



OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

2023 LEGISLATIVE IMPERATIVES

By Kathy Gerhardt

Below are the 2023 legislative imperatives for the American Council of the Blind. These were also our legislative priorities in 2022 and all four were introduced as legislation in the 117th Congress (2021–2022). This year marks the beginning of the first term for the 118th Congress, and, as a result, we must work to have these pieces of legislation reintroduced and the bills passed into law.

The **Exercise and Fitness for All Act**, sponsored by Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, promotes the provision of exercise or fitness equipment, classes, and instruction that are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Duckworth also introduced the **Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act** to establish uniform accessibility standards for websites and applications of employers. This bill requires employers, public entities, and public accommodations that provide goods or services through a website or online application to make those websites and applications accessible to individuals with disabilities. The requirement applies even if the good or service is offered only digitally.

Senator Jan Schakowsky of Illinois introduced the **Medical Device Non-Visual Accessibility Act**, which calls on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to create and enforce nonvisual accessibility standards for home-use medical devices so that devices are fully accessible out of the box for blind or low-vision persons.

The final bill, introduced in both the House and Senate, is the **Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act**, cosponsored by Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts and Representative Anna Eshoo of California. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) several years ago began to require local TV station affiliates of ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC, located in the top 80 TV markets, to provide 87.5 hours per calendar quarter (about seven hours per week) of audio-described programming, of which 50 hours must be prime time and/or children's programming and 37.5 hours may be any type of programming. This update to that will require audio description on almost all television programming, audio description on video programming delivered via internet protocol that is posted by large content creators, and online video platforms to provide easy-to-use audio description authoring tools for content creators. It requires improvement of the quality of audio description, expansion of the

availability of closed captioning video programming on television and online, and makes closed captioning and audio description settings easier to find and use. This bill also requires video conferencing services to be compatible with assistive technologies, third-party captioning and interpreting services, and telecommunications relay services; access to emergency services via real time text, direct video calling, or telecommunications relay services; and expansion of access to the National DeafBlind Equipment Distribution Program and double the program's authorization to \$20 million.

WELCOME BACK, KELSEY!

By Vicky Prahin

Cleveland chapter member Kelsey Nicolay rejoined ACBO's board of directors this year. A member of ACB since 2016, she is involved in multiple activities throughout ACBO, serving on various committees, especially on the membership and sports and recreation committees. She is also involved at the national level, including helping with technology and working with the Braille Revival League and the ACB employment committee. In her spare time, she enjoys camping, music, and spending time with her nieces and nephew.



**Newsletter Committee: Katie Frederick, Vicky Prahin, Malaina VanderWal
Michelle Spillan, Editor**

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Catherine Bister, Katie Frederick, Kathy Gerhardt, Irwin Hott, Caroline Karbowski, Vicky Prahin, and Stephanie Welch-Grenier**. The *Ohio Connection* is a quarterly publication of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. Please submit your material in print or via e-mail, and include your name and phone number. E-mail items to acbo.newsletter@gmail.com or send them to the address below. The summer issue deadline is May 15. **ACB-Ohio, 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214, Phone: 614-261-3561**

ACBO Community Shares Campaign Codes

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



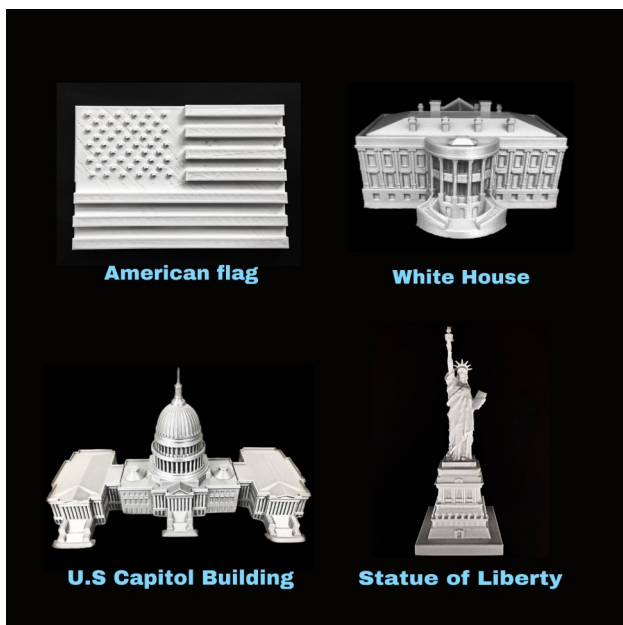


WHERE LEARNING TAKES SHAPE

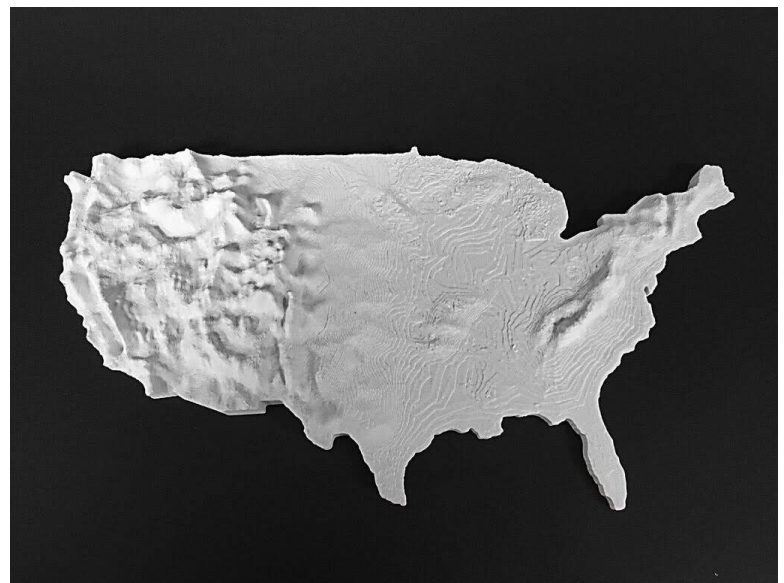
By Caroline Karbowski,
Founder and CEO, See3D, Inc.

See3D, Inc. (See3D.org) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Cincinnati, Ohio, that is primarily managed by Ohio State University students. See3D organizes the printing, design, and distribution of 3D printed models for people who are blind, visually impaired, or have low vision. It was founded in 2017 as a way to provide 3D printing project ideas for people who were enthusiastic about printing but were unsure what to create. Anyone who is blind or low vision, or a parent or teacher of someone who is blind or low vision, can make a [request for a model with this form](#). People have requested models so they can better understand objects that are often observed visually or have been difficult to create in an accessible tactile form. Common model requests include maps, buildings, snowflakes, molecules, animals, and automobiles. We mail models Free Matter for the Blind to recipients in the US and internationally.

We are always looking for new volunteers to assist in model design, model printing, model descriptions, and more! Virtual volunteers have come from all over the world and are of all ages. We also have in-person volunteering events in Cincinnati and Columbus. Check out our [Get Involved page](#) to join our screen reader accessible Slack Workspace where we communicate. We have channels for print requests, design requests, accessible 3D printing, model descriptions, 3D printing help, and more. Please email info@see3d.org with any inquiries.

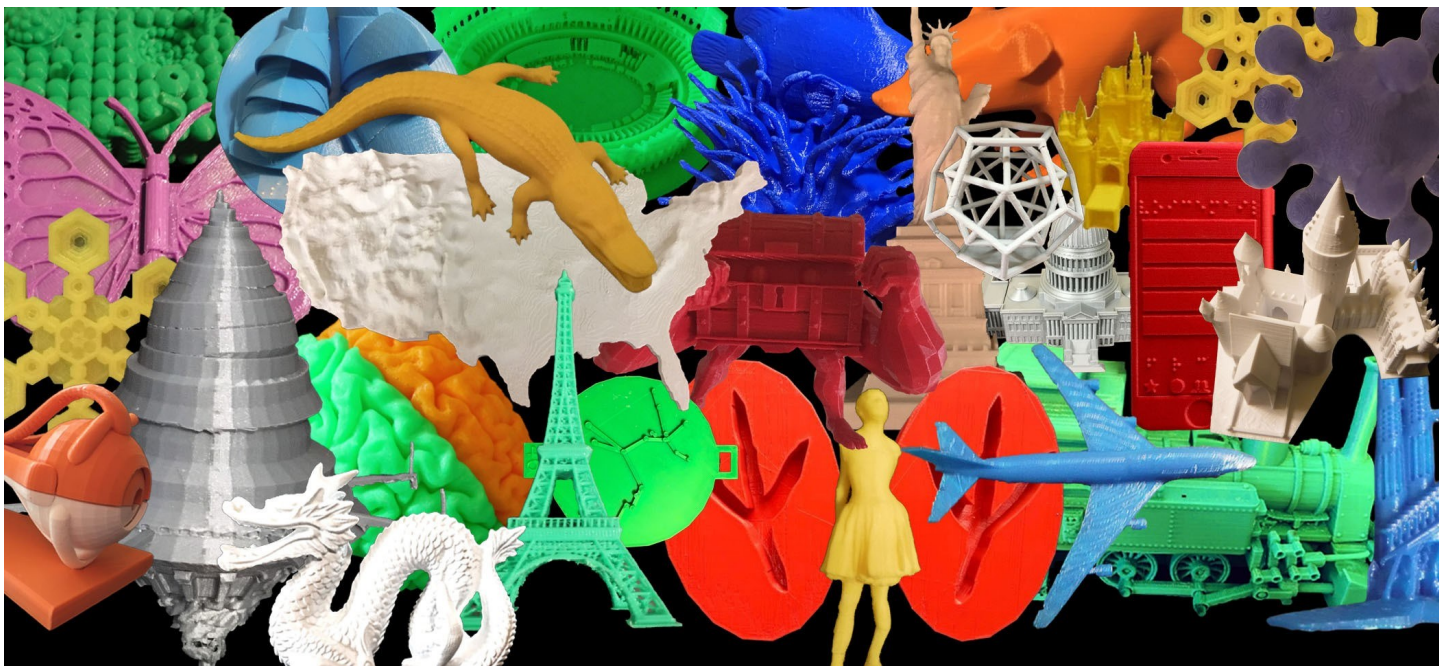


***Clockwise: American flag,
White House, Statue of
Liberty, U.S. Capitol Building***



U.S. topographical map

**More cool models
from See3D** ➡



A collage of various 3D models. From top left to bottom right the models include: Cell membrane, Sydney Opera house, alligator, Colosseum, fish in an anemone, Statue of Liberty, mouse, snowflake, COVID-19, butterfly, USA topographical map, boxer mimic, United States Capitol Building, iPhone with braille, Hogwarts Castle, snowflake, eye with muscles, Floating Castle of Aincrad, human brain, Eiffel Tower, chicken tracks, Degas' Little Dancer for Fourteen Years, airplane, train, Segrada Família, and a Chinese Dragon.

GOVERNOR DEWINE ANNOUNCES HISTORIC INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT OHIOANS WITH DISABILITIES

Reprinted from *OOD Works*, an e-newsletter published by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's biennial Executive Budget for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 reinforces his commitment to making Ohio a Disability Inclusion State and Model Employer of Individuals with Disabilities. This historic investment will allow Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) to positively impact the lives of Ohioans with disabilities like never before. Governor DeWine's significant investments provide OOD with the maximum amount of federal grant dollars available by the second year of the biennium, allowing the Vocational Rehabilitation program to help even more Ohioans with disabilities get and keep a job.

Governor DeWine's Executive Budget also funds a brand-new initiative called Accessible Ohio. This initiative will support Ohio's cities, counties, state agencies, attractions, and venues in becoming accessible and inclusive for individuals with disabilities.

Supports Ohioans with Disabilities to Earn Higher Wages

As Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted continue to bring in-demand jobs to Ohio, OOD will increase support to Ohioans with disabilities so that they can attain credentials (e.g., degrees, certificates, licensures). These credentials will help remove barriers for Ohioans with disabilities as they work to achieve financial independence.

Nationwide, individuals with disabilities are disproportionately employed in low-wage, entry-level jobs, experience dramatically higher rates of poverty, and have significantly lower levels of educational attainment. People with disabilities are also much more likely to be employed part-time than those with no disability, and the percentage of working-age individuals with disabilities who are employed is less than half that of working-age individuals without disabilities. Governor DeWine's Executive Budget aims to level the playing field and increase earnings for Ohioans with disabilities.

With the Governor's support and a new five-year federal grant, OOD's Works4Me program will help 1,450 individuals with disabilities to move out of subminimum wage employment and into competitive, integrated jobs. The innovative program will bring together partnerships from across the state to bridge the skills gap for individuals with disabilities through career development, work incentives planning, paid community-based work experiences, and wraparound services.

Boosts Credential Attainment

Through existing partnerships with Ohio Technical Centers, community colleges, career centers, and other training programs, OOD will seek to support Ohioans with disabilities to earn short-term credentials needed for in-demand, well-paying jobs. This will help meet the needs of Ohio's employers seeking to hire skilled workers. OOD can provide counseling and guidance to these students with disabilities to address their needs and purchase necessary services such as tuition, fees, licensures, exams, tools, equipment, uniforms, transportation, technology, and other supports. Students will have access to OOD's network of more than 700 Employer Partners for internships and employment opportunities and receive any needed on-the-job support.

Expands Ohio College2Careers

With the support of Governor DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly, OOD, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Higher Education, launched Ohio College2Careers (Ohio C2C) in 2019. Originally implemented at 15 colleges and universities, the partnership expanded in 2021 to Ohio's two Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Wilberforce University and Central State University. Ohio C2C immerses full-time vocational rehabilitation counselors on campuses to assist

students with disabilities in career exploration, assistive technology, resume and interview preparation, and job placement. Our Career Development Specialists connect these students with OOD's Employer Partner network for internships and careers.

With Governor DeWine's Executive Budget, a continued partnership between the Ohio Department of Higher Education and OOD will expand Ohio C2C to make these critical services and resources available to college students with disabilities statewide, serving an additional 1,600 students annually. OOD will also modernize policies to increase support for tuition and other education expenses for students with disabilities and refine current career services to meet the needs of college graduates with disabilities.

Increases Services to High School Students with Disabilities

The Ohio Transition Support Partnership (OTSP), which began in 2015 with the Ohio Department of Education, ensures that students with disabilities have access to OOD's Vocational Rehabilitation services. In FY 2022, OOD assisted nearly 16,000 young people with disabilities, including approximately 4,500 students through the Ohio Transition Support Partnership, to work toward their employment goals.

Governor DeWine's Executive Budget will expand OTSP to serve an additional 2,250 students with disabilities annually. This will empower more students with disabilities as OOD supports their successful transition from secondary education to post-secondary education and employment. In addition, OOD will focus on increasing services to students with disabilities enrolled in Career-Technical Education in Ohio. A greater number of these students can benefit through help from OOD for individualized work experiences, assistive technology, tools, licensure/certification fees, work clothing, and job placement in their chosen field.

Supports the Creation of "Accessible Ohio"

Building upon Governor DeWine's commitment to Ohioans with disabilities, the Accessible Ohio initiative creates the first-ever coordinated effort in Ohio to support Ohio's cities, counties, state agencies, attractions, and venues to be accessible and inclusive. Ohio will lead the way in fostering a sense of community and belonging that strengthens the state for all of its citizens.

Accessible Ohio will make Ohio a global leader in public accessibility, encouraging businesses to locate in Ohio and visitors to prioritize travel to our state. OOD will support Ohio's public and private entities in their endeavors to become accessible and inclusive. Accessible Ohio Specialists will be on hand to work directly with local partners to identify barriers to access and establish goals for accessibility through customized consultations.

Increases Support for Community Centers for the Deaf

Governor DeWine's proposed budget invests an additional \$500,000 annually for the

Community Centers for the Deaf to increase services to help Ohioans who are deaf or hard of hearing reach their educational and vocational goals. As a result, individuals served by the Community Centers for the Deaf will engage more in the community and experience greater independence.

Supports Disability Services Partners

Governor DeWine's Executive Budget strives to leave no individual with a disability behind. OOD's long-standing partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation providers, Ohio's Centers for Independent Living, sight centers, Assistive Technology of Ohio, and the Ohio Brain Injury Program through The Ohio State University, will continue to receive funding support from OOD to meet the needs of Ohioans with disabilities.

Creates Penalty Enhancement for Hate Crimes Against Individuals with Disabilities

Governor DeWine's proposed budget includes adding an enhanced penalty for hate crimes committed against individuals with disabilities ("disabilities" as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act). The enhancement would address criminal acts that are motivated by prejudice or intolerance directed at those with disabilities.

Specifically, the proposed budget would make the crimes of aggravated menacing, menacing, criminal damaging, criminal mischief, or telecommunications harassment an offense of the next higher degree than the original offense committed if the victim is an individual with a disability, and the offender targeted the individual based on his or her disability.

Empowers Ohioans with Disabilities

Governor DeWine's Executive Budget significantly increases efforts to support Ohioans with disabilities, empowering them to find careers, stability, purpose, meaning, connection, and independence. This historic investment in Ohioans with disabilities will allow OOD to maximize federal resources allocated to Ohio by providing the full state match that is needed to access these grant funds by the second year of the biennium and serve more than 41,000 Ohioans with disabilities annually. With the full match, an additional 6,000 individuals with disabilities a year will receive increased support for vocational rehabilitation services, education, credentials, and assistive technology. The investment also expands the employer partners OOD assists (currently more than 700) in recruiting new employees and strengthening diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

The Executive Budget also continues funding for OOD Jobs for Recovery, Ohio Employment First, Ohio Vocational Apprentice Program, Independent Living Services for Older Blind Ohioans Program, and Personal Care Assistance Program. For those individuals who are unable to work due to their disability, OOD's Division of Disability Determination will continue to determine medical eligibility for Ohioans with disabilities who apply for Social Security disability benefits.

ANNUAL ACB-OHIO SCHOLARSHIPS

The American Council of the Blind of Ohio will offer scholarships for academic year 2023-2024. Visit www.acbohio.org for submission guidelines and application materials. Complete applications are due by July 15. If you would like assistance or have questions, call the ACB-Ohio office at 614-261-3561. Scholarships are available for entering freshmen, undergraduates and graduate students. Previous winners are welcome to reapply. An applicant must be an Ohio resident or attend an Ohio school in a two-year or more post-secondary degree program, be legally blind, have a 3.0 or higher GPA on a 4.0 scale, and willing to attend the 2023 ACB-Ohio conference and convention November 10-12 in Columbus. Send the completed application packet to ACB-Ohio Scholarship Committee, 3805 N. High Street, Suite 305, Columbus, OH 43214, or via e-mail to acbo.director@gmail.com with "Scholarship Application" in the subject field. Applications are due July 15. The scholarships are as follows:

- \$1000 FRIENDS OF FRESHMAN SCHOLARSHIP—Presented to a blind or visually impaired entering freshman in any field of study.
- \$4,000 MAX EDELMAN-DAVID NEWMeyer SCHOLARSHIP—Presented to a legally blind undergraduate student in any field of study.
- \$5,000 JOANN FISCHER-LINWOOD WALKER SCHOLARSHIP —Available to a legally blind graduate student in any field of study.

TALKING PRESCRIPTION LABELS ARE JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

The number of pharmacies offering free talking labels is growing, but many people still do not know about talking prescription labels! En-Vision America is happy to do the work if someone needs assistance finding a participating pharmacy or requesting the service from a current pharmacy. The program is called "Let Us Do the Work for You." Fill out the simple form and En-Vision America will get you set up with free talking labels. If the pharmacy is not yet signed up with their service, mention ScripTalk and that you would like to get the service. Let En-Vision America know who the pharmacist is and someone will reach out and explain the details.

The new ScripTalk mobile app is now available in the iOS and Android App Stores. ScripTalk Mobile IOS: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/scriptalk-mobile/id1317698388> ScripTalk mobile Android App: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mistral.scriptalkmobilev2>. For questions, contact Loretta Roberts, advocate outreach specialist at 800-890-1180 ext. 126. The form is available in 26 languages in addition to English.

GOAL IN SIGHT: MEETING THE NEEDS OF OHIOANS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

By Stephanie Welch-Grenier, Founder & CEO of Goal in Sight

My husband, Aaron, and I started Goal in Sight in 2018 through my work as a certified vision rehabilitation therapist and teacher of the visually impaired. What started out as giving a simple replacement magnifier, IT services, or a few extra low-vision pens, quickly turned into providing larger equipment, such as CCTVs, and countless volunteer hours. Over the next couple of years, we continued to address the needs of individuals with visual impairments across Ohio, while I completed additional certifications and training at The Ohio State University. This allowed us to provide more comprehensive low vision and blind services throughout Ohio for individuals of all ages.

As an IT specialist, Aaron offered much-needed services to individuals with assistive technology needs that were hindered by a lack of proper IT support. In 2022, we took Goal in Sight public as community need began to far exceed the team's reach. Although the instructional needs of individuals with visual impairments are addressed through both federal and state programming, all programs have limits in reach and scope. These limitations are most often present in Ohio for transition-aged youth, individuals with progressive conditions in need of braille instruction, and adults in their golden years. As a former transition program coordinator and adult daily living skills instructor at a Lighthouse for the Blind in Florida, I'm always concerned about the independent living needs and employment outcomes of youth with visual impairments. This concern has guided my doctoral work at The Ohio State University as I research ways to improve employment outcomes and public perceptions of employees with visual impairments.

Today, our board members and I are working on a five-year plan to address these three initiatives. Most importantly, Goal in Sight is working to provide direct in-home instruction for transition-aged youth in need of daily living skills training and equipment, a service that is stuck somewhere between school district allowances and state vocational rehabilitation programming. Our part-time efforts are slowly building to a full-time commitment to our community. As a community-funded, non-profit program, Goal in Sight continues its mission of working to build confidence, maximize independence, support vocational goals, and foster aging in place through education, training, research, equipment, and adaptive aids for the blind and visually impaired of all ages.

Our organization now works with community partners to place equipment with individuals across the state and meet training and equipment needs that are not covered through other funding sources. We are thankful for the opportunity to advocate for the needs of our community members who are experiencing vision loss

and look forward to growing our program with each coming year.

Find out more on our website <https://www.goalinsight.org/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GoalNSight> and Twitter at <https://twitter.com/GoalNSight>. To contact our office call 419-777-1025 or email info@goalinsight.org.

JOIN US FOR THE BVI SPRING WALK

By Catherine Bister



When: 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m., Saturday, May 6

Where: Clear Creek Park, 668 Venture Blvd., Wooster, OH 44691

What: Please join us for a relaxing, easy hike with food and friends!

Contact: Catherine Bister (email: catbister@aol.com, call/text: 330-464-1355)

This free event is open to hikers/walkers with visual impairments and their guides. Lunch is included. Clear Creek Park is situated on a beautiful 11-acre wooded wetland on the edge of the city. The park offers inner and outer loop trails with gentle grade changes over paved or boardwalk surface covering three fourths of a mile. There is a newly constructed pavilion, handicapped accessible restrooms, and a dog relief area. The trail includes a nicely sized observation deck with benches overlooking Clear Creek. This event is generously sponsored by Wooster Noon Lions and Bogner Construction.

RSVP by April 15 to save your spot. Please indicate if you need a guide and any dietary restrictions. My guide Beanie would like to know if you are bringing a guide dog that she can hike with.

Beanie and I took a test hike recently and we really enjoyed this secluded location. There are distinct edges on the blacktop trails, which helped Beanie stay true and focused with her guide work. This is a shorter hike, but the meandering paths and grade changes made it feel like a much bigger space. Subtle directional changes offered varied sensory experiences every 20 to 30 paces. I found myself relaxing and enjoying this pleasant, homey park. We met other hikers on our outing, some with leashed dogs, also enjoying a little warmth on a winter's day. Everyone was friendly and courteous, giving Beanie plenty of room to work. I absolutely loved the observation deck and heard many birds—I really didn't want to leave. Beanie enjoyed stretching her legs while seeing and smelling lots of birds. She gives this hike a four-paw rating and a happy sniff!

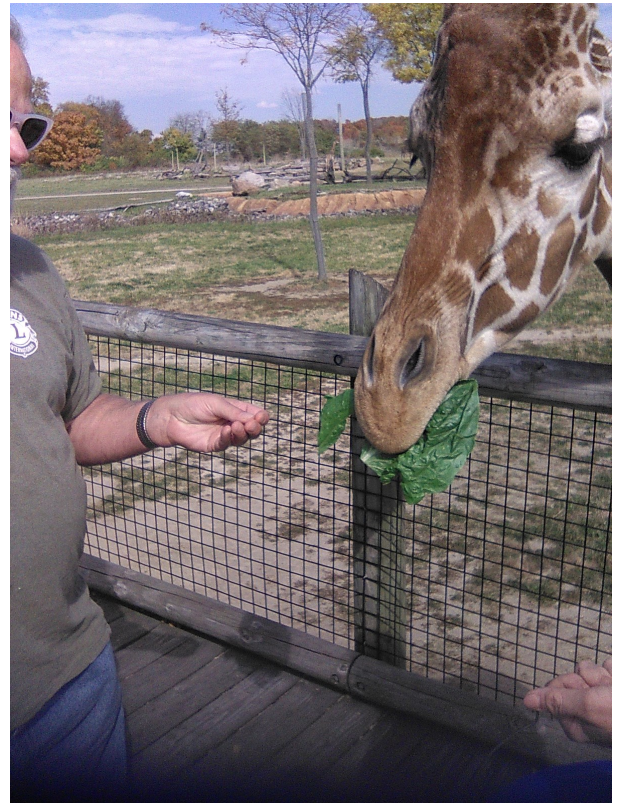


ROMAINE CALM AND KEEP FEEDING THE GIRAFFES

By Irwin Hott

Last October, my good friend Lisa and I went to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. We each had season passes so there were several things that were free or reduced in price. There were lots of Halloween events going on that day, so the zoo was quite busy.

One of the things I had done several times was to feed the giraffes. There were four or five giraffes waiting to be fed and there was quite a line. It took five to eight minutes to go through the line. Nitro was my giraffe this time. The giraffes were standing below with a barrier in between them and us. Giraffes are about 15 feet tall, so we approached them with their mouths about upper chest level for us. Zoo staff handed each of us three large romaine lettuce leaves. One just had to hold out the lettuce leaf and the giraffe gently took it out of your hand. I could sometimes feel the warm breath and feel the nose which had short, bristly hair. On one of the previous encounters the giraffe got what must have been a special treat as I was given a cracker to pass along. The cracker was taken with a little more authority but still very gently.



Nitro the giraffe munches on romaine lettuce leaves

Our family has gone to the zoo for as long as I can remember. In the mid '90s the zoo had a dinosaur exhibit of full-sized animatronic critters. I was there with Tonka, my third Seeing Eye dog. Suddenly, there was a big roar behind us. Tonka whipped around 180 degrees in her harness, looked at the dinosaur, and decided it wasn't dangerous. After that she totally ignored them. That was one of the few times I took my guide dog to the zoo.

Back in the '60s there were small boxes bolted to the iron cage bars that contained recorded information about the animals. One had to buy a large plastic key to start up the recording. Those lasted a couple of years, and I had a lot of fun sticking the key into the slot and activating the recording.

Zoos have greatly changed over the years in a very good way. Check them out; there may be several hands-on experiences that might be worth your time.



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

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

APRIL 5, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

APRIL 9, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

APRIL 15, ACBO BOARD MEETING, 3 P.M., VIA ZOOM

MAY 3, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

MAY 6, BVI SPRING WALK, CLEAR CREEK PARK, WOOSTER

MAY 14, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

MAY 15, ACBO NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

JUNE 7, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

JUNE 11, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

JUNE 30–JULY 7, ACB CONFERENCE & CONVENTION,
SCHAUMBURG, IL

