# National Federation of the Blind of Michigan (NFBMI)

**The Informant**

**Vol. 5: All Canes Lead to…**

**Date: June** 2025

Affiliate Zoom Link:

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

## From the President

Celebrate with the Michigan blind people’s movement, friends, as we are in the season of reunion, memory-making, and network-building. June is a month

of joy, prosperity, and abundance; in that it offers much to reflect on, cherish and get invested in within the Federation while we prepare for the largest

gathering of blind people in the United States.

A Happy belated Father’s Day to all the excellent blind fathers and fathers of blind children in our affiliate and throughout the state. With the rights

of blind parents and blind youth within the educational realm challenged; it is imperative that the NFB of Michigan remain vigilant in our advocacy efforts.

June is also the month of a variety of initiatives and programs for the Michigan affiliate. Please take time to review all we’ve accomplished and plan

to do. Our June newsletter’s theme states, “All canes lead,” an ode to the return of our national convention. Congratulations, Michigan affiliate, it is

year three of our NFBMI REAL youth program rollout to our national convention; I cannot think of a better introduction to the opportunities of the Federation

than explaining all it can offer to young blind people, their families, and others in the community.

## Important National Updates

### 2025 National Convention

The 2025 NFB national convention will take place at the Marriott Hotel from July 8-13 in New Orleans, Louisiana. There are still a few rooms available at the Marriott thanks to an extension. The Sheraton, our overflow hotel that hosts our exhibit hall, also has both single and double rooms available. To learn more about our national convention, please visit [www.nfb.org/convention](http://www.nfb.org/convention).

### National Federation of the Blind Radio Network

Have you tried out NFBRN yet? At our 2025 Washington Seminar, President Mark Riccobono shook the room when he unveiled the National Federation of the Blind Radio Network (NFBRN). This all-new, always-on radio network offers updates, presidential releases, classic banquet addresses and so much more Federation content that continue to help blind people raise their expectations. To get connected and learn more, visit <https://nfb.org/resources/publications-and-media/nfbrn>.

### Legislative Updates

Both the Blind Americans Returning to Work Act (HR 1175) and the Access Technology Affordability Act (HR 1529), introduced into the 119th Congress needs your support. By connecting with your representative in Congress, you can be the force we need to ensure that blind people are not penalized for having ambition in employment. If you are interested in learning more about this bill and how your voice can be helpful in working toward this goal, please contact our affiliate legislative chair, Sheila Fulmore, to learn about methods of communicating with their office or attend our upcoming legislative committee meeting.

### New Legislative Updates

#### Social Security Administration

The National Federation of the Blind responded directly to the Social Security Administration (SSA) on their proposed field office closures and employee reductions. To read our organization’s full response to the SSA’s acting commissioner, visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/policy-statements/letter-social-security-administration-regarding-recent

#### Department of Education

The National Federation of the Blind responded to the Secretary of Education following the federal government’s executive order to close the Department of Education. To read our letter emphasizing the importance of maintaining programs for blind and disabled people, visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/policy-statements/letter-secretary-education-regarding-executive-order

### Library Services

The National Federation of the Blind also sent a letter to chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate respective appropriations subcommittees following the federal government’s executive order aiming to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which funds state libraries for the blind and print disabled. To read our full letter to Congressional decisionmakers, visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/policy-statements/letter-chairs-and-ranking-members-house-and-senate

### NFB Newsline

Have you registered for NFB Newsline? This service offers access to over 500 publications, weather updates and job listings to blind, deaf-blind and

low vision people around the country. Register here https://nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-newsline

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Our technology podcast, Access On, offers in-depth reviews from industry experts, interviews and more informational content. Subscribe today and stay

connected with the latest updates by going to https://nfb.org/resources/publications-and-media/access-on-podcast

## 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, as well as NFB Newsline. You can access these issues by visiting [www.nfbmi.org/informant](http://www.nfbmi.org/informant) or looking at our state-specific channel on newsline either on the web, the mobile app or by calling in.

### Announcement, BELL Academy

The National Federation of the Blind of Illinois (NFBIL) will hold its 2025 BELL Academy in Springfield, IL August 4-8. BELL stands for Braille Enrichment

Literacy and Learning, and includes a week-long residential program for blind youth. Families travelling from outside of Springfield are provided hotel

accommodations and meals are included. For more information or to register for this program, please visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-bell-academy

### Detroit Reorganization

Are you a Federationist or potential member of the National Federation of the Blind interested in being part of effective, results-driven work that accomplishes the local, regional, statewide, and national efforts of the blind people’s movement in Michigan? In 2025 the board of the National Federation of the Blind

of Michigan made the decision to begin the reorganization of its presence in the Detroit area. This decision hopes to both imbue its members with the philosophy

of the movement while offering members an active opportunity to take part in foundational work to build the Federation. Individuals interested in becoming

part of the growing experience of developing a chapter from foundation to function are invited to join our reorganization brainstormer, being held on June

23, 2025 at 8pm via our affiliate zoom line to discuss these efforts, the expectations of a chapter chartered with an affiliate of the Federation and how

you can be an active part of the development efforts.

### NFBMI Convention Dinner Gathering

The Michigan affiliate is excited to explore the Big Easy together as a family with its annual convention dinner outing. This year, join the Michigan Blind

People’s Movement as we two-point touch or tap-slide into deliciousness at “The Rum House Caribbean Taqueria,” on July 9. As with all our convention dinner

outings, all attendees are responsible for their meals, with transportation to and from the restaurant from the hotel covered by the affiliate when you

travel with our group. To register for the dinner, please sign up via email or text with Damontae Scott, Michigan Fellow, and Flint Genesee chapter vice

President. He can be reached at (810) 295-6422 or

lennysox@icloud.com.

Dinner reservations have been made for our party at 6pm, so please sign up or reach out with serious inquiries only, as we will be joined by special guests. The deadline to hold your space is June 25, 2025. For more information about the restaurant or access to the menu, please visit https://www.therumhouse.com/

We look forward to fellowship and delectable connections.

### NFBMI Caucus

We invite all convention attendees to join us at our affiliate caucus this year. The affiliate caucus is an opportunity for affiliates and division members

to meet prior to general session to prepare for convention meetings, initiatives, and fundraising efforts. Discussions about our experiences with pivotal

items like the 2025 Rookie Roundup, acknowledging our two national scholarship finalists, information about banquet exchange and notes about where individuals

receiving assistance can pick up funds will be made available during this time. The caucus of the NFB of Michigan will take place on July 9 at 9pm in Studio

8 at the 2025 national convention.

### “Taste of Michigan” Exhibit Hall Table Information

Come one, come all to table A49 at the 2025 NFB national convention for your delectable Michigan cherry-themed treats. Yes, the NFB of Michigan is back

with its array of cherry flavored goodies, including: cherry jam, cherry nut mix,  cherry barbecue sauce, sour cherry gummi rings and even those cherry

gummi bears. Outside of this, the infamous NFBMI 50-50 raffle returns. Winners do not have to be present to win the raffle and the winning ticket will

be pulled live on the final day of our national convention.  The excitement begins July 8, with pre-orders being forwarded to nfbofmi@gmail.com or President@nfbmi.org.

### NFBMI Needs Assessment

The 2025 NFBMI Needs Assessment will be released to all registered members of our affiliate for them to complete. The needs assessment is a mid-year

survey our membership will be completing for the first time that allows for them to evaluate the direction of some of the local, regional, statewide, and

national efforts our affiliate has participated in. It also provides opportunities for our membership to outline how they will take part in developing

new pathways to innovating or supporting future initiatives we take part in. In a time where the voices of the blind are paramount in all facets of society,

we look forward to your input in how we can make sure the steps we take represent as many of our members’ ideas as possible.

#### Board Meeting Survey Results

The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan thanks the attendees of its second quarterly board meeting this year, held in Dearborn at the Courtyard

Mariott. 41 attendees were in-person and results of our feedback survey were favorable. Most attendees were satisfied with the information provided at

the meeting, while many felt there were areas for growth in the length of the meeting and security concerns.

### Visions Fair

The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan thanks its members that supported the affiliate vendor table at the Visions Fair in Ann Arbor at the

Downtown District Library. Special thanks to New Wayne county chapter member Sara Norwood, Michigan Fellow Faye Chenault-Johnson and affiliate board member Donna Posont for their phenomenal work educating, illustrating and networking the philosophy of the blind people’s movement. The vendor table was lively, attracting interested parties for different reasons, with the two most requested items being the formation of an Ann Arbor/ Washtinaw Chapter and the 2025 REAL program.

## Social Events:

### Sense-sational Tactile Tour at Greenfield Village:

On Monday, July 21, 2024, join us for a tactile and multisensory experience at Greenfield Village. We will visit several buildings in Greenfield Village, which could include Firestone Farm, the Pottery or Weaving Shop, the General Store, and Ford Home. There will be opportunities to experience life in years gone by. Please meet in the plaza area in front of the entrance to Greenfield Village at 01:00PM. We will stroll around the Village until 04:00PM and there will be an option to enjoy lunch before the tour in the Village. There is no cost for the Greenfield Village tour and lunch will be at your expense. Location is 2900 Oakwood Boulevard in Dearborn, Michigan and parking is freely available across the street.

For more information you may contact Donna Posont, New Wayne County Chapter, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan. 313-220-8140

Donnabutterfly50@gmail.com

## Chapter/Division Updates

Flint Genesee Chapter

The flint Genesee chapter congratulates its president, Sheila Fulmore and Vice President, Damontae Scott, for being named to the local advisory council (LAC) of the Mass Transit Authority (MTA). We look forward to the change they can affect during their participation. Please join us for our monthly chapter meeting. We meet the third Thursday of the month at 5:30pm. At the flint Public Library. If you’re outside of Genesee County area, you are welcomed to join us via the NFB of Michigan zoom line for our virtual meeting experience.

Our 2025 Gala “Blind Etiquette Date: A Night in Paris” will take place on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at 6pm, with cocktail hour beginning at 5pm at the Flint Institute of Art; located at 1120 E. Kearsley

St., Flint, MI 48503.

### Michigan Blind Seniors Advocating for Seniors (MBSAS)

Hello Michigan seniors!  Our monthly meeting will take place on the 5th Monday of June.  Please meet with me in the Michigan Affiliate Zoom room at 8:00

PM, on June 30th, (note:  this is one week later than our normal meeting time.)    We'll be talking about the 2025 National Convention.  Learn how to attend

virtually if you are unable to travel to New Orleans.

### New Wayne County Chapter

Our June 7 chapter meeting focused on vision loss in seniors and we provided an informational program full of encouragement that those experiencing blindness

or vision loss can still live the lives they want. August 2 will be our next chapter meeting and we are trying out a new meeting place. We will gather

from noon to three at the Caroline Kennedy library in Dearborn Heights.

24590 George ST, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

Join us as we plan our picnic, prepare for state convention and share memories

from national convention in New Orleans.

### Michigan Association of Blind Students (MIABS)

MIABS held its first social event, “Michigan’s Got Talent” The Virtual Experience,” on Saturday, May 31 to excitement and camaraderie. We thank our members, board, members of NABS, and student visitors from other divisions that participated and our affiliate for supporting the work of blind students in our development. MIABS congratulates its board member, Shaneice Milledge, in her efforts to represent the student division as both a board member and blind parent at the 2025 Raising Expectations Accessing Life (REAL) program this year. The division also held

a virtual meeting on June 13, where it was decided to continue to promote student activities and events throughout the summer with engaging activities to promote recruitment. We look forward to connecting to more potential members through our programs and supporting the work of the Federation. For more information about the Michigan student division, please attend our next meeting, which will be announced publicly via the NFBMI email list by our division secretary.

## Committee Updates:

### Fundraising

In observance of the Independence Day holiday, the fundraising committee will meet on Thursday, July 3 at 6pm. This meeting will be a brief check-in to prepare for our efforts at exhibit hall and answer questions people may have about items for sale.

## Important State Affiliate Dates

\*06/23/2025: Detroit Chapter Reorganization: (08:00PM)

\*06/27/25 to 06/29/2025: REAL Program 2025

\*06/28/25: Flint Genesee Chapter Gayla (6PM)

\*06/30/25: MBSAS (Michigan Blind Seniors Advocating for Seniors) (8PM)

\*07/01/2025: NFBMI At Large Chapter meeting (08:00PM)

\*07/02/2025: NFBMI Communications Committee Meeting (08:00PM)

\*07/03/2025: NFBMI Fund Raising Committee Meeting (06:00PM)

\*07/08/2025 through 07/13/2025: National Convention; both virtual and in person

\*07/09/2025: NFBMI Caucus at the 2025 National Convention (09:00PM) Studio 8

\*07/14/2025: NFBMI Youth and Family Committee Meeting (07:00PM)

\*07/15/2025: At Large Chapter Philosophy Discussion (08:00PM)

With Love, Hope and Determination

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

President, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

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

“Without struggle, there is no progress.” – Frederick Douglas