



 Newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado

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National Federation of the Blind of Colorado 2012 State Convention Returns to Boulder

The NFB of Colorado 58th Annual State Convention

When: Thursday October 25th thru Sunday October 28th

Where: Millennium Harvest House, Boulder

1345 28th Street

Boulder, CO 80302

Room rates are $85 across the board for singles, doubles, triples and quads.

For Reservations: call 800-545-6285

To reserve your room online by September 25th, go to the following link:

<http://www.millenniumhotels.com/boulder>

Select Group Code, under the Corp/Promo Code and enter: 1210NATFED

It is important that all who plan to attend the convention pre-register. So, make your room reservation and register for the most important gathering of and for the blind in Colorado this year. Of course, you may register at the convention. Conventions cost our organization, so registrations are essential. Register online at [www.nfbco.org](http://www.nfbco.org), or call Lisa Bonderson at 303-504-5979. Preregistration begins on September 15th and closes on October 15th.

Pre-registration prices:

$15 Registration

$15 Friday Luncheon

$15 Saturday Luncheon

$30 Saturday Banquet

$75 Total

At the door registration prices:

$20 Registration

$20 Friday Luncheon

$20 Saturday Luncheon

$40 Saturday Banquet

$100 Total (Save $25 and pre-register.)

The Millennium Harvest House is one the finest, most enjoyable convention facilities we have ever had. They are great hosts. We are able to accomplish much work and hospitality, and NFB spirit at the Harvest House. We know that the Boulder chapter is busy making plans and looks forward to welcoming all of us. See you in Boulder!

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A Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader,

You will see that this issue has a youth and education focus. We write about the BELL program, comments from our President, news from the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, report from CCB Summer Youth Programs, and an article about our Educate Blind Kids Now Committee. This is no accident. Education is one of the top three NFBCO priorities for 2012. The convention set this priority at our 2011 convention. Of course, we have always had a focus on education. This year we have been even more targeted.

All of our programs and initiatives are important. We want better public transportation. We need to lower the rate of unemployment. We want to recruit more members, so that they gain from the NFB. We are proud of the work we do at our Colorado Center. We must pass federal legislation to bring about the end of unfair wages paid to people with disabilities. We must advocate for and develop new access technology. We care about the people of our movement. We will keep the faith, honor the philosophy, and do the hard work necessary to advance each of these efforts and many others. But in keeping with our top priority this issue, and in many issues to come, you will learn more about our concerted and determined effort to reform education for blind kids in partnership with parents and professionals.

There are other tidbits in this issue, so read on dear reader. One tidbit is that we are looking for an associate editor. How would you like to help write, gather articles, review and edit articles? Here is your big chance to be a proud part of the Blind Coloradan team! Be in touch with me, Kevan Worley.

At Your Service,



Kevan Worley

Aggregator & Contributor

From the Desk of the President

Greetings,

As I write this piece, many concepts strike me as quite amazing. For one, just about a month ago, I finished my 27th National Convention. Another remarkable occurrence is that the Summer of 2012 is almost over and my kids are getting ready to return to school. These two events are, more or less, the subject of this President’s message.

2012 NATIONAL CONVENTION

As we concluded the 72nd Annual National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind held in Dallas from June 30 through July 5th, I found myself reflecting on how far we have come as a movement and how much I have grown as an individual. When I first started attending NFB conventions in 1986, we would often struggle to reach 1500 attendees. Now we routinely have 2500 in attendance, even in the off years and go well over 3000 in the better years. Substantively, our ability to effect change and our prominence as the leading organization dealing with the affairs of the blind have grown immeasurably since 1986. Colorado has been and remains one of the strongest affiliates in the Federation, helping our movement move closer to our ultimate objective of first class citizenship for our community. This year our strength was evidenced by the fact that we were the fourth largest affiliate in attendance, with 132 registered, and by the key roles played by many of our members in the Convention as demonstrated through our presence on the national agenda several times and the multitude of leadership positions held by members of the affiliate in the various Federation groups, committees, and divisions.

Personally, I started my journey in the Federation as a seventeen year old, scared, national scholarship winner. Just about everyone had told me how terrible and unreasonable Federationists were. I never suspected that I would find such a nurturing home in the Federation where I could grow to explore and realize my full potential. There is no doubt that the NFB is the source of the confidence and support that has allowed me to manage a successful business, dynamic affiliate, and a beautiful family. As I reach the end of every Convention, I find myself thankful for what I have received and more determined to help our Federation grow, so that others can realize the tremendous gifts that have been bestowed upon me. This year is no different and I am excited to carry out our work in the coming year to make sure that we are even more capable of realizing our dream of true freedom and independence.

2012 NFBCO BELL PROGRAMS

As I mentioned above, the summer is just about over as demonstrated by the fact that my two young children are about ready to resume school again starting on August 20th. However, it is still summer time and summer time in the NFBCO means BELL Program time. This year, we ran two very successful BELL Camps, one in Colorado Springs and one up here in the metro area. Diane McGeorge and Michelle Chacon coordinated our efforts this year, and the success of the two programs is undeniable. I had the privilege of spending several hours with both camps and I left each one more determined than ever to carry out the work of the Federation. It was so exciting to observe these children, ranging in age from four to thirteen talking about the meaning of independence and freedom. Each child expressed how important literacy is to achieving freedom and independence and without Braille, blind children cannot acquire literacy. The distinguishing factor of our BELL Program is that the children learn from positive blind role models. I know our future is incredibly bright because we are reaching children at a much younger age and the net effect of our BELL camps and the youth programs we operate at the Colorado Center for the Blind is that the blind of tomorrow will possess much greater opportunities than those of us participating in the main stream of life today. If we do our work right, blindness will not be the barrier that it currently is and I am confident that we will do so.

GOODWILL PROTESTS

It seems to me that summer is not only a good time to conduct our BELL camps but it is also a great time for a good old fashioned NFB protest. As our readers know, we are engaged in a battle to change an old and vastly outdated law which allows certain employers to pay workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage. At the outset, one would think that this reform would be easy to accomplish now that we are in the 21st Century and the view of individuals with disabilities is supposedly much more enlightened. However, the employers who exploit workers with disabilities by paying them pennies per hour while the executives enjoy large, six figure salaries have been fighting vigorously to maintain the status quo. The largest of these employers is the nationwide network of Goodwill Industries. We are planning to conduct informational pickets all over the nation on August 25th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm local time in front of Goodwill thrift stores and donation centers. We will pick a few strategic locations in Colorado and join our brothers and sisters across the nation on the picket line. Stay tuned to our email lists and your local chapters for details on how we will take our message to the streets.

2012 NFBCO ANNUAL CONVENTION

As discussed elsewhere in this issue, we will be holding our 2012 NFB of Colorado Annual Convention from October 25th through October 28th at the Millennium Harvest House in Boulder. We will kick off the convention on Thursday with tours of various attractions in Boulder, a history session about the NFB of Colorado, and some leadership events. Friday will feature the opening of the exhibit hall and our first general session followed by breakout sessions in the afternoon with other important meetings and social events in the evening. Saturday will follow a similar pattern with a general session in the morning and meeting of our various divisions in the afternoon. Saturday night will be the highlight of the Convention with our Annual Banquet. Anil Lewis has been assigned as our national representative and will deliver the keynote address at our banquet. We will also present our 2012 NFBCO scholarships and conduct our fundraising auction. Anahit LaBarre and her committee are acquiring several wonderful packages that will help us raise money for our BELL Camps and our Scholarship Program. Sunday will feature other inspirational programming along with our annual business session where we elect board positions and consider resolutions. Stay tuned to our website and email lists for more convention details as they emerge.

2012 AMAZING VACATION RAFFLE

Even though we have some incredibly talented individuals involved in this affiliate, we cannot put on the breadth and scope of programs that we do without the ability to finance them. We have been blessed with several bequests in recent times but we cannot rely on that money to keep us going. That is why we are conducting an amazing vacation raffle. A local travel agency, eTravel Unlimited, will provide us with a $3500.00 travel certificate that the winner of our raffle can use for any travel product sold by the agency, such as cruises, other vacation packages, air fares, etc. The certificate does not have to be used all at once. Raffle tickets are $10.00 each and $20.00 will get you three tickets. Many of our members have these tickets in hand but you can also go to our website, www.nfbco.org, and find the raffle link on our front page. You can purchase raffle tickets online with a credit card and the tickets will be mailed to you. You can also fill out a form, send in your check, and then the tickets will be mailed. I need everyone to email all of their contacts, friends, family, business associates, school chums, everyone, and direct them to our website to participate in this raffle. Among our several hundred members, I can only imagine that we have several thousand contacts. The potential for this raffle is huge. Please help! Proceeds from the raffle will help fund the BELL camps and Scholarship Program. The winner of the raffle need not be present to win and the drawing will take place at our Annual Banquet on October 27th in Boulder.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude this message, I must say what an honor and privilege it is to serve as your President. We have accomplished so much together but we all know that there is so much work left to do. Together, we will make this a better world for all of us. I wish each and everyone one of you a happy conclusion to the summer and I look forward to the wonderful fall ahead.

Yours in Federationism,

Scott C. LaBarre, Esq.

NFB of Colorado President

Ringing the BELL for Braille, The 2nd Summer

By Diane McGeorge

***From the Editor:*** *Diane McGeorge took on the responsibility of coordinating our BELL program again this summer. Here is what she says.*

Another successful year completed for the NFB of Colorado BELL program. Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning, BELL, broke new ground this year by adding a second program in Colorado Springs. And what a success it was! We had the opportunity to hire Marty Rahn, a very busy and competent TVI teacher from the Greeley area. Marty has been an active member in NFBCO for years now and stepped up to the plate for our Colorado Springs BELL program. She is an experienced TVI serving a number of school districts in her part of the state, and her creativity and great spirit enriched our program. Michelle Chacon played a key role as she always does in any program she takes on. She worked in the Colorado Springs program for the first week, then came back to Denver to get the Metro area program going, and continued to teach there for two more weeks. After having worked for CCB in Confidence Camp for two weeks in June, her dedication to the blind children in our state is beyond compare.

A huge thanks goes to CSDB for sharing their space with us to hold our two week program. They generously gave us classroom space and places for Marty and Michelle to stay while they were there.

If I start trying to thank volunteers individually, I will no doubt embarrass myself, so please just let me say that we had wonderful volunteers to help with the program. We couldn’t have done it without them. Our growing Colorado Springs Chapter really stepped up to the plate.

We served six children in the Springs, and nine children in the metro area. We had a family that lives in Craig who arranged for their child, Brayden, to attend the program. Isadora, Brayden’s cousin, and Quinita, a student at CSDB, were instrumental in making the program a huge success. Isadora wants to be a teacher of blind children. She is starting out with all the right attitudes. Quinita is terrific. Her role modeling for the kids couldn’t have been better. So hats off to those two very special young women.

The Metro area welcomed our program back to Westminister at the Rocky Mountain MS Center. We had nine kids in that program, and what a time they had! Both programs had some wonderful field trips to museums, Cici’s pizza (which was a real favorite), and with the heat, lots of swimming. If you think all they did at Cici’s pizza was eat, think again. They got to investigate the kitchens, and make their own pizza. It was a big hit. The tactile art museum in Colorado Springs and the Children’s Museum in Denver also ranked high on the favorites list.

Braille was a part of every activity. What did they do? Keep a journal every day about their activities; write thank-you cards to the hosts of the field trips; read Braille books; and learn how important Braille is in their everyday lives. We were fortunate to have Eddie Culp and Amelia Dickerson once again this year as part of our Westminister program. The kids thoroughly enjoyed Ann Cunningham’s art and drawing with her amazing blackboard.

Each program ended with a program for parents and guests. Colorado Springs had a song about BELL, and Denver had a Hokey Pokey Braille song and dance “you put your dot one in … you put your dot two out … your put your dot three in and ya shake ‘em all about .. that’s what it’s all about it.” Each child received a certificate of accomplishment which they certainly deserved.

We have lots of pictures of activities we will be sharing with you throughout the year. All of our parents were terrific, helping with driving and taking pictures. You can look forward to a PowerPoint in the Colorado Parents of Blind Children state newsletter.

Braille Enrichment Learning and Literacy, that is the National Federation of the Blind award winning BELL program. That’s no hokey pokey. That’s what it’s all about.

Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards

By James Gashel

***From the Editor:*** *James Gashel serves as Secretary of the National Federation of the Blind. He also chairs the Dr. Jacob Bolotin award committee. This year National Federation of the Blind of Colorado was honored to be presented with not one, but two Bolotin awards. Mr. Gashel presented these awards on Thursday afternoon, July 5, 2012 from the platform in front of the 2400 delegates at our national convention in Dallas. The award is prestigious. It brings with it a cash award to support the programs, or individuals recognized. It is coveted. Here is what James Gashel said, when recognizing our outstanding work in Colorado.*

For our first recipient, representing organizations of excellence, we are recognizing a particular program led by blind adults to provide opportunities of special significance for blind youth. Although the program being recognized has a single name and mission, ten recipients are sharing this award. The program they represent is the Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Program with a total award of thirty thousand dollars. Each organization conducting the BELL program underway in ten separate states in 2012 will receive three thousand dollars given in recognition of outstanding leadership to make the program possible.

First launched in the summer of 2008 by the NFB of Maryland, the BELL program has reached a milestone in 2012 with ten states participating and serving students at fourteen different sites. The recipients we honor today are state affiliates of the NFB in Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. Because of the initiative of these state affiliates, children with low vision will learn that being blind and reading Braille is a respectable way to live.

Using mentorship as an NFB strength, the BELL program is based on interaction between blind students and blind role models. Throughout the day during the program students ring a bell to celebrate their accomplishments. In the beginning the adults recognize the students’ accomplishments and remind them to ring the bell, but by the end of the program students are excited to ring the bell on their own with each success. Students ring the bell when they successfully identify Braille letters for the first time, learn Braille contractions, use canes to travel independently, and realize that, by using alternative techniques, blind people can do the same things sighted people do.

Parent training is also emphasized in the curriculum. Parents are children’s first teachers. Ensuring that parents of blind children have a positive understanding of blindness significantly increases the success of their blind children.

When you think of reaching out to blind youth and helping them to achieve excellence in their lives, and helping parents to have high expectations for their children to achieve standards of excellence, think of the BELL program. That is what James Gashel said about the unique and important work of ten affiliates. As always Colorado is one of the affiliates leading the way and ringing bells of freedom.

The final Bolotin award for 2012 was also in recognition of work done in Colorado. Our very own, artist in residence and tactile teacher extraordinaire was recognized for her outstanding service. Here is what he said.

Now for our fifth and final recipient, representing sighted individuals with visionary enlightenment and a genuine understanding of blindness, we recognize Ann Cunningham with an award of five thousand dollars.

The view that blind people cannot enjoy or create visually appealing artistic works is one of the last bastions of discrimination we face. In fact, many well intentioned programs can be found which offer special opportunities to the blind in art appreciation, but note the operative word—special—when special is usually just another word for separate.

Specializing as a tactile artist, Ann Cunningham first started to teach art classes at the Colorado Center for the Blind, beginning in 1997. Her classes include stone carving, sculpting, tactile mapping, painting, drawing, and more. Ann routinely travels with students to gardens, art galleries, and museums, helping them learn that enjoyment and creation of artistic works is a reasonable and realistic expectation for people who are blind. More than anyone, Ann has become a mentor and teacher for blind artists throughout the country, encouraging them to prove their skills, often when others are discouraging them. Ann has even provided training for sighted professional artists, sharing her nonvisual techniques for making art fun, creative, and accessible to all blind students. Her recent invention of the Sensational BlackBoard allows blind students to create and understand maps, diagrams, and other graphics. This is a low-cost tool to make such drawings fully accessible to blind people.

When you think of a can do spirit and creative problem solving, tearing down barriers and surmounting obstacles, just saying “yes,” when conventional wisdom says “no,” think of Ann Cunningham.

Jessica At Large: The Foundation

By Jessica Beecham

***From the Editor:*** *In the last issue we introduced you to Jessica Beecham. We are proud to have Jessica at work organizing chapters and promoting the work of our affiliate. She is imaginative and energetic. We will be running a regular column written by Jessica. I am currently calling this column “Jessica At Large”. She will be at large, roaming the state to help us change what it means to be blind. Here is Jessica Beecham.*

Boy, has it been a busy few months in Colorado At Large! From training in Baltimore to building databases to designing programs and everything in between, lots of time and energy has gone into building the NFB of Colorado so that we reach our full potential!

After arriving in Colorado, one of the first tasks was to receive training from the amazing affiliate action staff at the National Federation of the Blind’s National Center in Baltimore Maryland. Spending the week learning from NFB luminaries was inspiring and insightful. Returning to Colorado with a head full of knowledge, tons of lists for recruitment purposes, and lots of material to use on the job, it was time to lay the foundation for growth.

Locating potential new members as well as those organizations and individuals who could serve as dear friends to the Federation is vital for the growth and sustainability of our organization. Utilizing the lists from NFB National Center including White Cane, Future Reflections, Braille Monitor, Early Explorers, Youth Slam, and free books as well as our Colorado state database, it was easy to build a comprehensive database that allows easy access to potential members and friends. Another database was created for the student division which includes contact information for each University, including the disability service contact person whenever possible. This will allow the students division to widely promote their division, the NFB of Colorado scholarship program, and the student seminars and meetings that they regularly conduct.

Since social media has become such a powerful tool in both one-to-one communication as well as getting the word out about organizations, activities, and ideas, it is an imperative tool for organizational growth. The NFB of Colorado now has an active Facebook page so like us by searching National Federation of the Blind of Colorado NFB CO. We also have a Twitter account and you can follow us by using @nfbco. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, NFBCO has started a blog which we update at least weekly. To find out about the latest happenings in the NFB of Colorado, check out our blog posts at http://nfbco.blogspot.com. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding ways in which we could more efficiently and effectively utilize our social media to generate interest and membership please contact Jessica Beecham. So far we have been able to get the word out about our AMAZING VACATION TRAVEL RAFFLE, the boycott of Goodwill Industries, our sincere congratulations to Cody Bair for his National Federation of the Blind national scholarship award, the At Large chapter, and happenings in our Colorado NFB chapters.

In May, we conducted the first meeting of our At Large chapter which is a chapter of the NFBCO which meets via conference call on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00PM. The At Large chapter is meant for individuals who live too far away or have schedule conflicts that prevent them from attending in person chapter meetings. To join the At Large chapter for our next meeting call 619-326-2700 and enter access code 3566475#. To receive the most up to date information about our At Large chapter meetings and other information about NFBCO please visit our website at www.nfbco.org, contact Jessica Beecham, sign up for Colorado Talk, or stay tuned to any of our social media outlets. During the first At Large chapter meeting we discussed the National Federation of the Blind and its impact on the lives of America’s blind. There were twelve participants but only 6 of whom were not special guests on the call. During the second meeting we discussed the state divisions and had 15 participants, only 4 of whom were special guests on the call. This means that our participant count (those who are potential members) almost doubled. Our goal is to see our At Large chapter thrive until it is as large as the Denver Chapter and we are off to an excellent start. We want to utilize the membership of the At Large Chapter to start new in person chapters. We are already beginning to formulate plans for in person chapters so stay tuned for more information on Federation growth in Colorado.

Our Colorado chapters are doing some really awesome things across the state. The Pueblo chapter is now contributing money to assist with Braille writer repair for individuals in the community. The Colorado Springs chapter is working diligently to communicate with their city council about proposed cuts to public transportation and is participating in a number of community outreach events. The Mile High chapter is having a professional photographer at their next meeting so that they can contribute some great shots to our website and other materials that NFBCO prints and is working on planning a poker tournament in the fall. The Denver chapter had their summer picnic in July and graciously opened their doors to the summer students and staff from the Colorado Center for the Blind youth program. The Boulder chapter is busily working to plan aspects of our state convention. The Greeley chapter is hustling and bustling with yard sales and summer picnics. As you can see each of our chapters is staying busy and working hard to make a difference!

These are just a few of the summer happenings, and let me tell you, there are BIG plans in the works. From the launch of a mentoring program for high-school students, to community advertisement, the NFB of Colorado has a lot more excitement in store. Keep reading the Blind Coloradan, join our social media outlets, sign up for Colorado Talk, contact Jessica Beecham at jbeecham@cocenter.org or 303-778-1130 extension 223 for in-depth details, sign up for NewsLine and check out the Colorado Information Station, and call the NFBCO number 303-778-1130 extension 302 to keep up with the latest information about the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado!

National Convention, In the View of Our Scholars

By Scholarship Winners

***From the Editor:*** *Each year our National Federation of the Blind of Colorado scholarship winners are also given a trip to our National Convention. This is in addition to the cash award they will receive at the State Convention this October. For some of these scholars it is the first time they have attended the National Convention. We asked them to provide their thoughts. Here are some prospectives from five of our winning students. Our first essay comes from our state’s national scholarship recipient for 2012. He was awarded a scholarship from our affiliate in 2011.*

**Cody Bair**

2012 National Scholarship Winner and NFBCO Scholarship Finalist.

Recipient of 2011 NFBCO Scholarship.

Greeley, Colorado

Sophomore at the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado, majoring in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting

My second national convention experience was extremely different from my first. While at my first convention I was busy soaking up the NFB philosophy and learning alternative methods for achieving success in college. At this year’s convention I had the opportunity to connect with, and be mentored by, numerous Federation leaders. These leaders have significantly impacted my opinion of what it means to be a leader in the Federation. For example: I noticed that all of these leaders looked at the Federation as a whole instead of separate affiliates, divisions, and/or chapters. These mentors also presented me with numerous nonconventional ideas for recruiting new members, which had been successful for them in the past. In addition to being mentored by Federation leaders, I also had the opportunity to participate in many of the National Association of Blind Students(NABS) events, as well as, connect with the NABS leadership. As a result of conversing with them, I was given many ideas for recruitment and outreach projects for state student divisions, as well as, which projects and methods have historically not worked well. I strongly believe that the mentoring I have received at this year’s convention will make me a more valuable asset to the National Federation of the Blind.

**Savanah Baker**

2012 NFBCO Scholarship Finalist

Broomfield, Colorado

Freshman at Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska, majoring in English and Spanish.

The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado recently gave me the experience of a lifetime. After applying for the NFBCO state scholarship, I waited eagerly to see if I would be one of the recipients. Once I got the call and was told I was a finalist, I thought it couldn't get any better than this. However, I was wrong. Along with the scholarship, I had a chance to go to the NFB National Convention in Dallas, Texas.

The Convention was a six-day experience that I will never forget. I learned so many useful new tips about being a self-advocate and asserting my independence. Going blind has always frightened me, but after meeting thousands of successful blind business men and women, I have come to realize nothing can stop me from achieving my goals except myself. I feel more confident as I head off to college and I couldn't have done it without the NFB and all the wonderful mentors I had at the convention. I am so grateful for the experience I had and for the scholarship that will allow me to have many more equally amazing experiences.

**Dora Lopez**

2012 NFBCO Scholarship Finalist

Greeley, Colorado

Sophomore at Aims Community College, Greeley, Colorado, majoring in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Two years ago, I attended my first NFB convention. Ever since, I have found myself attending the annual conference each year. The experience this year has been the best. I was fortunate to attend with the Colorado Center for The Blind as a summer employee. Wonderful moments and people, who I have grown to care for, made this experience an unforgettable one. From dress-shopping to some last minute packing, somehow everything made perfect sense. The annual convention is something that I have made a part of my life. An event I look forward to as the summer approaches. The diverse people who make the conventions interesting, the inspirational speakers whose passion keeps the NFB spirit alive, and the feeling of belonging that I find, are all emotions and experiences that without question keep me coming back year after year. Perhaps it’s the realization that in order to make progress people have to work together and it is only until we learn to get along and work as a team; only then will we see change. The NFB philosophy enforces this truth. I have been granted many opportunities that without a doubt have enriched my life. However, I have learned that not one of my accomplishments would have been as meaningful, had I not taken a risk; knowing that I could succeed and as easily fail. The opportunities are everywhere, and thanks to the NFB they are at a closer reach. Finally, having the honor of being a 2012 state scholarship finalist has been a great honor.

**Kylene Quigley Lima**

2012 NFBCO Scholarship Finalist

Greeley, Colorado

Graduate Student at the Colorado School of Public Health, University of Colorado in Denver, Colorado, working on her Master’s Degree in Public Health.

My first Convention, how exciting! Although I was less excited about missing my daughter’s ninth birthday and leaving my other, more handsome half behind. However, as a Colorado scholarship recipient, I was honored to attend. In preparation for the week ahead I focused on the amazing opportunity I was facing in being surrounded by like-minded blind individuals. Actually, in all honesty, I did not know much of anything about what the Federation stood for. I knew I would be surrounded by a large concentration of blind people. This meant that for one week I was not the odd one out, the minority, or the “special” one. Let me go back a few years, actually twenty-four years. To the surprise of my entire family my vision deteriorated when I was six as a result of Stargardts. Regardless of my destiny as a blind person growing up in a world prior to the ADA my family instilled one simple, and yet empowering statement in me. My family would tell me, “Kylene, you can do anything and don’t let anyone tell you differently.” Since I was an impressionable six year old, I believed everything I was told and this statement became what I lived by.

Now let’s fast-forward to June 29th, 2012 to the Hilton Anatole lobby in Dallas, Texas. The sound of the canes reverberated throughout the massive hotel atrium emulating an off tempo tap dance. Lisa Bonderson- who had escorted myself and another scholar from Denver, handed me my room key and said that we will be in touch later on in the day. With bright eyes and a huge smile I took my key not giving any indication of what was really going on inside. I thought to myself, “Aren’t you going to help me find my room…?” As a wave of panic rushed over me I started to question what I got myself into. Not only did I need to find my room, but I was also starving. It was at this point in which I realized how independent I thought I was and how comfortably dependent I had become. After frustratingly finding my room I set out to find food. I wondered around the lobby of the hotel with no success of food when I found myself tucked away in a hallway pretending to observe the display of statues mounted behind glass as I wiped away the rush of tears. I was brought up believing I can do anything. I truly did believe that I could do anything. I even told all of the naysayers throughout my life that I could do anything. Was I wrong? I am a strong, normally confident, and successful person and yet, I felt scared and defeated. Luckily, my wonderfully encouraging husband was there- all be it thousands of miles away, to remind me that I can do it. He calmly told me to draw on my training and that I was in the perfect place to be comfortable with my blindness and who I am. I dusted off my bruised ego and found some much needed food.

 Over the following week I found my confidence soar. I stepped out of my OCD way of habitual living and challenged myself to be uncomfortable. There were lots of people around to offer help. That week I received a reality check. I was humbled by the work of so many powerfully successful blind individuals. I was honored to hear their experiences and efforts on behalf of blind people everywhere. I felt true admiration for so many within the Federation. I took this reality check and deposited it into my life’s savings, so that I can always draw upon it when I need. I know I have lots more work to do for myself and for my fellow blind family. I will always be thankful to the NFB of CO for providing me with the opportunity of attending the Convention to learn invaluable life lessons as a blind individual and, more importantly, intrapersonal lessons.

We also congratulate Jami Meyers. She was awarded a scholarship to attend national convention.

**Jami Meyers**

2012 NFBCO and National Convention Scholarship Recipient

Colorado Springs, CO

Ashford University, working on her Master’s Degree in Counseling.

My experience from the 2012 NFB National Convention was life changing. I am so blessed and honored to have been granted this opportunity that I will carry with me for a lifetime! Throughout the week in Dallas, I was inspired in so many ways by hearing stories, being educated, and seeing such a strong and determined group of people, who despite visual impairment have fulfilled dreams as high as the sky can reach. I was lucky to meet some fantastic people from all over the country! I had amazing mentors that were so helpful in providing me with support, advice, and guidance. I was lucky enough to have a wonderful roommate, who will now be a friend for life! I also enjoyed bonding with others from the Colorado Springs and Denver chapters, getting to know them better. I am so appreciative of the gift I was given in attending the National Convention! I am also excited to be a proud member of the Colorado Springs NFB chapter, and look forward to meeting more inspiring people, hearing more motivating stories, and being up to date on information and technology. Thank you all so much for this opportunity, and I can’t wait to attend my next NFB National Convention!

The United States Association of Blind Athletes

By Lacey Markle, Military Sport Program Assistant, USABA

***From the Editor:*** *From time to time we carry updates from our friends at USABA. Here is the latest.*

The United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) recently hired a Membership and Outreach Coordinator, Matt Simpson. The target goal for this new position is to increase sports and physical activity opportunities to students who are blind and visually impaired in Colorado by offering goalball, swimming, tandem cycling, track & field, judo and rowing programs. Nearly 70 percent of students who are blind and visually impaired do not participate in even a limited physical education curriculum. The barriers that blind and visually impaired youth face are numerous and primarily the consequences of moving their education from residential schools, where physical educators with blindness knowledge deliver specialized services in relatively small classes, to public schools where educators may have less knowledge, time and resources to apply to students who are visually impaired. USABA wants to break down these barriers, our state has approximately 850 blind and visually impaired students and USABA would like to have an impact in each of their lives. Matt will reach out to orientation and mobility instructors (O&M) and teachers of the blind and visually impaired (TVIs) to reach this goal. USABA is working with the Colorado Department of Education to identify these teachers and work with them in getting community based programs started in their area. Currently, USABA is starting the initiative by contacting all teachers in hopes of gaining an interest for when programs around Colorado start. USABA’s Executive Director, Mark Lucas, said, “ We want to reach out to all O&M and TVI’s to try and get a better understanding of their students interests and what resources are available to them in order to create a program that will be sustainable and successful,” he continued to say, “Matt will be a great asset to our organization. It is exciting to have an athlete working to promote our mission and in alignment with our strategic plan, reach our vision of becoming the nation’s leading resource for providing sport and physical activity across the United States.”

Sports and physical fitness are extremely important for students who are blind and visually impaired not only to maintain a healthy lifestyle, but to promote independence, increase self-esteem, learn life skills and in some cases bringing students who are blind and visually impaired together with sighted students. Studies show that the benefits of sports and recreation continue from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. A recent survey of USABA members revealed that not only do participants benefit academically from their involvement in sports during elementary and high school, but 57 percent of USABA members continued on to higher education to pursue a college degree, which is more than double the national average of 23 percent for their visually impaired peers.

“I am excited to be here and promote sports for people who are blind and visually impaired. It is great to be able to represent USABA athletes and bring their perspective to this organization,” said Simpson. This program is expected to start in the fall by hosting various sports programs throughout Colorado.

What is Audio Information Network of Colorado?

By Kim Ann Wardlow

***From the Editor:*** *Most of our readers are very familiar with and regularly use our NFB Newsline system. Many of our readers also benefit from the Audio Information Network of Colorado. However, I am often asked about these access systems. One of our active members, David Dawson, founded and continues to serve as Executive Director of AINC. He has demonstrated this robust service at many of our state conventions. However, in this issue we thought we would give you another glimpse at the services you can access through AINC. Here is what Kim Ann Wardlow, Director of Marketing for AINC, has to say about their services.*

AINC provides audio access throughout Colorado to newspapers (nearly 100 local papers), ad circulars, magazines, and other ink print materials through three regional broadcasts

The Audio Information Network of Colorado (AINC) provides services that blind, visually impaired, and print disabled individuals may use throughout their lives. Children’s programming is available in English and Spanish. It includes magazines, books, and stories recorded by a professional story teller. As children advance through school they may use the newspapers, science, travel, and other programs for school assignments. Young adults transitioning to post-secondary education or the work place may find employment information, grocery ads, and discount store ads helpful. Older adults often find that AINC services help them maintain independence and stay connected to their community.

AINC is in its 22nd year of serving Colorado residents. The non-profit was founded by David Dawson under its original name of Radio Reading Service of the Rockies (RRSR). Its mission is to provide audio access to ink print materials not otherwise available to Colorado’s blind, visually impaired, and print disabled residents.

Programming is broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Listeners have independent access to nearly 100 Colorado newspapers; grocery/discount ads; magazines; and other local publications. Three regional broadcasts are produced to maximize the number of local publications that can be read. The three regions are Denver Metro/Northeastern Colorado, Colorado Springs/Pueblo/Southeastern Colorado, and Grand Junction/Western Slope/Southwestern Colorado. In addition to the newspapers from the urban areas of each region, AINC also includes suburban papers like the Highlands Ranch Herald and Arvada Sentinel; rural papers like the Limon Leader, Ranchland News, Burlington Record, and Cortez Journal; and others like High Country News, La Voz, Indian County News, Intermountain Jewish News, and Space Guardian. All publications are read and recorded by volunteers. Rocky Mountain PBS transmits AINC’s three regional broadcasts. AINC provides pre-tuned receivers that pick up this signal. There are two telephone options - calling the office number to connect to the broadcast or for more flexibility using the Information-On-Demand System. To try a demo of the IOD system dial 303-443-2005 or toll free 877-443-2005 then enter 7777 when asked for a subscriber number. This will give you five minutes to try the system. AINC’s website has sample programming, live streaming, Podcasting, and online registration capabilities. Speakerphones and MP3 players are provided upon request. All services and equipment are provided at no cost to listeners. For more information call 303-786-7777 / 877-443-2001 or go to www.aincolorado.org.

DVR Promotes Buzogany

***From the Editor:*** *As readers of the Blind Coloradan may recall Susan Schierkolk retired from her position as Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Programs and Program Development Manager last winter. This statewide coordination and development position oversees a number of programs important to the blind of Colorado. Mrs. Schierkolk was imaginative, committed, professional, and steady.*

In April Mr. Buzogany was promoted to fill this vacant position. Rob Buzogany received his Master's degree in 1992, in the field of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Wisconsin. Mr. Buzogany has worked for over 12 years as a rehabilitation counselor for nonprofit, for profit and state government agencies. For the past 6 years Mr. Buzogany has been a field supervisor for the State of Colorado, Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). In April of 2012, DVR promoted Rob to the Programs and Program Development Manager. In this position Mr. Buzogany manages statewide programs including the Independent Living Centers programs, the Benefit Offset National Demonstration program, the Traumatic Brain Injury Program, and the Business Enterprise Program. Mr. Buzogany has benefited from the mentoring of Dr. Ken Schmidt and Susan Schierkolk in recent years. We are confident that he will provide excellent management and leadership in the position. The blind of Colorado expect much, and we will be watching.

Dining In the Dark

***From The Editor:*** *In the Spring Issue of the Blind Coloradan we featured perspectives on the Dining in the Dark phenomena. At the 2012 National Convention there was a resolution about the matter presented by a number of the members of our affiliate. This resolution is a bold policy statement. It passed unanimously. Here it is.*

Resolution 2012-04

Regarding Dining in the Dark

 WHEREAS, the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the widespread public misconception that the blind are not equal to the sighted in society; and

 WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind categorically rejects the myth that the blind are not equal to the sighted; and

 WHEREAS, programs of the National Federation of the Blind teach and promote a positive understanding of blindness, that the blind are normal and equal members of society, and that blindness does not mean inferiority; and

 WHEREAS, an activity known as "dining in the dark" is being promoted and used to raise funds by having sighted people experience blindness by eating in the dark; and

 WHEREAS, an article published in Time magazine entitled “Dining in the Dark” assures would-be diners that the cook “works in a well-lit kitchen”; and

 WHEREAS, the Dining in the Dark website--www.dininginthedark.org--states: “you will pick from a specially prepared menu (designed by a sighted local ‘star’ chef)” and "In darkness everyone becomes equal. Our opinions can't be molded by dress, mannerisms, or makeup as none of it can be seen. You learn that without sight your other senses become more acute”; and

 WHEREAS, these statements lay bare the underlying philosophy of dining in the dark, that sight means superior ability, and that, when sight is removed in the dark, the blind and the sighted are equal: Now, therefore,

 BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this fourth day of July, 2012, in the city of Dallas, Texas, that this organization condemn and deplore the use of dining in the dark in a manner that diminishes the innate normality and equal status of the blind in society; and

 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization pursue an active policy of opposition to dining in the dark activities and events, including use of media and public protests, whenever and wherever such activities and events exploit blindness and blind people based on a demeaning philosophy.

Happenings at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind

***From the Editor:*** *We enjoy carrying news from the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind. As the kids return to school, here is what we have to report.*

Students have returned to the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, expectations are high! This year the school for the blind has a principal.

In June the school hired Jennifer Langley. Principal Langley’s credentials are impeccable. Jennifer Langley, the new principal in the Adams Building at CSDB, comes to the school as a 21 year veteran teacher. Jennifer has taught most recently at the Washington State School for the Blind and prior to that at the Maryland School for the Blind. Her roles have been vast. While predominantly a Music Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Jennifer has been the Daily Living Skills Coordinator/Assessor, WSSB’s registrar, Outreach for Washington State in the area of Music Braille and instructor of a program entitled GOALS (Going Out and Living Successfully), a program to teach advanced job readiness, college readiness and personal finance. Jennifer has a passion for braille and helping make all students as independent as they can become. She has participated on state boards to help them understand how to assess students and create viable curricula for all, along with keeping high expectations for her students. Jennifer is very excited to join CSDB. Her vision and direction align perfectly with CSDB and she looks forward to building a long relationship within the school. We look forward to meeting her at school activities and on the pages of upcoming Blind Coloradan Newsletters.

Homecoming will be the weekend of September 8th. You may want to check the school’s website for all of the games, celebrations, and events.

<http://www.csdb.org/Default.aspx?DN=80e48029-9ab5-4b48-8ae3-e439283cdf91>

In the Summer Time

By Brent Batron

***From the Editor:*** *As readers know the Colorado Center for the Blind is an award winning program of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado. From its inception, it has worked to empower our blind youth. Brent Batron is our Director of Youth Services. He and his staff have just concluded what sounds like another highly successful summer program. Here is what he says.*

It is hard to believe that the Colorado Centers’ summer programs have already ended. The graduation dinner and talent show was held on August 1st. It was a very nice ceremony with the students and staff welcoming families, summer employers and guests. The students had prepared a meal for 150 people. It is always a bitter-sweet evening. It is wonderful to see the growth in all of the students but it is hard to say good-bye to them. After spending 8 weeks and becoming so close to each of the students, it is hard to believe that the group of 24 students and 9 staff members will never be all together in the same room again. The students have come so far in their skill level, their confidence, their independence and their belief in themselves and that blindness has simply become a characteristic and not what defines them.

We had students from 10 states including Arizona, Colorado, California, Missouri, New Mexico, Florida, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Arkansas and New Jersey We also were excited about working with our international students. We had a 15 year old from Thailand and 3 of our 6 middle school students came to us from Mexico. The families in Mexico are now planning to form a parents group based on NFB philosophy with an emphasis on how the Colorado Center has benefited not only their children but their families.

The students gained skills and confidence in the core classes of Braille, cane travel, technology and home management but they also participated in several challenge recreation activities. These included rock climbing, hiking, canoeing, martial arts, goal-ball, a city wide scavenger hunt, skating, bowling and even attending the theatre to see a play. The students also attended the NFB’s national convention in Dallas which afforded them the opportunity to travel in 2 airports and a very large convention hotel, the Hilton Anatole, and meet people from all different walks of life and learn about lots of new technology. They also attended the NFB of Denver’s annual picnic and they participated in all of the games including acting like big kids playing in the bouncy castle. Another fun and educational activity that they participated in was the 1st annual Summer Science Seminar. Students were able to conduct various scientific experiments, utilize accessible materials for many different sciences and learn that blindness is not a barrier to success in science classes. The presenters included a chemistry student at Colorado University, professors at Metropolitan State University in Denver and a world renowned tactile artist and author Ann Cunningham who won a Dr. Jacob Bolotin award at this years’ national convention of the National Federation of the Blind.

The Earn & Learn high school students not only gained work experience this summer but they learned skills of interviewing, networking and resume writing. Our students worked in several different locations all over the Denver metro area and Boulder in many different capacities. The jobs ranged from receptionist at the Center and the South Metro Chamber of Commerce, ushers at the Denver Center for Performing Arts for PHAMALY’s production of “Little Shop of Horror”, food service at the Federal Center, technology assistant at the Center, working with children at the Auraria Early Learning Center and with young blind kids in the BELL program. Two of our students worked at the Right Step which is a therapeutic riding program where they groomed and fed horses and even got to ride on their last day. It was an experience that they will never forget. Another student worked with a reporter from the Littleton Independent not only attending various meetings and court hearings but also getting to write articles.

If you would like to receive information about year round programs for youth and their families please contact Brent Batron at the Center 303-778-1130 x 222 or by email bbatron@cocenter.org .

Three “Visually Impaired” Mice: Political Correctness Gone Too Far?

***From the Editor:*** *The following article is from the August 2012 E-Connector. E-Connector is the online newsletter of the Colorado Organization of Parents of Blind Children. Julie Hunter is the editor. Read this article and you will see why people enjoy the E-Connector.*

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990, there seemingly has been an increase in sensitivity to terminology relating to people with disabilities, including the use of the word “blind”. A recent newspaper cartoon depicted a book store with a children’s book in the window. The title of the book was “Three Visually Impaired Mice”. The cartoon amusingly suggests that even the title of a cherished nursery rhyme must now be changed in order to be politically correct. Labels such as “Sight Impaired” and “Visually Challenged” are sometimes used in place of the word “blind”. Many people seem to feel that the word “blind” is a harsh and shameful word which needs to be avoided. It‘s time for those of us who love a blind person to use the term “blind” without flinching! There is nothing embarrassing or disgraceful about it. Being blind, whatever the degree of vision loss, is merely a characteristic. Just as we might describe our child as short (vertically challenged?) and blonde (pigment impaired?), so do we need to be comfortable using the word “blind.” As long as we make sure that our children are learning the alternative techniques of blindness so that they can compete on an equal footing in the world, then there is no shame in being blind.

Going Back to Boulder

By Arielle Silverman

***From the Editor:*** *Arielle Silverman is one of our most committed leaders. Here is an invitation from the Boulder Valley Chapter.*

This year the Boulder Valley chapter will be hosting our CO State Convention and we are once again planning some fun tour activities on Thursday afternoon.

We would like your feedback on which tour ideas sound the most fun and interesting. Please take a few moments to fill out our poll at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/nfbco](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/nfbco) and tell us which tours you like the best!

Please complete by August 24, 2012.

Best,

Arielle Silverman, Board Member, Boulder Valley Chapter, NFB

Catch the VIBE!

By Amy Gunning

***From the Editor:*** *Since our spring newsletter listing all manner of Colorado resources to empower and encourage blind people in the great outdoors. We have received much material. Amy Gunning is the Co-President of the Visually Impaired and Blind Skiers of the Colorado Springs Community. Here is what Amy has to say about VIBeS.*

VIBeS (Visually Impaired and Blind Skiers) of the Colorado Springs Community--is a non-profit organization originally organized for individuals with visual impairments to have an opportunity experience snow skiing. VIBeS has evolved into an organization that provides opportunities for year-round outdoor recreational activities. Hiking, camping, and tandem bicycling are the most frequently occurring activities when it isn't snow ski season. VIBeS Board of Directors meets on a periodic basis to discuss organization business, plan trips, and pursue fund-raising opportunities. VIBeS explores options for increasing membership, both of individuals with visual impairments and volunteers (who are sighted).

With snow skiing, VIBes has a formal training program for people interested in becoming volunteer ski guides. Skiers participate in training as well to learn the same commands that guides will utilize to ensure the safety of both snow skiers and guides. While there is formality with respect to guide and VIP (Visually Impaired Person) training, ski trip planning, weekend mountain hiking trips and BBQ gatherings, many other opportunities are ad hoc. VIBeS ad hoc activities occur when members call and/or email each other about getting together.

The VIBeS website is www.coloradovibes.org; we have our summer newsletter and calendar of events posted in Word and PDF formats. We'd love to have you join our fun so please feel free to visit our website or contact us for more information.

Current contact information is:

Amy Gunning, Co-President

Cell phone: 719-337-0161

Email: amythegun@comcast.net

Envision America

By Anna McClure

***From the Editor:*** *Here is the most recent release from our friends at Envision America.*

En-Vision America recently released the latest in audible identification and information assistance technology with the new i.d. mate Quest. This new device moves beyond just bar codes, with the addition of Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and camera capabilities. The new features allow the user to acquire information and identify items in several ways including Skype video, Google database, photo object identification, and currency identification. More wireless applications are under development. Additional inventory functions are also included, designed specifically for blind merchants and vendors. NABM and En-Vision America are working together to develop a training program for vendors so that they can make the most of these applications and see valued benefits in their work environment. For more information and details contact En-Vision America at 800-890-1180 or visit online at www.envisionamerica.com.

En-Vision America has valued its relationship with the National Federation of the Blind and the National Association of Blind Merchants for many years, from supplying snack pack bags at national convention to exhibiting at BLAST. It is because of the dialogue and cooperation between the two groups that specific technological advancements have been made for the i.d. mate talking bar code scanners. In continuing this partnership, En-Vision America recently released Quest, the latest in their i.d. mate line. Several additions and applications for Quest were designed especially for the blind merchant/vendor.

With new Wi-Fi/bluetooth features and an attached camera, even more ways of identifying items and gaining information are available. Skype video is one example of this. With a quick connection, you can have a live video feed going to a friend to help with reading an invoice, finding a lost item on the floor, or anything you might need help with. Currency identification and object recognition are also available with the Wi-Fi/camera elements. New applications are being developed and suggestions are welcomed.

In addition to the on-board database of nearly 3 million items, the user now has access to Google’s online database, increasing the total to nearly 20 million items. Items not found in the database can be added by users to a shared file, allowing individuals to share information and help each other to build product information.

New functions have also been added to Inventory Mode. Time and date can be placed into records, and all information is transportable to other data management programs.

NABM and En-Vision America plan to develop an in-depth training workshop for i.d. mate users, so that they can learn and apply the varied applications of Quest to their work. Stay tuned for more information on this training. In the meantime, to learn more about Quest or to purchase yours today, contact En-Vision America at 800-890-1180.

“Blind Students Get Down to Business” (Excerpt from the Braille Monitor)

By Terry McElhaney

***From the Editor:*** *The following story appeared in the April 13, 2012, edition of the Littleton, Colorado, Villager. It demonstrates the benefits that blind students receive from working relationships between NFB adult rehabilitation centers and their local business communities. Here it is.*

Networking is a basic skill that most business people have to deal with, if not master, on their way to success in today's business world. Facing a room of strangers with a pocket full of business cards and a handshake is always a little daunting for people entering the job market. Now consider the networking scenario without the ability to see who you are networking with. That's the challenge presented to students at the Colorado Center for the Blind during their annual networking event in partnership with the South Metro Denver Chamber. Last week sixty-five chamber investors and guests gathered at the CCB's campus near Historic Downtown Littleton to give students a real-life situation in preparation for graduation and subsequent job search. Prior to the event Executive Director Julie Deden and the center's Vocational Specialist Brenda Mosby prepared the business guests with an introduction to the school and its philosophies, strategies, and processes. The group was enlightened as to the proper way to approach a blind person, not to be afraid of the cane, and basically to treat a blind person the same as any sighted person. The use of "dark shades" [sleepshades] was also presented as a tool to help persons with some sight to learn when closing your eyes and trusting your instincts is preferable to trusting bad vision. The philosophy at CCB is that skills are not enough. The center takes students through a rigorous nine-month program in preparation for a life of independence and productivity. Daily classroom discussion of myths and fears surrounding blindness, along with exploration of real-life encounters, help students to see blindness as a mere nuisance rather than a tragedy. There's an eclectic mix at the center, including international students. The program provides training in orientation and mobility, Braille, technology and software, and home management, which includes cooking. Their final days include planning and executing a dinner for 50 and a drop which takes students anywhere in the greater metro Denver area and requires them to find their way back without assistance. The students were also prepared for the event with information on many of the business persons whom they would soon get the opportunity to meet. Thanks to the chamber's use of the Meetup social media site, the center had an advance list of who would be there and some biographical information regarding many in the group. Students with specific career goals in mind knew whom they wanted to meet in advance and were ready with questions. The center also had business cards printed for sharing during the event. There was obvious apprehension as the business leaders were led into the room with the waiting students. This quickly passed, however, as Mosby took control and introductions were given with the help of Chamber President and CEO John Brackney. Nods of approval could be seen as the students introduced themselves as well as their aspirations in turn. The business people also introduced themselves and their companies. From there organized pandemonium broke out as the groups merged and conversations struck up between them. The students often took the lead and with a handshake at the ready used their keen sense of hearing and their ever-present canes to approach people and strike up a conversation. CCB student Shanaia [Bethea] was encouraged by the encounters. I was very nervous going into the event, but once John [Brackney] started asking me questions, I felt much more confident. And I even talked to a couple of people who mentioned they knew someone in journalism and were eager to put me in touch," Shanaia said. International student Anna [Avramenko] from the Ukraine said, "It is such a small world. I met a woman, Linda Scott, who invited me to a luncheon where she plans to introduce me to two women business owners--one from Russia and one from the Ukraine. Business leaders who attended the event were equally moved by the experience. Tricia Englebert, owner of 5280 Drug Testing, said, "This was one of those events that I was super proud to be a part of. What an incredible group of individuals. These students are doing amazing things in spite of their disability. A truly humbling and perspective-changing experience.

“Blind CU-Boulder Student Inspires Lab Changes” (Excerpt from the Colorado Daily)

By Whitney Bryan

University of Colorado student Amelia Dickerson is used to sitting next to her lab partner and being told how the experiment is going.

Since a car accident in high school left Dickerson blind, there are certain activities -- such as science experiments -- that she can't do in the same way she did before, so she sat quietly and listened as her peers did the work.

After years of being told by classmates what lab work looked like, Dickerson decided she was tired of being left out of the experiments.

"I knew I could do these things; I just needed to do them in a different way than other students," Dickerson said.

Before classes started in the fall, she approached her soon-to-be chemistry instructor, Susan Hendrickson, and asked if she would be willing to put in a little extra time to help her participate in the lab.

"Lab helps us understand what we're reading in a practical way, and I didn't want to miss out on that anymore," Dickerson said. "I needed to know that she was going to work with me and help me actually participate."

Dickerson's passion inspired the general chemistry faculty members to begin making their labs more accessible. Over the past two semesters, with Dickerson's help, the chemistry department began incorporating new equipment to make experiments easier for students with disabilities.

Several of the experiments require students to pour liquids into beakers and read measurements labeled by visual markers. Hendrickson cut notches in the glass to allow Dickerson to feel the markers.

"That only costs 25 cents per test tube," Hendrickson said. "We also bought a textured rug at Target for $9.99 that tells her where the sink is."

Other changes were more expensive. An electronic probe system cost the department nearly $900, though Hendrickson said it was worth every penny.

"The system allows Amelia to collect data through interchangeable probes and then it's transferred to her computer, which can then read her the information out loud so she can hear the results," Hendrickson said. "And the best thing about it is that we have it now so we'll be able to use it anytime we have a student who needs it."

Dickerson said the system allows her to take temperatures and measure pH levels, data that she's otherwise never been able to collect.

Hendrickson said the labs are required to have benches that make equipment accessible to students in wheelchairs, but there are no requirements to accommodate blind students. She said in her experience, many students who face challenges in the classroom due to disabilities "just sit back quietly because they're too shy to do anything about it."

But Dickerson wasn't an ordinary student.

"She was determined, and her motivation is what really pushed us to put in the extra time and effort to help her," Hendrickson said. "She made it easy for us to want to help her."

Dickerson was so touched by the efforts that she nominated the department for the President's Diversity Award. Hendrickson said the department won a commendation but not the award.

Hendrickson said she hopes other departments will begin better preparing for disabled students.

"I'm really excited to talk to other departments who might be interested in making similar changes," she said. "All it took for us was an eager student who was passionate about making a change and some willing faculty to help her get there."

For Dickerson, the department's efforts resulted in more than a lesson in chemistry.

"I feel more included and more like there are options in the natural sciences for people with all kinds of different disabilities or struggles that they face," Dickerson said. "It has completely changed my attitude.

"Just because you haven't seen something done before doesn't mean you can't do it," she said. "All you need to do it try."

Catherine Kilcommons, of CU's Disability Services, said about 1,200 students registered with the office are studying in various departments across the campus.

She said the biology department has also been working to improve accessibility for students through encouraging its textbook publisher to improve its online interface

Read more: <http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_20569066/blind-cu-boulder-student-inspires-lab-changes#ixzz23jCCtdZj>

McGeorge Mountain Apartments

By Julie Deden

***From the Editor:*** *In our spring issue we spotlighted the purchase of a multi-family housing unit to be the residence of Colorado Center for the Blind students. In the May issue of the Colorado Center for the Blind newsletter, Julie Deden wrote about the dedication of the apartment complex. Julie is the Executive Director of the CCB, this is what she said.*

On May 11, the board of directors, staff and students of the Colorado Center for the Blind, community members and friends gathered together to dedicate our new apartment complex. Littleton Mayor Debbie Brinkman, who is a great supporter of the Center in all ways, was on hand to cut the ribbon. The rain did not soak our spirits but rather increased our exhilaration on this momentous occasion. Diane McGeorge, founder of the Center and current chair of our board of directors, told us that there are no words to express her love for all of us and the dedication that we all have in our work with blind people. Julie Deden, executive director of the Center, thanked Diane and her late husband Ray for their hard work, passion and love for the Center for, without them, we would not have the Colorado Center for the Blind.

Educate Blind Kids Now

By Kevan Worley

***From the Editor:*** *It is difficult for your editor to know what to say about, well, myself when writing articles for this publication. I’m not only the current editor, but I am often one of those charged with doing some of the important work we do. In this article I will tell you about our 2012 Educate Blind Kids Now Initiative.*

To be sure, many blind children are being educated now. Some are even getting a good education, but many are simply not receiving the high quality education they deserve. There are a number of reasons for this lack. We certainly do not have all of the answers, but we can think of no other organization which is taking a global and, we hope, a uniting approach to the challenges faced by children, parents, and teachers in the 21st Century.

At the 2011 State Convention, this affiliate made education a top priority. President LaBarre appointed the Educate Blind Kids Now Committee. The committee consists of co-chair Kevan Worley. Kevan is a parent of an adult blind child. Co-chairman is Michelle Chacon. She is an award winning teacher of visually impaired students and a board member of NFBCO. The committee includes such luminary thinkers and problem-solvers as Trina Boyd. Trina is a veteran TVI and member of the NFB with a track record of unparalleled accomplishment with a heart of service. She received much of her formative experience at the Colorado Center for the Blind. Maryann Migliorelli is a nontraditional university student and a former entrepreneur. Maryann is currently the Boulder Valley Chapter President. Bertha Guerrero is a TVI at CSDB and she is a member of the Colorado Springs NFB Chapter. Diane McGeorge is the founder and chairman of the board of our Colorado Center for the Blind. There is no doubt that Diane’s thoughtful vision and spirit brought true reform to the rehabilitation of the blind. Rounding out the committee is David Dawson. He is the Executive Director of the Audio Information Network of Colorado. He is a member of the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind Board of Trustees. I observe that everyone on this committee either uses or teaches Braille. I also observe that this committee would benefit from and be open to the addition of parents of blind children.

The committee has had substantive meetings with officials at the University of Northern Colorado, administrators at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, Colorado Department of Education, Lieutenant Governor Joe Garcia, and leading state legislators. We have engaged in conversation with the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute. We particularly appreciate Tanni Anthony at the Colorado Department of Education. Her professionalism, heart, and expertise is of great value. She has met with this committee three times. She has provided documents and meaningful guidance.

We are happy to have begun a more healthy and communicative relationship with CSDB. It is undeniable that over the years the relationship between the organized blind and the school has often been one of ups and downs. We know that on occasion there have been staff at CSDB who have not been welcoming to the philosophy and efforts of the Federation. There have also been numerous teachers, administrators, and care givers who have recognized the value of the Federation and the strategic importance of our support, advice, and advocacy. We too must recognize how our efforts can benefit from their professionalism and experience. We must continue to build bridges of understanding and possibility with our state’s residential school for the blind. The school lives in a world replete with challenges. They are often the same as all educational institutions in the 21st Century. However, the residential school for the blind also has challenges unique to the education of blind children with which they must deal.

The committee is tackling the tough problems: how to recruit young teachers of the visually impaired; how to enforce standards and essential Braille competencies in a rigorous manner while not losing qualified, nurturing, dedicated professionals; how to educate and encourage parents and teachers, so that all vision impaired kids have the opportunity to learn and use Braille regularly; strategies to ensure that the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation follows the law by opening VR cases for all blind students who are 14 years of age and older; how to ensure that blind kids are offered equal opportunity to have online assessments and testing. It is hard to believe that with all of the laws and advocacy from parents, teachers, and activists there are still blind students who cannot use many of the online assessment tools and take standardized tests alongside their sighted peers. It is appalling and unacceptable. You can be sure that our Educate Blind Kids Now Committee, backed by all of you, will change what it means to be blind by demanding that our kids get access to literacy, receive equal treatment, are offered the tools they need, leading to equality and opportunity. We will encourage parents. With your help, we will find young teachers. Together we will work to inform policy makers. We will create a climate in which teachers can be empowered and be appreciated. We will do these things with an open mind and a heart of service. Progress will be slow, but it will be sure.

We will have a full report on our 2012 Educate Blind Kids Now Initiative at our state convention on Friday the 26th and Saturday the 27th of October. Plan now to attend, engage, and learn. The agenda will be online in early October. We invite parents, teachers, those who teach the teachers, administrators, and students of all ages to participate in our fall statewide convention. There will be panels, interactive experiences, and presentations, as well as, excellent opportunities to network and share. If you have never attended, you owe it to yourself to join the fun, take part, get the facts, and help create the change.

It has been said many times, because it’s true, “our children are the future.” It is a priority of the NFB of Colorado to make that future bright.

Very Special Arts, Dynamic Buna, and Award Winning Ann

***From the Editor:*** *We recently received the following press release. We are delighted to publish it here. Read on, and you will see why.*

VSA Colorado/Access Gallery is excited to bring you…

Leadership Spirit Opening Show

Friday, August 17, 2012

6:00pm-9:00pm

At VSA Colorado Access Gallery

909 Santa Fe, Drive, Denver, CO 80204

The works of two artists in a collaborative project showcasing the illustrations of Andrew Morris and Buna Dahal’s recently released book, Leadership Spirit.

Buna, poet, writer, and renowned motivational speaker sought after for her leadership workshops and trainings all across the globe, will be at the Access Gallery signing her new book Leadership Spirit. As a child born blind in Nepal, Buna found herself up against many obstacles, especially the limiting beliefs of others. Choosing not to buy into it, Buna moved to the United States at a young age, worked as a successful job trainer and coach for the Colorado Center for the Blind, before earning her Master’s Degree and starting her own business. Recently, Buna was asked to speak at the United Nations Convention on the importance of spiritual leadership. To learn more go to <http://www.bunadahal.com/bio.html> .

The illustrations for the book were created by VSA Colorado illustrator Andrew Morris. Andrew is a graduate of Metro State College and has been working with VSA Colorado for 3 months. In addition to the work for the book, Andrew will also be exhibiting some of his other work.

Also on hand this evening will be art and accessibility innovator and artist Ann Cunningham. Ann Cunningham has been involved in the art community for more than 30 years and her accessible fairy tales, books, and art, have been seen and purchased all around the world. She will be showcasing her newest product the Sensational Black Board, which offers a fun, fast, easy, and inexpensive way to get tactile access to images. You can draw your own raised line pictures or you can have photocopy images of textbook or research materials quickly. To learn more visit <http://sensationalbooks.com/>

“Whole Community Conversation” for Aging and Disabled Population

***From the Editor:*** *We have been asked by Gary Van Dorn, our Mile High Chapter President, to carry the following announcement. Here it is.*

The Denver’s Office Emergency Management and Homeland Security invites you to the “Whole Community Conversation” for Aging and Disabled Population Whole Community Preparedness Program.

The Denver Office of Emergency Management will be hosting a series of community conversations during August and September. These conversations are intended to gather input from various populations in our community to find out how we can better work together to build a resilient community. We will be holding meetings with our faith based organizations, our aging and people with disabilities and our long term health care facilities to identify what we need from each other to create a better prepared community.

During these discussions, we want to find out what these different groups need from our office to be better prepared for emergency situations. We are also interested in finding out how these groups can help during an emergency and what preparedness activities they are already doing.

We recognize your importance in helping during an emergency. Please consider attending one of the two sessions that we are hosting for our aging and disabled populations. We will be holding the same program twice, once in the morning on August 21st and again in the afternoon on August 23rd.

Please register to attend at [www.denvergov.org/oem](http://www.denvergov.org/oem) .

Location: Denver Police District #3

1625 S. University Blvd

Denver, CO

Dates: August 21, 2012 - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

or

August 23, 2012 - 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Carolyn Bluhm at: 303-725-3084 or 720-865-7600

Carolyn.Bluhm@denvergov.org

Federation to Picket Goodwill Thrift Stores

By Scott LaBarre

***From the Editor:*** *As we go to print we received the following from NFBCO President Scott LaBarre. Read, join us, and change the world. Here is what Scott says.*

Greetings Fellow Federationists:

As you know, the NFB is engaged in a campaign to stop the practice of paying workers with disabilities less than the federally mandated minimum wage. In addition to our legislative efforts on this front, we have staged a nationwide boycott against Goodwill Industries. This is so because Goodwill is one of the largest, if not the largest, single entity which pays below the minimum wage to workers with disabilities. To draw additional attention to this matter, we are going to protest Goodwill locations across America on August 25, 2012.

As one of the largest and proudest affiliates of the Federation, we will join in these protests from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM on that Saturday. We have not yet decided which locations we will target but will be announcing that decision early the week of August 20th. It is likely that we will be conducting informational picketing at a Colorado Springs Good will location, and at one in Denver. Please join us at whichever location is best for you. Come help us make a dramatic statement that we are entitled to the same rights as anyone else. Please stay tuned to our website and email lists for more information on the protests.

Blind Buzz

By: *Buzz*

***From the Editor:*** *Blind Buzz is a column which will have announcements, notes, vignettes, profiles, assertions, snap-shots, rumors, innuendo and observations. Blind Buzz is solely responsible for the content. What’s happening? Blind Buzz wants to know.*

Michael Massey says, “There will be a sit down dinner for Pueblo Chapter members and their guests at the Weslean United Methodist Church. Chapter President Massey says the church 85 Stanford Avenue. The dinner will take place at 1 p.m. on Saturday October 20th. Tickets are $8. There will be a program highlighting NFB Kernel Books. The church Men’s Club will be cooking. Please contact Michael Massey at 719-542-3419.

What is team NFB? We hear that the NFB of Colorado may be forming team NFB. Members and friends may be running and walking in community race walk events. This will be great for losing weight, getting fit, and raising money. Win, win, win – Team NFB. Let us know when you get it to the starting line. The Buzz needs to get off my, ahhhhh, couch.

PUSH water is a brand with growing popularity on the East Coast and Midwest. The bottle will be carrying the following text: “Support Braille Literacy for the Blind: Text “Braille” to 85944 to donate $5 to the National Federation of the Blind. Learn more at [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org) .” The money will help fund NFB literacy programs. The product will be in the Colorado market soon.

Power Couples:

Julie Deden, Vice President of the NFB Colorado is reportedly dating Dan Burke. Dan is President of the NFB of Montana. Ooooh la la la.

James Gashel and Susan Kern are getting married in Denver on Sunday September 2, 2012. Susan is a Colorado native. She has recently retired from her position as Assistant Attorney General for the State of Hawaii. During her tenure there she handled a number of cases important to blind Hawaiians. In one landmark case, she represented blind vendors. She kept the Navy from denying the Randolph-Sheppard priority for cafeteria services. As Jim says, “Susan beat the Navy.” Jim is Secretary of the National Federation of the Blind. He is employed as Vice President of Marketing for KNFB Reading Technologies. Jim recently attended his 45th Annual National Convention. They both love skiing, skiing, and skiing. Along with tandem biking, farmer’s markets, and fighting the good fights. Congratulations!

Lisa Felix, an NFB-CS chapter member serving on the Board, as well as the CO-POBC Secretary, just got married! Whom did she marry, you ask? Fellow Federationist Everett Gavel is the lucky man. Lisa and Everett met on one of the many list serves that the NFB offers—the Faith Talk list—nearly five years ago. Everett has lived in Ohio, serving his local NFB chapter in that state, for the last 14 years. He recently moved to Colorado, “To be with Lisa, and be in the state I’ve long dreamed of living in,” he said. Whether he meant the state of Colorado, or the state of joy and contentment, we’re not quite sure). Lisa and Everett married on July 12, 2012, with two long-time friends as witnesses, and their Pastor leading a ceremony held among beautiful pine trees and a tree swing built for two. The next day, this couple was off to a Low Vision Expo in Colorado Springs representing the NFB-CS and CO-POBC.

Buzz has heard that Colorado State Government will be switching to Google Apps this fall. What?! The Buzz asks, incredulously, what?! Say it ain’t so, Governor!!!! Google Apps is not accessible. How will blind employees access information and transact business. Surely, Colorado state government won’t want to limit the ability of its blind employees by using Google Apps. Google Apps has refused to make their product accessible. This would be a violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the ADA. The Buzz wonders if Colorado DVR, Colorado State Library, Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, and other state departments with blind employees, or chartered to serve blind people will express concern to those in charge of technology programs for state government. Either Google should do the right thing, or Colorado must do the legal thing.

Congratulations to Nijat Worley! We understand that Nijat graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder this past May. He is now on the way to Baltimore, where he has accepted a job at the National Center for the Blind. He will be working in the Department of Strategic Initiatives helping to market NFB Newsline.

How is it that you can be a blind vendor, and drive a car? And we’re not talking about some special car outfitted with special access technology. The Buzz really wants to know. There are legally blind people in America, and in Colorado who use special lenses, qualifying for driver’s licenses, but if you can be made to see well enough to drive a regular car, are you really blind? I mean for all practical purposes, are you? Do you really require any targeted programs for the rehabilitation, training, education, and employment of the blind and vision impaired. The Buzz really wants to know.

The Buzz has been informed by the Editor of this newsletter that he received an email of thanks for printing the list of outdoor recreation organizations for people with disabilities in Colorado. The email said that the list was helpful for the athletically inclined as opposed to the athletically reclined.

The Mile High Chapter of the NFB of Colorado has our monthly meeting on 15 August 2012. The meeting will feature a discussion of one of the NFB's keystone banquet speeches on blindness. The 1963 banquet address “Blindness: Handicapped or Characteristic”. Please read or listen to the speech, at <http://www.nfb.org/Images/nfb/Publications/convent/blndnesh.htm> before the meeting so you are prepared to discuss the speech. You are most welcome to attend even if you did not have an opportunity to review the speech beforehand. Contact Gary Van Dorn, garyvdrn@msn.com with any questions. Thank you.

The Mile High Chapter of the NFB of Colorado held their elections on 20 June 2012. The following individuals were elected:

President -- Gary Van Dorn

Vice-President -- James Gashel

Treasurer -- Karen Samuelson

Secretary -- Monique Melton

Board Member -- Wayne Marshal

Board Member -- Brenda Mosby

President Gary Van Dorn says, “I appreciate those who served last year. We accomplished so much as a new chapter. There is more to accomplish!!!! Thank you.”

Joe Morgan is a blind entrepreneur living in Black Forest, Colorado. He has sometimes been a member of the NFB. Joe will be traveling to the Democratic National Convention as an elected delegate this fall.

We have the inside dope on the Colorado Springs Chapter Picnic. Forty-eight members and friends attended. Much food was devoured. Anthony Melena and Rebecca Felix won the three-legged race. Jessica Beecham and Nijat Worley stumbled into second place. Almost everyone participating in the tug-of-war won because there were several bouts, heats, ummmm, tugs. People kept changing sides. Fortunately no children were crushed. No one went to the hospital. Some adults did sustain bruised egos.

Buzz wonders, do you read Imagineering our Future? It’s the newsletter from the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, edited by the NFBJI Executive Director, Marc Riccobono. It often has some very cool stuff. Here is a neat item found in the July issue.

In May, the NFB Jernigan Institute, in partnership with the Smith-Kettlewell Video Description Research and Development Center, hosted the first-ever video description professional development workshop. Nine participants received training in video description at this inaugural workshop. The primary instructor was Rick Boggs, a blind professional currently working in this field. Rick and his team spent five days instructing participants. The history of audio description, the ten principles of description, and the quality-control process were just a few of the topics covered. At the conclusion of the seminar, participants received their certification as Description Quality Specialists. In addition to the course content, participants had the opportunity to take part in several confidence-building activities such as grilling and running the chainsaw, which have become a tradition for visitors to the Jernigan Institute.

Buzz takes note of the emphasis on youth in this newsletter, but what about our seniors? I see by the Colorado Center for the Blind May/June Newsletter that seniors are still in charge. Here is what I have stolen from that newsletter.

On May 22nd five women and one man came together to attend our residential Seniors in Charge program. They came from all over Colorado, Texas and Ohio. The purpose of this program is to teach our seniors that being blind does not need to stop them from handling all aspects of their lives. We also want to show our students that they can continue to have very enjoyable and exciting adventures. Our students ranged in age from 55 to 81. They lived in our student apartments so that they would have the full experience of cooking and cleaning but mostly the time to share stories with their peers. Too often, seniors feel that others do not understand what they are dealing with. This intensive program gives them the opportunity to talk about their blindness openly and to know that others understand.

Zubie from Meeker, Colorado knows that she can again use her own power tools in order to remodel her home. She worked in our shop and was ecstatic to cut wood on the table saw and learned that she does not have to see in order to do this. Geraldine told us that she learned how to swim at age 72 and now at 77 she knows that she can learn how to be an active blind person. Karen told us that she feels as if she finally fits somewhere. All students traveled into the Center on the city bus, they prepared delicious meals, learned how to grill, used speech on the computer and picked up some Braille skills.

At the culmination of this program on Friday, May 25th, we came together with their families to talk about being blind. One of the family members expressed through many tears how thankful she is that her mother had this opportunity. She realizes that being blind is not a tragedy now, and that her mom will be fine. A few days with positive people have a tremendous impact on each student. Every time we have this program we are all enriched.

Senior groups are available weekly. For more information, please call Duncan Larsen at 303-778-1130 extension 226.

Eyecycle is having their FIRST fundraiser August 24th at the Denver Athletic Club from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. It is a casual wine tasting and culinary delight along with a silent auction. The silent auction contains many fun and useful items including VIP tickets to the USA Pro Cycling Challenge to watch the exciting Time Trial in Denver from the best viewing spot, hot air balloon rides or restaurant certificates plus many other great items. Some of you may know the good things that Eyecycle is doing to give blind and visually impaired persons the opportunity to ride on tandem bicycles with sighted captains so they can enjoy the wonderful benefits of bicycling. You can help Eyecycle continue to do this. Please come to this fun event. Tax deductible tickets at $40.00 each can be purchased at [www.eyecyclecolorado.org](http://www.eyecyclecolorado.org) . If you cannot come, you can also make a donation at that site. Please spread the word!!!

That’s the *Buzz* this month.

Special thanks to Lisa Bonderson, Julie Hunter, and Lorinda Riddle for organization, support and proofreading. Errors, assumptions, or omissions should be brought to the attention of the editor who will likely blame *Blind Buzz* for any mistakes. Thanks for reading *The Blind Coloradan*, Summer 2012 issue.