



**ACB**  
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**American Council of the Blind  
ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

## ACB State Affiliates

Alabama Council of the Blind  
Arizona Council of the Blind  
Arkansas Council of the Blind  
California Council of the Blind  
A3 of Colorado  
Connecticut Council of the Blind  
Delaware Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired  
D.C. Council of the Blind  
Florida Council of the Blind  
Georgia Council of the Blind  
Hawaii Association of the Blind  
Illinois Council of the Blind  
ACB of Indiana  
Iowa Council of the United Blind  
Kansas Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired  
Kentucky Council of the Blind  
Bluegrass Council of the Blind  
Louisiana Council of the Blind  
ACB of Maine  
ACB of Maryland  
Bay State Council of the Blind  
Michigan Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired  
ACB of Minnesota  
Mississippi Council of the Blind  
Missouri Council of the Blind  
Montana Blind and Low Vision Council  
ACB of Nebraska  
Nevada Council of the Blind  
New Jersey Council of the Blind  
ACB of New Mexico  
ACB of New York, Inc.  
North Carolina Council of the Blind  
North Dakota Association of the Blind  
ACB of Ohio  
Oklahoma Council of the Blind  
ACB of Oregon  
Pennsylvania Council of the Blind  
ACB of South Carolina  
South Dakota Association of the Blind  
Tennessee Council of the Blind  
ACB of Texas  
Utah Council of the Blind  
Vermont Council of the Blind  
ACB of Virginia  
Virginia Association of the Blind  
Washington Council of the Blind  
Mountain State Council of the Blind  
ACB of Wisconsin  
Wyoming Council of the Blind

## National Special-Interest Affiliates

Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss  
American Association of Blind Teachers  
American Association of Visually Impaired Attorneys  
ACB Diabetics in Action  
ACB Families  
ACB Government Employees  
American Council of Blind Lions  
ACB Radio Amateurs  
ACB Students  
Blind Information Technology Specialists  
Blind LGBT Pride International  
Braille Revival League  
Council of Citizens with Low Vision International  
Friends-in-Art of ACB, Inc.  
Guide Dog Users, Inc.  
Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs  
Library Users of America  
Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America  
Visually Impaired Veterans of America

# Table of Contents

<b>President's Report</b> .....	<b><a href="#">2</a></b>
<b>Executive Director's Report</b> .....	<b><a href="#">4</a></b>
<b>About the American Council of the Blind</b> .....	<b><a href="#">6</a></b>
<b>Looking Back at 2017</b> .....	<b><a href="#">7</a></b>
<b>Programs and Services</b>	
ACB's National Information Hotline.....	<b><a href="#">8</a></b>
ACB's Scholarship Program .....	<b><a href="#">8</a></b>
Advocacy and Governmental Affairs .....	<b><a href="#">11</a></b>
The Washington Connection .....	<b><a href="#">11</a></b>
The ACB Braille Forum .....	<b><a href="#">11</a></b>
ACB Link .....	<b><a href="#">11</a></b>
ACB's Audio Description Project .....	<b><a href="#">12</a></b>
ACB Radio .....	<b><a href="#">12</a></b>
Public Awareness .....	<b><a href="#">13</a></b>
<b>ACB Enterprises and Services</b> .....	<b><a href="#">14</a></b>
<b>ACB Board &amp; Staff</b> .....	<b><a href="#">15</a></b>
<b>ACB Annual Convention</b> .....	<b><a href="#">16</a></b>
<b>Financial Reporting</b> .....	<b><a href="#">18</a></b>

# President's Report

By Kim Charlson



**KIM CHARLSON**  
President

ACB continues to address many issues and advocacy challenges since we last gathered together. As you all know, the real work of the organization isn't the moments of success with press releases and passage of legislation, but rather the daily work advocating, writing letters and testimony, and developing and supporting ACB's infrastructure to ensure that we have the financial resources to work on our mission and get the job done.

Earlier this evening, we hosted our Annual Giving Society reception. This year, we had 223 individual donors and 40 corporate donors. These supporters are the backbone of our fund-raising which then allows us to accomplish our valuable work. One corporate example of our growing capacity is the generosity of JPMorgan Chase, whose support has allowed ACB to once again this year bring five Leadership Fellows to this conference.

Last year, ACB's Volunteer Hours Reporting Program collectively logged a total of 17,758 volunteer hours, worth \$418,388 of in-kind contribution value to ACB. This effort shows funders our commitment to our mission.

Needing more data to support our advocacy efforts, ACB developed a national survey on described audio content. More than 479 people completed the survey, which identified major demand for the increase

in available audio-described programming carried through television broadcast, satellite, and cable programming. This research data has helped ACB support its advocacy with statistics reflecting our perspective. Research findings indicated that three out of four respondents felt the current amount of available audio-described content was significantly below demand, and other obstacles still exist for accessing currently available content.

In mid-November, the Federal Communications Commission withdrew the agenda item to consider the expansion of hours of audio-described content for television. I am pleased to report that the FCC will be reconsidering the report and order which would increase the required hours of described programming that covered broadcast stations must provide to consumers.

This year, we have been dealing with several attacks to the Americans with Disabilities Act. In December, I sent a letter to CBS on behalf of ACB expressing my deep disappointment with the "60 Minutes" segment aired on December 4, 2016. Anderson Cooper's segment mischaracterized the ADA as an instrument of opportunism for drive-by lawsuits, rather than focusing on the role it has played, along with the courts, in protecting the fundamental human and civil

rights of more than 55 million Americans with disabilities.

On another note, ACB is working to prevent passage of the ADA Education and Reform Act (H.R. 620) by Congress. This bill, if passed, would prohibit civil suits arising out of a failure to provide adequate access to public accommodations for the disabled unless the plaintiff provides offending property owners with a written notice specifying the deficiency. Owners would then have 60 days to respond with a written plan for improvement, and an additional 120 days to correct the deficiency, or at least demonstrate sufficient progress toward a correction. Today, any citizen with a disability denied access can immediately file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice. Please do what you can to protect our rights under the ADA.

Thanks to Reps. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), and Steve Cohen (D-TN) on reintroduction of the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage of Low Vision Devices Act of 2017 (H.R. 2050). This legislation will establish a national demonstration/research project tasked with identifying the impact to Medicare and Medicare recipients who are prescribed low-vision devices over a certain threshold cost. As Congress looks for ways to improve health-care costs, ACB will urge the House of Representatives to support H.R. 2050, and move toward expanding greater independence for the millions of older Americans with severe vision loss.

With regards to ACB's efforts to obtain accessible currency, in 2016, the government moved back the target date for the next currency redesign from 2020 to 2026. ACB sought an order from the district court requiring that the \$10 bill be made accessible by 2020, and all the remaining denominations be made accessible by 2026. While this order was under consideration, the Treasury secretary advised the court that he has already complied with his legal obligation to make currency accessible by furnishing external currency readers to people with visual

impairments. While the secretary indicated that he still intended to proceed with adding a tactile feature in the next major redesign, he was doing so as a matter of policy, as opposed to fulfilling a legal requirement.

The district court denied ACB's motion in January 2017, and the case is now under appeal at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. We are asking the appeals court to do two things: 1) to order that the \$10 bill be made accessible by 2020 and all the remaining denominations be made accessible by 2026, and 2) we are asking that the court issue a ruling that external currency readers do not provide meaningful access to currency. We expect a decision within the next 6 to 12 months.

ACB has ventured into the development of a new Strategic Action Plan to help guide the organization in the future across five critical focus areas:

- advocacy, policy, and legislation;
- affiliates and membership;
- convention and meetings;
- development;
- and marketing and communications.

These focus areas were identified by the board of directors as having the highest potential impact for our organization. The ACB Strategic Action Plan was then developed by the board, the executive director, the national office staff, and select representatives from ACB state and special-interest affiliates. This plan identifies any resource requirements such as people needed to work on the task, funding to get the job done, or outside resources needed, measures of success, and an evaluation process for each goal to ensure that the organization is moving in the right direction.

ACB and its members have a lot of work to do over the next several months, but overall, our affiliates and chapters across this country are making a difference in so many ways. Working together, we can continue to make change happen.

# Executive Director's Report

By Eric Bridges



**ERIC BRIDGES**  
Executive Director

There's a tremendous amount of work that's going on, that has been going on, and that will continue to go on regarding our ability to be more efficient and effective in providing the services and advocacy wants and needs that you all have. We have a small but very effective team in our Alexandria office and in our Minneapolis office. The work that Tony Stephens, Kelly Gasque, Sharon Lovering, Nancy Becker, Lori Sarff, Dee Theien and Lane Waters do is critical.

Over the last year, we've taken a hard look at how effective and efficient we are, and we've taken some steps to improve our ability to do more. We looked at ACB's information technology infrastructure. The ACB staff has moved to Surface Pro 4s – everybody is using one but Kelly, who uses a Macintosh. We've transitioned to Office 365, and a lot of this is due directly to the impact that we've been able to have on Microsoft. They have done a phenomenal job over the last 18 months in rapidly improving the accessibility of many of their applications. ACB has also changed its accounting system to Dynamic GP, which is a state-of-the-art contemporary enterprise system. It's beginning to make people's lives much simpler.

Last summer, ACB's website, [acb.org](http://acb.org), was not friendly for mobile view. ACB has contracted with Louisville Web Group to handle that. Along the way, we had further discussions with

them, and the redesign of [acb.org](http://acb.org) is coming. There's a lot that needs to be updated. There will be a lot more pictures, and the ability to become a member at large of ACB.

I talked with the board about the need for us to look to the future, and urged members to consider conducting a strategic plan. The board was very supportive. Kim Charlson was a big-time champion of beginning this process. We put together a plan, engaged with a consulting firm, and began the process. Consulting firms, most of the time, do not do this pro bono; we had to locate the funds to pay for the consultants and to bring the board and some affiliates and staff together for a face-to-face exercise. JPMorgan Chase donated a significant amount of money. Ross Pangere also donated funds to bring board members and affiliate leaders to Alexandria. We could not have done it without JPMorgan Chase and Ross Pangere.

The reason JPMorgan Chase funded this project is that they believe in capacity-building and, in particular, for the nonprofit sector to take a look at what they as organizations are doing, how to be able to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of their programs and services and staff. The process began in October 2016. There were five focus areas that the board and leadership arrived at: 1) affiliates and membership; 2) marketing and communications; 3) convention and meetings;

4) development; and 5) advocacy, policy and legislation. Each of these five groups has a designated leader, and each team has put together its own action plan for the work they feel needs to be done. The marketing and communications team is focusing on the best ways to use ACB's website, listservs, ACB Radio, "The ACB Braille Forum" and other communications channels to maximize their effectiveness. These focus areas are not independent in and of themselves; they are all interrelated. Marketing and communications can have a direct and positive impact on our ability to recruit and retain members, letting folks know who we are and what we do.

We are also taking a hard look at development. In order for us to be able to provide more programs and services to our members, we need to 1) be able to sustain ourselves from a financial standpoint, and 2) to grow year over year at a rate that allows us to add additional staff in certain key areas so that we are more effective and efficient. One of the things that became crystal clear to us as we met with these focus groups is that there is a need for us to professionalize our staff. I'm not talking about 30 staff members, but an additional three could really help. The new team members would help with advocacy, affiliates and membership, as well as marketing and communications.

Overall sustainability is something that I mentioned a minute ago; the board has taken some corrective action over the last couple years to ensure that we are on stable financial footing. So how do we grow? There's a big ocean of money out there, but there are millions of fish in that ocean competing for every dollar. One of the areas that we've grown exponentially over the last five years is the financial support that corporations give us, and in particular, corporate sponsorship

of this convention. The increase from 2012 to this year is more than \$220,000. The best part of this is that we're actually influencing these companies in a positive way. They're not just giving us money and going away; they're here: Amazon, Microsoft, JPMorgan Chase, AT&T, Aira, and Google. This is such a wild and wonderful age that we're living in right now from an innovation standpoint with regard to accessibility.

The other areas that we're really investing heavily in are corporate foundations and family foundations. An interesting shift within foundation giving could bode well for us. The foundation world has been focused for the last decade or so almost solely upon providing grants for specific services and programs. That has begun to shift toward a realization that non-profits can only do so much if they're constantly going after specific services and programs, but they're not able to keep their lights on. The focus is now shifting back toward providing general operating funds through grants. This strategic plan takes a look at the next three years: how are we going to grow, how are we going to communicate, how are we going to recruit, how are we going to engage members and non-members in convention.

We would not be here if it were not for all the advocacy work we do. This advocacy work correlates directly with our marketing and communications work, with our affiliate and membership work. The more we can get out the word of our good work to the general public, to the blindness community, to the donor community, the better off we're going to be. Ultimately, we're not changing who ACB is, we're just modernizing in certain areas so that we can be more effective and tell the world about the good work of ACB.

# About the American Council of the Blind



Members of the  
2017 Brenda Dillon  
Memorial Walk  
committee.

Established in 1961, the American Council of the Blind (ACB) is a national organization of people who are blind, visually impaired and sighted whose mission is to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and improve quality of life for all blind and visually impaired people. With 70 state and special-interest affiliates, its thousands of members have a long history of commitment to the advancement of policies and programs which will enhance independence for people who are blind and visually impaired.

ACB's national office is based in Alexandria, VA, and is supported by hundreds of volunteer-members from throughout the United States who donate their time and effort to assist the organization in meeting its goals. ACB works through a variety of programs and services to enable blind people to live and work independently, to become active in their communities and to participate fully in the democratic process. The Council has influenced positive change in areas such as:

- Education
- Employment
- Rehabilitation
- Pedestrian Safety
- Civil Rights
- Social Security
- Transportation
- Recreation

ACB has state affiliates in virtually every region in the United States and 19 special-interest affiliated organizations which focus on the unique concerns of various profession and special populations, for example, blind lawyers, teachers, parents, information technology specialists, business owners, and users of guide dogs. Like the national organization and state affiliates, these special-interest organizations offer their own newsletters, become involved in specialized projects, and host annual meetings for their membership.

# Looking Back at 2017

## Audio Description of the Solar Eclipse

On August 21, ACB's Audio Description Project, along with the Mid-Tennessee Council of the Blind, the Tennessee School for the Blind, and the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, provided an opportunity for people who are blind worldwide to experience the total eclipse of the sun.

Dr. Joel Snyder hosted "A Total Eclipse — Audio Described!" on ACB Radio. Snyder, the director of the Audio Description Project, presented an hour of songs, interviews and special guests, with the main event described live from the Tennessee School for the Blind between 1:15 and 1:45 p.m. Central time. Nashville-based describer Julia Cawthon described the eclipse as it happened and provided a vivid "translation" of the visual event into words.

The recording of the broadcast is available at [acbradio.org/sites/default/files/archives/eclipse/solar-eclipse2017.mp3](http://acbradio.org/sites/default/files/archives/eclipse/solar-eclipse2017.mp3).

## Non-Visual Access to National Parks

Beginning in August 2017, researchers at the University of Hawai'i collaborated with Google, the American Council of the Blind, and the National Park Service to audio-describe print brochures at 15 park sites throughout the state of California. This latest phase of the UniDescription project focused on description of the primary print brochures available in California's national parks, distinguishing it as the first state in the country to feature such widespread accessibility for people who are visually impaired or blind.

The UH team already has audio-described brochures at 40 National Park Service sites throughout the country – including at Yellowstone National Park, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and the Washington Monument. For this phase of the project, the UH team will translate print brochures using the web tool it has created, which includes distribution through mobile apps and web sites, while simultaneously studying and refining best practices in the field.

The American Council of the Blind will provide multiple quality-control services, including usability and site testing at each park.



An ACB Radio listener explores a tactile guide as he listens to live audio-described coverage.

# Programs and Services

## **ACB's National Information Hotline**

ACB's National Information Hotline helps thousands of people each year who are looking for answers to questions about blindness, low vision and vision-related services. For the newly blind person, the chance to talk with someone who is blind can make a significant difference in how quickly and how well that individual adjusts. Family members can ask about available services and the potential for their loved one to regain independence. Business owners can obtain information regarding laws pertaining to accessibility. Whether the call is of a crisis nature or more purely informational, this hotline provides people with an opportunity to get answers to questions that are not easily answered elsewhere.

## **ACB Scholarship Program**

Many blind and visually impaired students have needs beyond those faced by fully sighted students, such as the need for reader services for textbooks not already recorded or transcribed into braille; specialized equipment such as talking computers or adaptive equipment for science courses; low vision aids, etc. The expenses associated with meeting these needs added to tuition, board and other costs can make it extremely difficult or impossible for otherwise capable blind students to remain in school.

In 1982, ACB established a scholarship program to provide financial assistance to outstanding blind and visually impaired post-secondary students. Since that time over \$1 million in scholarship aid has been awarded to outstanding students.

In addition to ACB's own program, we administer many other scholarships and awards to assist students who have visual impairments, including National Industries for the Blind Grant M. Mack Memorial Scholarship; the Dr. S. Bradley Burson Memorial Science Scholarship funded by Ms. Phyllis Burson in

memory of her late husband; the William G. Corey Memorial Scholarship for Pennsylvania residents funded by the Corey Trust; the John Hebner Memorial Scholarship funded by the family of the late John Hebner; the Arnold Sadler Memorial Scholarship funded by the Sadler Trust; the Eunice Fiorito Memorial Scholarship funded by a trust set up by James Fiorito; the Duane J. Buckley Memorial Scholarship funded by the Buckley family; and the Ross N. Pangere Foundation for the Visually Impaired Scholarships funded by the Ross N. Pangere Foundation for the Visually Impaired.

Affiliate-sponsored scholarships administered by ACB are: the Bay State Council of the Blind Scholarship for residents of Massachusetts; the ACB of Oregon Scholarships for residents of Oregon; the ACB of Oregon Scholarships for residents of Oregon; Marcia Dresser Memorial Scholarship funded by the American Association of Blind Teachers.

"Winning an ACB scholarship allowed me to not only continue with my education, but also to attend the 2017 convention in Reno, NV, where I became the student representative of the American Association of Blind Teachers." (Amber Steet, an undergraduate student at Kutztown University)

In 2017, 20 scholarships totaling \$55,450 were awarded to 20 highly competent blind and visually impaired students from throughout the United States.

# The 2017 Scholarship Winners



## **Bay State Council of the Blind Scholarship**

Matthew Shifrin, majoring in contemporary improvisation, New England Conservatory

## **Blue Ridge Scholarship**

Miranda Borka, Bachelor of Science in Social Work, Liberty University

## **ACB of Oregon Scholarship**

Qassim Saad, Master of Science in Nuclear Engineering, Portland State University

## **Kellie Cannon Memorial Scholarship**

Michael Fulton, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Western New England University

## **William G. Corey Memorial Scholarship**

Benjamin Chase, Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Lebanon Valley College

## **Marcia Dresser Memorial Scholarship**

Amber Steet, Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Kutztown University

## **Eunice Fiorito Memorial Scholarship**

Moses Babafemi, Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling, California State University

## **Duane Buckley Memorial Scholarship**

Trinh Ha, Bachelor of Science in Nutrition, University of Central Arkansas

## **John Hebner Memorial Scholarship**

Leonard Moore, Ph.D. in Adult Education, North Carolina State University

## **James R. Olsen Memorial Scholarship**

Matthew Turner, Master of Finance, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

### **Floyd Qualls Memorial Scholarships**

Millad Bokhour, Master of Public Health,  
West Chester University

Abby Edwards, Ph.D. in Clinical Health  
Psychology, Wright State University

Dora Hernandez, Master of Science in  
Rehabilitation Counseling, University of  
Northern Colorado

Ethan Markowitz, Bachelor of Business,  
Northwestern University

Cassandra Mendez, Bachelor of Science  
in Computer Engineering, Ohio State  
University

### **Arnold Sadler Memorial Scholarship**

Lindsay Ball, Bachelor of Science in Physical  
Education, State University of New York

### **Dr. S. Bradley Burson Memorial Science Scholarship and Norma Shecter Memorial Scholarship**

Olivia Charland, Bachelor of Science in  
Environmental Sciences, University of  
Vermont

### **The Ross N. Pangere Foundation for the Visually Impaired Scholarships**

Matthew Miller, Bachelor of Science in  
Actuarial Science, Michigan State University

Kartik Sawney, Master of Computer  
Science, Stanford University

Sasha Somuah, Bachelor of Business  
Administration, George Washington  
University



Scholarship Winner Dora Hernandez speaks during the 2017 convention.

## **Advocacy and Governmental Affairs**

In 2017, the American Council of the Blind worked on a wide variety of legislative, regulatory, and policy issues. These gains strengthened relationships with key influencers in Congress, government, and the private sector, furthering ACB's mission to secure greater economic and social independence for Americans who are blind and visually impaired.

Key legislative priorities in 2017 included lobbying Congress to strengthen the Medicare program for beneficiaries needing coverage of low-vision devices and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty. ACB urged Congress to support key programs and services that are of great value for Americans who are blind and visually impaired. ACB worked closely with engineers from the entertainment and airline industries to develop a framework for regulatory guidelines under the Department of Transportation that will make in-flight entertainment accessible for passengers who are blind or have print-reading disabilities.

ACB also worked with key departments in the federal government to expand accessibility for Americans who are blind. This work included providing oral arguments before the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia regarding the extensive delays in implementing accessible tactile currency. ACB also worked closely with the FCC, technology developers and broadcasters to explore ways in which artificial intelligence could be used to describe real-time video images, such as the emergency "crawls" that scroll across your TV screen.

## **The Washington Connection**

The Washington Connection is the American Council of the Blind advocacy and governmental affairs department's recorded legislative and information service. It is updated as vital information regarding blindness issues, pending legislation,

regulations, and news is available. Updates also occasionally include hot news that cannot wait for publication in "The ACB Braille Forum." Callers can access this service toll-free (1-800-424-8666) in English daily, except weekdays between the hours of 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern time, when it is answered live by ACB staff members. In addition, the Connection is updated regularly on the ACB web site.

## **The ACB Braille Forum**

"The ACB Braille Forum" features organizational news on both the national and state levels, national legislative updates, reports from the president and the executive director, human-interest stories, and columns featuring new products and services, obituaries, letters to the editor, and "for sale" and "wanted" high-tech items. It is available in braille, large print, four-track cassette, data CD, via email, as a podcast, and a growing number of individuals (approximately 3,500 per day) access the online version of the publication.

In 2017, "The ACB Braille Forum" was published six times and provided to 9,700 subscribers, including ACB's members, businesses and overseas readers. "The ACB E-Forum" was also published six times and sent via email to more than 5,300 subscribers

## **ACB Link**

ACB Link is ACB's iPhone app. It gives users access to valuable resources offered by ACB and sends out notifications of news relevant to ACB's work and the blindness community at large. The app will allow each user to be easily and quickly connected with the nearest ACB state affiliate, as well as to be informed and entertained by ACB Radio's Internet radio programming. Coming later this year: a version of ACB Link for Android users.

For more information, go to [link.acb.org](http://link.acb.org).



**Peter Korn, Director of Accessibility at Amazon, presents at the Audio Description Institute during the 2017 convention.**

## ACB's Audio Description Project

The purpose of the Audio Description Project (ADP) is to boost levels of description activity and disseminate information on that work throughout the nation. Its major goal is to sponsor a broad range of activities designed to build awareness of audio description among the general public as well as its principal users, people who are blind or have low vision.

In 2017, ADP's activities included:

- On February 24, members of the American Council of the Blind had the opportunity to attend a reception at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in celebration of a new ADP-produced audio described tour of two key museum areas, the Hall of Witness and the Hall of Remembrance. Ongoing generous support from the Aid Association for the Blind of the District of Columbia made the project possible. Immediately after the reception and a short presentation on the new audio guide by museum staff, visitors launched this new tour;
- On August 21, ADP sponsored live audio description of the solar eclipse broadcast as it happened on ACB Radio. More than 20,000 listeners tuned in to ACB Radio to hear it;
- The 2017 BADIE Awards received a record-breaking 36 entries — the Benefits of Audio

Description In Education recognizes young people who write reviews of described film and video;

- In order to ensure a high level of audio description excellence in a range of formats or venues (media, performing arts, museums, etc.), ACB and the ADP have begun an important certification effort with the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals.

## ACB Radio

ACB Radio, our Internet radio station, showcases and nurtures the creativity and talents of the blind/low-vision community from many parts of the world. ACB Radio is heard by a global audience, with visitors from more than 60 countries. Broadcast streams include "Mainstream," for entertainment and information; "ACB Radio Café," the place to hear blind musicians; "Treasure Trove," where you can hear classic radio dramas; "Interactive," a wide variety of music presented by DJs from around the world, including requests; "World News and Information," featuring several news sources including the BBC, CBC, Public Radio International and Pacifica; and "ACB Radio Live Event," featuring live coverage of ACB affiliates and other blindness-related special events.

In 2017, ACB Radio received an average of 200 visitors per day from throughout the

United States and 150 per day from other countries. Included were live broadcasts of the ACB national conference and convention, and a number of affiliate conferences that were held throughout the year.

### **Public Awareness**

ACB has a wide variety of public awareness programs through its integrated marketing and communications plan, with more than 20 communication channels. Through many different forms of media, such as the website, Facebook, magazine, radio programs, and Twitter, ACB presents valuable accessibility information for and about the blindness community to a broad audience. ACB also provides informative news media interviews and speaking engagements and assists affiliates with their educational programs.

Public awareness programs include:

#### **ACB Reports**

In 1985, the American Council of the Blind began distributing a monthly radio program to radio reading services. This half-hour radio program was christened “ACB Reports.” It is a blend of legislative news, interviews with interesting individuals, information about current fashion trends, new technology, and highlights of the ACB annual conference. The program now airs on 60 audio information service radio stations. It also airs on ACB Radio Mainstream and is

distributed as part of the audio edition of “The ACB Braille Forum.”

#### **ACB Website**

ACB’s website, [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org), is undergoing a major transformation this year. It now includes links to the organization’s Twitter and Facebook pages, a donate button, and is mobile-friendly. Coming next year: a complete renovation of the site.

#### **Podcasts**

ACB also offers a number of podcasts. The Special Education Task Force put together a two-part podcast on advocating for children inside and outside the classroom. For part 1, visit <https://tinyurl.com/ya3k4aws>; for part 2, go to <https://tinyurl.com/ycdj8yd9>. For the notes that go along with it, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y6wbu8yj>.

#### **ACB Social Media**

ACB’s Facebook and Twitter pages feature a variety of organization- and blindness-related news, human interest stories from around the world, photographs (with descriptions), job opportunities, and much more. Are you wondering how self-driving cars can improve transportation for blind and visually impaired individuals? What’s the difference between a service animal and an emotional support animal? You’ll be able to find these topics – and many more – on our social media pages.

### **Donate to ACB**

To make a contribution, which will be used to help us sustain our programs and services that promote dignity and independence for people who are blind, go to [acb.org/donate](http://acb.org/donate).

# ACB Enterprises and Services



**DAN SPOONE**  
Member of ACB and  
ACBES Boards

ACB operates three thrift stores under the auspices of a wholly owned subsidiary corporation known as ACB Enterprises and Services (ACBES). The profits generated by these stores each year are contributed to ACB in order to defray our operating expenses. The stores are located in Amarillo, Texas; Lubbock, Texas; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Day-to-day operation of the stores is overseen by our finance office in Minnesota, and the ACB board appoints the members of the ACBES board. Current members are: Michael Garrett, Missouri City, TX; Mike Godino, Malverne, NY; George Holliday, Philadelphia, PA; Carla Ruschival, Louisville, KY; Dan Spooone, Orlando, FL; Jeff Thom, Sacramento, CA; and David Trott, Talladega, AL.



ACBES Board Chair Michael Garrett and ACB President Kim Charlson present the Floyd Qualls Memorial Scholarship to Cassandra Mendez.

# ACB Board and Staff

## ACB Officers

President: Kim Charlson, Watertown, MA  
First Vice President: Dan Spoone, Orlando, FL  
Second Vice President: John McCann, Tucson, AZ  
Secretary: Ray Campbell, Glen Ellyn, IL  
Treasurer: David Trott, Talladega, AL

## American Council of the Blind Board of Directors

Jeff Bishop, Kirkland, WA  
Denise Colley, Lacey, WA  
Sara Conrad, Fitchburg, WI  
Dan Dillon, Hermitage, TN  
Katie Frederick, Worthington, OH  
George Holliday, Philadelphia, PA  
Allan Peterson, Horace, ND  
Doug Powell, Falls Church, VA  
Pat Sheehan, Silver Spring, MD  
Jeff Thom, Sacramento, CA

## Board of Publications

Ron Brooks, chair, Phoenix, AZ  
Donna Brown, Romney, WV  
Paul Edwards, Miami, FL  
Susan Glass, Saratoga, CA  
Debbie Lewis, Seattle, WA

## ACB Staff

Eric Bridges  
*Executive Director*

Tony Stephens  
*Director of External Relations and Policy*

Sharon Lovering  
*Editor, "The ACB Braille Forum"*

Kelly Gasque  
*Executive Assistant*

Nancy Marks-Becker  
*Chief Accountant*

Lori Sarff  
*Accounting*

Dee Theien  
*Administrative Assistant*

# ACB Annual Convention



ACB Board member Sara Conrad assembles ACB's newspaper at convention in Sparks, NV.

The 56th annual ACB conference and convention was held in Reno, Nev. from June 30-July 7, 2017. Hosted by the Nevada Council of the Blind, the theme of the 2017 conference and convention was "ACB Sparks Success."

This year, there were over 1,000 attendees, including students, teachers, parents, professionals, retirees and a group of kids who had fun in ACB's Youth Activity Center. In addition to holding sessions to conduct official ACB business, the conference was packed with an incredible array of workshops, seminars and programs on a seemingly endless variety of topics. Attendees found their days filled with information and new ideas, exploring new products in the exhibit hall; receiving tips on adaptive technology; and discussing issues related to rehabilitation, transportation, education, health, and much more.

Our thanks go to the 2017 corporate sponsors, our Nevada gems. Their continued generous support of the American Council of the Blind is much appreciated.



Georgia Council member Marsha Farrow receives a lifetime membership.



The 2017 JPMorgan Chase Award winners at convention.

# ACB Convention Sponsors

## Double Diamond Sponsor

Microsoft – ACB Radio Worldwide Broadcast

AT&T – ACB Radio Streaming

Google – ACB Conference Banquet

VANDA Pharmaceuticals Inc. – ACB Educational and Recreational events and ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk

## Diamond

General Motors – Audio Visual Services

## Emerald

Verizon – Conference Registration

Sprint – Information Desk

Uber Technologies – Communications Center and Newspaper

Comcast – Volunteer Services

JPMorgan Chase & Co. – Performing Arts Showcase and ACB Sparks of Enthusiasm Auction

## Ruby

Amazon – ACB Café

HumanWare – Official Conference Program

VFO - Official Sponsor of All General Sessions

Adobe – ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk, Audio-Described Movie and Recreation Zone

Regal Cinemas – Kids' Explorers Club and ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk

## Onyx

National Industries for the Blind – ACB Marketplace

National Association of Broadcasters - General Operating Support

Facebook – International Cultural Exchange Day

Macular Degeneration Foundation – ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk

Buell Fund – ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk and Recreation Zone

## Topaz

ACB Lions – Scholarship Students Travel

Coral

Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America – Scholarship Dinner and Luncheon for Outstanding Blind Students

Cox Communications – Student, Future ACB Leader or Young Professional

Spark Therapeutics – ACB Café Day (July 2nd) and Information Access Workshop

TracFone – ACB Café Day (July 3rd) and Advocacy Training Workshop

Deque

## Pearl

Library Users of America – NLS Talking Book Narrator

Discover Technologies – Affiliate and Chapter Development Seminar

HIMS – Luncheon to Recognize Outstanding Blind Students

Disability Relations Group – ACB Café Day (July 4th)

BAUM USA – ACB Café Day (July 5th)

Lighthouse for the Blind – Seattle

# Financial Reporting



An ACB member uses a magnifier to read during general session.

<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b><i>Current Assets:</i></b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$205,359	\$118,057
Restricted Cash	\$84,806	\$65,258
Accounts Receivable	\$2,907	\$3,218
Accounts Receivable - Other	\$-	\$15,579
Promises to give, net	\$1,722,665	\$-
Inventories	\$60,457	\$54,648
Prepaid Expenses	\$8,985	\$49,841
<b>Total current Assets</b>	<b>\$2,085,179</b>	<b>\$306,601</b>
<b>Investments</b>	<b>\$2,472,842</b>	<b>\$2,214,490</b>
Property and Equipment	\$61,792	\$66,758
Other Assets	\$16,390	\$17,600
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$4,636,203</b>	<b>\$2,605,449</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b><i>Current Liabilities:</i></b>		
Accounts Payable	\$67,410	\$79,620
Accrued Expenses	\$198,119	\$181,678
Deferred Revenue	\$3,870	\$1,560
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$269,399</b>	<b>\$262,858</b>

<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Unrestricted	\$1,299,578	\$1,145,649
Temporarily Restricted	\$2,530,790	\$663,746
Permanently Restricted	\$536,436	\$533,196
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,366,804</b>	<b>\$2,342,591</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,636,203</b>	<b>\$2,605,449</b>

## **Operating Statement**

### ***Revenue, Support and Gains***

Contributions from Individuals and Organizations	\$410,134	\$555,212
Legacies and bequests	\$1,733,935	\$26,404
In-kind contributions	\$13,786	\$9,133
Assessments and dues from local member units	\$54,890	\$62,715
Program fees	\$637,035	\$427,403
Other program activities	\$114,354	\$124,480
Miscellaneous income	\$1,000	\$19,920
Net investment return	\$301,049	\$96,750
Loss on disposal of equipment	\$(4,476)	\$-
Thrift store activities, net	\$203,880	\$75,174
<b>Total revenue, support and gains</b>	<b>\$3,465,587</b>	<b>\$1,397,191</b>

### **Expenses by Function**

#### ***Program Services***

Scholarships	\$111,470	\$83,847
Convention	\$225,330	\$229,283
Audio description project	\$132,134	\$76,871
ACB Radio	\$43,764	\$60,234
Telephone hotline	\$35,460	\$44,030
Advocacy and governmental affairs	\$143,488	\$112,447
Program Consultation	\$81,591	\$91,275
Membership Services	\$138,065	\$92,883
Public Awareness	\$216,803	\$195,654
Liaison with external organizations	\$81,983	\$53,585

<b>Support Services</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Management and general	\$117,322	\$84,246
Fundraising	\$113,964	\$85,824
Total expenses by function	\$1,441,374	\$1,210,179
<b>Change in Net assets</b>	<b>\$2,024,213</b>	<b>\$187,012</b>
Net assets beginning of year	\$2,342,591	\$2,155,579
Net assets end of year	\$4,366,804	\$2,342,591
<b>Total volunteer hours</b>	<b>16,492</b>	<b>17,758</b>
In-kind value	\$398,117	\$418,388



### ACB Officers and Board of Directors:

Front row, seated: Katie Frederick, John McCann, Mitch Pomerantz, Kim Charlson, Eric Bridges, David Trott, Sara Conrad, Denise Colley, Ray Campbell.

Top row, standing: Dan Spooone, Dan Dillon, Patrick Sheehan, Jeff Thom, Doug Powell, George Holliday, Allan Peterson.

[www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)

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