**NABS Notes December 2015**

*The National Association of Blind Students --*

*A proud division of the National Federation of the Blind*

In this edition of the NABS monthly bulletin:

1. The NFB National Scholarship – Apply Today!
2. Congress Needs Your Stories!
3. NABS During Washington Seminar 2016
4. An Update on Our Annual NABS Café
5. No Barriers Youth
6. State Updates
7. December NABS Board Meeting Minutes

**The NFB National Scholarship – APPLY TODAY!**

Are you legally blind?

Do you reside in the United States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico?

Are you pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time, postsecondary course of study at a U.S. institution in the 2016 scholastic year?

Are you available to attend the entire NFB National Convention in Orlando, Florida from June 30-July 5, 2016?

Are you eager to meet Federation leaders and network with some of the brightest, most passionate mentors out there?

If you said yes to all of these questions, then we strongly encourage you to apply to our 2016 National Scholarship Program! To recognize achievement by blind scholars, the National Federation of the Blind annually offers blind college students in the United States and Puerto Rico the opportunity to win one of thirty merit-based, national-level scholarships ranging in value of $3,000 to $12,000. All scholarships awarded are based on academic excellence, community service, and leadership.

Visit our website at [www.nfb.org/scholarships](http://www.nfb.org/scholarships) to begin your application!
Remember: applications, along with all necessary documents, must be submitted no later than March 31, 2016. Do not wait until the end of February to start gathering additional information and beginning the online form.

**Congress Needs Your Story!**

Have you ever struggled to succeed academically because of inaccessible software, websites, electronic course materials, or applications?

Do you receive accessible textbooks late, or even not at all?

Do you feel that your ability to excel in the classroom has been tampered with due to unequal access to education?

If you said yes to any of these questions, then we need your help! With just over three weeks until Washington Seminar, the National Association of Blind Students is making our final push to collect personal testimonies from each of you. With an ambitious goal of 250 letters, it is up to you to help us reach just that. These stories do not take more than 30 minutes; and make all the world of difference. It is much more powerful to present 5+ letters when speaking to your representatives. Our Congressmen care; and they need to hear from their constituents in order for change to occur. Particularly for those students who are not attending Washington Seminar this year, we need your contribution in order to improve the opportunities for blind students across our nation. We are briefly sharing our experiences, urging Congress to support to creation of voluntary guidelines, and pushing for equal access to education.

Please send all personal letters to Kathryn Webster at [kathrynwebster.nfb@gmail.comm](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/h/1dn5pj0sc505m/?&cs=wh&v=b&to=kathrynwebster.nfb@gmail.comm) by January 10, 2016. If you need guidance when drafting your letter, please feel free to reach out and sample letters can be provided. Thank you for your commitment to changing what it means to be blind.

**NABS During Washington Seminar 2016**

This year, NABS is hosting an array of events that will surely grab the attention of any blind student.

Beginning Monday morning, January 25, at 9am, we will kick off 2016 with an engaging, interactive, and enlightening Winter Seminar. Come join us until noon to hear from our National President, Mr. Riccobono, our Governmental Affairs team, guest speakers, and so much more.

Still curious after listening to our panel speakers and presenters? Join us in smaller group discussions moderated by NABS leaders to get all of your questions answered.

Following the NABS Winter Seminar, we welcome all student presidents to join NABS President, Sean Whalen, for our Student Presidents Luncheon from 12-2pm.

From 2-4pm, join our National Advocacy and Policy team for our Legislative Seminar where you will learn more about our four issues, hone in on best practices when conversing with Congress, and get all of your questions answered before we venture out to Capitol Hill Tuesday morning.

You won’t want to miss the Great Gathering-In from 5-7 on Monday evening in the ballroom! Join our Federation family as we kickoff the week with high energy, comradery, and hope for the future.

Finally, grab a friend and head on over to the NABS Café on TUESDAY night from 8pm-12am to enjoy some music, treat yourself to the cash bar, and indulge in some delicious food.

**An Update on Our Annual NABS Café**

During Washington Seminar, the National Association of Blind Students hosts an evening event with musical performers, food, drinks, and an auction. This year, the NABS Café will be on Tuesday night from 8pm-12am.

Have you ever wanted to explore Sea World before or after National convention? Are you tired of your weak iPhone speakers and need some heavy duty Bluetooth speakers? Look no further. NABS has put together a variety of auction items from electronics to trips to a fancy Keurig maker with an assortment of K-cups!

If auctions are just not for you, no worries! You are more than welcomed to come on in, meet new friends, interact with old ones, and snack on some great desserts. You wouldn’t want to miss a performance from the Federation-renowned Precious Perez and Meaghan Roper of Massachusetts, as well as so many others!

No Barriers Youth

Leading the Way: Grand Canyon Sound Academy

<http://nobarriersyouth.org/programs/leading_the_way>

This program is for students who are blind/ visually impaired or fully-sighted.

A group of 20 teenagers from across the U.S. will be selected to receive scholarships for a once-in-a-lifetime leadership adventure: Grand Canyon Sound Academy.

Dates: July 24-August 4, 2016

Student Program Fee and Scholarship: In celebration of the National Park Service’s 100th birthday, the Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division is providing generous scholarship support. Youth participants will only be responsible for paying or fundraising a $300 No Barriers program fee as well as travel costs to/from Phoenix, AZ. (This reflects a scholarship of $2,700/person). Selected participants will be expected to fulfill a set of scholarship requirements before, during, and after the expedition.

TO APPLY: Submit an online application and correlating materials here:

<https://nobarriersusa.wufoo.com/forms/2016-leading-the-way-grand-canyon-sound-academy/>

Application Deadline: January 8, 2016

**State Updates**

All state updates are printed below as they were received from their senders.

 Arizona

Greetings and happy holidays from Arizona students! Here in the great state of Arizona where the sun shines year round and Mr. Clause has to shed a few layers before making his annual deliveries, we are excited to share some holiday updates. Last weekend several Arizona chapters held their holiday parties and it proved to be an excellent time to raise funds for the student division. Across the North valley to the Southern area of Arizona we auctioned of holiday gift baskets and were able to raise over $500. As the end of the year approaches and we are nearing the New Year we feel it is necessary to begin 2016 with some fun. Following our Christmas fundraisers we are looking into an event for New Year’s to raise awareness and do some recruiting. This year AzABS is sending two board members to Washington Seminar to represent Arizona and advocate on behalf of blind students all across the Nation. As mentioned previously we are working on planning an Arizona student seminar aimed to raise awareness of the NFB and how to get involved, how to plan for the transition between high school and college, and other fun topics. Things are coming together nicely and very soon we will be sharing the details of the event with you all.

 Colorado

Winter has set in and Christmas is coming up, so the Colorado students got together last weekend for an afternoon of ice skating downtown Denver, followed by a night out at dinner.  We enjoyed getting together with new and old friends before we head out for the holiday.
In the New Year, we will be starting our NFL play-offs survivors’ pool to raise funds for the division.  Everyone is welcome to participate. We are still planning a leadership seminar among other things.  Stay tuned for much more to come in the New Year.

Happy Holidays!

 Louisiana

On the last weekend of October LABS had our annual student seminar. We had around 40 participants from high school, college, and some LCB students as well. We had a presentation by Dr Bell and his wife talking about working with disability services, rehab, using readers/drivers, along with other aspects of college. We also introduced the various aspects of the NFB, discussing the difference between and getting involved in chapters, divisions, and affiliates to all the students in attendance. We had many other things going on throughout the day on Saturday and the students were able hang out Friday night and Saturday night with different activities to get acquainted with one another and build friendships that will hopefully last for a long time. The students left on Sunday morning to head back home. We had a great turnout and everyone seemed to enjoy the weekend and learn a lot of new information. I want to thank Pam Allen, Eric Guillory, Bre Brown, Treva Olivero, and the LABS board for a great weekend.

Now we are getting information out for our state scholarship and getting ready for our state convention in April.

 Massachusetts

MASSABS is excited, with NABS and NFBMA help, to be sending five students to Washington Seminar.  Almost 50% of the NFBMA delegation will be students, 4 of whom have never been to Washington Seminar.

MASSABS will be hosting our winter student social in January at Boarder Cafe, a Mexican restaurant located in Harvard Square.  This will mark the five consecutive quarterly social we've hosted and will be the one year anniversary of the revitalization of the NFBMA student division.

Finally, because students graduate every year, we are in the process of culling our membership and email database to reflect only current students living in MA.  However, we will be adding some additional students this year as they apply for our state scholarship which has a deadline of December 31.

As we celebrate a fantastic year of growth in 2015, we are looking to increase fundraising and engagement in 2016.

 North Carolina

NCABS is kicking off 2016 with one of our student seminars! On January 30, 2016, NCABS will host a seminar on financial planning and social security benefits.  That's right! The entire day is about money and how you can plan for the future.  The session will run from 12:30-2:30pm.  It will be held in Fisher Building on the Governor Morehead School campus.

We look forward to seeing lots of you at Washington Seminar, as we are helping send five great students in North Carolina up to DC to advocate for blind people in America and educating the public on our abilities as active members of society!

**December NABS Board Meeting Minutes**

National Association of Blind Students

Board Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2015

Meeting called to order at 9:02 p.m.

 Members Present:

Sean Whalen (President)

Candice Chapman (1st Vice President)

Bre Brown (2nd Vice President)

Kathryn Webster (Secretary/Treasurer)

Hindley Williams (Board Member 1)

Chris Nusbaum (Board member 3)

Michael Ausbun (Board Member 4)

Treasurer’s Report:

Checking account: $4,741.38

Savings Account: $1,720.61

Awaiting $50 check from Karen Anderson from last year’s auction.

 Committee Reports

Communications:

Social media: Continuously increasing our friends on Facebook and followers on Twitter. Friend us on Facebook at NABS Link and follow us on Twitter @nabslink.

Student slate: Blogs up for December! Nefertiti and Alex Anderson wrote reflections on the Legislative Leadership Workshop.

NABS Notes: Coming out for December! Send any important info or state updates to Hindley at hbwilliams@gmail.com.

Fundraising:

Wash Sem funding wrap-up: Funding almost 30 students to attend Washington Seminar. Coming in slightly under budget which is great! Will be finalized soon. Estimated cost is $5500 total. President has agreed to reimburse NABS for half out of general funds. Students who are receiving funding are required to attend multiple events at Wash Sem, including the legislative seminar.

Auction items/logistics: Please let Kathryn know if your affiliate/chapter/student division can donate any items/gift cards.

Legislative:

Letters: We are making the final push for Washington Seminar. Please encourage all students to write letters. These should be in by January 1, no later than two and a half weeks before Wash Sem. Send letters to Sean or Kathryn.

Membership:

Math call wrap-up: 20+ people on the call on Sunday, December 13. Good questions; Eric Guillory and John Miller were guest speakers; recording will be out soon on website and list!

Training Center story project: Will start working on this with committee. Leaders identified.

New membership call in February (likely on scholarships)

**State Updates**

Hindley Williams:

Alaska: in contact regularly

Georgia: Hindley was there in October; successful Convention; few students attending Wash Sem; regular calls

Kansas: Hindley was there; lots of energy; affiliate is very supportive

Nebraska: just got new president

Pennsylvania: Hindley is student president; trying to get a student seminar off the ground; 5 students coming to Wash Sem

Washington: new division, new president

Vermont: Difficult because of no student division; affiliate contact; will continue to follow-up

Chris Nusbaum:

Maryland is doing really well; board retreat on January 2; Kathryn attends conference calls monthly with the board to kick start new division

All other states are unresponsive.

Michael Ausbyn:

Alabama: up and rising

Maine: no student division, but Dylan-Hedtler-Gaudette is going to help start one

Nevada: new board members; couple of people attending Wash Sem

Ohio: trying to restart student division

Oklahoma: working with affiliate president

Puerto Rico: difficult contact

South Carolina: working on membership, fundraising, and communication with new board

New Business:

NABS Board meeting during Washington Seminar before the Great Gathering In. More information will come.

Sean will send out a vote for a NABS Rep in Massachusetts.

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, concerns or suggestions. The NABS Board works for you, and we want to know how we’re doing! Thanks for reading, and we’ll be back in January.

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