

Kentucky Cardinal

The Kentucky Cardinal

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We dedicate this issue of the Kentucky Cardinal to those individuals in the United States and around the world who have lost their lives as a result of senseless prejudices and hatred. We in the National Federation of the Blind come together as blind individuals from all walks of life, accepting one another in our unique

differences. Blindness brings us together and makes us strong. This is a rare quality in a world so divided by our individual thoughts and beliefs.

The lead article in this issue comes to us from Ken Joblin, a resident of Christchurch, New Zealand. Ken spent a year in Kentucky from July 1986 to July 1987 when he was an exchange student at the Kentucky School for the Blind. Some of our members who are KSB alumni may remember Ken. Currently, Ken works for the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch. In this article he writes about his experience on March 15, 2019 when fifty lives were lost during a shooting at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. He reflects on how his blindness has given him a unique understanding of others who come from different backgrounds.

>Table of Contents

Topics

- [A Blessing of Blindness](#)
- [A Message from Our President](#)

- [2019 Legislative Efforts](#)

- [2019 Washington Seminar](#)

- [Reviewing the 2019 Kentucky Legislative Session](#)

- [NFB-NEWSLINE Kentucky Update](#)
- [Blindness Skills and Training: What Do You Really Need To Know?](#)
- [CHAPTER AND DIVISION ROUND-UP](#)
- [A Self Evaluation](#)
- [Louisiana Center for the Blind \(LCB\): My Perspective as a Student](#)
- [Chapter and Division Round-up](#)
- [Cook's Nook](#)
- [Lisa's Best Salsa](#)
- [Old Fashion Banana Bread](#)
- [Peanut Butter Cookies](#)
- [Officers and Board of Directors](#)

A Blessing of Blindness

A daily experience for me is to be driven around Christchurch as I go about my life as a blind person. Many of those who drive me have come to New Zealand in more recent years. They have come for a better life. Some have escaped war-torn countries or densely populated cities, many have had to leave their families, all have great hope in the future here for their children. Big sacrifices have been made and, as they arrive here, we are as foreign to them as they are to us. As they grow in confidence, they begin to interact with us and as our own experience of humanity is broadened, we too open up to them. After a while, it is no longer "us and them."

I've grown to know a number of Chinese drivers. I have said to them that if only others of my ethnic background could get to know them in the way I have, there would not be the fear that "the Chinese are taking over." Rather, my own friends would be impressed to see the level of kindness I receive from these drivers. Such is my relationship with my Chinese friends, I have found myself defending them when people of my own kind express their fears about them. As we've driven to various destinations together, we discuss the problems facing immigrant communities and what it is like for New Zealand as it grows to become a more open society.

When the Kaikoura earthquake occurred, my Chinese friend was among the first to check on me. I told him not to worry about me but to look after his own family. He replied that I am part of his family.

My family lives in the North Island and so on Christmas day, after playing the organ at Mass here, I am always off to the airport. It is not easy to get a cab on Christmas day. One of my Chinese drivers, though not on duty himself, has taken me to the airport at no cost to me and at the cost of kindness and respect from him and some inconvenience to his family. These drivers know I take God seriously and I know they have high ethical standards and want to be good citizens, good neighbours, good friends.

My taxi travel has had me sitting beside members of the Islamic community here in Christchurch. They have picked me up from outside churches which has led to conversations about faith. The first thing we do is show respect for each other as people of prayer, for whom God is at the centre of our lives. We acknowledge how important it is for people of faith to work together in a country that seems to want to live without God. I have never been inside a mosque but my own situation has allowed me to spend time with people who

are outside my experience. If I was capable of driving my own car, I would not have this opportunity.

On Friday I had just finished teaching 25 children from Sacred Heart Addington the opening bars of Mendelssohn's "Lift Thine Eyes". I was explaining what that Psalm means as we look to the hills, "from whence cometh our help?" In this translation of the Psalm, the words are "Our help cometh even from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." It was necessary to explain this older English as most of this choir come from the Philippines. At 20 to 2, I was explaining that we look to the sky when we are praying to God in heaven. I left Addington at 2.45pm, returning to the city. Unbeknown to me, I had narrowly escaped a lock-down. I was with my top Chinese driver and we were both perplexed at the number of police cars speeding passed us. His taxi computer informed him of the critical incident taking place in Dean's Avenue. As we came down Moorhouse Ave, we could see a big group of people just standing there and police going in different directions. As it became clearer that an attack on a mosque was taking place, I was grateful to be driven to the safety of my own home.

My Chinese friend rang today (Saturday) to check on me. He was worried about me going to Mass. When I asked why, he said that it might be dangerous because it would be a group of mostly white people together which might make us a target should anyone strike out in anger after what happened yesterday. I said it was important for people to be together at times like this. He also told me his father had rung from China, and among other things, had asked after my welfare. I have never met his father so was very touched by that. When the lives of people intertwine through shared experience, we no longer extol distinction but simply enjoy each other's company.

In travelling with a driver, I have to place my life into their hands. I have entrusted them with the ultimate responsibility, my life. I have not been let down. On Good Friday we sing the Psalm refrain "Father, I put my life in your hands." If I can place my life into the hands of another human being, surely I can do so with my Father in heaven. After all, my help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Lent 2019 is indeed a very dark time here in Christchurch. We have seen the evil which comes from a distorted view of humanity. There must surely be some good to come from this evil. Might it be a new respect for faith in New Zealand? Might it be an opportunity for the insularity which comes from a

strong adherence to a faith to open out and encounter others? Will there be insight once the immediate emotional response subsides? Is it a warning to us not to allow ourselves to live in a FaceBook echo chamber or in a religious ghetto? Do we need to re-discover the joy of finding out something new and different and in making ourselves vulnerable, that others gain a new insight into the goodness of God?

We can be confident that insight is there to be found. Here is "the question", one we hear as our lives are illuminated by the light of Easter: "What good would life have been to us, had Christ not come as our Redeemer?"

In Christ,
Ken Joblin

A Message from Our President

NFB of Kentucky president, Cathy Jackson, reports the following information in regards to the changing face of our Kentucky affiliate. Here is what she has to say.

The way we continue spreading the philosophy and good work of the National Federation of the Blind is to keep building our membership. Every Affiliate is anxious to grow and Kentucky is no exception. All state affiliates will go through an ebb and flow. We certainly have seen our share of lean times here in Kentucky. But, I believe the tide has turned and we are making some real progress and growth.

In Late October the NFB of Kentucky Board of directors voted unanimously to charter the newly formed Jackson Purchase Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. Danny Perry was elected president. If this name sounds familiar to you it's because Danny was the President of the former Murray Chapter. Danny has had a vision of forming a new chapter in the area ever sense the chapter disbanded several years ago. They did reorganize about three years ago, but circumstances were such that they did not succeed. Danny and others were determined and they never lost hope. Their hard work paid off. For anyone in the Jackson Purchase region of Kentucky who is interested in getting involved in the new chapter, feel free to contact Danny Perry at (270) 293-4476. Welcome members of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky Jackson Purchase Chapter to our NFB of Kentucky family. We wish you all the success in the world.

In February it was our pleasure to charter another chapter. We are pleased to welcome the fifth chapter of the Kentucky Affiliate to the family. The National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky, Western Kentucky Chapter, is small; but, President, Scott Heads says that won't be for long. Scott has been a member of the NFBK for about three or four years and has the drive and interest to make this chapter a vital part of our organization. He has shared some of his ideas with me and I am encouraged that he is taking such an interest in building the NFBK. If you live in the western part of the state, in the Owensboro/Henderson area, and would like to join the chapter, give Scott a jingle at, 270-925-0183. He can also be reached by email at [Email Scott](#). Welcome NFBK of Western Kentucky.

I am also proud that on March 4th we met via telephone conference call to try and reorganize our At Large chapter. About four years ago we decided it was in our best interest to form an At Large chapter for those people who were interested in becoming affiliated with the NFB, but were not in close proximity to a local chapter. We struggled to get individuals who would commit to attending meetings. We planned agendas but the interest just wasn't there. After a year of floundering we folded our tent and decided to try again at a later date. Thanks to Ryan Harvey this time we are off to a great start. There were 8 people on the first conference call, all of whom seemed interested in making this chapter a reality. Ryan has made connections with several blind people in the eastern part of the state. He wants to extend an invitation to any one in Kentucky who would like to share in the NFB experience to come on board. If you or anyone you know would like to learn more about the chapter you should give Ryan a call at, 606-231-2959; or, you could email him at [Email Ryan](#). I believe we have the right ingredients this time to actually charter an At Large Chapter here in Kentucky.

On a sadder note, we were forced to dissolve our Lexington Chapter. In December the NFBK Board had to pull its charter. National Federation of the Blind policy dictates that, if you are a member of the American Council of the Blind, you cannot hold office in the National Federation of the Blind. On the membership list I received in July 2018, the Lexington Chapter reported that new officers were elected. I found out that the president and treasurer were both active members of the Bluegrass Council of the Blind, an Affiliate of the American Council of the Blind in Lexington. I contacted the new president of the Lexington Chapter and explained that in order to continue as president of

the chapter, both he and the treasure must resign their membership in the Bluegrass Council. Unfortunately, the officers and members of the chapter disagreed with this policy and refused to change their affiliation with the Bluegrass Council. I reported this situation to the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. A motion was made to withdraw the charter of the Lexington Chapter. A vote was taken, and the board agreed unanimously. I regret that this happened. However, I have faith that one day in the near future we will be welcoming a new chapter in the Central Kentucky area.

I am excited about the growth of our affiliate and want to encourage all members to reach out to their friends who are not involved in the NFB of Kentucky to come to a local chapter meeting or event. If being involved in a local chapter is not an option, I encourage blind individuals to participate in the at-large phone conference call meetings. Through our collective efforts, we strive to help blind individuals from across Kentucky live the lives they want.

2019 Legislative Efforts

Each year the National Federation of the Blind works diligently to positively impact the lives of blind and disabled individuals through legislative efforts on both the national and state levels. Below are reports from the 2019 Washington Seminar, as well as, an update on happenings in the Kentucky Legislature in Frankfort this year.

2019 Washington Seminar

By: Jayne Seif

It is the energy of this year's Washington Seminar that I will remember best. Every year the feeling is different and this year the feeling was definitely dynamic, from the Great Gathering In to the meetings on the Hill, there was just an inescapable driving energy. From the first moments of President Riccobono's speech, we were reminded that, "We are the National Federation of the Blind and you can't shut us down."

Carrying that energy to the Hill were your NFB of Kentucky representatives President Cathy Jackson, Jayne Seif, Todd Stephens, and Laura Felty Stephens. We shared not only statistics but very personal stories surrounding each of the 2019 legislative issues. We explained how the Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA) would allow us to keep up with our peers both in and out of the work place. Using technology we carry with us on a daily basis, we were able to not just tell, but show the tools it takes to make us competitive. When talking about Greater Accessibility and Independence through Non-visual Access Technology Act (GAIN), we were able to share personal stories about the inaccessibility of medical equipment to manage diabetes and the difficulty in operating appliances in our homes that we are not able to fully access without sighted assistance. We were also able to share stories about going to the gym and the difficulties accessing equipment at such facilities independently. You could truly see the impact our personal accounts had on those we met. Even when it came to the Disability Employment Act (DEA) and Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (TCE), which are issues often not met with much favor, we were able to see a new dynamic and a willingness to listen. I believe this year was definitely one of those years where you can truly see the impact of our persistence and the relationships we have built in Washington.

Reviewing the 2019 Kentucky Legislative Session

By: Cathy Jackson

If you have been keeping up with the news you have heard about a very active legislative session in Kentucky for 2019. Pension reform and a couple of bills that will affect the teachers and the education system here in Kentucky have top billing. Several school districts across Kentucky have called off classes due to a high number of teachers absences. Their sick-out is a protest against these bills. I mention this only because I believe it has had a direct impact on our Parent's Rights Bill, H. B. 221. As I sit here at my computer writing this article it is the last day of the general session. Our bill will not be heard. I had high hopes that because it was introduced early in the session that this year would be the year it would become law. House Bill 221, if passed, would guarantee that blind parents and future blind parents are not discriminated against in the court system when it comes to custody cases, adoption proceedings, and foster care hearings. The blind person, simply due to the characteristic of blindness, would not be denied custody solely on his

or her blindness. The burden of proof, as to whether or not one is incapable of caring for a child, would rest on the person or persons bringing the accusations and calling for removal of the child. Representative Cantrell is as disappointed as we are that, once again, we fell short. She remains committed to this issue and wants to continue working with us next year in order to get this legislation passed. We will never give up.

On February 11th several of us were invited to attend the hearing on S. B. 76. Lora and Todd Stephens, and Lisa Dameron from Ashland, Ranelle Mackey, George Stokes, Karen Mayne, and Sherrel Applegate from Frankfort, and I made our way to the state capital. I was given an opportunity to speak on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. I stated our support of this legislation, and suggested a few changes in the language that the NFB believes will make this bill stronger. Senate Bill 76, An Act Relating to Sheltered Employment is a subminimum wage bill that will phase out the issuing of special wage certificates here in Kentucky by January 1st 2023. As you probably remember these certificates allow employers to pay blind and other disabled employees less than the fair minimum wage. Typically sheltered shop employers are the ones who take full advantage of this law.

When January 1st 2023 rolls around workshops will no longer be able to hire new employees. Unless it can be proven that there are no other viable work opportunities within a thirty mile radius of one's home. This means that the disabled population will have an opportunity to make a decent wage in a competitive job setting. The day will be gone when the disabled are placed in a segregated work environment with no hope for upward mobility, much less ever having a chance to be employed in the mainstream workforce.

Employees who are hired before January 1st 2023 have the option of remaining in the workshop setting if they or their guardian believe this is the best alternative. I have been following the action of this bill and after talking with Senator, Ralph Alvarado, the author of the bill I have learned that this bill did not advance for a full vote on the Senate floor. He also went on to say that Chairman, Carroll and the stakeholders on both sides of this issue have all agreed to continue to work towards an effective compromise for next year. You can bet that the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky will be there in 2020 to lend a hand in passing this ground breaking legislation.

On March 4th I and others on the Kentucky School for the Blind Stakeholders Committee met with Kentucky Department of Education, Commissioner,

Wayne Lewis, and Greta Hilton, Director of the Division of Learning Services. If you will recall at our 2018 State Convention we passed two resolutions. One expressed our concerns regarding the all-around quality of education that the students are receiving at the Kentucky School for the Blind. The second verbalized our concern that the administrative staff at the school is no longer required to receive any background education in the field of blindness and visual impairment. Unfortunately I and the others do not believe that Commissioner, Lewis nor Greta Hilton are as worried about the future of the school as we are. They did agree that the staff should have some sort of blindness training. However, unless we keep pushing and actually present a curriculum nothing will happen. They and others who have preceded them simply refuse to accept the idea that KSB is not the proper placement for all blind students. They do not understand that if we continue to admit the most severely and profoundly disabled blind children in to the school, it will eventually take on the characteristics of a hospital. As it stands now, KSB is not educating any of the students to the fullest. They do not have the funds to hire the qualified teachers for those whose primary disability is not blindness; and, furthermore, those students whose only disability is blindness are being cheated out of a quality education because certified teachers of the blind are not being hired. When asked what his vision for the future of the Kentucky School for the Blind is, the Commissioner gave a textbook answer. It did not address blind students specifically, nor did he mention the unique aspects of a residential school. I can honestly say I am troubled about the future of the Kentucky School for the Blind.

Before we know it the 2020 Kentucky General Assembly will come to order. I am counting on all of you to take an active part when called upon. Thanks for all you have done to keep blindness issues in the forefront, and to not let our representatives forget who we are: the National Federation of the Blind.

NFB-NEWSLINE Kentucky Update

Todd Stephens, State coordinator

NFB-NEWSLINE Kentucky has finally reached that next milestone of 2,100 subscribers in February 2019. It did take a bit longer than expected to get there, but we have arrived! 2,200, here we come.

We have some exciting news to share about the NFB-NEWSLINE service. In addition to the constant expansion of publications on the service with well over 500 today, the NFB-NEWSLINE national team is always enthusiastic about finding the most modern technology to interface with the service. We are pleased to announce that NFB-NEWSLINE® Alexa Skill for Amazon Echo Speakers is now available to you as of December 12, 2018. Yeah, the NFB-NEWSLINE® Alexa Skill for Amazon Echo speakers is now available!

You can now access NFB-NEWSLINE® content on Amazon Echo speakers with your voice by saying, "Alexa, open National Federation." Read over 500 publications available to NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers on Alexa enabled devices with your own voice. Browse Kentucky newspapers, national papers, magazines and more with

Alexa commands like:

- "Alexa, ask National Federation to list papers from Kentucky"
- "Alexa, ask National Federation to read the Lexington Herald Leader"
- "Alexa, ask National Federation to speak a little slower"
- "Alexa, ask National Federation to change voices"
- "Alexa, ask National Federation to go to the next section"
- "Alexa, ask National Federation to add this to my favorites"
- "Alexa, ask National Federation to email me this article"

For complete commands and instructions for using Alexa to interface with the NFB-NEWSLINE audio reading service, please see the following link [Alexa Commands and Instructions](#). For information about the NFB-NEWSLINE audio reading service, please visit us at [NFB-NEWSLINE Kentucky](#).

Now, I cannot conclude my report without this reminder to those using the touch tone telephone to help us to minimize the telecom charges incurred at the national level. How can you help? Choose a local number vs. the toll free number. To find out what your local calling number is in your area, or any other area, go to [Local Number Look-up](#) and place the ten digit number in the wizard and press Look It Up to see what that local calling number is. It is as simple as that. Please note that this disclaimer is for those who have free long distance, but may or may not have a local calling number in their area.

In this winter 2019 edition of the Kentucky Cardinal, we will now hear from our NFB-NEWSLINE Assistant Project Manager, Virginia (Ginny) Green, who

has served on the NFB-NEWSLINE Kentucky team for more than a year now. Ginny will give us her perspective of this phenomenal audio reading service, otherwise known as NFB-NEWSLINE.

Hi, my name is Ginny Green, and I am the NFB-NEWSLINE Kentucky Assistant Project Manager. My husband, Travis, is my best friend. We have two wonderful children. They are my world. We live in a quiet small town in Lawrence County. Each day is a gift, and for that I thank God. Helping others any way I can is something I love to do. That being said, NEWSLINE provides me with the perfect opportunity to do just that.

Glaucoma has left me with very little sight. As a visually impaired individual I know from personal experience how much of a benefit NEWSLINE is. I say this because I too am a NEWSLINE subscriber. My preference is the app. It has aided me in finding new recipes, keeping up with the news, reading magazines etc. Since I am a homemaker, I am always looking for new and healthy recipes. I have also discovered a few helpful decorating tips just by glancing at Better Homes and Gardens. The ability to keep up with the news in a different state, or even a different country for that matter is pretty neat. There are different magazines I enjoy reading. Such as Guide Post, Parents, and Every day With Rachel Rae just to name a few. If you need a good laugh, I recommend a section in Parents magazine called Giggles. A waiting room can be kind of boring, and usually people all around are grabbing magazines or other reading material to help pass the time. Well, I can pick up a magazine too, thanks to the convenience of the NEWSLINE mobile app.

One thing I really like about NEWSLINE is the fact that it's a service for print impaired individuals, meaning you don't necessarily have to have vision loss to enjoy this service. It is the NFB not only reaching out to visually impaired individuals but also other people with similar struggles. Another thing I like about NEWSLINE is I have the privilege of speaking with people from different walks of life. I feel I can relate to many of our subscribers because of my own life experiences. For example. I grew up on a cattle farm but attended KSB for several years before transferring to public school where I graduated. So, I know what it's like to have access to everything you need, and what it's like living in a metropolitan area such as Louisville. I also know what it's like living in a rural community and waiting for Braille materials that are already late. Transportation can be an issue no matter where you live. Although it is more of a challenge when living in the country. Both have their

pros and cons. I know what it's like to be the Braille user in a public school, and what it's like to be a dorm student four hours away from home. Being the mother of a visually impaired child. I now understand all these things from a parent's point of view. I am a stay at home mom. Working for NEWSLINE allows me to continue to be there for my husband and kids while also allowing me to help provide for them.

NEWSLINE is setting a wonderful example when it comes to accessibility. Not only are the publications increasing but so are subscribers. More accessibility options allow for more people to enjoy something lots of people take for granted. Something as simple as reading the newspaper, reading a magazine, or looking at the TV listings. Whether you are trying to be more aware of what is happening in your community, discovering a new recipe, reading Car and Driver, or just keeping an eye on a vacation spot. NEWSLINE is making that happen for so many people, and I love being a part of something that is such a great help to so many. I only hope others see the example we are setting and follow suit.

Thank you for your time and be sure to visit us and give us a Like on [Facebook](#) or [Facebook Mobile](#). You can also follow us on Twitter at [Twitter](#)

Blindness Skills and Training: What Do You Really Need To Know?

A Self Evaluation

By: Cathy Jackson

Occasionally we need to step back and take a close look at ourselves. What are our strengths and weaknesses? Are there changes that we can make in order to improve ourselves and make our lives better? Let's do something a bit different and out of the ordinary. How about we do a personal evaluation to see how efficient we are as blind people. Grant it some of us may be more proficient than others, but there is always room for improvement. Let's begin by answering the following questions, being honest with ourselves.

Can you independently do laundry, cook, go grocery shopping, and keep a clean house?

Do you have adequate functional Braille skills to make Braille useful in your daily life?

How are your Orientation and Mobility skills? Are you confident traveling independently?

How are your technology skills? Can you independently access information via your personal computer, iPad, iPod, iPhone, or other electronic devices?

Can you advocate for yourself?

These are some of the most basic skills we need as blind people to be independent and successful. Don't be embarrassed if you are lacking in certain areas. I'll be the first to admit my Braille reading skills are far below par. As a child with pretty good usable vision, I didn't take my Braille lessons seriously enough. Therefore, I never developed the touch or reading speed I needed to be considered a Braille reader.

The reason I say we must be honest with ourselves is because too often teachers are focused on being the cheerleader and motivator, always trying to encourage us. They are much more likely to be positive and may not be so quick to point out our deficits.

The same holds true with our parents, family members, and friends. Some parents are so grateful that their son or daughter is doing well academically that they totally forget how important independent travel, doing the dishes, making the bed, and being active in the community really is for total inclusion into society.

Even our best friends may not be the best judge of our capabilities or our shortcomings. Perhaps if your best friend is blind he or she might be in a better position to say, "OMG your Braille skills are dismal. You really ought to do something about it." I am willing to bet this case scenario is the exception rather than the rule.

Most of us have been very lucky. We have parents who expected us not only to do well in school, to take part in extracurricular activities, but to sweep the floor, run errands to the grocery, and be active in our church. Even though we have been given a sturdy foundation upon which to build let's not fool ourselves. This may not be enough. And then what's in store for the

individual who loses his or her sight later in life?

If after graduating from high school, or college, or losing your vision later in life, you may come to the conclusion that your skills as a blind person are lacking; therefore, a training program may be just the ticket for you. I, of course, have all of the trust and confidence in our National Federation of the Blind Training Centers. There are three: one in Louisiana, one in Colorado, and one in Minnesota. These centers operate strictly by NFB philosophy, realizing blind people can do anything we set our minds to with the proper training and tools. We are held to a higher standard at our centers. The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines us or our future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. We can live the lives we want, blindness is not what holds us back.

It's never too late to attend an NFB Center. Grant it, it would be better for you to attend a 6 to 9 month course at a center before you begin the employment process, get married and start a family. Once you become established you are far less likely to take the time away from your home and family. However, this isn't always possible, especially if one does become blind later in life.

The unemployment rate among the blind population is around 70%. Out of the 30% of us who are successfully employed 90% read Braille. This is a staggering statistic. I am guessing that the majority of employed blind people have adequate cane skills as well. They might not be the best travelers in the world, but they can travel. Continued training can only serve to improve our employment possibilities.

When I asked if you could advocate for yourself, how many times have you actually had to go to battle for something you felt you really needed? Or, was it to oppose something you believed you didn't need? The NFB is an advocacy organization. We advocate for the blind of all ages. However, one of our goals is to teach people to advocate for themselves. Again the sooner one can master the art of advocacy the more confident you will be facing life's many challenges.

I want to speak for just a minute to our younger members. You should be attending your Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings at least by the

age of 14. You should be allowed to make suggestions and offer your opinion as well as speak to what you believe might be beneficial for your academic growth and success. It is important that you learn about the IEP process so that you will be prepared to take over by the time you reach college. At this point in time you are totally responsible for your destiny. There isn't an IEP anymore, and you don't have a teacher of the blind to push you along the way. You will be dealing with rehab counselors, Disability Student Services (DSS), and professors. It's all on your shoulders now. It is an absolute must that you be the team leader. You chart the plan of action and make sure your goals are achieved.

How do you think you did? Were you honest with yourself? Do you believe you are a competent blind person? Do you see areas where you need improvement? Do you think you would benefit by further blindness training?

In examining myself, I know I could surely benefit from some additional instruction in blindness specific skills. I have already admitted to having lousy Braille skills, and I would also benefit from some formal O & M training.

So, how did you do? Are there areas where you need improvement? Even if you can't go to a training center, you can take steps to improve your skills. Your friends in the Federation are always ready to share ideas and make suggestions that will help you along your journey. But, it is up to you to take that first step toward improving yourself.

Louisiana Center for the Blind (LCB): My Perspective as a Student

By: Nickie Pearl

I just finished up my seventh week of training here at LCB and to say I have learned a lot is an understatement. No matter how good we are, there is always room for IMPROVEMENT, learning and growth.

I'm sure some of you have seen my posts on Facebook about my journey of personal growth and all the exciting adventures here. I'd like to take one aspect of this journey and focus on that for this article. I want to tell you all about the atmosphere of LCB, the attitudes of the staff and my instructors. Being at a NFB center is like no other. The passion for success and the

cohesiveness of the staff to encourage, motivate and inspire is stellar. Yes, this is a Structured-Discovery curriculum; and, believe me, no matter what the task or question to be answered is, we students have to find its answer through structured discovery. No hand holding, no questions answered, the discovery is in the way instructors assist you in finding out for yourself. Luckily, I had some skills, experience and knowledge before training, but it does not matter what you start here with, every student is treated the same and is expected to do the same work. The patience from instructors is amazing; the ease in which they teach and interact is comforting. They are encouraging AND willing to be your friend and mentor at the same time. What better way to really learn, grow and experience blindness than to really get to know someone.

As I stated, no student is treated any differently than any other. The only difference is in the pace in which we progress. For example; I am a good traveler. It only took me 4 weeks to get kicked off the van to and from my apartment, and being able to walk back and forth to the center on my own was one accomplishment. There are students who have been here longer than me who are still working on that. I did not read Braille, but students here who are younger than me & have read Braille all of their lives are better at that skill than I am. Being older, I have experience keeping a house, cooking and daily living skills so I am able to move more quickly through Home Management than others. I'm not being treated any differently, just pushed harder in some areas due to my age and experience. A pleasant word or even just a greeting is a regular occurrence from staff and instructors here at the Louisiana Center. The true NFB philosophy truly does shine here at LCB. Every stitch of my day is a NFB family quilt. The energy, confidence and passion that run through LCB are something I desperately wish every Federationist, Blind person and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor could experience.

We just returned from New Orleans where we spent two and a half days at Mardi Gras. Most people have asked me, "Why Mardi Gras?" Let me explain, why Mardi Gras. Not only is it a fun experience that is a Louisiana tradition, it's up there as an ultimate training situation. This trip is designed to utilize all of our training up to this point to build confidence, put training to practical use and for team building. If you have never been to Mardi Gras, the closest party atmosphere to it would be the Kentucky Derby or Thunder over Louisville. Crowds, music, food, lots of noise, obstacles and fun. If you can navigate

Mardi Gras or the Kentucky Derby, then you can travel and navigate anywhere.

Here again, getting to know the staff and instructors on a personal level has been invaluable and I look forward to each day of learning and personal growth. I know that the experiences that I have had at the Louisiana Center for the Blind will impact the rest of my life.

CHAPTER AND DIVISION ROUND-UP

Ashland Update

Lora Stephens, President

Last November, members of the Ashland Chapter held a wonderful outreach event at the Boyd County Public Library in downtown Ashland. Members were treated to a presentation by Michelle Grubb, the director of the Ashland Bus System. Michelle explained the intricacies of the bus service in the Ashland area. She shared her hopes for increasing service and the challenges faced in doing this. Michelle was knowledgeable and entertaining. She was willing to dialogue with us, and we offered our support of all that the Ashland Buss System does for the Ashland community. Following the presentation, we were treated to a spectacular lunch from Panera Bread, sponsored by J. Mike Freholm. In reaching out to the community, we passed out goodie bags with treats and NFB literature. We hope that we made a small impact on our community and look forward to future events.

In December we celebrated the Christmas season at the home of Lisa Dameron. We were treated to Lisa's chili and Todd's gumbo, by request. In addition, we held a cookie exchange and shared delicious homemade holiday cookies. We are looking forward to a productive 2019!

Frankfort Update

Karen Mayne, President

On February 28 2019, the Frankfurt chapter held election of officers with the

following results: Karen Mayne was elected president, George Stokes vice President, Cheryl Applegate second vice president Mary Jo Hackworth treasurer, and Ranelle Mackey was elected secretary. We discussed the upcoming national convention. Members have decided to help our first time attendees by paying for their registration fees and banquet tickets. In addition, we are planning to learn how to shoot firearms. This activity will probably take place when the weather is warmer. We are happy to report that we have two members that just couldn't stay away. David and BARBARA rains, have moved back to Frankfurt. Florida's loss is our gain! We missed them a lot when they left us and are very glad that they have decided to come back! Welcome back David and Barbara!

Louisville Update **Nickie Pearl, President**

The Greater Louisville chapter wrapped up 2018 in our normal fashion with a Holiday party and our traditional Christmas giving. Lots of laughs and cheer to end the year on a good note. Many thanks and appreciation to all who took the time to share the holiday spirit with our Christmas kids. I'm sure their Christmas morning was brighter due to your generosity.

The New Year brought us a new meeting location. The American Red Cross, located at 510 East Chestnut is our new home. Our meeting schedule remains the same, the first Friday of the Month from 6:00 pm till 8:00 pm. In March we greeted Stephanie Bryan as our guest speaker. Mrs. Byron is an Eligibility Specialist from TARC3. As you can imagine, there was lots of discussion surrounding the inefficiencies in our TARC3 Paratransit system. Although Mrs. Byron did not have all the answers, she assured us our concerns would be taken back to the appropriate individuals.

We are looking forward to warmer weather, our April Luncheon and Spaghetti Dinner and Auction. We are still working on details for the April Luncheon, so please stay tuned to the NFBK list serve as well as our Greater Louisville social media for updates.

Everything needs revamping from time to time and our annual auction fundraiser is no different. Many factors played into our decision to move it to June. Another change with that is, instead of a chili dinner, we'll enjoy a spaghetti dinner. The location is still the Crescent Hill United Methodist

Church located at 201 South Peterson. The date is Saturday June 8, 2019. Once again, more details will be forth coming, so please stay tuned to our social media pages.

By the time this article hits your inbox, the Greater Louisville Academic Scholarship application will have closed. Our chapter is so proud that we can offer this scholarship again this year. The winner(s) will be announced at the Spaghetti Dinner on June 8th.

We wish everyone a Happy Spring and look forward to seeing you at a NFBGL gathering soon.

COOKS' NOOK

The following recipes come to us from the kitchen of Lisa Dameron. Lisa is a member of the NFB of Ashland. Cooking is one of Lisa's favorite hobbies. Her friends in the Ashland Chapter know what a great cook she is. One of the chapter favorites is Lisa's Cheddar Bay Biscuits. She won't share that secret recipe, but she does share the following delicious recipes.

Lisa's Best Salsa

Ingredients:

- 8 large ripe tomatoes
- 1 large Vidalia onion
- 3 to 4 fresh garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
- 2. Tsp. apple cider vinegar
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- Chopped jalapenos as preferred

Directions:

Chop all vegetables into small pieces. Add dry ingredients and mix. Add vinegar and lime juice. Mix well. Use a food processor or immersion blender to achieve desired consistency. Keep in tightly sealed container in the refrigerator. Serve with tortilla chips.

Old Fashioned Banana Bread

Ingredients:

2 very ripe bananas
2 eggs
1/2 cup oil
1/4 cup buttermilk plus an additional tablespoon
1 tsp. Vanilla
1 & 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 & 1/2 cups sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 1 large loaf pan or 2 medium size loaf pans. In a large bowl mash bananas. Add eggs, oil, buttermilk and vanilla. Mix well with an electric mixer. In a separate bowl combine flour, sugar and baking soda. Pour dry mixture into wet mixture in 1/3 intervals and gently fold in with a spatula. Pour into pan(s), filling pan half way. Bake for 20 minutes on 350 degrees. Turn oven down to 325 degrees after 20 minutes baking time. Bake for an additional 40 minutes or until top is not wet in the middle.

Peanut Butter Cookies

Ingredients:

1/2 cup real butter, no margarine
1/2 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 egg
3/4 cup self-rising flour
1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1 tsp. baking soda

Directions:

Cream butter, sugar, peanut butter and egg in a large bowl. In a separate bowl combine dry ingredients and mix well. Add dry ingredients into wet ingredients and mix well. You will likely need to finish mixing with a spoon. After ingredients are well combined, roll dough into a large ball, wrap in plastic wrap. Chill in refrigerator for at least 1 hour. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Roll out walnut size dough balls and place on baking sheet. Criss-cross the top of each cookie with a fork to flatten slightly. Bake for 12-15 minutes. Makes about 2 1/2 dozen delicious cookies.

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