

Summer 2017



Ohio Connection

American Council of the Blind of Ohio
3805 N. High St., Ste. 305
Columbus, OH 43214
1-800-835-2226

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

By Katie Frederick

Summer means many things to us: the end of another school year, long hot days enjoying the outdoors, and spending time with family and friends. This summer, join in on ACB-Ohio's fun events and opportunities!

If you're a student, summer is a perfect time to submit an ACB-Ohio scholarship application for financial assistance during the 2017-2018 academic year. Scholarship amounts range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 and are available for undergraduate and graduate students in diverse fields of study. A student does not need to be a member to apply, and we encourage past applicants to reapply. The deadline for application packets is August 1. Find information about scholarship qualifications and application materials on our website at www.acbohio.org/scholarships, by calling the ACB-Ohio office at (800) 835-2226, or by sending an email to acbo.scholarships@gmail.com. The scholarship committee looks forward to receiving your application. Good luck!

If spending time outdoors hiking, boating, swimming, bike riding, or socializing by a campfire sounds like your idea

of summer fun, plan to attend the 2017 ACB-Ohio Summer Sports Retreat. The event will take place August 18 to 20 at Jody's place in Hockingport, Ohio. The cost is \$75 if you are a participant who is blind or visually impaired and \$25 if you are attending as a sighted guide for the weekend. We hope you'll consider joining us for a fun-filled, relaxed weekend on the Ohio River this summer. For more information call the ACB-Ohio office or email acboassist@gmail.com.

Think about recognizing someone with an ACB-Ohio award—maybe a teacher who's gone above and beyond, a media member who gave your local chapter worthy coverage, or someone in the blindness community who works to improve life for people who are blind or visually impaired. Send nomination letters by September 8 to acbo.awards@gmail.com or via postal mail to the ACB-Ohio office at 3805 North High Street, Suite 305, Columbus, OH 43214.

It's never too early to plan to attend the 2017 ACB-Ohio and ACB-Indiana joint conference and convention taking place October 20 through 22. This is our sec-

ond year at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky. Friday's program highlights include sessions on self-driving vehicles and ride-sharing apps in the afternoon, enjoying the waterpark and resort features of the hotel in the evening, or socializing with friends in the hospitality room. Saturday's highlights include learning about assistive and mainstream technology, meeting our 2017 scholarship winners during lunch, and wrapping up the day by hearing from talking book narrator Laura Giannarelli and enjoying the auction.

This year, we are working on arranging transportation to Sandusky; however, we need to know if there is interest before we secure transportation. Would having a ride to and from the conference impact your decision to attend? Please contact the ACB-Ohio office

with your thoughts on this matter. Kalahari room rates are \$109 plus tax for guests arriving Thursday, October 19 and \$139 plus tax for guests who check in October 20. To make reservations, call (877) 525-2427 and mention the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. The sooner you make your reservations, the closer your room will be to the convention center of the hotel. After September 15, rooms may be available at our group rate but are not guaranteed.

I hope this article gives you food for thought and you'll consider applying for a scholarship, attending the summer sports retreat, nominating a worthy individual for an award, coming to the convention in the fall, or better yet, all the above!

Michelle Spillan, Editor
Newsletter Committee: Katie Frederick,
Irwin Hott, Jenna McCartney, Vicky Prahin

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Katie Frederick, Jim Jirak, Kelsey Nicolay, Vicky Prahin, and Elizabeth Sammons.**

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, and include your name, address and phone number. Please send items for the next issue to acbo.newsletter@gmail.com by **August 15.**

LET'S DANCE: HOW I DEALT WITH CHOREOGRAPHY

By Kelsey Nicolay

I sang in choir since the fourth grade without much difficulty until one day in freshman chorus the director gave us the music we would be performing at the end-of-year show with choreography. I was nervous about how it would go. How would I remember the moves? How would I move around without my cane? What about getting on and off stage? My choir director assured me that I would dance and participate like everyone else and that they would find ways to make it happen.

We ended up having someone come in to help me. The choir director chose someone who was in show choir and had more dance experience. It worked out well. The person the director found seemed to know instinctively that I was capable of doing the moves on my own once I learned them. As soon as she felt I was ready, she insisted that I do as much as I could without her holding onto my arms.

After about a week she said, "I'm not going to help you too much today because I want you to be able to do it on your own during performance." I didn't do the moves perfectly the first few times I did them alone, but I knew that with repetition I would learn them, and I did. Two weeks before performance, I could do almost all of it alone and she could simply watch from a distance and correct me if necessary.

Performance weekend went well. While the first show time was mostly successful, I had a few setbacks. Like most students, I chose to take part in my grade's student-led ensemble. We auditioned for the show and were one of the groups selected. When it came time to learn our choreography, the choreographer commented that he tried doing the ensemble's dance steps with his eyes closed, and he couldn't do it, so he concluded that I couldn't either. I felt devastated because I had been working hard in choir and then he told me I couldn't perform the student ensemble choreography. The choir director decided to let me perform anyway and just sing the number with the ensemble. I was grateful he let me do that, but at the same time I felt robbed of an opportunity to prove myself. From this experience, I learned that it is important to stay positive and keep working at your dream and trying to change minds even if others don't believe you will succeed.

During my sophomore and junior years, the performances were not as successful. The choir director found someone to work with me who did not have the same expectations that the former student had. Instead of encouraging me to do the moves on my own, she stood behind me and moved my arms. It took a lot longer for me to learn the choreography, and on stage

during the performance she had to help me with most of it. The choir director allowed her to be on stage with me, but he overlooked the fact that she was practically doing it for me. My teacher of the visually impaired, family, and friends all commented that there was no reason for her to be on stage helping me. My TVI helped me with costume changes for one show so that my family could watch the performance. After both my numbers she told me that I could have done most of that myself.

The same thing happened both years. In my junior year, I participated in the student ensemble again. It was comprised of the people I had been in the freshman group with, but they were all in higher choirs than I was. They were familiar with my blindness, and it didn't seem like a big deal to them until it was time to learn the choreography. The group leader chose to make up the choreography herself instead of having our choreographer do it. When it came time for dance rehearsal, no one bothered to teach me until the week of the performance. My choir director told me one person was teaching me, my assistant told me something different, and another student in my choir said she was teaching me. I finally decided to call one of the members whom I knew from freshman chorus and who had helped me in that group as well. Luckily, she agreed to teach me the next day. However, because it was so close to performance, I ended up dropping the group at the last minute because I could not learn the arm movements in time.

In my senior year, I was determined to make this the best performance since it was my last one. I told my director that I wanted an assistant to help me learn the choreography but I did not want him on stage with me. The director had a hard time finding someone who was free during the first period of the day, but she eventually found someone, and, once she did, it worked out fine. This person understood that I could do the moves by myself once I felt confident. He was right there, but he never helped me when I didn't need it. It helped that my sister was in the same choir, so she sometimes worked with me at home to correct my mistakes. I also participated in senior ensemble since it was my last performance. That started off shaky, but, once I was taught the dance, I was okay. One of the girls in my choir was also in the group, so she started teaching me. She thought that I needed constant help and stood behind me and moved my arms. Two students whom I knew from middle school decided to teach me instead. I met with them one on one, and we went through it. I learned the routine in about an hour, and by the end of our time I was doing pretty much all of it with little assistance. The performance went really well, and my family told me that I fit right in, which is what I wanted.

Based on these experiences, I have several suggestions for students dealing with a similar situation. The most important piece of advice is to be confident. It may be difficult at times, but try to stay positive through performance. Second, self-advocacy is critical. If you feel you are not getting the help you need, speak up. Talk to the person

helping you and let him or her know that you want to do the moves on your own. It may be uncomfortable to bring this up, but if you do it tactfully, there should be no problem. You can also ask your orientation and mobility instructor or TVI for help. He or she may be able to help if there is a particular dance move you are struggling with. Either way, speak up if things aren't going

the way they should. Finally, show appreciation. For example, giving the people who helped you learn the choreography a gift card to their favorite restaurant or just some flowers goes a long way. People will be more likely to help you in future ensembles if they know their work is appreciated.

FRIENDS-N-FOCUS: A MEDINA CHAPTER UPDATE

By Don Kalman



Hi, everybody. Let me share what the Medina County Chapter has been up to.

- We put 37 CCTVs in the homes of people with limited vision.
- We picked out Medina County's voting machines.
- We persuaded the city of Medina to install audible traffic signals at four intersections. Since then the city installed two more for a total of six.
- We bought \$500 worth of equipment for the Brunswick School System and another \$500 for the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities.
- We persuaded the local theater to install audio-description equipment.
- We sent kids to the Cleveland Sight Center's Highbrook Lodge Camp. Hopefully we will send two more this year.
- We now have our IRS and Attorney General's paperwork done for this year.
- We held elections in April, resulting in a new secretary, Ed Fringer. Our vice president is Jamie Piechuta and our president and treasurer is Don Kalman.
- A Medina police officer came to our May meeting and gave an interesting talk on scams.

I just want everyone to know that I love our group and I think they do a wonderful job! I want to challenge the other chapters to do their best in their communities and make the American Council of the Blind of Ohio proud.



CALLING ALL LEADERS

By Vicky Prahin

The Program Planning Committee is busily putting together sessions for the 2017 convention. We will, as always, devote part of Saturday morning to elections of officers and members of the Board of Directors. These people do much of the work of ACB-Ohio, most of which is behind the scenes. The Nominating Committee searches for members who want more involvement than attending local chapter meetings. Most of us think of those elected as the leaders in our organization. While considering this, I wondered how many of us think of ourselves as leaders. What is a leader anyway? What qualities do we look for—in one another or in ourselves?

Merriam-Webster defines the verb “lead” as “to be in charge or command” and “leader” as one who is in command or control. Tom Madine, CEO and president of Worldwide Express, one of the largest authorized resellers of express shipping for UPS, says this about who and what a leader is: “The most effective leaders do this (lead) not through fear, intimidation or title, but rather by building consensus around a common goal.”

That’s what our board of directors is all about. Our common goal is to push forward the mission of ACBO, advancing the quality and equality of life for

blind and visually impaired people through advocacy, education, and social programs. Most officers and directors do this quietly, in the background, and I would bet that many Ohioans don’t even know who the board members are, those who are making decisions about what to pursue, whom to contact, and when and where to be vocal. We write and talk to legislators, speak to community groups, and provide resources for those who ask for them.

If you want to do any of these, think seriously about taking a leadership role in ACB-Ohio. You don’t have to be loud or confrontational; you don’t have to leave home. According to John Quincy Adams, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.” You can do this quietly and make a difference. Some people are afraid to step up because they fear making mistakes or being in the spotlight. Don’t worry about it; we ask you to do only as much as you feel comfortable doing. The important thing is to do it. Each one of you has some leadership qualities, so let them shine!

Join us at the 2017 conference and convention and see how others are leading and what you can do to help!

OLBPD FAMILY FUN & LEARNING DAY

(From Ohio Library for the Blind & Physically Disabled's Dimensions Newsletter)

Family Fun & Learning Day will take place on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Ohio Library for the Blind & Physically Disabled, 17121 Lake Shore Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44110. OLBPD patrons and their family and friends are invited to join us for the day.

Family Fun & Learning Day will feature guided tours of OLBPD's Sensory Garden by garden caretaker and horticultural expert Ben Zaremba from Zaremba Horticultural Services. The Sensory Garden is filled with flowers, herbs, and plants specially selected for their bloom, color, fragrance, taste, and texture. The Sensory Garden is open all year round.

OLBPD is pleased to welcome our featured keynote speaker Paul Landis. Born in Toledo, raised in Worthington, and now living in Shaker Heights, Mr. Landis joined the Secret Service in 1959 working the detail protecting President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Following the 1960 election, he joined the Kennedy detail at the time of the inauguration. He was transferred from watching Caroline and Jack Jr. to guarding Mrs. Kennedy in 1962. When Mrs. Kennedy decided to join her husband on his Dallas trip, Mr. Landis rode

the rear passenger-side running board on the car immediately behind President Kennedy's limousine on November 22, 1963. He witnessed the assassination of President Kennedy from the motorcade, was with Mrs. Kennedy at Parkland Hospital, and watched Lyndon Johnson being sworn in as President on board Air Force One. He left the Secret Service six months after the Kennedy assassination.

OLBPD is also pleased to welcome Beverly Cain, the State Librarian of Ohio, who will share updates with patrons from the State Library of Ohio. Also, Tracy Grimm, the Head of the Talking Book Program at the State Library will provide information and answer questions about digital talking book players and equipment. OLBPD staff will be available to discuss library services with patrons and share news from the National Library Service (NLS).

Pizza and soft drinks will be provided for lunch. Exhibitors joining us for the day include the Cleveland Sight Center's "Eye-dea Shop," Magnifiers and More, Veterans Administration, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, and more. For more information or to register for Family Fun & Learning Day, please contact OLBPD (phone: 800-362-1262).

FOR LEADERS AND ASPIRING LEADERS

By Jim Jirak



St. Louis's Gateway Arch was the backdrop for the culmination of the collaborative efforts of several Midwestern states to launch the initial Midwest Leadership Training Conference in August 2011. Dubbed the ABC's of ACB Leadership, each agenda item worked around this theme and provided a cohesive and meaningful conference experience. Building on the momentum of previous conferences, individuals from several states have planned this summer's Midwest Leadership Conference taking place August 4 through 6. The host hotel is the Regency Lodge, 909 South 107th Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska. The group rate is \$81 plus tax; reserve your room by calling (800) 617-8310.

This time, we are reaching beyond the Midwest to invite not only those affiliated with ACB, but other individuals who could benefit. Invite those you know who would benefit most from this program. Those interested might include, but are not limited to, a scholarship winner who has expressed genuine interest in and follow-through with projects. Perhaps you, or board members, are new and need to share the experiences of others.

To reach younger participants, the plenary committee teamed up with ACB Board Member Sara Conrad and ACB-Ohio Executive Director Katie Frederick, who will facilitate a Young Profes-

sionals Seminar. The purpose of this portion of the seminar is to encourage leadership of young professionals in the blindness community and in their personal communities, as well as to facilitate effective leadership across ACB. Young professionals are often uncomfortable with programming that is not specific to their age level. By providing this seminar in conjunction with the Midwest Leadership Conference, young professionals will have opportunities not only to strategize and grow with their peers, but also to engage with leaders of varying ages.

The festivities begin Friday, August 4, with an icebreaker. Some of the topics being discussed for Saturday include working across generations, having fun while fundraising, what future affiliate conventions may look like, networking in today's world, and life with a guide dog. We will top off the day with a banquet featuring a potential high-profile leader from the past.

If you're looking for a singularly effective means of increasing affiliate membership, training tomorrow's leaders, improving the ability of current leaders and creating a vibrant, active, and empowered state or special interest affiliate, look no further than the Midwest

Leadership Conference and the Young Professional Seminar in Omaha. If you have further questions or need more information about the conference in general, please contact me at jjirak@inebraska.com or by calling (402) 679-8448.

*So pack up the kiddies, the pets and the wife,
And see why Nebraska is called "THE GOOD LIFE."*



ACBO Community Shares Campaign Codes

State of Ohio 19003
City of Columbus 60240
Franklin County 60240
Ohio State University 60240
Columbus State 1061

CLOVERNOOK CENTER HOSTS REGIONAL BRAILLE CHALLENGE

By Katie Frederick

Cincinnati's Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in collaboration with the Braille Institute of America, hosted the First Regional Braille Challenge in March. The Braille Challenge, now in its 16th year, provides students opportunities to test their skills in five categories: reading, comprehension, braille spelling, chart and graph reading, proofreading, and braille speed and accuracy. Twenty-four students from across Ohio participated in the competition.

Following the regional competitions, top performers proceed to the national Braille Challenge event in Los Angeles, where 50 students from around North America embark on another daylong

competition to test their braille skills alongside their peers.



BITS & BYTES



By Elizabeth Sammons

FREE IPADS FOR STUDENTS

A new project called [Spotlight Gateway](#) is designed to put an iPad into the hands of any student with a qualifying vision impairment at no cost. The student can sign up for free with [Bookshare](#) to download books and receive an iPad with the Spotlight Gateway app installed. An ophthalmologist must sign off on the proof of vision impairment, and then can register the student on the Spotlight Gateway website.

AMAZON TECHNICAL & SHOPPING HELP

Amazon is the latest company to launch a help desk for disabled customers, at (888) 283-1678. It's open from 6 AM - 1 AM Eastern time, 7 days a week. In addition to the usual technical questions one may ask about using the website or Amazon's services, agents are able to describe product pictures or assist in the shopping process. Note: representatives are not allowed to actually place an order.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN DELAWARE & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

The Center for Disability Empowerment is creating and promoting a new Youth Empowerment Program for Delaware and Franklin counties. Independence, community inclusion and participation will be facilitated through Independent Living Skill development in post-

secondary education, community based employment, recreation/social activities, and self-advocacy. Please share this information with potential interested candidates or send contacts to Sue Hetrick (hetrick.cde@gmail.com) or Olivia Caldeira (caldeira.cde@gmail.com)

ONLINE, ACCESSIBLE JOB SEARCH HELP

This accessible site offers listings of Ohio job fairs & workshops; basic computer skills; resume writing; money management and much more. <https://ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/workshoplister.do?selectId=0>

STRETCH YOUR DOLLARS

[CouponChief.com](#) has released "[Retail Savings Guide for People with Disabilities](#)," offering a detailed walkthrough of discounts and special offers. This guide offers much information on different discount programs available.

LINK READING APP FOR ANDROID

Learning Ally has brought a Link reading app to the Android platform. The new version joins counterparts for iOS, Chrome, Windows, and Mac. The app will play human-narrated books, and also includes support for VOICEtext. The app is free to download from Google Play here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.learningally.LinkMobile&hl=en>

AFB'S HEALTH INSURANCE NAVIGATOR

The newest American Foundation for the Blind's Research Navigator focuses on the American health insurance sys-

tem, including 2015 statistics on how people with vision loss make use of public and private health insurance options as compared to the public overall. Details here:

<http://us11.campaign-archive2.com/?u=bd3c8fefc9f905f5ccf41c577&id=5202c0c14a&e=f058306649>

“GETTING STARTED” KIT FOR THOSE NEW TO VISION LOSS

With the right information, people with vision loss can face the future with confidence. The VisionAware™ "Getting Started" kit is here to provide hope and help to handle the challenges, and to connect you and your family members with specialized services and products available to assist with everyday life. This information is available in audio format and in Spanish in all formats as well. Details here: <http://www.visionaware.org/info/emotional-support/handling-the-news/getting-started-kit-for-people-new-to-vision-loss/123>

UNDERSTANDING THE FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) covers private-sector employers with 50 or more employees, providing up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons, among them the employee's own serious health condition. This page provides more information about how the FMLA applies in such situations. <http://www.askearn.org/topics/laws-regulations/family-and-medical-leave-act/#genesis-content>

LOW COST COMPUTING

Here's the best article this editor has seen in a blue moon addressing low-cost computing for people who are blind or visually impaired from AFB's Vision Aware.

<http://www.visionaware.org/info/everyday-living/helpful-products/using-a-computer/low-cost-computing/1245>

BLIND ASTRONOMER HEARS THE STARS

Learn in [this TED talk](#) how a scientist who lost her vision continued her career by finding ways to hear the stars.

APH ANNUAL MEETING ONLINE

If you were unable to attend the 2016 Annual American Printing House for the Blind Meeting or you want a refresher on a session you attended, on this page you will find the [audio and video for most Annual Meeting 2016 sessions](#) by our presenters.

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR BENEFITS?

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has released an improved version of its BenefitsCheckUp tool to help older adults and caregivers screen over 2,000 private and public benefit programs. The questionnaire directs visitors to local and national benefit and assistance programs, and visitors can search for specific types of benefits such as employment, housing, transportation, healthcare, and food assistance. Check it out here: <https://www.benefitscheckup.org/#/>



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FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND



ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

JUNE 30-JULY 7

ACB NATIONAL CONFERENCE
SPARKS, NEVADA

AUGUST 15

OHIO CONNECTION
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

JULY 11

OLBPD FAMILY FUN & LEARNING DAY
10 A.M.-3 P.M., CLEVELAND, OHIO

AUGUST 18-20

ACB-OHIO SUMMER SPORTS RETREAT
HOCKINGPORT, OHIO

JULY 22

ACB-OHIO BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 8

ACB-OHIO AWARDS
NOMINATION DEADLINE

AUGUST 1

ACB-OHIO SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE

OCTOBER 20-22

ACB-INDIANA/OHIO JOINT
CONFERENCE & CONVENTION
KALAHARI RESORT
SANDUSKY, OHIO

AUGUST 4-6

MIDWEST LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE &
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SEMINAR
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

