



OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

HONORING OHIOANS

By Vicky Prahin

At this year's national convention in Schaumburg, Illinois, two of ACB-Ohio's members will receive special recognition.

Thanks to ACB and JPMorgan Chase, Malaina VanderWal was selected to be one of five Leadership Fellows. She lives in Caledonia, Michigan. She is a graduate of Grand Rapids Community College with an Associate in Arts degree. She shares her knowledge and expertise through the programs offered by Michigan Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, of which she is a past president of her local chapter. Malaina volunteers in her local community in support of advocacy efforts for better transportation and is a member of Concerned Citizens for Improved Transportation. She serves on the ACB-Ohio board and enjoys being a member of Blind Information Technology Specialists, and she serves on many committees as well.



Malaina VanderWal



Janae Miller

The Durward K. McDaniel (DKM) Fund Committee seeks to identify and honor two ACB members who demonstrate leadership potential with the DKM First-Timers Award on an annual basis, one from east and one from west of the Mississippi River. This year, Ohio is proud to report that Janae Miller, president of the Columbus chapter, was chosen as the award winner from the East. She joined ACBO as a college student while at Wright State University. She has participated as a member of the legislative committee for two years and in the virtual and in-person DC Leadership Conference. She loves music and the arts and has sung both professionally and nonprofessionally, currently as an active member and volunteer of the Harmony Project, a Columbus nonprofit organization where people can embrace their differences and build social harmony.

Janae has a degree in communication studies and a minor in sociology with a focus in the area of social change, which has led her to set a life goal to make the world a better place for all disabled persons, especially the blind and hearing impaired. She

created Sight Unseen, a disability inclusion consulting and training company through which she uses her experiences to advise companies and businesses regarding the power of disability inclusion. As a certified Windmills (a disability awareness program) trainer, she is equipped to empower employment professionals to become more inclusive of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

We congratulate Malaina and Janae!

DEFYING EXPECTATIONS: THE 2023 ACB-OHIO / ACB-INDIANA CONVENTION

By Brant Adams & Rachel Densmore

Have you ever faced low expectations in the workplace, community, or during recreation, from family, friends, or acquaintances? Or worse—from yourself? During this year's convention, we will explore many ways to defy those expectations.

Where else would you want to be on November 10–12 besides the greatest Ohio / Indiana convention on earth? Friday, Saturday, and for you drag racing fans, even SUNDAY, SUNDAY, SUNDAY! Save the dates and join us. We are planning many great things! The location is the Crowne Plaza Columbus North – Worthington hotel at 6500 Doubletree Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43229. The phone number is 614-885-1885.

Topics will include:

- Leveraging 3-D models to learn about and explore the world
- Mental health from the perspective of people with blindness
- Defying expectations in recreation

We are working on an exciting excursion, so watch for more information on that. We look forward to you joining us, as we defy your expectations of what you thought possible at a convention!

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

By D A Pimley

During the annual business meeting at our state convention each fall, we vote for director and officer positions for our board. The board consists of 11 directors and five officers. We vote for approximately half of the director and officer positions one year and the remaining positions the following year. This helps ACBO have an influx of new

talent and ideas while retaining year-to-year knowledge of how the board works to support the organization.

In the spring, the nominating committee identifies which incumbent members in this year's election list wish to serve another term and which members have reached their term limit. The committee creates a slate of candidates consisting of incumbents and new members for the upcoming election. We will also try to identify a list of candidates for contingency planning.

This year's slate will consist of the first vice president and secretary positions and six directors. If you are interested in becoming a board member or just wish to learn more about serving, please visit <https://www.acbohio.org/about/board/> and the links at the bottom of that page which direct you to the current ACBO constitution and bylaws.

Do you have what it takes to be a board member? Please contact the nominating committee chair Rachel Densmore at racheldensmore20@gmail.com or 614-390-9587. If you are not sure you have the time to be a board member, but you want to do more for ACBO, think about serving on a committee. Help shape our future!

2023 ACB-OHIO SCHOLARSHIPS

The American Council of the Blind of Ohio will offer three scholarships for 2023-24 academic year. 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 or email acbo.director@gmail.com. Scholarships are available for entering freshmen, undergraduate 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 be willing to attend this year's 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. Remember, applications are due July 15. The scholarships offered are:

- **\$1,000 Friends of Freshmen 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.

WHEN THANK YOU IS NOT ENOUGH

By Katie Frederick

We can all think of someone who has gone above and beyond, making life better for individuals who are blind or low vision—that person at the grocery store who is always eager to help with the shopping, the bank teller helping with transactions who is never too busy to answer account questions. What about that fixed route or paratransit driver who goes against company policy to pick up or drop a passenger off in safer or closer locations? Or how about that employer who hired a blind or visually impaired person and purchased adaptive equipment and training in order to benefit them both? It could be a church member, neighbor, friend, or family member who has helped the blind community improve life. Show your appreciation by nominating them for an ACB-Ohio award! Award winners receive a large print and braille plaque during the banquet of the 2023 ACB-Ohio/Indiana conference and convention. The awards committee is accepting nominations for the following:

- **Ken Morlock Award:** Given to an Ohioan who is blind or visually impaired who has worked to enhance the lives of persons who are blind or visually impaired.
- **Ruth Davidson Award:** Given to a sighted Ohioan who has worked to enhance the lives of persons who are blind or visually impaired.
- **Ambassador Award:** Given to an ACBO member who has worked tirelessly for ACBO and the blind community.
- **Arlene Cohen Art of Teaching Award:** Given to a blind or sighted Ohio teacher of blind or visually impaired students.
- **Media Award:** Given to a person in Ohio who has written or reported about blindness or issues that concern blind or visually impaired persons. All nominations for the Media Award must be accompanied by the article, video, or other presentation which is the basis for the nomination.
- **Employer of the Year Award:** Given to an Ohio employer who has hired and made accommodations for employees who are blind or visually impaired.
- **Community Service Award:** Presented to a city, town, or organization for the outstanding efforts it has put forth to enhance the lives of blind or visually impaired people.

The deadline for nominations is September 15. Email nominations to acbo.director@gmail.com and put “awards committee” in the subject line. You can also send nominations to: ACBO Awards, 3805 N. High St. Suite 305, Columbus, OH 43214. If you have questions, call the ACB-Ohio office 614-261-3561.

TIME AND TRANSITION

By Katie Frederick

Ohio Connection readers may recall meeting ACB-Ohio executive director Ting Chiu in the fall issue. Ting came on board with an abundance of energy, great ideas, and enthusiasm for the role. After working with the organization for the past nine months, Ting left the position to pursue other opportunities at the end of April. Ting's passion for accessible, equal education for students and her commitment to the blind and low vision community is evident. I am confident we will hear more from her in the future in this space. It was a pleasure working with Ting. The board and I wish her all the best with her future endeavors!

I am pleased to announce Michelle Spillan accepted the role of ACB-Ohio's interim executive director effective May 1. For over ten years she has served as ACB-Ohio's administrative assistant, is very familiar with the organization and the blind/low vision community (her late mother, Jane Spillan, was blind). You can reach Michelle at acbo.director@gmail.com or call the office at 614-261-3561.

ACB-Ohio's personnel committee is developing a position description and will circulate the announcement soon after this issue goes to press. Please share the announcement with your networks and help us find the next executive director of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio.

HELP ACBO WHILE YOU SHOP AND SEARCH

By Michelle Spillan

The online mall Goodshop.com offers an easy way to support ACBO while you shop. Similar to the now defunct Amazon Smile, users select a charity when opening an account on the site, and a small percentage of their shopping total is donated to the charity of their choice. Goodshop.com offers coupons and special deals for over 30,000 stores, ranging from major retailers like Kohls, Target, and Ace Hardware, to small boutique stores.

If you use Chrome, Goodsearch.com, Goodshop's sister company, is another way to donate to ACBO. Like other search engines, Goodsearch generates ad revenue with every search you conduct, then \$0.01 of that revenue is credited to your search bank. When you earn enough money by searching, you'll be able to donate it to the charity of your choice. Go to goodsearch.com and click on "Make Goodsearch Your Default Search Engine" button to get started.

Goodshop and Goodsearch claim to support accessibility. If you are having trouble using these sites, send an email to information@goodshop.com and include "ADA" in the subject line.

ACB-OHIO AFFILIATE VOTING

By Malaina VanderWal

It is my honor and privilege to represent ACB-Ohio as the delegate during this year's ACB National Convention in Schaumburg. Our alternate delegate is Karen Spry. Since I will be attending the convention in person, members can submit votes to me for contested elections, constitution and bylaw amendments, and resolutions. Call or text 616-275-2054 (a Google Voice number) and leave a voicemail with your name and how you want Ohio to vote. Please remember to speak clearly. I will post to the ACB-Ohio list more information as I am able. The votes you send to me will play a role in how ACB-Ohio allocates the affiliate votes. Make your voice heard by voting individually and as a part of Ohio.

ACB 2023 RESOLUTIONS

Each year at the business meeting at the national convention, ACB members, through their affiliates, vote on key issues impacting people who are blind or visually impaired. Through these resolutions the ACB board and staff receive their primary directives. Below is a summary of the resolutions that will be voted on this year. You can read the full text of the resolutions on the ACB website (acb.org), listen to them on ACB Media 10, or listen and download via the ACB Business podcast feed.

2023-01 Medical and Exercise Equipment

Medical devices and exercise equipment must be fully accessible to those with blindness and low vision so they can maintain good health through regular physical exercise and monitoring of chronic health conditions.

2023-02 Coverage of Needles for Insulin Injections

Requires all health care insurers to cover the cost of needles and other means of injecting insulin so diabetics who require insulin can inject at the prescribed dosage, frequency, and manner, regardless of income status.

2023-03 Reduction of Insulin Cost

Many diabetics who require insulin face the difficult choice of paying for insulin or other life necessities; others are required by their insurers to use generic or less expensive insulin. This resolution prohibits insurance carriers from requiring individuals with diabetes to use an insulin other than the type prescribed by their physician.

2023-04 Establishing an ACB Policy for Member Referrals

To encourage more involvement by at-large members, the ACB board will establish a policy for referring at-large members to state and special interest affiliates.

2023-06 Encouraging Affiliates to Adopt a Prohibited Conduct Policy

To maintain a welcoming, professional, safe, and respectful environment at events and

online forums, ACB encourages each affiliate to adopt a Prohibited Conduct Policy to ensure that participants have a procedure to address complaints about conduct that goes against the values of the organization, and, in some cases, violates the law.

2023-07 Amendment of Older Americans Act

ACB is calling for increased funding for services for seniors. This includes vision rehabilitation, health, social, and transportation services.

2023-09 Large Print Books and NLS

ACB in conjunction with its CCLVI (Council of Citizens with Low Vision International) believes making large print materials available is equally as important as making recorded and braille materials available. ACB requests that NLS explores the feasibility of making large print books available.

Resolution 2023-10 Funding Increase for the Older Individuals who are Blind Program

ACB and its Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss affiliate (AAVL) commend the Biden administration for including a \$5 million increase in OIB funding in the proposed 2024 budget, an initial step toward ensuring seniors who are blind or have low vision receive the services they need to maintain or increase their independence.

2023-11 Vending Facility Equipment

This resolution urges the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the Office of Management and Budget to eliminate the prohibition against states using federal and matching funds for the purchase of equipment valued at less than \$1,000. This would help vendors, many who are struggling with shrinking income due to increased costs and decrease patronage, afford basic business equipment.

Resolution 2023-12 Funding of Visual Interpreting Services

ACB encourages its affiliates to advocate for funding of professional visual interpretation services at the state level for people who are blind or have low vision.

Resolution 2023-13 Ride-sharing and Communication

ACB will initiate discussion with service providers to seek changes in ride-sharing platforms so passengers who are blind or have low vision can clearly and directly communicate with drivers.

Resolution 2023-14 Ride-share Denials of Service to Guide Dog Users

ACB and Guide Dog Users Inc. (GDUI) request that the US Department of Justice determine whether the lack of effective action by ride share companies to prevent drivers from denying service to guide dog users equals a discriminatory practice and urges the DOJ to immediately address this ongoing pattern of illegal discrimination.

2023-15 Air Travel Attestation Forms

ACB and GDUI strongly urge the Department of Transportation to rescind the current burdensome attestation form requirements and if the DOT refuses, the only questions an airline should be allowed to ask a person with a disability are whether the service dog is required due to a disability and whether it is trained to perform a specific task to mitigate that disability.

2023-16 ACVREP and OT Certification

ACB calls on the staff and board of the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) to suspend any further development of a new OT certification until further input is sought from stakeholders in order to determine whether such certification is indeed in the best interests of the overall field of specialized services for the blind and visually impaired.

NEW OHIO LAW PROTECTS PARENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Ohio Senate Bill 202 , which took effect in April, prohibits disability from being used to deny or limit parenting. Republican Bob Hackett (District 10) and Democrat Nickie Antonio (District-23) are the primary sponsors for the bill. Specifically, the law:

- Prohibits a person's disability from being the basis to deny or limit custody, parenting time, visitation, adoption, or service as a guardian or foster caregiver.
- Prohibits a parent's disability from being the basis to deny or limit custody or visitation.
- Prohibits discrimination against prospective parents with disabilities by adoption and foster care agencies.
- Requires the consideration of reasonable accommodations and supportive services.
- Requires written findings by courts concerning parental disability.

Sadly, only about half of the states in the U.S. have laws that give equal footing to parents and caregivers with disabilities.



ACBO Community Shares Campaign Codes
State of Ohio 19003 City of Columbus 60240
Franklin County 60240 Ohio State University 60240
Columbus State 1061

VOTING IN OHIO

By Vicky Prahin

The 26th Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1971, gave the vote to citizens who are 18 or older. A couple of years later I turned 18 and registered to vote, even though few members of my family did. I had looked forward to going to the poll and choosing candidates I liked. Of course, I could not mark my own ballot at that time, but it was still a thrill to express my opinion. Many aspects of voting have changed since then. We now have accessible voting machines—and I still feel a sense of pride when I turn in a ballot which is really and truly secret. More and more people are using early ballots, and access to the internet gives people plenty of options for learning about candidates and issues.

Ohio has several new laws governing voting. For example, you must now show a valid picture ID when at the poll; no other form of identification is accepted. If you cannot, for any reason, go inside the polling area, you have the option of curbside voting. And, believe it or not, any citizen who is at least 17 years old can be a poll worker; a disability will not prevent you from serving if you choose to help out.

To learn more, go to Voters with Disabilities (<https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/voters-with-disabilities/>). We will have an attorney from the Ohio Secretary of State's Office on VOICEcorps on September 6 at 11:00 a.m. to explain more and answer your questions.



***Accessible voting in Ohio (photos courtesy
of the Ohio Secretary of State's Office)***



BVI SPRING WALK RECAP: A DAY OF FRIENDS, FUN, AND FOOD

By Catherine Bister

Twenty people braved the elements on May 7 for a relaxing nature hike, sharing food and laughter with old friends and many new ones. Jack Franz, an Ohio certified volunteer naturalist and master gardener, led an engaging conversation about the plants and birds common to the wetlands of Clear Creek Park in Wooster. Jack did an amazing job of finding ways to enhance our sensory experience, finding plants with unique smells and textures to examine. He pointed out the calls of many local birds and shared ways that we could continue enjoying the natural world in our daily lives. Hikers and helpers had a great time!

Here's how participants described the day:

*"Twenty friends greeting spring,
Chase away the rain with sun.
Behold nature's song!"*
-Caleb M.

"As a planner, it was interesting to understand from our member, Catherine, what a visually impaired person would value about the park and the walking trail."
-Deb M.

"It was really great to host other guide dogs who have trained at schools all over the country! We all took turns leading the group. My thanks to Stella, Hamish and Walt for making it a safe and successful walk for all the people there."
-Dog Guide - Beanie

"Meeting Niral and the other walkers was a wonderful experience. Exchanging jokes and stories before the walk was fantastic. The event showed me another level of interaction with nature. Looking forward to participating with this group again!"
-Olivia B.

"This was my first time doing anything like this with a group of other visually impaired people and I have to admit that I had a lot of fun. The sighted guides were very



Hitting the trail!



Wildflowers and plants native to the area

friendly, and the speaker seemed to be knowledgeable about the natural environment around us. They even fed me! Any outing with a free lunch is a good thing in my book! I had a really good time and look forward to more activities like this in the future."

-Duane V.

"It was amazing to see the reactions to the trail and the way we all interacted with our environment!"

-Tim B.

Many thanks to the Wooster Noon Lions, Bogner Construction, and the volunteers who helped make this event possible.



We all stopped at the park observation deck to listen to naturalist Jack Franz.



A serene woodland scene at Clear Creek Park in Wooster

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

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Brant Adams, Catherine Bister, Rachel Densmore, Katie Frederick, D A Pimley, Vicky Prahin, Michelle Spillan, and Malaina VanderWal.** "Summer" image on back cover downloaded from Freepik.com. 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 fall issue deadline is August 15. **ACB-Ohio, 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214, Phone: 614-261-3561**



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

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

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

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

JULY 15, SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE

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

(USE MEETING CODE 6142613561)

AUGUST 2, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

AUGUST 13, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

AUGUST 15, ACBO NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SEPTEMBER 6, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

SEPTEMBER 10, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

SEPTEMBER 15, AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE

NOVEMBER 10-12, ACBO/ACBI CONFERENCE, CROWNE PLAZA
NORTH HOTEL, COLUMBUS

