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**NFB Pledge**

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.

**Meeting Announcements**

Our next meeting is Saturday, August 12, at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd. We meet from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Anyone needing transportation, please contact Maria Rigogliosi, (321) 795-7376, no later than Tuesday, August 8. This is to ensure you are placed on the list for transportation.

As a reminder, SCAT charges a fare of $1.50 each way, for a total of $3.00. Drivers are unable to make change. Fare cards may be purchased by calling SCAT, (321) 635-7815, option 403 or 604. Fare cards cost $15.00 and provide for 10 trips. Please make sure to ask for a paratransit bus pass.

Our next meeting is chapter elections. There is an article about our elections in this newsletter. We will have a wrap-up of events at National Convention. The 50/50 raffle will also be at our next meeting. Each raffle ticket costs $1 and the winner will receive half of the monies collected for the raffle. We will additionally raffle an audio Bible; each raffle ticket is $1. All members are encouraged to attend our meeting.

**Chapter Elections**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will hold elections at our August meeting. All active, paid members of MSCC are eligible to vote. All seven positions on the board are open to any paid members of the chapter. Any member of MSCC may run for any open position during the election; nominations can be taken from the floor. You must be present at the chapter meeting in order to vote.

**Vision Fair**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is co-sponsoring a Vision Fair with The Fountains of Melbourne on Thursday, September 14. The event is at The Fountains, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901. Come and join us from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and find out what agencies, resources and products are available to you as you journey through vision loss. We are expecting Florida Eye, SCAT, Center for the Visually Impaired, Independent Living Aids and other agencies and organizations to answer your questions and show you products to help you live the life you want.

**The Children’s Hunger Project**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter participated in building packages of food for Brevard County students on June 27. MSCC surprised themselves, each other and everyone else by creating 250 food packages in a little over an hour! What an accomplishment for people who have never done this type of work. Imagine what MSCC can do with more than the 13 people who participated in June. The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter thanks SCAT for providing transportation for many of the attendees. Due to the success of MSCC, SCAT and The Children’s Hunger project are interested in scheduling another date to help feed hungry school children in Brevard County. We are sending out a call to all chapter members, their families and friends, who would like to participate in another session at TCHP. We are tentatively planning our next trip to Cocoa for a date in November. Please see Maria at our next chapter meeting to sign up. This is a worthwhile project for our chapter and gives us time to work, chat with one another and build karma points!

**National Convention Wrap-Up**

This year’s National Convention in Orlando, FL, was interesting and incredible. There were many things to do and learn about the National Federation of the Blind; and many connections to make with members from across the nation. All of us who attended took something valuable away from our experiences. Next year will be the final Convention in Florida and we hope that more members of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will attend.

One of the best things about National Convention is the number of the various sessions held in the first several days. There are many going on at the same time, so finding what you want to do can be daunting. Sessions can include Resolutions (policy statements voted on by the general membership); Legislation (bills either supported or opposed by the NFB); and companies showcasing accessible products (for example, Amazon, Google and VFO). Other sessions taught leaders and members of Affiliates, Divisions and Chapters how to conduct various duties within their respective areas of responsibility. For example, there was a session for Webmasters (those who create and work on Affiliate websites )and Communications and the use of Social Media. It wasn’t all work as fun activities were also available. Some of the more fun activities included the annual Mock Trial (hilarious and funny, but on a serious topic), an original play and trivia night.

Many Divisions within the Federation meet at National Convention. Divisions often meet and hold their annual business meetings at Convention because their membership is spread out across the country and can only meet face to face at Convention. They hold elections and discuss the business of the Division and network with each other.

As you can see, National Convention is an important component of membership in the National Federation of the Blind. Members are spread out and separated by long distances and usually only meet for drinks or a meal at Convention, the largest gathering of the nation’s blind. This year, approximately 2,500 members attended Convention. Once next year’s information becomes available, MSCC will share it with you. It is an exciting, interesting and informative event that you shouldn’t miss.

**M.S.C.C. Celebrates 2nd Anniversary**

August 2017 marks the second anniversary of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, National Federation of the Blind, Florida. This special date in time, provides an opportunity to briefly review history and outline Chapter responsibilities, asking for the full support of our Chapter membership.

The National Federation of the Blind was founded 77 years ago. As time progressed, each state formed Affiliates. State Affiliates became active in creating local chapters. That growth brings us to where we are today in Brevard County, Florida. Membership in the M.S.C.C. is not only a right…it is a privilege. After the August elections, there will be talented leadership in the form of new officers and a new board of directors. Our new leadership will need the commitment of each member to ensure the Chapter is supporting the Florida Affiliate as the Affiliate supports our National Office in Baltimore, Maryland.

Please be considering the needs of the Chapter with regard to maintaining contact with our Florida and Congressional Representatives in areas of blind education and rehabilitation. Locally, there is a need to communicate and visit with the Brevard County Board of Commissioners on matters of county funding for transportation and community leadership. Each member is asked to play a role to ensure the Chapter grows in number and visibility at the local level. Consider the part you can play in support of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, N.F.B.F.

Our Florida State Affiliate needs M.S.C.C.’s commitment to continue their work in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. The Affiliate is a key supporter of the National N.F.B. Office in Baltimore, Maryland.

Think of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, National Federation of the Blind of Florida as part of a large triangle. The National Office is the base of that triangle; the Florida Affiliate is supported by the base; the M.S.C.C. is supported by the Affiliate. However, do not forget that the levels of support also filter down. It is truly a two-way street and each of the three levels must strongly support the other two in our efforts to change what it means to be blind.

Attendance at important public meetings, sale of raffle tickets for the Chapter and the Affiliate, assisting with community events and working on M.S.C.C. projects are a responsibility of all chapter members. Start now to consider what you can do to assist the M.S.C.C. as it moves forward to change what it means to be blind. Providing time and effort to Chapter projects is part of the responsibility each member shares!

**10 Things You Didn’t Know About SCAT**

1. Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) was formed in 1985.

2. It was formed as a replacement for two competing bus services in Brevard County; Brevard Transportation Authority (BTA) and Consolidated Agencies Transportation System (CATS).

3. Both refused to cooperate with each other and often got into territorial and service disputes.

4. A countywide contest was held to determine the new name of the system. The new system was named Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT)

5. The service was designed around the special needs of the elderly and the disabled.

6. SCAT serves not-for-profit agencies through separate contracts with those agencies.

7. SCAT also operates paratransit services to serve the mobility needs of those who are unable to utilize fixed routes.

8. Paratransit is generally a curb-to-curb service accessed through a trip-by-trip reservation.

9. Space Coast Area Transit oversees the Volunteers in Motion Program. This program relies on volunteers to provide transportation services to qualified elderly citizens of Brevard County.

10. In 2012 SCAT had a record-breaking bus ridership of 11% or 2,040,000 passenger trips and an all-time record of 2.6 million system-wide passenger trips (including vanpools and Paratransit).

**Technology Tidbits**

Reprinted from: http://www.cnn.com/2017/07/19/health/hand-transplant-zion-harvey-study/index.html

Baltimore boy's new hands still gripping strong

By Jacqueline Howard, CNN

In 2015, the Baltimore boy made history as the first child to successfully receive a double hand transplant. Now, at 10 years old, Zion can use his new hands to perform everyday tasks that other children might take for granted, such as reading and writing, making his lunch and gripping a baseball bat.

"He was able to grip a baseball bat, which was something he wanted to do, by about a year, but now he can do it more powerfully with more coordinated motion between the right and the left hand," said Dr. Sandra Amaral, medical director of the hand transplant program at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who was involved in Zion's care.

"Most of his functional outcomes or progress have been really related to doing things more efficiently and effectively," she said. "A few new things that he can do: zip his pants, rip open a granola bar by himself and manipulate it to eat it."

Additionally, Zion can go to the bathroom without any help, said Dr. L. Scott Levin, chair of the department of orthopedic surgery at Penn Medicine and surgical director of the hand transplantation program at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who led the surgery.

"He really has gained tremendous independence, which is what we all strive for in our personal lives," Levin said. "We have restored, even in this little boy, a sense of personal dignity."

Levin, Amaral and 28 other doctors and researchers co-authored a paper describing Zion's history-making surgery and recovery, published in the journal The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health on Tuesday.

While Zion has not achieved any new significant milestones since last summer at the one-year anniversary of his surgery, the authors of the paper wanted to document in the scientific literature that his surgery was a success. Zion and his family were unavailable to comment on the new paper and his progress at the time of publication for this article.

Zion's hands and feet were amputated when he was 2 years old due to a life-threatening sepsis infection that resulted in the failure of multiple organs.

Then, at 8, he underwent a complicated 10-hour surgery in which the hands of a donor were surgically connected to his arms and became his own.

"This isn't the first amazing thing that he's done. He's been doing amazing things since he's been sick. I don't know many adults that can handle half of his life on a day-to-day basis," Pattie Ray, Zion's mother, said in 2015 before his surgery.

Fast-forward to about 18 months later, and "for our case report, he was actually able to write out his name for me to provide photo release consent," Amaral said of the new paper.

The paper reinforces that hand transplantation in a child can be surgically, medically and functionally successful under certain circumstances -- and even life-changing for a family, Levin said.

He said there's one moment immediately after Zion's surgery that he will always remember.

"I spoke to Zion's mom, Pattie Ray, and I said, 'Your little boy has two new hands,' and she just started to hug me and got teary-eyed," Levin said.

"I think (Zion) was a pioneer and his mom was courageous enough to allow us to engage our team to transplant his hands, and the end result, two years later, is a wonderful outcome thus far," Levin said.

After Zion's bilateral hand transplantation surgery, Levin said, his team closely monitored the boy's brain, using MRI and other imaging techniques to assess the progress of his hand function. After all, since Zion was 2, his brain had been used to functioning with no hands. After his surgery, that suddenly changed.

"When we gave him hands and connected his nerves to his new hands, those areas of the brain (that are responsible for hand function) woke up," Levin said, adding that it took only a few months for those brain regions to light up in the brain images.

Zion's bilateral hand transplantation procedure now holds clues to how such surgeries could be performed in other children, something that Levin said is being explored at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Another possible hand transplant candidate is being evaluated, he said.

"So, the program is continuing," Levin said. "This kind of transplant is here to stay."

Zion knows that his surgery and recovery have helped doctors prepare for future transplant candidates, and he has been eager to help others, Amaral said.

"He lets us videotape him, and he lets us study his brain, and lots of these tests take hours and hours of time, but he never puts up a fuss about that," she said. "We've talked a lot about how he's kind of the first, but hopefully, there'll be more, and so I think that he's mindful about making sure we get as much information to help others."