February 2023 minutes of the meeting

The National Federation of the Blind of California

San Fernando Valley Chapter

Date: February 11, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance, the NFB Pledge and the 1 minute message.

Question of the day: Are you going to listen to the Superbowl’s half-time show of the presentation by Rihanna?

Attendance:

Julian Vargas, Jane Suh, Robert Stigile-President, Joy Stigile, Robin Smith, Julie Skujuns, Lynne Nishihara, Candace Luther, David Lavaggi-Lindsay Kerr, Tiffany Johnson, Ron Hilliard - Member-AT-Large, Shelby Felter, David Delawder, Racquel Decidpeda, Jaymee Castillo, Keith Caballa, Sheila Biglang-awa-Secretary,

John and Nancy Albarran-Treasurer, Jose Lomeli, Alyce Garabedian and Bill Grosjean, -guest.

Total 26 attendees.

24 members and 2 guests.

Announcements:

•Nancy made a happy announcement that John and her will be celebrating their 4 years of marriage on February 16th. Then her next announcement’s for those of you who are signed up with BARD Mobile, they are seeking for volunteers to test Amazon Alexa and/or Google Home. She will send out the e-mail to the list serve where you write and send them an e-mail with your info such as name, phone number with the e-mail that you use for Bart mobile and the kind of device that you use. Once you get accepted, you will receive a confirmation. Her last announcement’s for those who has Lift account, they have a policy where after 2 minutes if you have not been picked up by the assigned Lift vehicle, they will start to charge a waiting fee. But if you have disability, there is some way that you can sign up in order for you to waive the wait fee. And this is done by going to your Lift account on the Lift app.

• In behalf of Hearts For sight, Racquel made the following announcements: Valentine’s fundraiser will run for the entire of February where you can order online cupcakes and cakes. If you need assistance with that, please let her of Joseph Burton know. His contact number is 818-253-4233. This is to support their mental health services as well as the rest of their fundraisers. On February 25th, they will have a hike at Lasso Rita Canyon State Park and New Haul in Santa Clarita area. Bus will be provided but you still have to get to the pickup locations. The 2 pick-up locations are: in Almanser Park in Alhambra and at Las Palmas Park in San Fernando. Details of the exact address where to meet the bus will be given once you RSVP. Then on March 7th, they will have a dinner fundraiser at Shakey’s in Whittier Address of the location will be sent on our list serve. On March 18, there will be a bike ride in Lake Balboa Park. On March 25, there will be a combination of hike and going to the beach in Crystal Grove, Orange County. This would be very exciting because they will be walking around to some historic areas.

* Julian’s tech corner: he mentioned about the new AI that you can interact on the internet chat. Google’s device is now called Bart. Next will be the Seeing Ai has built in and added a world channel. It has an indoor navigation which is similar with Soundscape and this soundscape will stop working in June. Seeing AI by Microsoft, if you’re not aware of this app, you should have it on your phone because it’s free. It has neat stuff for blindness tools such as an OCR to read your mail, spot read live text and currency. It even reads handwriting to some degree. Then next topic is about AIRA where Julian found out that they no longer offer the Covid test Promotion. But you can still have them help you set up the whole thing and you don’t need to have them wait for the 15 minute wait time. You can hang up and call them back again when your test is done after 15 minutes. His next announcement is that Humanware’s coming up with a new Victor Reader Stream 3rd generation. It has no replaceable battery. It will cost over $500. If you need to replace battery, you have to send it back to Human ware. If you want to learn more about it, there’s a good Podcast to follow. The next item is for those who have problems with Siri lately, if you’ve noticed ever since they introduced the new confirmation tone and if you talk to soon, it will miss a part of what you say. If you want to try to prove your accuracy with Siri, once you summon Siri, just wait an extra second before you start speaking what you want it to do. Next item, a reminder about the CSUN conference On March 15. The exhibit hall is from March 15 to the 17th. You can call Access to take you to the Anaheim Marriott.
* Robert wanted to point out one thing when Julian mentioned about AIRA and for all the changes that they’re making with the plan, they kept their add-on minutes at the same price last year and will extend at the end of February. Robert was suggesting to purchase add on minutes because in March they would astronomically be expensive. The 100 minutes for $90 will go up to $300 for that 100 minutes. Then his next item, a reminder for those member who joined middle part of last year and haven’t paid their dues yet, please send your $10 to Robert. Next reminder about social call. Robert will revamp the schedule to just have it on the 4th Friday because Steve Cook from South Carolina will have a movie night on the first Friday. It’s all described movies. That’s why Robert decided to have our first Friday social call for a movie night. So let’s all join in, bring your popcorn and drink every first and 2nd Friday of the month. He will share the Zoom info to everyone.

Secretary’s Report

 Tiffany made a motion to approve the January minutes as is, seconded by Joy and the motion carries.

 Treasurer’s Report

Nancy sent out the January Treasurer’s Report on February 9, 2023 in the list serve.

Robert mentioned that if you are planning to send your payment for your dues through PayPal, to not forget to select on “sending to friends and family” so PayPal will not deduct their fees. So that’s why on the report for Candace and Steve Lee’s membership dues, $9.70 on each was reflected instead of the $10 dues. PayPal took out a fee.

Fundraising

Joy mentioned that we had a conference call last Monday night and had a few of us on the call but she was hoping that 20 more people would be on a call. We came up with good ideas . What Joy would really like to hear a very sincere answer from everyone here in-person and in Zoom which ones they would find that they could support. Either by participating in the event or by sending out e-mails / notifications about the events. That could be #1. If you say or picked #2, it means that you would not find the event interesting and would not participate and you don’t know anybody else that would also be interested.

So, here are the 4 fundraising ideas: 1. Bob’s Big Boy restaurant in Burbank where the Chapter will purchase gift certificate which we would get them at a certain discount. We can sell them at the actual face value. You can go anytime you want once you have your purchased certificates on your hand. Or, we can plan as a group. With this Bob’s fundraiser we could get 40% for our Chapter. The second interesting idea is the Double Goods Popcorn via internet where you can place your order online and have it delivered to your door. With this we get 50% for our Chapter. The next one is Tupperware which can be done via Zoom. You can also call over the phone to place your order. We get 15% out of the sales. You can call anytime for that month and have it delivered at your home with a little extra for shipping and delivery fee. The fun part, our Tupperware representative would schedule a Bingo game via Zoom where giveaways and door prizes and given out. The last idea is Pampered Chef for all your kitchen needs, tools and kitchen items where we can do it in Zoom and in-person. 20% of the sales will proceed to our Chapter as well.

Now Joy asked everyone to vote or choose either #1 where you participate or get your friends and families participate. Or you can pick #2 where you don’t find any of it interesting and you don’t know anyone that would also be interested ant that you need more ideas. Joy asked members that are in-person and voted for option #1 are as follows: Tiffany, Robin, Candace and Jane. Then in Zoom, the following voted for #1: Racquel, Sheila, Ron, Jaymee, Julian, Jose, Bill, Keith, Nancy & John. Lynne selected #1 on the first 2 options and #2 from the 2nd 2 options.

\*Note: For those whose names were missed and was unable to hear your name or voice in the recordings, please let Joy know your selected options.

Racquel requested to not have a fundraising activity at the same time that the Hearts for Sight are having their own activity so more people can join. Robert suggested to have a fundraising in April, after our Chapter meeting. He asked Joy to put it out in the list serve for those who would be interested to join.

National Convention

It will be on July 1st to 6th Houston Texas. There will be Jernigan grants for first time attendees. Deadline to apply for that is April 15th. You need to send a letter requesting a grant to the Jernigan committee. Let them know why you want to attend the convention. Our Chapter will also provide a grant and will be discussed later with the Board. Remember that our fundraising activities help with the grants not only for the National convention but for the State convention as well.

State convention

Nothing has been discussed yet in details. Robert is hoping that the State convention will be in mid-October. The Inland Empire Chapter is working on a bus to travel up North for the convention.

Washington Seminar

Robert, Lindsay and Tiffany traveled to Washington DC. The issues that they took to the Congress are as follows: Blind Americans return to work Act dealing with Social Security. Then there’s the medical devices, a Non-visual Access Act dealing with digital interfaces devices. And also they have the website and Software Accessibility Act. None of these 3 issues have numbers yet but they should have it soon. Once they do, Robert will call everyone in the Chapter to contact your Congressional members office and try to get co-sponsors. Robert asked one of our National staff about the 2 bills that they were working on last year. One of them was the Access Technology Affordability Act which would provide a tax refund of $2000 and the other bill for Transformation Integrated & competitive Employment and asked what happened to them? They are actually still continuing on working on it. . He continued by explaining that Washington Seminar is basically a showcase of issues that we want Congress to know about. All of the 5 bills have bill numbers and we will be notified by these through e-mail.

Presidential Release

Presidential Release #524 was played. President Marc Riccobono thanked Robert and Joy for becoming the newest member Of the Dream maker Circle. For more information, you can contact Robert.

Lastly, Robert asked the attendees if there anyone who would like to become a new member or re-join the Chapter. Candace made a motion to accept Alice as a return member, seconded by Tiffany and the motion carries.

Joy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Racquel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 am

Respectfully submitted:

Sheila Marie B.C.

Cell: 818-404-7646

Chapter secretary and

Chair of Fundraising Committee

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