

(Up there on top is the NFB of Colorado Logo followed by “Live the life you want.”)

Blind Coloradoan Blog December 14, 2018

Writer, aggregator Kevan Worley. Co-editor Dan Burke.

Here is what you need to know.

Before We Move to Christmas and New Year’s Celebration, I want to recognize the Jewish members of the National Federation of the Blind and their families. This year, the celebration of Hanukkah took place the evening of Sunday, December 2 through the evening of Monday, December 10. There have been many prominent Jews who have led the civil rights movement, including members of our Federation over many generations. That shouldn’t be a surprise. The word “Hanukkah” means “dedication. “The holiday of Hanukkah commemorates a time (2,180 years ago) when God empowered the ancient Israelites to defeat the powerful Syrian-Greek army. The army, under the leadership of Antiochus Epiphanes, sought to conquer Israel and cruelly deny the Jews their right to worship God or practice their faith. Although vastly outnumbered and short of weapons, the brave Israelites miraculously defeated the Syrian-Greek army over a three-year period. The Jews re-claimed their land and holy sites, including the Jerusalem Temple, and re-dedicated it to God.”-Shannon Carollo. The [FamilyConnect](https://www.familyconnect.org/blog/familyconnect-a-parents-voice/including-your-child-who-is-blind-or-visually-impaired-in-hanukkah-traditions/12) blog has some ideas on how to include your child who is visually impaired in Hanukkah traditions.

Fred Rogers Said, “*I like to compare the holiday season with the way a child listens to a favorite story. The pleasure is in the familiar way the story begins, the anticipation of familiar turns it takes, the familiar moments of suspense, and the familiar climax and ending.”*

Don’t Forget the Blind Kids at Christmas. Some might read that and say, “what?” Of course, we wouldn’t forget our little darlings. Not intentionally. It’s fun to think a little about ways to include your blind child that would enrich the experience for her. I remember my siblings ooh-ing and ahh-ing over Christmas lights and nativity displays. When I was a child the family would bundle into the car and drive around the neighborhood looking at the displays. I enjoyed the love and laughter of the family, but I missed all of the visual magic. When the family gathered for church pageants, school plays, and Christmas movies, I couldn’t always tell what was going on. I am not suggesting that we make such an extraordinary effort to include blind children that they become the center of all activities. Keep these things in mind: describe the scenes of Christmas as they occur around you. Again, it doesn’t have to be the dominant feature of social interaction but a few descriptive words every now and then will enhance the experience. Most blind kiddos love noise and things they can touch. Get the little ones toys that will make you crazy. That is, toys that squeak and whine and rumble and talk and sing. How about choosing tactile and crinkly wrapping paper. You might choose to wrap your blind child’s gift in different textured paper with some kind of tactile or different shaped tags. It is a perfect opportunity for braille. Don’t forget to include your blind child when making those Christmas cookies. Include them in decorating. Search out some braille and braille print books to read as a family. Check out these resources: [NFB.org](https://nfb.org/Images/nfb/Publications/fr/fr3/Issue4/f030411.html), [Dolly’s Imagination Library](https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/audio-braille/), [National Braille Press](http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/process.html?subcat_id=1&heading=Children%27s%20Books--Print%2FBraille&mv_nextpage=publications%2Fbrowse_results&mv_todo=return), [The Braille Book Store,](http://www.braillebookstore.com/Board-Books) and [Seedlings](http://www.seedlings.org/). I would be very interested in your ideas. After all, there are only 372 shopping days before Christmas ’19.

We must not let our blind children be sedentary during the holidays. We know they will eat their share of Christmas cookies. When I was about four, I recall receiving a transistor radio. (Millennials and Generation Z can look it up.) The wonderful gift necessarily kept me occupied with sound without any moving around. Our low vision kiddos need access to digital play like their peers. But one of my Christmas wishes is that we do not substitute digital access for social activity and movement.

Braille cards and board games, skates and scooters, weights, bicycles, balls, Fitbit, jump ropes, hula hoops, yoga mats, and trampolines are as appropriate for most blind youngsters as they are for children who see.

Will Rogers Said, *“The only difference between death and taxes is that death doesn’t get worse every time Congress meets.”* Dan Burke says, “Scholarship Available for Blind High School Students: Attend the NFB Washington Seminar Jan. 27-30, 2019.”

Learn about advocacy and legislation.

Meet Colorado’s U.S. Senators and Representatives.

Travel to our nation’s Capital with dynamic blind leaders.

Scholarship includes:  airfare to Washington DC, lodging at the Capitol Holiday Inn and a food allowance. Chaperones from the Colorado Center for the Blind will be with each student.

Applicants must be legally blind Colorado high school students and at least 16 years old.

Applicants must submit an essay of 350 words.  Write about why you want to attend this event and how it will enrich your life.

Return your essay to Dan Burke no later than December 20, 2018.  Winners will be notified no later than January 2, 2019.

Colorado Blind to Be a Part of History. NFBCO never endorses candidates but we are always a part of civic endeavor and many of us engage in political activity as we live the lives we want. I note that some of us will be at the upcoming inauguration for Governor Jared Polis and Lieutenant Governor Dianne Primavera. During his service in Congress, Mr. Polis has often been a champion of people with disabilities. State Representative Dianne Primavera has a background in Vocational Rehabilitation. During her time in the General Assembly she always took time to listen to our concerns. It is likely that without her objective advocacy, rehab services for the blind would not have evolved over the past few years in a way that has brought about significant positive change. Here is the inauguration information.

Swearing-in Ceremony

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Public Viewing Area Opens at 9:00 AM

Ceremony Begins at 11:00 AM

West Capitol Steps

200 E. Colfax Ave.

Denver, CO 80203

This is a free, non-ticketed event. Due to limited space, we encourage the public to arrive early. This event is outdoors and will be standing room only in a public viewing area, so dress and plan accordingly.

The evening of the inauguration ceremony, a fun, exciting celebration and concert will take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

The Blue Sneaker Ball

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

General Admission doors open at 6:30 PM

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Tickets go on sale: Thursday, December 13 at 9 AM at Coloradoforall.com. General Admission Cost: $75. I will see many of you on the capitol steps. And, right across the street at 1525 Sherman, you can enjoy breakfast and lunch at Jack Sevier’s Capitol Cafe. Jack is new to the Business Enterprise Program, BEP. He is a trained chef and bakes some marvelous pies. And, let’s not forget to go in and visit our colleague Nate Hecker. Nate has a Business Enterprise Program coffee kiosk and vending business at the capitol, Hai Hai’s Limited.

Isn’t Hai Hai the Chicken from Moana? I know these things, I’m a grandpa now.

With the Change of Administrations, Governor Polis will be appointing the new Director of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, CDLE. The current Director, Sam Walker, has served for approximately 1 year. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, DVR, is housed in the department so the Governor’s choice will impact the lives of people with disabilities.

“For She’s A Jolly Good Fellow Which Nobody Can Deny.” Forty voices of admiration and appreciation rang out for the retiring manager of Blindness and Low Vision Services, BLVS, Julia Zanon. Camaraderie made such a beautiful noise at the Colorado Association of Blind Merchant Wild West Chapter gathering at the Downtown Courtyard Marriott Saturday evening December 8. The 5th annual has become the social event of the season. Observed in attendance was the LaBarre family, Steve Anton, Krista Hedlund, Wild West Chapter President Melissa Fishburn, and blind entrepreneur Gary Nelson. Kuddos to Brad and Marlene Basta for organizing another groovy time. Brad’s already working on the date for 2019! He says folks should pencil in December 14. Now there is a planner.

For Most of Us Holidays Are About Family. This is no less true in our NFB family. I guess this is why I like to visit our chapter holiday gatherings. Each year the Colorado Springs Christmas get-together is worth the price of the $10 white elephant. More than the surprisingly good food at Old Chicago, in my opinion, the chapter welcomes guests and is always inspired by the humor of Brian Smith. Chapter President Jeanette Fortin, mom, does her best to control our unruly family. Join the Springs group sometime, you will be glad you did! The chapter typically meets on the second Saturday morning of the month at 10 a.m. The meeting is at the Garden Ranch YMCA. Join on us February 9!

Jessica Beecham Says: WE Fit Wellness has partnered with The Anthem Foundation and [United States Association of Blind Athletes](https://www.usaba.org/news) to offer 25 athletes the opportunity to take steps toward better health. Members of the Denver/Colorado Springs group, along with 450 participants from 17 partner agencies located across the United States, will wear the Fitbit Flex 2 in order to increase their steps to 10,000 per day. Denver/Colorado Springs athletes will also have the opportunity to participate in several 5K and 10k race events.

Saturday, December 15, we will “don now our gay apparel” and “run, run Rudolph” in the Santa Stampede. After the race, National Fitness Challenge participants will head over to the Colorado Center for the Blind for the Denver Chapter Christmas Party. We have heard tale that Santa himself will be present!

While this is our first official race, our participants have been on the move! Chris Parsons is a common name to see at the top of the leader board along with both Batron’s. Our own Chaz Davis stepped it up to take first place in the Visually Impaired Division of the California International Marathon, which is the National Championship race for blind runners. Gotta run!

Get Active! Here Is an Item from our friends at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, CSDB: Recently, CSDB hosted a presentation by Susan Scott, a member of Generation Wild, an agency which helps people become more active outside. Ms. Scott discussed how she was working hard to do a sport that best fit her physical needs. For example, she ended up on the swimming team because she struggled in using her knees in the sport of track. She competed on the swimming team in South Africa and swam in a tournament in London. Ms. Scott won three medals that she showed students, during her presentation. She currently works at the United States Association of Blind Athletes and, in her role as a member of Generation Wild, talks to community members about getting healthy by becoming more active.

Our Colleague Brent Batron Serves as Chair of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Board of Trustees. He tells the Blind Coloradoan that the school continues the search process for the next superintendent. Deadline for submission of application is December 21. Interested candidates can reach the search-firm [Ray & Associates, Inc](https://rayassoc.com/job-details.php?ID=470).

Tis The Season. But I am already thinking of the season of love and romance. Valentine’s Day is just around the corner. The Anchor Center for Blind Children is hosting Visions of Love 2019. This charming event pairing wine and chocolate celebrates the artistry of all things decadent. Enjoy this opportunity to pamper your palate and share the magic of Anchor Center’s building and mission during the season of love. Hosted by the Denver Delta Gamma Alumnae Chapter benefiting [Anchor Center for Blind Children](https://anchorcenter.org/visionsoflove/).

Debbie MacLeod Send News From the [CO Talking Book Library](https://myctbl.cde.state.co.us/): Be sure to check out the newsletter in January about the adult winter reading program in partnership with the Denver Public Library. Any CTBL patron can participate. And speaking of the newsletter, it includes new DVD’s and books that have been added into the collection; as well as other news so be sure to check it out. We publish it on the CTBL website, NFB Newsline, in Braille or audio.

Colorado’s Own Adventurer, Eric Weihenmayer, was the emcee at the largest ever San Francisco LightHouse Gala the evening of November 29, 2018. Weihenmayer is the author of two books, *Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Farther Than the Eye can See* and *The Adversity Advantage: Turning Everyday Struggles into Everyday Greatness*. These books are on BARD and they would make great Christmas gifts, [www.erikweihenmayer.com](http://www.erikweihenmayer.com). Eric is Chair of [No Barriers USA](https://www.nobarriersusa.org/). With the sponsorship of the National Federation of the Blind, Eric and his team climbed to the top of the world in the early part of the last decade. The LightHouse Chris Buckley Award honored Scott LaBarre and Maryanne Diamond for their work advocating for the Marrakesh Treaty to make books accessible to the global blind community without exception. Benentech’s Jim Fruchterman presented the award. For info about the event and the other important awards read the [full recap](http://lighthouse-sf.org/2018/12/06/lighthouse-gala-for-blind-ambition-celebrated-our-community-and-our-donors/?mc_cid=620f9c6bcc&mc_eid=480eb3d2fb).

Two Departures from Colorado DVR Will Make the New Year a Challenge for Those in The Business Enterprise Program. Melanie Honsbruch has provided extraordinary service to blind operators in the area of administrative support. After the first of the year she will accept a new opportunity within the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. She will be greatly missed. And as we have discussed before in this [blog](https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/2018/11/your-thanksgiving-blind-coloradan.html), Julia Zanon, Director of the Blindness and Low Vision Services unit, which also oversees the Business Enterprise Program along with other programs, retires at the end of this year. We wish both of these talented professionals all the best. Don’t be strangers.

Mark Your 2019 Calendars! Sunday, June 23. That’s the tentative date of our second annual 6 Dot Dash 5K. Details coming soon.

Doing Some Reading Over Your Holidays? Tired of Dickens? Consider “Making Decisions, Setting Policy, and Taking Action. The Governmental structure of the National Federation of the Blind” by Mark Riccobono. This piece does a nice job of explaining how and why the NFB is governed and formulates the policies that guide our work. You will find it in the book, *Building the Lives You Want. 75 Years of the National Federation of the Blind*, available on NFB Newsline or by visiting NFB.org. The book was edited by Deborah Kent Stein. Deborah is a prolific writer and editor. She has written a number of marvelous children’s books. Blind Coloradoan readers may be interested to know that she wrote the book *America the Beautiful, Colorado*. The BARD synopsis says, “With its high, barren plains and nearly impenetrable mountains, Colorado was one of the last areas in the continental U.S. to be developed. Today, it is one of the nation's fastest growing states. Newcomers are attracted by its breathtaking scenery, its wilderness areas, and its high-tech industries. The author discusses the geography, history, economy, culture, sites, and people of Colorado. For grades 4-7 and older readers.” It was published almost 30 years ago. Many statistics will be out of date; however, the book does a nice job of capturing history, geography, and the sensibility and sweep of Colorado. Mrs. Stein is a leader in our NFB Illinois affiliate and is the national coordinator of our Braille Readers are Leaders, BRAL, contest.

Sign Those Kiddos Up Today! Tis the season for reading. We now have four young readers from the Centennial state enrolled in BRAL. Blind students should also be practicing for the National Braille Challenge. Read more about both of these programs in the [November 21st Blind Coloradoan.](https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/2018/11/your-thanksgiving-blind-coloradan.html)

Someone Reading This Issue Might Think That All Blind People Do is Read and Run! Not True! We also cook. December 21 after all the adult students head home for the holidays, the Colorado Center for the Blind will be hosting a number of blind students from Denver Public Schools. These students will be in our CCB kitchen working with our staff to improve their independent cooking skills. Here is hoping for some Christmas cookies mom.

He Shoots He Scores! Come Try Blind Hockey at The Pepsi Center! One of our BELL mothers, Allison Galloway, says: The Colorado Avalanche and Colorado Amateur Hockey Association invite you to learn to ice skate, try on hockey gear, and try blind hockey with the Colorado Visionaries blind hockey team. Thursday, January 3 at 12:00-3:00 P.M. at the Pepsi Center, main entrance. It’s FREE! You will be able to borrow skates and hockey gear. For more information email Doris Donley or call 719-231-6603. Click [here](https://tryhockeyforfree.com/register.php?e=9356) to sign up and check out all the fun had at [last year’s event](https://www.nhl.com/avalanche/video/avs-360-hockey-is-for-everyone/t-277437098/c-57109203)!

Did Not See Your Item in This Issue? Be a contributor! Send announcements, ideas, articles, and observations to either myself or Dan Burke. Enjoy this blog on NFB Newsline or read it at [NFBCO.org](https://www.nfbco.org/). Select Newsletters and Blogs from the menu on the left. Find The Blind Coloradoan Blog information and link to the [blog spot](https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/2018/11/your-thanksgiving-blind-coloradan.html) in the first paragraph. When it comes to celebrating the holidays we say, “*Live the Life You Want*.”

 “*It’s not so much what we have in this life that matters. It’s what we do with what we have.”* -Fred Rogers