



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND
KANSAS

Live the life you want.

TAP TRACKS

**The Newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of
Kansas**

Autumn/Winter 2024

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Associate Editors

Please submit materials for the Autumn/Winter 2024
issue of TAP TRACKS by August 15th 2024 to:

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From the President

- Tom Page

I feel that it was only yesterday that I wrote to you about our upcoming national convention. The summer has flown and I am writing today to bring your attention to our upcoming state convention which will take place in Lawrence, KS the first weekend in November. This gathering promises reunion and renewal as we continue to be the leading voice of blind Kansans.

I consider myself to be a very privileged person. Not only by birth: born into post industrial society as a white male; but also, by culture: growing up in a family that emphasized education and placed great value on learning. These privileges have aided me greatly in life. I find that these basic privileges have helped prepare me to take advantage of opportunities.

I look back at the time when I took advantage of the opportunity to join the National Federation of the Blind and since then the greater opportunities to grow as a person and leader that have come as a result of my Federation involvement. I hope that you will take advantage of chapter meetings, state and national conventions, Washington seminar, and any other involvement opportunities that come your way.

Our upcoming convention will present opportunities to hear from and ask questions of representatives from agencies of importance to blind people including: Vocational Rehabilitation, Disability Rights Center of Kansas, Alpha Point, Kansas Talking Books Library, Kansas State School for the Blind, and many others. We will have time to celebrate our successes and mourn our losses together. We will chart the direction of the organization for the coming year

In addition to our work in Kansas representing the true capabilities of the blind. We will hear from Pam Allen (1st Vice President of the NFB, President NFB of Louisiana) about Federation activities across the nation. For instance; by the time we meet in Lawrence we will have already joined with our brothers and sisters in San Francisco at a rally designed to bring notice to the ongoing problems blind Americans continue to deal with around ride-sharing services. For more information on the rally consult www.nfb.org

This convention will feature a youth seminar in which we will welcome youth and parents to the activities of the NFB of Kansas and offer time for fellowship. In addition to all of this, our exhibit hall, will offer the opportunity to meet with over 20 vendors and agency representatives. When our work is done, we will have some fun!

Please consider joining us in Lawrence this November. Further, consider what opportunities you have to offer and how your personal privilege can be put to use in our Kansas affiliate during the coming year and the time beyond. Thanks for all you do!

Kansas Affiliate Constitution Revisited After 52 Years

Rob Tabor

If you assumed that the Kansas NFB affiliate has a Constitution, you assume correctly. However, the constitution, first effectuated in 1968, has not been amended since 1972. We don't have to look far to recognize that some critical facts on the ground have changed since then, which is why a special committee was assembled to study this important governance document to determine if any changes are needed.

In fact, the committee has proposed a few changes which will be presented to the 2024 Kansas affiliate convention for possible ratification. But before this can happen, there must be a special meeting beforehand to present the amendments to our membership. This meeting will be convened on our Zoom platform on Sunday, October 6 at 3:00 p.m. be sure to check your inbox often for the official announcement which will have the Zoom logon instructions.

Curious about those proposed amendments? Here is a short preview.

- Expulsion of members for misconduct would be governed by the process specified by the national NFB Code of Conduct instead of a simple 2/3 vote of the membership.
- Membership dues, currently at one dollar, would be set by the board.
- The \$100.0 lifetime membership would be eliminated.
- The requirement to place the state treasurer under bond is changed to a decision of the board.
- Last not least, all gender-specific pronouns e.g., his and her, are eliminated.

So, don't miss this important Zoom video conference so you can ask any questions to help you to determine how to vote during the annual business meeting on the morning of November 3.

Rock! Chalk! Jayhawk!

-Donna Wood

The National Federation of the Blind of Kansas would like to invite you to Jayhawk country, for the 56th annual state convention. This year's state convention will be held November 1, 2, and 3, 2024.

The location is The Double Tree by Hilton, Lawrence 200 McDonald Dr. Lawrence, KS 66044. Room reservations can be made by calling 785-841-7077. Room rates are \$129.00 per night. This price includes breakfast. You will find a convention registration form in this newsletter or, on nfbks.org, on home-on-the-range, the affiliate list serve and Facebook.

Pre-registration will be \$5, registration at the door will be \$10. Lunch will be \$20 and banquet \$30. The deadline for making room reservations is Saturday, October 12, 2024.

Convention will begin on Friday, November 1, 2024. It will begin at 2:00 PM and the focus will be on vendors.

We will have all our usual meetings on Friday evening. This includes hospitality, resolutions and nominating committee.

Friday evening, we will also have a pizza and game night for the youth attending the convention.

Saturday morning will bring a report from our National Representative, Pam Allen. You will find her biography later in this newsletter. Also, a state report by our affiliate President Tom Page and presentations from our community partners.

In the afternoon there will be a breakout session for the youth. Where there will be presentations on preparing for college, technology, video gaming, safety and more.

The general membership will meet and cover such topics as ABC'S of the NFB, philosophy of the NFB, sports and recreation, chapter building, advocating for oneself and so much more.

The theme of this year's convention is "Growing The Blind Movement Together". We invite you to join us for a weekend of learning, laughter, and networking. We will also be having a couple of really fun fund raisers. So just between you and me, you might want to be sure and bring your NFB coin and brush up on the NFB pledge.

Now Let's Go Build The Federation. We will see you in November.

The National Federation of The Blind of Kansas would like to invite you to participate in our youth seminar. At the Double Tree by Hilton 200 McDonald Dr. Lawrence, KS 66044. It will be held Saturday, November 2, 2024 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

Theme: Navigating blindness requires alternative thinking

Agenda:

Friday, November 1, 2024

7:00-10:00 PM—Pizza and game night

Saturday, November 2, 2024

12:30 PM—registration

1:15 PM—Introductions, opening remarks, and the NFB, Who we are and what we do.

1:30 PM—Representatives from Kansas University (KU); Admission standards and requirements, Financial aid, and How to pick a major.

2:00 PM—High and low tech, Accessible curriculum, Demonstration of alternative techniques braille, screen readers, Apps. And etc.

2:30 PM— safety and self defense

3:00 PM—Hobbies and Leisure Activities; games, video gaming, Music Production, sports and recreation, and etc.

4:00 PM—Careers and Opportunities

4:30 PM—closing remarks

NFBKS policy: Any person under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to attend NFBKS seminars, programs and events.

LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT!

Pam Allen

Pam Dubel was born in 1970 and grew up in Lancaster, New York. She became blind at approximately two years old as a result of retinal blastoma, a type of cancer. Although her parents were shocked by her loss of sight, they fortunately realized that she was still the same child except that she could no longer see.

Through love and high expectations, they instilled in Pam a sense of pride and confidence in her ability to succeed. They constantly taught her that her blindness was not a limitation to achieving her goals and dreams. Growing up as the youngest of six children also helped her learn to be independent.

Since she was the youngest, nobody, especially the brother a year older than she, let her get away with anything. Pam attended a private Catholic school, where she was the only blind student. Her itinerant teacher provided a sound foundation in Braille, which helped her excel in academics.

Her parents expected her to do her best and to engage in activities that would make her a confident and well-rounded person. She participated

in horseback riding, skiing, and cheerleading during elementary school. During high school her interests shifted to performing in chorus, doing community service, and having fun with her friends.

While growing up, Pam had limited contact with other blind people her age. In general, she had no desire to associate with other blind people. She understood that every high school senior experiences some trepidation about the transition to adulthood and independence. However, as high school graduation approached, she began to grapple with questions that her sighted peers couldn't answer.

She planned to attend college, and she hoped that she would eventually find a job, but she secretly wondered if she would truly be able to obtain employment. After all, she had had difficulty finding part-time work during high school. Her loving family and friends encouraged her, but she had questions that went unanswered.

Although she entered college with some apprehension, she was determined to achieve her best. Her small liberal arts college provided an exciting environment in which to learn and grow. But those unanswered questions continued to nag at her. If people were amazed that she could accomplish the most insignificant tasks, would they ever treat her as an equal?

She realized that she had to meet other blind people with more experience than she had who could serve as role models. Her search exposed her to a wide variety of groups of, and for the blind. However, not until she attended a student seminar hosted by the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio did she begin to find the answers for which she had been searching. Although she didn't realize it at the time, that seminar marked the beginning of a new chapter of her life. She met Barbara Pierce, president of the NFB of Ohio, who told Pam about the Louisiana Center for the Blind. More than that, she spoke with Joanne Wilson, its director, who arranged for Pam to complete an internship at the center the following May. As soon as that was completed, Joanne

invited her to work as a counselor in the children's summer program that year.

Pam was a 1991 National Federation of the Blind scholarship winner when she was a senior at Denison University, where she majored in psychology and minored in women's studies. She served as vice president of the Ohio Association of Blind Students and as secretary of the National Association of Blind Students, and throughout college she worked summers for Joanne Wilson at the Louisiana Center for the Blind with the Children's Program.

After graduation from college Pam decided to become a student at the Louisiana Center for the Blind. She recognized that she still needed to gain some confidence in her skills and in her ability to be a successful blind person.

Since 2001 Pam Allen has served as the director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind, one of three NFB adult rehabilitation centers.

Prior to becoming the director, she served as the director of youth services. She worked with blind infants and toddlers and their parents, supervised the training of classroom aides to teach Braille throughout Louisiana, coordinated summer camps, and developed innovative programs for blind children and teenagers.

People often ask her what makes the Louisiana Center for the Blind such a special place. She responds, "What sets our alumni apart from those of other kinds of rehabilitation facilities? The answer is that, by attending our center and the other centers conducted by Federationists, students are exposed to the National Federation of the Blind and its philosophy. The NFB is more than an organization; it is a loving family. Regardless of where you are, you can find members of the NFB who can give you support and encouragement when you need it. The NFB also provides a constant supply of mentors and role models who challenge you to set

goals for yourself. Lives are positively changed every day at the Center because of the philosophy of the NFB."

Allen recalls that she used to believe that she did not need other blind people. She thought that being independent meant succeeding without the help of others. Her involvement with the National Federation of the Blind has taught her that this is not true. She has learned that she needs reinforcement from her blind colleagues and friends.

Pam lives in Ruston, Louisiana, with her husband Roland Allen, a dedicated Federation leader and a gifted orientation and mobility instructor at the center.

She is currently the president of the NFB of Louisiana and secretary of the National Association of Blind Rehabilitation Professionals. In July of 2002 she was elected to the National Federation of the Blind board of directors. Four years later, in 2006, she was elected to serve as treasurer of the National Federation of the Blind. In 2012, Pam and Roland received the prestigious Jacobus tenBroek Award in recognition of their distinguished service in the Federation. In 2015, Pam was elected as first vice president of the National Federation of the Blind.

Allen is also involved in a variety of community and professional organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce and as a gubernatorial appointee to the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council. She says, "Being elected to the national board has allowed me to give back and to spread the message of our movement. It is an incredible honor and privilege to serve!"

North-Central Chapter Update

-Shauna Zepeda

North-Central chapter meets at the Salina Senior Center 245 N. 9th Salina, KS 67401, at 2:30 PM on the third Wednesday of the month. The

officers are President, Shauna Zepeda; Vice-President, Austin Meyer; Secretary, Sharon Luka; and Treasurer, Tom Basgall.

There were 6 chapter members who volunteered at the Senior fair. It was held on May 31, 2024. Where many kernel books and information packets were handed out.

North-Central members, that were unable to attend the national convention, gathered together to listen to the convention general sessions.

Members are making plans to attend the NFBKS state convention in November. Which is being held in Lawrence at the Double Tree by Hilton. The North-Central chapter members are looking forward to gathering at state convention and sharing ideas and learning from other members across the state.

For further information on the NFBKS North-Central chapter please contact President Shauna Zepeda at 785-304-6326. Now let's go build the federation!

Hello Kansas Affiliate,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the grant awarded to support my participation in the recent national convention. Your generosity has made a significant impact on my life, and I am truly thankful.

The convention was an incredible experience—a gathering of passionate minds, inspiring speakers, and valuable networking opportunities. Thanks to your financial support, I was able to attend workshops, engage in meaningful discussions, and contribute to the overall success of the event.

The grant provided not only helped with my expenses, but also allowed me to fully immerse myself in the convention's activities.

There were some very overwhelming moments for me personally, one such moment was when I was walking the wrong way down the hotel hall where the restaurants were, at lunch break and was confronted by a sea of white canes coming my way. One of my favorite events was the resolutions meeting.

As I move forward, I will continue to uphold the values and mission of the National Federation of the Blind.

With heartfelt thanks,

Lara "Christy" Roberts

JAYHAWK CHAPTER UPDATE

-Rob Tabor

On April 12, 2024 we hosted a trivia night fundraiser at Murf's Grill in Lawrence. We raised \$300 and a good time was had by all.

As per our custom, we rang in the summer with a summer social at La Tropicana Mexican restaurant in north Lawrence, where we enjoyed being together, enjoying delicious authentic Mexican cuisine, and hearing the roar of freight trains moving swiftly down the tracks. The weather on June 8 was pleasantly conducive to dining on the spacious patio.

The excitement is growing as we look forward to hosting the 2024 state convention during the first weekend of November at the Double Tree Hotel right here in beautiful west Lawrence.

We will conduct a raffle for one or two beautiful afghans created by Joy Polson, a very talented seamstress and a new member of our chapter. After the banquet we look forward to entertaining conventioners with the music of Easy Pieces, a talented regional band who has performed for us in previous conventions. We hope to make it a great and memorable convention.

The Jayhawk chapter meets on the second Monday of the month at Murf's Grill located at 3115 W 6th Street. More information about the membership and activities of the chapter may be directed to our president, Renee Morgan via email at rmorgan@willowdvcenter.org or by phone at (785) 424-4734.

Kansas makes a bizarre request of blind residents trying to renew state ID

-Emily Schlenker

I was born in Liberal and have lived in Wichita for most of my life. I am currently attending the KU School of Pharmacy at the medical campus north of downtown. As the first totally blind student to pursue a doctor of pharmacy, also known as a PharmD. I face a lot of challenges due to the high volume of material I must learn and the completion of the technical requirements of my program, that are considered visual tasks. These include giving vaccines, checking prescriptions, and mixing IV infusions. I have proven that with some modifications, these and many other tasks can be done by someone who is blind, but it takes an open mind and a sense of curiosity on the part of the instructors and others to make this happen.

I hold two undergraduate degrees from Wichita State University, one in global studies (2011) and more recently a biology degree with a chemistry minor (2020). These are hard-won accomplishments that required more self-advocacy than studying or homework.

I do not want anyone to struggle as much as I have, because the price of my degrees was so much higher than books and tuition. The amount of time I had to dedicate to explaining why a blind person needs access to the same materials as all other students, and the innumerable conversations I had with people in an effort to convince them that blind people belong in science, is time I will never get back.

I am very proud of the way WSU has become a much more welcoming place for blind students, but there is no rest for people with disabilities, because we continue to be confronted with barriers to the privileges and responsibilities of living as an adult. People reading this might think that achieving success in a professional program such as pharmacy is the most challenging thing that a blind person will do in their lifetime, but I want to share a different perspective.

Often, it is accomplishing what people with eyesight think of as simple everyday tasks that present the highest barriers for those of us living with blindness. I want to share one of these challenges that I have recently faced.

As a blind Kansan, I am issued a state identification card instead of a driver's license, and I have to renew it periodically. I have to spend a lot of time at school, and coordinating transportation to and from the Department of Motor Vehicles is not easy to do around my class and study schedule. I was made aware of the iKan app, which is used by the state of Kansas to enable residents to complete certain tasks online. One of these is the renewal of driver's licenses and state ID cards.

I was very excited about this, and I logged on to the app and proceeded through the steps to get a new Real ID card. I was hopeful when I started the online renewal process, not only because at first it was very usable for me, but also because I was in the system and eligible to proceed without skipping class to go in person.

Everything went very well until I was directed to provide information about a recent optometry visit. The iKan app only allows those with a vision assessment to renew a license or ID. To be required to visit an optometrist for a vision exam, in spite of being on record as being blind and holding a state ID rather than a driver's license, was absurd and highly frustrating.

I reached out to the state of Kansas about this issue and was informed that I would have to either go to a DMV office in person, or fill out a form that is not accessible to blind people and provide my credit card information by mail so my ID could be renewed.

For blind people, use of online services and payment processing is a secure and convenient way of doing things, but we are excluded from the very service that would make ID renewal accessible and efficient for us. I make use of fillable pdf documents to complete accessible forms related to my licensing as a pharmacy intern, and I can complete tasks in a timely and efficient manner. The process to renew my state ID could be as easy as it is for sighted people, but instead it is a multi-step process involving a form I cannot use independently, and the transmission of my credit card information through email. We have asked for online or virtual options for years, and now that these services are a reality, we are once again left out. We are expected to put our credit card information at risk to process our requests remotely, whereas sighted people can process payments securely with the iKan system.

My husband, who is also blind, and I, must routinely get assistance from sighted people to complete paperwork in order to obtain healthcare and keep our identification and other documents up to date. This puts us in the position of revealing private or vulnerable information to others while our sighted peers have access to more confidential and secure means of doing the same things. I shared my experience as a blind pharmacy student because I believe it shows that many things are possible and can be made accessible for participants.

This situation with the iKan app is fixable, especially because the ID cards issued to blind people are an option that the state already offers, and this could be an option in the online renewal process. If this were changed, blind Kansans could renew and securely pay for their ID cards and get on with their lives.

This is a significant access barrier, which is a direct result of a failure to consider the special populations in the state. When calculating and mixing IV medications is more accessible to me than a mainstream requirement such as the one, I have described, it's time to make some noise. This is not about asking for special treatment, so much as it is about equal participation in the online renewal service that is available to sighted Kansans. A glitch in Kansas' iKan online app makes it more like uKan't for sightless Kansans, says first blind KU pharmacy student.

Senior Division Update

-Dianne Hemphill

The NFB of Kansas Senior Division continues to actively participate in various areas, with the goal of positively impacting seniors, and of course others, in their adjustment to vision loss.

Activities of the Kansas seniors include: Hosting monthly call in meetings, featuring active and motivating blind seniors from across the state, attending and participating in state affiliate conventions, including those held in other states. As well as traveling to Orlando, Florida for the most recent NFB national convention. Following, and alerting others about state and national legislation impacting blind seniors. Hosting monthly game and movie nights, via conference call. And, most importantly, living the most active and independent lives we can.

We would welcome you to reach out to us via e-mail, at
diannehemphill@cox.net

We are the blind leading the blind. We want to help you live your best life.

A TRIBUTE TO SOMEONE ELSE

We were saddened to learn recently of the death of one of our most valued acquaintances. Someone Else.

Someone's passing created a vacancy that will indeed be difficult to fill. Someone Else was with us for many years and for every one of those years, did far more than a normal person's share of work.

Whenever leadership was needed, this wonderful person was apt to bring results. "Someone Else can work with that group." we all said.

Whenever there was a job to do, one name was on every list, Someone Else!

And it was common knowledge that Someone Else was generous toward volunteer organizations. If there was a financial need, everyone just assumed that Someone Else would make up the difference.

Were the truth known, we all expected far too much of Someone Else.

Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do.

Someone Else left a model to follow, but we wonder, WHO is going to do all those things that Someone Else did?

Blind Christians Group Update

-Donna Wood

Blessings to one and all. The National Federation of the Blind of Kansas Blind Christians Group meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM by conference call. The conference line number is 916-235-1420 and the participants pin is 879925. Each month a member will volunteer to lead a devotional for the next month.

January through March we had a devotional series on the 23rd Psalm.

In April we heard Linda Anderson's testimony of faith.

In May our devotional was from Genesis 21:1-8. It was on the gift of laughter.

Then in June the devotional was in Phillipians 4:4-9, where we learned about how to obtain the peace of God. We did not meet in July because of National Convention.

As of the writing of this article we have only met through August. in august the devotional was Psalm 37, and was led by the National President of the Blind Christians Group, Linda Mentink.

The officers for the NFBKS Blind Christians Group are:

President, Donna Wood; Vice-President, Cheryl Miller;
Secretary/Treasurer, Michael Nava.

If you would like further information please contact Donna Wood at donnajwood@cox.net or call 316-640-0650.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith not by sight.

A Note of Appreciation

-Donna Wood

I would like to give a special THANK YOU! to those on the State Convention Planning Committee. It is their hard work that is going to

make this upcoming state convention a great success. I want to Thank them not only for their ideas but for their willingness to step up and give their time and energy outside their work and personal lives.

The following people have my gratitude: Renee Morgan, Susan and Rob Tabor, Luther Fuller, Matt Mitchel, Michael Nava, Anya Fuller, Brandon and Laridda Murphy, Alison Roets and Kennick Wooley.

Each one of them has contributed their gifts and talents to the planning of our state convention and that is what makes it feel more like a family reunion rather than just a convention. Thank You! Thank You!

Johnson-Wyandotte Chapter Report

-Susan L. Stanzel

Our chapter was well represented at the national convention. We have four new members. The chapter voted to give \$100 to the Kansas School for the Blind and to participate in the annual walk on September 28th. We believe being social is a very important piece of chapter membership. Jody and Don have been hosting a monthly movie night and game night. Jody announces this each month on home-on-the-range and everyone is encouraged to join.

Registration for the NFB of Kansas 56th Annual State Convention November 1-3, 2024 Double Tree
Lawrence

Please send registration form and payment to Robert Fuller at 1120 Randall Rd. Lawrence, KS 66049 or
PayPal to treasurer@nfbks.org and go to the Friends and Family button. Please make checks payable to
the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas.

If you are registering multiple attendees, please include all names of those you are registering.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Pre-registration: \$5.00 ____ = _____

Registration at the door: \$10.00

Luncheon: \$20.00 ____ = _____ Banquet: \$30.00 ____ = _____ Vegetarian Meal? # _____

The convention will be held at Double Tree Lawrence

200 McDonald Drive Lawrence, KS 66044—Telephone (785) 841-7077. Room rates are \$129 per night
(includes breakfast). Please come and join our 56th annual state convention!

Live the Life You Want!