

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Live the life you want.

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



COLORS:
Blue: 294, 2945, 252, font color - 3005
Green: 361, 355, 357
Orange: 173, 021, 1485

FONTS: Corbel and Gabriola



What We Believe

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) 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 live 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 people in the United States. Founded in 1940 by sixteen individuals from seven states, the Federation now has tens of thousands of members and 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, which typically draws between twenty-five hundred and three thousand delegates. 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. By providing public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, literature and materials about blindness, specialized aids and appliances, 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 over 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, speaking through democratically elected blind leaders. 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

Dear Friends:

Each year, as I sit down to write my annual message to you, I am filled with humble gratitude for the honor and privilege of serving as the President of the National Federation of the Blind, the most powerful, innovative, inspirational, and dynamic organization that the field of blindness has ever known. I am also filled with gratitude to you, our members and supporters, who make what we do possible in large and small ways every day. While the National Federation of the Blind needs our elected leaders at all levels to facilitate our work, it cannot function without the large, loving family that works together to transform the dreams of blind people into reality.

So once again, I take this opportunity to thank each of you for the things that you do to further our movement, whether it is welcoming a potential member to a chapter meeting or social gathering, providing encouragement to a person who is beginning to lose vision, making a one-time or regular monetary contribution, helping children learn the skills of blindness at one of our BELL academies or other educational programs, grilling hamburgers and hot dogs at a chapter picnic, managing an affiliate's social media presence, or volunteering to drive a group of Federationists to a meeting with their member of Congress. It's also important to remember that each blind person changes the lives of other blind people simply by going about his or her daily work and living the life that he or she wants, because this shows the general public our capacity and knocks a hole in the wall of misconception and misunderstanding that is the true barrier between blind people and our dreams. Each of us has our role to play in the Federation family that we have made together, and each of you has my profound gratitude for playing that role.

Many of us had an extraspecial opportunity to see the Federation family at work in 2016. The National Federation of the Blind was pleased to

host the Joint General Assembly of the World Blind Union and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment this past August. Blind delegates from all over the world attended this event, and as the hosts we were expected to provide all manner of logistical support, including assisting the delegates to navigate the hotel. At past assemblies, sighted volunteers have provided this assistance, but dozens of National Federation of the Blind volunteers from across the United States provided it this time, not only guiding delegates around the beautiful Rosen Centre Hotel facility in Orlando but providing impromptu cane travel lessons. At one point, a line formed when one of our members was demonstrating to an inexperienced individual the technique for navigating an escalator when using a white cane. Within a few minutes the folks waiting in line were eager to take their turn boarding the escalator independently. By the end of the nearly week-long event, many of the international delegates who had initially been reluctant to navigate the facility on their own were traveling independently and joining our volunteers to help their colleagues. It was an inspirational demonstration of how raising expectations and mentoring each other helps blind people everywhere live the lives they want. It was also a beautiful manifestation of our Federation family reaching out to share our positive philosophy and genuine love with our blind brothers and sisters from across the globe.

Speaking of families, the other great honor and privilege of my life is being a husband to my wife Melissa and a father to our three beautiful children, Austin, Oriana, and Elizabeth. The kids are growing up fast, and every moment that Melissa and I spend with them is precious. Helping them to learn and grow is our challenge but also our great joy. Conversely, our greatest fear is that something will happen to them or to us that will separate our family. Every parent has this fear, but Melissa and I know that tragedy might strike for no other reason



Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind

than our blindness. We know this because it has happened to far too many of our blind brothers and sisters and their children. Blind parents have been sent home from the hospital without their newborn infants. They have been told that they cannot even visit with their kids unless a sighted person is present. Blindness has been brought into custody disputes, even by sighted spouses who know better, in the expectation that the family court judge will see it as evidence of parental unfitness. The National Federation of the Blind is working to educate judges and social workers, to pass legislation to the effect that blindness alone cannot be considered evidence of unfitness to parent, and to fight for the rights of individual blind parents.

At the same time, we recognize that parenting is a challenge for everyone, and that blind parents need the help and support of other blind parents in order to do this critically important job more effectively. To that end, we have launched a new blind parent initiative so that blind parents can connect, share information, and support each other. We have launched a website, www.blindparents.org, and are soliciting help from our community of members and supporters to populate it with content. We already have a number of contribu-

tions and are seeking more, including stories from blind parents and children of blind parents; videos of the techniques that blind parents use for various parenting tasks; and product reviews for mainstream and blindness-specific items, from baby carriers to talking thermometers. We have also begun a Parent Mentor Program so that new blind parents can connect with those of us who have some experience. Our goal is that all blind parents, blind people thinking of becoming parents, grandparents, professionals, and other family members have the resources they need to learn the tools and techniques that allow blind people to raise thriving children. If you are a blind parent and need information and support, or have information and support to offer, please visit www.blindparents.org or send an email to parenting@nfb.org.

In this message I've provided a brief overview of some of the highlights of 2016 and of an effort that has personal significance to me as well as to blind parents across the nation. I hope you will read the following pages to learn more about how the National Federation of the Blind grew, prospered, and changed the lives of blind people in 2016. No single report, however, can summarize and quantify everything that each of you do every day to grow our movement, bring hope to those who are losing vision, advance public policy that will bring positive change for blind Americans, and more. I want to hear what you're doing and how it is changing lives, so always feel free to reach out to me by calling the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute at (410) 659-9314 or by sending an email to me at officeofthepresident@nfb.org. Thank you for all you do, and will continue to do, to help raise the expectations of blind people and allow all of us to live the lives we want.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Riccobono, President
National Federation of the Blind



There is a significant relationship between Braille literacy and high achievement in education and employment.

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.

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 ninth annual Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards, with a total cash value of \$50,000, honored four innovators in the blindness field on July 6, 2016, as part of the National Federation of the Blind annual convention in Orlando. A \$5,000 award was presented to Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc., a Wisconsin-based transcription service that converts textbooks for school children into Braille, and is able to provide immediate transcription services for other classroom materials. A \$10,000 prize was awarded to Oskar & Klaus Publishing, a company that produces children's books detailing the adventures of a blind cat (Oskar) and his cat friend (Klaus) with the message of accepting differences and not allowing blindness to prevent a cat or person from embarking upon extraordinary adventures. A \$15,000 award was presented to Winston Chen for his creation of the mobile application Voice Dream Reader, which extracts the text of electronic documents in many formats and converts it into synthetic speech. A cash prize of \$20,000 went to the Semitic Scholars, a group of three blind graduate students who created a Braille code for ancient Biblical languages so that source documents of religious texts could be studied by blind students in their original context, a feat that was previously impossible.

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. In 2016, in addition to the NFB scholarship, each of the thirty winners received a \$1,000 check and plaque from Ray Kurzweil, a Google Chromebook laptop, and a \$1,000 cash award from Google.

The scholarships are presented at the banquet of the National Federation of the Blind convention, which in 2016 took place in Orlando, Florida. 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 2016 winner of this schol-



arship was Maria “Conchita” Hernandez of Washington, DC, who is pursuing a career in research on reading media assessments.

The members of the 2016 scholarship class were a diverse group studying a broad range of disciplines including law, computer science, education, medical research, and accounting. 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 2016 scholarship winners and the awards they received:

\$3,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: Tara Abella (Indiana), Justine Aragon (Colorado), Deniz Aydemir-Doke (Pennsylvania), Riki Burton (Kentucky), Nathan Clark (Maryland), Deanna Greco (New Jersey), Nazanin Heydarian (Texas), Matthew Miller (Illinois), Kathryn Olsen (Iowa), Chelsea Page (Louisiana), Donna Posont (Michigan), Joe Rowell (Massachusetts), Kennedy Stomberg (Minnesota), Corgan Waters (Tennessee), Johna Wright (Georgia)

\$3,000 Adrienne Asch Memorial Scholarship: Sharon Jose (Virginia)

\$3,000 E.U. & Gene Parker Scholarship: James Mooney (Arizona)

\$3,000 Charles & Melva T. Owen Memorial Scholarship: Merry-Noel Chamerlain (Nebraska)

\$3,000 Charles & Betty Allen Scholarship: Samrawit Biyazin (Oregon)

\$3,000 Expedia Scholarships: Megan Borella of California and Kartik Sawhney (California)

\$3,000 NFB Science & Engineering Division Scholarship: Cassidy Wilde (Utah)

\$5,000 NFB Award: Brennan Carman (New York)

\$5,000 Larry Streeter Memorial Scholarship:
Precious Perez (Massachusetts)

\$5,000 Pearson Scholarship: Elif Emir Oksuz
(Ohio)

\$5,000 Mimi & Marvin Sandler Scholarship:
Jameyanne Fuller (New Hampshire)

\$8,000 Oracle Scholarship for Excellence in a
STEM Field: Laura Etori (New Jersey)

\$8,000 Oracle Scholarship for Excellence in
Computer Science: Syed Rizvi (Massachusetts)

\$10,000 Charles & Melva T. Owen Memorial
Scholarship: Kathryn Webster (Connecticut)

EXPANDING NFB-NEWSLINE®

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 four hundred publications, including over three hundred fifty local and state newspapers, thirteen national newspapers, twenty-one breaking news sources, seventeen international newspapers, sixty-one magazines, five Spanish-language newspapers, and several blindness-specific publications, including the *Braille Monitor* and *Future Reflections*.

In addition to these four hundred periodicals, NFB-NEWSLINE also provides access to emergency weather alerts, seven-day weather forecasts, television listings, job listings, and advertising circulars.

Subscribers can access NFB-NEWSLINE services in a number of ways, including using a touch-tone telephone, on the web at www.nfb.org/nfbnewsline, via MP3 or dedicated book players, or through the NFB-NEWSLINE Mobile app, which is avail-

able free in Apple's iOS App Store. Subscribers can also choose to have newspapers sent to their email addresses, allowing them to read the newspaper on their computer or portable device. NFB-NEWSLINE is available in forty-six states and the District of Columbia. Material is available via synthetic speech, or using a connected Braille display with some access methods. In the past year, NFB-NEWSLINE embarked on a project to provide all publications as a Braille-formatted downloadable file on www.nfb.org/nfbnewsline. The initial work pertaining to the Braille file creation was completed and is currently available on the website in a beta form.

In 2016 a total of twenty-five new publications were added to the NFB-NEWSLINE service. These included three breaking newsfeeds, one national newspaper, one international newspaper, thirteen magazines, and local newspapers in seven states. NFB-NEWSLINE also provided transcripts of the three presidential debates, the vice presidential debate, and materials from both major candidates' websites during the presidential election campaign. Additionally, articles based on search terms for both major candidates were provided under a special 2016 Presidential Election section.

In 2016 the NFB-NEWSLINE system received a telephone call from a subscriber every 13.05 seconds, and a subscriber accessed a piece of information every 2.01 seconds using one of the available access methods, including the touch-tone telephone. During 2016, 5,635 new subscribers signed up for NFB-NEWSLINE, bringing the total number of subscribers to 115,491. A total of 2,403,672 calls were made to NFB-NEWSLINE over the telephone. NFB-NEWSLINE provided 37,056,006 minutes of news to subscribers. Over the same period, 3,037,819 newspapers were emailed to subscribers. TV listings were accessed 481,373 times, and magazines were accessed 795,330 times. Newspapers were accessed 11,333,104 times during the year. The NFB-NEWSLINE online service was accessed 13,172,993 times through the use of the web service, the iPhone app, and

other download methods. The 2016 presidential election information was accessed 152,021 times.

Subscribers constantly tell us how invaluable they find the service:

Genia Stowe—"I really love the NFB-NEWSLINE service. It gets top marks in my books. It is super easy to use and contains so much content. My favorite publication is the *Jerusalem Post* but I also enjoy the variety of magazines that are available on the system. It is so important to have a well-rounded knowledge of what is going on in our community, state, country, and world. ..."

Barbara Foster—"I like everything about the NFB-NEWSLINE service. As a blind person, it is sometimes hard to get people to read me the things I want to hear. I love that I can read all by myself with the NFB-NEWSLINE service. I love to cook and so being able to get recipes out of the paper or from magazines is another one of my favorite features of the service."

Marcia Robinson—"I feel so lucky to have access to the severe weather alerts. I used to feel a lurch in my stomach when I would hear the sound on the TV that told me that print was scrolling across the bottom of the screen alerting me of severe weather. I was never sure whether the severe weather alert was for me or for some other area and I did not know the seriousness. Was it a watch, or a warning? Should I take cover? All of those worries can be very stressful. Now I can use the NFB-NEWSLINE to find out exactly what is going on and I feel much more confident and prepared."

Scott Ingracias—"This service was a hidden treasure for me! For many hours of the day, it's just me and NFB-NEWSLINE! I'm still astounded by how comprehensive this service is. I love the weather updates, Job Listings and TV Listings. With regard to my independence, I used to feel self-conscious about not being able to participate in, or contribute to a conversation regarding current events. ... Today,

as an NFB-NEWSLINE subscriber, I find myself actually knowing more than many of my friends and colleagues about what is going on in the world. I am very involved in my community and sit on several councils. It is vital for me to always stay current. I know that I can count on NFB-NEWSLINE to keep me on task."

ShaQuantaey Mack—"Using NFB-NEWSLINE to look for jobs makes navigating the job search so much easier for me. I really loved the fact that I can just zip through the ads and email myself the ones that were relevant. And I found my dream job!"

On the 2016 election information: "This is terrific!" "How cool!" "Thank you!" "Better and better!" "This coverage was extremely valuable for my decision process. I read every article on your service about my presidential candidate." "Wow! Thank you so much!" "I want to thank you so much for posting this kind of information on NFB-NEWSLINE. This is wonderful. Thank you very, very much."

KNFB READER

Over forty years ago, the National Federation of the Blind partnered with Ray Kurzweil to develop technology that would help blind people to acquire access to the various print materials that we all encounter in our daily lives. Our first iteration of this revolutionary technology was the Kurzweil Reading Machine, which was the size of a household appliance. In 2014 the National Federation of the Blind, working with KNFB Reader LLC and Sensotec NV, released the KNFB Reader app for iOS devices, and in 2015 the app for Android smartphones and tablets was released. These apps use the phone's camera and state-of-the-art optical character recognition and image-processing technology to give the blind instant access to the contents of print materials. KNFB Reader can help users read mail, menus, bills, food packages, user manuals, and more. The text is read aloud in clear synthetic speech or can be read with a connected refresh-



KNFB Reader is the best optical character recognition (OCR) app on the market, and is changing the lives of blind, low-vision, dyslexic, and other print-disabled users around the world.

able Braille display. Words are highlighted as the text is read, making the app useful for those with dyslexia or other print disabilities. In 2016, the AppleVis community awarded KNFB Reader a Golden Apple Award for 'Best Assistive iOS App of the year' for the third year in a row. KNFB Reader has also been inducted into the AppleVis Hall of Fame.

In 2016, KNFB Reader LLC and Sensotec NV continued to develop the iOS and Android apps, as well as working toward the release of the new KNFB Reader for Windows 10, which was launched early in 2017. In addition, the KNFB Reader Enterprise program was launched, allowing individuals and organizations to purchase cross-platform licenses from the NFB Independence Market and other authorized distributors. The KNFB Reader app is now available from the iOS, Google Play, and Windows 10 stores for their respective devices.

Here is what users say about KNFB Reader: "I will tell you that no other app I have used even comes close to producing the results of the KNFB Reader app." "The KNFB Reader opens a world that has been closed. The app is on your phone and it goes everywhere with you." "This is going to make college handouts so much easier now. I'm telling every blind person I know ... about the app." Now more than ever, KNFB Reader is helping blind and print-disabled individuals across the nation and the world get the information they need to live the lives they want. For more information, visit www.knfbreader.com.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND FREE WHITE CANE PROGRAM

The National Federation of the Blind believes that the long white cane is a means to independence for the blind. The white cane has proved a useful tool to millions of blind people in navigating their environ-

ments with confidence and safety. It is a tool that allows blind people to travel where and when they want, and as such promotes independence and self-sufficiency.

We believe that independence and freedom to travel are so critical to the quality of life of blind people that every blind person should have a cane, regardless of ability to pay. That is why the National Federation of the Blind offers free fiberglass canes to blind users through its Free White Cane Program. Any blind individual in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico may request a cane for their personal use. Requests may be made as often as every six months.

In 2016 the National Federation of the Blind distributed over seven thousand canes to blind people across the United States, helping to ensure that blind Americans live the lives they want.



FREE SLATE AND STYLUS PROGRAM

In addition to distributing free white canes, the National Federation of the Blind also gives free slates and styluses to blind people who need them. The slate and stylus have long been and continue to be valuable tools for writing Braille.

The slate and stylus is the only Braille-writing tool that has the same portability, flexibility, and affordability as a pen or pencil. From labeling canned goods to jotting down a phone number, the uses and advantages of the slate and stylus to the blind are as varied as those of the pencil or pen to the sighted.

Any blind individual in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico may request a free slate and stylus. Requests may be made as often as once per year.

In 2016, the third year of this program, over three hundred fifty slates and styluses were given free of charge to blind users.

BRAILLE PROGRAMS

BELL Academy Program

The NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Academy, first launched by our Maryland affiliate in 2008, continues to provide blind children with instruction in Braille, cane travel, and the other nonvisual skills they will need to achieve their dreams and live the lives they want.

Evidence shows that Braille literacy increases the likelihood of employment, yet fewer than ten percent of students who are legally blind in the United States learn Braille. NFB BELL Academy provides intensive Braille instruction to blind and low-vision students who can benefit from additional Braille education in the summer months.

During NFB BELL Academy, students use Braille throughout the day in meaningful, fun activities, such as reading Braille recipes while cooking and identifying ingredients labelled in Braille. Students also enjoy more formal instruction in Braille reading, Braille writing, and other nonvisual skills from the kitchen to the playground and beyond. By bringing students and successful blind mentors together, NFB BELL Academy fosters a positive attitude about Braille and about blindness itself. Braille



users teach students that Braille is an invaluable tool for completing a wide variety of tasks independently and efficiently.

One parent expressed, “My daughter learned so much at NFB BELL Academy! I found out that Braille was not so difficult to learn! My daughter enjoyed the teachers, learning Braille, meeting peers, and now she is much more confident! We are so thankful for this experience. It was amazing to see how fast she picked up Braille and to see her confidence soar!”

Games and other cooperative activities provide NFB BELL Academy students the opportunity to build friendships with blind peers and blind adults. NFB BELL Academy students put their learning into action on field trips, led by blind mentors. On one NFB BELL Academy field trip, students walked to the grocery store using their canes while wearing learning shades so that they could concentrate on their cane travel skills. On the trip, students shopped for ingredients for a fruit salad and paid for their purchases using the nonvisual money identification skills they had learned. They returned to their classroom and prepared the fruit salad (peeling, cutting, mixing, and portioning) wearing their learning shades and trusting in their nonvisual skills.

Many parents highlight the importance of access to blind peers and adults—an experience their children rarely have. One parent said, “The biggest thing for me is the impact BELL offers socially. In school,

my daughter struggles with fitting in. Other children don't understand, but at NFB BELL Academy, she has made some of her best friends. BELL offers not only education in essential skills that they need for learning and daily living, but empowerment as well. My daughter's self-esteem is boosted every year."

NFB BELL Academy also shares information and resources so that parents may continue to provide learning and enrichment opportunities for their children throughout the year. Parents gain the skills and knowledge they need to support their blind children on the journey to adulthood. Parent participants also appreciate the opportunity to get to know other parents of blind children, as well as successful blind adults who connect them with a vast number of useful resources and ideas. A parent shared, "I found out that, with the long white cane and training he got at NFB BELL Academy, my son can be independent and travel by himself. How could you improve the program? Make it longer!"

In the summer of 2016, thirty states hosted forty-five NFB BELL Academy programs, which served more than three hundred and twenty-five blind students throughout the United States. NFB BELL Academy students leave the program excited about Braille, eager to learn more, and connected with dozens of blind adults who can answer any questions 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 in children and their families and promotes a love of reading by encouraging parents to read daily with their





blind or low-vision child. The program strives to introduce young children and their families to Braille by directing parents to essential resources and effective literacy strategies that promote success for their young blind children. Members of the club receive a print-Braille book, a plush reading pal, quarterly Braille activity sheets, Braille birthday cards, a monthly parent e-newsletter, and a subscription to *Future Reflections*, the quarterly magazine of the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children.

Braille Letters from Santa

In December of 2016, the National Federation of the Blind once again offered a special holiday service for children who read Braille. For the tenth year, blind children were able to request Braille letters from Santa in care of his helpers at the NFB Jernigan Institute, who sent Santa's replies 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 National Federation of the Blind 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 National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute now conducts all administrative functions of the certification program, including the recruitment, training, and evaluation of individuals wishing to become certified Braille tran-

scribers 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 2016 the program has submitted the names of 2,142 individuals to the Library of Congress, indicating that they have successfully completed the certification courses in literary, mathematics, and music transcribing or proofreading.

In addition to the day-to-day operations of this program, the transition to Unified English Braille has necessitated significant revision of course material, retraining of staff, and additional credentialing of individuals certified under older Braille rules. During 2016, the revision of the literary proofreading course was completed, and significant progress was made on the updating of the Nemeth Code (mathematics) and music Braille transcribing courses. Multiple editions of a three-part test have been created and administered to test for the “Letter of Proficiency in UEB”, which is an add-on credential for transcribers and proofreaders who were certified under the pre-UEB rules. By the end of the 2016 contract year, 214 individuals had earned a letter of proficiency in UEB from the Library of Congress.

Jeruigan Institute

OUR COMMITMENT TO EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES



We remain committed to providing early childhood resources to encourage parents of blind children to be their child’s first teacher. Our early childhood initiatives include our NFB Braille Reading Pals Club. Through this program, we provide a book with both print and Braille text, which allows sighted parents to read to their blind child and expose them to Braille. In addition, each child receives a plush stuffed animal, a reading pal, to play with while they learn to read, and parents receive additional resources. Our NFB Early Explorers program allows parents to introduce blind toddlers to independent travel using the white cane. Parents are provided

helpful information on how to teach the fundamentals of orientation and mobility to their child, and they are also able to acquire a toddler-size white cane through our Free White Cane program.

OUR COMMITMENT TO BRAILLE LITERACY

Under a contract with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress, we continue to administer the Braille Transcription Certification Training Program. Through this program, we work to certify a pool of capable, qualified Braille transcription professionals that will be responsible for converting printed literary, mathematics, and music materials into Braille. We have developed the National Reading Media Assessment (NRMA) to assist parents and education professionals to

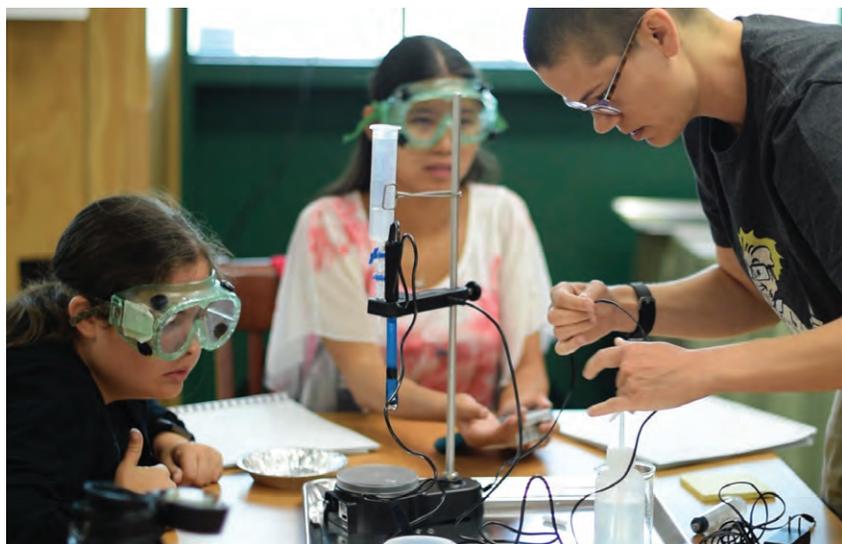




determine whether a child with low vision can benefit from instruction in both print and Braille. With more tools in their toolbox, these students have even greater potential for success. In addition, our NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Academy also provides support for those low-vision students who may not have been able to receive Braille instruction in school. This two-week summer literacy academy is exposing hundreds of elementary-age school children to Braille and independent living skills. Without this program, many of these children would remain illiterate. This program is highlighted elsewhere in this report.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CAREER COMPETITIVENESS

Our National Center for Blind Youth in Science web portal (www.blindscience.org) provides descriptions of and links to resources and information about the many science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs coordinated by the National Federation of the Blind. We recognize that when the curriculum is accessible, blind students have the capacity and intellect to be academically competitive with their sighted peers. We are dedicated to ensuring that blind students receive the instruction and training that will allow them to be equally competitive in the employment arena, and to take advantage of the emerging career opportunities available in the STEM fields.



OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

The National Federation of the Blind Center of Excellence in Nonvisual Access (CENA) to Education, Public Information, and Commerce has been established to raise awareness of nonvisual access, to identify current gaps in compliance with accessibility requirements, to provide a vehicle for discovery of future gaps, and to create training programs and resources to fill those needs. We have conducted a number of accessibility boutiques, informal accessibility-specific seminars that are free and open to the public. The State of Maryland has supported these and other accessibility projects and programs through a Nonvisual Accessibility Initiative (NVAI) grant administered by the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD).

We continue to maintain the International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind (IBTC), an evaluation and demonstration center with a comprehensive collection of the various access technologies that allow blind people to access information and our environment.

Our Blind Users Innovating and Leading Design (BUILD) program utilizes one of our greatest resources, our members. Through our BUILD program, we are establishing a database of team members to evaluate websites, products, and services for accessibility. Technologies are being developed every day that affect the way we all live, work, and play. In order for us to ensure access to the ever-evolving technologies that make it possible for blind people to live the lives we want, we need to innovate and lead the design process.



Through our Strategic Nonvisual Access Partner (SNAP) program for websites, we have strengthened our partnerships with companies like Target and Desire2Learn by helping them develop and maintain nonvisually accessible websites, which allow blind people to access their products and services. In simple terms, a nonvisually accessible website is one where screen access software can obtain sufficient information from the web application to enable the blind user to access information, complete transactions, and utilize features that have been identified as primary to the application. Moreover, we help our partner's enculturate accessibility within their product design, policy development, and employment practices.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

In 2016, we established a Research Advisory Council (RAC) to help define research priorities, to explore appropriate independent and collaborative research projects, and to identify opportunities that strengthen the breadth and depth of influence of the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute in the blindness-research arena.

An issue of our *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research* (JBIR) was dedicated to the proceedings of the 2016 General Assembly of the International Council on English Braille, which took place at the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute May 22-26. These proceedings are the largest source of contemporary information about Unified English Braille (UEB) in the English-speaking world.

The 2016 Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium, “Diversity in the Disability Rights Movement: Working Together to Achieve the Right to Live in the World,” examined the status of diversity in the disability rights movement and explored ways to increase diversity so that all may achieve Dr. tenBroek’s vision of equality of opportunity. The Hon. Myron H. Thompson, US District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, was the keynote speaker.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHT TO A PRIVATE, INDEPENDENT VOTE

Under our Help America Vote Act grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, our mobile voting working group finalized accessibility and usability guidelines for electronic ballot delivery systems. These guidelines were incorporated by the National Institute for Standards and Technology into the report “Remote Ballot Marking Systems: Designing for Usability, Accessibility, and Security.”

OUR COMMITMENT TO ARCHIVING OUR HISTORY

The National Federation of the Blind Jacobus tenBroek Library continues to pursue its goal to become the most trusted resource for information on the nonmedical aspects of blindness and the central repository of the history of the nation’s blind. To aid this endeavor, the work of the tenBroek Library in 2016 focused on three main areas: supporting the work of the National Federation of the Blind at the national, state, and local levels; expanding our presence online by increasing access to NFB literature and resources, as well as our archival collections; and continuing to cultivate our existing relationships while seeking out additional partnerships for work on exciting new projects.

In 2016 the tenBroek Library continued to expand our collection holdings, particularly those that

document the history and current activities of the NFB, and worked to increase their ease of access by both Federationists and the general public. Our commitment to making the great wealth of knowledge preserved in NFB literature available online continued to make good progress this year, including with our ongoing project to digitize all legacy issues of the *Braille Monitor*, digitized issues of which are now available on our website from 1957 to 1973. A new exhibit was added to the library honoring the many distinguished Federationists and allies who have received the NFB’s oldest and most prestigious awards: the Jacobus tenBroek, the Newel Perry, and the Kenneth Jernigan Awards. And once again, our professional staff processed a high volume of reference requests and hosted visiting researchers. Much of this work supplemented projects undertaken by NFB members, officers, and staff members, and aided in the creation of reference files concerning the history and make-up of the organization, which will aid researchers now and in the future.

The tenBroek Library partnered with Misericordia University (MU) for our first ever summer archives internship. As part of a six-week program, the Library hosted an MU undergraduate student who worked with our staff on photo preservation and created documentation and resources to support the NFB Oral History Program. The internship proved to be a complete success, and we look forward to hosting a new student in the summer of 2017.

Library staff worked to increase the NFB’s exposure to new audiences and to share our expertise by participating in professional library conferences and forums. Key among these efforts was our participation in the first Disability History/Archives Consortium meeting, hosted by the University of Texas at Arlington in August of 2016. This event involved more than fifty archivists, curators, librarians, historians, and rights activists from across the country with the goal of developing a centralized resource for disability history and the institutions that preserve it. The tenBroek Library staff was



proud to represent the rich legacy of the National Federation of the Blind and to promote the organization's integral role in the organized blind movement in this promising new project.

Building upon our existing partnership with Digital Maryland, the state representative of the Digital Public Library of America, the tenBroek Library curated a new exhibit on the life of NFB founder Dr. Jacobus tenBroek. Using primary source documents taken from his personal and professional papers, this exhibit provides a glimpse into the life and work of Dr. tenBroek beyond the Federation. The selected documents focus on his post-secondary education, initial struggles to find work as a college professor, teaching career, family life, and research projects concerning United States constitutional law. They also provide a unique glimpse of his personality, sense of humor, and intelligence through his personal correspondence.

Our Donors

DREAM MAKERS' CIRCLE

The Dream Makers' Circle consists of friends of the National Federation of the Blind who are helping raise the expectations of and for the blind through their commitment of a legacy gift to the organization. Recognition is given to those committed individuals who support the work of the National Federation of the Blind by including us in a will or living trust, a life-income gift, or by making the NFB a beneficiary of a life-insurance policy or retirement plan. Individuals enroll in the Legacy Society by advising the National Federation of the Blind, in writing, that they have included us in their estate plan. Some donors wish to remain anonymous, and the National Federation of the Blind honors these requests. However, we offer the following recognition of these selfless individuals as an expression of our sincere appreciation, and in an effort to encourage others to make a similar commitment.

Roland & Pamela Allen
John Berggren
Ron & Jean Brown
Charles & Jacqueline Brown
Shawn & Latonya Callaway
Patti & Francisco Chang
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Angeline O'Meara Trust
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Tactile exhibits allow blind people to experience and enjoy art.



The white cane has proved to be a useful tool to millions of blind people, allowing them to travel safely and independently in both familiar and unfamiliar places.

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Financial Statement

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31, 2016

REVENUE AND GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support:	
Contributions	\$16,726,489
Donated Services	4,362,261
Government Grants	2,074,144
 Total Public Support:	 23,162,894
 Revenue:	
Sales - independence products and publications	700,456
Investment Income (loss)	623,098
Royalties	1,242
 Total Revenue:	 1,324,796
 Total Revenue and Gains and Other Support	 \$24,487,690

EXPENSES

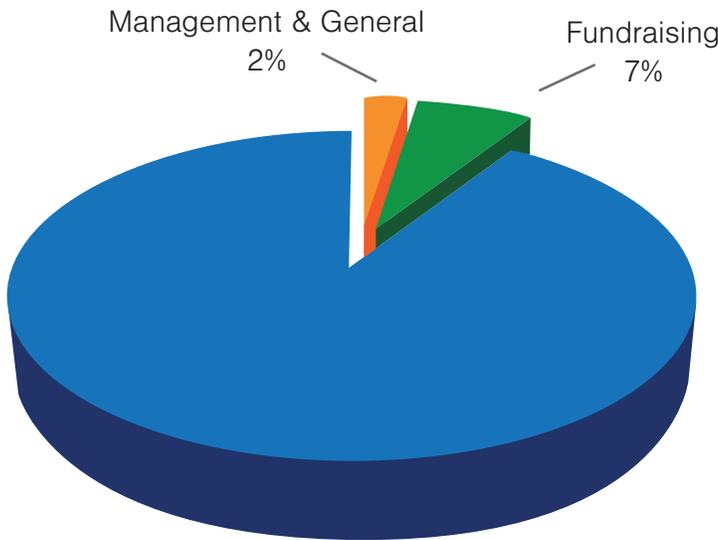
Program Services:	
Blindness Integration	\$8,804,789
Civil rights, advocacy and self-organization	6,023,390
Nonvisual access technology, methods and systems	5,229,150
 Total Program Services	 20,057,329
 Supporting Services	
Management and General	570,343
Fundraising	1,529,523
 Total Supporting Services	 2,099,866
 Total Expenses	 \$22,157,195

Changes in Net Assets	\$2,330,495
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$22,026,293
Net Assets - End of Year	\$24,356,788

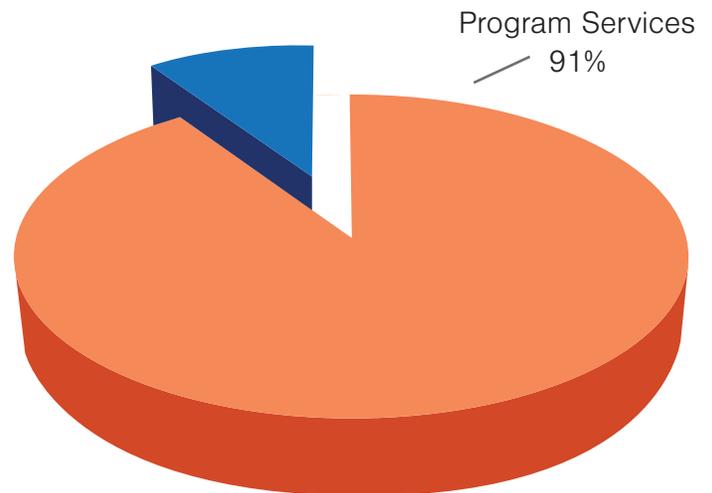


The National Federation of the Blind meets the rigorous Standards for Charity Accountability set forth by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The NFB maintains a GuideStar Exchange Gold Participant status, and is an approved charity participant in the Combined Federal Campaign.

FUNDRAISING AND MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL EXPENSES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT



PROGRAM SERVICES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENSES



Financial statements presented have been audited by Rosen, Sapperstein and Friedlander, LLC. 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.

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Policy Advisor to the President

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Jernigan Institute

John G. Paré Jr.
Executive Director for Advocacy and Policy



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 help blind people live the lives they want:

DONATE ONLINE

Contributions by credit card may be given all at once or pledged over a period of time. A one-time credit card donation can be made online at www.nfb.org/donate. To make a recurring donation, please call our accounting department at (410) 659-9314, extension 2213.

DONATE BY MAIL

Checks should be made out to the “National Federation of the Blind” and mailed to the National Federation of the Blind, attention Outreach 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 (855) 659-9314 or by visiting www.nfb.org/vehicledonations.

DONATE CLOTHING

If you live in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Virginia, you can donate clothing and other household items to the National Federation of the Blind. You may take your items to a GreenDrop collection site or call (888) 610-4632 for home pickup. Learn more by visiting www.nfbpickup.org.

PLANNED GIVING

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 or contingent beneficiary. You could also consider designating the NFB as the beneficiary or contingent beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan, thereby giving a substantial gift for a relatively modest annual outlay of funds. For more information on planned giving opportunities, please contact our outreach department at (410) 659-9314, extension 2422. You will also need to consult with your financial and/or legal advisor.

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.



LAR16P



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

Live the life you want.