

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2017

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Clark, At-Large
Erika Evans, At-Large
Bill Johnson, AER
Basil Julian, LIONS
Terry Sheeler, NFB
Stephanie Smith, ASBVI

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandra Edwards, ACB
Beverly Kindle, Vendors
Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB
Lisa Reynolds, AER
Larry Wayland, FAIRS

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Kara Aaron, BVA
James Caton, ASBVI

DHS Representative: None

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff: Rhonda Austin, Betsy Barnes, Amanda Connell, Charlie Cain-Davis, Kandy Cayce, Brent Dozier, Lisa Fore, Rhonda Garmon, Amy Jackson LaTasha Mays, Katy Morris, Amber Neal, Debra Newton, Jim Pearson, Kena Sabb, Brian Sanders, Donna Thelen, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes, Liz Whitaker and Tonia Wright.

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Mrs. Terry Sheeler called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Motion was made by Mr. Bill Johnson to approve the agenda. Mr. Basil Julian seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

APPROVAL OF 06-09-2017 MINUTES. Motion was made by Basil Julian to approve the June 09, 2017 minutes. Mr. Keith Clark seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

INTRODUCTIONS. All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Katy Morris

On behalf of the board and staff, Mrs. Morris expressed sincere condolences to Mrs. Judith Renick of the DSB Harrison Office in the recent loss of her husband Gary, and to Ms. Christy Saunders of Little Rock in the loss of her mother Mrs. Reta Carver.

NATIONAL ISSUES:

NCSAB – The National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) is tracking the recent regulatory review being conducted by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and other federal agencies. One of the NCSAB concerns is the starting age required for Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), funded under a new special set aside provision. Historically, DSB has initiated casework with Transition clients at age 14. However, the RSA interpretation of new regulations requires DSB to adjust upward to age 16, which is used by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and state education. This puts many DSB clients at a disadvantage because studies indicate that blind individuals need certain rehabilitation services earlier than the general population of students with disabilities in order to master specific skills supportive of learning without vision.

HR 620- As FAIRS President Larry Wayland noted last meeting, the ADA Education and Reform Act (HR 620) threatens to weaken the ADA by extending the time a violator might continue non-compliance with the law. A grievant must notify the business as to which provisions of the law were violated and when. Then afford the business a lengthy period (6 months) to correct the problem. We are hoping that HR 620 will die. Larry noted that the greatest problem with the 6 month time frame is that, for college students needing materials, access delayed is access denied.

Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act. Final regulations finally were issued and basically, by 2019, “Quiet Cars” can’t be quiet anymore. It will be interesting to see what noises they acquire.

STATE ISSUES:

Transformation. DHS continues evolving in its efforts to do its part in transforming state government. DSB and the DSB Board have to be vigilant that the transformation of such a large department does not endanger the structure and mission of DSB and impede services to clients. This is the whole reason why the division with its **governing board** is structured as it is. The board counts among its members multiple stakeholders: consumers, professional associations, civic groups, etc..... all the groups and individuals that have interests in the community of Services for the Blind for the state of Arkansas. Historically, when normal processes work correctly in the large department, things go reasonably well for DSB and no issues arise. However, when issues do arise for DSB, which is by far the smallest agency in the department, the value of the governing board becomes apparent.

The Board is the champion supporting **client programming**. It is obligated to plan, monitor and evaluate the programs for the Division. In addition to that, it is responsible for **administrative oversight**. Normally, those administrative oversight responsibilities move forward in tandem with state policies and procedures. For example, the DSB board has authorized the division to

abide by DHS policy and utilize DHS procedures as long as they comply with the state plan. However, when DHS elects to move in a direction that would put DSB out of compliance with federal regulations or directives, DSB must take a different course. Right now the **performance evaluation system** for state government has been put on hold while OPM develops a new system. Suspending performance evaluation is not an option for DSB because we are obligated to follow the state plan which must contain a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development including an evaluation system. So we will be continuing the evaluation system as usual and have discussed this and other personnel issues with DHS Office of Human Resources.

Workforce co-location plans- There are 10 workforce boards that serve the entire geographic spread of Arkansas. Several of our counselors serve as voting members on those boards, as well as one supervisor. Under the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the boards are responsible to oversee the development of program and funding plans mandated by Congress and ensure that they are submitted to the federal oversight agency by January 1, 2018. Co-location, in various forms, is to include DSB, ARS and all other partner agencies. The partners are working on these 10 co-location plans and have reached out to the head of the Department of Workforce Services to see if DWS can provide uniform guidance to the process for all ten boards. From an accounting standpoint, the charges to DSB must be reasonable, allocable, and necessary.

Promulgation of Client Policies- The entire state is in the process of promulgating policies that affect citizens because legislative review showed a number of agencies and departments long overdue. DSB is fairly up-to-date, but DWS will need to promulgate the new Combined State Plan involving all the partners. DSB will build on this and update its public policies for all its programs on the web.

Field Services Report- Ms. Betsy Barnes, Field Administrator

Ms. Barnes reported that the Field Services staff have been very busy implementing WIOA. She called attention to the hard work of Area Managers and the excellent job they are doing in an environment of constant change.

Amanda Connell – supervises the Northwest Region - Fayetteville, Fort Smith and Harrison offices. **Mary Douglas** – is supervisor for the Central Area including Batesville and Pine Bluff. **Amber Neal** – is the newest DSB Area Manager and covers the East Arkansas Region including Jonesboro and West Memphis. **Brian Sanders** – supervises the Little Rock team, and **Lou Talley** – is Area Manager for the South Region, covering offices in El Dorado and Texarkana.

Field Activities: Since last board meeting, all Field Staff attended the semi-annual Field Training in July, focusing on changes in the AWARE client data system. In August, trainers carried the

July training a step further, going to each geographic area and conducting hands-on AWARE trainings in small groups, entertaining questions as they arose.

YTD Field Statistics. Details on Counselor performance statistics on behalf of DSB Clients are in your packets. The Division is slightly down from July last year. Counselors have closed 264 cases in competitive, integrated employment, compared to 269 employed individuals through July 2016.

Case Review: In preparation for Federal review, DSB is conducting compliance Case Reviews of all closed cases for 2014, 2015, 2016, plus we have added federal 2017 since we expect to see federal auditors in early 2018. Field has 5 more offices to review and we are sending teams of 5-7 staff at a time. Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (and South Area Supervisor) Lou Talley is overseeing this immense project.

Pre-ETS Activities: DSB is working with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) on vendor applications and school Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and utilizing the ARS templates. DSB and ARS have each entered into agreement with a new vendor called 'TEEM' (The Education and Employment Ministry) out of Louisiana. TEEM staff are working with DSB, the schools and ARS in the southern half of the state. The northern half is addressed through individual authorizations. DSB Pre-ETS Counselors are very anxious to get everything flowing smoothly. They recently attended a joint training with ARS and State Education staff toward the goal of seamless services to Transition and Pre-ETS students.

WSB - World Services for the Blind is providing a new 'After-School-and-Saturday' training program to DSB Pre-ETS clients across the state to support client readiness for future careers.

Vision Quest – DSB continues to work with the state consultant and other Vision Quest team members to implement the newly signed MOU that outlines the roles and responsibilities of multiple agencies regarding Employment First. (This initiative emphasizes competitive, integrated employment and educates clients, potential clients and their families on how employment interrelates with benefits to provide persons with disabilities a better quality of life.)

Supported Employment: Field staff are working to identify new qualified SE service providers, and to develop agreements with them across the state, to increase in the number of individuals served through the DSB Supported Employment Program.

Consumer of the Year (COY) Finalists - Since our last meeting, there have been 10 local area COY presentations across the state, bringing the total to 18 so far. Packets will be sent out to the DSB board COY committee in November to facilitate its review of all the area winners and

the Committees recommendation to the full board of the overall Consumer of the Year for 2017. The DSB Board will announce the overall winner at the December Board meeting.

White Cane Safety Day - The White Cane Safety Day celebration is scheduled for Friday, October 13, 2017 at 10:30 at WSB.

End of DSB Field Report

Business & Technology Report - Mr. Jim Pearson, Administrator

Vending Facility Program. The renovations of the Russellville, Social Hill and White River highway vending locations are complete and the locations re-opened on 9/1/17. The Pulaski County vending machine contract was placed for public bid and was awarded to Snack Vending.

DSB Inventory. The annual agency-wide inventory audit of all agency equipment was completed on June 30, 2017 and the process went well.

DWS Kiosks. New accessible equipment has been installed in 10 of the 17 DWS Resource Room sites and Liz Whitaker has the remaining 7 sites scheduled for installation next week.

Little Rock Tech Lab. The Tech Lab received upgrades recently for equipment and software for training clients.

DSB Finance & Administration Report –Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes

Mrs. Morris introduced DSB Assistant Director Mrs. Cassondra Williams-Stokes and congratulated her on recently having completed her doctorate. Katy then rephrased her introduction as 'Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes'. Dr. Williams-Stokes began her remarks by introducing Mrs. Jacqueline Plummer as the new DSB Chief Fiscal Officer and observing that Jackie has blended well with DSB staff and the division is fortunate she has joined us.

Budget and Expenditures- Cassondra called the board's attention to the Expenditure vs. Budget Report that is in the board packet. She elaborated that DSB is currently working on the final closeout for federal fiscal year 2015, which shows a zero balance of remaining VR funds. DSB is working on closing out our match requirements for the Independent Living and Supported Employment grants (SE). The SE match is only required for those SE expenses incurred for the Pre-ETS program.

Under the VR program, DSB is required to reserve 15% of the formula grant for very specific Pre-ETS services. The 15% amounts to \$986,678 currently, which DSB must expend by 09/30/2017. The division has expended a little over \$400,000 for that purpose to date, and expects to end the year at \$450,000 expended for eligible Pre-ETS categories. DSB is developing agreements with new vendors as well as developing new programs with existing vendors to meet Pre-ETS criteria. It is understood that Arkansas along with many other states, must return unspent Pre-ETS funds to RSA this inaugural year. Next year, it is anticipated that DSB will expend the full 15% reserved for Pre-ETS for services qualifying under the new law.

The Maintenance of Effort match for the VR program must also be expended by 09/30/2017. It is \$1,785,506 and has already been fully expended.

Annual Federal Reporting. The federal RSA-2 report is due by December 29, 2017 and staff are already working on it, so that it can be finished ahead of time.

Federal Monitoring Visit. The RSA Monitoring Review is expected in January 2018 and DSB is scheduling a series of periodic staff meetings with supervisors and other key players to plan strategy and prepare the agency as well as possible.

Contracting

OIB. DSB recently awarded the contract for direct services to Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) to World Services for the Blind. Initially DSB set up the performance-based contract for \$475,000, which included some remaining funds under the 2015 grant award. We are again looking at a \$475,000 contract for the Older Blind program covering services through June of 2018.

Minority & Faith-based contracts. DSB recently awarded contracts totaling \$19,920 each to 4 centers for independent living, including Sources in Fayetteville, Mainstream in Little Rock, SAILS in Hot Springs, and D-RAC in Pine Bluff. D-RAC operates as a satellite of SAILS, so the Pine Bluff funding actually flows through SAILS.

Personnel

DHS CAP Process- Mrs. Morris mentioned that DSB met earlier this week with DHS Office of Human Resources. The purpose of that meeting was to inform DSB of the maximum number of positions ('Cap') we will be allowed to recruit under the rules of the new pay plan. The "CAP" number given to us is less than the number of positions appropriated in the DSB act, and subsequently funded, so the division will recruit at the number appropriated, which is 78 positions.

Outreach to Applicants who are blind - Staff are working very hard to get vacant positions filled as quickly as possible. State NFB and State ACB receive notice of all vacancies at the time DSB advertises them. This is an extra effort to ensure notification is disseminated to blind or visually impaired consumers. Terry Sheeler interjected that when she receives the notifications to NFB through the DHS 'CISCO' system, she is unable to access them perhaps because of the firewall. State Rehab Technologist for the Blind, Liz Whitaker, responded that the solution might be for DSB Recruitment to transmit the announcements through DSB Tech Lab's internet, since it is not tied to the Cisco System. It was agreed that this approach would be tested.

End of Finance & Administration Report.

End of Director's Report.

OLD BUSINESS:

2017 Employee of the Year (EOY) Results – Basil Julian

Mr. Julian explained that the DSB Board recognizes outstanding DSB Employees annually in each of three categories: Clerical Services, Direct Consumer Services and Administrative Support Services. The selected Employee of the Year in each of those categories receives a \$100.00 prize and a plaque at the December Board Meeting. He added that it is a great thing... not only great for receiving the money and recognition, but also great because the winners each represent the outstanding employees of DSB. He noted that he would like to thank all the persons who took the time to nominate individuals. He also wanted to thank his fellow EOY subcommittee members: Kara Aaron and Stephanie Smith. Together the subcommittee had the difficult task of choosing among these nominations and recommending winners to the full board. The nominees for Clerical Services were Stephanie Hettinger and Sherrie Watson-Friday; the winner of **Clerical Services** category is Sherri Walston-Friday. The nominees for Direct Consumer Services were Dwight Turner and Jacob Grace; the winner in the **Direct Consumer Services** category is Jacob Grace. The nominees for Administrative Support Services were Lou Talley, Contrena Bowie, Amanda Connell and Crystal Anderson. The winner in the **Administrative Support Services** category is Crystal Anderson. The overall Employee of the Year is Jacob Grace. Upon approval by the full board, these persons will be recognized at the December Board Meeting.

APPROVAL OF EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS. On behalf of the subcommittee, motion was made by Basil Julian to approve the categorical and overall winners of DSB Employee of the Year. Ms. Erika Evans seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

National Convention Reports. Sandy Edwards and Terry Sheeler reported upon their experiences in representing the DSB Board at the national conventions of American Council of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind respectively. Their reports are provided as attachments 1 and 2 of these minutes.

Recruitment-Katy Morris

Mrs. Morris noted that this topic was on the agenda to seek guidance and assistance from the board to a right the serious recruitment and personnel classification problems the division is encountering. The complicated recruitment process leaves caseloads vacant for extended periods, requiring supervisors to provide both direct services to clients and managerial services to the staff they supervise. This delays services to clients and in some situations jeopardizes client rehabilitation plans.

These problems have been documented repeatedly and were resolved by DHS for a short time prior to the 2017 Pay Plan Act. The 2017 Act reversed the correction though DSB appealed the errors in time for them to be resolved before the act was passed. Federal regulations require the DSB Director to give written assurance that DSB has an appropriate number of positions at appropriate levels to carry out the state plan. Turnover, inadequate hiring registers and organizational inequity indicate this is not the case. The General Assembly will meet in fiscal session in the winter of 2018 and present the opportunity to correct the inequities. Hopefully, with the board's assistance, we will be able to resolve these problems still remaining because we have staff members who have stepped forward to take on additional responsibilities saying that they are trusting that DSB will resolve the issues of inequity. Chairman Sheeler committed to review the composition of the board personnel committee and work with the committee to address this issue.

New Business- Special Reports to Board

Consumer Group Meeting Reports. Representatives Sandy Edwards and Theresa Sheeler provided detailed reports of their attendance at the annual conventions of ACB and NFB respectively, which are included in the appendix as Attachments 1 and 2 of these minutes.

JumpStart 2017. DSB Pre-Employment Transition Counselor Ms. LaTasha Mays presented a chronology of the training and activities of Jump Start students last June. The detailed report is provided as Attachment 3 of these minutes.

QUARTERLY FAIRS ACTIVITIES – Larry Wayland, FAIRS Board President, reported that FAIRS (Friends of Arkansas Information Reading Services) has submitted its application for restoration of its 501(C)3 status. FAIRS should be hearing back from the IRS soon. Then, he noted, the FAIRS board can start asking everyone for money. Larry added that the link to listen to the AIRS broadcast is www.airs.aetn.org.

Quarterly OIB Contract Activity Report – Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB CEO provided a detailed report of services provided to DSB OIB clients under the DSB contract for that purpose. She also gave an update of other happenings at WSB. The report is provided as Attachment 4 to these minutes.

QUARTERLY DISABILITY RIGHTS ARKANSAS (DRA) REPORT – Jackie Gorton, DRA (Disability Rights of Arkansas) Advocate noted that she is the intake person for DRA and reported that DRA has served 44 individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The issues brought to DRA vary widely and include abuse, housing, health care, rehab, assistive technology, post-secondary education, education, rights violations, neglect, employment, government benefits and services. Northwest Arkansas supervisor Amanda Connell interjected that she would appreciate a visit by a “CAP” (client assistance program) spokesperson in the Fayetteville area.

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AR-SILC)

The SILC report was provided in the board packet, and is included as Attachment 5 of these minutes. SILC Executive Director Sha Stephens, who was unable to attend the board meeting, also asked that the group be notified that:

The Arkansas State Independent Living Council (ARSILC) will host the 2017 Arkansas SILC “Circle of Service” award ceremony November 18th. The event is being held to honor those individuals and /or businesses that have impacted the lives of individuals with disabilities in Arkansas. Individuals and/or families, businesses or organizations that have stood as “Change Agents” in service for individuals with disabilities in the state of Arkansas. Honorees will be recognized on Saturday, November 18, 2017 at the Holiday Inn Airport Conference Center, 3201 Bankhead Drive. Little Rock, Arkansas. The event will begin at 6:00 pm. The Arkansas SILC will be taking nominations from now until October 6th. Tickets for the event will be \$40 or a table for \$350. More information will be shared on how to purchase tickets soon. Email: Arkansasilc@att.net for additional information and to have the link sent for the nomination.

Board Member Election – Mrs. Morris noted that it is time for the board to elect a chair and vice-chair.

Election of Board Chair – Basil Julian recommended Terry Sheeler remain as Board Chair. Erika Evans seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. **Motion Passed.**

Election of Board Vice- Chair – Basil Julian recommended Bill Johnson remain as Board Vice-Chair. Erika Evans seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. **Motion Passed.**

SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING – Chairman Terry Sheeler noted that the next board meeting is set for Friday, December 08, 2017, 10 A.M. followed by the Annual Recognition Luncheon at Four-Points Sheraton in Little Rock, AR.

Annual Performance Review of DSB Director. Mrs. Sheeler adjourned the regular board meeting and called the full board into Executive Session to conduct the annual performance evaluation of Division Director Katy Morris. Upon completion of the review, the Chair reconvened the board and reported that the evaluation had been completed and the results will be provided to DHS for reporting purposes. There being no further business of the board, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Edwards, Secretary

ATTACHMENT 1: 2017 REPORT OF CONSUMER CONVENTION - American Council of the Blind (ACB) – Sandy Edwards

Ms. Edwards expressed her thanks to the Board for sponsoring her attendance at the 2017 ACB National Convention. In 2011, it was also held in Sparks, Nevada and I attended then as well. ACB had speakers every day. You could go to numerous sessions or exhibits. They had a speaker from the National Library Service and one from the Library Users of America on updates for library services. They described the new Down Load on Demand service, where you can receive a requested book immediately because NLS has access to all of the databases. The World Blind Union had a speaker from Antigua.

ATTACHMENT 2: 2017 REPORT OF CONSUMER CONVENTION – National Federation of the Blind (NFB)- Theresa Sheeler

The 77th Annual National Federation of the Blind Convention was held July 10th through July 15th 2017 in Orlando Florida at Rosen Shingle Creek Resort. We had 2,481 attendees by Saturday July 15, 2017. This year we had the pleasure of hosting DSB staff Shayla Nelson and Cynthia Hastings to attend to our national board meeting, General Sessions, and banquet.

I want to express to the DSB Board my appreciation for sponsoring my attendance to the NFB National Convention. The convention this year started with the first three-days of several division and committee meetings. You can only imagine my excitement as I step into a room and see members from my federation family and new faces to greet. We may be talking about Technology, Legislative Initiatives, Community Service, Employment, etc. We learn and grow from that knowledge.

The NFB Independence market is always a great resource to visit to get products, tons of literature, Kernel Books and copy of speeches from our great past and present leaders. The Arkansas table this year had the opportunity to fundraise for the Arkansas affiliate.

When General Session comes and we are all in attendance and the gavel comes down, you can always feel the excitement and joy of the National convention. We all listen to Mark Riccobono present his Presidential Report. This year his report was titled: The Heartbeat of the National Federation of the Blind. He reported on the following items and issues: Hosting the World Blind Meeting, parental rights, equal pay for equal work, transportation issues, accessibility in kiosks and point-of-sale machines, accessibility issues with voter machines and accessibility in education for blind students and the NFB Braille Education certifications training program. Mark updated us on STEM – science, technology, engineering and math - development programs. This year will be the 10th anniversary of Youth Slam. KNFB reader update, Beta testing with the Newsline Amazon echo.....as you can see (and mark referred to during this past year) our heartbeat has grown in strength and intensiveness.

Below I have listed the following speakers for our 2017 National Convention:

A Worldwide Revolution: The Marrakesh Treaty, the Accessible Books Consortium, and Global Literacy for the

Blind Scott LaBarre, President, National Federation of the Blind of Colorado
2017 Presidential Report

Mark A. Riccobono, President, National Federation of the Blind

Leadership in Self-Driving Automobiles: The Blind and the Self-Driving Coalition for Safer Streets David Strickland, General Counsel and Spokesperson, Self-Driving Coalition for Safer Streets

Leadership in Literacy: How Do We Know What We Do Not Know? Marc Maurer, Director of Legal Policy and Immediate Past President, National Federation of the Blind

Engineering Tools for Tactile Fluency: A Partnership with the Organized Blind Movement Josh Coffee, President, E.A.S.Y. LLC

Empowering STEM Education through Technology: HumanWare's Commitment to the Future Gilles Pepin, Chief Executive Officer, HumanWare

Building New Paths to Accessibility: Powering the Next Generation of Accessible Educational Materials Betsy Beaumon, President, Benetech

Leadership in Fitness: A Crossfit Trainer Living the Life She Wants Bettina Dolinsek, Crossfit Trainer

Running Across America: A Blind Ultra-Athlete's Challenge to Change Jason Romero, Ultra-Athlete

Breaking Blind: Staying Fit with a Dose of Federation Love, Hope, and Determination Maureen Nietfeld, Home Management Instructor, Colorado Center for the Blind

The American Foundation for the Blind: New Directions for the Future Kirk Adams, President, American Foundation for the Blind

Transforming Hope into Action: A Report from the World Blind Union
Fredric Schroeder, President, World Blind Union

Building the Twenty-First Century American Workforce: Disability Does Not Define Your Employment The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta, Secretary, United States Department of Labor

From Knowledge to Power: A Report on Advocacy and Policy Programs John Paré, Jr., Executive Director for Advocacy and Policy, National Federation of the Blind

2017 Resolutions 24 Resolutions were presented and voted on.

The Future of Access Technology for the Blind: Progress at VFO Tom Tiernan, President and CEO, VFO

The Future of Equal Access to Technology: A Commitment to the Journey at Microsoft Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Chief Accessibility Officer, Microsoft

Worldwide Excellence in Travel: Accessibility in Partnership with the Blind Bhala Dalvi, VP of Technology and Executive Sponsor of Accessibility, Expedia Inc.

Educational Leadership and Product Innovations: The Future of the American Printing House for the Blind Craig Meador, President, American Printing House for the Blind

Excellence in Technology Led by the Blind: A Report from the Jernigan Institute

Anil Lewis, Executive Director for the Jernigan Institute, National Federation of the Blind

Supporting Equality for Blind Americans: A New Sheriff in the United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Val Demings, United States House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District, Florida

The Power of the Mind: Research Exploring the Capacity of the Blind Marina Bedny, Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University

Building New Paths to Accessibility: Powering the Next Generation of Accessible Educational Materials)

Ann Cunningham, Art Instructor, Colorado Center for the Blind

Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards James Gashel, Chairperson, Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award Committee

KNFB Reader: Demonstration and Product Update**Exploring the Future: Disability, Technology, and Partnership**

Ray Kurzweil, Director of Engineering, Google, Inc.

Revolutionizing Access to Information: A Platform for Testing the Limits Suman Kanuganti, Co-founder and CEO, Aira Tech Corp.

The Blind Cook: Chopping Through Misconceptions to Live the Life She Wants Christine Hà, Chef, Cookbook Author, and Master Chef Season 3 Winner

Transforming Dreams into Reality: The Fulfillment of One Blind Man's Mission Ron Gardner, Past President, National Federation of the Blind of Utah

Leadership through Action: A Champion for the Blind in the United States Congress The Honorable David Young, United States House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District, Ohio

Banquet Speech Mark A. Riccobono, President, National Federation of the Blind

The National Convention ended with our banquet. The banquet address was given by our National President, Mark Riccobono. His address was titled:

Innovation, Blindness, and the Emerging Pattern of Thought.

He spoke about how technology is defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes. We live in a time in which technology is constantly a part of our human experience, but of course we've always lived with technology. Technology has changed the way we work, play, and even the way we think. Technology is changing our patterns in society, but we maintain the power to shape those changes.

The founding President and leader for the first generation of the National Federation of the Blind was Jacobus TenBroek. A thoughtful leader of the blind and a brilliant scholar of

constitutional law, Dr. TenBroek firmly established the foundation for our philosophy about blindness and rallied the blind to understand we deserve equal treatment under the law and in society.

The second generation of our movement was Kenneth Jernigan, He was a teacher who understood that the Federation's discipline in thought would only have a lasting impact if it led to concentrated action and rigorous testing by blind people. The dynamic growth of the second generation of our movement occurred during the time period when advances in science and technology accelerated the pace of innovation in the United States.

The dynamic leadership of the longest-serving President, Marc Maurer, brought greater diversity to our movement and used our pattern of thought to explore the perceived limits of blindness in imaginative ways. Dr. Maurer's sharp intellect, understanding of the tools of law, and ability to personalize and test our philosophy were essential in taking our movement to the next level.

With every generation of our Federation, our philosophy has led us to raise the standard of excellence for blind people. This brings us to the current fourth generation of our movement. You and I are challenged to raise our own expectations, just as those who preceded us raised theirs for themselves and for us. We have the power to shape our future lives.

It is not the technology that defines us, makes us capable, or determines our future. It is the bond of faith that we hold with each other, the pattern of thought that we have established and use to test the limits and the unwavering determination that allows us to transform our dreams into reality.

Following Mark Riccobono's speech we were introduced to all 30-scholarship winners and they were all presented with their awards. I am very proud to announce to you that Trinh Ha is our 2017 National Federation of the Blind Scholarship winner for Arkansas.

In closing, I would again like to thank the Division of Services for the Blind Board for their support to attend the 2017 National Federation of the Blind, National Convention.

ATTACHMENT 3: 2017 JUMPSTART REPORT: LaTasha Mays

Ms. Mays expressed great appreciation to Ms. Linda Williams of the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) for her leadership and hard work as the ASBVI Coordinator for Jump Start 2017.

Week 1:

The students started the week off with a benefits counseling lessons with Brian Sanders. The students also toured World Services for the Blind campus. Tuesday, the students learned independent living skills with Tanya VanHouten and assistive technology skills with Calvin Churchwell. Wednesday, the students toured U of A Pulaski Technical College and later received cooking lessons. Thursday, the students received banking lessons at Centennial Bank. The students also received O&M lessons with Phyllis Gunderman. Everett Elam spoke with the students about being a successful person with a visual impairment as well.

Week 2:

The students started the week off by touring UALR Tuesday, we toured Industries for the Blind The students were also taught dinner etiquette by Stephanie and Liz during a classroom lesson. Wednesday, we enjoyed a full day in Hot Springs, we toured National Park Community College, went to Mid-America Science Museum and cruised on the Belle of Hot Springs Riverboat. Thursday, the students worked hard at Our House Homeless Shelter sorting and folding clothing for ones in need.

Week 3:

Monday, the students received O&M lessons with Phyllis Gunderman by riding the city bus to Target. Afterwards, a representative spoke to the students about Goodwill Industries work program. Tuesday, the students labeled food boxes at Arkansas Food Bank as a community service project. Afterwards the student went to the mall to purchase interview outfits. Wednesday, the students took a ride on the Trolley in downtown Little Rock and learned some

history about downtown Little Rock. Thursday, the students learned banking skills by cashing their pay check at Centennial Bank. Later that evening at Jump Start graduation the students showed off their talents at the Jump Start Talent Show and afterwards received their graduation certificates and medallions for completing the Jump Start program. We are proud that the students gained new life skills, such as hands on work experience, independent living skills and about educational and community resources available to them.

ATTACHMENT 4: OIB and Other WSB Activities – Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB CEO

WSB staff has been very busy all summer. We have hosted more than twenty events throughout the state and had more than 319 participants at those events. This does not include the event that we had in Mountain Home where we had 39 participants and that did not include the people from Good Sam. Our events are being well received. Some of that is that we are being real creative with the programming that we are putting on. Everything from a program we do called 'Cutting the Cord'- how to get rid of your cable and satellite provider to reduce bills. I think that I was the one that inspired that because I cut my cord and literally got rid of my cable company. I am now paying \$8.00 per month for 60 channels. So, I have no complaints there. We have our final event for the year which is going to be next Saturday, September 16, 2017, Fall Picnic in the Court Yard. Everyone who wants to come is invited. But it is for our OIB. We are going to have live music. It should be a beautiful weekend and it is not going to rain on our parade.

We continue delivering supplies and do trainings. For the total clients served for the FFY there were 91 cases closed, there were 457 in-kind and closed. We continue to have a Doctor who works on our staff, he is retired from his practice and travels to all of our events. He does thyroid checks, diabetes checks, neuropathy, and just overall health screenings at these events. We also have a staff nutritionist in one of our OIB staff now that is teaching some cooking classes using an induction stovetop rather than the traditional stove top. This is one of those fancy gadgets where the pan gets hot, but the burner doesn't.

We continue to run into problems with poverty. As we know it is a food desert, people choose between food and medications. There are many times folks who serve our OIB people that carry around beans, rice and crock pots. Now we have started adding protein packs to that as well. Literally, their cupboards are bare when we get out there. It goes far beyond the ability to access the food or cook the food, it's how you get your hands on it.

We continue to grow medical partnerships throughout the state. It is important to make those dollars go further for the contract to be able to do surgeries and take care of some of the medical necessities that go along with that.

WSB-Some additional notes that I have is about some of the things that are happening at WSB. During our summer months were very busy. Latasha just reported on Jump Start. Usually they come from Jump Start and jump over to WSB. From there we have our college prep program, essential workplace skills series and we have job placement in the community as well as on campus. We do ACT test prep and a variety of things with the summer program. We have kids

that come in from multiple states as well. In partnership with DSB Cassandra or Betsy spoke about the **STYLE** Program (Student Transition Youth Learning Experience). It has been identified that there are issues with kids that did not come to Jump Start or the WSB Program still needed services. We started to provide services, 2-day and 4-day workshops throughout the state (NE, NW, SE and SW). We had good results, we started a little late, so we were behind feeding programs, Summer camps and family vacations, everything the comes along with summer. We still were able to refine the program a little bit better to see what we were going to be able to do on the road. We are working in conjunction with DSB to deliver that as a year-round program, as well as start an after-school program for the kids at ASBVI. And some of the kids in the Little Rock metro region are going to come over and work on independent living skills, job skills, do work experience training and on the job training. There is a variety of skills going into that and WSB is about to officially start a second shift there. This is just a different way of looking at things than we have done in the past. We have kind of focused on that college prep age and we have kind of moved down the scale a little bit. I am very excited about this because there is a need. We have expanded beyond that of our regular campus and vocational programming. We have a MOU in place with Pulaski County Special School District and we are providing services in braille, orientation and mobility.

Two of my instructors are sitting here, Lisa, who is our orientation and mobility instructor is serving six kids in five different schools. Sandra Edwards came out of retirement and is teaching braille. She has a kindergartener from Oak Grove Elementary and a middle school student from Maumelle Middle School. The TVIs (Teacher for the Visually Impaired) from PCSSD (Pulaski County Special School District) jumped ship and went over LRSD (Little Rock School District). The problem is that they could not find any TVIs to serve Pulaski County, so we are just using some of our services and expertise that we already offer at WSB. It is a new funding source for us and a new way for us to look at services we are providing. Not only a service, but I am building a future recruitment pipeline that begins with kindergarten and take them through the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program. Recently we had a graduate of our ATI Program to get picked up by one NIV agencies in Silver Springs, MD. No experience other than what she gained in our program, making \$55,000.00 a year, full medical with a 401k, that's a great story right there. We continue with our desktop support, credit counseling and call center report. I am getting ready to meet with a Credit Counseling Agency that's opening up five offices in the Dallas area, as well as looking for people to tele-commute. One last thing, with the storms coming in and everybody's network, WSB is a registered FEMA site for anybody that is in the state of Arkansas during a natural disaster, we would be able to take anybody. For anybody in the other states that are affected, we can only take the blind and visually impaired or deaf blind as long as they meet guidelines within the mission.

ATTACHMENT 5 – AR STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT-JUNE 2017

The month of June 2017 has been very busy with meetings and conference calls related to the goals and objectives of the State Plan. The ARSILC staff is working with the finance team and accountant in finalizing the numbers for the DSB FY 2017 state grant that will end on June 30.

June 1: The ARSILC Executive Committee met to discuss the agenda and items to be voted on at the upcoming third quarter board meeting. The committee heard from the treasurer as well as the accountant on the financial solvency of the ARSILC and where the budget stands. The committee made recommendations to take the item of discussion for increases in pay to the full board meeting.

June 6: The third quarter ARSILC Board meeting took place at the ARSILC office. The board members voted on financials and heard reports from the CILs as well as ARS and DSB. I provided the board members an update on the REV UP Arkansas initiative pertaining to voting. The ARSILC is leading the efforts in Arkansas to have a successful National Disability Voter Registration Week (NDVRW). The events are taking place July 17-21, 2017. I also reported that the SILC was asked to lead the voting coalition efforts in Arkansas. To date, the ARSILC has received one financial sponsorship to help with the educational materials during that week.

June 6: The NCIL Voting Rights committee met by conference call in the afternoon. The agenda included the following items: Voting accessibility vs. security and an update on training people with disabilities to run for office. Kathy Hoell and Jim Dickson are the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson for the committee.

June 7: The Breakfast Club met at 9:00 a.m. David Deere, Executive Director of Partners led the discussion. The group discussed Arkansas' coordinated care plan and the federal budget, including Medicaid and SSI/SSDI. The group also had a discussion on the President's proposed budget. David Deere asks members that the President's budget would have significant impact on to report to the group as updates evolve.

June 9: I participated as a panelist for the REV UP National Organizing Call hosted by Zach Baldwin with the AAPD. The States who were a part of the panel were Arkansas, Texas and Colorado. I provided the group of participants an overview of what Arkansas did last year and what is being planned for the upcoming week of events July 17-21. Zach Baldwin stated that the significant point is gathering data at the events in order to provide a measureable. This will be important for all states and help with any future

funding at the national level. Zach encouraged everyone on the call to make sure this is communicated to those planning events within their perspective states.

June 9: The NAACP State planning committee met by conference call. The NAACP State meeting is scheduled for September 2017 and will take place in Pine Bluff. I have been asked to provide names of individuals to the sub-committee that could possibly be a panelists or speaker. One of the general sessions will have a component related to the disability community.

June 12: The ARSILC staff worked on preparing educational materials and handouts for upcoming trainings that will be conducted during the week.

June 13: I conducted a workshop at the Pathfinder Jim Pickens' workshop located in Jacksonville. Over 200 consumers participated in person or via/teleconference. The purpose of the workshop was to inform the consumers on the importance of self-advocacy. Another workshop will take place on Thursday, June 15th at the same facility to capture those consumers who were not in the first workshop.

June 14: The Arkansas REV Up planning meeting took place by conference call. Six organizations/partners were present on the call. To date over fifteen events have been scheduled throughout ten different counties. More events are being discussed but have not been confirmed. I encouraged the participants to make sure data is collected on the number of individuals who register to vote. The ARSILC will host a press conference/educational event during NDVRW at the state capitol. That event is scheduled for July 19th beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Rotunda.

The ARSILC will continue its efforts of collaborating and communicating with the four CILs in the state, the DSE as well as the other agencies within the Independent Living Network of Arkansas.

Respectfully Submitted,

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ARSILC Executive Director