

National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas

Welcome to the 70th Annual Arkansas State Convention
April 12-13, 2024
Held at the Hilton Gardens Hotel, Jonesboro, Arkansas

“Exceeding Expectations”

Introducing the Arkansas Affiliate Board

- President: Nena Chadwick
- 1st Vice President: Brent Philpot
- 2nd Vice President:
- Treasurer: David Henry
- Secretary: Shelley Keeland
- Board Member 1: Tanya Vanhouten
- Board Member 2: Mollie Hernandez
- Board Member 3: Bettye Johnson
- Board Member 4: Cindy Scott-Huisman
- ARKABS Liaison: Bryson Jones

Introducing Chapter Presidents:

- At Large Chapter: Tanya Vanhouten
- Central Arkansas Chapter: Brent Philpot
- Northwest Arkansas Chapter (NWA): David Henry
- ARKABS: Bryson Jones

The National Federation of the Blind, the oldest and largest organization of and for the blind in the US, is made up of blind/visually impaired people of all ages and their families and friends. As noted above, the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas Affiliate is made up of an affiliate Board, which meets monthly, and various chapters, which also hold monthly meetings and have their own Board members. We also have a student (division) and various working committees.

The One-Minute Message:

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back. Together with love, hope, and determination, we transform dreams into reality.

The National Federation of the Blind 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.

Integrity and Respect:

To allow all attendees the chance to benefit from all aspects of the convention, we are committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone. We appreciate your assistance in cultivating an atmosphere in which participants from diverse backgrounds can learn, network, and share with each other in an environment of mutual respect. Thank you for doing your part to contribute to our community and the high expectations we strive to maintain. Follow this link for the complete NFB Code of Conduct:

nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct

Door Prizes will be drawn throughout the meeting. You must be present to win.

As we warmly welcome each of our wonderful speakers and listen to what they have to share, please note that there will be time for questions at the end of each speaker's presentation. If we can keep our questions and comments brief, that will allow each person to have a turn.

Registration

All convention attendees are required to register. Registration with the convention entitles you to the convention room rate and qualifies you to win door prizes. If you have pre-registered for the convention, please go to the registration area to pick up your registration packet. If you did not pre-register, you may do so in the registration area. The onsite registration fee is \$75. We will adhere to the registration times strictly so that our registration workers can participate in all convention activities.

The registration table outside the Ouachita & Delta rooms opens at 8:15-8:45 am Friday, April 12, and 8:15-8:45 am on Saturday, April 13, for packet pickup.

NFB-Arkansas Fragrance-Free Policy

The National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas's goal is to be sensitive to members with perfume and chemical sensitivities who, as a result, may suffer potentially serious health consequences. In order to address this concern, members and participants at conventions and other meetings should refrain from wearing scented products, including, but not limited to, perfumes, colognes, aftershave lotions, or similar products. We want to ensure full participation in all of our state-wide activities.

Adopted by the Board of Directors on March 12, 2024

Exhibitors

All Exhibitors will be in the hall area leading to the Ouachita & Delta Meeting Rooms on Friday, April 12, from 10 am to 5 pm and Saturday, April 13, from 9 am to 5 pm.

GENERAL SESSION I Ouachita & Delta

Friday, April 12, 2024, Morning

Time	Activity
9:00 AM	Call to order and announcements, President Nena Chadwick Opening Prayer, Bettye Johnson
9:30 AM	Welcome, Mayor Copenhaver
10:00 AM	National Report, National Rep. Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia
10:40 AM	World Services for the Blind (WSB), Eric Yarberry, CEO
11:00 AM	Disability Rights Arkansas: Who We Are and What We Do, Mollie Hernandez, MA, CRC
11:30 AM	Climbing Higher, Cindy Acree, Consultant for Organizational & Leadership Effectiveness
12:00 to 1:30 PM	Lunch Box Pickup, TBA

GENERAL SESSION II Friday Afternoon Ouachita & Delta

Time	Activity
1:30 PM	Announcements, President Chadwick
1:40 PM	Dr. Devlin, Low Vision Specialist, Boozman Hof Clinic
2:15 PM	Calvin Churchwell, Vision Rehabilitation Specialist
2:30 PM	What is the Division of Services for the Blind? Amber Neal, Area Manager of NE Arkansas
2:45 PM	Fit Break, Linda Melendez, President NFB of New Jersey
3:00 PM	Stephen Partridge, DSB Business Engagement Representative
3:30 PM	SSI/SSDI, Shannon Long, Community Work Incentive Coordinator, CRC
4:00 PM	Working Together: Rights and Responsibilities in Vocational Rehabilitation Process, Wensday Kramer, MA and Mollie Hernandez, MA, CRC
5:00 PM	Adjourn and Announcements
	Dinner on Your Own
7:00 PM	Live Auction

Come join us for a fun-filled time while we bid on fantastic items. Afterward, there will be festivities to look forward to, such as trivia, getting to know each other, making new friends, and catching up with old ones.

GENERAL SESSION III Ouachita & Delta Saturday, April 13, 2024, Morning

Time	Activity
9:00 AM	Announcements, President Nena Chadwick
9:05 AM	Panel: Blind School versus Public School, Wesley Hillman and Ginger Robertson
9:15 AM	Panel: iPhone, Android, and Blind Shell Phone, Bryson Jones, Charles Tate, Sady Tate and Amerissa Lovato
9:30 AM	Arkansas Presidents Report, Nena Chadwick, President

Breakouts:

- Blind Members Group 1: Tracy Soforenko Moderator
- Blind at Heart Group 2: Linda Melendez, Moderator
- Come together, Tracy & Linda Moderate together.

Tactile Art by Shirley Davis
Crafting by Tanya VanHouten

Exhibitors Time

This will be the time that you will get to talk with our exhibitors and exchange some great conversations.

12 -1:30 -Lunch Cookout Hamburgers and Hotdogs Donated by the Thompson and Tate Families, Dessert donated by Elizabeth (MeMa) Stacy

GENERAL SESSION IV Ouachita & Delta

1:30 Announcements: President Chadwick

Business Meeting:

- Roll Call
- NFB Pledge
- Business Meeting Minutes from 2023
- Treasurers Report
- Resolutions
- Chapter Presidents Reports:
At-Large, Central, and NWA
- ARKABS Committee
- Elections
 - Nomination Chair
 - President
 - 1st Vice President
 - 2nd Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Board Member 1
 - Board Member 2
- Adjourn

7 pm Banquet

Prayer Bettye Johnson

Banquet Buffet Style

Banquet Address Tracy Soforenko, National Representative

There will also be door prizes, awards, and a drawing for the grand prize.

Special Thank you to all our members, volunteers, sponsors, exhibitors, friends, and most importantly, our families for all the support you have given throughout the year so that we can “Build the National Federation of the Blind!”

Meet Our National Representative: Tracy Soforenko

National Representative and Affiliate President of Virginia, As of February 2024

Tracy Soforenko grew up in Rhode Island as the youngest child of a high school teacher. He attended the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1991 with degrees in finance and psychology. Each summer, he worked long hours to pay tuition and expenses. He noticed difficulty with driving and scheduled an eye exam only to find out he was experiencing rapid vision loss due to retinitis pigmentosa. After college graduation, Tracy moved from Philadelphia to Washington, DC, and started a career in technology and business consulting, serving financial services, retail, and publishing industry customers across North America. Tracy’s career evolved from consulting to becoming a project manager for the federal government, where he managed large customer service and financial technology projects for the Corporation for National & Community Service and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

He and his wife Sharon were married in 1995 and moved to Arlington, Virginia in 1997. As his career progressed and family responsibilities expanded with two daughters, Tracy desperately needed to learn alternative nonvisual techniques to do his job, raise his children, and be involved in the community. He needed positive blind role models, a new mindset on blindness, and a way

to contribute to the community. He found his local National Federation of the Blind chapter and was immediately put to work. Through the Potomac Chapter of Virginia, Tracy ran fundraising activities, was involved in mentoring students, and attended his first NFB National Convention in 2005. The experience was transformative, and he started developing youth programming, running the Virginia program to help first time convention attendees, directing legislative advocacy in Richmond, and taking on other leadership roles. He served as president of his local chapter and as a vice president of the Virginia affiliate before being elected president of the Virginia affiliate in 2016. Tracy's enthusiasm for the national convention led him to serve as chair of the Kenneth Jernigan Fund. Tracy expanded programs for youth in the Virginia affiliate, leading to the creation of Project Resilience, Independence, Self-Advocacy, and Employment (Project RISE) in 2017. This thriving program now serves thirty-five students with a team of thirteen staff and mentors. For the past 3 years, the Virginia affiliate has conducted weekend long senior empowerment programs to share alternative techniques and Federation philosophy with sixty blind and low-vision seniors through the Virginia Silver Bells program. Finally, Tracy has expanded engagement in legislative advocacy at a state and national level, with nearly one hundred members participating in legislative advocacy in Richmond and forty participants in Washington Seminar. In 2021, Tracy was elected to serve as a member of the National Federation of the Blind Board of Directors.

Tracy and his wife Sharon still live in Arlington, Virginia. He loves to hike, participate in his local Toastmasters Club, and cook.

Dream Makers Circle

You can help build a future of opportunity for the blind by becoming a member of our Dream Makers Circle. It is easier than you think. You can visit your bank and convert an account to a P.O.D. (payable on death) bank account, which is payable after your passing to the National Federation of the blind or one of our affiliates. Your legacy gift to the National Federation of the Blind or the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas can be made in the form of a will or living trust, an income-generating gift, or by naming us as the beneficiary of a retirement plan, IRA, pension, or a life insurance policy. You can designate a specific amount, a percentage or list NFB as one of several beneficiaries. For additional information, please contact Patti Chang at (410) 659-9314, extension 2422, or at pchang@nfb.org.

Vehicle Donations

The National Federation of the Blind uses car donations to improve the education of blind children, distribute free white canes, help veterans, and so much more. We have partnered with Vehicles for Charity to process donated vehicles. Please call toll-free (855) 659-9314, and a representative can make arrangements, or you can donate online by visiting nfb.org/vehicledonations.

Next...To all our great sponsors:

Gold Level: Disability Rights Arkansas

501-296-1775

disabilityrightsar.org

Silver Level: The Pharmacy at Wellington

501-708-4320

thepharmacyatwellington.com

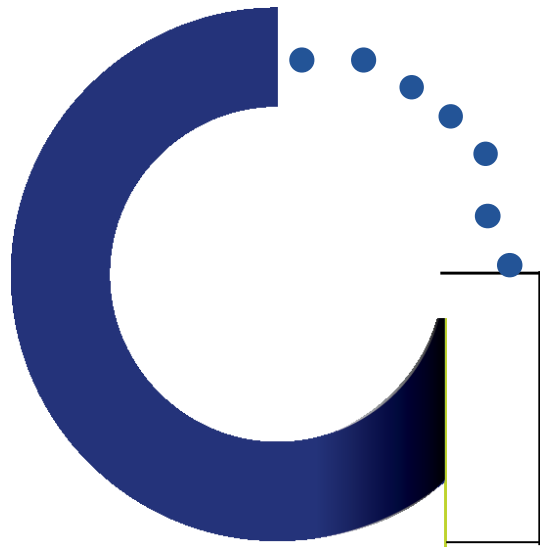
Bronze Level: Arkansas Children's Hospital

501-364-6448

archildrens.org

Thank you to all our Exhibitors:

- Disability Rights Arkansas
- Nano Pac, Inc
- Arkansas Library for the Blind
- Tupperware



**Disability
Rights
Arkansas**