The National Association of Blind Students A proud division of the National Federation of the Blind.

# NABS Notes, July 2017,

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## Convention Wrap-Up

The national student division’s 50th anniversary celebration has come and gone, yet the excitement and energy is more vibrant than ever before. NABS was proud to serve on the 2017 National Convention Host Committee, along with four affiliates: Washington DC, Hawaii, Tennessee, and Arizona. We helped coordinate an NFB Luau, along with the hospitality suite and those responsibilities that come with the host committee’s efforts. NABS kicked off the week with a networking event with music and fellowship. The following night, we hosted our annual seminar and business meeting with speakers from all over the world. Congratulations to Michael Ausbun, Cody Beardslee, Chelsea Peahl, Shannon Cantan, and Luke Schwinck for being elected to the national student board. To bring in some fitness and friendly competition, we implemented an annual walk-a-thon with Dustin Cather of Illinois spearheading this effort. On Wednesday night, the NABS Board, under the guidance of the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, coordinated NABS Olympics, an event that brings our NFB divisions and centers together to showcase their individual purposes and to promote their missions. This event flourished with success, and will definitely be back next year! NABS was fortunate enough to receive support from our national president to financially assist students in attending banquet. To continue our theme of 50 years of progress, we focused on getting one student from each state to attend banquet. Thank you to President Riccobono for his endless support for our students. The 77th annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind glowed with success for our Federation. Over 250 students were in attendance from nearly all 52 affiliates. Our fundraising efforts were overwhelmingly positive, bringing in over $5,800 in profits to the national student division. We could not have put on such an incredible week without our membership both at the state and national levels. As we begin gearing up for Washington Seminar, we need your help. First and foremost, put Washington Seminar in your personal budget, get involved at your state level, and help us build the National Federation of the Blind!

## Rideshare Testing Program:

The NFB is seeking feedback from Lyft or Uber customers who have service animals or who travel with individuals with service animals. Your feedback will be used to assess how successfully Uber and Lyft are implementing new driver training requirements and policies regarding drivers’ obligations to transport riders with service animals, as per the companies’ settlement agreements with the NFB. If you use Lyft or Uber and have a service animal or travel with someone who has a service animal, your help with this testing process is critical. Please see

<http://www.nfb.org/rideshare>

for more information contact Valerie Yingling at

[vyingling@nfb.org](mailto:vyingling@nfb.org)

(410) 659-9314, extension 2440

## McGraw-Hill:

The NFB is investigating the accessibility of McGraw-Hill products and platforms, including ALEKS, Connect, and SmartBook. If you have encountered access barriers with McGraw-Hill products or platforms, please contact Valerie Yingling at:

[vyingling@nfb.org](mailto:vyingling@nfb.org)

## NABS Cook Books:

Greetings NABS,

NABS is selling accessible cook books to help raise funds so we can help sponsor students to attend our national events. Please consider purchasing one of your own and contact friends and family to get one into their hands as well. This cookbook is a diverse collection of recipes submitted by blind students from across the country.  It is divided into three sections which are appetizers, entrees, and of course desserts!  Each section contains a multicultural influence from Asian, Middle Eastern, Mexican, Italian, and down home American comfort food.  At the front of the book it also has helpful non visual cooking tips and where to find non visual kitchen gadgets.  We are able to print these in braille, large print, and regular print.  All varieties are sold for $15.

If you would like to purchase one of your own please follow this link to the order form.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdkhzrqVB9WFrHWcTeeC0o95SH5DgOC82NT8BUZKs872AyfsA/viewform?c=0&w=1>

## NABS Board Meeting Minutes:

National Association of Blind Students

July 23, 2017

Start time: 9:00 Eastern

Committees:

Outreach: Tarik Williams, Chelsea Peahl, and Ellana Crew

Legislative Advocacy: Syed Rizvi, Bryan Duarte and Kenia Flores; will be working with national office.

Fundraising: Cody Beardslee, Edward Shaham, Dustin Cather, and Shannon Cantan Event Planning: Luke Schwinck, Janae Bergmeier, and Elizabe h Scheeler

Dropbox has folders with outlines and goals: 6 month goals and expec tations. All chairs reach out to talk to co -chairs this week by Friday to know when meetings will be. Contact info for chairs and co -chairs.

Monthly board meetings: There will always be an agenda in the Dropbox prior to meeting. Kathryn will email out the agenda 24 hours in advance, but calls will still happen regardless.

NABS Representatives: Kathryn will send NABS Rep request forms out to national leaders, student presidents, and state presidents, to be submitted 6-8 weeks in advance, prior to event being held.

State assignments: all states have been assigned. All of this in in the drop box. Contact student leaders and state affiliates by Friday. Student divisions need us.

Website is going into big update phase. Calls every month. Be there. Meet the board call next week, July 30th.

Adjourned: 9:26 pm eastern

## NABS Blog Post:

From the Editor: The National Federation of the Blind awards 30 scholarships to outstanding students in the classroom, in the community, and beyond. We are proud of these academically talented, yet exquisitely diverse individuals, for raising the expectations of blind people across the nation. Below, we will hear from five exceptional scholarship recipient s, as they share some personal sentiments proceeding the 2017 National convention. Note: Scholarship applications open on November 1, 2017 and close on March 31, 2018.

Andrew Sydlik

I was overwhelmed and transformed by my first NFB convention. As a Ph.D. student at the Ohio State University, I have been studying American literature from a Disability Studies perspective. Disability Studies reflects the NFB's philosophy that the obstacle to success is not one's disability, but society's prejudices and barriers. I came back to school after 10 years working in the nonprofit sector because I still had not come to terms with my blindness, and I wanted to learn about those who had come to think more critically about society's attitudes towards blindness and other disabilities. I discovered the wonderful world of Disability Studies and disability rights, in which the NFB has played a huge role. I also felt that the administrative work I was doing, while valuable, was not quite as intellectually or politically challenging an dsatisfying as the kind of work I wanted to do. Although I have come a long way in the last five years, from feeling ashamed by my white cane to feeling empowered by it, I was forced to confront all the internalized stigma and doubt I still had about blindness at the NFB conference. I've always thought of myself in terms of limitation rather than possibility, and having met all the amazing and accomplished people at the convention, I realize even more fully that this does not need to be so. And hearing collectively the diverse and impressive range of work that the NFB does, I know the opportunities available are virtually boundless. I plan to continue my involvement with the NFB, at the local, state, and national levels as much as possible. And after earning my doctorate, facilitated generously by the support of the NFB and their donors, I see two career paths, either of which will involve my desire to spread the message of disability awareness, acceptance, and rights. I will either continue in academia as a professor, informing students about the misconceptions and prejudices towards blindness and other disabilities. The other path involves entering the disability nonprofit sector, bringing my disability awareness and writing skills to disability services or advocacy work. Whatever I do, I will work hard to make other blind and disabled people know that they can live the lives they want.

Trin Ha

When I applied for the 2017 NFB scholarship, all I knew was that if I won, I would get a chance to attend the National Convention in Orlando, Florida. No words can sufficiently describe the excitement I felt when Mary Fernandez, one of the members of the scholarship committee, gave me a call and notified me that I had been chosen as a finalist. It was like a dream come true. I thought to myself, that someone would finally help to pay the expenses for me to visit another state of the beautiful country I have come to love so dearly. When July rolled around, I realized though my trip 2 to Orlando would not be a vacation. I was quite certain it would be an unforgettable once-in-a-lifetime experience. As soon as I arrived at the hotel, I felt like I had been le d to a whole new world. Never before had I seen so many blind people with so many canes and guide dogs confidently and independently on the move at such a big hotel like Rosen Shingle Creek. The week was packed with meetings and activities. At first, I was both scared, lost, confused, and overwhelmed. I wished there was a way I could just take the money and fly right back to Arkansas. As time continued, my fears were replaced with happiness. I gradually understood fully what some people meant when they told me I will gain so much more from my first NFB convention than just a scholarship. I bonded with mentors as well as friends who saw the potential in me and believed in me more than I'd ever believed in myself. I discovered some divisions such as NABS, Sports & Recreation, and a few others that I want to be a part of. Growing up in Vietnam where society still has very low expectations for people with disabilities, my heart burst with joy when I got to meet and talk with several blind persons who are successful in all kinds of professions. From now on, I definitely know what I am going to tell my Vietnamese friends if they ask me what kinds of jobs do blind people in America do. I admire the wonderful work the National Federation of the Blind does and the great diversity it has. I wish to bring back to my home country the knowledge I have acquired, so that someday blind people there can also live the lives they want. I am much honored to have had the opportunity to be a scholarship finalist, and I am really grateful to those who have worked so hard to put on such a wonderful convention.

Maureen Niedfeld

Being a Home Management teacher at the Colorado Center f or the Blind, I was excited to attend the convention not as a CCB staff member, but as a scholarship finalist. I was also excited with the prospect of receiving mentorship from so many members of the organization. I recently returned to college at The Metropolitan State University of Denver to stud y Nutrition and Dietetics and was so honored to be selected as a finalist. I received the news that I was a finalist and shortly after underwent major brain surgery and woke up with new physical deficits that I had never experienced; low blood pressure, poor balance, and no function of my right arm and hand now posed new challenges. How was I going to be able to get through convention and also be able to absorb and receive everything that I knew would be offered? Because of these health complications, the thought of not attending the National Convention for the first time since I became a member nine years ago made me realize how much I need this charge eve ry year, to be with and share these beliefs with members from all over the country. The National Federation of the Blind met my worries of my new challenges with the same attitude that they have on blindness that anything can be overcome. Prior to the convention, I received the encouragement and support that I needed to feel confident that I could attend convention with all of my new health concerns. The week provided me with life changing mentorship, a fresh perspective on my purpose in the organization, and I believe actually aided in the process of my recovery. Mentally and emotionally, the National Federation of the Blind convention was just where I needed to be. I am excited to pursue my dreams of higher education while being filled with passion for the National Federation of the Blind.

Aneri Brahmbhatt

Convention week was a week full of firsts for me. My first time flying completely alone; my first 3 NFB convention; my first time being surrounded by so many successful blind people (and let's not forget the abundance of sweeping canes). Walking through those hotel lobby doors, I had to stop and take it all in. From checking in to finding my room to finding the people I was supposed to meet, every experience boosted my confidence because I was doing it all independently. By Wednesday, I had the layout of the hotel figured out, and i t was truly a proud moment when I got to the meeting room by myself. Other than raising my self-confidence though, the convention helped me to realize how involved the NFB is in issues that directly affect me, as well as issues I didn't even know were issues. My awareness was most definitely increased. The resolutions meeting was truly eye opening. I didn't know there was still so much left to accomplish. Convention was also full of fun activities like the NABS student Olympics, karaoke, and a performing arts panel, just to mention a few. Though this was my first convention, I sincerely believe it won't be my last.

Sophie Trist

I'm a Louisiana native. In the summer of 1997, I was a year old, and I'd already undergone several surgeries. My parents had tried to restore some vision in my right eye, but by then, it was pretty clear that I would be totally blind. That's when they found out that the National Federation of the Blind was holding its annual convention in New Orleans. They went to meet other blind people and see what resources the NFB had to offer. I don't remember that first convention, but my parents were inspired by the Federationists they met there, and they raised me with the belief that if I had determination and good blindness skills, I could turn my dreams in to reality. As a kid, I attended student seminars and summer programs at the Louisiana Center for the Blind. I didn't personally engage with NFB philosophy until I attended the STEPP program in 2013. There, I met students who had faced accessibility barriers in their education and learned about the ways blind people are discriminated against. A few months before the program began, I took a trip to Disney World with my eighth grade class and took advantage of the fast passes available to disabled people. One of the STEPP instructors told me something that still resonates with me to this day: "If blind people want the same rights as our sighted peers, we must accept the same responsibilities." I'm a Federationist because I want equality. I've never had to struggle for my education, but I want to advocate for those who have. That's why I am proud and honored to be an NFB scholarship winner.

## State Student Division Updates:

Arizona:

Greetings from the hott state of Arizona,

We are super excited to announce that we have a national scholarship winner Zenyep from our student board. We also had several of our student board attend the national convention along with over 80 students from SAAVI Services for the Blind. This year Arizona will be working hard to increase membership, plan fun and unique fundraisers, and working hard to get AIM HEA letters from our entire board as well as members. Our state convention is approaching at the end of August so we are also hard at work planning a fun and informative student meeting. We are excited to be serving along the side of all of you to build our federation.

Illinois:

The Illinois students had great representation at the annual convention of the national Federation of the blind. We had 10 students attend in total six of them were first timers, and we had two national scholarship winners! We are now gearing up for our state convention from October 27 to October 29. We look forward to the coming year.

Massachusetts:

 President Precious Perez, Treasurer Meaghan Roper, and Board Member Stephanie Valdes attended national convention this year. These board members along with Massachusetts scholarship winner Malissa Carney met with President Riccobono to say hello and give a brief overview of progress and challenges that are being faced as student leaders in Massachusetts. The board representatives from MASSABS thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of convention from volunteering at the exhibit hall table  and meeting a new incoming Boston University student to division meetings and general sessions. We are more encouraged and inspired to continue building the federation, and showing blind students in Massachusetts by example that we can live the lives we want.

New Jersey:

Hello NABS!

NJABS has had a very eventful summer. At the beginning of June we participated in a northeastern seminar at the Jernigan Institute. Present were students from six different states and it was an incredible weekend of learning, networking, and Federation building.  At national convention NJABS conducted a fundraiser of selling mini waterproof Bluetooth speakers and while we are still waiting on the final numbers of our sales it was a successful fundraiser. Much is happening in New Jersey and we look forward to sharing more exciting news in the near future!

New Mexico:

Membership is currently at 15 members, three new members added since state convention.

We have meetings every second Sunday of the month at 3P.M. MST.

We have been working on AIM HIGH letters and how to support students throughout their educational career.

Ohio:

Hello from Ohio,

Ohio Association of Blind Students is working hard during this summer.

We are continuing our monthly potcasts. Next one will be released very

soon. Follow us on Facebook to be notified first. We are planning an

online higher education advocacy/ preparation meeting for recent high

school graduates and current college students. It will be in August,

and details will be shared soon.

Utah:

Summer/Fall Update

Hey y'all! We hope you’ve had a great summer, and are ready to kick the new school year off to a fantastic start! UABS knows we are! We are planning a fall kickoff/end of summer pool part to take place on August 26th to enjoy one more fun day in the sun! If you would like info on this event, please contact Chelsea, President of the Utah Association of Blind Students, at [chelsea.Peahl@hotmail.com](mailto:chelsea.Peahl@hotmail.com).

Also, we are planning our student seminar to take place this October in Salt Lake City, Ut. To ensure we are bringing in topics that you’d like to see, we have created a survey through google forms to have your input be heard. Even if you are not from Utah or are unable to attend, please still consider taking the survey! Your voice matters and we want to hear it!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSccdvZPoUiXVTcoDrEdfVyZvJJ-Z77oj-SBZYESlU3XELKGlQ/viewform?usp=sf_link>

As usual, UABS calls take place on the third Wednesday of each month at 8:30 MST. Call number is 605-475-4000 with the code 230539. We would love to have you!