges and universities facilitate the teaching and learning process. For blind students, digital materials like e-books, learning management systems, and university web portals can and should provide access to materials that were inherently inaccessible when they were printed on paper. There is no way to make a print book accessible to a blind person without the time-consuming and labor-intensive process of converting it into another format, but an accessible digital book can instantly expand the circle of participation, allowing blind students to bypass specialized services and instead have mainstream access to mainstream materials.

Sadly, the education system has sometimes failed to deliver on this promise. Many electronic instructional materials and their delivery systems are inaccessible to blind students. New innovations arrive in the digital marketplace every day, but not all are available to blind users. The legal requirement to provide meaningful, equal access to disabled students has become eclipsed by a powerful drive to embrace new innovations.

The result is that many blind students face a difficult situation. A congressionally authorized study found that students with disabilities experience a daunting assortment of challenges, including blocked access to educational opportunities and even failure to graduate, solely because of inaccessible materials. Many blind students do not receive their textbooks and course materials in an accessible format until weeks into the course. Even then, they are sometimes forced to settle for a segregated, “separate-but-equal” format. A blind student might receive an electronic file of a book, for example, but the file may not have page numbers or navigational features like the e-books that his or her sighted peers are reading. The blind student, therefore, cannot easily locate reading assignments within the text, and does not have access to other features like the ability to annotate it.

The National Federation of the Blind has spent the last several years examining this problem. Meeting the needs of blind students is simply a matter of institutions of higher education prioritizing accessibility and being able to purchase accessible content and products. Solutions to make digital materials accessible have been available for years, but some developers will not supply accessible products until they perceive a demand. Some institutions of higher education have failed to make the needs of disabled students a priority. The Departments of Justice and Education warned institutions of higher education that the use of inaccessible technology in the classroom is a form of discrimination, and subsequently initiated legal action against some schools for failing to follow the law. These steps were supposed to stimulate a demand that would increase the number of accessible options in the marketplace, but some schools lack the expertise to fathom what accessibility truly means and what they should request from publishers and vendors.

Guidelines are sorely needed. Mandates of equal access have been successful in the past because



there are guidelines for exactly how schools should implement these mandates. There are regulations for physical buildings and facilities, and others defining equal access with regard to factors like race and gender. Technology is a game-changer, and there must be room for innovation, but the answer still lies in guidelines. That is why the National Federation of the Blind has partnered with the Association of American Publishers to propose accessibility guidelines for instructional materials used in postsecondary education. These guidelines will give direction to schools and guide the market. **As more schools follow the guidelines, more developers will make accessible products, creating a virtuous circle that will protect the rights of blind students and enhance the education of sighted students as well.** The National Federation of the Blind also continues to work with developers to provide them with the expertise to implement accessibility in their products, and our work with Blackboard, Desire2Learn, and others has been successful. Our first-ever conference on tactile graphics in 2013 explored this exciting area of technology innovation that can allow diagrams and other visual representations to be reproduced in ways that allow blind students to touch and interact with them. Our work with institutions of higher education such as Penn State and the University of Montana is also improving the situation. In summary, we are actively collaborating with content providers, technology developers, and institutions of higher education to make an equal education for all blind students a reality.

American society prides itself on the concept of equal opportunity for all of its citizens. For blind students, providing equal opportunity in the twenty-first century means providing equal access to educational

materials that use twenty-first century technology. This is a matter of critical importance not only to blind students, but to society as a whole. How do we know that the cures to cancer, illiteracy, or hunger are not lost, or at least postponed, every time a blind person drops out of college?

Technology holds the promise of equal access and equal opportunity, and the National Federation of the Blind can and will ensure that promise is fulfilled.

## 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



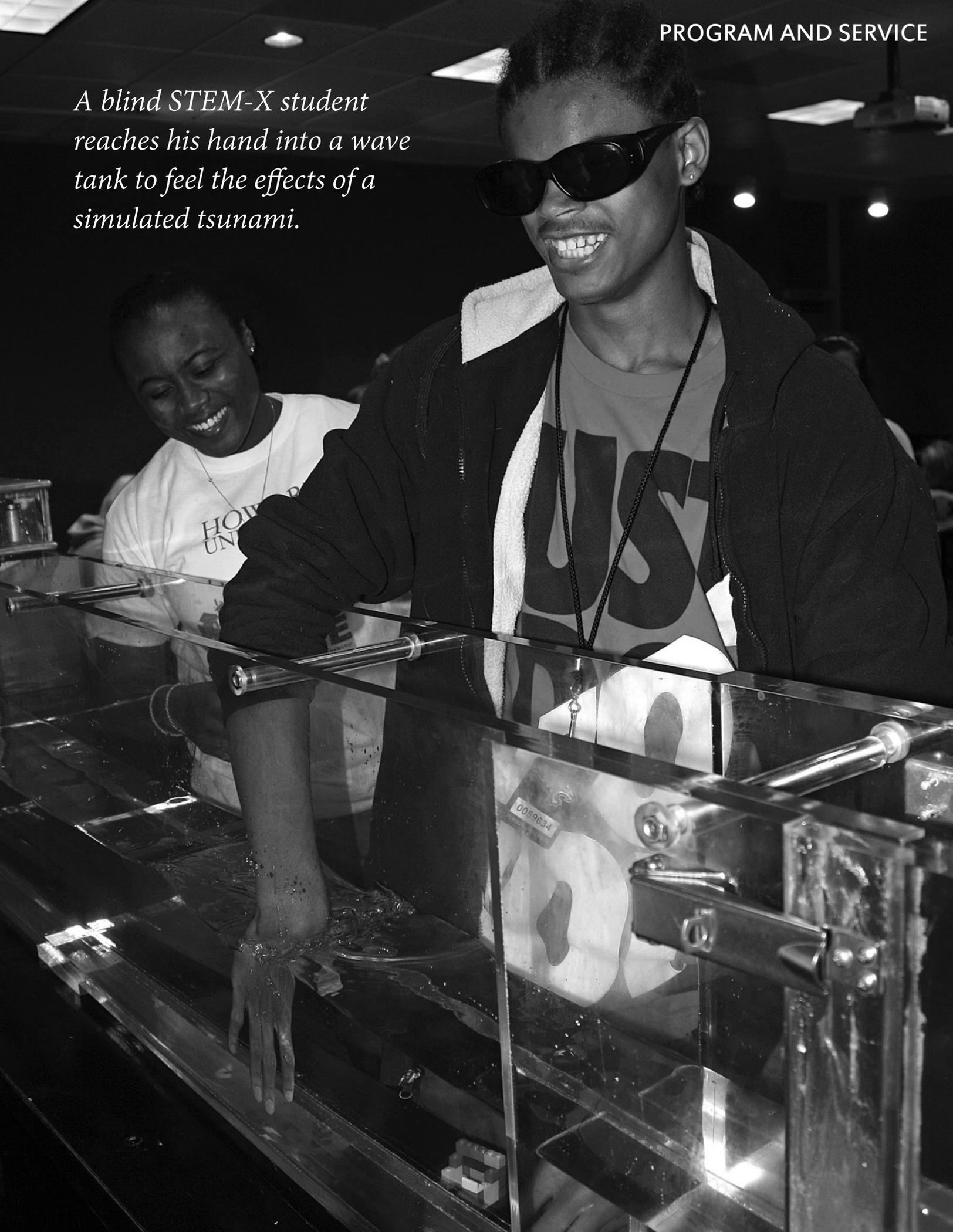
*Dr. Jacob Bolotin*

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 sixth annual Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards, with a total cash value of \$50,000, honored five innovators in the blindness field on July 6, 2013, as part of the National Federation of the Blind annual convention in Orlando. James Kubel was awarded \$5,000 for his innovative contribution to diabetics, the PumpMate, which is the first product ever developed that allows diabetics who are blind or have low vision to safely and independently control all functions of an insulin pump. The NFB of Utah and the Utah Department of Workforce Services were jointly recognized for their groundbreaking partnership Project STRIVE—which connects blind students with blind mentors to better prepare them for college and employment—with a cash award of



*A blind STEM-X student reaches his hand into a wave tank to feel the effects of a simulated tsunami.*



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\$10,000 made to the NFB of Utah. The NFB of Texas and Texas Workforce Commission were also jointly recognized for a similarly innovative program called Project CHANGE—a workforce readiness program for blind youth aged fourteen to twenty-four—with a cash award of \$10,000 made to the NFB of Texas. A \$10,000 award was given to Desire2Learn for its industry-leading example in consistently adhering to accessibility standards for its learning management system. Emily Wharton was awarded \$15,000 in recognition of her groundbreaking Code Master system, which she developed to better teach Braille to adults.

## 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 scholarships are presented at the banquet of the National Federation of the Blind convention, which in 2013 took place in Orlando, Florida. This year's scholarship class included five 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 2013 winner of this scholarship, Jeri Siqueiros-Ramirez, movingly shared the story of how, with the help of the NFB, she realized her blindness was not a barrier to her success.

The members of the 2013 scholarship class were a diverse group studying a broad range of disciplines including engineering, theology, special education, law, and psychiatry. 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 2013 scholarship winners and the awards they received:

\$3,000 NFB Awards: Conrad Austen, Cody Bair, Danielle Burton, Mark Colasurdo, Albert “Al” Elia, Juna Gjata, Fredrick Hardyway, Natasha Hubbard, Tyler Kavanaugh, Mi So Kwak, Domonique Lawless, Alex Loch, Disa Muse, Steven J. Phelps, Heather Rasmussen, Kaitlin Shelton, Ivy Wanta, Matthew Yeater, and Stephanie Zundel

\$3,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Scholarship: Treva Olivero

\$3,000 E.U. and Gene Parker Scholarship: Angela Dehart

\$3,000 The Oracle Scholarship for Excellence in Computer Science: Stephanie DeLuca

\$5,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Scholarships: Mona Minkara and Kathryn Webster

\$5,000 Larry Streeter Memorial Scholarship: Chopper Johnson

\$5,000 The Mimi and Marvin Sandler Scholarship: Molly Faerber

\$7,000 NFB Scholarships: Brooke Lowell and Julie Ann McGinnity

\$10,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Scholarship: Kristin Fleschner

\$12,000 Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship (funded by the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults): Jeri Siqueiros-Ramirez.

# NFB-NEWSLINE®: CONTINUING TO REVOLUTIONIZE 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 330 local and state newspapers, six national newspapers, ten international newspapers, forty magazines, four Spanish-language newspapers, and several blindness-specific publications, including the *Braille Monitor* and *Future Reflections*.

In addition to these periodicals, NFB-NEWSLINE® also provides access to emergency weather alerts, weekly weather forecasts, television listings, job listings, and advertising circulars. Subscribers can access NFB-NEWSLINE® services in a number of ways, including over the telephone using a touch-tone telephone, on the Web at [www.nfbnewslineonline.org](http://www.nfbnewslineonline.org), via download using an MP3 Player or NLS Talking Book Player, or through the new NFB-NEWSLINE® Mobile App, which is available free in Apple's iOS App Store. Subscribers can also choose to have newspapers sent to their e-mail addresses, allowing them to read the newspaper on their computer or portable device. With the addition of Maine in May 2013, NFB-NEWSLINE® is now available in forty-six states and the District of Columbia.

In 2013 a total of twenty-one new publications were added to the NFB-NEWSLINE® service. These included five "breaking news" feeds, three national newspapers, two magazines, and eleven local newspapers.

In 2013, the NFB-NEWSLINE® system received a telephone call from a subscriber every 14.9 seconds, and a subscriber accessed a piece of information every 2.9 seconds using one of the available access methods, including the touch-tone telephone. During 2013, 4,840 new subscribers signed up for

NFB-NEWSLINE®, bringing the total number of subscribers to 104,159. A total of 2,128,695 calls were made to NFB-NEWSLINE® over the telephone. NFB-NEWSLINE® provided 38,242,415 minutes of news to subscribers. Over the same period, 2,318,411 newspapers were e-mailed to subscribers. TV listings were accessed 579,564 times, and magazines were accessed 245,948 times. The state newspapers were accessed 5,617,788 times during the year. The NFB-NEWSLINE® online service was accessed 506,482 times, through the use of the Web service, the iPhone app, and other download methods.

Subscribers constantly tell us how invaluable they find the service, including the new iPhone app. Karon of Texas says: "Thank you for NFB-NEWSLINE®. It has become more and more difficult to read the newspaper, to the degree I finally gave up. It no longer gave me pleasure in attempting to read it. Now with NFB-NEWSLINE®, once again I can enjoy reading the news. Once again thank you for this wonderful service."

Ojocion of California says: "Thank you so much for the full weather report on NFB-NEWSLINE®. It is really awesome. There are a lot of us who suffer from mold, pollen, and the barometric pressure; and we have very gusty winds that can sometimes stop you in your track when you are walking on the sidewalks. I have never heard such a complete weather report. So, thank you very much."

David of Tennessee says: "I just called to express my enormous gratitude to all of you at NFB-NEWSLINE® for this excellent service. It would be an enormous understatement if I said that NFB-NEWSLINE® was the best newspaper and information access service ever invented for the blind. I use it every day, especially



to read my hometown newspaper, the *Nashville Tennessean*, and the *New York Times*, two of my favorite newspapers, and I don't know what I would do without it. ... I like to call it my currency for conversation, because every day I am able to read so many great articles and newspapers, and then I am able to have conversations with other people about what's going on all around the world ....”

## BRAILLE PROGRAMS

In 2013, 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 Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) program, first launched by our Maryland affiliate in 2008, continues to be a leading force in reversing the Braille literacy crisis in America today. NFB BELL is an intensive program that provides two weeks of Braille instruction to blind and low-vision



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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. Numerous parents noted that one of the most valuable aspects of the NFB BELL program was the opportunity to interact with blind children and adults—an experience their children rarely have. One parent said, “Being taught by blind adults was a great learning experience. It helped [my daughter] understand that as a blind person she can still be anything she wants to be, including a teacher.”

During the program, students expand their understanding of the uses for Braille in their daily lives by engaging in authentic activities, such as using Braille while cooking to read recipes and identify or label ingredients. Students also learn through games and other cooperative activities. In addition to serving blind students, the program provides parents with training and resources so they can ensure that their blind children grow up to be successful adults. Parent participants stated that they appreciate the opportunity to get to know other parents of blind children and successful blind adults who connected them with a vast number of useful resources.

In the summer of 2013, nineteen states hosted a total of twenty-three 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 and blindness.

### **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 2013 nearly five hundred families participated, starting their children off on a long life of Braille reading.

### **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 seventh 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 six hundred 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 2013 the program has submitted the names of 1,690 individuals to the Library of Congress, indicating that they have successfully completed the certification courses in literary, mathematics, and music transcribing or proofreading.

## JERNIGAN INSTITUTE

The year 2013 was the tenth year of operation for our National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute. When we opened this expansion of our headquarters in Baltimore, we committed ourselves to building a future full of opportunities with our own hands. We continued the tradition of determining our own future and gathering the resources required to make that future a reality. As we completed the first decade of our Institute, we also prepared for the next great era of accomplishments. Below are some of our 2013 highlights, made possible by the contributions of our members, donors, and partners.

### **NFB Science Technology Engineering & Math to the Extreme (NFB STEM-X)**

In our continued effort to demonstrate to blind youth that they can pursue their dreams and participate fully in advanced science fields, we offered a new summer program, NFB STEM-X, under the auspices of our National Center for Blind Youth in Science initiative. Forty-five blind high school students from twenty-seven states traveled to Baltimore to participate in this summer's program. The students had the opportunity to build their own schedule for the program. They chose which of the five focus disciplines (aerospace engineering, chemistry, civil engineering, computer science, or robotics) in which they wanted to participate—spending each morning in that class. Students also selected three enrichment classes, one for each afternoon, from the eight that were offered (paleobiology, video description, geology, nanotechnology, biology, human physiology, art, and cyber security). Students spent the evenings in recreational activities of their choice. The offerings included beep baseball, goalball, accessible disc golf, ballroom dancing, rock climbing, and geocaching. The program activities occurred on the campus of Towson University and at the NFB Jernigan Institute under the mentorship of blind role models.

One unique aspect of NFB STEM-X was the scenario around which the curriculum for the five focus discipline classes was developed. *ISONia*, a novella written specifically for the program, told the tale of a comet (@STEMXComet) on a collision course with earth and the efforts of a taskforce of world-class scientists (including the students at NFB STEM-X) to innovate solutions to this potentially devastating natural disaster. The students' work to combat ISON required them to collaborate and problem-solve constantly. For example, students in the aerospace engineering group worked to build a spacecraft that could be sent to the comet to collect vital data that would be transmitted to scientists around the world for analysis. Students in the civil engineering class built a truss bridge to replace bridges that might be demolished upon ISON's impact and created desalinization plants to purify water.

At the end of the program, the students at NFB STEM-X were not able to stop the fictitious comet—there are some things even science can't do—but the students learned lessons and developed friendships that

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will last a lifetime. Students' tweets on the last day of the program included: "My bag is packed. I am so inspired by all of you. I will miss you, but this isn't goodbye forever. I feel so loved and blessed. #NFBstemx" and "#NFBSTEMX was an excellent program. I left it wanting more!!" Artifacts of the students' work can be found in the Jacobus tenBroek Library at the Institute, and these young blind explorers can be observed making a difference around the country.

## Blind Driver Challenge®/Dan Parker Quest for the Salt

In the National Federation of the Blind, we come together to innovate new solutions that allow blind people to pursue their dreams. In 2011 we held the first public demonstration of technologies built under the Blind Driver Challenge® (BDC) initiative of our NFB Jernigan Institute. That milestone was accomplished after a decade of dreaming, planning, exploring, and developing our nonvisual interface technologies. In 2013, we reached another significant milestone when Dan Parker, a member of the NFB from Georgia, set a record by independently driving a motorcycle on the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah at 55.331 mph.

Before going blind, Dan Parker was an experienced drag racer and skilled machinist living in Alabama. On March 31, 2012, Dan was involved in a freak accident during a drag race in which he hit a wall at 175 mph, leaving him completely blind and with other significant injuries. After eight months of recuperating and worrying, not knowing what he could do as a blind person, Dan made up his mind to continue doing what

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he loved. He had been riding motorcycles since he was eight, and he had extensive experience around, on, and in cars and motorcycles. He had always had a dream of racing at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. Dan decided that the way to overcome the fears and limitations he had associated with blindness was to pursue his quest for “the salt”—to build and independently run his own motorcycle on the Salt Flats at a sanctioned event.

As the result of Dan’s visit with Dr. Marc Maurer, President of the National Federation of the Blind, the NFB became a primary sponsor of Dan’s dream project. In August 2013, Dan Parker and the NFB team traveled to the Salt Flats, where Dan demonstrated his motorcycle—a red, three-wheel-trike configuration outfitted with a GPS and audible guidance system. Dan used an audible interface that provided tones in his helmet to indicate whether he was to the left or right of the center line, with the pitch of the sound indicating his distance from the center line.

We continue to seek partnerships with researchers and innovators to expand the horizons of independence for the blind. In the process of creating new opportunities, we empower blind people to live the life they want, and we raise expectations for the blind everywhere. Our Blind Driver Challenge® project is just one way in which we spark the imagination of great innovators who might come to be partners in our mission.

### Jacobus tenBroek Law Symposium

The sixth annual Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium, “Push Forward and Push Back: Continuing the Struggle for the Right to Live in the World,” took place on April 18-19, 2013, and was hosted by the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute. This annual symposium is now the premier event for examination of the intersection of disability rights 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 170 people from throughout the United States and Canada attended, representing ninety-nine academic, advocacy, corporate, and governmental organizations.

Jonathan M. Young, partner and general counsel for FoxKiser and former chairman of the National Council on Disability, headed the list of leading advocates and scholars who made presentations and facilitated workshops. Other presenters included Rebecca Bond, chief of the Disability Rights Section, U.S. Department of Justice; Judith E. Heumann, special advisor on international disability rights, U.S. Department of State; Curtis L. Decker, executive director, National Disability Rights Network; Ari Ne’eman, president, Autistic Self Advocacy Network; and Robert Dinerstein, professor of law, American University Washington College of Law. Workshop topics included litigation strategies in K-12 education cases, the impact of the Affordable Care Act on people with disabilities, restraint and seclusion in the educational setting, and how to increase the number of judges with disabilities.

### Jacobus tenBroek Library

The Jacobus tenBroek Library is the premier research library on blindness in the United States and the only one of its kind that is run by the blind. The foundation of the library collection is the personal and professional papers of Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, a professor and constitutional law scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, who founded the NFB in 1940. The library continues to be the nation’s key library collection on the nonmedical aspects of blindness by documenting the history of the organized blind movement, the achievements of the blind, and dozens of other areas of interest to scholars.

During the past year, the NFB continued to build this unique collection, which can be freely accessed by researchers around the globe through our fully accessible online portals. The Cane Tip ([www.nfb.org/thecanetip](http://www.nfb.org/thecanetip)) is our database for finding aids that

describe our manuscript and archival collections, including the papers of Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, Dr. Isabel Grant, and a number of other personal collections, in addition to the NFB institutional archives. The Blind Cat ([www.nfb.org/theblindcat](http://www.nfb.org/theblindcat)) is our online public access catalog where researchers can search our robust collection of published materials including print, talking books, Braille, and digital formats.

A significant achievement during the past year was the continued expansion of our archival collections. In October, the NFB was honored to be remembered in the will of the late Dr. Abraham Nemeth, inventor of the Nemeth Code of Braille Mathematics and Scientific Notation. A pioneer whose work opened up countless new fields and opportunities for blind people interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and other areas of higher learning, Dr. Nemeth's impact cannot be measured. Thanks to Dr. Nemeth's generosity, the tenBroek Library will ensure that his groundbreaking contributions to Braille and to blind people everywhere will be preserved and made available for the benefit of all.

We also continue to explore and develop the papers of Dr. tenBroek and have made substantial gains in documenting the organization and activities of the NFB state affiliates. Through the recent donation of the Marie Pluth Collection, the library now preserves original prototypes of print/Braille Twin Vision® children's books, an innovative project originally developed by Jean Dyon Norris in the 1960s, which was supported by both Dr. tenBroek and Dr. Kenneth Jernigan. With these and other archival acquisitions, we are strengthening our position as the foremost resource on both the historical and present-day experiences of the blind.

## Equal Access to Technology

The Access Technology team of the NFB Jernigan Institute continues to lead our efforts to foster innovation in technology to help those who are blind or who are losing vision, and to advocate for access to the mainstream technologies that shape

life in the twenty-first century. In 2013, the team continued to operate the world-renowned International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind, which contains over \$2.5-million-worth of specialized software and hardware products for evaluation and testing by the team and for the information of the thousands of visitors who come to the Institute each year. In addition, the team conducted and presented at many conferences and seminars designed to improve the landscape for access to technology and information by the blind.

From April 12–13, 2013, the NFB hosted its first-ever tactile graphics conference. With thirty-four sessions on a wide variety of topics and 120 participants from fourteen countries, the conference made quite an impression in the small but growing field of tactile graphics. Topics covered tactile accessibility in a range of scientific and educational settings and demonstrated some of the latest and most promising developments in the field. Standards and best practices for creating tactile graphics were also covered in a number of sessions, fostering collaboration and the sharing of knowledge in an area in which many professionals work in isolation. Papers from the conference were published in the *Journal for Blindness Innovation and Research*.

The NFB works to spur innovation in access to mainstream technology. We do this by providing information about technological innovations and best practices, and by collaborating directly with companies seeking to improve access to their products and services by the blind. One notable example of such collaboration is our ongoing partnership with Desire2Learn, a Canadian company that produces an online learning management solution. This company received a 2013 Dr. Jacob Bolotin award in recognition of its extraordinary commitment to accessibility and the outstanding results of that commitment. Desire2Learn has also been gold certified through the NFB's Nonvisual Accessibility Web Certification for multiple consecutive years. The company has taken the NFB's values and criteria to heart, and members of its team are advocates for comprehensive accessibility in education. Also in 2013, as a result of negotiations with



*Technology holds the promise  
of equal access and equal  
opportunity for the blind.*

*Photo courtesy of Perkins*

## PROGRAM AND SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

the NFB and the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, it was announced that job search company Monster Worldwide will be the first job search and recruitment website in the industry to provide jobseekers who are blind with full and equal access to all of its products and services, including its mobile applications. The rising use (and usability) of mainstream technology by blind users serves to further cement the NFB's commitment to ongoing partnerships with the companies that shape the landscape such as Apple, Google, Microsoft, and Oracle.

As books, including textbooks, move from paper to digital the Access Technology team maintains close relationships with many content providers, such as Pearson, Cengage, and the Association of American Publishers, to guide them through the transition and point to formats and standards that make inclusive design easy. The International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), the global trade and standards organization dedicated to the development and promotion of electronic publishing and content consumption, is another critical ally in our work for digital access to books.

As part of the NFB's access technology education and awareness efforts, our team has presented to audiences at access technology and mainstream conferences across the nation to further the

public's knowledge of how the blind use technology and how to avoid creating barriers to usability and accessibility. The team's recent presentations included sessions at the Tata Interactive Learning Forum 2012 in Washington D.C. and the 2013 EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative Annual Meeting on the topic "Making the 21st Century Campus a Model of Accessibility." The team also presented at the California State University at Northridge's annual Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference in March of 2013. The topics were "Usable out of the box? Google Android, Apple iOS, and Windows 8 Mobile Face Off," and "Using Mainstream Devices as Notetakers." CSUN also included a collaborative effort with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (UK), the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Vision Australia, and other blindness organizations to advocate for accessibility in Windows Mobile 8. This coalition also addressed an open letter to Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer on this topic, since Windows Mobile is now the only major mobile phone operating system that contains no accessibility features whatsoever. The team participated in the "E-Book Readers and e-Publishing for Mobile Platforms: Competing for Seniors and Users of All Abilities" panel at the M-Enabling Summit in Washington, D.C. in June of 2013. We also continue to share our expertise through the *Braille Monitor*, the Access Technology Blog, and countless in-person, phone, and email exchanges.

# OUR DONORS

We would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions given in 2013. 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.

## **Jernigan Circle \$450,000+**

Ray E. Barnum Trust  
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*A long white cane is  
key to independence  
for the blind.*



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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:

1. Special recognition in NFB publications. If a donor wishes to remain anonymous, the National Federation of the Blind will honor this request.
2. A specially designed “thank you” gift
3. Copies of NFB publications
4. The satisfaction of contributing to the future success of the NFB mission

The National Federation of the Blind would like to thank the members of the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society for their commitment to our organization and our mission:

Adrienne Asch  
Charles and Jacqueline Brown  
Christopher S. Danielsen  
Parnell and Kim Diggs  
James Gashel  
Louise Geretti  
Ever Lee Hairston  
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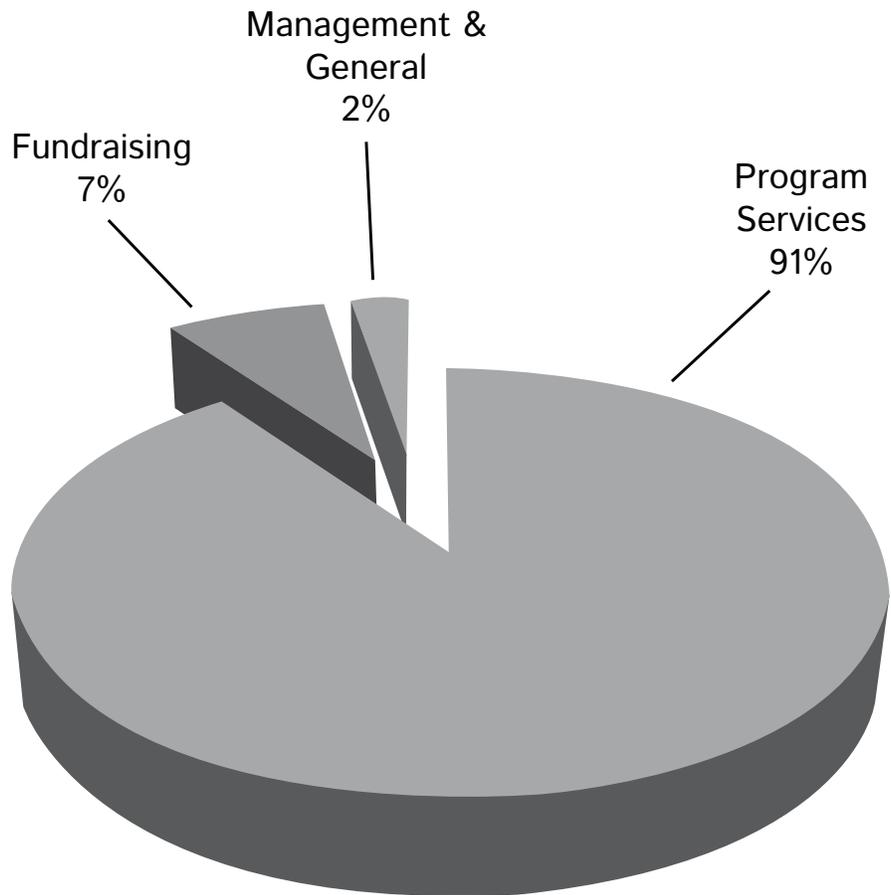
Financial statements presented have been audited by Rosen, Sapperstein and Friedlander, Chartered. Complete audited statements with accompanying notes for the National Federation of the Blind can be obtained by contacting the offices of the National Federation of the Blind, 200 East Wells Street at *Jernigan Place*, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, (410) 659-9314.

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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, 2013



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

## REVENUE AND GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support:	
Contributions	\$18,630,024
Donated Services	4,998,169
Government Grants	134,285
 Total Public Support:	 23,762,478
Revenue:	
Sales - Independence Products and Publications	399,538
Investment Income (Loss)	1,793,301
Royalties	3,286
 Total Revenue:	 2,196,125
 Total Revenue and Gains and Other Support:	 \$25,958,603

## EXPENSES

Program Services:	
Blindness Integration	\$9,554,940
Civil Rights, Advocacy and Self-Organization	6,137,931
Nonvisual Access Technology, Methods and Systems	4,462,322
 Total Program Services:	 20,155,193
Supporting Services:	
Management and General	521,227
Fundraising	1,603,930
 Total Supporting Services:	 2,125,157
 Total Expenses:	 \$22,280,350

Changes in Net Assets	\$3,678,253
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$26,366,357
Net Assets - End of Year	\$30,044,610



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](http://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](http://www.nfb.org/vehicledonations).

**Donate Clothing** – You can donate clothing and other household items through our GreenDrop program, which converts these items into critical dollars that assist the NFB in its mission. This program is currently available in Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia. Learn more by calling 1-888-610-4632 or visiting [www.nfbpickup.org](http://www.nfbpickup.org).

**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.

**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](https://twitter.com/nfb_voice) or like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/NationalFederationoftheBlind](https://facebook.com/NationalFederationoftheBlind).



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*Thank you  
for your  
continued  
support!*



  
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