



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Annual Report 2014



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 2014 CONVENTION

It's hard for me to believe that a year has gone by since our conference in Columbus, Ohio, and my incredibly exciting election as the first woman to serve as president of ACB. ACB continues to address many issues and challenges of all types since last we gathered together.

Accessible Prescription Labels

In 2011 ACB began working on the problem of inaccessible information on prescription drug labels with the introduction of H.R. 4087, the Accessible Prescription Drug Labeling Promotion Act. The original bill language was incorporated into S. 3187, the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act, which passed and became law in July 2012.



ACB President Kim Charlson

The bill language called for the establishment of a working group comprised of representatives of the blind and aging communities, along with pharmacies under the auspices of the U.S. Access Board. ACB was represented on this group by past president Mitch Pomerantz, as well as by Annette Carter. The group developed a comprehensive "best practices" document for pharmacies to ensure that people who are blind or visually impaired have access to prescription drug labeling information. The National Council on Disability was charged with coordinating an awareness campaign in cooperation with the members of the working group to inform the public of those best practices, as directed by the act. NCD has failed to promulgate an awareness campaign. ACB will be reaching out to NCD to determine what it plans to do on behalf of blind and low-vision individuals on this crucial issue.

Structured Negotiation Settlements

Since I'm discussing access to prescription information, we can't forget the tremendous work being done by our attorneys, the queens of structured negotiations, Lainey Feingold and Linda Dardarian. Let me spotlight Lainey and Linda's activities addressing access over the course of the past year.

Right before last year's convention, ACB announced a structured negotiation settlement with Weight Watchers International to make its web sites, mobile apps and print information more accessible and inclusive for its members and subscribers with visual impairments. Weight Watchers adopted the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines as its accessibility standard for both web and mobile applications, and has made substantial enhancements to its web sites and mobile devices to meet this standard. Weight Watchers also strengthened its system for providing braille, large print, and audio versions of print information to members with visual impairments.

Now people who are blind will be able to take greater advantage of the wonderful tools and information that Weight Watchers offers. To further show their support to ACB, Weight Watchers is a 2014 topaz sponsor of the Recreation Zone.

We continue to work with Jeffrey Lovitky, our pro bono attorney, on the Bureau of Engraving and Printing case. Eric Bridges and I met in person at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in October, with a large group of staff

from the Meaningful Access Unit. We received an update on research, developments and testing of currency with tactile features. We also had a demonstration of the updated iOS app Eynote, which has been upgraded and is faster to use. ACB will not lose sight of the end goal of currency that people who are blind can identify by touch.

Guide Dog Access

In the area of guide dog access rights, ACB has been involved with two cases. You may have heard about the experience of ACB member Albert Rizzi, a guide dog user, who was ejected from a U.S. Airways flight on Nov. 13, 2013 because he was not able to put his guide dog far enough under the seat of the person sitting next to him. Rizzi had been assigned a seat at the rear of the small plane, in the center of the bench seat, with no passenger seat in front of him since that was the aisle itself.

The Air Carrier Access Act grants people who use guide dogs the right to full access to air travel, accompanied in the cabin by their working dog. It is the responsibility of each airline to insure that personnel both understand and respect the rights of passengers who use guide dogs. ACB has called upon all airlines to guarantee that appropriate policies regarding the access rights of people who are blind traveling with guide dogs are in place, and that airline personnel who interact with passengers before, during, and after travel receive appropriate training regarding the treatment of guide dogs and their handlers during all phases of travel.

Audio Description and Television

Now, let me shift to television and audio description. Last fall, the Federal Communications Commission published final regulations requiring that virtually all TV and TV-like devices must be accessible through audible controls, guides and menus. This action by the FCC is the result of an unprecedented outpouring from the blindness community demanding greater accessibility. Many of you may recall that there had been attempts by some industry groups to thwart the intent of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA), which revolutionizes the television viewing experience for people who are blind or visually impaired. ACB, along with the American Foundation for the Blind, successfully negotiated with



Sleeping guide dog at the 2014 convention

leading industry advocates to draft the consensus that the FCC ultimately used to adopt their new rules. Under this consensus, virtually all TV and TV-like devices, inclusive of tablets and smart phones, receiving digital video programming must be accessible through audible controls. These requirements will go into effect in 2015.

Legislative Initiatives

On the governmental affairs front, three legislative initiatives that ACB has been working on deserve an update. In December, Reps. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) introduced H.R. 3749, the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act of 2013. This bill seeks to right a wrong that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has perpetrated for many years through the denial of coverage of low-vision devices for Medicare recipients. These tools are often essential for individuals with low vision who, without the aid of assistive technology, cannot read product labels, medication bottles, handle their mail, pay bills, and manage their health and personal independence. Without the aid of such assistive devices, many more individuals will be forced into assisted living or nursing home facilities as our population ages.

As many of you are aware, late last month the House and Senate reached an agreement on compromise bill language to reauthorize provisions in the vocational rehabilitation program contained in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The compromise bill H.R. 803,

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), was passed by the Senate in late June and by the House in early July. Here are a few of the provisions that are of interest to ACB.

The compromise bill keeps the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the U.S. Department of Education. The RSA Commissioner position remains a presidential appointment requiring Senate confirmation. The Older Blind Program stays with RSA and is not moved to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ACB will continue to monitor implementation of this legislation and keep you posted on developments.

Financial Industry Access

For the better part of the last 20 years, ACB has worked with banks to ensure the customer experience for people who are blind or visually impaired is accessible. Whether we talk about Braille statements or talking ATMs, ACB has led the way in working with the banking industry.

Earlier this year ACB was approached by JP Morgan Chase to discuss the next generation of outreach that they were seeking to have with the blindness community. These discussions culminated in a day-long meeting held at JP Morgan Chase's headquarters in New York City, where ACB was represented by Eric Bridges and Brian Charlson. This was a clear sign that JP Morgan Chase is taking accessibility seriously. It was a great first step to kick off the next generation of banking accessibility for our community.

ACB Communication Enhancements

Much of my work this year has been with what I call the ACB infrastructure. This includes the board, committees and task forces, and the board of publications. Recognizing all of the great work being done by ACB committees and task forces, I want to give a shout-out to some significant communication initiatives undertaken by ACB's Strategic Plan Goal Group 1 on communications and an effort by the board of publications to bring information to members in new ways.

Thanks to Larry Turnbull, you can now access ACB Radio on the new ACB Radio telephone system at 605-475-8130 – where you can listen to the six ACB Radio channels over the phone. To listen to “The ACB Braille Forum” and “The ACB E-Forum” by phone, dial 605-475-8154.

ACB has a strong commitment to expand its available communication channels to meet all of the information needs of our membership. Balancing everyone's needs and taking full advantage of emerging technologies is important to me as president of ACB. We also continue to work hard to ensure that members without technology can have a variety of options to get the ACB information they need.

Social Media

For those using technology to keep up with information, ACB is there for you as well through social media. You can “Like” us on Facebook ([americancounciloftheblindofficial](#)); or “Follow” us on Twitter ([acbnational](#)). For those of you using Twitter, you can follow more detailed convention coverage at [#ACB14](#).

The ACB Twitter account has grown over 65 percent in followers since last convention, and it continues to grow weekly. ACB's Facebook page is one year old; it has over 550 followers, and it is growing at a rapid rate.

Continuing Advocacy

ACB and its members have much work to do over the next several years, not simply to improve programs and services for blind and visually impaired people, but to hold onto what we've fought so hard to obtain during the previous half century. We represent all blind and visually impaired people regardless of economic status or functional ability. ACB advocates for a wide spectrum of programs and services for people of all ages and capabilities. Our work isn't always easy, and at times, it can be discouraging. Nonetheless, that is our charge and our mission. Working together, we can make change happen.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE 2014 CONVENTION



Executive Director Melanie Brunson

Charles Dickens began his classic work “A Tale of Two Cities” with the following passage: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epic of belief, it was the epic of incredulity. It was the season of light, it was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” As I reflected on the past year for ACB and for our community in general, it occurred to me that this passage pretty accurately describes the situation we face.

ACB and the disability community in general face many challenges: our Congress, our state and local governments, and even some of our own financial and other challenges. But we also have many opportunities to make a huge difference. Sometimes we focus on the challenges and get discouraged. We can and must make the most of those opportunities. It’s clear to me that there can be a tremendous payoff if we try to make the most of our opportunities. I want to give you one very clear example, and that is the 2014 convention that you’re sitting in right now. Do you realize that we have at this convention a greater participation from industry than we have had in a long time? It is truly amazing. The number of companies that are represented here is incredible.

The other thing that has impressed me is the amount of human capital and time that they have invested in coming to this conference. The corporations that are here have brought senior-level talent, and a lot of it. Google had 13 people here. Sprint had 10 people here. Folks, we are on the map! Those folks have invested an awful lot in ACB this year in both tangible and intangible ways, and I think that they really need to be commended for that. This is the result of work begun by your director of external relations and policy, Eric Bridges, as well as volunteers throughout ACB, to address the challenges that we just talked about in accessing technology and becoming full participants in society. Through these efforts, ACB is now acknowledged as a partner and a resource that industry can go to for expert advice regarding meeting the needs of people with visual impairments.

We have come a long way, and I believe that we have every reason to believe that we can continue to move forward with efforts to enhance accessibility to our society at all levels because of the reputation that ACB has achieved. It hasn’t happened overnight, but it has happened because we stuck to our guns and we continued the work in spite of the discouragement or in spite of the short-term setbacks. As we think about all of this, I’d like to remind you that sometimes advocacy work, whether it be advocacy with industry or government or other entities, begins with the behind-the-scenes work, work that sometimes seems routine and insignificant, but it is valuable work, and without it, the job doesn’t get done. It involves people at many levels, including the work of our administrative staff as well as the management staff, and the volunteers in this organization.

We as your staff work hand in hand with all of you, ACB’s members and volunteers. Without you, we wouldn’t be here. We are a team. We have a lot of talent on our staff. I am incredibly grateful for them. But we need to hear from you. We need your support. We need your ideas, because this is collaboration. This is, as someone said, a family. We as your staff enjoy this week because for us it’s a family reunion, and it energizes us. I want to encourage all of you to not get discouraged when you think things look bleak. Remember that for every

challenge there's a chance. And you have to take chances, otherwise you don't have the ability to address the challenges. As I think back on this past year, I'd like to offer this observation. Although we might sometimes feel like we're in the worst of times, because of the pressures of a given moment, we have seen a lot of evidence that through persistence and through partnerships with each other and with those outside our organization, great things can happen. And I'm willing to bet, since this is a betting town, that for ACB, for the blindness community in general, and for each of our affiliates and for each of our members, the best of times is yet to come. Now whether I'm right and win the bet, or whether I'm wrong, it is up to us.



American Council of the Blind Board Members. Front Row, Seated: Sara Conrad, Katie Frederick, Kim Charlson, Marlaina Lieberg, Melanie Brunson, Denise Colley, Carla Ruschival. Top Row, Standing: David Trott, John McCann, George Holliday, Michael Garrett, Dan Spoone, Ray Campbell, Jeff Thom, Allan Peterson, Berl Colley, Mitch Pomerantz, Pat Sheehan.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

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 71 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 Arlington, 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 20 special-interest affiliated organizations which focus on the unique concerns of various professions and special populations such as blind lawyers, teachers, families, information technology specialists, library users, 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.

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 opportunity to talk with someone who is blind can make a significant difference in how quickly and how well that individual adjusts and accepts the vision loss. For a family member, questions can be answered regarding services available and the potential for their family member to learn skills to regain independence. For a business owner, information regarding laws pertaining to accessibility can be provided to avoid issues related to discrimination. 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 readily available 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, Alexandria, Va.; 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 Dr. Mae Davidow Memorial Scholarship, funded by the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind; the ACB Students Brenda Dillon Memorial Scholarship, funded by the ACB Students; the Bay State Council of the Blind Scholarship for residents of Massachusetts; the ACB of Oregon Scholarships for residents of Oregon; ACB of Colorado Scholarships for residents of Colorado; the Delbert K. Aman Memorial Scholarship for residents of South Dakota, funded by the South Dakota Association of the Blind; the Richard



Scholarship winner Elizabeth Muhammad

Bennet of Maine Memorial Scholarship for residents of Maine, funded by ACB of Maine; and the Alma Murphey Memorial Scholarship, funded by the Braille Revival League of Missouri.

“Receipt of the ACB scholarship has helped me greatly in paying off my tuition. In fact, a part of the tuition for engineering students at the University of Kentucky cannot be waived even for graduate assistants; that part comes out of the student's pocket. Paying that tuition portion every semester is a burden, especially for graduate students like myself who are raising a family on the assistant stipend. The ACB scholarship helped to lift that burden for two semesters, with a little left over, and I am greatly thankful to ACB.” (From Hamid H., a graduate student at the University of Kentucky)

In 2014, 20 scholarships totaling \$47,500 were awarded to 18 highly competent blind and visually impaired students from throughout the United States.

Floyd Qualls Memorial Scholarships

- Garrett Haywood, Bachelor of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies, Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, Fla.
- Rachel Zeiter, Bachelor of Science in Multi-Age Special Education, Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio
- Charlotte Reed, Master of Social Work, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Ky.

- David Techman, Master of Fine Arts in Screen Writing, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Calif.
- Antonio Vega, Master of Arts in Japanese Linguistics, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii

ACB Students Brenda Dillon Memorial Scholarship

- Kaitlyn Siekert, Bachelor of Science in Child Life, Edgewood College, Madison, Wis.

Duane Buckley Memorial Scholarship

- Justine Aragon, Bachelor of Science in English, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colo.

Kellie Cannon Memorial Scholarship

- Hamid Hamraz, Ph.D. in Computer Science, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.

William G. Corey Memorial Scholarship

- Elizabeth Muhammad, Bachelor of Science in Political Science, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Eunice Fiorito Memorial Scholarship

- James Debus, Bachelor of Science in Special Education, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Tex.

John Hebner Memorial Scholarship

- Hina Altaf, Master of Science in Assistive Technology, California State University, Northridge, Calif.

Alma Murphey Memorial Scholarship

- Tabitha Brecke, Ph.D. in Adult Education, Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.

Arnold Sadler Memorial Scholarship

- Sherrie Lilley, Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Pillar College, Newark, N.J.

Norma Shecter Memorial Scholarship

- Lorise Diamond, Bachelor of Science in Communications, Southwestern College, Chula Vista, Calif.

Bay State Council of the Blind Scholarship

- Nicholas Corbett, Bachelor of Science in Political Science, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

Oregon Council of the Blind Scholarship

- Leslie Weilbacher, Bachelor of Science in Special Education, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colo.

The Ross N. Pangere Foundation for the Visually Impaired Scholarships

- Emily Pennington, Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio
- Kathryn Webster, Bachelor of Business in Mathematical Business and Economics, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.



2014 ACB Scholarship Winners

The ACB Braille Forum

This year, ACB's national magazine got a name change! "The ACB Braille Forum," as it is now known, features organizational news on both the national and state levels, national legislative updates, reports from the president and the executive director, human-interest stories, occasional poetry and book reviews, plus columns featuring new products and services, obituaries, letters to the editor, and "for sale" and "wanted" high-tech items (and the occasional "free to good home" item). It is available in braille, large print, four-track cassette, data CD, via e-mail, and an ever-growing number of individuals (approximately 3,000 per day) are accessing the online version of the publication.

In 2014, "The ACB Braille Forum" was published six times during the year and provided to 10,358 subscribers, including ACB's members, businesses and overseas readers. "The ACB E-Forum" was also published six times during the year, and sent via e-mail to more than 3,600 subscribers, including ACB members and overseas readers.

Advocacy and Governmental Affairs

The advocacy and governmental affairs staff and membership of the American Council of the Blind advocate on a wide variety of issues for people who are blind and visually impaired. In 2014, ACB national staff provided consultation on issues related to access and discrimination to approximately 275 individuals from throughout the United States.

In March, ACB and CVS/pharmacy announced a program to provide ScripTalk talking prescription labels for prescriptions ordered for home delivery through its online pharmacy, CVS.com. The ScripTalk labels are free to CVS.com pharmacy customers who are blind. Customers can also obtain a free ScripTalk reader from En-Vision America that will enable them to listen to the information on the ScripTalk label.

In June, ACB announced a ground-breaking settlement with Walgreens, launching a nationwide program offering talking prescription devices to customers with visual impairments. Walgreens is the first in the industry

to offer its own talking prescription device, called the Talking Pill Reminder, at its retail locations nationwide. The device attaches to prescription containers and can be recorded to speak the information on the customer's prescription medication label. All Duane Reade pharmacy locations will also have the free talking prescription labels.

In a continuing investigative series documenting discrimination against guide dog handlers trying to get cabs in Washington, D.C., WUSA9, D.C.'s local CBS affiliate, conducted an undercover investigation with Melanie Brunson and Eric Bridges and field journalists to document the discrimination. More recently, WUSA9 followed up on its previous investigation into discrimination by taxi cab drivers in the nation's capital. Their findings sparked the first official complaint using evidence gathered by the undercover cameras.

ACB's pro bono attorneys from the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and Sutherland Asbill and Brennan LLP have filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of blind federal contractors and ACB against the General Services Administration (GSA), the federal executive branch agency responsible for administering the government's non-defense contracts. The complaint alleges that GSA has failed to make its web site, SAM.gov, accessible to blind federal contractors who must register and annually renew their federal contractor registration. It names three individual federal contractors and the American Council of the Blind as plaintiffs. The lawsuit seeks to force GSA to make its web site accessible to blind federal contractors.

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 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern time, when it is answered live by ACB staff members. In

addition, the Connection is updated regularly on ACB e-mail discussion lists and the ACB web site.

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 via the Internet, having visitors from more than 60 countries during fiscal year 2014. 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 visually impaired DJs from around the world, including requests; “World News and Information,” featuring several news sources including but not limited to BBC, CBC, Public Radio International and Pacifica; and “ACB Radio Live Event,” featuring live coverage of ACB affiliates and other Blindness related special events. ACB Radio is one of the most innovative services for people who are blind to have come along anywhere.

During fiscal year 2014, ACB Radio received an average of 2,400 visitors per day from throughout the United States and from more than 60 foreign countries. Included this year were live broadcasts of the ACB national conference and convention, and a number of affiliate conferences that were held throughout the year.

ACB Reports

In 1985, the American Council of the Blind began distributing a monthly radio program to audio information service radio stations. These radio stations provide readings of newspapers, magazines, books, and other audio information to an audience of blind and print-impaired individuals throughout the country.

This half-hour radio program was christened “ACB Reports.” It is now carried by over 50 audio information service radio stations each month. In addition, it airs on ACB Radio Mainstream, is distributed as part of the audio edition of “The ACB Braille Forum”, and is also available for download as a podcast.

Now produced for ACB by the Radio Reading Service of Mississippi Public Broadcasting, ACB Reports is a monthly combination of legislative news, interviews with interesting individuals, information about current fashion trends, new technology, and highlights of the ACB annual conference.

ACB’s Audio Description Project

The American Council of the Blind’s Audio Description Project (ADP) purpose is to boost levels of description activity and disseminate information on that work throughout the nation. Our 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 2014, ADP’s activities included:

- Conducting the third annual Audio Description Conference, which featured, for the first time, a mentorship program pairing blind convention attendees with describers, in conjunction with the ACB conference and convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. Sixty-six people from nine countries attended.
- Collaborated with the Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute on the Video Description Research and Development Center (VDRC). ACB has conducted focus groups, provided audio description seminars, and assisted Smith-Kettlewell with identifying and evaluating new technologies and techniques for adding blind-accessible, descriptive information to web-based video resources used in classrooms all around the nation.
- In conjunction with the Described and Captioned Media Program, developing a list of age-appropriate vocabulary words to be used in audio description, with a concentration on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) content.
- Recognizing individuals and organizations who have demonstrated leadership in audio description in four categories; media, performing arts, museums and international.
- Presenting the Dr. Margaret R. Pfanstiehl Achievement in Audio Description for Research and Development, and the Barry Levine Memorial Award for Career Achievement in Audio Description.

ACB Annual Convention

The 53rd annual ACB conference and convention was held in Las Vegas, Nev. from July 10-19, 2014. Hosted by the Nevada Council of the Blind, the theme of the 2014 conference and convention was “ACB: The Real Deal,” a theme which highlighted both the geographic location and the hard-fought advocacy victories the organization has won in recent months.

This year, there were over 1,800 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 2014 corporate sponsors, our Nevada gems. Their continued generous support of the American Council of the Blind is much appreciated.

Double Diamond Sponsor

Vanda Pharmaceuticals

Emerald Sponsors

Google

JP Morgan Chase

Ruby Sponsors

Comcast

HumanWare

Regal Entertainment

Verizon

Onyx Sponsors

Adobe Systems, Inc.

AT&T

Facebook

Freedom Scientific

National Industries for the Blind

Topaz Sponsors

Buell Fund

Sprint

Weight Watchers

Coral Sponsors

ACB Lions

Goldstein, Borgen Dardarian and Ho, and the Law
Office of Lainey Feingold

Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America

Pearl Sponsors

ACB Families

International Association of Audio Information
Services

HIMS, Inc.

Library Users of America

Maxi-Aids



Convention attendees Ken Stewart and Jane Kardas

FINANCIAL REPORTING

Consolidated Financial Statements

December 31, 2014 and 2013

Balance Sheet	2014	2013
<i>Current Assets:</i>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$110,694	\$94,503
Accounts Receivable	\$20,074	\$21,078
Accounts Receivable- Other	\$51,800	\$51,800
Inventories	\$62,876	\$64,794
Prepaid Expenses	\$14,621	\$19,767
Total Current Assets	\$260,065	\$251,942
<i>Investments</i>	\$2,306,884	\$2,232,544
Property and Equipment	\$67,029	\$111,199
Other Assets	\$20,039	\$27,334
Total Assets	\$2,654,017	\$2,623,019
Liabilities and Net Assets		
<i>Current Liabilities:</i>		
Accounts Payable	\$185,677	\$165,266
Accounts Payable- Other	\$0	\$51,800
Accrued Expenses	\$124,002	\$190,451
Total Current Liabilities	\$309,679	\$407,517
Total Liabilities	\$309,679	\$407,517
<i>Net Assets:</i>		
Unrestricted	\$1,128,354	\$1,079,171
Temporarily Restricted	\$689,788	\$611,335
Permanently Restricted	\$526,196	\$524,996
Total Net Assets	\$2,344,338	\$2,215,502
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,654,017	\$2,623,019
Operating Statement		
<i>Revenue, Support and Gains:</i>		
Contributions from individuals and organizations	\$420,069	\$442,884
Legacies and bequests	\$459,727	\$53,653
In- kind contributions	\$52,200	\$37,841
Assessments and dues from local member units	\$65,813	\$62,855
Program fees	\$302,499	\$231,299
Other activities	\$121,094	\$105,742
Miscellaneous income, including interest income	\$29,380	\$21,879
Gain on investments	\$78,863	\$246,724
Thrift store activities, net	\$140,504	\$64,716
	<hr/>	
	\$ 1,389,141	\$1,138,161

Expenses by Function	2014	2013
<i>Program Services:</i>		
Scholarships	\$69,954	\$71,939
Convention	\$202,434	\$191,183
Audio Description Project	\$68,854	\$82,936
ACB Radio	\$52,772	\$53,951
Telephone Hotline	\$51,495	\$71,663
Advocacy and Government Affairs	\$109,011	\$122,920
Program Consultation	\$103,084	\$93,151
Membership Services	\$84,045	\$81,210
Public Awareness	\$236,738	\$251,441
Liaison with External Organizations	\$63,693	\$66,946
<i>Support Services:</i>		
Management and General	\$91,080	\$98,630
Fundraising	\$127,145	\$126,058
Total Expenses by Function	\$1,260,305	\$1,312,028
Changes in Net Assets	\$128,836	\$173,867
Net Assets Beginning of the Year	\$2,215,502	\$2,389,369
Net Assets End of the Year	\$2,344,338	\$2,215,502

ACB Enterprises and Services

ACB operates three thrift stores under the auspices of a wholly owned subsidiary corporation known as ACB Enterprises and Services (ACBES.) A portion of the profits generated by these stores each year is 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, Tex.; Mike Godino, Malverne, N.Y.; George Holliday, Philadelphia, Pa.; Carla Ruschival, Louisville, Ky.; Dan Spooone, Orlando, Fla.; Jeff Thom, Sacramento, Calif.; and David Trott, Talladega, Ala.

ACB Officers (as of July 22, 2014)

President: Kim Charlson - Watertown, MA
First Vice President: Jeff Thom - Sacramento, CA
Second Vice President: Marlaina Lieberg - Burien, WA
Secretary: Ray Campbell - Glen Ellyn, IL
Treasurer: Carla Ruschival - Louisville, KY
Immediate Past President: Mitch Pomerantz - Pasadena, CA

American Council of the Blind Board of Directors (as of July 22, 2014)

Berl Colley - Lacey, WA
Sara Conrad - Grand Rapids, MI
Janet Dickelman - St. Paul, MN
Michael Garrett - Missouri City, TX
George Holliday - Philadelphia, PA
John McCann - Falls Church, VA
Allan Peterson - Horace, ND
Patrick Sheehan - Silver Spring, MD
Dan Spoone - Orlando, FL
David Trott - Talladega, AL
Ex Officio: Denise Colley - Lacey, WA

Board of Publications (as of July 22, 2014)

Denise Colley, chair - Lacey, WA
Ron Brooks - Phoenix, AZ
Marcia Dresser - Reading, MA
Doug Powell - Falls Church, VA
Judy Jackson - Miami, FL
Ex Officios:
Ron Milliman - Bowling Green, KY
Bob Hachey - Waltham, MA
Berl Colley - Lacey, WA

ACB Staff

Melanie S. Brunson
Executive Director

Eric Bridges
Director of External Relations and Policy

Sharon Lovering
Editor, "The ACB Braille Forum"

Francine Patterson
Executive Assistant

Lane S. Waters
Controller



ACB Staff Member Lane Waters

2014 CONVENTION PHOTOS



Richard Petty Driving Expo



ACB Mini Mall



2014 Convention attendees



Bonnie Springs Tour



ACB's 2014 Convention Bingo



ACB Walk

ACB STATE AFFILIATES

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

NATIONAL SPECIAL INTEREST AFFILIATES

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