National Federation of the Blind

Community Service Division

Who We Are

The National Federation Of The Blind Community Service Division is a Proud Division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the oldest, largest, and most influential membership organization of blind people in the United States.

Our Purpose

The purpose of the Division is to promote jointly the positive philosophy of the NFB and the benefits of community service by educating the blind about how to become involved in service, educating the sighted about the true abilities of the blind via involvement in service, and encouraging such involvement in members, chapters, and affiliates of the NFB. We acknowledge the positive effects of community service and service learning with our assertion that service is not only a path to employment and a way to educate, but also a way to learn about oneself and the issues faced in one’s community and country.

What We Do

We work to promote and encourage community service and service learning at the local, state, and national levels of the NFB and to advance the goal of full integration for the blind on the basis of equality. We coordinate service projects that develop confidence in blindness and the alternative techniques that the blind use, create workshops and trainings that develop competent leaders, serve as a resource for the blind and sighted alike about the service field with an emphasis on how the blind can contribute, and promote a positive philosophy of blindness through action and service.

What We Believe

Through these means, we aim to change the perception that the blind are passive recipients of service rather than active providers of service. In order to do this, we must challenge ourselves and others to rethink what service-related activities the blind can do with the proper basic training and understanding of the given service project and the proper non-visual techniques. We believe that taking on projects that allow us to look beyond blindness is instructive both for ourselves and the community. The group thrives with the collective efforts of all who believe in service, the NFB, and the power that comes with collective action and the belief that we can address our country’s most pressing problems alongside our sighted friends, family, and neighbors. Ultimately, we wish to participate in service not as blind people, but as citizens of our communities with the ability and desire to give back.

Who Can Get Involved

Our membership consists of people at all levels of service, from those who have a wealth of service experience, to those who serve from time to time, to those who are interested in serving but may feel nervous or uncertain about getting involved in projects or may not know how to get involved. We strive to meet everyone where they are in their service experience and to serve as a network and support system for those who have a common interest in serving their communities. We also actively seek and welcome partnerships and collaborations with agencies, organizations, and individuals who share our philosophy and our belief in the ability of the blind to participate in community service.

How to Get Involved

We hold periodic conference calls during which we present a topic for discussion or have a guest speaker talk about his or her community service experiences. We also have a blog at http://nfbcommunityservice.wordpress.com that is updated with summaries of conference calls and personal stories about the service work of our members. Finally, we operate a listserv at <http://www.nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/community-service_nfbnet.orgg> where members can connect, share stories, ask questions, and post articles and announcements about service-related topics of interest. If you are interested in joining the group or you have any questions, please contact President Darian Smith at dsmithnfb@gmail.com or (415) 215-9809.