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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 will be Saturday, June 8, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901.

Please note that there is a change for our July meeting. We will meet at our regularly scheduled day and time. We will meet on Saturday, July 13, 9:30 a.m. until noon.

We will have a 50/50 raffle at our next meeting. Tickets cost $1 each. The prize is half of the money collected. At our June meeting, the guest speaker will be Deb Martin, Director of the Cocoa talking Book Library and a member of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter. Debbie will discuss the Talking Book Library, the NLS Book player and be available to answer your questions about the service.

**2019 5th Annual Car and Bike Show**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is hosting its Fifth Annual Car and Bike Show on October 12, 2019. This is our biggest fundraiser and chance to educate the public about blindness. Each year, we hold a show to celebrate White Cane Day, which is observed on October 15. In 1964, Congress passed the White Cane Awareness Day Act. The white cane is our most ubiquitous symbol of freedom and independence. We expect our members to attend with their white canes and be visible to our sighted peers in the community.

White Inspector gloves will be given out so we can “see” the vehicles through touch. Vehicle owners will be on hand to describe their cars or motorcycles.

MSCC needs each member to assist with door prizes for our car and bike show. Door prizes create interest and fun. Over the past few years, door prizes have gained in importance. We would like each member to bring to us one item to be used as a door prize. For example, a gift card, bottle of wine or sparkling juice. We encourage you to contact professionals, businesses, grocery stores, auto shops, etc. Each year we place raffle tickets in the envelope given to each vehicle that registers and call the numbers off throughout the show. Anyone wishing to help plan our fundraiser, please contact Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500.

**The High Roller Raffle/State Fundraiser**

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida is having a fundraiser that will run through National Convention in July. The High Roller is a raffle with a three-tier cash prize. First place will receive $1,000; Second place wins $500; and Third Place will receive $250. Each raffle ticket costs $5. Members received an envelope at our April meeting or via mail, with tickets to sell. Please return ticket stubs and the money collected to Camille Tate by our June chapter meeting. All stubs and monies must be turned in during our National Convention. Contact Camille, (321) 372-4899, for assistance with picking up stubs and money collected if you are unable to come to our June chapter meeting.

Attendance at National Convention is not required to win. Please ensure the ticket purchaser’s name and contact phone number is written on the stub.

**IMPORTANT! Please make checks payable to: NFBF or NFB Florida**

**News from State Convention**

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida’s annual convention was held over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-27, 2019. It was wonderful to meet up with old friends and make new ones!

As always, our conventions are jam packed with meetings, sessions and fun. We held a Leadership conference during the morning before the convention started. Inviting two leaders or potential leaders from each chapter, we spent the day with members of the Florida affiliate board and our National Representative, President Ron Brown. President Brown is the 2nd Vice President of the National Federation of the Blind and the President of the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana.

Friday night began the festivities. The exhibit hall opened at 5 p.m., showcasing agencies product available to the blind and visually impaired. There was a meet and greet until 8 p.m., with delectable selections of finger foods. The Resolutions Committee, chaired by Camille Tate, met at 7 p.m. and the State Board, under the leadership of President Denise Valkema, met at 8 p.m. NFB Trivia and Treats met at 9 p.m., while our two state scholarship winners met with the state board, other students in the affiliate and our National Rep and his wife. Pizza was eaten. We managed to change the outlook of a young blind woman in the few hours she was at the convention. This experience brings home to all of us exactly why we do what we do. This young lady, Mikayla M., one of our scholarship winners, did not use a cane and would hide her blindness from the world. One evening in the company of so many using a cane, openly blind and having fun taught her that being blind is nothing to hide. We wish her luck at the University of South Florida in Tampa!

Saturday was busy! Presidents and Vice Presidents met at 7 a.m., as they do each year at convention. General Session for the day began at 9:30 a.m. There are so many things that happen during General Session it is hard to put all of it into words on paper. You really have to be there. Our Diversity and Inclusion committee hosted our first Women of the Movement luncheon to celebrate the women of our affiliate who have made strides not just in the Federation, but in their communities as well. It was inspirational, moving and sweet to hear the four speakers discuss their journeys through life. There were various workshops and sessions throughout the afternoon, dinner was on our own and then it was time for the talent show and auction. We are pleased to note that the Melbourne Chapter auction basket sold for $135, with all proceeds to be applied towards a Seniors Program at next year’s convention.

Sunday dawned bright and early with a 7 a.m. Nominating Committee meeting, attended only by the delegates for each chapter (usually chapter President) or the alternate delegate (in the event the President is unable to attend). General Session began at 9:30 a.m. Resolutions were presented to the convention body and both passed! We heard from Director Robert Doyle, Division of Blind Services, who pledged support for our resolutions to bring Braille and literacy back to our blind students and to end sub-minimum wages in Florida. We also held elections that morning and our state affiliate board will remain the same; all five positions up for election had no changes. Here are the results:

President: Denise Valkema

2nd Vice President: Miranda Kilby

Secretary: Sylvia Young

Board 2: Jorge Hernandez

Board 3: Camille Tate

Congratulations to those who were elected to the affiliate board!

Also, on Sunday night was our banquet, emceed by Jorge Hernandez and Camille Tate. We heard from our National Rep, witnessed a marriage proposal and acceptance and gave out awards. We are pleased to announce Maria Rigogliosi received the Outstanding Member Award from the affiliate, as selected by our chapter members!

Monday was report day. We heard our Treasurer’s Report and reports from the various committees and groups within our affiliate.

It goes to show that if you can attend state convention, you should. There is so much to do and learn, it cannot all be accomplished in just one state convention. The 2020 National Federation of the Blind of Florida State Convention will be held at the Embassy Suites in Tampa, Florida. Start preparing from now if you wish to attend. As the new year draws near, we will consider if or how much we will contribute to send as many members as possible to next year’s convention.

**Legislative Alert**

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida has set its legislative priorities for our 2020 Legislative Session. Following our state convention, we will begin to work on those priorities because the next legislative session begins on January 14, 2020.

Our two items currently (one more may be added at a later date) are, protecting the rights of blind parents and ending sub-minimum wages in Florida. We have discussed these topics briefly at previous chapter meetings. Please see Camille Tate at the meeting for additional information, including how to obtain packets you can use while visiting our State Representative or Senator.

Nationally, we are still working on the Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA), Greater Accessibility and Independence Through Non-Visual Access Technology Act (GAIN) and Disabled Employment Act (DEA) All of these and more are important initiatives we in the National Federation of the Blind believe in strongly.

Please see Camille Tate for more information on any of the above legislative actions.

**The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.**