



Blindness Matters

Newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of Utah

2025: Volume:2 Issue: 2

From the editors

Each October, we pause to recognize Blindness Awareness Month, a time to educate, advocate, and challenge the misconceptions that still surround blindness. Yet within the National Federation of the Blind, this month carries a deeper resonance through Blind Equality Achievement Month (BEAM)—a celebration of equality, empowerment, and the extraordinary accomplishments of blind individuals across the nation.

BEAM is not merely about awareness; it is about transformation. It reminds us that blindness is a characteristic, not a limitation, and that progress is driven by those who dare to lead, to innovate, and to reimagine what is possible.

At *Blindness Matters*, we see this issue as both reflection and declaration—a testament to how far we have come and a call to action for what lies ahead. Together, we are shaping a future defined by excellence,

opportunity, and unwavering belief in the boundless potential of blind people everywhere.

This issue is BEAM-ing with great content! Including encouraging words from President Everett Bacon, a look around at the great work of our Chapters and Divisors, the debut of the *Federationist Spotlight*, and a special piece from a guest contributor!

If you would like to include an announcement, highlight, fun fact, recipe, or other interesting piece in a future issue, please contact the Editor Casey Reyes via email at caseyry3s@gmail.com

Stay even further connected with all things NFB of Utah by subscribing to our affiliate listserv. To do so, send an email to nfb-utah-subscribe@nfbnet.org with the word “subscribe” in the subject line.

Casey Reyes, Editor



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Bacon's Bits

Hello fellow Federationists and friends of the NFB of Utah!

Fall is in the air, and we are entering into the fall convention season. I have been asked to attend the NFB of Iowa Oct. 17-19 and the NFB of Virginia Oct. 30- Nov. 1.

October is Blind Equality Achievement Month, and I am very excited at the different events our chapters and members are participating in. We are also welcoming Glidance to Utah. They will be demonstrating their new mobility option that hopes to be available next year.

We are very encouraged to learn that Congressman Burgess Owens has signed on to be a co-sponsor of the Website Software and Mobile Applications Accessibility Act. Our national headquarters has been sending

Chapter News and Events

Salt Lake Chapter

Greetings Salt Lake Members,
We are excited to share the lineup of our events for the rest of the year! Here's a sneak peek of what's in store:

October 25: We are gearing up for the Reading Marathon Kickoff Pajama Party! We are excited to gather with everyone to invite Utah children to Read & Dream

out emails about ways you can get more involved in the grassroots level in advancing our proposed legislation. Washington seminar 2026 will be taking place the last week of January and we are beginning the planning stages for this.

Attention Walmart Shoppers! Aira is now free in all US locations!

Lastly, our 2026 annual state convention will take place April 23-25 at the Ogden Courtyard Marriott. Please save the date and more details will be forthcoming.

As always, I am excited and enthused about what we continue to work towards here for blind and low vision people in Utah! Please feel free to reach out to me at 801-631-8108 or email me at ebacon@nfb.org

Everette Bacon, President NFB of Utah
nfbofutah@gmail.com

During our BEAM event! Saturday October 25th, 10AM-2PM.

At the Salt Lake City Downtown Library,
210 E 400 S SLC, UT 84111

November 22: *Panel Discussion* Participate in an insightful panel discussion featuring experts and advocates in the field of blindness. This event aims to foster dialogue, share experiences, and inspire action. Saturday November 22nd, 11AM-1PM.

At the DSBVI building.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

December 20: *Grand Holiday*

Event Celebrate the holiday season with our grand event! Enjoy festive activities, live entertainment, and the joy of spending time with our NFB family. Saturday December 20th, 11AM-1PM.
At the DSBVI building.

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details on each event. We look forward to seeing you at these exciting gatherings and building lasting memories together.

Red Rocks Chapter

October 7: BEAM celebration began with a discussion on various blindness topics such as daily living tips and tricks, safe. Orientation and mobility, effective communication as it relates to advocacy, and resource sharing. This was followed by lunch with a variety of food trucks and Q&A with chapter members which was open to those of the community.

October 8: Mayor Garth Green signed the proclamation for White Cane Awareness Day at the Cedar City Council Meeting

October 9: Chapter meeting at St George City Hall where Mayor Randall signed the proclamation for White Cane Awareness Day!

October 15: Members will meet at City Hall to take photos with Mayor Randall and take a short walk down Main Street.

Student Division

The Utah Association of Blind Students continues to assist in providing a community of resources and support for blind students across the state of Utah. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

BEAM event: Students gathered over zoom on 10/5 for an uplifting gathering to celebrate the achievements and lived experiences of individuals who are blind or have low vision. Among the presenters were national student division leaders, a former Utah affiliate president, and a two-time Goalball paralympic medalist.

Save the date: November 21 and 22
UTABS is planning a student seminar. Stay tuned for more details as they become available.

Next meeting Friday December 12th

Hop on our monthly meetings on the second Friday of each month at 8 PM Mountain Time via Zoom.



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

Federationist Spotlight: Tina Reisner: Mother, Mentor, and Motivator

If you've been a member of the NFB of Utah for a while, chances are you've had some interaction with Tina Reisner. Tina is always doing something for our movement. Whether that be contributing to chapter bake sales, keeping the pack in line at the Guide Dog Users group, or imparting her words of wisdom to the Student Division. We couldn't think of a more deserving person to feature in the very first *Federationist spotlight of Blindness Matters!*

Of all the hats Tina wears — advocate, educator, mentor — the one she's proudest of is mom. Raising her daughter while navigating life with a guide dog has been an adventure, and one that often sparks curiosity from strangers. "People stop me and ask how I manage an active one-year-old and a dog," Tina says with a laugh. "It's all about the confidence I've built and the examples I've had from other blind people."

Motherhood has taught her a few key lessons, always having a backup plan (or 20). "Be ready for plan D through Z," she jokes. "And connect with other blind parents. Their support, advice, and encouragement make such a difference." Tina's guide dogs have been trusted teammates since she was 18. They've walked beside her through college, grad

school, and now parenting — building her confidence and strengthening her advocacy skills along the way. And if she could offer one piece of advice to students or anyone chasing big goals, it's this: *advocate for yourself*. "The more you do it, the more doors you'll open — in school, work, and every part of life."

Through it all, Tina's passion for the NFB's mission has never wavered. A former intern and scholarship recipient, she's committed to giving back to the community that's given her so much. She truly does embody the Federation's philosophy of living the life you want. With her energy, determination, and heart, Tina isn't just living her best life, she's paving the way for others to do the same.



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

Blind Achievement Past to present: The Factory Floor

Hannah Clemenson: Blindness
Matters Contributor

Blind Equality Achievement Month is often riddled with social events and demonstrations to encourage reflection on our history and achievements together. Whether it's a chapter picnic or a White Cane Day Walk, it's incredibly valuable to celebrate in community.

However, October is also, a splendid time to reflect in solitude. Whenever I turn the phrase "blind equality achievement" within my mind, one image springs to my memory. Once again, I'm surrounded by the high fluorescent lights of the factory floor, the rhythmic thump and hiss of machinery, the chatter of low conversation, the staccato tap of canes traveling to workstations and back again. I lived for three months in Seattle and worked at the Lighthouse for the Blind, an affiliate of National Industries for the Blind. It's not for everyone, but for me, my time manufacturing products in a workshop was integral to my knowledge of blind history. For hundreds of years, blind men and women have toiled in light manufacturing, either under government contract through National Industries for the Blind or in sheltered workshops. Chairs, baskets, brooms, and pillowcases

have given way to water canteens, cleaning supplies, and even airplane components. Hours of communal talk, singing, and board silence have become line after line of workers listening to their own private music, sports games, and podcasts while repetitive motion animates their hands. This work may not be glamorous or awe-inspiring, but it fed our families and granted our independence through long-ago decades when the blind had few better options.

For many, it continues to do so. With the money I made during those drizzling months, I was able to return to university and eventually finish my education. Though I'm proud to have now joined the small percentage of blind adults who hold a bachelor's degree, I will never be too proud to remember my months on the factory floor and reflect on the lives and achievements of working-class blind folks who toiled for long, repetitive hours so that they could remain independent, self-sufficient, and hold equal space in society with their sighted peers. I will always see the assembly line as an honorable backup plan and recall fondly the time I spent letting my hands flutter through the centuries-old patterns of collective blind memory.



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND