# National Federation of the Blind of Michigan (NFBMI)

**The Informant 2024**

**Vol. 9: Falling Into Federation Change and Traditions…**

**September 15, 2024**

## Affiliate Zoom Link

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

## From the President

Happy September and welcome to a brisk, exciting issue of “The Informant,” where the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan updates are fresh, frequent, and successful. I’m so happy to be back with you all as we transition into the autumn season, a new academic term, a new football season, the end of the baseball season, the advent of pumpkin spice and my personal favorite weather ever! A fun fact about September is that it technically was originally the seventh month of the year, as January and February were not included in the original calendar and the French prefix of the month, sept, translates to seven. The official flowers for September are the Astor and Morning Glory. Astors bloom all year, can be found in red, white, and pink; and represent the virtue of patience. Morning Glories are found in a variety of colors; including red, pink, white, and yellow; and represent the virtue of loyalty.

The month of September is nationally recognized as harvest month, with communities all over doing their due diligence to account for the fruits of their labor. This tradition comes with seasonal change and is embraced by many as a right of passage. Whether you are working as a hand in a larger greenhouse or tending to the vegetables in your private garden, harvest season is imperative for all producers, and I am confident blind people understand this fact. Our local chapters and state divisions often communicate and network with local and regional producers at farmers markets and entrepreneurs in the agriculture industry as we educate the public on our programs and volunteer at local events. These opportunities both raise awareness of the need of more blind people in the agricultural field and continue to embrace and promote the mission of the blind people’s movement: to live the life we want !

## Important National Updates

* 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](http://www.nfb.org/convention).
* The 2025 NFB Ride Share Rally will take place on October 15, 2024, from 10am until 3pm PT outside the Uber and LIFT headquarters to educate their leadership on our frustration regarding the ongoing rideshare denials for guide dog handlers. If you are interested in attending this national event, please contact your chapter or division president before September 23, 2024. Funding assistance is available for serious ambassadors.

## 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).
* We encourage all chapters, divisions and members that are considering ways they can support our organization more to join the Pre-Authorized Contribution (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](http://www.nfb.org/pac).
* The 2024 state convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan will take place October 31- November 3, 2024. The convention will take place at the Radison Plaza at Kalamazoo Center, located at 100 W. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Additional information regarding registration is available by visiting [www.nfbmi.org/convention](http://www.nfbmi.org/convention).
* The nightly room rate for the 2024 state convention is $129. To reserve your room at the convention rate, please use the included link. <<https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/KY78M6>>
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan excitedly welcomes NFB Second Vice President Everette Bacon as our 2024 national representative. Everett serves as the president of the National Federation of the Blind of Utah and as a resolute leader of the blind people’s movement. I look forward to all he will offer us during our convention experience this fall.
* The 2024 NFBMI state convention is accepting submissions for door prizes. A door prize is an item that is given away during public convention sessions (general session, hospitality events, banquet, business meetings) and are designated for registered convention attendees only. If you have items, whether new or gently used, that you believe would make an excellent door prize; please contact Donna Posont, New Wayne County chapter president at Donnabutterfly50@gmail.com.
* The 2024 NFBMI state convention will be returning to its roots with its live auction. The live auction occurs during the banquet on Saturday, November 2, 2024, and is a fundraising opportunity for attendees to bid on items donated to support the Federation’s programs for the next year. Hosted by the Blind Michigan Seniors and our auctioneer extraordinaire, Michael Powell; we are accepting donations for auction items. If you have an item you would like to donate for our convention auction hosted by our Michigan blind seniors, please contact Patricia Pyle at patriciajpyle@gmail.com.
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan encourages all members to attend our 2024 state convention, where a variety of exhibitors, sponsors, rehabilitation professionals, seminars, and activities are awaiting to engage and inform you. With so many opportunities to elevate yourself, I invite you to take advantage of the tradition of reaching out to your NFB family for financial support if there is a need to make the convention experience a reality. All active members’ protocol for applying for state program financial assistance is to begin by applying with their local chapter or division. After doing this and receiving assistance, please send a request via email to President@nfbmi.org that states your need for assistance and what you hope to gain from the convention experience. Please note all applicants must be dues paid members, be registered for state convention, and be prepared to work as a volunteer at times during the convention. The deadline to apply for state-funded assistance to the 2024 state convention is October 15, 2024.
* The 2024 NFBMI Lansing Gathering will take place on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 9AM. The legislative committee is still accepting names of members to join us for this important advocacy initiative in our state capital as we continue to push our issues to our elected officers. If you are interested in joining us in Lansing, please contact your chapter or division president or join our committee meeting via Zoom on Thursday, September 19, 2024.
* The 2024 NFBMI Dots with Distance fundraising campaign begins October 1, 2024. Throughout Blind Equality Achievement Month, take some time to commemorate the importance of braille by sending your favorite person, or yourself, a personal, customized braille note. Great for daily affirmations, reminders or even a love letter for a crush, all of our braille notes are sent via Free Matter for the Blind for $5, but for $15 patrons can join the “Braille Readers Brigade” or BRB, where they receive a braille list of the NFBMI active chapters and divisions leadership contact, a braille NFB pledge card, a braille NFB one-minute message card, and a customized NFBMI BRB passport card with their name. The NFBMI BRB passport card is important because aside from being both braille and print with our state affiliate logo, turning it in during state convention after you have visited the exhibit hall enters you in a drawing for $150 cash at our banquet on November 2! To learn more about this campaign or to purchase your BRB package, visit [www.nfbmi.org/BRB](http://www.nfbmi.org/BRB).
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan is grateful for the generous donation of Detroit Tigers tickets we received from the Tigers organization. A special thanks to both the Tigers and state affiliate treasurer, Mark Eagle, for his tireless work to continue to promote the presence and work of the Federation in our great state. The NFB of Michigan looks forward to its “Tapping with the Tigers” event, taking place on September 29, 2024. If you have registered for this event with your chapter or division president, please stay tuned for coordination updates.
* The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan congratulates Flint-Genesee chapter president and state affiliate board member, Sheila Fulmore, for being named the chair of the NFB’s national community service division. We appreciate Sheila’s continued dedication to the programs of the Federation, the mission of the organization and the message the movement gives to so many.\

## Chapter/Division Updates

* **At Large Chapter:** We are excited to cohost our state convention this fall with the Michigan Seniors. We will hold our monthly chapter meeting on October 1 at 8pm. We will be looking for members interested in filling the positions of vice president and secretary/treasurer for the 2025 year, as well as continuing to discuss our participation at state convention, specifically with volunteer responsibilities.
* **Detroit Chapter: After winning concrete concessions from our negotiations with the Detroit Water and Sewage Department (DWSD), we are now doing our part in taking on the awesome task of informing the larger Detroit blind and low vision community that we now have new options/rights including in-person access to representatives working at DWSD's Randolph Office via appointments (preferred) and/or walk-ins, + the option for blind customers to receive their monthly bills in large-print; On August 24th, we hosted an amazingly fun and successful Tandem Bike Riding for the Blind event on Detroit's beautiful Riverwalk in which 33 people participated, birthing our second signature annual event; At our last chapter meeting, a HUD representative informed us about a range of existing low-income and Section 8 Housing opportunities existing across the city, and representatives from the social justice group We The People delivered a powerful presentation on the historic fight for greater water rights in Detroit; And, Our October plans include getting out to vend at the Department of Elections' Oct. 19th Get Out To Vote Block party, and Roller skating with the NFB, details TBA soon.**
* **Flint-Genesee Chapter:** Join us for our chapter meeting on Thursday, September 19, 2024. The meeting will be held at the Flint Public Library in the Harrison Room from 5:30 to 6:45 PM. We are thrilled to welcome WJRT Radio Host Alice Dee and Ann McKay-Bacon as our newest members. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to them! Congratulations to our members who participated in the Bobby Crim Races on August 24. A special shoutout to Shaun Williams for securing 1st place in his age group and to Denise Cunningham, our Crim Leader, for receiving the 2024 Lion Heart Award. The Flint/Genesee Chapter recently participated in a voter outreach event hosted by the Genesee County Disability Network. We provided a variety of NFB literature to the participants, contributing to NFB awareness as an important cause. A few of our members will be attending the Lansing Gathering this month. This is an excellent advocacy opportunity, and we look forward to hearing about the experiences and insights gained from it.
* **Michigan Association of Blind Students (MIABS):** MIABS will be holding an in-person meeting at the 2024 state convention on Saturday, November 2, 2024, in Kalamazoo. At our monthly division meeting, the division voted to have a representative from the National Association of Blind Students attend our state convention. The request was approved at our quarterly board meeting on September 7, 2024. If you are a student interested in registering as a member, please email crawleyjerusalem@gmail.com or attend the monthly MIABS meeting held on the NFBMI Zoom line.
* **Blind Michigan Seniors Advocating for Seniors (BMISAFS):** Calling all Seniors! Our upcoming BMISAFS monthly meeting is scheduled at ZOOM September 23rd at 8:00 PM. Please plan to attend. We need to finalize our plans for the upcoming State Convention. I was so excited last month to hear how many of you are planning to attend! Go SENIORS!
* **New Wayne County Chapter:** We are excited to announce that the next New Wayne County Chapter meeting will take place on Saturday, September 28, 2024, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Henry Ford Centennial Library, located at 16301 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, MI. Our special guest, Renee Echols from the Washtenaw County Disability Network, will be presenting on the mission and initiatives of the Disability Network, providing valuable insights into its work and impact. Following the meeting, we invite all attendees to a chapter gathering at Sam Rau’s residence for continued discussions and fellowship. Additionally, I am collaborating with Renee Echols and her colleague on an exciting blog project focused on intersectionality for Blindness Awareness Month. If you’re interested in contributing to this project or have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Important State Affiliate Dates

* 09/16/24: NFBMI Capital Region Chapter Meeting (7pm)
* 09/18/24: NFBMI Convention Planning Committee Meeting (7pm)
* 09/19/24: NFBMI Legislative Committee Meeting (7pm)
* 09/23/24: Blind Seniors Advocating for Seniors Meeting (8pm)
* 09/27/24: NFBMI Soundboard (8pm)
* 09/28/24: NFBMI New Wayne County Chapter Meeting (1pm)
* 09/28/24: Michigan Association of Blind Students Meeting (6:30pm)
* 09/29/24: NFBMI “Tapping with the Tigers” (3pm)
* 10/01/24: NFBMI At Large Chapter Meeting (8pm)
* 10/01/24: NFBMI Dots with Distance Fundraising Campaign Begins
* 10/14/24: NFBMI At Large Chapter Philosophy Discussion (8pm)

With Love, Hope and Determination,