Advocacy seems to be the theme of 2017. The 132nd Ohio General Assembly began the year looking at the next state budget, and the American Council of the Blind of Ohio is monitoring the process and participating in conversations and hearings related to transportation. Ohio’s transportation budget is separate from the general budget; however, this does not mean funding for transportation cannot occur in the general funding portion.

In October, ACB-Ohio participated in a transportation summit, bringing together providers of transportation and consumer/advocacy organizations around the state. Following the day-long conference, a smaller group met and discussed a strategy for approaching Ohio’s General Assembly to ask for an increase in public transportation funding. In December, the Ohioans for Transportation Equity Coalition sent a letter to Governor Kasich, the director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, and key House and Senate members who serve on transportation committees. The American Council of the Blind of Ohio added its signature to this letter, joining approximately 50 organizations around the state who believe an investment increase in Ohio’s transportation system is sorely needed.

The General Assembly term and budget process are now underway. The new General Assembly term and budget process are now underway. Learn more about the importance of advocacy at all levels of government. If you agree an increase in transportation funding is necessary, you can help. Members of the General Assembly are in their Columbus offices Tuesday through Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays, and in their districts the rest of the week. To contact your representative and senator, go to our home page to find them; click on the “Locate your Ohio senators and representatives by zip code” link. You can also call the Ohio Legislative hotline at (800) 282-0253 and speak to your senator and representative via phone.

The transportation budget is scheduled to be finalized by March 31, and the general budget will take effect July 1.

Ohio Happenings

By Katie Frederick
July 1. Living and working in Columbus provides me the opportunity to testify and meet with legislators here, but you can make a difference in your community, too!

I hope this article has given you a chance to learn more about some of the statewide work ACB-Ohio is undertaking. Remember, we are a statewide organization comprised of many members and several local chapters. We want to share Ohio information with you, but we know many members and chapters are taking part in interesting activities and efforts. Please share this information for publication in the Ohio Connection so members and friends of ACB-Ohio can learn more about how you are making life better for Ohioans who are blind or visually impaired. The next newsletter deadline is May 15. Let us hear from you!

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

As always, thanks to the contributors: AFB, Reggie Anglen, Katie Frederick, Vicky Prahin, Elizabeth Sammons, and Lori Woodall.

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 May 15.

There's still time to buy a virtual raffle ticket for a chance to win $1,500 in cash. Tickets cost $10 each; buy three and get one free!

We'll draw the winner on May 1. You can purchase tickets by visiting www.acbohio.org/raffle, calling the office and providing your card information, or by mailing a check for the amount you'd like to the ACB-Ohio office.

NFB SCHOLARSHIPS
Due March 31: National Federation of the Blind (NFB) offers blind U.S. college students scholarships worth from $3,000 to $12,000. All scholarships are based on academic excellence, community service, and leadership. Details here: https://nfb.org/scholarships.

AFB SCHOLARSHIPS
Due April 1: Scholarships of $2,000-$3,500 from American Foundation for the Blind; various fields/requirements detailed here: https://www.afb.org/info/afb-2017-scholarship-application5#content

STUDENT VIDEO CONTEST
Due April 17: National Center for College Students with Disabilities seeking student videos and YouTubes for posting. Top winners will be awarded cash prizes. We’re especially interested in examples of what works for students, classrooms, or access. Details at http://www.nccsdonline.org/video-competition.html

NFB STEM SLAM FOR STUDENTS
National Federation of the Blind announces the 2017 NFB Youth Slam, a weeklong learning opportunity for students grades 9 through 12 in a wide-variety of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. One hundred blind and low vision students from across the country will be selected to attend this weeklong adventure at Towson University (Maryland) next July 23 to 29. Applications due May 7. For more information and to learn about volunteer opportunities, see: http://blindscience.org/nfb-youth-slam

For additional questions, call (410) 659-9314, extension 2418, or email STEM@nfb.org

TACTIBLE BOOK COMPETITION
Entries Due August 10, 2017: The International Tactile-Illustrated Book Prize, a competition to encourage quality and quantity of tactile books for children with visual impairments. Visit this link for rules and entry forms and to see last year’s winners www.aph.org/tactus-international-tactile-books-competition/Submit your tactile book appropriate for children age 3 to 12 to the American Printing House for the Blind. Questions? Contact Rob Guillen, rguillen@aph.org
ACCESSIBLE ABSTRACT ART

BRAILLE TRAILS & GARDENS

ACCESSIBLE VETERAN BENEFITS

ACCESS VETERAN BENEFITS

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DC THIS YEAR?
Finally, Mr. Stevens said:

“Continued failure by government to provide crucial information in an accessible format has long been an issue for Americans who are blind. The problem has been of particular concern within the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). This, fused with concerns in the new administration that government will turn its head to particular protections protected under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, leads ACB to urge Congress to send a wake-up call to the administration, reminding them that failure to provide such accommodations is not just in violation of the Rehabilitation Act, but demonstrates a critical inefficiency of government that results in unnecessary appeals and delayed actions through a failure to provide materials in accessible formats.”

You don’t have to go to Washington, DC, to make your voice heard. Call or write to your local representatives and urge them to support these important items. If you don’t know who your representatives are, find out on the ACB-Ohio website, www.acbohio.org and click on the link that reads Locate your Ohio senators and representatives by zip code.

If you would like to find out more about visiting Washington next year, contact me (prahin@icloud.com) or our Executive Director, Katie Frederick (acbo.director@gmail.com).

**CONGRATULATIONS, LORI!**

Lori Woodall, Board Member and Greater Cincinnati Chapter Vice President, was recently elected president of the Ohio State Firefighters Association Auxiliary. A longtime supporter of firefighters, she has held many offices within the organization for over twenty years. A couple of Lori’s noteworthy achievements are founding the Franklin Township Fire Auxiliary in her hometown of Felicity, and before that starting a similar group in a neighboring township.

**SUMMER CAMP FUN**

Highbrook Lodge in northeast Ohio has been providing summer camp experiences for individuals with vision loss and blindness for 89 years. This summer’s schedule offers something for everyone, and includes day camp and multiple-day experiences for all ages. A few of the camp’s offerings include Fit & Fabulous Camp (August 5-6) for adults ages 40-60 who love being active; Young Adult Camp (August 5-6) for ages 22-40—activities include goalball, archery, canoeing and more; and Bright Futures Day Trip (Sunday July 9) for campers of all ages. More session information and a downloadable application packet can be found at www.clevelandsightcenter.org or call 216-791-8118. Application deadline is June 5.

**BITS & BYTES**

**UPDATED BSVI DIRECTORY**

BSVI has updated and posted its annual compilation of vision loss and hearing loss resources. The document primarily contains Internet links and other information on general resources, advocacy groups, media and communications access, hearing assistance, learning resources and other information. The resources are divided as useful for deafness, blindness and deaf/blind community members. This is a downloadable Word document accessible to screen reader users. Note: document may take 30-60 seconds to download.

http://ood.ohio.gov/Core-Services/BSVI/Vision-and-Hearing-Resources

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM**

Applications now open for OOD’s Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) held in Columbus from July 30-August 3. Ohio YLF is a five-day leadership training program for 11th and 12th grade students with disabilities who are interested in developing their leadership ability. Delegates from all over the state learn about choosing a career, the history of disability as a culture, available technology and resources, and self advocacy. Students get to meet professionals with disabilities and have an opportunity to develop their own Personal Leadership Plan to reach goals in education, employment and community development. Students not already working with OOD need to apply for VR services by March 31. To complete the YLF application and for additional information, visit http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Programs/Youth-Leadership-Forum
We were very pleased to see the Supreme Court ruling today in Fry v Napoleon Community Schools. The Supreme Court held unanimously that Ehlena Fry’s family can pursue a lawsuit against her former public school district for denying access to her service dog, Wonder. The ruling made clear that if a school discriminates against a child for using a guide dog or service animal, parents are legally able to go straight to court to enforce the student’s rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504.

AFB APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT RULING IN SUPPORT OF SERVICE ANIMALS

(From the American Foundation for the Blind blog, posted 2/22/17)

"Nothing in the nature of the Frys’ suit suggests any implicit focus on the adequacy of (Ehlena’s) education," Justice Elena Kagan wrote. "The Frys could have filed essentially the same complaint if a public library or theater had refused admittance to Wonder." Therefore, the family does not need to exhaust all the administrative procedures typically required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Read the full text of the ruling issued by the Supreme Court (PDF).

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to grad school and would like a job in engineering. She played in the band, is a member of the Student Government and the Honor Society, and volunteer at the local animal shelter.

The American Council of the Blind of Ohio offers six scholarships each academic year, ranging from $500 to $2,500. Full instructions are available to apply.

MAKE YOUR MOMENTS COUNT

By Reggie Anglen

The Supreme Court (PDF)

Read the full text of the ruling issued by the Supreme Court (PDF). It should be noted that the regulations issued by the Department of Education under IDEA require that children with disabilities receive an appropriate education that is a free, appropriate public education that meets the unique needs of each child. The regulations also state that the IDEA guarantees an individual educational program that is designed to address the unique needs of each child.

The American Council of the Blind of Ohio offers six scholarships each academic year, ranging from $1,000 to $2,500. Full instructions are available to apply.

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to graduate school and would like a job in accessible technology, especially at Disney.

In Support of Service Animals

AFB applauds Supreme Court ruling in support of service animals.

You can help by visiting our secure website, www.able bombings.US, and making a donation. Donate online today.

Tyttie & Elsa

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to graduate school and would like a job in accessible technology, especially at Disney.

In Support of Service Animals

AFB applauds Supreme Court ruling in support of service animals.

You can help by visiting our secure website, www.able bombings.US, and making a donation. Donate online today.

Tyttie & Elsa

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to graduate school and would like a job in accessible technology, especially at Disney.

In Support of Service Animals

AFB applauds Supreme Court ruling in support of service animals.

You can help by visiting our secure website, www.able bombings.US, and making a donation. Donate online today.

Tyttie & Elsa

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to graduate school and would like a job in accessible technology, especially at Disney.

In Support of Service Animals

AFB applauds Supreme Court ruling in support of service animals.

You can help by visiting our secure website, www.able bombings.US, and making a donation. Donate online today.

Tyttie & Elsa

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to graduate school and would like a job in accessible technology, especially at Disney.

In Support of Service Animals

AFB applauds Supreme Court ruling in support of service animals.

You can help by visiting our secure website, www.able bombings.US, and making a donation. Donate online today.

Tyttie & Elsa

Meet Two More Scholarship Winners

Jenny Ham & Cassandra Mendez

Jenny Ham received the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship last October. She is a junior at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in social work and Spanish. She has volunteered with Su Casa, tutoring at the Academy of Multilingual International Studies and serving as the student teacher for an English as a second language adult night class, and is now a staff writer for The News Record. She is a member of the University of Cincinnati’s Honors Program and has made the Dean’s list for four out of five semesters.

Cassandra Mendez won the David Newmeyer Scholarship. Cassandra is a sophomore at The Ohio State University, majoring in computer science and engineering. She is involved in many extracurricular activities and has worked at jobs most of us would find intimidating. She plans to go to graduate school and would like a job in accessible technology, especially at Disney.
KUDOS & THANKS, AWARD WINNERS!

For years, Ken has been a major asset to ACB-Ohio—the Greater Cincinnati Chapter in particular. He is always eager to drive people to chapter meetings, entertainment venues, churches, restaurants, and even the state ACBO conference. If he’s not personally providing the ride, he makes sure chapter members have rides through taxi or paratransit. Ken serves behind the scenes, doing the jobs that keep the chapter humming, whether it be serving as chapter parliamentarian, selling raffle tickets, or carrying boxes.

Now retired after 25 years with the Ford Motor Company, Ken plans to spend more time with family, church, travel and helping ACB-Ohio at the local and state levels. For 43 years he has been married to his high school sweetheart, board member Lori Woodall; they have two children and five grandchildren.

For years, Ken has been a major asset to ACB-Ohio—the Greater Cincinnati Chapter in particular. He is always eager to drive people to chapter meetings, entertainment venues, churches, restaurants, and even the state ACBO conference. If he’s not personally providing the ride, he makes sure chapter members have rides through taxi or paratransit. Ken serves behind the scenes, doing the jobs that keep the chapter humming, whether it be serving as chapter parliamentarian, selling raffle tickets, or carrying boxes.

Now retired after 25 years with the Ford Motor Company, Ken plans to spend more time with family, church, travel and helping ACB-Ohio at the local and state levels. For 43 years he has been married to his high school sweetheart, board member Lori Woodall; they have two children and five grandchildren.

Currently, Terry is creating a website featuring short interviews with chapter members so new members and site visitors can get acquainted with the chapter. He has many talents, including playing piano, bass guitar, songwriting, and singing beautifully. He is the father of two children and grandfather of one.

Terry Olandese has served as president of the Greater Cincinnati chapter for a number of years and has been active at the state level on the board and as a 2016 national conference delegate. Whether it’s a computer, cell phone, or your back (he is a massage therapist), he will help you fix it.

A few months ago, Terry started “Talk Back Tuesday” every first Tuesday of the month to keep the chapter connected between meetings. This conference call is an active fellowship time with history lessons, jokes, funny stories, and items about the chapter. It’s enjoyed by all who call in.

In December, Mr. and Mrs. Claus (board members Terry Olandese and Lori Woodall in costume) paid a special visit to the adult daycare where fellow board member Lita Wesley is employed. They received a very warm welcome. Every resident had his or her picture taken with Mr. Claus and received a candy cane. Mr. Claus played favorite Christmas carols on the piano, accompanied by some very strong voices. Kenny Woodall and Board Member Sue Wesley also attended.

WE NEED YOUR NOMINATIONS!!!

Most of us enjoy recognition for what we do, but we seldom toot our own horns. Even if we find it somewhat embarrassing, it feels really good to receive an honor for a one-time special service or for years of working in the background. From the other side of that coin, it’s a terrific feeling to surprise someone who isn’t expecting appreciation.

Do you know a person or organization in Ohio who gives time, money, ideas, or any other kind of support to ACBO? Nominate that individual or group for an award. Don’t worry if you feel uncomfortable writing; you can instead call Lori Woodall (513-876-3351), Vicky Prahin (614-949-7757), or Katie Frederick (800-835-2226) and provide the information verbally. The individual you nominate can be blind or visually impaired or sighted; the organization can provide services, offer funding, or do something which benefits our membership.

The deadline this year is September 8. Don’t think about it; do it! Mail letters of nomination to ACB-Ohio, 3805 North High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214 or send via email to acbo.awards@gmail.com.

MR. & MRS. CLAUS VISIT SENIORS

In December, Mr. and Mrs. Claus (board members Terry Olandese and Lori Woodall in costume) paid a special visit to the adult daycare where fellow board member Lita Wesley is employed. They received a very warm welcome. Every resident had his or her picture taken with Mr. Claus and received a candy cane. Mr. Claus played favorite Christmas carols on the piano, accompanied by some very strong voices. Kenny Woodall and Board Member Sue Wesley also attended.