# National Federation of the Blind of Michigan (NFBMI)

The Informant 2024

Vol. 7: Celebrating Federation Accomplishments

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## Affiliate Zoom Link

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

## From the President

Greetings Michigan Federationists, friends, and visitors to a fashionably late summer edition of “The Informant.” Though a tad tardy, I’m excited our monthly newsletter offers important updates and announcements for blind Federationists, continuing to align with the blind people’s movement in our steps to live the lives we want.

The month of July has a variety of reasons for blind people to get into the summer spirit. With this being national hot dog month, national ice cream month and disability pride month; Federationists are encouraged to enjoy themselves and proudly join the celebration. Much like President Riccobono’s message in his keynote address at our 2024 national convention banquet, knowing who we are promotes a reason to reserve our dignity in all spaces. Whether you, your chapter or division are planning to celebrate the wonderful weather or just to have a gathering with a few hot dogs, the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan encourages these activities and welcomes you to invite your Federation family to the party. We may even supply some ice cream. Let’s continue to build the Federation.

## Important National Updates

* The 2024 NFB National Convention was an exciting experience for both virtual and in-person attendees. Throughout the convention, attendees had opportunities to engage in a variety of seminars, make their voices heard during general session and the resolutions committee meeting, and tune into an amazing banquet address by our national president.
* The 2025 NFB national convention will take place at the Marriott Hotel from July 8-13 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Additional information about convention registration and hotel reservations will come shortly. To learn more about our national convention, please visit www.nfb.org/convention.

## Important State Updates

* Visitors and members of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan can now view this issue and past issues of “The Informant” on the NFBMI Webpage. You can access these issues by visiting [www.nfbmi.org/informant](http://www.nfbmi.org/informant).
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan was proud to have 30 confirmed in-person attendees at our 2024 national convention. Of this number, 10 were first-time convention attendees and six were Kenneth Jernigan Awardees. To follow the experiences of some of our in-person attendees, please visit our Facebook page. Under “National Federation of the Blind of Michigan,” you can find posts, photos, and updates from our membership during their time in Orlando.
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan congratulates Donna Posont, the New Wayne County chapter president, for her acceptance of a 2024 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award. Her story and continued dedication to empowering blind people in her efforts are testaments to the success we can achieve when we raise our expectations to work toward our dreams.
* The NFB of Michigan excitedly supported our national convention in its first-ever sexual health education Research Fair. This research-supported presentation, which promotes blind-led accessible sex education in a safe space, offered convention attendees opportunities to gain experience about a variety of developmental topics; including anatomy, biology, identity, physiology, mental health, resources, and access. This event, led by Federation leaders and professionals in various fields, took place July 5 from 4-8pm at the Rosen Center.
* The NFB of Michigan excitedly broke new fundraising ground at the 2024 exhibit hall during our national convention. With the guidance of our coordinator, Ather Jammoa, our affiliate completely sold out of our “Taste of Michigan Cherry” themed items. Not to be outdone, the annual NFBMI 50/50 raffle surpassed its previous record, raising $1750 in funds over convention week. Congratulations to Jordyn Castor for winning the 50/50 raffle this year and a thank you to all members that supported our efforts through working a shift or making a purchase.
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan added exciting changes to its delegation activities at our 2024 national convention. Members gathered for an affiliate dinner at a local restaurant in Orlando on July 3, had an opportunity to meet President Riccobono and the national board members over coffee on July 4 and took part in a pre-banquet photo shoot on July 8. A heartfelt thanks to numerous members for supporting our membership in this new experience. I’d also like to recognize our leaders for picking up responsibilities to create a true family atmosphere during these experiences.
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan recognizes and congratulates Maryann Murad, affiliate state secretary, for her advocacy efforts in our national organization. Maryann authored and submitted the resolution addressing Amazon’s lackluster accommodations and human resources process for blind employees. The resolution was unanimously accepted by the convention, and she did a stellar job representing our affiliate and her thoughts on the matter in Orlando during general session. To view our 2024 resolutions, please visit [www.nfb.org/resolutions](http://www.nfb.org/resolutions).
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan is excited to continue to make a national presence at our convention. During the 2024 general session, the NFB of Michigan consistently became contenders for the PAC-a-derm, a recognition for affiliates that have increased the percentage of PAC plan memberships. We encourage all chapters, divisions and members that are considering ways they can support our organization more to join the PAC plan for as little as $5 per month. To learn more about the PAC plan and how it benefits members and programs of the National Federation of the Blind, please visit www.nfb.org/pac.
* The 2024 NFB of Michigan state scholarship program officially launched on June 1, 2024. If you are a blind student in the state of Michigan that is a high school senior or are attending a college/university, please email [scholarships@nfbmi.org](mailto:scholarships@nfbmi.org) or visit [www.nfbmi.org/scholarship](http://www.nfbmi.org/scholarship)24 for more information. The state scholarship program is awarded at our state convention each year and the application deadline is September 15, 2024.

## Chapter/Division Updates

* **Capital Region Chapter:** The Capital Region chapter is excited to have hosted the first NFBMI Open House. This event was held on July 15, 2024, from 5-7pm at the Foster Community Center, and included approximately 25 guests who shared information about the Federation, testimonials about personal journeys from being a member and ways guests can get involved. Attending vendors included BSBP, Michigan Department of Education: Low Incidence Outreach, the National Library Services for the Blind, Peckham, and Michigan State University.
* **Detroit Chapter: The** Detroit Chapter presented our five recommendations from the Blind People's Water Rights Agenda to the DWSD Board of Commissioners. Led by Director Gary Brown, this Board gave us incredibly positive feedback. They said that they have already begun conversations with their contractors on how to make their bill-paying kiosks accessible.
* **Flint-Genesee Chapter:** Greetings from The FLINT Chapter! We meet monthly on the third Thursday of each month at the Flint Public Library from 5:30 PM to 6:45 PM. Please join us for our next meeting. We are thrilled to share the success of our 2024 Blindness Equality Gala, and hosting the Michigan NFB REAL Program in downtown Flint, Michigan. It was a wonderful event celebrating the Gala theme was blindness equality. Four of our members had the opportunity to attend the National Convention in Orlando, Florida this year. One of our members was honored with the prestigious Jernigan Award, while another successfully completed a rigorous leadership program. We are immensely proud of their achievements. Looking ahead, we are excited to announce our upcoming Annual Community Picnic on July 27, 2024, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We invite everyone to join us for a day of fun and community spirit.

## Important State Affiliate Dates

* 07/22/24: Blind Seniors Advocating for Seniors Meeting (8pm)
* 07/24/24: NFBMI Convention Committee Meeting (7pm)
* 07/26/24: NFBMI Sound Board (8pm)
* 07/27/24: NFBMI Flint-Genesee Chapter Picnic (11am)
* 07/27/24: Michigan Association of Blind Students Meeting (6:30pm)
* 08/06/24: NFBMI At Large Chapter Meeting (8pm)

With Love, Hope and Determination