



Fall 2011

Ohio Connection

American Council of the Blind Ohio
P.O. Box 307128 Gahanna, OH 43230

1-800-835-2226

Register Now for Building Blocks for a Brighter Future — *By Mary Hiland*

ACB Ohio's fifth annual Building Blocks for a Brighter Future, a half day of workshops and activities for families with blind or visually impaired children, will take place on September 24, 2011. ACB Ohio and The Ohio Lions Foundation invite you to join us at the Ohio State School for the Blind, 5220 N. High St. in Columbus for this exceptional program. Sign-in and exhibits begin at 12:30 p.m. and the program runs from 1-4 p.m.

If you are a parent or grandparent of a child who is blind or visually impaired and answer no to the following questions, the family seminar is the perfect workshop for you:

- Do you know how to work with school administrators so that your child receives the services to which he or she is entitled?
- Are you comfortable with the "alphabet soup" of special education, such as LRE, FAPE, LEA, IEE, MFE, and IDEA?

- Do you know what kind of technology is best for your child?
- Do you know when to start orientation and mobility exercises for your toddler or pre-schooler?

The goals of this seminar are to give parents tools to work with, to encourage children to explore creative outlets through various activities, to provide roundtable discussion groups for parents and/or grandparents, and to give families the opportunity to network with one another.

Our keynote speaker will be Tiffany Wild, Ph.D., professor at The Ohio State University, and one of her graduates, Tara McCarthy, a teacher of children who are blind or visually impaired. There will be panel discussions, resource materials and hands-on technology demonstrations. The children will enjoy a day of games and activities while the parents share and learn.

(Continued on page 5)

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

With autumn upon us, bringing with it the rituals of the season, I can't help but think back to a September 38 years ago when a seemingly small act of raising my hand changed my entire life.

I was a sophomore that momentous year—my first one as a full-time public school student. There were 12 or 13 of us in the journalism class that day. Our teacher, Steve Dunn, had one of those resonant voices that automatically riveted your attention on him no matter what else was happening in the room. “I need a volunteer to write a weekly school activities column for the Standard-Examiner,” he called out that day in an effort to cut through the verbal chaos of a class getting under way. (The Standard-Examiner was the local paper in my community.) “Ok, don't all raise your hands at once,” he boomed. “Let's get this assigned so we can get on with class.”

That's when the fierce arguments started in my head. “Don't raise your hand and be a fool. You have no idea whose hand is already up; if that girl, Danielle, has her hand up, you'd be cooked. She can write better than you in her sleep.” The other half of my brain seemed to rebut with, “well, if you want to write for a newspaper someday, you need to get as early a start as possible; this is a prime chance.”

And so the argument that took mere seconds seemed to go on without end. Finally, my hand slowly rose as did the tension and gut-tightening knots.

“Nolan, yours is the only hand that's up,” Mr. Dunn said perfunctorily. “I guess the job's yours.” That raised hand would, in time, lead to a paid internship with that paper and to my first job out of college, and from there to a lifetime of writing. A small decision it was—to raise or not raise my hand. But the impact that raised hand had on my life was immense indeed.

Small decisions can have immense consequences in negative ways, too. As many of you know, our organization was victimized by the alleged embezzlement of a former employee over a period of several years. You don't go from being a trustworthy individual to being someone who coldly determines to lie and take money in a single decision. I'm in no way trying to portray our former employee in a sympathetic light, but the accumulation of small decisions result in bigger ones that ultimately can change lives positively or negatively.

Those small decisions with big consequences can turn a nondescript blind kid into a reporter and editor or a decent person into someone not to be trusted or respected. The thread-like strands of those tiny seemingly insignificant decisions are ultimately braided into thick ropes that either tie us down or give us the ability to climb and swing to loftier heights and better places—and it's all dependent on the nature of those tiny decision strands.

We read with sorrow of elected officials on both sides of the aisle who resign their office in disgrace because of deci-

sions made. While the reporting of those final decisions that result in the resignations are newsworthy, I'm always fascinated when I think of the hundreds of small decisions that went unreported but that surely lead to the larger ones.

All of us are in a unique position to make small decisions about our involvement in ACB Ohio that can have a large and lasting impact on us and on the organization. In light of what you've learned and will yet learn regarding the theft of money from us, you could hastily determine to never again to donate to the organization—a quick decision on your part, but one with significant long-lasting impact on the organization.

You need to know that it was Mary Hiland's diligence and vigilance that discovered the alleged theft. She instantly took steps to cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in her community and in the county, and she instituted a full internal investigation that resulted in the discovery that our former employee may be guilty of taking some \$40,000.

All of that documentation has been shared with law enforcement officials, and the executive committee and board have taken steps to ensure that thefts of this nature would be much harder to accomplish. We've also allocated funds for a full review of our financial status by accountants who work frequently with nonprofit organizations. Additionally, we've taken steps to file insurance claims that will allow us to recover much of what was allegedly taken. The new control measures will do much to satisfy our justifiably nervous insurer that we are a responsible organization who will

continue to monitor our financial status and whose elected leaders will continue to be wise stewards of funds received.

Just as the simple act of a raised hand changed a life, so the simple decisions you make to trust the organization with your donations, to share your time and talents with the organization, and to continue to take pride in your membership in it will have large and lasting impact on ACB Ohio's future.

Rather than enveloping ourselves in gloom, bitterness, and mistrust, let us celebrate the forward movement of the organization. We remain very much open for business, and we remain involved in the business of improving the lives of our members and of blind and visually impaired Ohioans. Our state conference and convention will go forward as planned in November with a diverse, informative and relevant program that will positively impact your life in a variety of ways. Our search for an executive director to replace the retiring Mary Hiland will continue quietly and competently in the hands of a thoughtful deliberative search committee who will provide well-crafted recommendations to the board as a whole.

In truth, we have much to celebrate in ACB Ohio. Our friends continue to be our friends; even those who traditionally oppose us have quietly reached out with a hand of sympathy and support in these difficult times. We will weather this and come through it stronger and better, but only if you and I together make good seemingly small decisions—the ones with the immense power to lift and liberate.

ACB Ohio Membership Report

— *By Dave Perry*

The Membership Committee will once again distribute membership awards at our state convention in November. There will be an award for the recruiter of the year, one for the chapter with the highest percentage of members, and one for the chapter that recruited the most members throughout its community. We will also have the popular membership drawing this year.

A membership panel discussion will take place during the Saturday morning session at the convention and will feature two panelists and a moderator. I'm very pleased to be moderating the panel discussion. This panel's purpose is to identify ways to gain new members and increase our membership participation throughout the state.

Membership committee members have done a great job making calls to various chapters to collect current ACB Ohio membership information. Following are the annual results to date:

The Eye on Summit Chapter has 13 members; 10 are active. Michelle Hostenstaub is the top recruiter this year with two new members.

The Marion Chapter welcomed seven new members, and usually has 50 members at its meetings.

The Columbus Chapter has 75 members, with 30 currently active. Three new members joined this year.

The Stark County Chapter has 22 active members, and they all attend meetings. The chapter has seven new members this year.

The Medina Chapter has 14 members, and seven attend meetings on a regular basis.

The Tuscarawas Chapter has 17 members, and eight of them are active. Two new members joined this year.

The Ideal Friends of Knox County Chapter has 13 paid members, nine of whom are visually impaired. Two new members have been recruited by the chapter so far this year.

The Cincinnati Chapter has 53 members, and 40 are active. Six new members joined this year.

I want to extend my congratulations to all members for enabling the American Council of the Blind of Ohio to do its important work! However, I want to encourage each one of us to continue reaching out in our communities so that we as an organization will be able to improve the quality and equality of life for all people who are blind or visually impaired.

For more information regarding the membership of ACB Ohio, please visit our website at www.acbohio.org or contact me at daveperry@fuse.net.

Fundraising Season in Full Swing

ACB Ohio has joined Community Shares of Mid Ohio's coalition of local nonprofits and can now benefit from donations through giving campaigns at workplaces throughout central Ohio.

Community Shares was established by various nonprofits for the purpose of fundraising on their behalf through workplace giving campaigns. Through the campaigns, each individual donor selects which charity or group of charities will receive his or her donation based on which organization is working on the issues and causes the donor cares about most in his or her community.

If you or someone you know work at an employer that supports Community Shares, please consider directing some of your donations to ACB Ohio. ACB Ohio uses these funds to help support our mission of promoting and advocating for the quality and equality of life for people who are blind or visually impaired.

You can check out the list of all the workplaces that support us and other Community Shares' member charities at www.communityshares.net.

Is your workplace not on the list? Visit Community Shares' workplace giving section on their website to find out how you can start a new campaign at your workplace to make a difference in your community through convenient payroll contributions.

"Eye Opener" Coffee Returns to State Convention

Due to the incredible response at last year's fall convention, ACB Ohio will again be offering its own special Braille labeled "Eye Opener" Coffee Roast at the state convention in November.

Great for warming up in the fall and winter months to come, this coffee is roasted the week of the convention to ensure its freshness! Tell your relatives and friends and bring your shopping list for how many bags you want to take home from the convention. This coffee is great to enjoy at home and to give as gifts!

Building Blocks (Continued from page 1)

The fee is just \$10 per family, which includes an afternoon of learning and sharing, an afternoon snack, and a gift from the National Braille Press.

Pre-registration is required by September 19 and space is limited. To register, or if you have questions or concerns, call ACB Ohio Executive Director Mary Hiland toll-free at (800) 835-2226 or e-mail mary.hiland@wowway.com.

Note: Please call for specific parking directions because of construction at the school.

2012 American Council of the Blind of Ohio Membership Invitation

Come join The American Council of the Blind of Ohio, which promotes a brighter outlook for blind or visually impaired Ohioans.

We are a participating member of Community Shares of Central Ohio and are recognized by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance.

Membership Application Contacts

If you would like to become a member or renew your membership in a local chapter, please contact:

*Cincinnati

Joyce Rogers (513) 921-3186

*Cleveland

Dave Padgett (440) 884-6316

*Columbus

Irwin Hott (614) 266-1543

*Knox County

Patty Yarman (740) 397-8492

*Mansfield

Brant Adams (419) 747-6948

*Marion

Ernie Breece (740) 382-8986

*Medina

Chuck Norman (330) 225-3269

*Ohio Alliance of VI Students
Katie Frederick (419) 306-3721

*Ohio Parents of Children with
Visual Impairments
Rachel Miller
rlmiller423@gmail.com

*Stark County
Carolyn Burley (330) 484-3807

*Summit County
Michelle Hasenstaub (330) 686-0076

*Tuscarawas Valley
Carl Russo (330) 343-1717

*At-Large
ACB Ohio Executive Director
(800) 835-2226

When you join a local chapter, you are automatically enrolled in the state and national ACB affiliates and will receive their newsletters, *The Ohio Connection* and *The Braille Forum*. Patron, sponsor and corporate member levels include a "Thank You" in both our *Ohio Connection* quarterly newsletter and annual convention attendee packet.

If you wish to become involved in specific activities, please call us at (800) 835-2226 and let us know in what area you would like to contribute your time and talents.

2012 ACB Ohio Membership Application

Please fill out and return this membership form today, or call your local chapter representative, listed on the previous page. Dues paid between October 31, 2011 and February 15, 2012 count for 2012. If you have already paid your dues locally at a chapter for 2012, you do NOT need to fill out this form again.

Annual dues are \$15. Please make checks or money orders payable to "ACB Ohio" and return it with this membership form by February 15, 2012. You can also join through ACB Ohio's website at www.acbohio.org and click on the "Membership Application" link. Simply fill out the form, print and take this form to a local chapter or mail it along with dues to:

ACB Ohio, P.O. Box 307128, Gahanna, OH 43230

Please print your information carefully.

*Name _____ Today's Date _____

*Address _____

*City/State/Zip _____

*Phone (____) _____

*E-mail Address _____

*Fully Sighted? No _____ Yes _____

*Membership New _____ Renewal _____

*ACB *Ohio* Newsletter Format:

Please Choose One: Audio Cassette Large Print E-mail

*ACB *National* Newsletter Format:

Please Choose One: E-mail Lg. Print Audio Cassette
Braille 3.5 inch Computer Disk

*MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

\$15 Member of a Local Chapter, or member-at-large _____

(LIST CHAPTER) _____

_____ \$25 Non Profit Organizational Member

_____ \$30 Sponsor Member (Individual and "Sponsor" a College Student)

_____ \$100 Corporate Member (Individual or Organization)

_____ \$500 Patron

Clarifying Membership and Other Issues

— *By Robert Rogers*

As someone who believes strongly in the value of informed members and leaders in ACB Ohio, I often witness confusion on a number of issues. I hope to clear up some of the confusion with the following information.

MEMBERSHIP: One may be a chapter member or member at-large. Chapter members pay dues through the chapter while members at-large pay \$15 annual dues directly to the ACB Ohio treasurer. We encourage people to become involved on the local level to help ACB Ohio in its mission of advocacy and education of the public. And, you get to meet and make friends with others in your area and get updates on issues relating to blindness.

Chapter dues can be any amount set by chapters so long as \$10 goes to the ACB Ohio treasury (\$5 to ACB Ohio and \$5 for the national ACB membership). Presently, all chapters are charging \$15 annual dues, with \$5 remaining in the chapter treasury.

ACB LIFE MEMBERSHIP:

ACB National offers a Life Membership designation for \$1,000. Chapter or at-large annual dues are reduced by \$5 for that person because there is no longer an annual membership assessment to the national organization.

MEMBERSHIP YEAR: Membership is on the calendar year. However, dues are accepted at the ACB Ohio November convention, those dues being good

through December 31 of the following year. If you pay dues at the convention, you can participate in a fun membership contest.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES: As required by the ACB Ohio constitution, chapters must provide membership updates no less than on a quarterly basis.

INFORMATION REQUESTED FOR

MEMBERSHIP: Keeping accurate membership records is a continuous and difficult job. When you are turning in membership information to the ACB Ohio office or Membership Committee, please provide the following: full name, street address, city, state, zip, phone, email, and chapter name. Please be sure to also note if you are a Life Member of ACB.

Robert Rogers is the Treasurer of ACB Ohio. You can reach Robert at (513) 921-3186 or by e-mail at rrrogers@nuvox.net.

Contributors . . .

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

Around Ohio



Cincinnati members hit the road on June 11th for the Just Another Bike Ride event.



Cincinnati members Joyce Rogers and her guide Mary Beth Donelon took to the streets for the 12th annual Flying Pig Marathon in downtown Cincinnati the weekend of April 30 - May 2. This was the first year ACB Ohio's Cincinnati chapter took part in the marathon, which attracted participants from all 50 states and 12 countries.

Nominating Slate

The nominating slate to be voted on at the ACB Ohio State Convention in November is as follows:

Jill Noble, First Vice President
Katie Frederick, Secretary

Board Members:

Charlee Major
Dave Perry
Jacque Perry
Vicky Prahin
Sue Wesley

In addition, there is one open position.

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 November 22, 2011. Please include your name, address and phone number and send to: Terri Kevany, Editor, at take-vany@roadrunner.com or call (216) 251-0484.

Keeping Connected — *By Marc Guthrie*

Since we connected last, we received a \$1,000 donation from the Ohio Lions Foundation for our fall family seminar. Please be sure to take a minute to thank any Lions Club members you may know for making their fourth consecutive \$1,000 gift for this program. Lions International continues to be the number one service organization in the world supporting vision-related causes.

Our new partner, Community Shares of Mid-Ohio, recently held its fall campaign kick-off and awards event in Columbus. Executive Director Mary Hiland and I attended the event, which included representatives of most of Community Share's participating charities and some of its participating employers. The event was an inspiring get-together. We have two Community Shares events scheduled in September with Franklin County and State of Ohio employees at which we will introduce ACB Ohio's mission. We are very proud of our new relationship with Community Shares and are grateful that their leadership is giving us new opportunities to get in front of potential donors.

I want to use the rest of my space to share some information regarding self-advocacy. Below are some ideas that ACB Ohio members can use to advocate for themselves and for our mission.

The most effective way to convey your views to your state or federal lawmaker, and impact the outcome of legislation, is to get to know them. Invite him or her to visit one of your ACB Ohio affiliate meetings. If a visit to your affiliate can-

not be arranged, consider scheduling a visit with your legislator in their district. Though one-on-one visits with legislators can be time consuming, these meetings often can produce good results. By meeting personally, ACB Ohio members can put a face on our organization and our good mission.

You could also attend a lawmaker's town hall type meeting scheduled in their district in the near future. Or, many lawmakers hold office hours in their district, often in libraries, township and city halls, and other public buildings.

If there are no other options, ask to meet with a member of the legislator's staff who handles issues that are important to you. When meeting with the lawmaker or staffer, point out how any pending legislation will affect you and others with disabilities. Personal stories can be helpful toward developing relationships with lawmakers.

Until we connect next, please keep in mind that ACB Ohio's mission needs your financial support. If you happen to work at a United Way participating employer, please ask if you can designate your annual gift to ACB Ohio. And of course, if your employer is affiliated with Community Shares, please support ACB Ohio. Best wishes until we next connect.

Marc Guthrie provides counsel to ACB Ohio on fundraising and advocacy matters, his email address is marcguthrie@hotmail.com.

Meet Our Scholarship Winners

— *By Vicky Prahin and Katie Frederick*

Three more excellent students, highlighted below, were awarded ACB Ohio scholarships in last year.

Shannon Dunigan, awarded the University of Toledo-ACB Ohio Endowed Scholarship, is in her fifth year at the University of Toledo. She will graduate in December with a dual degree in Mild/Moderate Special Education and Special Education of the Blind/Visually Impaired. “At the end of my freshman year, I was fortunate enough to tutor a six-year-old boy who was completely blind,” said Shannon. “After working with him, I decided that this was the career path I desired.” Shannon grew up in Springboro, near Dayton. After graduation, she plans to substitute teach until a full-time position in her field becomes available. She has been very active during her undergraduate years, tutoring children and volunteering.

Lauren Adams was the recipient of the ACB Ohio-Wright State Endowed Scholarship at last year’s ACB Ohio Convention. Currently attending Wright State University and majoring in Psychology, Lauren hopes to become a counselor. Upon graduation from Wright State, she would like to obtain a Master’s degree, but is unsure what field of counseling she will go into. When not taking classes or studying, Lauren enjoys spending time with family and friends, listening to music and surfing the Internet. Her involvement at Wright State consists of mentoring incoming students

with disabilities and participating in pilot tests of new technology. Lauren has also assisted in workshops with teachers of the visually impaired and intervention specialists to better assist them in helping their current students.

Sandy Sommers received the David Newmeyer Scholarship. She is currently enrolled in the Physical Therapy Assistant Program at Stark State College in Canton. She maintains a 4.0 GPA while remaining active with her three children. “The immediate goal is to get a job to help put all three of my kids through college over the next six years,” said Sandy. “The ultimate goal would be to complete further education to receive a doctorate in PT.”

Sandy learned five years ago that she has retinitis pigmentosa, which has progressed rapidly. She says, “ACB has been an amazing resource for me in dealing with my vision loss. I am so thankful to ACB Ohio for allowing me the opportunity to continue my education by providing scholarship money. I will be able to restart my professional career in a path that enables me to work at a job I love while visually impaired.”

New scholarships will be awarded at the state convention in November. Please be sure to join us to meet these wonderful and deserving recipients in person and be sure to read more about them in next year’s *Ohio Connection*.

Ohio Connection
American Council of the Blind
Ohio Chapter
P.O. Box 307128
Fall 2011

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



2011 ACB Ohio Datebook

Building Blocks for a Brighter Future

Ohio State School for the Blind,
Columbus
September 24, 2011

ACB Ohio State Convention

Worthington, Ohio
November 18-20, 2011

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

Don't Miss the ACB Ohio State Convention!

It's that time of year again. Time for all
ACB Ohio members and friends to
gather for some great speakers, in-
formative workshops and fun activities
at the 2011 state convention.

This year's convention will take place
November 18-20, 2011 at the Holiday
Inn in Worthington, Ohio. Look for con-
vention materials and registration infor-
mation in your mailbox soon!