## The Independence Market

The Independence market has masks back in stock, 3 for $10, or $4 each. Call them to learn about their January specials. To order, you can call the Independence Market at (410)659-9314, extension 2216, or you can email [IndependenceMarket@NFB.org](mailto:IndependenceMarket@NFB.org).

## Fundraising

thank you again to Freedom Scientific, Vispero, their CEO and all the staff there for their commitment to the work of the National Federation of the Blind.  And thank you to all of you who helped us match both the Vispero gifts at the end of the year totaling $100,000.

## Washington Seminar

February 8-11

The Great Gathering takes place at 5 PM, EDT, February 8th virtually.

Reach out to your state affiliate to learn how you can get involved

Participate in the Tuesday Chapter meeting to learn more about Washington Seminar.

## Department of Transportation and Service Animals

On December 10, 2020, the DOT made a final ruling concerning air travelers with service animals. The ruling went into effect on January 11, 2021. The rule permits airlines to require passengers to complete the DOT service animal air transportation form. On December 22, 2020, the NFB sent a letter opposing the required form. The National Association of Guide Dog Users will advocate on behalf of guide dog users on this matter.

## 2021 National Convention

A final decision has not been made regarding an in-person convention. However, according to President Riccobono, it is looking like this year’s national convention will be virtual.

## NFB Leadership Priorities

“We want the National Federation of the Blind to be a safe and healthy space for all blind people, for our families, for our friends, and that includes our three affiliated training centers.” President Mark Riccobono

January 2021-July 2021: Phasing in training

Please refer to President Riccobono’ s December 16, 2020 open letter that is published in the January 2021 Braille Monitor.

Please read the revised Code of Conduct that was adopted by the national board members in December 2020.

## Explaining How Change Will Happen: Partnership with RAINN Rape Abuse and Incest National Network)

NFB has partnered with the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the nation. The purpose of this partnership is to assist us in furthering a safe, inclusive, and welcoming culture free of sexual misconduct, as part of all NFB programs and activities.

RAINN's website: RAINN.org.

RAINN’s toll-free national sexual assault help line: 1-800-656-HOPE.The call and the services are free to anyone.

The NFB and RAAIN will meet in early January.

Phase 1 includes the following:

Create and conduct a mandatory training program regarding sexual violence and misconduct for staff, volunteers, and leadership within the organization.

Says President Riccobono, “in March of this year, we're going to start with all of the boards of our state affiliates, our national division, all of the staff at our national office, all of the staffs at our affiliated training centers, as well as the students at those training centers.  “

President Riccobono continued, “the second thing that we're going to do most immediately with RAINN is review and augment the NFB's code of conduct to include the strongest possible policies, practices aimed at preventing sexual misconduct and assault within our organization.  We're relying on RAINN's expertise to assist us in identifying the best practices and incorporating them directly into our code of conduct.  And we plan to do that very quickly before our national convention. We'll also be devising ongoing training and resources in collaboration with RAINN and their expertise, their nationwide leading expertise in these areas.  Where we know blindness, they know sexual assault and violence prevention, and we're going to be identifying through their expertise how we're going to sustain these efforts and what we need to do after the national convention.”

## Survivor-lead Taskforce

The taskforce is lead entirely by six survivors and is an intermediate advisory team to the National Federation of the Blind leaders…

Other survivors can share stories and information to enhance the work of the NFB to make healthy changes going forward.

The taskforce will make recommendations and meet weekly with President Riccobono.

For more information please visit: NFB.org/survivors and find the initial announcement.

call our main number here (410)659-9314 and dial extension 2238 to leave a voice mail, and one of our task force members will get back to you.

## Diversity and Inclusion

A full-time staff member has been hired to increase NFB’s diversity and inclusion efforts. Training materials will be created and shared with affiliates to ensure there is a pipeline for diversity and inclusion in leadership. The NFB will be led by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. You can E-mail the committee at: diversity@NFB.org

## blind Randolph-Sheppard vendors

The most recent COVID legislation that was passed and ultimately signed by the President included a $20 million appropriation for our blind vendors, … is going to provide relief to blind entrepreneurs who have simply been sidelined because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This much needed financial assistance is due in part to the advocacy efforts of our members and leaders.

## Memorializing Members

Joyce Scanlan of MN passed away. (I missed the date, sorry). “Joyce first became active in our Minnesota affiliate in 1970.  She served as President of the affiliate from 1973-2007.  She served for a long time as a member of our national board and for many years served as our first Vice President.  Joyce led the charge to establish blindness, learning in new dimensions, BLIND, Incorporated, and served as its executive director from its founding in 1986 until her retirement in 2003….” Joyce’s legacy lives on.

Sadly, four other members of the NFB family also passed away in late 2020.

## Braille Transcription Courses and Certification

Since December 13, 2006, the NFB has led the braille certification training program. Currently, Jennifer Dunnam manages this program. The program is operated under a contract with the National Library Service. Courses lead to certification for braille transcribers and braille proofreaders. Once the student has met all the requirements their name is sent to NLSfor certification. Courses can be taken by sighted or blind individuals. The end goal of the certification is to promote literacy through producing braille that is accurate…. There are several certifications available…. The course requirements are completed by email or in some cases paper mail as well.  All the course materials are free to download for anyone, whether you're enrolled or not, but if a person meets the eligibility and wants to enroll in the courses to work with one of our fantastic course instructors, they should submit an application to do that.  And the applications and all the course material and a lot of other information could be found at NFB.org/transcribers.

Note: The San Francisco School District has been unable to recruit a certified braille transcriptionist. The District has previously contract nominally proficient transcriptionists.