



Spring 2011

Ohio Connection

American Council of the Blind Ohio
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ACB Legislative Conference Recap

— *By Katie Frederick*

Five ACB Ohio members made the trip to Washington, D.C., to represent our state at the 2011 ACB Legislative Seminar. The event was held Sunday, February 27 through Tuesday, March 1. Participants Katie Frederick, Jill Noble, Nolan Crabb, Dave Perry and Chris Schumacher were able to visit 18 representatives and our two Ohio senators this year.

We focused our efforts on three issues: prescription drug labeling, Medicare purchasing rule changes and vehicle donation. As we met with various Ohio Congressional staffers, we informed them about these issues and ACB's viewpoint. Two of these issues, prescription drug labeling and Medicare rule changes, are issues that we would like to see addressed in this year's Congress.

The Prescription Drug Labeling Act would grant the FDA the authority to regulate the content and format of the labeling of prescription drugs to ensure they are accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. Currently,

this is regulated state by state, and accessibility to those who are blind or visually impaired is nonexistent.

The Medicare Low Vision Aid Inclusion calls for a clarification of the existing rules that prohibit coverage of contact lenses and eyeglasses. If amended, the ruling would allow for the coverage of other low vision devices such as magnifiers and CCTVs for in-home use.

The issue of vehicle donation was introduced to Congress last year and managed to receive approximately 211 sponsors; however, a bill was not passed. Senator John Ensign (R-NV), a member of the Senate Finance Committee, introduced the text of this bill as S. 110 to amend the IRS code of 1986.

If this bill were to pass, donors could claim fair market value up to \$2,500 and require the IRS to issue new guidelines for donors and charities on how to properly calculate fair market value.

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From the President's Desk — *By Nolan Crabb*

Every winter about this time, ACB affiliate leaders from throughout the nation gather near the organization's national headquarters to network with one another and learn ways in which they can return home and be more effective as affiliate leaders. That long-held tradition continued this winter, and it was my privilege to meet with other affiliate leaders and gain additional insights into the successes and challenges faced by the national organization during the past year.

Following the usual round of introductions, the group heard from the current and past presidents of the National Alliance of Blind Students, who spoke about the importance of recruiting new, younger members to our chapters and affiliates. I had hoped that these young ladies would offer some hints on how to do that. Alas, they asked us how we thought we could do that. I'm pretty sure if I'd known how already, I might have skipped that session. I took a modicum of comfort in the reality that no one else seemed to have any magic formulas either.

One of the sessions that had a tremendous impact on me was a session on leadership and how to lead more effectively. Needless to say, it was a session with information that was particularly relevant to me.

While I didn't take part in a large number of the visits to the members of Congress, I felt the ones in which I did participate were as successful as we could expect in this session. In fact, I think we

were better received than I had expected. I joined Jill Noble when she visited Sen. Portman's office, and Dave Perry was kind enough to let me tag along with him and Chris Schumacher in visits to Sen. Brown and Rep. Mike Turner's offices. Jill Noble and Katie Frederick included me in their visit to Rep. Steve Stivers's office. In every case, we were well received, and the staff members were attentive and asked searching questions.

Regarding matters closer to home, I'm pleased to announce that ACB Ohio is the recipient of a year's worth of public relations assistance from a Dayton-based PR company. We have Mary Highland to thank for that since she initially found a story in the *Columbus Dispatch* about a company seeking to give back to its community.

Mary completed an online questionnaire that informed the company of our work and mission, and after its representatives interviewed several of our members, ACB Ohio was chosen as the organization which will receive help from the company. We are excited to have these professionals help us to better and more effectively tell our story, enhance our website, and more.

We have a lot of wonderful educational events scheduled for the rest of the year, and I encourage you to check out the calendar on the back page of this newsletter or see the full yearly calendar on the ACB Ohio website at www.acbohio.org.

Around Ohio: *Chapter Reports*

Eye on Summit

Bob McDowell from the Akron Law Department spoke at Eye On Summit's February meeting. He shared information he learned while researching the ADA, including the requirements for the Bioptic Driving Program, rules for dog guides, and our rights to public information and accommodations as visually impaired individuals. There was a lively Q&A session and Mr. McDowell promised to attend another meeting to answer more member questions and concerns.

The chapter also hosted Joe Martin, a Wellness Life Coach, at the March meeting. He addressed exercise and nutrition concerns and helped members set personal goals in these areas.

Stark County

The Stark County chapter hosted a speaker on recycling in January. She made an interesting presentation on the recycling of plastic, glass, paper and aluminum. She was asked to return again to discuss electric waste. The February meeting was dedicated to members sharing ideas on everything from fundraising to member recruitment. The chapter recently recruited a few new members and hopes to gain more new members before the end of the year.

Wake up with ACB Ohio's own "Eye Opener" Coffee Blend

Don't forget to try ACB Ohio's own "Eye Opener" coffee blend with its unique Braille labeling. There are also delicious flavored coffees, other blends, tea and tea accessories.

Buy yours today and buy some for a friend! Each purchase supports ACB Ohio's mission to promote the quality and equality of life for people who are blind or visually impaired.



To order, call (937) 697-5200 or go to www.stoneycreekroasters.com and select On-line Store. Click on the "Give Back" page and go to ACB Ohio's "Support This Group."

The **Ohio Connection** is a quarterly publication of The American Council of the Blind of Ohio. Please submit your material in print or through e-mail. The next deadline is May 22, 2011. Please include your name, address and phone number and send to: Terri Kevany, Editor, at takevany@roadrunner.com or call (216) 251-0484.

From the Director's Chair — *By Mary Hiland*

Two very exciting developments for ACB Ohio will be the catalysts for growth and, yes, change in the coming year.

First, I am delighted to announce that we have indeed been accepted as a member of Community Shares, an organization of agencies and service providers, who conduct fund-raising campaigns in the workplace. For more than 15 years, Community Shares of Mid Ohio has been extending philanthropy to all through workplace giving that provides vital and stable financial support to its non-profit members.



If you or someone you know is an employee of the state of Ohio or works at a Community Shares campaign participating organization, please encourage them to designate ACB Ohio in their next workplace giving campaign. Except for VOICEcorps Radio Reading Service, we are the only participating blindness organization. This could be the fund-raising break we've been seeking, but we need your help to make it a success. Donating is easy and painless. Dona-

tions are made through payroll deduction and will help keep ACB Ohio in the business of helping people who are blind or losing their vision.

I am also excited to announce that we received a wonderful gift of one year of free marketing support from Forge, a Dayton-based firm. Each year Forge conducts a search for a deserving non-profit to help in a project they call Forge Your Dot Org. ACB Ohio was chosen from 35 applicants. To date, we have had two meetings with their staff, and the ideas for our future have been blossoming, not only from their firm, but also from our members. We are eager to make changes that will enhance our growth, raise awareness and eventually lead to financial stability. Stay tuned.

Contributors . . .

Thank you to ACB Ohio members who contributed to this issue of the *Ohio Connection*: **Carolyn Burley, Nolan Crabb, Katie Frederick, Marc Guthrie, Michelle Hasenstaub, Mary Hiland, Dave Perry, Vicky Prahin, Joyce Rogers, and Robert Rogers.**

Keeping Connected — *By Marc Guthrie*

Since we last connected, Community Shares has accepted our application for membership, which means that in 2011 ACB Ohio will be listed as an eligible charity with the State of Ohio Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC). More than 50,000 state employees will now have the option of supporting our efforts, via payroll deduction, during the fall 2011 campaign.

In addition to the CCC, other employers also contribute to Community Shares, including the Columbus Metropolitan Libraries, Columbus Public Schools, Denison University, and the Commerce National Bank.

Community Shares' website states: "Community Shares of Mid Ohio was established in 1993 as a coalition of locally-based, non-profit organizations collaboratively participating in workplace giving campaigns. These campaigns provide vital and stable financial support for non-profit, social advocacy member organizations. Community Shares of Mid Ohio's 60 members are community-based, volunteer-led charities and agencies that address a wide range of social and environmental services and issues, and focus on long-term, prevention-oriented solutions that emphasize social change and justice."

Check out their website at www.communityshares.net. When I recently visited the website it was exciting to see ACB Ohio listed as a new Community Shares member.

In my final ACBO Board briefing in 2010, I shared that I thought 2011 would be a very challenging year for Ohioans with disabilities. As you know, the \$400 million for passenger rail service in Ohio has been sent back to the U. S. government and dispersed to other states. Though the rail issue appears to be dead for at least Governor Kasich's administration, there are other important matters pending in our capitol, which are crucial to our members and thousands of other Ohioans with disabilities. We need to advocate aggressively for our beliefs.

According to a recent article in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, one in every three dollars the state spends is on Medicaid, and there is going to be a major effort to reduce this cost. Medicaid, RSC, Ohio Legal Services, Developmental Disabilities and other important programs will be targeted for significant cuts. Because we don't have powerful lobbyists representing our interest, we have to be self-advocates. It is important that all ACB Ohio members get to know their lawmakers. You can reach out to your state representative or senators by calling (800) 282-0253. If you don't know your legislator's name, a staffer at that toll-free number should be able to assist you. Best wishes until we next connect.

Marc Guthrie provides counsel to ACB Ohio on fundraising and advocacy matters. His e-mail address is marcguthrie@hotmail.com.

ACB Ohio Hosts Winter Fun in the Snow

Over a fun-filled weekend in January, 15 pairs of cross country skiers, snowshoers and hikers gathered for the 23rd annual ACB Ohio Winter Sports Retreat at Punderson State Park near Cleveland. Half of these winter-lovers were blind or visually impaired and their sighted partners guided them across the snowy golf course, through the woods, and over trails in nearby parks.

Modeled after an international event called Ski for Light, this program allows adults who are blind to experience the joys of winter sports with as much independence as possible. A major highlight of the weekend was the snow! Participants had plenty of the white stuff and the conditions for setting tracks used by skiers and guides could not have been better.

Blind skiers take verbal direction from their sighted guides as they weave through trees and traverse up and down hills. Because the skiers and guides are not tethered, except through words, from a distance, an observer wouldn't be able to tell who was blind and who was not.

This event provides an opportunity for vigorous exercise, but, just as importantly, it creates an atmosphere of trust and respect. After skiing, many took part in Euchre and Scrabble tournaments or enjoyed other board games. Others attendees preferred to emphasize the retreat aspect of the getaway, relaxing by the fire, chatting with friends or curling up with a good book.

The Winter Sports Retreat is one of three recreational opportunities that the American Council of the Blind of Ohio hosts each year. Please think about joining us for the always fun Summer Sports Retreat in August. Watch the *Ohio Connection* or the ACB Ohio website for more information.



Jill Noble and Roger Meridith get ready to hit the trails.



Lynn Power, Gracie Hurley and Katie Frederick play a lively game of Euchre.



Rob Rogers, Ken Bordwell, Vicky Bordwell and Joyce Rogers take a break from skiing to pose for a picture.



While father Ken looks on, Vicky Bordwell gets a better idea of how cold the snow is when she falls while skiing.



Catherine Bister and Gracie Hurley give sledding a whirl.



Jill Noble and Steve Plouck weave through the woods on an exciting downhill trail.

Membership Committee Update

— By Dave Perry

I consider it an honor to chair the ACB Ohio Membership Committee. I also consider it a greater honor to have so many active and involved members participating on this committee. I want to personally thank Katie Frederick of Columbus, Sara Soper of Toledo, Nolan Crabb of Columbus, Chris Schumacher of Cincinnati, Mary Hiland of Gahanna, and Vicky Prahin of Columbus for their participation and hard work on the committee. I also commend them for all of their dedication and love for the American Council of the Blind of Ohio as a whole.

It has been said that charity starts at home. Supporting an ACB Ohio local chapter around your hometown should be a major priority. It is also good to spread that charity away from home. Please consider participating with ACB Ohio on the state level to provide support and information for all Ohioans who are blind or visually impaired. Bringing back the Toledo and Dayton Chapters would be a great way of supporting Ohioans who are blind because it is extremely important that ACB Ohio has local chapter representation in every area of the state.

We as a Committee are striving to increase our membership participation among our full membership body. Our goal as a committee is to always encourage ACB Ohio members and friends to be more active, more produc-

tive, and more supportive so that we as an organization can be more effective. We strive for improving the quality and equality of life for all Ohioans who are blind or visually impaired. Feel free to contact us at your earliest convenience at daveperry@fuse.net or call (800) 835-2226 for more information or a membership application.

Legislative Conference (From page one.)

Claims of value exceeding \$2,500 would require a certified appraisal.

The bill would maintain IRS reporting requirements for both taxpayers and charities and retain penalties for false reporting. This would allow ACB, ACB affiliates, and other nonprofit charities to keep their important programs running into the future.

Attending the seminar was a great experience for all who participated, and I cannot wait to represent ACB Ohio in the future.

Essay Contest Winners Announced

— By Joyce Rogers

The second annual Arlene Cohen Braille Essay Contest, held during September and October of 2010, resulted in the awarding of eight Braille books and two monetary prizes. We thank all of the students who submitted entries this year.

The book awards went to Sami Palmer, Yaqi Schumacher, Olivia Bump, Joice Janicki, Crayton Benner, Brandon Tolle, and Casey Campbell, all students at the Ohio State School for the Blind, and Gabriella Drago, a student at Mentor High School. The students received a Braille book of their choice from the Seedlings Catalog.

Two essays qualified for monetary awards. Casey Campbell, aged 12, took third place in her age group. Her teacher is Cecelia Peirano. Gabriella Drago, aged 14, took second prize in her older age group. Her teacher is Mary Davidson. They won prizes of \$75 and \$100, respectively.

Casey's favorite subjects are spelling and reading because, she says, she always does well in those subjects. She also enjoys her music and art classes. For fun, Casey enjoys playing the keyboard and watching television. She likes to read Beverly Cleary's Ramona Quimby books and science fiction. She has recently read Ramona the Brave by Cleary.

Gabriella enjoys learning Spanish because it is spoken by so many people in the world and it is helpful to know a second language. She likes English because writing allows her to express herself and her feelings. Gabriella likes the teachers and the students at Mentor High because the teachers help her with her individual needs and she has many friends among the students. Her hobbies are singing and playing the piano and she loves the freedom of expression they offer her. She prefers reading fiction books and one of her favorite books is *The Hunger Games* written by Suzanne Collins.

The Touch of Wonder Reading Program and Arlene Cohen Braille Essay Contest are designed to promote the reading of Braille among grade school and high school students in Ohio.

We hope to have more award winning essays in 2011. Students may participate in the reading program as early as April this year and qualify for prizes. Information about the reading program and essay contest for 2011 is available on the ACB Ohio website at www.acbohio.org. For more information or an application, contact Joyce Rogers at jarogers@one.net or by phone at (513) 921-3186.

Meet Our Scholarship Winners

— *By Vicky Prahin and Katie Frederick*

ACB Ohio offers several scholarships each year, and the winners are always amazing students. Those who attend the state convention have opportunities to meet these impressive young people, and we want everyone else to have a chance to get to know a little about them. We will introduce a couple of our scholarship winners in each issue of the *Ohio Connection*.

Jenna Karg, a sophomore at Bowling Green State University, received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship during our 2010 ACB Ohio convention. Jenna is pursuing a degree in special education and hopes to teach students with special needs in an urban environment. Outside the classroom, Jenna is involved in her campus community. She is active in a non-denominational church group, a learning community for other education majors, and tutoring students.

Jenna grew up in upper Sandusky, Ohio, a small town near Marion. When not in class or participating in other school-related activities, she enjoys several other interests, including reading, spending time with family and friends, and riding horses.

Jenna attended all activities during the convention weekend, had a great time, and looks forward to participating in future ACB Ohio events.

Barbie Stahl, winner of the JoAnn Fisher Scholarship, lives in Spring Valley and attends the University of Dayton as a second-year law student. Barbie lost her sight to meningitis before her first birthday. When she was four, her parents, Dick and Linda, heard about the HOPE Program (Helping Others Through Personal Experience), the brainchild of Julie Russell. Julie taught Barbie Braille and got her started on the path to independence.

After witnessing various instances of discrimination during her early years, Barbie decided that the only way to fight such actions was through the legal system, and she set her sights on becoming an attorney. She now hopes to practice estate law, helping people avoid pitfalls.

When she is not studying, Barbie enjoys reading and playing the piano, at which she excels. She also enjoys meeting new people and trying new things. After attending the 2010 State Convention, where she impressed many people with her wit and charm, she said, "I really had a blast!"

MMS “Two-for-One” Program

— *By Dr. Ronald E. Milliman*

Would you like to be able to help your state affiliate, and at the same time, assist ACB at the national level, too? Well, now you can by participating in the “Two-for-One” Monthly Monetary Support (MMS) Program.

In appreciation for your participation, ACB will send you a pocket-sized, FM Scanner Radio when we receive your first contribution (while supplies last). This high-quality FM radio comes complete with Earbud earphones and batteries for your listening enjoyment.

New participants, and current participants that increase their monthly contribution by \$5 or more, will also be included in an annual drawing for a valuable gift. In recent years these gifts have included a Hamilton Beach talking microwave, a Humanware Victor Reader Stream, and a GW Micro BookSense.

The MMS Program is a way to financially support our organization in whatever amount you can afford. The amount you designate is automatically deducted from your bank, credit card or debit card account each month by ACB and is used to fund the many critical needs of our organization. You completely control the amount that you give and from which account it is taken. You also indicate a start and end date.

Participants can also designate to have all of the funds go to the national organization or designate an amount up to 50 percent of the net amount of your de-

duction to be given to an affiliate of your choice, including any of our special interest affiliates.

At the national level, we need funds to support our many programs that help all of us. Our staff is busy every minute of their working days fighting for our rights, for new programs that will be in our best interest, and to maintain existing laws and programs that benefit people who are blind. The ACB staff is our voice on Capitol Hill, and we need to support them by helping to fund their efforts.

Our ACB affiliates also need funding to support their activities, such as on-going public education campaigns, scholarships, social events, defraying the costs associated with attending the state and national conventions, the Washington Seminar, etc.

Any amount can help. Current contributions range from \$10 per month and go all the way up to \$100 per month, with the average contribution being approximately \$23.

To get started, call the ACB financial office at (800) 866-3242 and we will help you fill out the required form. You can also access the form on our ACB website at www.acb.org/mms.

Dr. Ronald E. Milliman is Chair of the American Council of the Blind’s MMS Program Committee. His e-mail address is milliman@insightbb.com.

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Ohio Chapter
P.O. Box 307128
Spring 2011

**Free Matter
for the Blind or
Handicapped
P.O. Manual
Part 138**



2011 ACB Ohio Datebook

ACB Ohio Board Meeting

Columbus, Ohio
April 2, 2011

OSU's Multiple Perspectives

OSU, Columbus
May 4-5, 2011

Technology Expo

Sight Center of NW Ohio, Toledo
May 20-21, 2011

Just Another Bike Ride

Wolf Park, Columbus
June 11, 2011

ACB Ohio Board Meeting

Columbus, Ohio
July 30, 2011

ACB Ohio/Seeing Hands Association

Technology Seminar, St. Clairesville
September 10, 2011

Building Blocks for a Brighter Future

OSSB, Columbus
September 24, 2011

For more information on any upcoming
ACB Ohio events, call
(800) 835-2226 or logon to
www.acbohio.org.