# National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

Topic: Braille Group

Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Time: 7 PM

Location: NFB NJ Zoom Platform

# 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM

# 2. Roll Call: There were twelve in attendance

Affiliate President Linda Melendez  
Group Facilitator Mary Jo Partyka  
Zoom Administrator Tracy Carcione

Members: Linda DeBerardinis, Michael Halm, David Hamlin, Ken Lawrence, Marian Lee, Jessie Scanell and Darlene Scanell,.

Participant: Andy Smith and Misty Hagan

# 3. NFB Pledge

Mary Jo led the group in the recitation of the NFB Pledge.

# 4. Affiliate Membership and Membership Form

President Melendez informed us to be a member of the group you are required to a member of the affiliate or a chapter. They are also required to fill out a committee membership form.

To become a member of the affiliate, click on the link below.

<https://nfbnj.org/chapters/affiliate/membership-form>

To become a member of a chapter, click on the link below.

[Become A Member – National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey (nfbnj.org)](https://www.nfbnj.org/become-a-member/)

After becoming a chapter member, please fill out the Committee & Group membership form. If you join the affiliate this step is not required.

<https://www.nfbnj.org/committee-group-membership-form>

# 5. Braille Challenge Recap

The Braille Challenge took place on March 1 at the Joseph Kohn Training Center (JKTC) under the leadership of VISTA Education and was very successful.

# 6. BELL Academy Update

There will not be a BELL Academy this year. The affiliate will discuss changes to our BELL program for 2025; stay tuned for additional information.

# 7. STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics) U 2

Under the leadership of Lia Stone, NFB NJ Director of Youth Programs and Natasha Ishaq, Student Committee Chair we will be holding a STEM U2 program on Saturday, June 1 at the JKTC The students will range from third-to -fifth graders and will have the opportunity to conduct science experiments and find out the results of their efforts and more; stay tuned for additional information.

# 8. LIFE (Literacy is for Everyone) Program

Mary Jo recommended the group to hold our own program rather than join the Chicago affiliate’s program. They are reading a long book and only meet for an hour each week to read. Our group suggested that we pick shorter books for all of us to read. We also plan to open the program to affiliate members even if they don’t read braille. They can obtain the same books from the BARD site.

# 9. Braille Mentoring

President Melendez and Facilitator Partyka discussed the possibility of referring people who want to learn Braille to contact the Hadley Correspondence School for lessons. Their program is very thorough, and our group can assist NFB NJ members by answering questions and helping them to learn. We also discussed the fact that those who want to learn Braille should have a Braille typewriter at their disposal so they can practice reading and writing their letters. Someone indicated that Hadley has a loan program where students can borrow Braille writers from the school.

# 10: Braille Reading Contests

Mary Jo informed the group that the National Office sponsored its Braille Readers are Leader’s contest earlier this year. The Talking Book and Braille Center also held a Chilly Chapters contest where participants were required to read books and provide the library with information concerning how much they read.

# 10. New Business

The group also discussed:

* E-reader
* Limit for number of books which can be downloaded from BARD and Bookshare
* BARD Website
* Games

# 11. Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, June 19  
Time: 7 PM Eastern Time

Location: NFB NJ Zoom Platform

# 12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Meeting notes respectfully submitted by Mary Jo Partyka, Facilator

Reviewed and formatted by Linda Melendez; President