



Winter 2016

Ohio Connection

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

MEET TWO OF OUR SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Joe Chadbourne, one of our 2016 scholarship winners, is a senior accounting student at the University of Akron. He completed a summer internship at Levin, Swedler, and Kennedy accounting firm and will finish his Bachelor of Science in accounting, with a minor in Spanish, in the spring. He will then focus on studying for and passing the Certified Public Accounting Exam. Joe hopes to obtain a government tax accounting job in Akron or Cleveland, and he is considering pursuing a master's degree in taxation or business administration.



Joe Chadbourne

The 2016 ACBO Ohio State University scholarship recipient, Rebecca Darling, was unable to attend this year's conference. However, she wrote a letter expressing her gratitude and thanks for being selected as the 2016 recipient. This scholarship is presented to a student who is studying to become a



Rebecca Darling

teacher of the visually impaired. Partnering with OSU, which offers the specific courses in areas such as braille and assistive technology instruction, ACB-Ohio is helping combat the shortage of teachers who are

qualified to teach children who are blind or have a visual impairment. Here are Rebecca's words of thanks to the members of ACBO:

"I cannot express my gratitude enough for being selected as a 2016 scholarship recipient for the ACBO Ohio State University Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship allows me to fuel my continuing education and my passion. My passion has not always been as strong. Before I attended college and immersed myself in graduate school, my presence within the field of students with visual impairments was misunderstood—to myself and to others.

As a child, I did not understand the meaning of “self-advocacy.” In fact, I did not have a great understanding of myself until I was in college. However, my childhood was characterized by large print, sun glasses, long sleeves and sunscreen. Even to this day these elements are important in my life. Now, technology plays a great role as well. These are just some of the aspects of being a person with Albinism.

While I cannot speak for the entire Albinism community, I can speak for myself. I can articulate my needs. I can make suggestions to my sighted peers and colleagues. While as a graduate student these skills seem ingrained into my personality and demeanor, it was not always this way. As a child, I struggled to understand my visual impairment; I could see, but details were out of the question. I often felt between a rock and a hard place. Sometimes, I still feel this way. However, my successes have greatly outweighed the struggles.

I am a certified Intervention Specialist, but am working to further my education. My passion continues onto students with visual impairments. With that passion, I am currently a graduate student at The Ohio State University; my program is the Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning for Sensory Impairments with concentration in Visual Impairments. I am very much looking forward to becoming a teacher for the visually impaired. As a student who did not understand her visual impairment, I want to assist students in their understanding. I want my passion and my successes to be an example to my students.

Again, I am grateful to be a scholarship recipient for the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. Through this scholarship, I am able to continue my education toward my passion; being a teacher for the visually impaired and working with students whom have visual impairments.”

Michelle Spillan, Editor

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Katie Frederick, Jim Jirak, Jill Noble, Ann Pimley, Vicky Prahin, Elizabeth Sammons, and Karen Spry.** 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 **February 15.**

2016 AWARD WINNERS

ACB-Ohio presented five awards this year at the state convention. Here, we put the spotlight on two winners.

Janice “Jan” Blatz, a member of the Columbus chapter, received the Ken Morlock Award. Don Haines nominated this woman who has done so much for her community. Among other activities, Jan has volunteered for many years in several capacities for VOICEcorps, Central Ohio’s radio reading service. From 1975 through 2008, she served as the Ohio State School for the Blind alumni reporter. She also acted as secretary for Insight Investors, a club for blind investors and sighted friends, which met monthly to learn the basics



Jan Blatz, Ken Morlock Award Winner

of investing, study stock reports, and vote on stock purchases for the club. Currently, she works several days a month for *The Newsreel*.

Nominated by Don Kalman, the Medina Lions Club received the 2016 Community Service Award. This group has contributed significantly to the Medina community. This year, they donated funds that helped send two teens to the

Cleveland Sight Center’s Highbrook Lodge Camp for the visually impaired for 12 days. Medina Lions Club members are always willing to assist whenever possible. Stay tuned to learn about the other award winners.

MIDWEST LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By Jim Jirak

Plan to join us in Omaha, Nebraska, for the Midwest Leadership Conference and Young Professionals Seminar, August 4 through 6, 2017. Our host hotel is the Regency Lodge; the room rate is \$81 plus tax per night.

The conference plenary and Young Professionals Seminar Committee are hard at work putting together a program with something for leaders and potential

leaders of all ages. We are working on a couple of special options for our banquet keynote speaker, so stay tuned.

Watch for information in ACB’s *Braille Forum*, this newsletter, ACB’s email lists, social media, and other channels as the conference draws closer. We hope you’ll plan to join us in Omaha next August.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Vicky Prahin

I want to thank the membership for showing confidence in what I have done and can do by reelecting me for another two-year term as president of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. I have learned a lot over the last two years. Some of what I learned resulted from making mistakes. I think we have done well, however, and can continue to improve.

One area in which I have worked diligently involves cooperating with other organizations to accomplish more. In 2014 we joined a coalition of agencies to change the way Ohio handles services provided to blind and visually impaired citizens. We are working with Disability Rights Ohio, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Ohio, the Center for Disability Empowerment, and several other organizations from around the state to bring our rehabilitation system up to date with the rest of the nation's rehab agencies.

In August, ACBO and NFB of Ohio partnered to provide training to BSVI counselors and staff. We presented sessions on the importance of Braille, having reasonable expectations, and developing good communication skills. We offered many resources that should be helpful to both counselors and consumers.

In 2015 this newsletter received the Hollis K. Liggett Award at the national conference and convention, and we

proudly display the plaque at fundraising events and other venues. The award recognizes quality writing as well as variety and presentation of information in an affiliate publication.

ACB-Ohio joined Community Shares of Mid Ohio several years ago, thanks in part to Marc Guthrie, who introduced us to the organization. This relationship has grown over time, benefiting ACBO in many ways.

Community Shares of Mid Ohio is a workplace-giving federation with a focus on social justice, health and human services, animal welfare, the arts, and the environment. It has helped more than 100 nonprofit organizations by distributing more than eight million dollars over nearly 25 years. Community Shares is similar to the United Way, but the scope is much more limited, so it's possible to serve the membership more personally and offer services which appeal especially to everyone involved. Its mission statement says:

Community Shares of Mid Ohio builds mutually beneficial relationships and secures resources to empower member nonprofits in Central Ohio.

Since our office is located in the area covered, we can participate in all that the organization offers its members. The membership is diverse, including well-known groups such as animal welfare agencies and those helping the

homeless, as well as groups devoted to serving the disabled, such as MOBILE (Mid-Ohio Board for an Independent Living Environment), Deaf Services, and Dreams On Horseback (featured in the fall 2016 issue of the Ohio Connection). Being part of this coalition gives us many advantages. We take part in city, county, and state campaigns each fall that bring us donations which we would not otherwise receive. A person working for a state office, for example, can elect to have a certain amount deducted from his pay to go to ACBO. This means that we receive a check from Community Shares once a quarter.

Katie Frederick and I belong to committees and task groups which do the work of Community Shares, and I currently serve as secretary for the Board of Directors. These activities give us contacts we would probably not otherwise have, and give us chances to work with other organizations and individuals to educate about blindness, low vision, and what ACB-Ohio does.

Katie and I have attended several educational sessions to learn about fundraising, increasing membership, and board development. These are all applicable to what we do with and for ACBO.

If you know of something I should take part in, contact me at 614-949-7757 or prahin@icloud.com. My job is to serve the entire membership.

FIRST THINK SNOW, THEN ACBO!

*By Jill Noble, Recreation
Committee Chair*

The 29th annual ACB-Ohio Winter Sports Retreat will be held Friday, January 13 through Monday, January 16 (Martin Luther King holiday weekend) at Punderson State park near Cleveland. This is an adults-only weekend. There are multiple pricing options: single is \$530, double is \$350, and triple is \$290. The cost includes three nights' lodging, six delicious meals, and many activities that do not require cash, such as euchre, board games, sledding, and hiking.

If you would like to participate, please complete the online application or call the office for assistance. Send a \$100 deposit by December 23 to **ACBO WSR, c/o Chris Schumacher 114 Harter Ave., Springdale, OH 45246**. Make checks payable to **ACBO**.

Partial stipends will be available again this year for guides and skiers who may need financial assistance. These are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so get your application in.

If you have questions, concerns, or know anyone who would be interested in being a skier or guide, please call Chris Schumacher, 614-636-3222, or ACBO Executive Director Katie Frederick at 800-835-2226. Hope to see you there!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

By Katie Frederick

Within ACB-Ohio, many projects and opportunities could use your help, and, guess what, we're not asking for money! Each year, ACB-Ohio's committees help accomplish much of the organization's work. There are also tasks you can help with if working on a committee is not possible.

During the last week of February, ACB-Ohio sends representatives to the annual affiliate president's meeting and legislative seminar in Washington, DC. Attending the meetings provides opportunities to network with other affiliates, discuss issues of importance affecting people who are blind or visually impaired with elected officials, and spend some time visiting sites in our nation's capital. This year, we would love for you to join us as we advocate to improve services for people who are blind in Ohio and around the country. If you have thought about getting more involved, are interested in meeting with elected officials and taking a road trip, consider joining us in DC in February. More information about this year's event will be available in January.

Increasing ACB-Ohio's advocacy efforts at the Ohio Statehouse and in local communities always needs work. If your local chapter has worked in the community to improve access to services, please share with the affiliate. ACB-Ohio's legislative committee would like to host an Ohio advocacy day in the spring and partner with other

organizations to bring it to fruition. If you have worked with members of the General Assembly in the past or want to help plan an Ohio day of Advocacy this year, contact the office.

During the 2016 conference banquet, ACB-Ohio presented awards to deserving individuals and organizations around Ohio. See elsewhere in this and future issues of the *Ohio Connection* for more details on this year's recipients. An awards committee is tasked with reviewing letters of nomination and selecting the most deserving in various categories. Consider writing a letter of nomination or joining the awards committee and help choose worthy recipients in 2017.

As 2016 draws to a close, our office is ready to accept 2017 membership dues. When you pay \$15, \$5 goes to ACB's national office, \$5 stays with Ohio, and the remaining \$5 supports a local chapter. If there is not a chapter in your area, consider starting one or sign up as an at-large member. Local chapter listings are on our website at www.acbohio.org/about/localchapters. Becoming a member is important, not only because the more individuals we have the more effective our advocacy efforts, but when we attend the annual ACB conference, our state's membership allows for increased influence of organization policies and elections. The \$15 you choose to invest in ACB-Ohio is much appreciated, but how can

we work together and make the organization better? How can membership grow? What unique ways has your local chapter found to attract and retain members? Social media is one way we keep members and other interested parties up to date about specific Ohio-related events, activities, or items of interest. However, it takes time to find content and post it to the Facebook and Twitter feeds we manage. If you are active on social media and enjoy finding or creating content and want to help increase awareness of ACB-Ohio, we'd love your help.

What does your payment of \$15 annual dues mean to you? If you have

thoughts, ideas or suggestions about membership, speak up and share them. The American Council of the Blind of Ohio can only be as strong and effective as its members.

Hopefully this article has given some food for thought and provided some ways you can contribute and help increase awareness and understanding of our wonderful, democratic, membership organization. As the holiday season is upon us, I extend my wishes to all for a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year. Let's all work together, lend helping hands, and make the American Council of the Blind of Ohio better and stronger in 2017 and beyond!

2016 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



David Hadley, Joe Chadbourne, Marie Johnson, Jenny Ham, Cassandra Mendez (not pictured: Rebecca Darling)

ACBO COMMITTEES

ACB-Ohio has several committees to help do the organization's work. If you have interest in any of the following committees, contact Vicky Prahin at prahin@icloud.com or 614-949-7757.

Membership Committee: The purpose of this group is to devise ways of increasing membership and maintaining current membership.

Legislative Committee: These people keep current on legislation within and outside the state, update the membership, and contact legislators to support our needs. They also plan and participate in the annual trip to Washington, DC, to learn about current legislation and visit our representatives in the House and Senate.

Awards Committee: This committee solicits, collects, and reviews nominations for the awards ACBO gives out at the annual convention.

Sports and Recreation Committee: This committee promotes and plans the summer and winter sports retreats and other activities in which members participate.

Scholarship Committee: ACBO gives several scholarships to students enrolled in colleges and universities throughout the state. The members of this committee promote the scholarships, review applications, choose recipients, and confer awards.

Fundraising Committee: If you have ideas for raising money for any of our programs, you can help on this committee.

Program Planning Committee: Help us put together the program, find speakers, and plan workshops for the 2017 convention. The committee usually meets once a month by conference call, January through June, and in August and September as needed.

Nominating Committee: Do you know anyone who would like to serve as an officer or member of the board? You can serve on the committee that vets and recommends the slate, or you can make a nomination without being on the committee.

ACBO Community Shares Campaign Codes

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

CHECK OUT THE NEW OODWORKS.COM

By Elizabeth Sammons

This fall, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) launched a new job portal called OODworks.com. The site allows potential consumers to learn about BSVI and BVR vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and complete an online application, allowing a more streamlined process.

Anybody interested in VR resources is encouraged to visit www.OODWorks.com where you can watch a video about our services, take a brief self-assessment, and apply for services online. To reduce roadblocks, such as transportation, for many who could benefit from VR services, OOD-Works.com can help a person start the process without having to visit an office.

The OODWorks video addresses the key qualifying components. It states,

“Do you have a disability that makes it hard to get or keep a job? Do you want to work but don’t know where to start? Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities can help! OOD helps people with all types of disabilities who are ready to work, find and keep a job.”

Once the individual completes the online application, he or she will be contacted by an OOD staff member in the area to schedule an appointment. VR services involve deciding if a person is eligible for services, setting an employment goal, putting the goal into a plan, and getting the necessary job services and training.

If you have a disability, want to work, and are willing to commit to the process, the next step is yours!

BITS & BYTES



Medical- and Disability-Related Leave Advice

The U.S. Department of Labor has unveiled a new online tool to help employees and employers understand the

medical and disability leave to which employees may be entitled. The Medical- and Disability-Related Leave Advisor asks users a few questions, such as type of business or organization, workforce size, and if the entity receives federal financial assistance. With that information, the advisor quickly directs users to federal employment laws that apply and provides additional information, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Happy 30th Anniversary to the Air Carrier Access Act

The Air Carriers Access Act (ACAA) prevents airlines from discriminating against people with disabilities. As the holiday season approaches, start planning now to avoid hassle at the airport. Check out this informative [Accessible Air Travel](#) booklet to learn more about your rights as an air traveler with a disability.

National Transportation Survey for People with Disabilities

The [ADA Participation Action Research Consortium](#) is conducting a national survey for people with disabilities, "Transportation Access and Experiences," which is designed to improve understanding of accessibility of public transportation for people with disabilities. This project focuses on community living, community participation & work/economic participation disparities of people with disabilities. They would like to improve their understanding on transportation access of people with disabilities and use this information to make improvements at regional and national levels. [The online survey](#) can be completed in English or Spanish. If you have any questions or comments regarding this survey, please contact Jill Bezyak from the Rocky Mountain ADA Center at jill.bezyak@unco.edu.

Recording Doctor Visits

This thought-provoking article discusses pros, cons and legal implications of those patients wishing to record a visit with their doctors and technology to assist. <http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/patients-poised-to-record-doctor-s->

[67415/?utm_source=JD-Supra-eMail-Digests](#)

Accessible Health Records

In this podcast, "Making Personal Health Records Accessible to All," an expert discusses how personal health records are being used to promote health with personalized health information and education, and presents a model for making this information accessible to people with sensory and physical disabilities. <http://www.healthliteracyoutloud.com/>

Technology Accessibility in the Workplace

A new, free, online course, "An Introduction to Technology Accessibility in the Workplace," has been added to the NTAC-BVI website. Learn more about different types of technology that are traditionally inaccessible, including additions and modifications that can be made to improve access for someone with a visual impairment. Screen readers and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones are evaluated, and CEU's are available. See this and additional Courses from National Technical Assistance Center - Mississippi State University here: <http://www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu/courses/>

Accessibility Outdoors

If you enjoy gardening or if you have a farm, this impressive array of fact sheets from AgrAbility will provide you with lots of safety and best practice tips. <http://agrability.osu.edu/resources/factsheets#main-content>

Related, this website categorizes resources for home assistive technology

and disability work tools in the outdoors. <http://disabilityworktools.com/>

Info for Older Adults

The Central Ohio Area Association on Aging offers this wide array of Guides & Publications for older adults with disabilities; some are specific to the counties served, while others have wider use.

<http://www.coaaa.org/cms/resources/guides>

Uber Accessibility

Uber recently launched a new accessibility site for people with disabilities, providing a central place for information about opportunities for people with disabilities as both riders and drivers, including policies and requirements of drivers. <https://accessibility.uber.com/>

Motivation and Physical Activity Study

Assistant professor Justin Haegele in the Department of Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University is seeking your participation in an online study on motivation and engaging in physical activity among adults with visual impairments. This study consists of an online survey that should take about twenty minutes to complete; responses will be anonymous and confidential. Participants must be age 18 or over and legally blind. Those who complete the survey will have the option to enter a drawing for one \$50 gift card and two \$20 gift cards. To begin, go to:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3105425/Physical-Activity-Attribution-Survey>



(from Access Fairfax: News & Events for People with Disabilities)

Question: Can an employer be required to reallocate an essential function of a job to another employee as a reasonable accommodation?

Answer: No. An employer is not required to reallocate essential functions of a job as a reasonable accommodation.

Question: Are businesses allowed to charge a cleaning fee to customers who have service animals?

Answer: No. Businesses cannot ask or require an individual with a disability to pay cleaning fees, even if people with pets are required to pay these fees. Service animals are not pets. If you normally charge individuals for the damage they cause, you may charge an individual with a disability for damages caused by his or her service animal. Service animals must be housebroken and under the control of the owner at all times.



American Council of the Blind of Ohio
3805 N. High St., Suite 305
Columbus, Ohio 43214

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND



ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

JANUARY 7

ACBO BOARD MEETING
COLUMBUS, OHIO

JUNE 30-JULY 7

ACB NATIONAL CONVENTION
SPARKS, NEVADA

JANUARY 13-16

WINTER SPORTS RETREAT
CLEVELAND, OHIO

OCTOBER 20-22

ACBO CONVENTION
SANDUSKY, OHIO

FEBRUARY 15

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

FEBRUARY 25-28

LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR
WASHINGTON, DC

