National Federation of the Blind of Cleveland Chapter

June 17, 2020

May 15, 2020 Minutes:

The May Chapter monthly meeting was held through a teleconference call on Friday, May 15, 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:

Ali Benmerzouga, recording Secretary, welcomed all members, attendees from other chapters and Divisions, all guests/visitors. Also, he recited the one-minute message.

Roll Call:

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

Pledge:

William Turner, First Vice President, helped all attendees to recite the National Federation of the Blind Pledge.

Shut-in Members:

Cheryl Fields, 2nd Vice president, informed the Board about the health issues of some chapter and affiliate members and/or their relatives and urged everyone to keep them in his/her thoughts and prayers.

Secretary Report:

 Ali Benmerzouga, Recording Secretary, with the help of Suzanne Turner’s technology touch, presented the April 2020 minutes. Cheryl Fields made the motion and Billie Graham second it. The minutes were voted on and carried.

Treasury Report:

Natassha Ricks, Treasurer, presented financial reports for April 2020. The Checking account reflects to date, $177.88 and the Savings reflect to date: $1,024.29. Billie Graham made the motion and Delcenia Brown second it. the treasury report was voted on and carried. Also, she reminded everyone about sending their dues by mail as soon as possible.

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. Also, she reminded the Board about the following items and to do the needful whenever necessary:

* Ohio Affiliate has two fundraisings that are still going on, namely, the Piggest Raffle Ever and the PAC Plan.
* To register for the 2020 Virtual National Federation of the Blind convention before June 15, 2020.
* Jessica McKee from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disability (OOD) called and said that she is available and ready to help anyone with matters related to OOD.
* Members are going to receive by mail some personal protection equipment from COVID-19 from our Affiliate President, Richard Payne very shortly. She and the whole board thanked our Affiliate President for his continuous help.
* To get familiar with Zoom platform since everything is going to be on Zoom in the near future.
* A great talk scheduled for Tuesday, May 19 at 7:00 P.M., 2020 titled: “Becoming the leaders we deserve,” is going to be given by three great speakers from the National Federation of the Blind.
* There will be a Quarterly open house lead by the National Office for people to learn about the National Federation of the Blind and its philosophy. She urged everyone to let his/her family, friends and relatives know about the event.
* Services for Independent Living, Leadership Academy:

Suzanne Turner, President, informed all members and State members that Services for Independent Living (SIL) is now accepting applications for its Virtual Summer 2020 Leadership Academy “Immersion Session”.  The Leadership Academy is a course designed to help people with disabilities gain skills needed to participate on nonprofit boards, community coalitions, task forces, and/or system change committees in a meaningful way.  The goal of the academy is to increase the number of persons with disabilities prepared to engage in community leadership roles. She added that the Summer 2020 “Immersion Session” will begin on **Monday, July 6, 2020 and end on Thursday, July 30, 2020**.  Classes will be held twice weekly on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 1 pm to 4 pm.  **All classes will be held virtually.** Upon completion of the Leadership Academy, SIL will work with participants to identify areas of interest and potential leadership opportunities. **The deadline for applications is June 15, 2020**.  Because space is limited, we encourage interested applicants to apply early.  If you would like an application and/or if you have any questions, please contact Laura Gold via email at [lgold@sil-oh.org](mailto:lgold@sil-oh.org) or via telephone at 216-815-0015 (please leave a detailed message).  If you require the application and/or flyer in an alternative format, please let Laura know. Delcenia Brown and Renee Johnson Arrington both graduated from SIL Leadership Academy and have the following to say about the Leadership Academy Training:

Delcenia said that she learned a lot from the training and now she knows about how to run a board meeting, committee composition, nonprofit organizations, leadership qualities, how to be at the table when decisions related to disabled individuals are made ; Renee added that she learned a lot about Nonprofit board and how they operate, the existence of many and diverse disabled groups and organizations, the great and enjoyable classes provided by the program and that she learned new skills and sharpened old ones. Both graduates, Delcenia and Renee recommended the training to all members, especially to those who would like to advocate for the disabled individuals.

A Philosophical Discussion:

Suzanne Turner, President, asked all members the following question: Are you ok with being blind? Many members and without the slightest hesitation told their own stories and experiences and enthusiastically expressed that they are fine with their blindness and they undoubtedly believe it is respectable to be blind.

Membership Report:

Regina Mason, Membership Committee Chair urged the board to have some devoted volunteers who will take the responsibility of keeping in touch with the newly blind individuals. For those interested, please call Regina or Gloria at your earliest convenience.

Senior Report:

Gloria Conway, Senior Committee Chair reminded the board about the monthly

Call, scheduled on Sunday, May 17 at 7:00 P.M. and asked everyone to share his/her favorite recipes with those on the call. She added that there is a daily coffee break call at 10:00 A.M. and urge everyone to call, check in let those on the call know how he/she is doing and break the isolation caused by COVID-19.

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, May 24, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. on the Ohio conference line.

Guests:

Ohio Association of Guide Dog Users

Louann Bowers and Debbie Baker , members of the Ohio Guide Dog Users (OGDU), talked about the different activities of their group, their yearly get together at conventions, their email list, having guest speakers /veterinarians, how they advocate for bills related to their guide dogs, explained that their guide dogs do not transmit COVID-19 virus and urged everyone to reduce the patting. Also, they talked about the benefits of being a member of the group /OGDU, the $5.00 yearly membership fee and their coordination with the national Guide Dog Users (NAGDU), especially when advocating and working on legislatives related to Guide dogs. They added that OGDU is part of NAGDU and mentioned that they help individuals when they have issues with their guide dogs.

Ohio Association of Blind Students (OABS):

Kinshuk Tella, member and president of the Ohio Association of blind students, talked briefly about his association/division and urged everyone to help with the 2020 adoption of a graduate through Facebook or by email or by contacting him directly.

Shout Out:

Cheryl Fields urged everyone to be safe and be healthy.

Wilbert Turner thanked our state affiliate President, Richard Payne for the personal protection equipment.

Regina Mason thanked Suzanne for all the work she is doing for the chapter and the affiliate.

Henry Butler told our Chapter president Suzanne Turner that she really came back strong.

Shirley Patterson Thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers, calls and for asking about the health progress of her mother, brother and sister.

Team Building Exercise:

Suzanne Turner, President, started a team building exercise and asked everyone to be honest with himself/herself. She described four different personalities and assigned a different color for each personality, namely, Orange, gold, green and blue. She asked many members about the true color of his/her personality. She added that these colors may change when progressing in time and the degree of participation and learning from the National Federation of the Blind activities and self-education.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Please make a note of the action items below:

Voice Box Number:

(641) 715-3900

Code: 582705

Cleveland Teleconference Number:

(605) 313-4834

Code: 246345

Ohio Conference Line:

Tel: (712) 775-7031

Code: 240281423

Zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/4081850851>

Meeting ID: 408 185 0851

One tap mobile

+16468769923 and ID code: 408-185-0851.

Zoom Telephone number:

(669) 900-6833

Id: 4081850851

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](mailto: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](mailto:nfboh-cleveland-request@nfbnet.org)

4- Please don’t forget to send your dues to our Treasurer as soon as you can.

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

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