April 2023 Chapter meeting

The National Federation of the Blind of California

San Fernando Valley Chapter

Date: April 8, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 am. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance, the NFB Pledge and the 1 minute message.

Question of the day: What is your favorite food item to have in Easter or pass over?

In attendance:

John and Nancy Albarran-Treasurer, Keith Cabala, Racquel Decipeda, David and Valerie Delawder, Ron Hilliard-Board Member-at-large, Tiffany Johnson, Candace Luther, Lynne Nishihara, Julie Skujuns, Joy Stigile, Robert Stigile-President, Jane Suh, Anthony Melena, Jo Anne Seaman, Bill Grosjean, Shelby Felter, Lindsay Kerr, Robin Smith, Julian Vargas, Jaymee Castillo, Alyce Garabedian and Donna Roysner-guest.

Total: 24 attendees.

23 members and 1 guest. .

Announcements:

* Candace has a friend named Britney Bram from Bakersfield who’s going to the National Convention and she’s looking for a roommate. Candace can send her information if you’re interested.
* Lynne announced that a PhD student at Caltech that wants low vision test subjects for one of her studies which is geared to the National Institute of Health. So she has a small budget and can pay $25 an hour. You will be working on a computer screen and answering some questions.
* In behalf of Hearts for Sight - HFS, racquel made a few announcements. On April 16 Sunday , they will have a hike at the Canyon and State Park located in New Haul, Sta. Clarita area. HFS will be providing a bus ride from the 2 bus stop locations in Alhambra and in Las Palmas Park in San Fernando. She will provide the exact address and the meeting spot when you RSVP. This will be an all day activity. The first bus will pick up at 8 am and will be back at 4 pm. Then the 2nd announcement is their bike ride on April 23rd Sunday at the Long Beach Shoreline from 10 am to 12:30 pm or 1 pm. If you want to hang out together after, there are plenty of restaurants in that complex. Information will be sent out as well. Now, if anyone who’s interested in joining the Friday happy hour cardio at 1 pm. This is a fitness program and if you have any cardio machine such as treadmill, elliptical, rowing machine or even though you don’t have any of those kind of machines, you can still join them. Joseph burton is leading this program. Lastly, HFS has now a 33-34 oz. size water bottle with their logo on it. With a $33 donation and up, you can get have a water bottle.
* Nancy sent out the information on the list serve about the Disability Community Resource Center – DCRC has received a grant through a partnership with the company called Cerebral. This is to provide a 2 month free teletherapy or virtual therapy. If you are interested, you have to register with DCRC as a member in order to be able to take advantage of this Cerebral program. It is only free for 2 months. If you need assistance in enrolling, you can contact them at 310-390-0611.
* David shared the news about AIRA. If you want to do a hands free, they took away the voice command. Robert added that recommendation after everything’s fixed, the suggestion is that you can download the new app but don’t get rid of the old one because is no longer in the App store. You can actually do a lot of things on both apps at the same time. The old app has the features that the new app does not have.
* Tiffany announced that Les Sebatnik was rushed to the hospital and is need of your prayers. If anyone would like to visit him, the address is 5601 East De Soto Avenue a Kaiser hospital Woodland Hills, 5th floor room 510.
* Julian’s Tech corner is as follows: a new neat app called Oko, an AI co-pilot for the blind. What this app does with the use of the iPhone camera, you can point this at a traffic signal or pedestrian signal and it will indicate you via sound or vibration to signal whether or not if the light is up that says: Walk or Don’t Walk. Only available with the IOS. A tool that goes hand in hand with your O&M training. Julian’s been using this for a month now and has a 100% accuracy. It’s free and once you launch the app , it will take you to the tutorial that explains all and can go back to hear it again. Appleviz.com has a podcast about it. The next item, anybody that uses the Cash reader app which not too long ago it tells you that the subscription has expired. If you are not careful, you’ll be led to believe that you have to sign up again. The answer is NO and you do not. You basically close the subscription window. Go to the stings and activate the button that says “find, activate and restore purchases.” This will put you back where you should be. The next item, we’ve talked about the old and new AIRA app. It’s good to keep both. In the new app, the connection is a little bit smoother but Julian still keeps the AIRA legacy app. Last but not least, his Breaking Blindness Barriers group will be on April 22nd via Zoom. On the first part, they will be commemorating Dr. Bill Takeshita where you can say your good thoughts and words about him. Then the 2nd part will be the CSUN round up. Julian wants to hear from those people who attended and would like to share your experience to those who were unable to go.

Secretary’s Report

Nancy had a correction regarding a word spelled wrong. Joy found a few spelling errors.

Joy made a motion to approve the March minutes as written with the corrections, seconded by Tiffany and the motion carries.

Treasurer’s Report

Nancy sent out the March 2023 treasurer’s report in the list serve on April 4, 2023.

Fundraising committee

Joy announced the Bob’s Big Boy fundraiser on Saturday April 15, 2023 at the Burbank location. There are a few changes. We are not able to reserve an certain area for all of us . If we want to that, they said they will end up giving us one check and that will be too hard to figure out. She and Robert will be there between 4:30 and 5 pm. The gift certificates that you purchase are $5 each. The Chapter purchases them at $3 each and that’s how we make the 40%. You can also use the gift certificates to pay your tip and tax. You have to pay your bill at the register. You can not leave gift certificates on the table with the check. If you want to get extra gift certificates, you have to do it at the beginning at the register. Nancy suggested to make sure that your gift certificates are in a safe place. And also to make sure to have enough gift certificates.

As far as the Chapter goes, Robert needs to revisit and amend the Constitution. For those people last month, he mentioned that that it has be brought up and re- visited this month and be voted on. So, we need to amend the Constitution of our Chapter since it was adapted in 1980. Our Constitution says that Article 1 name, the name of the organization which is our Chapter shall be the San Fernando Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of California. All of the Chapters that are being organized these days are being organized as National Federation of the Blind of California and whatever Chapter name they have, which ours is San Fernando Valley Chapter. It’s been one of the things that’s been holding us back on our Chapter’s checking account Robert is trying to get things organized with Wels Fargo to get anything in the bank account. . There are a couple of other things that he’s hoping to get done. One of it is that we have someone in the Chapter’s checking account that passed away many years ago and we still have his name on the checking account. So, we do need to amend the Chapter Constitution so it will reflect the proper name of our organization which is National Federation of the Blind of California, San Fernando Valley Chapter. Again, Article 1 name the name shall be San Fernando Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of California.

Joy made a motion to accept the amendment changed, seconded by Racquel and the motion carries.

Presidential Release

National Convention will be from July 1st to the 6th in Houston Texas. Register now and go to nfb.org, register either for in-person or virtual. After May 1st, you can go to nfbtx.org which is the Texas Affiliate which will be the host. You will be able to see what tours that we’re having during the convention.

Robert mentioned that there is a person named Dan

Rourke who came to the NFB. He’s been a National Hockey League official since 1999. He’s father is blind and has met the NFB. Dan is working on something and he also what’s to do something to help the NFB to be known in the community. He’s doing a Route 66 tour. It’s going to be a bike ride starting in Santa Monica riding all the way to Chicago Illinois. It’s a 2400 mile bike ride. There will be 8 places that are going to be involved in this awareness / fundraiser. Look for more information soon. President Mark riccobono wanted to let everyone know that this will be happening. Now for us NFB members, to go to the starting point to cheer him up with all of us with our white canes and guide dogs to shine! This way, the community would know that there are blind people who are members of the National Federation of the Blind and that we are all active, busy and doing things. .

Robert mentioned a couple of legislative things in late March, President Riccobono sent a letter on behalf of the NFB to support in increasing the funds for older people with blindness. We’re hoping that the Senate will increase the amount of funds that they receive.

He also mentioned that President Riccobono sent a letter to the EOOC stating that jobs that require driver’s licenses, even though the job isn’t affected by someone who does not have it to not require a driver’s license.

For more information about the Presidential Release, please contact Robert.

Robert introduced the guest speaker named Debra Erickson who is the founder of Blind Kitchen. Debra has retinitis pigmentosa. Her day job is she works at the Oregon Commission for the Blind and she teaches adults how to cook safely, efficiently and independently. She was a blind student in the Culinary school and graduated in 2019. She has to learn a lot about adaptive cooking techniques so she can be safe, clean and the food can be attractive. The Blind Kitchen is built to share these adaptive culinary tools and also cooking strategies for people with visual loss who want to be able to cook. Order can be done online at the blindkitchen.com. You can also call her at 503-3132345.

Racquel made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Nancy. The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted:

Sheila Marie B.C.

Cell: 818-404-7646

Chapter Secretary

NFB.SFV