**The 47th Annual State Convention**

**National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey**



**IT BEGINS WITH US!**

Thursday through Sunday November 9, 10, 11, & 12, 2023

**Crowne Plaza Edison**

2055 Lincoln Highway

Edison, NJ 08817

**Linda Melendez, President**

908-590-1747

president@nfbnj.org [www.nfbnj.org](http://www.nfbnj.org/)

# Who We Are & What We Do

The National Federation of the Blind, the oldest and largest organization of and for the blind in the US, is made up of blind/visually impaired people of all ages, and their families and friends. We help newly blind people adjust to eyesight loss, assist parents and teachers of blind children, and promote the full participation and integration of blind people in our communities.

Our activities include:

* Assisting blind persons in acquiring the skills of independence and developing confidence in themselves
* Supporting parents and teachers of blind children with information, mentoring, role modeling, and training
* Preparing blind students for careers and self-sufficiency through mentoring, training, and academic scholarships
* Encouraging blind seniors to continue to live active, meaningful lives
* Advocating for policies that eliminate discrimination, promote civil rights, and guarantee equal access to high quality educational and rehabilitation programs
* Sponsoring information campaigns and legislative action at the state and national levels
* Educating the public through community activities and publications

# Spotlight on the NFB of New Jersey

Since 1976, the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey, an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind, has been providing invaluable information and resources to blind/visually impaired people throughout the state. Our members work together for a brighter tomorrow by raising expectations for blind people everywhere so that blind people can live the life they want. Our six chapters meet monthly; committees and groups meet at various times throughout the year. Please join us — we would welcome your participation and membership. For more information on the affiliate, chapters, committees, programs, and projects, visit [www.nfbnj.org](http://www.nfbnj.org/)

# Live the Life You Want

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. Together with love, hope, and determination, we transform dreams into reality.

# The National Federation of the Blind 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.

# Integrity and Respect

To allow all attendees the chance to benefit from all aspects of the convention, we are committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone. We appreciate your assistance in cultivating an atmosphere in which participants from diverse backgrounds can learn, network, and share with each other in an environment of mutual respect. Thank you for doing your part to contribute to our community and the high expectations we strive to maintain. To read the NFB Code of Conduct, visit [www.nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct](http://www.nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**Become a Convention Sponsor**

Companies and individuals can support the programs and projects of the NFB of NJ by becoming a convention sponsor. There are four levels of sponsorship. Get details by clicking the link below. You can use PayPal or a credit/debit card online or write a check to NFBNJ and mail to Affiliate Treasurer Annemarie Cooke, 7 Mayfair Road, Southampton, NJ 08088; please write “Convention Sponsor” in the memo section. <https://nfbnj.org/state-convention/sponsor-registration>

# Pre-registration Pick-Up and On-Site Registration Studio Room

Thursday, November 9: 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Thursday, November 9: 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Friday, November 10: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday, November 11: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

*Special Note:* Linda & Lucas Melendez will be handing out pre-registration packets from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM on Thursday, November 9 at the back of the Technology Seminar in the Windsor Ballroom.

# Bagged Continental Breakfast Garden Ballroom

You will receive your breakfast coupons when you register at the hotel

(2 coupons per room per day registered). Bagged breakfasts will be the chef’s choice to include bread, fruit, juice and hot beverages, and will be available from 7:15 AM – 8:30 AM. Bring your coupon to exchange for a bagged breakfast. Contact Linda DeBerardinis at 667-256-5131 if you have extra coupons or need more coupons.

# Pre-Paid Box Lunch—Friday and Saturday Garden Ballroom

You will receive your pre-purchased lunch tickets when you pick up your registration packet. Lunch tickets will be marked for Friday or Saturday. Pre-paid boxed lunches will be available beginning at noon. Bring the correct day’s ticket with you to exchange for a pre-paid meal!

# Banquet Ticket Exchange Windsor Ballroom

For a smooth seating process, we use a Banquet Ticket Exchange. Bring your pre-purchased ticket to the ticket exchange table, where you will trade it in for a ticket with a table number. If you would like to sit with friends, gather ALL tickets and exchange them together (you must have everyone’s ticket when you go to the exchange).

# Banquet Ticket Exchange Hours

Friday 4:30 - 5:00 PM; Saturday 8:00 AM - 8:25 AM, 12:00 - 12:15 PM, and

5:10 - 5:25 PM. If you do not exchange your ticket, you will be seated where space is available.

# Exhibit Hall—On-Site & Virtual Talmadge Ballroom

Visit our array of vendors to view the many fine products and services available for those with vision loss. Speak to representatives directly to have all your questions answered.

You can also view their products online and hear from vendors unable to attend in person by clicking on the link below from Nov. 1 through Dec. 30. <https://www.nfbnj.org/state-convention/exhibitors-and-sponsors>

# Pay Affiliate Membership Dues & Participate! Windsor Ballroom

Would you like to become a member of a committee, group, program or project but are not yet a member of a chapter? Then come pay your dues and become a member of the NFBNJ affiliate. 8:00 AM – 8:25 AM on Friday. Annual dues are $10.

# Guide Dog Relief Instructions

The guide dog relief area can be found in the courtyard at the back of the hotel. Beginning from the front desk, facing away from the desk take a left to find the double doors to get outside. You will be walking on tile, but when you reach a carpeted texture again, you are at the outside doors.

Please note that if you tell your dog to target the door outside, there is another set of double doors directly across the lobby leading to the front exit that your dog may try to find. The front exit has a large covering over it, so if you see this covering or cars, you are on the wrong side of the hotel.

When exiting the hotel on the courtyard side, you will encounter two sets of doors to get outside. Both sets are double doors, so you do not have to switch sides with your dog unless you want to. When you are heading out of these doors to go outside, the elevators to get to your room are on your left side, while the entrance to the Exhibit Hall is on your right side. Once exiting the doors, one of the 3 trash cans can be found immediately to your right. If you keep walking straight, you will feel a brick pathway under your feet. When you feel the brick change to a flat surface, you know it is time to take a left to find the grass. This is located approximately 40 steps away from the doors. If the flat concrete turns back into a brick texture, you missed your left and have gone too far. After taking a left on the sidewalk, you will reach a large grassy area approximately 32 steps to the light post.

There will be a light post with trash cans on either end of this grassy courtyard. The courtyard is shaped like a diamond, and there are bushes around the perimeter. Once you are finished relieving your dog, if you tell your dog to target the door inside, the double doors are the only option available. When heading back inside, if you did not locate either trash can by a light post, there will be a final trash can directly on your left before entering the hotel again.

# Host Chapter & Affiliate 50/50 Raffle

Support the Host Chapter and the Affiliate by purchasing 50/50 tickets, 1 for $10; 3 for $20.

# Door Prizes

Door prizes will be drawn for pre-registered conventioneers and announced throughout the convention; you must be present to win. Donated door prizes are welcomed and can be given to Ellen Sullivan in the Studio Room during registration hours.

# Kustom Canes “Your Cane Give” Program

# Studio Room

Wondering what to do with your old cane or tips: “You Cane Give” program allows you to help us give your used cane to a person far away who needs it! We need canes in all sizes. Bring them with you to the convention and drop them off in the Studio Room during registration hours.

# Recording and Streaming

We will be recording and streaming the Thursday, November 9, 7:30 PM hybrid segment, Saturday, Nov. 11 morning and afternoon sessions, and the banquet.

Join sessions virtually with this Zoom link: [https://zoom.us/j/6477660103?pwd=MUl1dnZQU1JxMkhUemdCSHZUM21H](https://zoom.us/j/6477660103?pwd=MUl1dnZQU1JxMkhUemdCSHZUM21HUT09) [UT09](https://zoom.us/j/6477660103?pwd=MUl1dnZQU1JxMkhUemdCSHZUM21HUT09)

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Meeting ID: 647 766 0103

Passcode: 460994

# THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9

**10:00 AM to 12:30 PM—Pre-registration Pick-Up and On-Site Registration**

**Studio Room**

**10:00 AM to 9:00 PM—Exhibit Hall—On-Site & Virtual Talmadge Ballroom**

Visit our array of vendors to view the many fine products and services available for those with vision loss. Speak to representatives directly to have all your questions answered.

You can also view their products online and hear from vendors unable to attend in person by clicking on the link below from Nov. 1 through Dec. 30. <https://www.nfbnj.org/state-convention/exhibitors-and-sponsors>

# 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM—Technology Seminar Windsor Ballroom

1:00 PM **Opening Remarks,** Jane Degenshein, Board Member and Technology Committee Chair

1:10 PM **Resource Panel: A Trove of Gems on the Hadley Website**, Rick Fox; **Somebody Out There Has the Answer--the Value of Listservs**, Mary Jo Partyka; **Talk to Me Using the VO Starter App**, Jane Degenshein

1:55 PM **The Blind User’s Guide to Ridesharing with Uber**, Tracy Carcione and Ed Godfrey

# 2:25 PM The Latest on Seeing AI and Envision AI, Andy Smith

2:45 PM **Be My Eyes and the AI Option,** Tony Santiago 3:10 PM **Shopping with Amazon,** Anne Marie Harris 3:30 PM **Braille Screen Input /Jaws Help,** Rick Fox

3:55 PM **New Accessibility Features in IOS 17,** Tony Santiago

4:20 PM **Shortcuts, Quick Tips, How-To’s, More**, Tech Team Panel

# 5:30 PM–Membership & Friendship Appreciation Pizza Party Sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey Windsor Ballroom

Let the NFBNJ show how much you are valued as a member and friend. Join us for a FREE Pizza Party with beverages sponsored by our affiliate.

# 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM—Pre-registration Pick-Up and On-Site Registration

**Studio Room**

**7:30 PM–Navigating and Understanding Social Security Basics for the Blind—Hybrid Session**

**Windsor Ballroom**

Daniel B. Frye, JD., Director of Employment and Professional Development Programs—Blindness Initiatives—National Federation of the Blind, Concord, New Hampshire

See Zoom link next page to join virtually.

Join the Social Security Basics session virtually with this Zoom link: [https://zoom.us/j/6477660103?pwd=MUl1dnZQU1JxMkhUemdCSHZUM21H](https://zoom.us/j/6477660103?pwd=MUl1dnZQU1JxMkhUemdCSHZUM21HUT09) [UT09](https://zoom.us/j/6477660103?pwd=MUl1dnZQU1JxMkhUemdCSHZUM21HUT09)

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 647 766 0103

Passcode: 460994

# FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10

**7:15 AM to 8:30 AM—Bagged Breakfast Pick-Up Garden Ballroom**

**8:00 AM to 5:00 PM—Pre-registration Pick-Up & On-Site Registration Studio Room**

**8:00 AM to Noon—Exhibit Hall—On-Site & Virtual Talmadge Ballroom**

Visit our array of vendors to view the many fine products and services available for those with vision loss. Speak to representatives directly to have all your questions answered.

You can also view their products online and hear from vendors unable to attend in person by clicking on the link below from Nov. 1 through Dec. 30. <https://www.nfbnj.org/state-convention/exhibitors-and-sponsors>

# 8:00 AM to 8:25 AM Pay Affiliate Membership Dues & Participate! Windsor Ballroom

Would you like to become a member of a committee, group, program or project but are not yet a member of a chapter? Then come pay your dues and become a member of the NFBNJ affiliate. Annual dues are $10; place your dues in an envelope with your name and best contact number.

# NFBNJ Committee Meetings Windsor Ballroom

**9:00 AM–Diabetic Group**

Clarke King, Board Member

# 9:40 AM–NJ Association of Senior Blind (NJASB)

Jane Degenshein, Chair

# 10:20 AM–NJ Association of Blind Technology Users

Jane Degenshein, Chair

# 11:00 AM–Braille Group

Mary Jo Partyka, Facilitator

# 11:40 AM–NFBNJ General Membership Meeting

Linda Melendez, NFBNJ President

All are welcome to learn more about affiliate and chapter membership.

# Noon to 12:20 PM–Pre-paid Lunch Pick-Up Garden Ballroom

Pick up your pre-paid boxed lunch. YOU MUST BRING YOUR LUNCH TICKET FOR FRIDAY WITH YOU TO EXCHANGE FOR MEAL!

# 1:30 PM–Job Seekers Seminar Lincoln Ballroom

Job seekers, attend this seminar! We’ll give you a brief orientation to the Job Fair, go over logistics and last-minute details, and leave you with the finishing touches you’ll need to succeed at the Job Fair.

# 2:30 PM–Job Fair Talmadge Ballroom

Blind and low vision job seekers will have the opportunity to present themselves to employers who are looking for qualified individuals to hire. YOU MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED FOR THE JOB FAIR TO ATTEND.

# Concurrent Sessions1:30 PM to 2:45 PM–The Stage for Your Story Windsor Ballroom

Melissa Lomax, Board Member; Employment & Transition Manager, Family Resource Network

In this interactive workshop, participants will learn about the power of their own story and how blindness fits in it. We will explore ways to incorporate their blindness that showcase their talents and dreams.

# 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM–Find Your Space in the NFB and the NFBNJ! Lincoln Ballroom

Linda Melendez & Anil Lewis

# 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM–Voice Over: A New Era of Empowerment Windsor Ballroom

Matt Vollbrecht, Certified Apple Trainer, Owner of the Tech Juggernaut and long-time friend of our Tech Committee, will demonstrate the Voice Over capability of our Apple smart devices in new ways. You will

be thrilled at the possibilities, as we explore together, how you can be empowered to perform tasks you never before thought possible.

# 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM–Cooking Without Looking Lincoln Ballroom

Carol Castellano, Facilitator, Parents of Blind Children-NJ, & Blind Cooks

Are you afraid to let your blind child get anywhere near the stove? Come learn about the simple tools and techniques blind people use to cook safely and deliciously! We'll have demo's and try-it’s if the space allows.

# 4:30 PM to 5:00 PM–Banquet Exchange Windsor Ballroom

**5:30 PM–Federation Family Meal Windsor Ballroom**

Conventioneers who purchased their meal ticket will reconnect and meet new members and friends to dine and socialize with. YOU MUST BRING A DINNER TICKET WITH YOU TO RECEIVE YOUR PRE-PURCHASED MEAL!

# 7:00 PM–Resolutions Committee Meeting Lincoln Ballroom

Ryan Stevens, Chair

Come witness the development of resolutions, which become the policy statements of NFBNJ. This meeting is open to all, however only committee members are eligible to vote. Membership voting takes place during Sunday, Nov 12 Affiliate Business Meeting.

# 8:15 PM to 11:00 PM–Blind Parent Gift Shower & Federation Fun Windsor Ballroom

Join us to celebrate our blind parent winner Mary Rose NFBNJ Garden State Chapter member, then stick around for fellow- ship, music, and cash bar! Join a team and compete for weekend bragging rights during our Federation Fun Time! Teams will work fast to answer trivia questions, perform tasks, and produce songs for one round of a sing down! No need to join a team in advance—just show up and jump right in!

# SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

**8:00 AM to 1:00 PM Pre-registration Pick-Up & On-Site Registration Studio Room**

**8:00 AM to 8:25 AM–Banquet Exchange Windsor Ballroom**

**Morning General Session Windsor Ballroom**

**8:30 AM–Traditional Pre-Convention Music 9:00 AM–Welcome, Call to Order**

Linda Melendez, President, National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

# 9:05 AM–Opening Ceremonies

Jane Degenshein, NFBNJ Board Member

Pledge of Allegiance

National Federation of the Blind Pledge

Invocation—Jane Degenshein Temple Ner Tamid Moment of Silence

Honoring Veterans

# 9:20 AM–Introduction of the Scholarship Class of 2023

Lia Stone, Director of Youth Programs, NFBNJ

# 9:30 AM–Nominating Committee Report

Ryan Stevens, Chair, and Affiliate Parliamentarian

# 9:40 AM–Presidential Report

Linda Melendez, President, National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

**10:10 AM–National Representative’s Report: It Begins with Us!** Anil Lewis, Executive Director for Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind

# 10:40 AM–Fishing, Floundering, and Finding One’s Way: Examining When Blindness Matters

Daniel B. Frye, J.D., Director of Employment and Professional Development Programs, Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind

# 11:00 AM–Fit BreakNena Chadwick, President NFB of Arkansas

**11:10 AM–National Association of Blind Students Report**

Logan Stenzel, National Association of Blind Students Representative

# 11:20 AM–NJ Moving Forward Together

Kaylee McGuire, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services, NJ Department of Human Services and Dr. Bernice Davis, Executive Director, NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

# 11:45 AM–Announcements

**12:00 PM–Adjourn**

**12:00 PM to 12:20 PM– Pre-Paid Lunch Pick-Up Garden Ballroom**

Pick up your pre-paid boxed lunch. YOU MUST BRING YOUR LUNCH TICKET FOR SATURDAY WITH YOU TO EXCHANGE FOR MEAL!

# 12:10 PM to 1:10 PM–NJ Association of Blind Students GatheringStelton Board Room–3rd Floor

**12:15 PM–NJ Parents of Blind Children Meet & Talk Session Windsor Ballroom**

Carol Castellano, Facilitator

Come meet new people & see old friends at this informal session. We can talk about your child's education and development, ways to deal with challenges, and any other things that may be on your mind. This is a safe zone where you can feel free to complain about problems and brag about triumphs! Hope to see you there!

# 12:15 PM–Open Chat Lunch Session Lincoln Ballroom

Jane Degenshein, Facilitator Grab your lunch and join us!

# 12:00 PM to 12:15 PM–Banquet Exchange Windsor Ballroom

**Afternoon General Session Windsor Ballroom**

**1:15 PM–Call to Order & Announcements**

Linda Melendez, President, NFBNJ

# 1:30 PM–What’s New at the TBBC?

Adam Szczepaniak, Deputy State Librarian & Director, NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center

# 1:40 PM–Redefining the Possible

Steven McCoy, First Black Deafblind Journalist, Founder, Spoken Entertainment

# 2:00 PM-Canes, Guide Dogs & Tech-Tools for Traveling While Blind

Brianna Murray, Tony Santiago, Members and National Rep Anil Lewis, Executive Director for Blindness Initiatives, NFB

# 2:40 PM—Get on the PAC Plan, Sign Up Today!

Anil Lewis, Executive Director for Blindness Initiatives, NFB

# 2:50 PM–Fit Break

Logan Stenzel, National Association of Blind Students Representative

**3:00 PM–Know Your Rights: The First Step in Advocacy**

Melissa Lomax, Board Member, NFBNJ

# 3:20 PM–Taking Off in Houston

Valarie Frink and Ed Garcia, Members; Lia Stone, Facilitator

# 3:55 PM-Finding My Footing in the Blindness Community

Mary Rose, Member

# 4:10 PM-Breaking Out of the Comfort Zone

Elisha Johnson, Member

# 4:30 PM-Washington Seminar and the NFBNJ Washington Seminar Delegation

Linda Melendez, President NFBNJ

# 4:45 PM-Announcements and Closing Remarks

Linda Melendez and Anil Lewis

# 5:00 PM–Adjourn

**5:10 PM to 5:25 PM–Final Banquet Ticket Exchange Windsor Ballroom**

**7:00 PM–Banquet Talmadge Ballroom**

YOU MUST BRING YOUR BANQUET EXCHANGE TICKET WITH YOU TO RECEIVE A MEAL!

**Maestra of Ceremonies**—Jane Degenshein, Board Member, NFBNJ; Chair, Senior and Technology Committees

**Invocation**—Daniel B. Frye, JD., Director, Employment and Professional Development Programs, Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind

**Keynote Address**—Anil Lewis, Executive Director for Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind; NFB National Representative

**Recognition of Contributors** to State Scholarships Presentation of State

**Scholarship Awards** — Lia Stone, Director of Youth Programs, NFBNJ

# Door prizes & Auction

 **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12**

**8:30 AM–Affiliate Business Meeting—Open to All Talmadge Ballroom**

Linda Melendez, President, NFBNJ

What We’ve Accomplished & What’s Ahead Chapter Reports

Resolutions Elections Closing Remarks

\*Agenda subject to change\*

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey expresses appreciation to all members and non-members who attended our 47th annual state convention.

Thank you for coming.

Linda Melendez, President

National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey 908-590-1747

president@nfbnj.org

For the list of affiliate board members, chapters, committees, groups, and programs, please visit the state website at: [www.nfbnj.org](http://www.nfbnj.org/)

# Meet our National Representative:

Anil Lewis serves as the Executive Director of Blindness Initiatives for the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in Baltimore. He has held many positions within the Federation, including Director of Advocacy and Policy and Director of Strategic Communications. In all his work, he seeks to positively affect the education, employment, and quality of life of all blind people.

Anil was born in 1964 in Atlanta, Georgia, the third of four children. Both his older brother and sister became legally blind at an early age from retinitis pigmentosa. Although he was diagnosed at age nine with retinitis pigmentosa, his vision was fairly unaffected until age twenty-five. Anil faced adversity in his childhood education, but eventually became the first member of his family to graduate from college.

Before he became blind, Anil fairly easily found respectable employment with wages high above the minimum wage. Then in 1989, while pursuing his Bachelor of Business Administration in Computer Information Systems at Georgia State University, he became blind from retinitis pigmentosa. "All of a sudden a door that had been open to me slammed shut," he recalls.

He became personally acquainted with actual social injustice and discrimination and committed himself to take action and make a difference.

Anil received blindness skills training while completing his course requirements for his degree at GSU, quickly learning the alternative skills of blindness, including Braille, activities of daily living, assistive technology, and use of the long white cane. Armed with these new skills and this new determination, he quickly became committed to ensuring that others in similar situations could get appropriate training and unlimited opportunities, work he continues to this day.

Anil attended his first NFB convention in Chicago in 1995 and became aware of the empowering philosophy and tremendous resources of the National Federation of the Blind. He immediately began to infuse NFB philosophy into the assistance he provided to others, enabling him to motivate, educate, and encourage other blind people.

An active member of the NFB, Anil became president of the Atlanta Metropolitan Chapter of the NFB of Georgia in 2000 and was elected president of the NFB of Georgia in 2002. In that year he also received the Kenneth Jernigan Memorial Scholarship, the NFB’s most prestigious award presented to a blind student, which he used to obtain his Master of Public Administration from GSU in 2003. That year he was also elected as a member of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind.

In addition to the many awards and commendations he has received for his work, Anil has also been appointed by governors and a president to committees which worked to reduce barriers by encouraging the implementation of public policy securing the rights and promoting the responsible participation of the disabled as productive citizens.

Anil volunteers as a teacher and mentor for blind students who, due to limited resources and lack of trained professionals to teach them, are not empowered with the skills and positive self-concept to pursue their dreams. In his personal life, Anil says that his proudest accomplishment is his bright, ambitious son Amari, born in 1997.

# National Scholarship Program–Call for Applications Begins Dec 1

Every year, the National Federation of the Blind awards more than

$120,000 to blind scholars across the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, in recognition of their achievements and professional aspirations. The scholarship program is our commitment to academic excellence and leadership among blind students, and each winner is awarded based on academic excellence, community service, and leadership. The application process opens November 1. To learn about eligibility and requirements of the 2024 scholarship program visit this link: [https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-](https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/scholarship-program) [awards/scholarship- program](https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/scholarship-program)

Review the online scholarship application checklist and program FAQs. Let others know about this program that invests in the future of blind people.

# Pre-Authorized Contribution Plan (PAC Plan)

PAC stands for Pre-Authorized Contribution. Each month, the amount you have designated is automatically deducted from your checking or savings account. That sum, which may be as little as five dollars, helps fund projects like the NFB Free White Cane program, and is also used to take care of “rainy day” expenditures that may arise unexpectedly.

To arrange for PAC Plan contributions, go to [www.nfb.org/pac](http://www.nfb.org/pac) and fill out the form. The National Center will call you to get payment information. You can also call 877-635-2711 or email pac@nfb.org to enroll. Donations can be direct withdrawals from a checking account or charges to a credit card.

For additional information or assistance, contact Annemarie Cooke, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind of NJ, at 609-859- 4084, or aec732@gmail.com.

# Exhibitors and Sponsors

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey thanks all our exhibitors and sponsors for your continued support. You help us raise expectations so that we can live the life we want. Please visit our website and view the list of this year’s exhibitors and sponsors.

<https://www.nfbnj.org/state-convention/exhibitors-and-sponsors>

# Sponsors:

# It Begins with Us:

Bestwork Industries for the Blind

Jon Katz, President & CEO

1940 Olney Ave., Suite 200 Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08003

Phone: 856-424-2510 Website: <https://bestworkindustries.org>

Bestwork Industries for the Blind, Inc. is a private not-for-profit corporation dedicated to improving the quality of life for people who are blind by providing training and employment opportunities in a supportive work environment.

# Live The Life You Want:

Melendez Family

NFBNJ Chapters: At Large, Capital, Central Jersey, Garden State, Northern, Northeast and South Jersey Chapter

NFBNJ Committee: Seniors and Technology

Ellen Sullivan

# Raising Expectations:

Annemarie Cooke & Doug McCray

Rick Fox and Debbie Bloomer

Mary Jo Partyka

# Exhibitors

# Access Link

1 Penn Plaza East Newark, NJ 07105

Phone: 973-491-4424 Email: adaservices@njtransit.com Website: [Access Link Opens Doors for People with Disabilities | NJ TRANSIT | New Jersey Transit Corporation | New Jersey](https://www.njtransit.com/first-run/access-link-opens-doors-people-disabilities)

[NJ TRANSIT’s Access Link paratransit service is an important lifeline for customers with disabilities who travel to work, medical appointments, recreational and entertainment destinations, shopping, and more. Access Link provides public transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use our existing local bus service.](https://www.njtransit.com/contact/customer-service)

# C-TECH

Charles Cohen, President

2 N. William Street Pearl river, New York 10965

Phone: 845-735-7907 Email: chuck@magnifyit.com

Website: <https://www.ctechlowvision.com>

C TECH has been providing products and services for the blind & visually impaired community for over 40 years. We provide a range of products from hand-held magnifiers to 24" desktop units with speech. C TECH represents Optelec and OrCam, just to name a few. We also have a selection of head-mount units. C TECH offers free in-home demonstrations on most products.

[Click here to view C-TECH’s audio/video clip!](https://nfbnj.org/StateConventionExhibitors_Audio-VideoRecordings/C-TECH.mp4)

# JW.org

Steven and Susan Shepard, Representatives

210 Mount Pleasant Ave. Stratford, Connecticut 06615

Phone: 203-450-1670 Email: sshepard487@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.jw.org>

We provide Free spiritual materials in formats such as braille, large print, videos and audio files.

# NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Krystal Allen, Representative

153 Halsey Street, 6th Fl. Newark, New Jersey 07101

Phone: 973-648-2821 Email: krystle.allen@dhs.nj.gov

This agency’s mission is to promote and provide services in the areas of education, employment, independent living and eye health through informed choice and partnership with persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families and the community.

# New Jersey Division of Disability Services

Cristine Chickadel, NJ ABLE Program Representative

11A Quakerbridge Plaza Hamilton, New Jersey 08625

Phone: 609-438-6666 Email: cristine.chickadel@dhs.nj.gov

The Division of Disability Services (DDS) provides a single point-of-entry for people seeking disability related information in New Jersey. DDS serves individuals with all disabilities, statewide. DDS works to streamline access to services and information that promote and enhance independent living for individuals with disabilities by facilitating coordination and cooperation among local, county and state government agencies.

# New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center

Stephen Felle, Outreach Librarian

2300 Stuyvensant Avenue Trenton, New Jersey 08618

Phone: 800-792-8322 Email: tbbc@njstatelib.org

Website: <https://www.njstatelib.org/tbbc>

The New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center provides books in audio and braille to those who need them. Our library has several benefits. These include things like having no waitlists, or books that you cannot buy or find at your local library. Besides books in audio and braille, we also have large print books for kids and teens. All these services are provided at no cost to those who qualify.

[Click here to view NJSL TBBC’s audio/video clip!](https://nfbnj.org/StateConventionExhibitors_Audio-VideoRecordings/NJSL_TBBC.mp4)

# The College of New Jersey - Center for Sensory & Complex

# Disabilities

Kathleen Spata, Program Coordinator, SSP-NJ

2000 Pennington Road P.O. Box 7718 Ewing, New Jersey 08628

Phone: 609-771-2795 Email: sspnj@tcnj.edu

Website: <https://njcscd.tcnj.edu>

The iCanConnect, provides the equipment needed to make telecommunications, advanced communications, and the Internet accessible to low-income individuals who have both significant vision loss and significant hearing loss. The SSP-NJ program provides trained professionals with skills directly related to providing access to individuals who experience a combined vision and hearing loss to access their community and enhance their independence.

# The Seeing Eye Institute

Chelsea White, Outreach Specialist

P.O. Box 375 Morristown, New Jersey 07963

973-539-4425 Email: whitec@seeingeye.org

Website: <https://seeingeye.org>

The Seeing Eye located in Morristown NJ is the oldest dog guide school in the world. If you are interested in partnering with a dog guide come and see what we have to offer.

[Click here to view The Seeing Eye Institute’s audio/video clip!](https://nfbnj.org/StateConventionExhibitors_Audio-VideoRecordings/TheSeeingEye.mp4)

# Vanda Pharmaceuticals

Vicki Preddy, Nurse Educator

2200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW,

Suite 300 Washington, DC 20037

Phone: 202-579-8035 Email:vicki.preddy@vandapharma.com

Website: <https://vandapharma.com>

Vanda Pharmaceuticals is dedicated to raising awareness of Non-24-Hour Sleep-Wake Disorder (Non-24) and supporting the blindness community. Non-24 is a rare circadian rhythm disorder affecting people who are totally blind. People living with Non-24 experience excessive daytime sleepiness and nighttime sleeplessness, which leads to impaired social and occupational functioning.

[Click here to view Vanda’s audio/video clip!](https://nfbnj.org/StateConventionExhibitors_Audio-VideoRecordings/VandaPharmaceuticals.m4a)

We are grateful to all those who contributed time, effort, and suggestions to show that **It Begins with Us**!