**June Blind Coloradoan**



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

**Blind Coloradoan Blog June 2019**

**Writer, aggregator Kevan Worley. Contributing editor Dan Burke.**

**Here is what you need to know**

**May is for mother, June is for dad.**

There is no question that mom is the most important, honored, and loved but, hey, dads were there too. The May issue of the Blind Coloradoan was dedicated to the mothers of the movement. Of course, the wonderful woman who many of us call mom in the NFBCO is Diane McGeorge. As we dedicate the June issue to the fathers it is natural that those of us who have been around very long remember Ray. Ray truly was the principle founder of our affiliate in 1955. How many of us were taken under Ray’s wing for guidance, encouragement, and love? He taught this writer how to tie a tie among other things. He and Diane raised a family and they took the time and tremendous effort to raise an affiliate. We lost Ray at the beginning of this decade. We do have an extensive recording in which Ray recounts the history of our movement in Colorado. It would be worth your time. So, to all the dads, Happy Father’s Day! This issue is for fathers and the big daddy with the strong grip and the deep voice, Raymond W. McGeorge.

**Littleton Mayor Debbie Brinkman to serve as NFBCO 6 Dot Dash Co-Chair.**

 The Colorado Center for the Blind has been a big part of the Littleton, Colorado community for almost 2 decades. During that time, the Center has received extraordinarily good will, support, and great generosity from Littleton and Arapahoe County leaders. Mayor Brinkman has been one of the CCB’s best friends. More than a cheerleader, she genuinely cares about the people and the programs we operate. On Saturday morning, June 29 she will be with us to celebrate at the starting line. Her support and that of the Littleton City Council will help make our big event another in a series of big successes. WE LOVE LITTLETON! AND WE LOVE MAYOR DEBBIE BRINKMAN!

|  |
| --- |
| The front of the Colorado Center for the Blind, showing the new landscaping and patio with picnic tables, with iris, lilacs and other flowers in bloom.  The sign on the side of the building with “Colorado Center for the Blind” and “National Federation of the Blind” is visible |
| The front of the Colorado Center for the Blind, showing the new landscaping and patio with picnic tables, with iris, lilacs and other flowers in bloom.  The sign on the side of the building with “Colorado Center for the Blind” and “National Federation of the Blind” is visible |

**Dan Burke offers us the following CCB News.**

Read the update below and you will know why so many people in our community support our Colorado Center for the Blind and do so with great pride.

It’s June and Colorado snowmelt is roaring down canyons and creeks, as our rock climbers experienced yesterday in Clear Creek Canyon.  Things are in rapid motion at CCB too.  We’ve had a bunch of graduations in May, with more coming this month.  And as those students leave, a new group of students arrive to begin the Independence Training Program.  We are also expecting 14 “No Limits to Learning” summer students on Friday.  Their 7 summer counselors have been with us for a week, subjected to the enforced luxury of staying at the Hampton Inn while their apartments get new sheet rock, paint, and carpet.  This is the residual repair work following our January roof failure.  "By the skin of our teeth" is the phrase most often heard when this topic comes up this week.

Spring rock climbing ends, summer gardening begins.  Tuesday was a big planting day.  Just think of all those tomatoes and basil, hot peppers and tomatillos coming in July.

On Monday the building will be rocking with confidence/BELL kids.

We'll have eight DVR counselors come to CCB the week of June 17th for training on the basics of blindness.  Thanks to Christa Headlund, Manager, Blindness and Low Vision Services (BLVS), and Executive Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Steve Anton for helping make this happen.  When the DVR counselors are with us we'll have our annual ice cream social, which will include all the staff and students from Confidence/BELL, No Limits to Learning, ITP, and Seniors.  We're hoping to break the record of 126 attendees that day!

CCB staff and students will be heavily involved with the 6 Dot Dash on June 29, running, walking and volunteering.

And then we'll head off to Las Vegas in early July for the NFB Convention!

Yes, it’s a torrent of activity at the Colorado Center for the Blind, a lot like June runoff!

|  |
| --- |
| Governor Polis signs SB19-202 as NFBCO members and bill sponsors look on |
| Governor Polis signs SB19-202 as NFBCO members and bill sponsors look on |

**"SB19-202 is now the law of Colorado!"**

That's what Governor Polis said Wednesday morning in his office at the Capitol, with NFB of Colorado members from Denver and Colorado Springs standing behind him at his desk with the bill sponsors. Dan Burke is not only the contributing editor of this blog he is also Legislative Chair for NFBCO. Dan develops strategy, communicates with our members, meets with Legislators, helps formulate messaging, and does much of the important research necessary to support our initiatives. He certainly managed this bill with creativity and capacity. But it took all of us from the deliberation at the state convention to the Day at the Capitol, all of the phone calls, financial contributions, and chapter building to make this happen. Here is what Dan says about SB19-202: Voting Rights for Voters with Disabilities:

Of course, thanks to Gov. Polis and those sponsors - Sens. Danielson and Zenzinger and Rep. Froelich. And thanks to the Colorado Assembly - nobody voted against the rights of Coloradans with disabilities to have equal access to the mail ballot!

But thanks first to us in the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, because we identified that the time was right, that the technology was now capable of securely delivering a mail ballot option to Coloradans with disabilities so we can vote at home or on-the-go privately and independently.

It was our own Curtis Chong who pointed out last fall that the technology was now ready for this, and that other states had passed such bills.  That became a resolution at our 2018 NFB of Colorado convention, which of course passed.  And with our resolve set, we went to our friend Senator Jessie Danielson who carried our parents' rights bill (HB18-1104) successfully into law last year.  She said she'd love to carry this bill.  Once again, her legislative prowess carried SB19-202 into law.

Like the parents' rights bill, this bill benefits all Coloradans with disabilities in equal access to the mail ballot of Colorado.  So, thanks to the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition for their support and testimony in favor of the bill in the Senate hearing, and to the Disability Law Clinic and others.  Thanks to Secretary of State Gina Griswold's staff and to the Colorado County Commissioners Association for their contributions to the final shape of the bill, and to the support of the Governor's Office of Information Technology which, in the person of Theresa Montano who oversees accessibility in the state's IT, took an active interest in SB19-202.

Yes, with the help of all these key people and organizations, we took this from resolution to equal voting rights for Coloradans with disabilities.  So that's why, when Gov. Polis made the statement quoted at the top of this article announcing that SB19-202 was now the law, it felt so good.

**This issue is in appreciation of NFBCO 6 Dot Dash 5k sponsors and supporters.**

This year, we proudly welcome Platinum Sponsor Garth Braun Associates, P.C. (GBA). GBA is an architectural, planning, and development consulting firm providing services from along the front range of Colorado to the shores of Belize, Central America, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and beyond. GBA has been a part of our Colorado Center for the Blind family for many years. Thanks to our Gold Sponsors Sysco; Southern Food Service Management, Inc.; Philadelphia Insurance; LaBarre Law; Zimmer Cox Commercial Builders; R3NG/CP&M; Comcast; First Bank; Business Enterprise Program (BEP); Blackstone Consulting, Inc.; and Aira. Thank you for your support and join us on June 29.

**Steve says.**

 Serving for only a few hours in his new capacity, leading the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Having come directly from private sector management to public service, Steve Anton addressed a state convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado. It was a rocky time for DVR. Service to blind consumers was dismal. There was a long list of people with disabilities waiting for VR services. Mr. Anton was not yet able to comment officially on the many questions posed by the membership. Steve was a little coy. He would preface his responses by saying, “I don’t know the official policies at this time, but Steve says.” He answered in a manner that let us know he would get it. He understood and no matter the “official” positions of the agency. He would act. He has.

On May 14th, Steve Anton announced that after 4 years he would be retiring as of September 30th.

As noted in several resolutions passed at our state conventions, Steve Anton has been a true public servant. He has managed an agency from tumult to tremendous achievement. He has led with innovation, hard work, understanding, and vigilance. From day one, if “Steve said” there was a very good chance we could count on it. Thank you, Director Steve Anton. We salute you. And we say enjoy your retirement. Congratulations on many years of service in both the private and public sector.

**The next Springs City Blind Meet Up!**

Tuesday, June 18. The gang gathers anytime during the hours of 5 until 7 p.m. Springs Orleans, 123 East Pikes Peak Avenue. Two for one hors d'oeuvres. Fellowship with members of our Federation. Meet community leaders. Share your ideas. Share your hors d'oeuvres. Share this announcement with others in our community. See you there. This note is on behalf of Chapter Vice President Brian Smith. He usually gets there early.

**MagniSight of the Rockies.**

 For more than 30 years Brian Smith has been manufacturing, distributing, and representing product lines which bring low vision and blindness technologies to legally blind Colorado citizens. Brian and his son and partner, Matthew, have launched their newest company. No longer in the manufacturing business, CEO Smith and his team will be focusing on representing the best product lines in the industry. They have partnered with NanoPac.  NanoPac has been in the business over thirty years and are the premier distributors for Freedom Scientific, Optelec, OrCam, IrisVision and many other products. They have many new exciting devices that they would be glad to demonstrate to you.  MagniSight of the Rockies looks forward to continuing the long tradition of serving the blind and low vision community here in Colorado. For information, contact Brian Smith.

**Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind concludes its 145th year of service with commencement ceremony honoring an outstanding senior class.**

Brent Batron serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Diane Covington is the School/Community Liaison. Here is what she has to say.

“Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind seniors celebrated their graduation with a poignant Commencement ceremony.  Beautiful speeches by the school’s Valedictorian, Quincie Mattick, and Salutatorian, TJ Bannister, were followed by a commencement address given by CSDB alum Nicholas Elstad.  We are incredibly proud of the CSDB graduates of 2019!”



Quincie Mattick, 2019 CSDB Valedictorian.

You may enjoy this [graduation video](https://gazette.com/multimedia/graduation-moments-colorado-school-for-the-deaf-and-the-blind/video_d5098fcb-2f48-54b1-ac0f-63be64a5a126.html), provided by The Gazette.

**CCDC strongly urges Governor Polis to commit to Colorado’s disabled citizens.**

 NFBCO often finds kindred spirits in the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC). Like us, they are people willing to engage in the rough and tumble of public education, policy, advocacy, and politics. The Executive Director of CCDC wrote a letter to Governor Jared Polis on May 13th. The letter addresses proposed changes planned by the Governor. These changes would do significant harm and we encourage you to read [The Letter from CCDC](http://0.0.7.227/06/ccdc-strongly-urges-governor-polis-to.html).

**The Aurora Chapter says... Check out our Caps**

President Dale Holden says: The Aurora Chapter of the NFBCO is selling caps that say "Live the Life You Want" in both print and Braille! They are available in dark blue with white lettering and white with dark blue lettering. We will be selling them locally and at National Convention. Join us in spreading our message of independence and buy a cap!

|  |
| --- |
| https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-UBSxL62c8pw/XP_PxING6qI/AAAAAAAAAuI/3ojlZPdYcQcQeR2_EsU8CDqBS297U6fLwCLcBGAs/s320/caps.jpg |
| picture of Aurora chapter caps with navy cap on the left and white cap on the right. Caps appear as described above. |

**NFBCO to Host Blind Parents Seminar August 23-24th**

The Blind Parents Division will be hosting our first Blind Parents Seminar! The fun will kick off with a night of bowling on Friday, August 23 and will continue throughout the day on Saturday with an agenda including a keynote address from Melissa Riccobono, general sessions, tracks for parents of infants/perspective parents, elementary school children, pre/teen, and grandparents. This seminar offers something for everyone and our agenda can be found [HERE](https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/2019/06/blind-parents-seminar-agenda.html).

**Recap of the 2018-2019 USABA/Anthem National Fitness Challenge.**

This week the 2018-2019 National Fitness Challenge came to a close. From our kickoff at state convention where many of our participants received their FitBit Flex 2 devices to the Try It Seminar which was the final event of the fitness challenge, our participants really stepped up their fitness game. We participated in Olympic day, Santa Stampede, Super Half Game Day 5k, Climb for Courage, Cherry Creek  Sneak, and the Try It Seminar which included self defense, group fitness, tandem cycling, and track and field. Our participants increased their daily physical activity through using the FitBit and even won the second group challenge against other National Fitness Challenge teams in our region. During the last challenge event, our Own Chaz Davis won a top performance award. Even though the challenge has come to a close for the year, all of the participants are invited to join us for the 6 Dot dash on June 29th!

**NFBCO Sports and Rec Division still has a few tickets for the Colorado Rockies vs. San Diego Padres Saturday evening, June 15.**

 Contact Maureen. Tickets are only $25, and you can sit with your NFBCO buddies. Rockies are really on a roll of late. Let’s hope, Rockie Roll is here to stay!

**The Mueller Report, the Mueller Report.**

 Not to be left out. Your Blind Coloradoan can be right up there with CNN, Fox, Washington Post, The Atlantic. We, too, have a Mueller Report item for you. You can read the Mueller Report on NFB Newsline. Read it through the app, online, or on your landline. If you are not a subscriber of NFB Newsline please subscribe today. You will enjoy more than 400 publications, job ads, shopping ads, your local weather, TV listings, and ripped from the headlines, the Mueller Report.

**The NFBCO 6 Dot Dash 5k continues to add interesting, exciting elements.**

Check out this very cool offer from one of our outstanding Gold Sponsors.

**Free Aira Access for the 6 Dot Dash!**

Aira is proud to sponsor the 2019 6 Dot Dash. As part of our partnership, we are offering Aira Access for this event.

What is Aira Access? Individuals who are blind or have low vision can use Aira for free through Aira Access. Aira has partnered with some of the most well-known businesses in the world to provide free Aira Access to more people, in more ways. It is the ability for anyone to download the Aira app and use Aira for free; get instant descriptions of racecourse surroundings, identify aid stations, and describe race day expos.

Download the free Aira app as a Guest at [www.aira.io/app](http://www.aira.io/app) so you can use Aira for free while attending the event. Trouble downloading? Call 1-800-835-1934.

Aira is on a mission to provide instant access to visual information for anyone, anytime, anywhere. Learn more about [Aira](http://www.aira.io/) or [watch this video](https://youtu.be/AceuXqCHuY0).

**Barela appoints Anton’s successor, by the Blind Coloradoan staff.**

Stakeholders left holding the bag? Time will tell.

For many years, government agencies have sought meaningful input from stakeholders. And more and more they have worked collaboratively with stakeholders representing the interests of citizens being served by those agencies. Some of these groups of interested and talented advisors are more formalized. Such as the State Rehabilitation Council, SRC. The SRC is cemented in statute and should be meeting regularly to support and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Some stakeholder engagement is less formal. Consumer group leaders, experts in the fields of education and rehabilitation, and others with significant interest in the work being done on behalf of Coloradoan’s with disabilities have regularly met with management and staff of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

As soon as Julia Zanon assumed management of Blindness and Low Vision Services, BLVS, she assembled a group of stakeholders from across the state to provide progress reports and gather their suggestions. This was only one reason that the early development of BLVS was so successful so quickly.

People with disabilities in Colorado have enjoyed and benefitted from this stakeholder engagement. The agency has been enriched by the authentic experiences they gained from this open process. This has become the norm since the absorption of DVR into the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in 2016. This approach was a pledge made by the Executive Director of CDLE Ellen Golombek. Over the past 3 years, stakeholders have served on panels to choose DVR managers, including the hiring of Director Anton and the most recent promotion of Krista Hedlund to succeed Julia Zanon as manager of BLVS.

This is why organizations like NFBCO, CCDC, and other stakeholders were dismayed and dumbfounded over the pronouncement made by CDLE Executive Director Joe Barela on May 14. We have written on these pages about our excitement to welcome Joe Barela. Director Barela was appointed by Governor Polis to head CDLE not long after his election. Leaders of the Federation met with Barela and his team early this Spring. Reports from our leaders were glowing. “He gets it.” He pledged to support expansion of the Business Enterprise Program. He indicated his understanding of client choice. He understood our conviction to expand BLVS across the state based on that unit’s early successes. According to Scott LaBarre, NFBCO President, “the new Executive Director has a background in creating employment opportunities. It was clear that he had capacity, and no one cares more about job opportunities for the blind than we do.”

And so, it was with great anticipation that we joined a conference call with Director Barela and his team. On the call, we were told that Steve Anton would be retiring on September 30. (Read item elsewhere in this blog.) We were then summarily informed that Kristen Corash would be assuming this post. Note, Kristen Corash is a highly accomplished program administrator with many years of experience. Although no vocational rehabilitation credential, she is regarded as a more than competent manager who gets things done. We look forward to introducing the new Director to you in future blogs. The unilateral decision made by a member of Polis’s cabinet with little experience in the world of vocational rehabilitation for people with disabilities was deeply troubling. Stakeholders were not happy to be treated in, what we considered to be, a cavalier manner. And we said so. We said so on the call. We said so in follow up emails and phone calls. It soon became clear to us that the agency was getting the message.

The week following the conference call, Joe Barela and other members of his team visited the Colorado Center for the Blind. They met with our leadership. Director Barela took a tour of our best in class facility. He met the people of the organized blind movement. He engaged students and asked meaningful questions. The meeting we held with his team was extremely frank. The ideas exchanged were real, substantive, and thoughtful. Joe and his team indicated their understanding and further indicated a true commitment to growing programs and re-establishing stakeholder trust.

Time will tell. But partnerships are not always easy. Progress is replete with bumps in the road. We hope this bumpy road is behind us. We are hopeful that Director Barela has learned something from us. And, moving forward, we will learn from each other so that the agency can continue to serve its mission.

**NFBCO joins CCDC and other organizations on letter of protest.**

Director Barela:

We are writing as organizations that are gravely concerned with the process of how the new DVR director was chosen following the resignation of Steve Anton. We represent a diverse collection of disability rights organizations that work closely and represent people that should be able to benefit from DVR services.  Our concern is not necessarily with your pick for the new DVR head, but with the lack of involvement by those most directly affected in the process.

Find the complete text [HERE](https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/2019/06/letter-to-director-barela.html)**.**

**The Builders. True stories from the history of the Rocky Mountain blind by Peggy Chong, The History Lady.**

I thought I would pass this one on to you as it is coming up to convention time and I find it funny.  Sad, but funny.

As national convention approaches, we are all getting ready.  Every affiliate sends a delegate and many others in several affiliates have their way paid by an affiliate, chapter, or division.  Here is what happened to the very first delegate from Colorado to the NFB convention.

The United Workers for the Blind, (UWB) joined the NFB officially in January of 1941.  The president, Lute Wilcox was most enthused about the philosophy of the NFB and meeting tenBroek, (he was not Doctor yet).  But he was also more than 80 years old.  So, a younger man was selected by the board at the urging of Wilcox.  We will just call him Mr. Delegate as he was referred to in part, in the letter sent to tenBroek August 22, 1941 when Wilcox explained why they had no delegate present.

“He…. Procured tickets and reservation. That night he had to go on a toot, had a fight with his spouse and fell downstairs, injuring himself, badly.  Someone sent in a police call, the cops arrived about midnight, and Mr. Delegate was packed off to the hoosgow (his spelling) where he was sent to the bug house.”

After a week or so in the hospital, he was called before the sanity court and found to be not able to care for himself thanks to testimony by his wife.  She became his custodian and conservator.  His wife returned the money they had spent on the tickets to the UWB after being asked by the board.  She also had great fun with his money.

In six months, Mr. Delegate appeared in sanity court once again.  This time the UWB testified on his behalf to discontinue his wife as conservator and custodian as she was proving not to have Mr. Delegates interest at heart.  Mr. Delegate could not hold his liquor and lost the trust of the leadership of the UWB.

The lesson to take from this is to be sure you get a good night’s rest before leaving for convention.

**Editorial, by Kevan Worley.**

We use this blog to spread our message of love, encouragement, and accomplishment. We use it to announce our events. We use it to offer our Federation perspective. But I don’t usually author something as serious as an editorial! Bottom line, what I would like to say to you is serious. We really cannot do the work we do for so many without your donations. We need your contribution of time, energy, imagination, and money. This note is to encourage you in the strongest terms I can to participate in one way or another in our upcoming NFB of Colorado 6 Dot Dash 5k. First, with no raffle this year your contribution made simply by registering for the event is truly and absolutely essential if we plan to carry on our youth programs and scholarship program. Whether or not you want to run the race please consider registering. You can race on your own, you can pace it in your living room, walk it on the treadmill, or run it as a local chapter activity. You will have made your financial contribution by registering for the race. Here is the link! [www.6dotdashco.com](http://www.6dotdashco.com/). Will you promise to encourage others to register? I have written and called my family and friends all over the country. I simply tell them that they didn’t win the raffle last year or the year before. But they made a beautiful contribution to the work I care so much about. For me, that work is making sure blind children have the love and resources they need to build the futures they want. Next, we need volunteers. Let us know if you or someone you know would like to spend some time Saturday morning June 29 at the Colorado Center for the Blind helping us stage and operate our NFBCO 6 Dot Dash 5k. We need folks to help with sound, our water stations, the expo, registrations, check IDs for the blind beer tasting (you must be an actual adult for this task). In short, we need you and your buddies to be part of the action.

This is our second annual NFBCO 6 Dot Dash 5k. It is our second annual blind beer tasting at the event. This year, St. Patrick’s Brewing and Blind Faith Brewing are back! We have added Jackass Hill Brewery from downtown Littleton. More than a race, this is a real Colorado Center for the Blind Littleton community festival. You will enjoy an expo of products and services. There will be great activities for the kids. And our buddies with the band Stray Dog will be entertaining.

No raffle. Just serious fun at the Colorado Center for the Blind. If you haven’t been to the Center in a while come, take a tour. The newly renovated grounds are worth a visit. This will be a party and we need your participation. If you have questions call me at 303-929-2369. You can also email Jessica. I can’t wait to see you Saturday morning, June 29. We will get started with coffee donated by Elevation and the expo kickoff at 8 a.m. Race at 9. Stray Dog begins at 10:30. If you would like to have a sighted guide for the race please let Jessica know. Special thanks to Silver Sponsors Liberty Bell Vending; Pawcuz, Inc.; The United State Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), and many other community partners for their support. Do we have yours?

|  |
| --- |
| Guide dog German Shepherd Onyx sitting on the trail in Black Forest Colorado with the sun shining through the tall trees in the background. Picture taken using Aira. |
| Guide dog German Shepherd Onyx sitting on the trail in Black Forest Colorado with the sun shining through the tall trees in the background. Picture taken using Aira. |

**Doggonit**.

Sometimes, members of the public are confused, misguided, or downright obstreperous when it comes to allowing my guide dog and me entrance into this or that restaurant, Lyft, or other public facilities. As a guide dog user, you have certain rights and protections under federal law that allow for your use of a guide dog. National Association of Guide Dog Users, NAGDU, can help you protect your rights. Have questions about your legal rights as a service dog user? Need an advocate to work with you regarding an access denial? You can now call the NAGDU Information & Advocacy Hotline! Toll-Free 1-888-NAGDU-411 (1-888-624-3841). Or call 1- 813-658-5749. Thanks to Melissa Greene, President of our Colorado Association of Guide Dog Users, COAGDU, for bringing this item to our attention.

**Still** time to join us at [NFB National Convention](https://www.nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention) at the Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, July 7-12.

**Submit items to be considered for July Blind Coloradoan Blog by June 26.**

**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 [blog spot](https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/).

**Forward, Always Forward!**

**“Live the Life You Want.”**