Uniting Together Over Distance

But Definitely Not Distant

2021 Annual State Convention

National Federation of the blind of Michigan

Thursday, November 11, 2021 – Saturday, November 13, 2021

Anywhere and Everywhere Using the Zoom Platform

Michael Powell, President

# Message from the President

We thought it would be different. Although we looked forward to gathering in person this year, it just was not meant to be. Since COVID-19 variants and vaccination delays have caused businesses to operate at less than full staffed capacity, we determined we could not hold a live state convention that we have come to expect. Therefore, in true NFB fashion, when we must change our course of action, or develop a new plan, we approach it with the same dedication to excellence that has always characterized our movement.

These last two years we have been working in a virtual environment, and we have come to appreciate the options and possibilities the virtual meeting platform continues to offer us. Despite the physical distance that separates us we have become stronger together as we unite together as an organization. Working individually from our respective homes across the state of Michigan, we spend time with each other, hold meetings, attend seminars, teach each other, and deliberate over matters as we speak collectively with one voice. With the virtual environment we are no longer restricted by hours of travel time or poor public transportation services.

This creative spirit of ours, in taking advantage of every opportunity and seizing the moment, brings to mind how the founders of our movement recognized that if we as blind people were ever going to come into our own as a people who represent a normal cross section of society, we would have to be the ones to determine how we see ourselves and how others need to see us.

The rest of the world continues to look at blind people as broken sighted people who have diminished value and capacity because of our lack of physical sight. According to this view, a person is considered blind by either the amount of vision that remains or the amount of vision that has been lost. However, those of us who continue to work and grow under the federation’s definition of blindness believe a person is considered blind when he or she uses techniques and strategies to do things that usually would be done with eyesight if the person had it. We stress the importance of functioning and living actively, not just coping or doing the best to get by with a debilitating eye condition. We are a people who invest time and energy in ourselves as we literally work at learning how to be blind.

As the world continues to evolve and technology and other advancements shape the world around us our ability to function as blind people also continues to evolve as we test the limits of what blindness is and what it is not. We continue to be a living work in progress as we develop our skills and gain confidence in living our lives, getting an education or a job, and participating actively in the federation to pass on what we know to those blind people who have never learned or understood our message.

As our brand message statement says, “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.”

If you are attending our virtual convention for the first time or are from another part of the country, I personally welcome you to the NFB of Michigan State Convention. Let us rededicate ourselves or commit to our cause if you are new to us. We invite you to join with us and help us carry on our work together to build the federation in this present time, dream for our future, and, as President Riccobono says, “ transform our dreams into reality.”

Michael Powell, President

National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

# NFB Branding Message

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.

# 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.

# Convention Registration

Convention registration is available online. Please visit https://www.nfbmi.org/convention to register for the convention. We encourage everyone to register for the convention. Everyone who registers for the convention will be eligible to win door prizes that will be given away throughout the convention. Additionally, current members of a local chapter or state division in Michigan will be eligible to vote during resolutions and elections.

# Tell your Friends

We encourage you to talk about the convention with your friends on social media. Our official hash tag is #NFBMI21.

# Inclusivity, Diversity, and Code of Conduct

We are committed to providing a welcoming, safe, and healthy environment for everyone. Thank you for cultivating an atmosphere of mutual respect in which participants from diverse backgrounds can learn, network, and share with each other. We are committed to diversity, equity, and the free expression of ideas. These principles have been outlined in our Code of Conduct found at https://nfb.org/codeofconduct.

We recognize a shared responsibility to create and uphold that atmosphere for the benefit of all. Prohibited behaviors include harassment, sexual misconduct, and inappropriate use of the NFB virtual convention platform. Prohibited behavior or misuse of the platform will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the convention and/or other consequences. For assistance or to report an incident at the convention, please call 410-659-9314, extension 2475, or email code@nfb.org.

# Zoom Meeting Access

We will be using one of two separate Zoom meeting rooms throughout the convention. We have embedded Zoom links in the agenda to make it easy for you to access your meeting.

## Most of the convention meetings will use the following link:

https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

Meeting ID: 961 269 5221 Passcode: 902855

One tap mobile: +13017158592,98441867949#,,0#,,902855

All of the student division meetings will use the following link:

https://zoom.us/j/98441867949?pwd=d1lhdWs4bGdjR1BPajBLQks2Nk1IUT09

Meeting ID: 984 4186 7949 Passcode: 902855

One tap mobile: +13017158592,98441867949#,,0#,,902855

# Phone Meeting access

We have kept most of the meeting information the same for anyone accessing the meetings using a landline telephone. All the meetings will use the same phone number and passcode. The only thing different is the meeting ID number.

Phone Number: +13017158592

General Sessions ID: 961 269 5221

Student Sessions ID: 984 4186 7949

Passcode: 902855

Anyone who would like additional information using the accessibility features for Zoom can visit the Zoom accessibility page at: https://zoom.us/accessibility.

# Door Prizes

 Door prizes will be drawn periodically throughout the convention sessions on Thursday evening, all day Saturday, and during the banquet. Anyone is eligible to win a door prize if they are registered for the convention and are present on Zoom when their name is called for a door prize.

People can claim their door prize by raising their hand in the Zoom platform. A person can raise their hand in the Zoom platform by pressing ALT Y or command Y using a desktop computer, star 9 if calling in from a telephone, and under the more tab if using a mobile app on a smart phone.

# Thursday, November 11, 2021

## 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Happy Hour Meet and Mingle

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

Say hello to old friends, meet some new friends, and ask questions regarding logistics for the convention weekend.

## 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Opening Session

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

7:00 pm Call to order and Welcome, Michael Powell, President,

7:15 pm A Report from Our National Office - Jennifer Kennedy, Executive director, BLIND, Inc. (Blindness: Learning in New Dimensions)

7:50 pm My Experience as an Amazon Employee – Munzer Abukharsa,

8:10 pm Scholarship presentation – Sabrina Simmons, Scholarship Committee Chairperson

8:40 pm Uniting Together Under Leadership: Why I Choose to Lead – Daniel Hodges, President,

Pieces of Me

9:00 pm Adjourn

# Friday, November 12, 2021

## 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Resolutions committee meeting

 Steve Handschu, Resolutions Committee Chairperson

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

## 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Uniting Together with the NFB Philosophy

Jennifer Kennedy, Executive Director, BLIND, Inc.

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

## 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Exhibit Hall Open House

 J.J. Meddaugh, First Vice-President

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

## 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm How the NFB is like an Oak tree

 Donna Posont and Fred Wurtzel, Youth Outreach Committee Co-Chairpersons

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

## 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm MABS Virtual Dance Party: open to all

Zoom ID: 984 4186 7949

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/98441867949?pwd=d1lhdWs4bGdjR1BPajBLQks2Nk1IUT09

This is your chance to pick the tunes, hang out with old friends, and meet some new friends. Plus lots of door prizes. Tickets are $7 before the event and $10 on the day of the event via Paypal.

Ticket Registration: http://www.nfbmi.org/students/dance-night-registration.

# Saturday November 13, 2021

## 9:00 am – 12:00 pm General Session

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

9:00 am. Call to order and opening remarks - Michael Powell, President

9:15 am The Ongoing Commitment to blind Education in Michigan - Roxanne Balfour, Director, Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach, and Pat Love, education Consultant, Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach

9:45 am Exploring Program Possibilities with Vocational Rehabilitation Services - Bill Robinson, Director, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Lisa Kisiel, Director of Field Services Division, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Juan Ortiz, Director, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons Training Center, and Shannon McVoy, Transition Services Manager, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

10:15 am What It Means to Lose the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind- Richard Clay, Community Outreach Committee Chairperson

10:35 am Equal Rights Equals Participation in Michigan Elections – Fred Wurtzel, Board Member and Mike Powell, President

10:55 am Building Success and Celebrating Accomplishments - Sabrina Simmons, Founder, Eye Learn

11:15 am Building Dreams with Diversity and Inclusion within the NFB - Robert Parsons, Board Member

12:00 pm Adjourn for lunch.

## 1:00 PM – 2:30 pm Michigan Association of Blind students meeting

Rachel Pavone, President

Zoom ID: 984 4186 7949

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/98441867949?pwd=d1lhdWs4bGdjR1BPajBLQks2Nk1IUT09

WE welcome all students and anyone interested in student issues to join us as we shape the vibrant and exciting student division for the future. Anyone seeking an officer position or vote in elections must register and pay $10 annual dues.

Student Registration: http://www.nfbmi.org/students/membership-form.

## 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Blind Michigan Seniors Advocating for Seniors Meeting

Darryl Rice, Chairperson

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

## 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm Business Session

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

President’s Report - Michael Powell

Secretary’s report - Diana Mohnke

Treasurer’s Report - Mark Eagle

Convention Voting Logistics

Election of Board Members

Nominating Committee and Alternate Delegate 2022 National Convention

Resolutions – Steve Handschu

Constitution Amendment

2022 Washington Seminar

2022 National Convention

2022 NFB of Michigan Convention

State Division Reports

Seniors, Students, Guide Dog

Chapter Reports

Kalamazoo, Capital Region, Jackson, New Wayne County, Detroit, At Large

Old and new business

## 7:00 pm –10:00 pm Banquet Session

Zoom ID: 961 269 5221

Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09

7:00 pm INVOCATION Darryl Rice

INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Keynote Address - Jennifer Kennedy, Executive director, Blind, Inc.

Scholarship Awards Presentation –Sabrina Simmons, Scholarship Committee Chairperson

Auction and door prizes – Donna Posont, Door Prize and Auction Chairperson

10:00 pm Adjournment of the Virtual NFB of Michigan 2021 State Convention

# Convention Sponsors

A T Guys

Website: https://www.atguys.com/store/index.php

Best Buy

Website: https://www.bestbuy.co

Humanware

Website: https://www.humanware.com

Pieces of me

Website: https://peacesofme.org

# Thank You!

Thank you for participating in the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan 2021 state convention. We hope to see you again next year at the 2022 state convention, or at your next local chapter or division meeting.