National Federation of the Blind of Ohio, Cleveland Chapter

April 17, 2020

The April Chapter monthly meeting was held through a teleconference call on Friday, April 17, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. The Call number used is 605-313-4834 and the pass Code is 246345. The reason for having this teleconference meeting is to adhere to COVID-19 social distancing adopted by the National Federation of the Blind and the local and state officials.

Welcome:

Shirley Patterson, Board member, welcomed all members, attendees from other chapters, State Affiliate Board member and all guests/visitors.

Roll Call:

Suzanne Turner, President, welcomed everyone and made sure about the presence of the chapter’s members.

Pledge:

William Turner, First Vice President, recited the pledge.

Shut-in Members:

Cheryl Fields, 2nd Vice president, informed the Board about the health issues of some members and urged everyone to keep them in his/her thoughts and prayers, namely, Sarah bishop and Carolyn Arlington.

Secretary Report:

 Ali Benmerzouga, Recording Secretary, with the help of Suzanne Turner’s technology touch, presented the minutes. They were voted and carried.

Treasury Report:

Natassha Ricks, Treasurer, presented financial reports for April 2020. They were voted and carried. Also, The Board decided to wave the dues for this year due to COVID-19.

President’s Announcements:

Suzanne Turner, President, thanked everyone for attending the meeting, for the help some of the members are providing, and for all the meetings organized by some members during these COVID-19 difficult times. In what follows, two of our members will give a brief description of what they were doing and providing while social distancing and teleworking.

Serving under COVID-19:

Natassha Ricks, Licensed social worker:

She was calling and taking care of people 65 and older in North East Ohio and the West of Ohio and checking if they need anything, such as food and medications. She added that most of them are staying safe. Also, she mentioned to them and to all members to stick to social distancing and use instant cart, or door-dash services for shopping and food delivery and not to go outside if you don’t have to. She finished by urging everyone to stay safe, check in on your loved ones and friends, exercise and be careful.

Alexis Tyson:

She talked about her work experience with veterans during this pandemic and how she helped them handling their different type of claims. She added that about 21 Veterans die per day. She mentioned that she urged them to use the Crisis line. Also, she informed them about the Different help available for them during this crisis and to see a social or mental health help, if necessary.

Suzanne Turner and all Board members thanked them both for what they are doing to our veteran and Senior citizens.

Suzanne Turner, President, reminded the board that Ohio Affiliate has two fundraisings that are still going on, namely, the Piggest Raffle Ever and the PAC Plan.

Washington Seminar:

Theresa McKenney and Wilbert Turner, Members, reported that it was really a good experience. They added that the House Representatives were open minded, nice to them. Also, they mentioned that they presented three legislative initiatives, namely, ATAA, GAIN, and AIM High and were promised that the bills will be presented. For more information about the bills, please see Appendix A.

 Encouraging Power

Joann Williams, Cleveland’s Cheering Coordinator, reminded the Board that time is stressful now and invited all members to join and encourage one another on Sunday, April 26, 2020 at 4:00 pm on the Ohio conference line.

National Convention

William Turner, Vice president, announced that 2020 National Federation of the Blind Convention is going to be virtual, no registration fees, and registration is required. He added that when registering, the member is required to provide an email address. Also, he reminded the Board that he is available for help. He added, that for those who made reservation with the Hotel, the hotel will contact them and give them their money back.

Cleveland Guide Dog Committee

Renee Arrington Johnson, Guide dog Committee Chair, invited all members to the OGDU meeting on Sunday, April 19, 2020 at 7:00 pm. She added that her committee is planning to participate with their guide dogs during the 30th ADA Anniversary this coming July 2020.

Senior Report:

Gloria Conway, Senior Committee Chair, informed the Board that she is available on a daily basis for a Coffee break at 10:00 am. She urged all members to call the Ohio conference line and share his/her morning thoughts/experience/story.

Sandra Krems, Ohio Senior Division, she informed everyone about the project Gloria Conway and her started A year ago by visiting seniors in the Recreation Centers and educating them on how to communicate when you are blind as well as giving Informational seminars. She urged those who are interested in being part of the project to get in touch with her or Gloria.

Community Outreach:

Cheryl Fields, Community Outreach Chair, thanked everyone for helping during this difficult time. She added that it has been a stressful month and no need to overload yourself too much., She urged everyone to increase the daily dose of humor, music, to reduce the stress level. Also, she talked about all sorts of domestic violence since everyone is home due to COVID-19, and urge everyone to call 911 or the hotline if he or she notices or faces anything like that. Additionally, she mentioned the NVDA Screen Reader training and Happy Hour activities that took place last week. She concluded by informing all members that Next week’s Happy Hour participants are going to sing.

Team Building Exercises:

Suzanne Turner informed the Board that the aging department got in touch with her and asked her what can they do for the veterans. The Board decided to send thank you cards to the veterans. She urged all members to send her a short note, which will be included in those cards before mailing them to the veterans. Cecil supported the project by donating $20.00.

Shout out:

Wilber mentioned that the Scrip-talk can be used using the phone. He added that you need to download the app and register. This app will read all the information for you and when to refill. Also, he provided the phone number for scrip-talk, which is 800-890-1180.

Henry informed the Board about the Low-cost pharmacy. Regina added that they Prepackage all your meds and deliver them to you.

Sherley informed all members on how to get some food from the Food bank. She added that we have to call 2166382265 and tell them that you want to register to get food.

Dr. Carolyn Peters will contact Lillian to discuss the possibility of having a chapter in her city.

Cheryl thanked the affiliate for all the help and support.

Robert from Mississippi was happy.

Dr. Carolyn Peters: Membership, urged members to share things with family and friends, deliver items to people, tell and share your story, and make sure to stay safe and healthy.

Richard Payne, Affiliate President, reminded Gloria and Sandy that we are a support group, and during this pandemic We have always met the challenge, and we are more prepared than others. He concluded by thanking them and letting them know that he enjoyed the 10:00 am calls and that he is available and ready for any support that they may need while carrying the Senior project in different cities/Recreation Centers. Gloria Conway added that she is so proud of the leaders and so proud and happy to be a member of this chapter.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Please make a note of the action items below:

Voice Box Number:

(641) 715-3900

Code: 582705

New Teleconference Number:

(605) 313-4834

Code: 246345

Ali Benmerzouga, Recording Secretary

440-590-0315 – cell

Natassha Ricks, Treasurer

(216) 376-9863

Notes!

1. Please take a moment and like, share and promote Cleveland’s Facebook Page

<https://m.facebook.com/NationalFederationOfTheBlindOfOhioClevelandChapter/>

2.. Please subscribe to Ohio-Talk to stay informed on the know in the Ohio Affiliate.

Ohio-Talk mailing list

Ohio-Talk@nfbnet.org

<http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/ohio-talk_nfbnet.org>

3. Please subscribe to Cleveland’s List Serve for all up-to-date information in the Cleveland Chapter.

<http://www.nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfboh-cleveland_nfbnet.org>

nfboh-cleveland-request@nfbnet.org

4-please call a member who you have not seen for a while and talk to them about returning to the Cleveland Chapter.

Appendix A:

In what follows, brief descriptions of the three bills that are going to be presented during the 2020 Washington Seminar.

Bill 1: The Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA) (H.R. 2086/S. 815) The cost of critically needed access technology is out of reach for most blind Americans. By providing a refundable tax credit for qualifying purchases, Congress will stimulate individual procurement of this technology and promote affordability of these tools. Learn more about the Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA) (H.R. 2086/S. 815) at <https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/legislative-agenda/access-technology-affordability>

Bill 2: The Greater Access and Independence through Nonvisual Access Technology (GAIN) Act (H.R. 3929) Advanced digital interfaces create barriers that prevent blind individuals from independently operating essential devices that enhance quality of life. Congress must end the digital divide that threatens the independence of blind Americans by developing minimum accessibility requirements for such devices. Learn more about the Greater Access and Independence through Nonvisual Access Technology (GAIN) Act (H.R. 3929) at <https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/legislative-agenda/greater-access-independence-nonvisual-access-technology>

Bill 3: The Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education (AIM HIGH) Act (H.R. 5312/S. 3095) Until a market-driven solution for accessible instructional materials is achieved, blind college students are denied access to critical course content. The AIM HIGH Act will remove these barriers to equality in the classroom by creating a set of guidelines that clearly define accessible instructional materials. Learn more about the Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education (AIM HIGH) Act (H.R. 5312/S. 3095) at <https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/legislative-agenda/accessible-instructional-materials-higher-education>

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