National Association of Guide Dog Users

National Federation of the Blind

Annual Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 5, 2018

Rosen Shingle Creek

Orlando, Florida

The meeting was called to order by President Marion Gwizdala at 7:02pm EDT. There were 43 in attendance. President Gwizdala led us in saying the NFB pledge.

President Gwizdala thanked those who were helping to stream our meeting, and those enhancing participation through social media via Facebook, Twitter and emailed comments and questions.

During the meeting a container was passed to collect donations to defray expenses for the relief area.

Elections

The following officers and Board members were reelected by acclamation:

President: Marion Gwizdala

Secretary: Sherrill O’Brien

Board Member: Aleeha Dudley

Board Member: Jessica Snyder

Update on NFB ride share testing Program

NFB’s Legal Program Coordinator Valerie Yingling began the update on NFB’s three year ride share testing program which began in May of 2017. The form is located at nfb.org/rideshare/test

The testing program welcomes the sharing of both positive and negative experiences.

The biggest takeaway at this point in the testing is the tremendous importance of lots of rider feedback. Valerie also emphasized the importance of following up after a denial by submitting a complaint to Uber or lyft.

Tim Elder from TRE Legal Practice then spoke further about the program. He said too many drivers are receiving a warning rather than termination. He said it must be made clear that a service animal denial was a “knowing violation”. He said the company involved must have specific information. He encouraged taking a screenshot of any relevant text messages.

Tim asked for comments concerning a situation in an Uber or lyft pool where a passenger is asked to move from the front to the back seat to accommodate a passenger with a guide dog.

Airline Policies Concerning Guide Dogs

Marion talked about the growing number of regulations airlines are trying to impose on passengers with service animals. He reviewed his meeting in Baltimore with officials from Delta Airlines. They were receptive and said they would not make these new requirements mandatory. But when members of the NAGDU Board and other volunteers checked Delta’s website and randomly called their disability customer service line, they were not given the latest accurate service animal policy information. So Marion and Raul Gallegos met with Delta officials again. NFB’s John Pare, Executive Director of Advocacy and Policy, believes our quick action has helped stem the tide and kept many other airlines from implementing Delta’s injurious policies.

Legislation

Marion said a bill to watch is the FAA Reauthorization Act. It contains some ambiguous language regarding service animal policy. Senator Burr of North Carolina has introduced an amendment we oppose which contains some of the problematic proposals Delta was attempting to implement.

Important Documents

The secretary read the comments NFB and NAGDU jointly submitted in response to the DOT’s release of its interim enforcement priorities for the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). This release, along with the Advance notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), allows the public time to comment before the department issues its final implementing regulations.

The secretary also read NAGDU’s proposed Resolution Regarding Airline Travel with Guide Dogs.

Affiliate Report

Stacie Gallegos gave a report on NAGDU’s Texas affiliate (TEXAGDU).

Marion thanked the following NAGDU 2018 SEMINAR sponsors:

On the Go Guide and Service Dog Products, Orlando Emergency Veterinary clinic, Ruffwear, and TEXAGDU.

We then held the drawing for the $150 gift certificate donated by Julie Johnson’s company On The Go. Christi Durham was the winner.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM EDT.

Respectfully submitted

Sherrill O'Brien, Secretary

National Association of Guide Dog Users Inc. (NAGDU)

National Federation of the Blind

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The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise expectations because low expectations create barriers between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want! Blindness is not what holds you back