**It’s back: the Blind in Education, Employment, and Technology. .**

**Brought To You By Goshen College & The National Federation of the Blind, Michiana Chapter**

**BEET Conference 2023: Blind People In Service To The World**

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| Friday, May 19, 2023 | 8:30 AM-3:00 PM Eastern | Koinonia RoomCollege Mennonite Church1900 South Main StreetGoshen, Indiana |

More and more, people who live with blindness, low vision, and other disabilities are discovering that living the life you want doesn't have to mean being trapped in a cocoon of isolation, poverty, and boredom, reinforced by the kindly but low expectations of others.  There are many ways forward and upward. Come and meet those who are raising expectations every day.

After an enforced COVID layoff, the 2023 Comeback Edition of the BEET Conference contains hard-to-find and up-to-date detail useful to those who live with blindness or visual impairment and who are transitioning to higher education or into a job. Just as important, we offer educational material and a platform for frank and open discussion of any issues that have an impact on someone who lives with blindness and on any issues seen to impact the sighted teachers, counselors, employers, and loved ones who share life with that someone.

Along with prepared remarks, navigating the college/university environment will be emphasized. Topics of interest to be addressed may include:

* Nonvisual access to online learning platforms at the secondary and/or university level: How to make a truly integrated learning environment for blind class participants on the Web?
* Navigating the physical campus for a blind student. Is it necessary for us to show up to class in person in today’s hyperconnected world?
* Interacting Effectively with your college’s Office Of Disability Services and with your VR counselor; and
* How to convert experiences and knowledge from the high school or college campus into competitively-paying jobs while cultivating both blind and sighted allies.

Space is limited. RSVP to Kane Brolin: (574)386-8868 or kbrolin65@gmail.com.

**Agenda**:

* 8:30 AM: Continental Breakfast And Informal Introductions
* 9:00 AM to 11:45 AM: Prepared Remarks. Featured speakers include:
	+ Ms. Mary Bonds: a story of faith, redemption, and service to others. Having overcome the challenges of blindness, diabetes, and even time spent as a prison inmate, Mary has discovered that nothing will keep her from serving others who come from hard places, nor from serving as sole guardian to seven grandchildren .
	+ Mr. Chris Milewski: the Blind in Professional Food Preparation. Some might remember when Christine Hà, a blind woman, won Master Chef with Gordon Ramsey in 2012. But her story is less unique than most would think. NFB Michiana’s 1st Vice President Chris Milewski demonstrates to us how he gets paid to work efficiently and safely to prepare food for others as one who is legally blind. And he is open to sharing with us tips and tricks on how he shops for food and cooks it for his own nourishment at home.
	+ Ms. Grace Mishler, MSW: the Blind Leading the Blind Toward Success in Vietnam. What are blind people doing to serve others and to raise expectations of the blind in Southeast Asia in the 21st century? What can blind university students and social services providers here in the USA learn from the experience of blind students and teachers based in Vietnam? Come and find out. From 2000 till 2019, this remarkable, blind American served as a program volunteer there with  the Church of the Brethren Global Mission and Service. She initiated new projects at Ho Chi Minh City National Vietnam University of social sciences and humanities, Managing a caseload of 13 blind students while living with retinitis pigmentosa herself. Grace drew attention to White Cane Awareness Day in Vietnam andsynchronized the efforts of several different NGOs, Grassroots disability self-help groups,  and blind  Schools in collaborative relationship with The University.
	+ Medicaid eligibility must be proven all over again if you live in Indiana. If you are a subscriber to some form of either Indiana Medicaid or the Healthy Indiana Plan, find out how to increase your odds of staying eligible and avoiding an unexpected and unaffordable removal from the program you have come to depend on.
* 11:45 to 1:00 PM: Lunch.
* 1:00 to 3:00 PM: Discussion
	+ Ms. Jeanette Shown: Associate Professor at Goshen College and Current Ph.D. Candidate, working in both Computing Science and Social Justice. Are the blind welcome as employees or contractors in the high tech industry? What about in jobs that involve writing code? Schooled in the scientific method and experienced as a professional mediator, Ms. Shown describes her research and the means by which she is developing repeatable methodology that makes it possible for a blind individual from any background to learn the logic and method of writing computer code.
	+ Generalized discussion about technology, best and worst practices in education, and how to most effectively engage with Vocational Rehabilitation, Indiana Disability Rights, and your current or potential employers.

The BEET Conference is a safe sharing environment where questions are welcome and different points of view are encouraged.