

**59TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF VIRGINIA**

Tracy Soforenko, President

**November 3 — 5, 2017**

**WESTIN TYSON’S CORNER**

7801 Leesburg Pike

Falls Church, Virginia 22043

(703) 893-1340

**HOSTED BY THE POTOMAC CHAPTER OF THE**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF VIRGINIA**

John Halverson, President

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# The Federation Pledge

“I pledge to participate actively

in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind

to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind;

to support the policies and programs of the Federation;

and to abide by its Constitution.”

# Convention Registration & Information

Convention registration and information will be held in the Cyprus Room, located in the meeting room area. The cost of on-site registration is $25. Pre-registration packet pick up and on-site registration will be open the following times:

* Thursday, November 2 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
* Friday, November 3 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and   
  12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
* Saturday, November 4 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Door prizes and auction items can be brought to the registration desk beginning on Thursday evening.

## Meal Functions

Tickets for all meal functions are available at the registration desk. Banquet and box lunch tickets must be purchased by 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 4.

**Banquet:** Banquet tickets may be purchased onsite for $40. We will not have reserved seating at the banquet this year. Seating will be open, so come early to get seats together. Do not forget to bring your ticket because tickets will be checked at the door.

**Box Lunch:** If you did not pre-register for a boxed lunch, tickets may be purchased onsite for $18, while supplies last. In addition, a limited number of student pizza lunch tickets may be available for those who did not pre-register for $7.

**Note:** For more information about hotel, registration or meal functions, please contact Joe Orozco at (202) 810-4023.

## Door Prizes

Door prizes will be drawn periodically throughout convention sessions on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and at the banquet. To be eligible for door prizes, you must be registered for the convention and present in the room when your name is called.

## Action Auction

Throughout the convention we will be holding an Action Auction to raise money for the affiliate. The auction will be great fun with many valuable items up for bid. You will have a chance to preview auction items on Friday afternoon in the exhibit area. For more information, contact Jacki Brown, Chairperson and Auctioneer.

## Contact Table

If you need assistance from the NFB of Virginia (such as helping a blind child get a good education, getting access to blindness skills training, learning to use NFB-NEWSLINE®, or resolving an employment discrimination problem), please go to the contact table. After the convention, a member of the NFB of Virginia will contact you. In addition, if you would like to sign up to receive any of our publications or would like to get regular updates about our programs and legislative efforts, please also visit the contact table. The table will be open during the board meeting, after the opening ceremonies on Friday, during General Session on Saturday, at the end of the banquet, and all morning Sunday. For more information, please contact Alex Castillo at (917) 532-7439.

## Youth Track

Youth Track is coordinated by the Virginia Association of Blind Students and will run parallel to the main convention program. The Youth Track will connect students with positive role models and peers throughout the state; challenge students to think about themselves and their role in the civil rights movement; introduce students to our positive NFB philosophy on blindness; educate students about their choices for blindness skills training; and give them the opportunity to participate in exciting activities in the convention hotel. For more information, please contact Derek Manners at (903) 271-6494.

## Childcare

Childcare will be available for infants through fifth graders whose parents are registered for the convention. Child care will be available throughout the day on Friday and Saturday. Childcare will be located in the Redwood Room (Lower Level). We will have activities and games for the children. For more information, please contact Naim Abu El Hawa at (202) 848-8932.

Childcare will be offered at the following times:

* Session 1: Friday, 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
* Session 2: Friday, 12:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.
* Session 3: Friday, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
* Session 4: Saturday, 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
* Session 5: Saturday, 12:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.
* Session 6: Saturday, 6:45 p.m. to one half hour after the banquet ends

Snacks will be provided during Sessions 1, 2, 4 and 5. Even though childcare will be open and fully staffed during lunch on both Friday and Saturday, lunch will not be provided. Parents should either pick their children up for lunch at the end of Session 1 and Session 4 or provide a lunch for their children in the childcare room. Also, dinner will not be provided on Saturday evening. Parents should feed their children dinner prior to bringing them to Session 6. The cost of childcare is $10 per family per session.

## Dog Relief Area

The Westin Tyson’s Corner has several grass areas on the property. There is one designated dog relief area, which is located at the end of the function hallway and through the exit doors. Walk down the steps and on your left, is a grassy area. Please deposit all waste in the trashcans provided.

## Assistive Listening Devices

A limited number of assistive listening devices are available during all convention sessions and at the banquet. For an assistive listening device, please go to the contact table located in the back of the hall during all convention general sessions. A credit card or identification card is required as a deposit for the equipment.

## Daylight Saving Time

Don’t forget to set your watches back one hour for the change that occurs early Sunday morning. Smart phones, of course, should handle this change automatically.

# Presidential Suite

The Presidential Suite is Room 939.

# Thursday, November 2, 2017

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Registration: Cyprus Room.

8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Prince William Chapter Organizing Meet Up: Presidential Suite, Room 939. We are re-establishing our Prince William Chapter. Interested individuals should join us for this informal meet up to discuss how do we meet our goals and make connections in the Prince William County area.

# FRIDAY, November 3, 2017

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Registration: Cyprus Room.

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. NFB of Virginia Board of Directors Meeting (Open to All): Oaks Rooms 1 & 2.

## General Session

Oaks Rooms 1 & 2

10:00 a.m. to 10:25 a.m. Opening Ceremonies:

* Call to Order - Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.
* Invocation - Rev. John Shellito, Associate Rector, St. George's Episcopal Church, Arlington, Virginia.
* Presentation of the Colors - NFB of Virginia Veterans.
* Pledge of Allegiance - Naomi Mills and Ashley Tyron, 2017 NFB BELL Program Participants, Woodbridge, Virginia and Ashburn, Virginia.
* Federation Pledge.
* Star Spangled Banner - Mary Fernandez, Greater Alexandria Chapter, Woodbridge New Jersey.
* Greetings from Our Host Chapter - John Halverson, President, Potomac Chapter, Arlington, Virginia.
* Convention Arrangements - Joe Orozco, Chairperson, Convention Organization and Arrangements.

10:25 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. Seniors Taking Charge: A Panel Discussion:

* Nancy Yeager, Moderator, Arlington, Virginia.
* Roberta Cohen, Chantilly, Virginia.
* Mary Anne Kessler, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

10:40 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Stepping Out of the Comfort Zone: Reflections from Virginia’s 2017 McDonald Fellows and Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship Fund Winners:

* Moderator: Sandy Halverson, Acting Chairperson, McDonald Fellowship Committee, and NFB of Virginia Liaison, Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship Fund Committee.
* Portia Baskerville, Richmond, Virginia.
* Michael Kitchens, Portsmouth, Virginia.
* Gerald Meredith, Richmond, Virginia.
* Brandon Shuttleworth, Arlington, Virginia.

11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Quality Education for Virginia’s Blind Students. John Eisenberg, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services, Virginia Department of Education.

11:20 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Welcome to Tyson’s Corner. Delegate Patrick Hope, 47th District in Arlington, Virginia.

11:30 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. Action Auction.

11:40 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Virginia. Raymond Hopkins, Commissioner, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

12:00 p.m. General Session Adjourns.

12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Registration: Cyprus Room.

12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Exhibits: The Birches Room. Annette Carr, Exhibits Coordinator.

1:00p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Resolutions Committee: The Pines Room, Jennifer Shields, Chairperson. We encourage the participation of all members in setting Federation policy. Come help shape the policies of the NFB of Virginia.

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Virginia Association to Promote the Use of Braille. Evergreen Room, Patricia Droppers, President. Please come and join the Virginia Association to Promote the Use of Braille (VAPUB) where we will be able to put our hands on some new technology related to braille as well as discuss other important issues relevant to braille literacy for people of all ages. Help us show Virginians that braille is thriving.

## Friday Afternoon Concurrent Seminars

2:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. Eyes on you: Dress, connect, impress - Increasing the social and the professional you by Maximizing your Wardrobe Potential, Cultivating Relationships, and Leaving an Everlasting Impression. Uricka Harrison, Evelyn Valdez, and Alexander Castillo, Co-chairs, Oaks 2 Room. Focus on how you present yourself, both professionally and personally, to achieve your goals, promote your brand, and make a strong impression on others.

2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Living the Collaborative Life you Want - How Blind People Strategize to Work in a Visually Oriented Workplace: Oaks 1 Room, Sean McMahon, Chair. How do blind people effectively collaborate in the workplace be it remote virtual or face-to-face with their peers? We will have an interactive panel discussion about the technology and alternative techniques used by blind professionals to enhance their productivity on the job. In addition, participants will get the opportunity to apply the skills discussed in an interactive collaboration exercise.

4:00 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. Emergency Preparedness: Making Your Plans - Oaks 2 Room. Learn about how to create a plan for an emergency and overcome obstacles should an emergency occur. Learn from others and keep in control.

* John Bailey, Moderator.
* Courtney Arroyo, Outreach and Disabilities Integration Liaison, Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management.
* Norma Crosby, President, National Federation of the Blind of Texas.
* Evelyn Valdez, Logistics Management Specialist, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Public Meeting on DBVI Divisions, Programs and Services: Oaks 2 Room, Susan K. Davis, Policy and Training Coordinator, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. At-Large Chapter Meeting and Reception: Presidential Suite, Room 939, Rick Holley, Chairperson.

6:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Winning them Over with Professionalism and Poise: An Etiquette Dinner. Joe Hobson, Coordinator, Palm Court Room within the Blue Fire Grill.

7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Convention Hospitality: Oaks 1 Room. Hosted by the Potomac Chapter, John Halverson, President. All registered convention attendees are welcome to join us for this fun Western themed evening of fellowship and hospitality. Don’t forget your ticket provided with your registration to enter this event.

7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A Walk on the Wild Side: Braille Carnival: The Pines Room. Hosted by the Virginia Parents of Blind Children: Laurie Wages, President

Join us, with your children of any age, as you take a walk on the wild side to explore the animals encountered on a safari. Come play games and have a snack! We hope to see you there!

8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Student Membership Kickoff: Dogwood Room (Lower Level), Robert Parsons, President.

8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Virginia Association of Guide Dog Users Meeting. Willow Room, Robert Parsons, Secretary. The Virginia Association of Guide Dog Users will be conducting an informative business meeting regarding future division programs, legislative updates, and a special election for current vacant positions on its executive board. Please join in to cover topics like the ride share monitoring program, effective post training techniques, and medical/health related tips for new and seasoned handlers.

# Saturday, November 4, 2017

7:15 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. Scholarship Breakfast: Presidential Suite, Room 939, Brian Miller, Chairperson.

8:00 a.m. to 10:00a.m. Registration: Cyprus Room.

## General Session

Oaks Rooms 1 & 2

9:00 a.m. Call to Order -Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

9:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m. Invocation - Althea Pittman, President, Eastern Shore Chapter, Melfa, Virginia.

9:05 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. National Report - Norma Crosby, President, National Federation of the Blind of Texas and Member of the Board of Directors, National Federation of the Blind.

9:35 a.m. to 9:40 a.m. Introducing the 2017 NFB of Virginia James F. Nelson, Jr. Scholarship Finalists. Brian Miller, Chair.

9:40 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Action Auction.

9:45 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. Engaging in STEM fields: A Youth Slam Experience. Michael Munn, 2017 Youth Slam Participant, Berryville, Virginia.

9:55 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Our Globetrotter: Building Dreams Around the World. Fredric Schroeder, President, World Blind Union

10:15 a.m. to 10:25 an Innovation at Blindness: Learning in New Dimensions, (BLIND Inc) Rob Hobson, Coordinator for Professional Development and Outreach, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

10:25 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Action Auction.

10:30 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. Struggles and Success in IEP Advocacy: A Parent’s Perspective on Providing Students the Skills They Need for Long-term Success. Giao Lai, Parent, Warrenton, Virginia.

10:40 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. Step One: Engaging Students. Robert Parsons, President, Virginia Association of Blind Students, Richmond, Virginia.

10:50 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Project RISE: Resilience, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment. Kathryn Webster, Project RISE Program Coordinator, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Arlington, Virginia.

11:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. NFB-BELL: Early Literacy, A Lifetime of Possibilities. Alex Castillo and Beth Sellers, Virginia NFB BELL Academy Program Coordinators.

11:15 a.m. to 11:25 a.m. The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired: Partnering for Success—Melody Roane, Director, Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI).

11:25 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Action Auction.

11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Presidential Report, Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

12:00 p.m. General Session Adjourns.

12:05 p.m. to 12:15 p.m. Box Lunch Pickup: Intersection of Oaks Foyer and Main Hall (at the top of the ‘T’).

12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Upward Mobility Luncheon, Mary Fernandez, Coordinator, River Birch Room. This luncheon will focus on individuals who are early in their career and trying to grow to move up the employment ladder. Whether you are a young professional, seeking to change careers, or trying to figure out how to find and partake of new opportunities, join us to connect and discover ideas for your future.

12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Seniors Division Luncheon and Business meeting, Pines Room. Nancy Yeager, President.

12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Virginia Association of Blind Merchants Division Luncheon and Business Meeting. Water Birch Room. Andre Tynes, Vice President

12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Virginia Parents of Blind Children Luncheon and Business Meeting. Evergreen Room.

Laurie Wages, President. Network with other parents: Use a Slate and Stylus Under Blindfold.

12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Blind Students Luncheon and Business Meeting. Dogwood Room (Lower Level).

Robert Parsons, President. Student Pizza Lunch pick up will be held in the Dogwood Room starting at 12:05 p.m.

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Registration. Cyprus Room.

## Saturday Afternoon Breakout Sessions

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Youth Track, Dogwood Room (Lower Level), Robert Parsons, President.

2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Getting the Job Done - Advancing Your Job/Career Prospects, Oaks Room 2. Amir Rahimi, Communications Manager, ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia, Coordinator. This career workshop will focus on helping you get and grow on the job. Whether you are a job seeker, a new employee, or someone trying to advance in the evolving workplace, this dynamic workshop will provide you the skills to navigate with greater confidence. We will combine great presentations, interactive sessions and the opportunity to learn from our peers to help you succeed. This year’s seminar will focus on self-reliance, private sector solutions, and charting your own path. Key areas of focus will include resume and cover letter critique, mock interviews, overcoming obstacles in the workplace, and networking best practices.

2:00 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. Parent Track, Evergreen Room, Laurie Wages, President, Virginia Parents of Blind Children. Get your questions answered about the NFB from Michael Kasey, Past President of the NFB of Virginia and learn alternative techniques for your child

2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Senior Track: Seniors in Charge. Video presentation and Discussion. Oaks 1 Room, Nancy Yeager, President.

2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Senior Track: Staying in the Game. Pines Room, Nancy Yeager, President. Participate in discussions and presentations on such topics as: hearing loss; transportation; Senior activities around the country; and low impact exercise.

3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Do You Dream in Color? Oaks 1 Room. Join us for a screening of the critically acclaimed film “Do You Dream in Color?” about four inspiring blind students and their journeys. This will be followed by an opportunity to ask questions to parents and NFB leaders. We will also discuss how the NFB can help students achieve their dreams in a discussion facilitated by Brian Miller and Fred Schroeder.

5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Project RISE Open House for Northern Virginia students and parents.

Kathryn Webster, Project RISE Program Coordinator, Evergreen Room. Learn more about Project RISE, meet our team and ask your questions.

## 2017 Convention Banquet

Oaks Ballroom

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Pre-Banquet Reception (Cash Bar): Oaks Foyer.

7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Banquet Program - Charles Brown, Master of Ceremonies and Past President, NFB of Virginia.

Invocation—Rev. Dr. Eugene Thomas, United Methodist Church, Arlington, Virginia.

2017 James F. Nelson Scholarship Awards Presentation—Brian Miller, Scholarship Committee Chairperson.

Banquet Address - Norma Crosby, President, National Federation of the Blind of Texas and Member of the Board of Directors, National Federation of the Blind.

Action Auction - Jacki Brown, Chairperson and Auctioneer.

# Sunday, November 5, 2017

8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. Devotions: Evergreen Room.

## General Session

Oaks Rooms 1 & 2

9:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m. A Musical Invocation—,

9:05 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. Building Your Federation Fervor: A Philosophical Study. Joe Orozco, NFB of Virginia Leadership Fellow, Woodbridge, Virginia.

9:35 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Youth Track: Dogwood Room (Lower Level), Derek Manners, Coordinator.

9:35 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Access to Information: NFB Newsline, the KNFB Reader and other technology to keep You Informed. Scott White, Director of sponsored Technologies, National Federation of the Blind, Baltimore, Maryland.

9:45 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. X Marks The Spot. Evelyn Valdez, Potomac Chapter, Alexandria, Virginia.

9:55 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Action Auction.

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Business Session:

* Audit Committee Report—Michael Kasey, Chairperson.
* Treasurer’s Report—Mark Roane, Treasurer
* SUN Committee Report: Sandy Halverson, Chairperson.
* 2018 Richmond and Washington Seminars—Deepa Goraya and Derek Manners, Legislative Directors
* 2018 National Convention.
* 2018 NFB of Virginia Convention.
* Resolutions—Jennifer Shields, Chairperson.
* Nominating Committee Report—Michael Kasey, Chairperson.
* Elections.
* Report of Youth Track Activities—Derek Manners, Coordinator.
* Old and New Business.
* Closing Remarks—Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia

12:00 p.m. General Session Adjourns.

Thank you to our Potomac Chapter for hosting the 2017 NFB of Virginia State Convention. Your hospitality made us feel like family and it made the convention one of our best ever.

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202-349-8486 [www.torresfoundation.org](http://www.torresfoundation.org)

VFO – Assistive technology for the blind and visually impaired. 800-444-4443 [www.vfogroup.com](http://www.vfogroup.com)

Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired – VRCBVI provides quality training in the skills of blindness and promotes positive attitudes about the capabilities of blind individuals to make positive contributions at work and in the community. In addition to the training program we offer for adults, we also offer innovative and fun programs for blind youth that will challenge them to reach their full potential. Learn about these and other exciting initiatives at VRCBVI! 804-371-3323 <https://www.vrcbvi.org>

Jacobus tenrec Legacy Society

Help build a future full of opportunity for the blind by becoming a member of the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy

Society. Your legacy gift to the National Federation of the Blind can be made in the form of a will or living trust, an income-generating gift, or by naming the NFB as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. You can also become a member of the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society by making a legacy gift to your state affiliate. By committing to support an NFB affiliate, your gift will benefit both local and national programs as all bequests made to affiliates are split evenly with the NFB national treasury. In addition to having the satisfaction of contributing to the future success of the NFB's mission, tenBroek legacy society members will also receive a specially designed thank you gift and other benefits. For additional information about the Jacobus tenBroek Legacy Society, please contact:

Lou Ann Blake

at the NFB Jernigan Institute

[lblake@nfb.org](mailto:lblake@nfb.org)

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