National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky

70th Annual State Convention

Hilton Garden Inn Northeast

Louisville, KY

September22nd-24th, 2017

Friday, September 22, 2017

The 70th annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky got underway early Friday morning with the 5th annual Friday Symposium hosted by the technology Assistance Division, the Entrepreneur Division and the NAPUB Divisions of the NFB of Kentucky. Nearly 50 individuals participated in this all-day symposium that touched on technology and careers. This event was sponsored by Vanda Pharmaceuticals and Retina Associates of Kentucky.

Following the symposium, the Sports and Recreation Division sponsored the 1st annual health and recreation fair. During this event, participants had the opportunity to get a massage, explore essential oils, examine and test out rowing equipment, learn to play poker, and much more. Following the fair, the Sports and Rec Division held its annual business meeting and election of officers.

In the evening, the resolutions committee met to finalize the2017 resolutions that would be put forward for discussion and vote by the general assembly during the Saturday afternoon business session of the NFB of Kentucky.

The Friday night social was a fund time for everyone. A live auction to help off-set the cost of the 2017 state convention took place, with our own Michael Freholm as auctioneer. Individuals had the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and spend a bit of money to help support the NFB of Kentucky and the 2017 state convention. Members went home with some wonderful items including homemade peanut butter fudge, an Apple TV, hand knitted sweaters and afghan, a Vera Bradley bag and many other wonderful items that were donated for auction, and the NFB of Kentucky came out with $975 toward the cost of the convention.

Saturday, September 23, 2017

Saturday morning started bright and early with the annual scholarship breakfast to honor our 2017 scholarship recipient, Ramazani Mubelela. Scholarship committee members, our own state president, Cathy Jackson and our national rep, Fred Schroeder were in attendance.

Morning General Session

President, Cathy Jackson called the session to order promptly at 9:00 A.M. George Stokes of the Frankfort Chapter gave the invocation. Following the invocation, Kennetta Freholm from the Ashland Chapter sang the national anthem and My Old Kentucky Home. Nickie Pearl, president of NFB of Greater Louisville welcomed convention attendees to Louisville.

Roll Call of Chapters and Divisions:

Ashland Chapter: Lora Felty Stephens, President

Frankfort Chapter: Karen Mayne, President

Louisville Chapter: Nickie Pearl, President

Lexington Chapter: Pam Glisson, President

Four Rivers Chapter: No one was in attendance from this chapter.

Entrepreneur Division: Michael K. Freholm, President

NAPUB: Angela Dehart, President

TAD: Sandra Williams, Vice-President

Sports and Recreation Division: Jayne Seif, President

Report from Our National Office:

Our national representative, Fred Schroeder, brought greetings from our national office and national president, Marc Riccabono. Dr. Schroeder talked about how life changing becoming a part of the NFB can be, and how attending a national convention can impact your life. 51 weeks out of the year society tells us all of the things we cannot do, but one week out of the year we get together and remind ourselves that we can do anything that we want to do. Mr. Schroeder outlined current efforts of the NFB and how our efforts impact the lives of blind individuals.

Morning stretch:

Jayne Seif, president of the Sports and Rec Division got us up and moving.

BELL Academy:

Jayne Seif, coordinator of the 2017 BELL Academy Introduced our three BELL attendees, Makenna, Colton and Anthony. She interacted with the children asking them about their BELL experiences. The Children were very cute, and everyone enjoyed hearing from them.

National Braille Challenge:

Lora Felty Stephens introduced Carmynn Blakely, an 8-year-old student from the Jefferson County Public Schools who came to share about her experiences as she participated in the 2017 National Braille Challenge that was held in Las Angeles, California this past June. The NFB of Kentucky and NFBK chapters and divisions helped support Carmynn to make this trip. Carmynn made us proud by winning first place in her category. We are very proud of Carmynn and enjoyed hearing about her experience.

Youth Slam:

Michael Freholm introduced three of the six Kentucky students who had the opportunity to attend the 2017 NFB Youth Slam that was held in Baltimore, MD in July. Riley Seif, Ramazani mubelela and Maury Durret. These students were excited about their experiences. In addition to the six students, three adult volunteers from Kentucky attended as well; Michael K Freholm, Avery Baggett and Laura Parker.

Kentucky Office for the Blind:

Cora McNabb, acting director of the Kentucky Office for the Blind addressed the assembly. Cora explained the current situation at OFB and the plans to merge OFB with OVR. The merger will take place due to the status of state government at this time. We are fighting to keep our own director and separate budget for blind services. Cora outlined the status of current programs across the state and those taking place at the McDowell Center.

2017 NFBK Scholarship Finalist:

Lora Felty Stephens, scholarship chairperson, introduced Ramazani Mubelela, the 2017 NFB of Kentucky scholarship finalist.

Luncheon Board Meeting:

(See minutes from the board meeting.)

Afternoon General Session:

Movie: Do You Dream in Color?

To begin the afternoon general session, the movie, Do You Dream in Color? Was shown. The movie is a documentary of four high school age blind students with various dreams for their futures. After some technical difficulties, we were able to watch the movie. It was disappointing, though, that there was no audio description to the film. This made it somewhat difficult to follow at times. Following the movie, there was discussion and some members spoke about which of the four young people they most identified with.

7th Inning Stretch:

Jayne Seif, president of the Sports and rec division once again got us up and moving.

State of the NFB of Kentucky:

President, Cathy Jackson gave a history of the NFB and NFB of Kentucky in her presidential report. She explained the impact the NFB has had in the past 70 years and how working together, collectively, has made the lives of blind individuals better across the state and country. She explained how individuals from Kentucky have impacted the NFB movement in the past and how we hope to continue to do so in the future.

Resolutions Committee Report:

Katie Adkins and Michael K. Freholm co-chaired the resolutions committee. The committee brings forth three resolutions for discussion and adoption this year.

Resolution 2017-01:

This resolution deals with the merger of the Kentucky Office for the Blind and the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. The NFB condemns and deplores the short-sighted merger of the two agencies. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2017-02:

This resolution deals with the protection of the civil rights of blind parents. After discussion, the resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution 2017-03:

This resolution commends the American Printing House for the Blind and its president, Dr. Craig Metre for his support in our 2017 BELL Academy. The resolution passed unanimously.

General Business:

Treasurer Report:

J. Mike Freholm gave the treasurer’s report as follows:

He explained that NFBK has three checking accounts and two Morgan Stanley investment accounts. The current balances in these accounts are as follows:

General Checking: $5879.96

Cameron Fund: $458.07

Newsline: $4,053.00

Morgan Stanley Funds:

NFBK Fund: $43,743.51

Allen Scholarship Fund: $44,013.46

In his report, Mike outlined income and expenses and explained investments. Katie Adkins made the motion to accept the treasurer’s report. Scott Spaulding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Secretary Report:

A motion was made to accept the minutes from the 2016 NFB of Kentucky state convention as distributed via the email list-serve. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee Report:

Angela Dehart, chairperson of the nominating committee reported that her committee places the following individual’s names in nomination for board member positions on the 2017-2019 NFB of Kentucky Board of Directors: Todd Stephens, George Stokes, Jayne Seif, Nickie Pearl, Karen Mane and Sandra Williams. A motion was made to accept the nominating committee report. The motion passed unanimously.

Election of board members was held with the following results:

Todd Stephens was elected by acclamation.

George Stokes was elected by acclamation.

Jayne Seif was elected by acclamation.

Nickie Pearl was elected by acclamation.

Karen Mayne was elected by acclamation.

The committee placed the name of Sandra Williams to be elected to a board position. Angela Dehart was nominated from the floor. A secret ballot vote was held, and Angela Dehart was elected to the board by a majority vote.

New Business:

President, Cathy Jackson asked if there was any new business to bring to the floor. There was no new business. The afternoon general session adjourned.

Saturday Evening:

Annual Banquet of the NFB of Kentucky:

Michael K. Freholm served as the Master of Ceremonies. George Stokes gave the invocation. Those sitting at the head table were recognized. The keynote address was delivered by Fred Schroeder, president of the World Blind Union.

Shaking the Money Tree:

President, Cathy Jackson gave attendees the opportunity to make contributions and pledges to the NFB of Kentucky. Individual members, as well as chapters and divisions offered contributions.

2017 Scholarship Presentation:

Lora Felty Stephens, scholarship Committee chairperson presented the 2017 Charles and Betty Allen scholarship to Ramazani Mubelela. Rama is a freshman at Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Lexington. He plans to earn his degree in computer technology.

Awards Presentation:

George Stokes chaired the awards committee. Two awards were presented this year. Jayne Seif and Phil Seif received awards.

To conclude the banquet, raffles and drawings from the various chapters and divisions were held.

Sunday, September 24, 2017

Sunday morning began bright and early with division meetings. The TAD meeting was held at 8:00 a.m. Next, the NAPUB meeting was held at 9:00 a.m. and finally the entrepreneur Division meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. This ended the 70th annual convention of the NFB of Kentucky.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lora Felty Stephens, Secretary