GAVEL AWARD 2022 Chapter QUESTIONNAIRE

Chapter name: National Federation of the Blind of Ohio Springfield Chapter

Chapter president's name: Debra Baker

Date: September 29, 2022

Current membership: Twenty-Nine (29)

Membership Last year: Twenty-Six (26)

Number of new members joining this year (worth 1 point each): Three (3)

Before September 30, 2022, how many business meetings will your chapter have conducted Since September 30, 2021 (worth 1 point each)? Eleven (11)

How many members are registered with NFB-NEWSLINE®? Eight (8)

How many new users have signed up this year (worth 1 point each)? 0

Does your chapter use social media? If so, please explain. We are developing a Facebook page. Chapter members also use their personal social media accounts to promote NFB activities.

Is your chapter on the PAC plan? Also, how many individual members are on the PAC plan? (1 point for chapter and 1 point per member) Yes, the chapter donates $50 per month on PAC. Three individual members also donate monthly via PAC.

1. How does your chapter promote the goals, philosophy, and activities of the National Federation of the Blind among chapter members and the general public (worth up to 10 points)?

* We have held discussions of NFB historical materials, such as previous convention speeches and monitor articles from individuals such as Dr. Kenneth Jernigan.
* We hold discussion on blind philosophy regularly, such as evaluating how blindness is portrayed in popular media and in society as general. We have held discussions on podcasts that discussed blindness issues and we have discussed how employers have handled employing blind people and how they often exclude employees from activities once employed because of not considering accessibility.
* The Chapter listens to and discusses the Presidential Release.
* The Chapter advocated with the Kettering Ohio City Council to improve the City’s Shared Mobility Device Regulations to ensure that scooters and other rented Shared Mobility Devices are not left on sidewalks in a manner that obstructs the path of travel of blind pedestrians.
* The Chapter has two members serving on the Hartman Rock Garden Advisory Committee to advise the operators of the facility regarding making the facility’s grounds and exhibits accessible to patrons who are blind and have low vision.
* The Chapter advocated with Goodwill Easters Seals Miami Valley regarding their hiring practices. The organization was asking all applicants, regardless of job, whether or not they had a drivers license. This application question was discriminatory because it was screening out blind and low vision applicants. As a result of the Chapter’s advocacy Goodwill Easter Seals removed this question from the majority of their job announcements.
* The Chapter has reached out to multiple area police departments to educate them on the requirements of Ohio’s White Cane Law and regarding the requirements of Ohio law pertaining to access to businesses by blind individuals using guide dogs.
* The Chapter hosted an information table at the Springfield CommonsFest at National Road Park on August 6, 2022. At this event, Chapter members handed out literature. Chapter members made contact with several families who have family members who are blind and invited them to Chapter meetings.
* The Chapter meets in the Gaier Room of the Springfield Public Library on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Our meetings take place at 10:15 A.M. and members are usually lined up at the doors to enter the library when the building opens at 10:00 A.M. This allows our Chapter members to interact with the other members of the public waiting to enter the building. On numerous occasions this has resulted in Chapter members discussing blindness with the members of the public, and has allowed members of the public to see blind people traveling and conducting business independently.
* The Chapter is in the midst of working with the Springfield Public Library to educate them on how they can make their online meeting room reservation system accessible to users of screen readers.
* The Chapter promoted the 2021 Braille Santa letter to both the Springfield City Schools and the Kettering City School District.
* Two Chapter members, Eric Duffy and Todd Elzey serve as members of a Statewide Task Force to eliminate Subminimum Wage in Ohio.
* The Chapter also regularly discusses technology issues to assist members with blindness related assistive technology.
* The Chapter has assisted the community with funds for Tornado Relief Efforts in December 2021 through a donation to the Springfield American Red Cross. These efforts show that the Blind are engaged members of the community.
* In September 2022 the Chapter met with the Dayton Historical Park (Carillon Park ) regarding the lack of accessibility of the facilities exhibits for blind and low vision patrons. The Historical Park has agreed to work towards making its exhibits accessible.
* Three Chapter members traveled to Columbus to participate in an educational/fundraising event for See3d, which produces free 3d models for blind individuals. This participation included the Chapter making a $200 donation to the fundraiser.

2. Civic Activities: Aside from participating in local, state, and national Federation activities, in what community programs have your chapter members been involved? Examples: social or political causes, religious institutions, Civic organizations, or student activities (worth up to 10 points). Be sure to give examples of how each activity demonstrates a blindness skill or promotes The National Federation of the Blind. Examples: “One member demonstrated the use of the KNFB reader to a person; one person explained a computer screen-reading program; Two members used Braille to read scripture in church; Five members used canes and guide dogs at a town meeting conducted by our member of Congress.”

* Chapter member Eric Duffy during the year was employed with Synchrony Bank and now Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. During his employment Mr. Duffy regularly uses Braille, Braille displays, and screen readers (i.e. JAWS and Voice Over).
* Chapter member Aleeha Dudley is employed with Synchrony Bank and also uses braille, Braille displays, and screen readers (JAWS & Voice Over).
* Chapter member Debra Baker is a member of her Church’s Bell Choir and uses multiple blindness skills, including Braille music, to participate.
* Chapter member Dan O’Keefe is President of the Springfield Library Board and volunteers with multiple Springfield area charities, including the Interfaith Network, which serves Springfield’s homeless population. In this role Dan has educated Interfaith Network staff on how to work with homeless individuals who are blind or have low vision.
* Todd Elzey worked as a Freelance Journalist and desmonstrated that blind and low vision individuals can conduct interviews, take videos, and take photos. One of Todd’s major activities was covering Kettering Ohio High School sports which involved taking photos during High School football Games and High School wrestling matches. Todd also regularly covered local government in Kettering, which allowed members of the community to see him working at various public meetings using screen magnification and other low vision assistive tech.
* Susan Day is a member of the Lions Club, serves a member of her Club’s board, and regularly participates in Lions Club activities.
* Debbie Baker tutors a blind student.

3. In what forms of advocacy are your chapter members involved (worth up to 10 points)?  (The definition of advocacy that will be used is: public support or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. Synonyms are: support for, backing of, promotion of, campaigning for, pushing for, and arguing for.)

* Todd Elzey is a contributor to several political campaigns, particularly regarding the 2022 Ohio Senate race.
* Todd Elzey also regularly advocates for inclusion of Assistive Listening Devices in meeting and performance venues.
* Todd Elzey also regularly promotes access to Government records and meetings through Open Meeting and Public Records Acts (i.e. Sunshine Laws).
* Eric Duffy is politically active and has supported Candidates in the Ohio Senate and Ohio Governor’s Race.
* Deborah Baker has been actively involved in Democratic politics in Springfield via a Women’s Democrats group.

4. Please note that this question has three parts so that we can determine how closely our chapters and divisions are working together and how much we see ourselves as part of the state and national organizations. Be sure to answer each part of this question.

How has your chapter interacted with other NFB chapters or divisions during the past year?

A. List all activities in which your chapter has participated with another chapter or division; How many members took part in each (worth up to 10 points)?

* Debra Baker serves as a member of the Ohio Association of Guide Dog Users (OAGDU) Board. She regularly participates in activities regarding guide dogs, including the Division’s efforts to update Ohio’s guide dog access laws and education efforts regarding guide dogs. Several Chapter members, including Vickie Travis and Aleeha Dudley (who are guide dog users) have contributed to Ms. Baker’s efforts regarding OAGDU.
* Several members of the Chapter are members of the Senior Division, and have participated in Senior Division Fundraising efforts.
* Susan Day is President of Ohio’s Diabetic Action Network and has been instrumental in working to revive the Division.

B. List all state-affiliate-sponsored activities in which your chapter has participated; How many members took part? (worth up to 10 points)?

* Eric Duffy serves as the NFB of Ohio Secretary, NFB of Ohio Legislative Director, and NFB of Ohio BELL Coordinator.
* Todd Elzey serves as the NFB of Ohio Treasurer, and as Chairman of the Fundraising, Publicity/Newsline/Website, and Resolutions Committee. Todd also serves as a member of the Legislative Committee. Todd Elzey also serves as a member of the Merchants Division Board of Directors.
* 4-5 members participated in the 2021 NFB of Ohio State Convention. Todd Elzey and Eric Duffy made presentations during the Committee.
* Todd Elzey and Eric Duffy both wrote multiple articles for Ohio’s newsletter, the Buckeye Bulletin.
* Todd Elzey wrote 4 Resolutions for the 2021 NFB of Ohio Convention, which all passed.
* Eric Duffy wrote 3 Resolutions for the 2021 NFB of Ohio Convention, which all passed.

C. List all events sponsored by the national organization in which chapter members have participated this year; how many took part in each (worth up to 10 points)?

* Todd Elzey, Debra Baker, and Eric Duffy all participated as part of the 2022 Ohio Washington Seminar Delegation.
* Todd Elzey and Eric Duffy attended the 2022 National Convention in New Orleans.
* Todd Elzey is a member of the National Staff working as the NFB’s Digital Communications Coordinator.
* Todd Elzey has written a blog post for the Voice of the Nation’s Blind Blog.
* Macy McClain performed in the We Are With U Concert to benefit the blind of Ukraine.

5. What fundraising projects has your chapter engaged in during the past year (worth up to 10 points)?

The Chapter was unable to actually implement a fundraising project in the last year, partially due to COVID. However, the Chapter has been actively planning its first post Pandemic fundraiser, which is scheduled for November 12, 2022. The event will take place at Mother Stewarts Brewing in Springfield. The chapter will receive a portion of sales from the evening. Prior to the Pandemic this was an extremely successful fundraiser allowing the Chapter to earn several thousand dollars during each event. This year’s event will feature entertainment provided by several NFB of Ohio members. The event will also feature an auction of donated gifts. The event will double as a large scale public education effort.

A. Describe the extent to which chapter members take responsibility for such projects.

The event is being completely planned, organized, and run by Chapter members. We are not using any outside resources for event operations.

B. What role did outside organizations or sighted volunteers play in these activities?

We have some sighted chapter members who are providing driving services to for members to collect auction donations.

6. Funding the projects and activities of the National Federation of the Blind at the local, state, and national levels is vitally important work for all of us. Answering the following questions will assist the awards committee to compute the percentages of financial support of each chapter. This will enable the committee to make useful comparisons.

A. What was your chapter's bank balance as of September, 2021? Balance as of September, 2022?

* September, 2021 = $5172.95
* September, 2022 = $2398.24

B. After subtracting all expenses associated with fundraising, how much money has your chapter raised during the year ending September 30, 2022?   How much money came in from all other sources during this period?

We did not raise any funds from fundraising, but have our first major fundraiser planned (see below) the remainder of our income consisted of membership dues (29x$5 = $145) and roughly $50 in miscellaneous donations for a total of about $195 in income.

C. How much money has your chapter contributed to the state affiliate during this period (worth up to 10 points)?

* $500
* In addition to Chapter contributions, 4 members contribute through the State Affiliate via regular donations through the Amazon Smiles Program, and multiple members contributed via the NFB of Ohio’s annual Money for the Movement Fundraiser.

D. How much money has your chapter contributed to the national organization during this period (worth up to 10 points)

$690:

* $20 per month for Pac = $240 per year
* $200 for the We Are With U Concert
* $50 each for the Jernigan, White Cane, SUN, and tenBroek funds = $200
* $50 for convention door prizes

7. Describe what your chapter has done to promote the legislative initiatives of the National Federation of the Blind. This could include inviting a public official to a chapter meeting, writing letters, making phone calls, etc. (worth up to 10 points)

* Two of our members (Eric Duffy and Todd Elzey serve on the Affiliates Legislative Committee
* The Chapter receives regular updates on both State and Federal legislative proposals at each meeting.
* Four members submitted written testimony on the NFB of Ohio’s Parental Rights legislation and our Accessible Prescription Labeling bill.
* Two members traveled to Columbus to testify multiple times on the NFB of Ohio’s Parental Rights legislation and the Accessible Prescription Labeling bill
* The Chapter has invited our legislators to join us at our Chapter meeting.
* State Senator Bob Hackett (R-10) of Springfield was the primary sponsor on SB 202, the Senate version of the NFB of Ohio’s Parental Rights Legislation. SB 202 passed the Ohio Senate on a 30-0 vote. Senator Hackett also spoke about SB 202 at the 2021 NFB of Ohio State Convention.
* Numerous members have written and called other State Legislatures soliciting their support on the NFB of Ohio’s Parental Rights and Accessible Prescription Labeling bills.

8. Take no more than two paragraphs to discuss the ways in which your chapter is a stronger part of the National Federation of the Blind today than it was a year ago (worth up to 10 points).

The Chapter is stronger this year because it resumed meeting in person. This has allowed the Chapter to once again provide in-person personalized assistance to blind individuals. The Chapter has also become much more engaged in the community, conducting far more advocacy and education efforts. Finally, our return to in-person operations has also finally allowed us to plan our first post-pandemic fundraiser, which will allow us to replenish our treasury, which will allow us to continue to increase our public education and advocacy efforts.