President’s Update

May 2016

May began with the Idaho Gives campaign on May 5. NFBI received donations of nearly $200.00, which is the most we have ever received from this campaign. Even though May 5 was emphasized as a day for Idahoans to support their favorite charities, donations can be made throughout the year. We also received a small check from Amazon Smiles. Even though the donations from these two organizations are relatively small, they demonstrate that there are many untapped sources for donations and all donations count.

Speaking of fundraising, the Treasure Valley chapter held its annual Cycle for Independence on May 21 at River Glenn Junior High. Despite rain near the end of the ride, we had approximately the same number of riders as last year. People were enthusiastic and as usual, the lunch for riders and volunteers was delicious! We still have bike socks which can be purchased for $5.00 per pair. If you were a rider or volunteer and didn’t get your socks, please let Ramona Walhof know. I will have more information in the June update on the amount of funds that this great event raised. We got some excellent pictures during the event, which we can use on our website, for publicity and in many different ways. Thanks to all who participated in this great event. Al Schneider will be the event chair for next year and we are already beginning plans for 2017.

NFBI will have three BELL Academy sites this summer; Boise, Idaho Falls, and Coeur d’Alene. If you want further information or would like to volunteer in one of these programs, please contact Alison Steven at (208) 761-6286, email [pecans65@gmail.com](mailto:pecans65@gmail.com).

I am happy to let everyone know that again this year, we have a Jernigan scholarship winner. Julie Anderson, and her eight year-old son Carver, who is blind and has participated in the Idaho Falls BELL Academy for the past 3 years, will be attending the national convention with help from a Jernigan scholarship. Our NFBI secretary Susan Bradley was instrumental in introducing Julie and Carver to the NFB and he has benefitted greatly from the BELL Academy. One of the ways to support the Jernigan fund, which provides these scholarships, is to purchase raffle tickets. The winner of the raffle will win an all-expense paid trip for 2 to the 2017 convention. Tickets are $10.00. If you would like to purchase tickets, contact me by phone or email.

On May 25, we had a meeting of the state board and the NFBI convention committee. At this point, we have decided to start the convention activities earlier on Friday and Saturday, integrate the business activities into the general convention session, and make the Saturday evening banquet and auction the high point of the convention. This schedule would eliminate the Sunday morning business meeting and make it easier for people who have to travel to get an earlier start. We are also looking into having concurrent sessions for one of the general session times. The thought behind this is that we could have sessions dedicated to students and/or parents.

This model is being used in some other states. We also agreed to send memorials to national to remember Terry Harris, Fred Riggers, and Mike Blackaller, who have all passed recently.

Chris Jones is forming a state wide committee to work on transportation for conventions and perhaps other events. He would like to have a representative from each chapter serve on the committee. If your chapter has not yet appointed someone to do this, please do and let Chris know at 208 308-3376 or [clj53787@gmail.com](mailto:clj53787@gmail.com).

Erin Jepson, from the Palouse Empire chapter and a speaker at our convention, has written an excellent article in the May Braille Monitor entitled If Braille Were Print. It is very thought provoking and I encourage all members to read it. It is still available on NFB Newsline. NFB has a new website for blind parents, [www.blindparents.org](http://www.blindparents.org). President Riccobono has asked blind parents to review the contents of the website, and share content to include. NFB is also looking for parents to be mentors and help in other ways. I know we have many blind parents in Idaho. Please email [parenting@nfb.org](mailto:parenting@nfb.org) to share your information or assistance. Melissa Riccobono is leading this effort. Remember, we need to let prospective blind parents know that they can raise children, and we must also educate professionals such as doctors and nurses that blindness is not a characteristic that defines our ability to be parents.

We have two YouTube videos on our website. One of them is developed by Sierra Schmidt and is Entitled introduction National Federation of the Blind of Idaho, and the other one is Mary Ellen Halverson and her twin grandchildren. The title of the video is Mary Ellen with Henry and Lilly.

I will talk to everyone again after the NFB national convention.

Dana Ard, President

National Federation of the Blind of Idaho

Phone (208) 345-3906

Email danalynard@q.com