**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF MICHIGAN  
48th Annual STATE CONVENTION  
November 3, 4 and 5, 2017  
Four Points Sheraton Kalamazoo**

**3600 East Cork Street**

**Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001**

**Phone: (269)385-3922**

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As president of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan I wish to welcome you to our 2017 state convention. Those of you attending and visiting with us for the first time, we will do all that we can to make your time with us enjoyable, informative and uplifting. We encourage your full participation in all our activities and we invite you to ask questions and share your observations and experiences. The theme of this year’s convention is, “learning with those who live it.” What, you may ask; will we be learning with each other? Who are the people who live it; and what exactly are they living?

The Brand of the National Federation of the Blind states the following.

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.

The people you will be meeting this weekend at this convention come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some of us are relatively new to blindness while others have been blind for most or all of our lives. When we were introduced to the federation we made the decision to live the lives we want. On some days we may be better at doing it than on others. But, coming together and working through our local chapters, meetings, activities and conventions, we draw strength from each other and build upon what we have come to know and believe. We increase our value and gain greater self-confidence as we reach out to other blind people, their families, friends, and the public at large to show them that life is worth living and blindness should not prevent or exempt anyone from living a normal, full and rewarding life. As you come to appreciate our perspective and join with us we can only gain from your individual talents, abilities and experiences. In other words, we want you, and we need you. We need and want your minds, hearts, hands and voices. Together we will develop positions and adopt policies that truly will shape the world view and make a difference in the quality of life blind people will live as we determine our own destiny. This weekend we offer you the best gift we can give you. That is the gift of ourselves. We will always be here to build you up when you need it, celebrate your victories and accomplishments and present you with challenges when matters need our attention. We will comfort you in hard times and fight for you when obstacles are put in your way. Above all, we will love you with all that we have. Throughout our history we have learned that our greatest strength comes from our giving. So we give what we have to you and only ask that you help us in our mission to give to others. Our work will not be finished until every blind person, regardless of background or circumstance, will be given a sense of his or her own real self worth by a world that will believe in the real capacity of every blind person to live an active meaningful life. A world that, by its actions, rather than its words, will expect blind people to contribute to the greater good on the basis of complete equality. The blind people who come to know this organization today must be its future leaders tomorrow. We alone must be the ones who decide what techniques and strategies we will use and develop to live the lives we want. Our years of experience have shown us that only we who live with blindness know best what blindness really is and what it isn’t. Our lives must always be in our hands. This is why we invite you to become a part of us and participate in all that we are. Drawing from our past, living in our present, we plan and dream for our future. The national Federation of the Blind has been the major force in all matters related to blindness and the blind since 1940. So stand and celebrate with us. As our leaders have always told us, “Together we transform our dreams into reality.”

Michael Powell

President, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

## Thanks to our Sponsors

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Indian Trails and OrCam, White Cane sponsors of this year’s convention. Their support goes a long way in enabling us to put on a top-notch event. Thank you!

## Tell your Friends

We encourage you to talk about the convention to your friends including on social media. Our official hash tag is #NFBMI17

Also, visit our website at <http://www.nfbmi.org>, join our Facebook group, and subscribe to our Email discussionlist**.**

## Childcare

Childcare will be available in the Milham Room during the Friday evening session from7 to 9 PM and during general session, breakouts, and the banquet on Saturday and Sunday.

## Free Literature

A variety of free literature is available for the taking near the Academy Ballroom. Please feel free to browse and take whatever interests you. Literature is available on a variety of blindness topics and in multiple formats. Please contact Kim Evans with any questions or suggestions for literature you would like to see at convention.

**HOTEL DINING**

## Potter's Lounge & Restaurant

Named after our first Mayor, Mayor Allen Potter, Potter's Lounge & Restaurant in Kalamazoo offers fun food in an upscale pub atmosphere. Sample some of our specialty cocktails highlighting the Michigan blueberry, such as ourBlueberry Caprihana, the Blueberry Basilito, or the Blueberry Mojito with rum and basil. We're also known for our local craft beers.

Our Kalamazoo restaurant features unique stuffed burgers filled with BBQ pulled pork, Chili, or a Michigan favorite - olives and pepper jack cheese with a fried lake perch from the Great Lakes. Save room for our Michigan blueberry cobbler and locally made ice cream. Enjoy an extensive selection of sports channels so you can watch your favorite teams as you dine. Whether you're meeting a business colleague or just out for the evening with the family, Potter's has a little something for everyone. Potter's Restaurant serves breakfast and dinner daily.

### **Hours**

Breakfast: 6 - 10 AM

Dinner: 5 - 10 PM Dining | 4 - 11 PM Lounge

### **Room Service**

Enjoy our delicious restaurant fare from the privacy and comfort of your room. The room service menu offers the best from our kitchen and serves it to you fresh, hot, and in no time at all.

A convenience store is also available near the lobby featuring beverages and light snacks**.**

**OrCam MyEye
Wearable Assistive Device
Breakthrough artificial vision technology with a smart camera, empowering people who are blind or visually impaired.
Instantly and discreetly read text from any surface, recognize faces, and identify products.
OrCam Gives Independence
Stop by our booth in the exhibit hall for a demo!
WWW.ORCAM.COM
1-800-713-3741**

FRIDAY – NOVEMBER 3

1:00 - 6:00 Exhibit Hall – Fairmount

Stop by our expanded exhibit hall with over a dozen companies and vendors eager to share their latest products and services. See some of the latest in assistive technology, learn about services which may benefit you, and purchase some great products.

**Exhibitors include:**

OrCam (White Cane Sponsor)

A T Guys

Able Zone, Inc

E. M. Vitu

Guide Dog Foundation

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Michigan Association of Guide Dog Users

Michigan Department of Education-Low Incidence Outreach

Michigan Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (MPVI)

MiPOBC/MI BELL Academy

Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind

SASS/Birding by Ear and Beyond.

Say it in Braille

Toy Cathedral

4:00 - 7:00 Registration –Academy Ballroom Foyer

Registration: $20, Banquet tickets: $40; Saturday lunch: $15

4:00 Resolutions Committee – Crane

If you feel the NFB of Michigan needs to take a position on an issue, please bring your resolution or idea to the meeting. This is where we set policy for the organization. All are welcome. Please Email resolutions to stephenhandschu@gmail.com. Stephen Handschu, Chairperson

6:30 - 9:00 Michigan Association of Blind Students – Crane

Learn about the latest happenings with your student division as well as the National Association of Blind Students. Jeff Crouch, President

7:00 - 9:00 Michigan Parents of Blind Children – Fairmount

Come meet other parents and get to know Haley Dare, our enthusiastic parent leader. Childcare will be available.  Discussion items are as follows: Michell Gip, Blind, Inc.; Amber-Marie Schultz, Blind/VI Easter Egg Hunt; membership-building, fundraising (Yankee Candle) and creating a MiPOBC Board; the past year's successes and plans for the future, including the 2nd MI BELL Academy. - Haley Dare, President

7:00 - 9:00 One Touch Self Defense - Ramona

One touch is a self-defense system designed for blind people. It includes: Strategies for avoiding violence, deescalating and removing oneself from such situations, and physical techniques to defend yourself when you can't avoid or leave such situations. You do not need to be an athlete or have any previous experience to participate in the seminar. Cost, $5 per person.

9:00 - Midnight Friday Night Hospitality and Mixer, hosted by the West Southwest Chapter –Academy Ballroom

Join your federation family for music, mingling, and fun. Light appetizers and cash bar available.

## SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4

All general sessions and the banquet will be held in the Academy Ballroom

8:00 - 8:45 AM  Registration – Academy Ballroom Foyer

## General Session

9:00 AM Call to Order.

Opening remarks and Introductions: Michael Powell, President

9:15 AM Report from our National Office: Dan Wenzel

Dan Wenzel is this year’s national representative who will be representing President Mark Riccobono, the president of the National Federation of the Blind. Dan is also the Director of BLIND Inc. (Blindness, Living in new dimensions, one of our three NFB training centers.

9:50 AM Introducing our 2017 NFB of Michigan Scholarship winners,

J.J. Meddaugh, Scholarship Committee Chair

10:00 AM The Year in Review, “My First Year at the Bureau.” William Robinson, Director Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

10:40 AM NFB Training Centers: Michell Gip BLIND Inc.

10:50 AM What it’s Like to Attend an NFB Training Center, Bobbi Pompey, Graduate, Louisiana Center for the Blind

## Break-Out Sessions

11:00 - 11:45 Parents Division – All are welcome.

1. Homeschooling a Blind Child with Lydia Schuck; - Academy front of room
2. Resources for Partially-Sighted Children with Haley Dare,

MiPOBC – Academy back of room

3. Working with Blind Babies and Toddlers with Katie Hurst - Crane

11:00 – 12:00 Technology and Tools, and Online Convenience Apps – Fairmount

Lead by J.J. Meddaugh, this session will focus on modern tools which can make life easier. Grocery delivery, rideshare, crowd-based assistance apps, and more. Bring your tools and tricks.

11:00 - 12:00 Intro to NFB Newsline – Ramona

Join Georgia Kitchen as she introduces NFB’s service for free newspapers, job listings, and much more. Newsline has expanded greatly over the past several years and is more than just a phone-based service.

12:00 Lunch to GO – Potter’s Restaurant

If you preordered lunch, pick it up here. You can also order your lunch at the registration table Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

12:15 - 1:00 Potpourri Questions & Answers from a TCVI, Pat Love-Sypho, TCVI with MDE-LIO - Academy

## GENERAL SESSION

1:30 PM General session reconvenes: Do You Dream in Color:

Quoting now from President Riccobono, “This film is a beautiful and powerful chronicle of four young people striving to achieve their goals and live the lives they want in the face of the low expectations and misconceptions that too often erect barriers between blind people and our dreams. In particular, the film accurately portrays the ways in which our public education system fails blind students.” The National Federation of the Blind is pleased and proud to work with the makers and distributors of this well-crafted and enlightening movie to bring it to a wider audience.” Local chapters are strongly encouraged to have screening events throughout our state to inform the public, stimulate discussion, and promote the work of the National Federation of the Blind.

3:00 PM MiPOBC and Michigan’s First BELL Academy: Haley Dare with panel and guests.

3:20 PM Tactile Tours at the Henry Ford Museum: Caroline Braden

3:50 PM Science camp Fred Wurtzel and others

4:35 PM American Learning Center: Jennifer Hays

5:00 PM Adjourn

5:15- 6:15 PM Michigan Association of Guide Dog Users - Crane  
Derek Moore, President

6:00 Social Hour, cash bar – Academy Ballroom and Foyer

7:00 Annual Banquet Sabrina Simmons, Master of Ceremonies

(Please have your banquet tickets out and visible for the servers)

Call to Order

Invocation

Banquet Speech – Dan Wenzel, NFB National Representative

Scholarship Presentation - J.J. Meddaugh

Awards

Our annual auction will take place immediately following the banquet. Please stick around and support our affiliate. Credit cards will be accepted. Please bring auction items to the back of the ballroom.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

## 9:00 AM Business Meeting, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan. All are Welcome.

## Quorum

## Introduction of Participating Members

## Secretary’s report: Linda Bloodsaw

## Treasurer’s report: Mark Eagle

## President’s Report: Mike Powell

## Elections

## Selection of Delegate to National Convention

## Resolutions

## National convention where and when

## Fund raising for national convention

## Washington Seminar January 29-Feb 1, 2018: J.J. Meddaugh

## Student Division Report: Jeff Crouch

## Parents Division Report: Haley Dare

## Human Services Division Report: Mary Ann Robinson

## Guide Dog Division Report: Derek Moore

## COMMITTEES; including: Legislation, Membership, Communications and Fund Raising

## Chapter reports

## Old business

## New business

## 12:00 Adjourn

12:30 - 2:00 MIPOBC Outing to Sky Zone Trampoline Park

Price is $16 per child/jumper for 1.5 hours plus $1 for sky socks.  This is just a fun post-convention family event to chat, play with friends and connect!  Families that are interested in attending will transport themselves to the park and pay their own way.  The address is 5103 Portage Road, Kalamazoo 49002.  Telephone is 269-459-9243.  If you would like to book ahead of time, please go to www.skyzone.com\kalamazoo.

## WHO are the Blind that Lead the Blind?

## Below is a list of 2017 board members.  New officers begin their terms at the close of business on Sunday.

President

Michael Powell

29619 Fox Run Circle

Warren, MI 48092

Phone: (586) 754-1325

Email: president@nfbmi.org

1st Vice President

J.J. Meddaugh

Email: vp@nfbmi.org

2nd Vice President

Fred Wurtzel

Email: vp2@nfbmi.org

Secretary

Linda Bloodsaw

Email: secretary@nfbmi.org

Treasurer

Mark Eagle

Email: treasurer@nfbmi.org

Board Members

Melinda Latham

Mary Wurtzel

Derek Moore

Diana Mohnke

## Thank you for attending the 48th annual State Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan.

## Save the Date

Please join us for our 2018 convention at the Westin Southfield, November 2-4, 2018.