# National Federation of the Blind of Michigan (NFBMI)

The Informant 2024

Vol. 10: The Convention Edition!

October 16, 2024

## Affiliate Zoom Link

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

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## From the President

Do you feel it? The beating of the heart? The excitement pooling as you consider the closeness of what's coming. Do you hear it? The questions being formed, statements being made and friendships being forged while so many of you engage in new experiences and meet new people. This is the pre-convention vibe family. Let's embrace this issue together, follow me.

First, Happy Blind Equality Achievement Month. What an appropriate time for us to be discussing this, one of the most important times of the year for us as blind people. With both convention in full swing and National White Cane Awareness Day just passing; the energy coursing through the blind is palpable, but in Michigan we are a special situation this year. 2024 has been a whirlwind of advocacy, programming, and promotion of the Federation; with each of you taking charge of our destiny as an affiliate. Please, take the time to congratulate yourselves for this effort and to read below for the fruits of our labor.

## 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 <<http://www.nfb.org/convention>> [www.nfb.org/convention](http://www.nfb.org/convention).

\* The 2024 NFB Ride Share Rally took 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. The event was successful and coincided with our monthly presidential release, where we were updated on the efforts and how we can continue this advocacy. If you have not already learned about this monumental demonstration, please tune into the online version of the October

2024 presidential release.

## Important State Updates

### The Informant:

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

### PAC Plan:

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

### State Convention:

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

#### Rooms and Rates:

Rooms at the discounted rate of $129 per night plus tax are

available on a first-come basis. To reserve, call (269) 343-3333 Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM and ask for the NFB of Michigan rate.

#### Registration Deadline Before Price Increase:

Register by October 20 to get the discounted rates of $15 for

registration and $45 for banquet. After October 20, the prices will go up by

$5 each.

#### Hotel Shuttle:

The hotel offers a complimentary shuttle. If you would like to be

picked up from the bus/train station or the airport, fill out the transportation request form on the convention page.

### Scholarship Finalists:

The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan recognizes its 2024

scholarship finalists: Calliandra Bowman-Tomlinson, Tiare Mayes, Oguzcan Saygili and Felecia Bradford. We welcome them to our 2024 state convention experience.

### Convention Exhibit Hall:

Be sure to visit the largest exhibit hall we've ever had on Friday

from 11 AM to 6 PM. More information is on our convention website, but this is the Convention Special Edition, so scroll below for a list of vendors and sponsors! You won't want to miss this or a chance to win big with our NFB BRB Exhibitor Passport Program.

### Fund Raiser; Dots With Distance:

The 2024 NFBMI Dots with Distance fundraising campaign began 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. You have two choices, a simple note is $5, while joining the Braille Readers Brigade (BRB) for $15 gives you the note, along with additional important braille materials and your personalized BRB Passport for exhibit hall. To learn more or to pre-order your BRB passport, visit <<http://www.nfbmi.org/BRB>> [www.nfbmi.org/BRB](http://www.nfbmi.org/BRB).

#### BRB Passport and Exhibit Hall:

While visiting the exhibit hall on Friday, November 1; don't forget

to show your personalized BRB passport to the exhibitors and sponsors operating the table in exchange for a code word. These words come together to make a phrase. Handing your personalized BRB passport and the phrase to President Parsons before banquet on Saturday, November 2, 2024, enters you in for a drawing of $150. If you pre-order your BRB passport, it will be included in your pre-registration packet. Limited passports will be available for purchase at the registration table.

### National Representative for Convention:

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.

### Convention Door Prizes:

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 <<mailto:Donnabutterfly50@gmail.com>> [Donnabutterfly50@gmail.com](mailto:Donnabutterfly50@gmail.com).

### Convention Live Auction:

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 <<mailto:patriciajpyle@gmail.com>> [patriciajpyle@gmail.com](mailto:patriciajpyle@gmail.com).

### Tapping with the Tigers:

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 Michigan affiliate attended our "Tapping with the Tigers" event, representing four chapters and two divisions with pride. We look forward to future outings in Comerica Park, as well as work to infuse more accessibility into the live broadcast options for blind attendees.

## 2024 NFBMI Convention Exhibitors and Sponsors:

### Platinum Sponsors:

. Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

. Discover Kalamazoo

. Eye Learn

. Non-24/Vanda

### Gold Sponsors:

. Michigan Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO)

### White Cane Sponsors:

. Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity

. Birding By Ear and Beyond

. Family Counseling and Mediation Services

. can Connect / Perkins School for the Blind

. Leader Dogs for the Blind

. Rehabilitation WAY, LLC

## Exhibitors

. A. T. Guys

. Access To Places (virtual only)

. Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

. Braille Bright Assistive Tech LLC

. Disability Network Southwest Michigan

. En-Vision America (virtual only)

. Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind & Visually Impaired

. Guide Dogs for the Blind

. Lions 11-B1 Winter Camp for the Blind and Visually Impaired

. Lions Bear Lake Camp

. Michigan Braille and Talking Book Library

. Michigan Ski for Light

. NewHaptics

. Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind

. Selvas BLV

. VisualEyes Access

. Western Michigan University, Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies

### Virtual Exhibit Hall Preview:

A virtual exhibit hall preview will be held Wednesday, October 30 at 8 PM in the affiliate Zoom room.

## Chapter/Division Updates:

### At Large Chapter:

We are excited to host our state convention this fall with the Michigan Seniors. We held our monthly chapter meeting on October 1 at 8pm, where we held our election for the positions of President, Vice President, and Treasurer/Secretary ahead of convention. As a result of the meeting, Sanho Steele-Louchart was re-elected president, Kashonia Graham as Vice President and Ather Jammoa as treasurer/secretary. We recognize and thank Victor and Alizia Marques for their time and effort in the At Large chapter and wish them luck in their new endeavors in Arizona. We will be holding a philosophy debate presentation with the Flint chapter at state convention and look forward to connecting with everyone at our annual in-person meeting on Saturday, November 2 at 1pm.

### Detroit Chapter:

October 5th, we commemorated BEAM by hosting Roller Skating with the NFB at Detroit's Northland Roller Rink, a challenging, yet wildly fun event that drew 45 participants. We sent representatives to the affiliate's annual Lansing Gathering, the Just Ask Foundation's Health and Fun Fair at the Eastern Market on October 3rd, and made plans to host a vendor table at the Department of Elections' big October 19th Get Out the Vote Block Party. At our Chapter Meeting, we discussed both the multi-layered purpose of why we attend our State Convention, and how we should explore, discover, and conduct ourselves at the Convention if truly guided by NFB Philosophy.

### Flint-Genesee Chapter:

Nine members attended the Lansing gathering, where we had a wonderful time connecting with our leadership team, federation family and participating in the meetings. We participated as a vendor at the Genesee Disability Network outreach day. Two members managed our table, distributing information, while another member networked with various organizations about the Federation and its programs. Our communication committee recorded a podcast discussing our upcoming event for Blind Equality Achievement Month. We will hold a Voters Outreach Training focused on the VAT machine. Our special guests, our planning committee chair and affiliate president, joined us to promote the state convention-great job, and thank you to both!

### 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. Our representative from the National Association of Blind Students (NABS) is Qualik Ford. Qualik serves as the president of the Maryland Association of Blind Students. For more information about convention, our in-person meeting and how you can get involved with the Michigan Association of Blind Students, attend our meeting this Friday at 4pm on the Michigan affiliate Zoom platform.

### Blind Michigan Seniors Advocating for Seniors (BMISAFS):

Hello Michigan seniors! Please come to our monthly meeting at 8:00 PM on Monday, October 28. We will be discussing final plans for our hospitality suite at the state convention. There are jobs for everyone to do! Some folks will be asked to help serve coffee and snacks and others will be asked to help steer people to the hospitality suite when they arrive at the hotel on Friday. In addition to the Friday hours (11:00 - 3:00) we will be open for an hour on Saturday and Sunday mornings before general session (7:30 - 8:30). Our annual in-person Chapter meeting will take place on Saturday afternoon at 1pm. The agenda is coming soon. Please be prepared to pay your $5 annual dues at that time. I'm so looking forward to seeing you at our monthly meeting and in person at our Annual State Convention in Kalamazoo!

### New Wayne County Chapter:

Today the New Wayne County chapter will volunteer at the Environmental Interpretive Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. We plan to collect seeds and sow them in the prairie near the Henry Ford mansion. This area needs more native grass in order to keep away invasive plants and we will do our part to support that process. Nine chapter members will travel to Kalamazoo to share a good time at state convention.

With Love, Hope and Determination,

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

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