The MAPBC met for our January meeting on Thursday, January 11th. The meeting began at 6:12PM. Those in attendance included:

Youme Nguyen Ly

Hai Nguyen Ly

Jennifer Bose

Stephanie Valdes

Ellen Bartelt

Liz Lesperance

We did an icebreaker where we discussed our goals for the parents’ division in 2024. We were joined by Ellen Bartelt who is a teacher of the visually impaired in Allston. She will be working towards establishing a BELL Academy here in Massachusetts.

Liz recited the NFB pledge.

Stephanie provided updates from the January presidential release which included:

* HR3702/S1467 is the Accessible Technology Act. This bill is being reviewed at the national level and needs co-sponsorship
* The summer internship is returning this summer and will run from June 3rd to August 9th
* The NFB cooking group is launching a campaign to increase the accessibility of kit chen appliances. At this time, they are requesting information on large kitchen appliances that are accessible.

Liz put forth a motion to approve the December meeting minutes which Stephanie seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Stephanie advised that the state convention is approaching quickly. If you are interested in attending, please contact the Salem Waterfront hotel ASAP to make your room reservation as rooms are filling up quickly.

The parent’s division is planning on putting together a children's basket for the online auction.

Liz will speak to the convention committee about including a question about childcare on the convention registration form.

One of our major goals in 2024 is to focus on outreach. To achieve this goal, we would like to have documentation that we can distribute describing the division. Hai suggested reaching out to the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children to see if there is an existing template which we could then customize for Massachusetts. Hai and Youme will reach out to the NOPBC. Stephanie advised that once we have documentation we can distribute, we could then contact companion blindness organizations and attend their events to share our outreach materials.

Stephanie suggested that for the next meeting we could each research an organization that we could get involved with further. While in attendence at these events, we could sign people up for the free white cane program and slate and stylus program.

We discussed fundraising. We would like to hold an accessible Easter hunt. Easter is on March 31st of this year. Youme located an organization that builds accessible Easter eggs and will reach out to find out what these materials entail. Jenn's daughters are in girl scouts and the troops may be able to help assemble the eggs. This is also an opportunity to teach the girl scouts about blindness. We only have two meetings from now until Easter so if we cannot get the fundraiser organized in time we will plan to hold it the following year.

Hai brought up that we all need to pay our membership dues of $5.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 15th. Stephanie and Ellen will be back from their BELL training then.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16PM.