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**National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska**

**to Hold Local Braille Training Academy for Blind Children**

**Lincoln, Nebraska June 7, 2016:** The National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska (NFBN) will hold a two-week Braille training academy for blind children on June 13-24, 2016. The NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Academy is designed to provide blind children and children with low vision ages four through twelve with two weeks of intense Braille instruction via hands-on learning and fun.

The NFB BELL Academy, which was developed by members of the NFB of Maryland in 2008, brings together successful blind mentors and students, enabling the students to foster a positive attitude about Braille and an understanding that Braille is an invaluable tool for completing a wide variety of tasks. Including Nebraska, 31 affiliates of the NFB will host the NFB BELL Academy in 2016.

The academy run by the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska is being held at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church, in Lincoln, Nebraska. During the academy, the attendees will become acquainted with how useful Braille can be as an alternative to reading print. They will learn about the Braille code through an engaging combination of arts and crafts, games, outdoor activities, and field trips.

Amy Buresh, president of NFBN, said: “Today, despite the fact that Braille literacy is one of the highest predictors of success for blind youth, only one in ten blind children are learning Braille in school. We are raising a generation of functionally-illiterate blind children who are unable to read or write as well as their peers because they don’t have the correct tools or training. The NFB BELL Academy seeks to reverse that downward trend in Braille literacy by exposing young blind children to Braille and setting them on a path to a life of Braille literacy and success.”

A parent of a previous participant in the BELL Academy had this to say about the experience: “The most valuable thing my daughter learned is that she isn't alone.  She is the only child in her school with a visual impairment and enjoyed knowing there are other kids out there who are like her and face some of the same vision-related difficulties.  The instructors and volunteers pushed her out of her comfort zone and helped her find success in mobility activities she has never had a chance to try at school.  We will be asking many questions in our next IEP team meeting!”

For more information about the NFB BELL Academy, please visit www.nfb.org/BELL.