# The Informant 2024

# Vol. 2: Elevating Federation Voices, Together

# February 15, 2024

## Affiliate Zoom Link:

<<https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09>>

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## From the President:

 *Happy Thursday and greetings to my Federation family,*

friends, and guests. This edition of "The Informant" is exciting for a few

reasons. As we are on the heels of the world celebrating love, I want to

wish an incredibly Happy Valentine's Day to all. It is important to also

recognize the exciting NFL Super Bowl game that took place last weekend,

which connected so many Federationists across the nation. Our bond through

shared interests is another great reason that blindness is never a

characteristic that stops you from our dreams or goals.

The month of February is observed as Black history month in the United

States. Originally conceived as a week of observation by Carter G. Woodson

in 1926, the intention was to highlight the contributions of Black Americans

to the American experience. During this time, Black history was not

considered American history; a reality that Woodson called a "foundational

flaw" in our national identity. The concept was ferociously opposed during

Woodson's original introduction, with it not being nationally recognized

until February 1976, almost 50 years later. President Gerald Ford

articulated that the observation would be extended to Black history month to

"provide homage to Woodson, the father of Black history." The dedication of

civil rights activists, legislative support, and public enthusiasm to

enshrine the efforts of Black Americans throughout time allows for the

efforts of Black culture to be recognized in context and continues to

promote a rich educational perspective about our nation and its evolution.

Like Carter Woodson, often advocacy comes from individuals that have an

idea of what a fulfilled life is. This idea, when married with shared values

and coordinated activity, can result in monumental change for groups. The

National Federation of the Blind of Michigan recognizes this inherent

potential in blind people. Each day, our membership actively works to

advocate and educate as effective blind children, parents, professionals,

seniors, and students as effectively as possible, actively raising

expectations of what it means to be blind. This parallel has much to do with

the values the organized blind share with civil rights initiatives and

leadership. As we continue to define what it means to be blind by living the

life we want, I challenge all of you to continue elevating the voices of

Michigan's blind, for our advocacy is our calling card. Whether it is

attending our annual Washington Seminar, advocating at the state capital

during our Lansing Gathering or making your needs heard to local businesses

or agencies; your advocacy and voice is the most powerful tool to progress

in the organized blind movement. As you advocate, know that the Federation

supports you and that we are truly all a family here.

## Important National Updates

### \* Hotel reservations for the 2024 NFB National Convention are

### available.

The convention will take place July 3-8 at the Rosen Center Hotel

in Orlando, FL. Updates on registration and related items will be available

in coming weeks. For information about convention and to register online,

visit <<http://www.nfb.org/convention>> www.nfb.org/convention.

### \* The application period is still open for the 2024 Kenneth Jernigan

### Scholarship program.

The award is designed for first-time attendees of the

NFB national convention and provides financial assistance to those who

request. Applicants must be a member of a local chapter or state division in

Michigan. The application for the Kenneth Jernigan Award can be found at

<<https://nfb.org/form/kenneth-jernigan-convention-scho>>

<https://nfb.org/form/kenneth-jernigan-convention-scho.>

### \* The 2024 NFB National Scholarship program is live.

Every year, the

National Federation of the Blind offers thirty scholarships to students

enrolled in a college, university, or other post-secondary educational

program. Graduating high school seniors are also encouraged to apply.

Applicants are required to meet the legal definition of blindness and

prepare to attend the entire national convention in Orlando. The deadline

for the scholarship program is March 31, 2024. To apply for the national

scholarship program, please visit <<https://scholarships.nfb.org/>>

[https://scholarships.nfb.org/.](https://scholarships.nfb.org/)

## Important State Updates

### \* During the past month our affiliate secretary, Rachel Newland,

### informed us of her decision to step back from her duties for personal

### reasons.

The NFB of Michigan appreciates the ingenuity and enthusiasm that

Rachel brought to our board since her election and wishes her the best

during this transition. The NFB of Michigan also recognizes and thanks

Maryann Murad of the Detroit chapter, who has agreed to serve as our interim

state secretary, for her dedication to our efforts.

### \* The NFBMI legislative and advocacy committee thanks all of its

### members and attendees for their efforts at our 2024 Washington Seminar.

11 Michigan Federationists gathered on capital hill and advocated for support

of our national issues. Our committee is excited to thank both

Representatives Rashida Tlaib (Michigan 12th District) and Shrai Thanedar

(Michigan 13th district) for their cosponsoring of HR 5813| The Website and

Software Applications Accessibility Act.

### \* The NFBMI fundraising committee thanks all of its participants and

### supporters in the 2024 NFBMI Super Bowl Pool.

We had an amazing initiative,

with massive national support from members and affiliate presidents alike.

The next fundraising meeting will be on Sunday, February 18 at 7pm and will

cover planning for both our statewide popcorn fundraiser in a few weeks and

grant writing. We invite all interested members to join us via Zoom using

the above link. For questions about fundraising, please email

<mailto:[President at nfbmi.org](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)> [President at nfbmi.org.](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)

### \* The NFBMI Membership committee thanks all active chapters and

### divisions for their work to update and maintain records using our online

### portal.

If you are a dues-paid member of a chapter or division and have

questions about your activity status, please consult your chapter or

division membership coordinator. Every active chapter and division have a

membership coordinator.

### \* The NFBMI Communications committee is still seeking members to help

### spread the word of the Federation.

If you are a person that is organized,

proficient in social media or drafting emails, your skills can be the work

that moves the affiliate and the Federation forward. Please contact Ather

Jammoa, chair, at <mailto:[Atherjammoa at yahoo.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)> [Atherjammoa at yahoo.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org) for

more information on how to join and play your part in working towards our

goals.

### \* The NFBMI Youth and Family program planning committee is hard at

### work in providing the best opportunities for blind children and families.

The committee is excited to begin actively promoting the 2024 Raising

Expectations Accessing Life (REAL) program, which takes place June 21-23 in

the city of Flint. If you are interested in attending as a participant for

either our STEM2U or NFBMI Scholars track, please read more about it on our

official registration page. Visit <<https://forms.gle/kzir71iPbZuGPGsQ6>>

here to learn more and please join us for our next committee meeting, where

we will be agenda crafting and working on program coordination. For more

information, please contact Tara Morgan at

<mailto:[tara.morgan180 at gmail.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)> [tara.morgan180 at gmail.com.](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)

\* The National Federation of the Blind's Braille Enrichment, Literacy

and Learning (BELL) Academy training took place in Baltimore, Maryland, at

the Jernigan Institute over the past weekend. BELL is an opportunity to

instill the importance and usefulness of braille in the lives of blind

children around the nation. We want to thank both Linda Bell and Tara Morgan

for their leadership and participation in the training. We are excited to

learn how BELL can be incorporated in our affiliate in the near future.

### \* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan held its first

### NFBMI Soundboard on January 26.

Our soundboard is a monthly opportunity for

members who are customers of BSBP to discuss questions they may have or

challenges they may be facing while working with our state agency. We had a

strong turnout for our first meeting and look forward to meeting with anyone

who needs this service on the fourth Friday of each month at 8pm via Zoom.

\* The first quarterly board of directors meeting of the National

Federation of the Blind of Michigan will take place on Saturday, March 2,

2024, at 12pm. The meeting will take place via Zoom. This is an open

meeting, which means that members are free to listen in for important state

updates or business. As per our constitution, presidents of active chapters

and divisions are required to attend the board meeting to provide updates.

To verify your chapter or division's active status and charter, please

contact me via email or phone. Voting during this meeting is limited to

state board members and chapter/division delegates.

## Chapter/Division Announcements

###  \* Capital Region Chapter:

The next chapter meeting will be February 19

at 7 pm. Attendees can use the NFBMI Zoom room or attend in person at the

office of the Michigan Flyer, 333 Albert Street, East Lansing, MI. At our

next chapter meeting, we will be discussing leadership potential and ways we

can increase our advocacy presence in the Lansing/East Lansing area. For

more information, please contact Fred Wurtzel at <mailto:[f.wurtzel at att.net](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)>

[f.wurtzel at att.net.](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)

###  \* Detroit Chapter:

The Detroit Chapter held elections at our January

meeting and elected the following officers to serve throughout 2024:

President Richard Clay, Vice President Sabrina Rice, Treasurer Daryl Rice,

Secretary Pauline Smith, Board Member Tara Morgan, and Board Member

Christina Clarke. The chapter's elected officers and members recently met

with DDOT Director Michael Staley and received progress updates on the

city's paratransit system. The Chapter will hold its February business

meeting in-person Saturday, February 17th from 1:00-3:30 PM, pre-ceded by a

Technology hour session from 12-1 PM at the Eye Learn Office, address 1100

### \* Flint-Genessee Chapter:

For additional information about the

chapter, including meeting information, please contact President Sheila

Fulmore at 810-241-6124 or <mailto:[spfulmore0402 at gmail.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)> m. The

Flint/Genesee Chapter congratulates Felecia Bradford, Nancy Jago, Damontae

Scott, And Sheila Fulmore in a Job well done in joining the Michigan

Affiliate in Washington DC for the 2024 Washington Seminar, they

participated in some "GREAT" Advocacy work. The Flint/Genesee Chapter meets

monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Flint Public Library from

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM and Hybrid VIA Zoom in the MI Zoom Room.

### \* New Wayne County Chapter:

Our February 10 meeting was well attended

and was loaded with laughter. Members reported on Washington Seminar and

thanked the chapter for support. Several members wish to attend National

Convention, so we have launched a specific Avon fundraiser for that purpose.

To make purchases or inquiries you may call Deborah Wellington at

248-354-2668. This is the last week to sign up for the Henry Ford

Sense-sational Tactile Tour on March 16, 2024. Contact Donna Posont at

<mailto:[donnabutterfly50 at gmail.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)> [donnabutterfly50 at gmail.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org) to join the

tour.

### \* Blind Michigan Seniors Advocating for Seniors (BMSAS):

Hello

Michigan Seniors! I want to welcome all seniors to our monthly meeting that

will take place via the Michigan ZOOM room on the 4th Monday of each month

at 8:00 PM. We began 2024 by electing our officers and discussing our goals.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. My

email address is <mailto:[patriciajpyle11 at gmail.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)>

[patriciajpyle11 at gmail.com.](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)

### \* Michigan Association of Blind Students (MIABS):

The student division

is excited to have had a presence at the 2024 Washington Seminar. President

Jerusalem Crawley, Yazmine Couthen and Brandon Blessett advocated alongside

affiliate members effectively. Members of MIABS also had networking

opportunities with student divisions from across the nation at the annual

NABS Winter Seminar in the Holiday Inn Capital during the week-long event.

Our members are currently looking forward to attending the NABS Midwest

Regional Student Seminar, which takes place in Chicago, IL March 22-24. For

more information, please email <mailto:[crawleyjerusalem at gmail.com](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)>

[crawleyjerusalem at gmail.com.](http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/nfbmi-talk_nfbnet.org)

## Important State Affiliate Dates

### \* 02/18/24 NFBMI Fundraising Committee Meeting

### \* 02/19/24 NFBMI Capital Region Chapter Meeting

### \* 02/23/24: NFBMI February Soundboard

### \* 03/02/24: NFBMI State Board Meeting

### \* 03/08/24 BSBP Consumer Involvement Committee Meeting

With Love, Hope and Determination,

Robert Parsons, Jr., M. A., CRC, CVRT, LLC

President, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

(269) 216- 8640

www.nfbmi.org <[http://www.nfbmi.org](http://www.nfbmi.org/)>

"Without struggle, there is no progress." - Frederick Douglas