



American Council of the Blind

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

ACB State Affiliates

Alabama Council of the Blind	Missouri Council of the Blind
Alaska Independent Blind, Inc.	Montana Blind and Low Vision Council
Arizona Council of the Blind	ACB of Nebraska
Arkansas Council of the Blind	Nevada Council of the Blind
California Council of the Blind	New Jersey Council of the Blind
A3 Colorado	ACB of New Mexico
Connecticut Council of the Blind	ACB of New York, Inc.
Delaware Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired	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	

National Special-Interest Affiliates

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

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President's Report

By Kim Charlson



KIM CHARLSON
President

I have much to report to you since our convention in Dallas last year. ACB continues to address many issues and challenges of all types.

Transitions

In the Virginia office, the first transition was an actual move from Arlington to Alexandria in January. We hired a new executive director in November, Eric Bridges. With the transition of Eric as ACB's new executive director, we needed someone to handle our advocacy and governmental affairs work. We were incredibly fortunate to hire Anthony (Tony) Stephens to serve in this capacity beginning in January. Tony came to us from National Industries for the Blind, where he worked in a similar capacity.

Capacity Building

One example of our expanded capacity is due in large part to the generosity of JPMorgan Chase, whose support enabled ACB to bring eight Leadership Fellows to this conference. JPMorgan Chase has also sponsored the production of a short public service announcement called Spotlight On that focuses on ACB and our work; it will be airing over the summer on public TV stations.

Partnerships

In December, ACB and Microsoft entered into a partnership to advance the accessibility

of information technologies. Through this partnership, ACB and Microsoft are working together to make sure that planned updates to various Microsoft products are accessible and meet the needs of people with visual impairments.

Structured Negotiations

ACB announced two structured negotiation settlements on accessible prescription labels and medication information. Humana and Rite Aid have started offering talking prescription labels, braille, and large print labels to customers who are blind or visually impaired through mail order service for Humana, and in-store and mail order in-store pickup for Rite Aid.

ACB and its attorneys reached a landmark settlement with the General Services Administration (GSA) on behalf of three blind federal contractors and ACB. The settlement requires GSA to make significant changes to SAM.gov. This case sets an important precedent, to reinforce that the Internet is part of our daily lives, and being unable to access any web site puts members of the blind community at an economic disadvantage. We thank GSA for working collaboratively with ACB and our attorneys to make SAM.gov accessible.

Last year, I shared the audio of a taxicab stinging operation conducted by a team of

investigative journalists from WUSA Channel 9 in Washington, D.C. regarding access to taxis by blind individuals using guide dogs. Three weeks ago, Eric Bridges and ACB reached an agreement with four D.C. taxi companies: Yellow Cab Company of D.C., Inc., Grand Cab Company, Elite Cab Association, and Pleasant Taxi Club LLC, to carry out an Accessibility Initiative to ensure that blind and visually impaired individuals accompanied by guide dogs have full and equal access to taxi services in the District of Columbia, including street-hailed taxicab services. The cab companies have agreed to collaborate with ACB and contribute to a testing fund overseen and administered by ACB. In a joint letter, all four companies recommended needed changes to D.C. Taxi Commission policies and rules to promote and safely provide street-hail taxi services in Washington, D.C. to the visually impaired.

Legislation

Reps. Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.) and David McKinley (R-W.Va.) introduced the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act (H.R. 3535), named for two pioneers in the education of deaf and blind students. The Cogswell-Macy Act will amend and modernize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to address the largely unmet unique needs of students with sensory disabilities. The bill will: ensure that students with vision and/or hearing disabilities are properly identified, evaluated and served, especially when they may have additional disabilities; guarantee that students with sensory disabilities are provided with the full array of special education and related services they must have to truly receive a free and appropriate public education; promote and support teachers and associated professionals who are critical to the delivery of such services; and hold all levels of our public education system accountable for these expectations.

An estimated 350,000 students are deaf or hard of hearing, and upwards of 100,000 are blind or low vision. Yet less than one-third of

those students are reported as having those needs under IDEA. That is unacceptable. We need to ensure that students with these disabilities have the same opportunity as other children to learn and gain useful life skills.

On May 16, ACB expressed deep concern and disappointment over continued delays by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which reported to the court further delays in implementation of accessible tactile paper currency to as late as 2026, 13 years past the initial timeline set forth by the court in *ACB v. Paulson*. On June 9, ACB filed a motion in the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia to require the Department of the Treasury to act judiciously and expeditiously in order to release accessible currency by December 31, 2020.

Accessibility

We saw a major development from Disney/Pixar with the release of its Disney Anywhere App, which allows consumers to download audio description tracks for select movies and listen to them in the movie theater using their own smartphone. ACB was pleased to nominate this initiative for an FCC Chairman's Award for Advancement in Accessibility — and I was proud to witness the award presentation.

ACB has also been working with Netflix. In May, ACB, the Bay State Council of the Blind, and individual advocates reached an agreement with Netflix to continue to make accessible the movies and videos offered through the Netflix video streaming and DVD rental subscriptions service. Under the agreement, Netflix will provide audio description for many popular titles in its streaming and disc rental libraries, as well as for "Netflix Original" shows such as "House of Cards" and "Orange is the New Black." Netflix has also committed to make its website and mobile applications accessible.

I look forward to working hand in hand with all of you to make sure our dreams for people who are blind become realities.

Executive Director's Report

By Eric Bridges



ERIC BRIDGES
Executive Director

2016 has been a year of many changes and successes. One of those changes was the national office's move to Alexandria in January. Another was the addition of a new staff member, Tony Stephens, as the director of advocacy and governmental affairs.

In December 2015, ACB announced a partnership with Microsoft. Through this partnership, ACB was able to provide direct input to Microsoft's product development processes. The progress that Microsoft demonstrated influenced ACB. It motivated us to move to Office 365, to procure new hardware, and to purchase Enterprise accounting software, thereby modernizing our IT infrastructure. We are pleased to build on the previous engagements we've had with Microsoft, and we look forward to working more closely with the teams to review and test new features and upgrades.

In March, I was honored to speak at the CSUN conference (the world's foremost international assistive technology conference) as part of the Teach Access Project panel discussion. Representatives from Yahoo, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Georgia Tech joined me in this 45-minute discussion. Technology companies dedicated to accessibility have faced the common challenge of preparing designers, engineers and researchers to think and build inclusively. Similarly, academic programs in design, engineering and other related fields

of study are seeking ways to better prepare students to address the needs of diverse populations. Given this shared challenge, industry, academia and advocacy have now come together through Teach Access to create models for teaching and training students of technology to create accessible experiences.

ACB is keenly aware that universities are challenged in many cases by their own bureaucratic inertia when adapting or changing learning experiences for students. This project is a step forward in teaching accessibility as part of the total learning experience. In order for the Teach Access Project to be successful, the voice of the consumer with a disability is vital in order to cut through the barriers that each sector unintentionally sets up for one another at times. We are the individuals purchasing and using these applications, and it is important that our voice is heard as the project proceeds. To find out more about Teach Access, visit <http://teachaccess.org/>.

In July, it was my pleasure to be present when ACB presented Apple, Inc. with the Robert S. Bray Award. The Bray Award is given to a person or a company that has improved communication technology or devices, or expanded access to such devices for all blind people. Apple received the award for its accessibility innovations that open up the

world to people with vision loss by giving them access to the same products their sighted friends, family, and colleagues use.

ACB, in an effort to inform the general public about the capabilities of blind people in general, and blind parenting specifically, created a five-minute video highlighting how a young couple raises their nearly 2-year-old son. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kbVtOrLzIU&feature=youtu.be>.

In mid-July, we received notice about a piece of legislation that would allow for the use

of braille e-readers by users of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) introduced S. 3207, which would authorize the NLS to begin moving toward including this option for library users. We're excited to see this new technology be utilized by NLS. The cost of these devices has decreased dramatically with the new braille-reading technology being put into play. This will be a win-win for both users and government.



Sarah Herrlinger, Apple representative, with Eric Bridges, ACB Executive Director. Sarah accepted the Robert S. Bray Award on Apple's behalf at the 2016 ACB convention in Minneapolis, MN.

New Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs Announced



TONY STEPHENS

Director of Advocacy
and Governmental
Affairs

I am very pleased to announce that the American Council of the Blind has appointed Anthony “Tony” Stephens as our Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs.

Tony brings a wealth of experience advocating on issues encompassing people who are blind or visually impaired. Most recently he managed public policy and advocacy at National Industries for the Blind — representing NIB on Capitol Hill, working with national disability coalitions, and leading NIB’s Advocates for Leadership and Employment program.

I have had the great fortune to work closely with Tony over the past five years and firmly believe that he possesses the passion and skill sets to effectively represent ACB’s interests to Capitol Hill, the executive branch, and beyond. His work on social justice campaigns spans more than two decades, working on some of the most complex issues in the public-interest sector, such as health care, immigration, and poverty reform. A former Jesuit, he has played an integral role in bridging coalitions between secular and faith-based organizations, and previously worked for The Opportunity Agenda — a New York-based communications think tank focusing on media, mainstream culture, and domestic human rights causes.

Legally blind since birth, Tony lost the remainder of his sight at age 15 due to acute-angle closure glaucoma. He serves on multiple boards representing people with disabilities, and is a member of ACB of Maryland. Tony holds a master of arts in mass communications and a bachelor of arts in journalism from the University of Georgia; and he received a certificate in business management from George Mason University. He resides in College Park, Md. with his wife, two young sons, and his guide dog.

About the American Council of the Blind



A group photo of the ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk subcommittee at convention.

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.

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 Oregon Council of the Blind 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 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.

"Receiving a scholarship has allowed me to attend the 2016 convention in Minneapolis, Minn., where I was able to meet and exchange ideas with many other blind professionals and students. The scholarship funds have also helped me conduct research over the summer, and will enable me to present my work at upcoming conferences. Overall, the scholarship will go a long way in helping me

complete the research I need to finish my dissertation and successfully earn the Ph.D. Thanks again to the ACB.” (From Marcus Hernandez, a doctoral student at the University of Arizona)

In 2016, 17 scholarships totaling \$46,825 were awarded to highly competent blind and visually impaired students from throughout the United States.

The 2016 Scholarship Winners



James R. Olsen Memorial Scholarship

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

Bay State Council of the Blind Scholarship

Elaine Phillips, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

Marcia Dresser Memorial Scholarship

Christiane Steele, Bachelor of Science in Special Education, Western Governors University, Salt Lake City, Utah

Kellie Cannon Memorial Scholarship

Jack Duffy-Pretentis, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and Robotics, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, Mass.

Floyd Qualls Memorial Scholarships

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

Marcus Hernandez, Ph.D. in History and Global Change, University of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

Marissa Hirschmann, Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Central College, Pella, Iowa

Timothy Jones, Bachelor of Music, Mercer University, Macon, Ga.

Phoebe Tran, Ph.D. in Epidemiology, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

Norma Shecter Memorial Scholarship and Duane Buckley Memorial Scholarship

Lorise Diamond, Bachelor of Science in Communications, San Diego State University, San Diego, Calif.

Arnold Sadler Memorial Scholarship

Kathleen Ernst, Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, Ill.

Oregon Council of the Blind Scholarship

Lillian Goodman, Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Linfield College, McMinnville, Ore.

The Ross N. Pangere Foundation for the Visually Impaired Scholarships

Michael Beausir, Bachelor of Science in Business and Sports Management, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Fla.

Kristie Hong, Bachelor of Arts in Mathematical Economics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

Mark Myers, Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla, Mo.

John Hebner Memorial Scholarship

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

William G. Corey Memorial Scholarship

Lisa Hagerich, Master of Social Work, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, Pa.

ACB Link

ACB's iPhone app, ACB Link! Updated in 2016, the app will assist ACB staff, members and friends to readily communicate news of relevance to the blind community.

ACB Link 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, and be informed and entertained by the wide variety of Internet radio programming offered by ACB Radio. ACB Link will bring blind people, their friends and families together in a new and exciting way.

For more information about ACB Link, go to link.acb.org.

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, 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 2016, "The ACB Braille Forum" was published six times during the year and provided to 8,500 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 3,170 subscribers, including ACB members and overseas readers.

Advocacy and Governmental Affairs

Throughout 2016, the American Council of the Blind (ACB) advocated across a wide array 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 2016 included lobbying Congress to strengthen the Medicare program for beneficiaries needing coverage of low-vision devices, reform in special education for children who are blind, and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, which would expand access to print material in accessible format for millions of people around the world who are blind. The annual Mid-Year Conference and Legislative Seminar

had over 100 advocates from ACB affiliates taking their message to Capital Hill.

ACB additionally worked with key departments in the federal government to expand an array of access equality issues for Americans who are blind. This work included active participation in structured negotiations by the Department of Transportation between advocates and the airline industry, in order to strengthen rules encompassing service animals and develop accessible in-flight entertainment systems. Progress with the Federal Communications Commission was also made, urging the FCC to expand audio description programming on broadcast and cable, and to assure broadcast and cable providers were in compliance with the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA). While the Department of Justice remained static in their efforts to expand the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to include Title III protections on the Internet, ACB was actively engaged with the White House to identify ways stakeholders could work toward expanding web accessibility. This work culminated in an accessible technology summit at the White House in November 2016.

Finally, ACB continued to foster strong relationships with leaders from the rehabilitation, technology, telecommunications, and transportation industries. ACB worked closely with cable providers to assure they met key CVAA compliance deadlines. ACB worked with other blindness organizations to create a coalition focused on addressing concerns raised by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which funds vocational rehabilitation. Additional relationships were also fostered with advocates and industry leaders focused on Internet of Things (IOT) development, which has made significant gains in recent years toward advancing accessibility through mobile and smart home devices.

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 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 2016. 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 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 2016, ACB Radio received an average of 800 listeners per day from throughout the United States and from more than 750 international listeners. 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 radio reading services. 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 60 audio information service radio stations each month. The program also airs on ACB Radio Mainstream, and is distributed as part of the audio edition of "The ACB Braille Forum."

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 purpose of the American Council of the Blind's 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.

2016, our eighth full year of activity, was yet another banner year for ACB's Audio Description Project (ADP). Here's a summary of that work:

- Sponsored the sixth Audio Description Project Conference in Minneapolis--eight nations were represented along with attendees from 16 USA states and the District of Columbia.



Presenters speak during the ADP Institute at the 2016 Annual Convention in Minneapolis, MN.

- We held two Audio Description Institutes. In Minneapolis, the Institute (our ninth!) trained 10 participants in the fundamentals of audio description, including co-director Dr. Francisco Lima from Recife, Brazil; in Washington, we trained 19 participants in conjunction with ACB's midyear meeting.
- We offered the 2016 Audio Description Awards: Achievement in Audio Description – Performing Arts: Arts Access, Raleigh, NC; Achievement in Audio Description – Media: Fred Brack, Raleigh, NC; Achievement in Audio Description – Museums: Dole Institute of Politics / Audio-Reader Network, Lawrence, KS; Achievement in Audio Description – International: Bos Soluções e Serviços Ltda. – Sao Paulo, Brazil; Special Recognition Achievement in Audio Description: Alice Austin, Eliot, ME; Special Recognition Achievement in Audio Description: Mark Messersmith, The Visual Voice – Mountain View, CA; Dr. Margaret R. Pfanstiehl Memorial Achievement Award in Audio Description – Research and Development: Disney / Pixar “Disney Movies Anywhere App” – Los Angeles, CA; Barry Levine Memorial Award for Career Achievement in Audio Description: Dr. Francisco Lima – Recife, Brazil
- We screened an audio described film, “Spotlight” for approximately 100 individuals
- We continued to earn income from Amazon.com fees associated with the purchase of DVDs on the ADP website. Since 2009 and the inception of the ADP we’ve earned \$8,965.21; in 2016 alone, we earned \$1,679.96.
- The ADP website, acb.org/adp, now has over 2,000 “Likes” on the ADP Facebook page and we continue to broaden the ADP reach on Twitter. In 2016, we provided weekly updates on audio-described DVDs and Blu-ray discs (148 in 2016—a 20% increase over 2015). We also provided updates on TV shows including video description and our comprehensive listing of broadcast television programs with audio description.
- The BADIES (Benefits of Audio Description in Education contest): the 2017 version of the contest was announced in September 2016. We received 27 entries (the most ever) from students ages 8-18.
- The ACB publication The Visual Made Verbal: A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description, is now available as an audio book through the NLS and has been published in Russian, Portuguese and Polish (Spanish, French and Arabic versions are in early stages of development).

ACB Enterprises and Services



Michael Garrett,
member of the
ACBES Board.

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, Tex.; Mike Godino, Malverne, N.Y.; George Holliday, Philadelphia, Pa.; Carla Ruschival, Louisville, Ky.; Dan Spoone, Orlando, Fla.; Jeff Thom, Sacramento, Calif.; and David Trott, Talladega, Ala.



David Trott, member of both the ACBES
and ACB boards.



Dan Dillon and Dan Spoone, ACB board
members.

ACB Board and Staff

ACB Officers (as of July 22, 2016)

President: Kim Charlson, Watertown, MA
First Vice President: Jeff Thom, Sacramento, CA
Second Vice President: John McCann, Tucson, AZ
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, 2016)

Jeff Bishop, Tucson, AZ
Denise Colley, Lacey, WA
Sara Conrad, Madison, WI
Dan Dillon, Hermitage, TN
Katie Frederick, Worthington, OH
George Holliday, Philadelphia, PA
Allan Peterson, Horace, ND
Patrick Sheehan, Silver Spring, MD
Dan Spoone, Orlando, FL
David Trott, Talladega, AL
Ex Officio: Ron Brooks, Phoenix, AZ

Board of Publications (as of July 22, 2016)

Ron Brooks, chair, Phoenix, AZ
Paul Edwards, Miami, FL
Susan Glass, Saratoga, CA
Debbie Lewis, Seattle, WA
Doug Powell, Falls Church, VA
Ex Officios:
Katie Frederick, Worthington, OH
Bob Hachey, Waltham, MA
Berl Colley, Lacey, WA
Carla Ruschival, Louisville, KY

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



Participants of ACB's Youth Activity Center ride on a roller coaster during a day at the theme park.

The 55th annual ACB conference and convention was held in Minneapolis, Minn. from July 1-9, 2016. Hosted by the ACB of Minnesota, the theme of the 2016 conference and convention was "ACB: Land of 10,000 Dreams," a theme which referred to the convention's location.

This year's attendees included 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 2016 corporate sponsors, our Minnesota gems. Their continued generous support of the American Council of the Blind is much appreciated.



Staff member Lane Waters received a life time membership award at convention.



Lorise Diamond, ACB scholarship award recipient.

ACB Convention Sponsors

Double Diamond Sponsor

Google – Crown Jewel Sponsor

Vanda Pharmaceuticals – ACB Banquet and Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk

Emerald Sponsors

Deque Systems – Guide Dog Services and International Cultural Exchange Day

JPMorgan Chase & Co. – Your day at the conference (July 8th, 2016)

Microsoft – Conference Registration

Sprint – Conference Volunteer Service and afternoon ACB Radio Broadcasts

Uber – Audio Visual Services

Verizon – Information Desk and Decade of Dreams Auction

Ruby Sponsors

Adobe – Convention Program

Comcast – ACB Exhibit Hall

Facebook – Interpreter Services Deaf / Blind

HumanWare – ACB Radio general session broadcasts

Macular Degeneration Foundation – Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk

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

Onyx Sponsors

AT&T – ACB Café

Buell Fund – Recreation Zone

Charter Communications – Performing Arts Showcase

National Association of Broadcasters – ACB Marketplace

National Industries for the Blind – Scholarship Winners' Reception and one general session

VFO Freedom Scientific / Optelec – Exhibit Hall Guide

Topaz Sponsors

ACB Lions – Scholarship Winners' Travel

Coral Sponsors

Baum, USA – ACB Future Leaders and Outstanding Blind Student

Lainey Feingold, of Law Office of Lainey Feingold; and Linda Dardarian and Megan Ryan, of Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho– Audio Described Film Night

Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America – Scholarship Winners' Dinner and Luncheon

Pearl Sponsors

CaptionMax – ACB Café, July 6th

Discover Technologies – ACB Café, July 5th

HIMS, Inc. – ACB Café, July 3rd

Lighthouse for the Blind Seattle – High Tech Workshop

LUA – NLS Talking Book Narrator

Maxi-Aids – ACB Café, July 4th

Financial Reporting



An ACB member takes notes with a braille notetaker during general session.

Balance Sheet	2016	2015
Current Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$118,057	\$203,049
Restricted cash	\$65,258	\$30,211
Accounts Receivable	\$3,218	\$9,217
Accounts Receivable - Other	\$15,579	\$51,800
Inventories	\$54,648	\$56,852
Prepaid Expenses	\$49,841	\$11,968
Total Current Assets	\$306,601	\$363,097
Investments	\$2,214,490	\$2,082,856
Property and Equipment	\$66,758	\$45,171
Other Assets	\$17,600	\$29,655
Total Assets	\$2,605,449	\$2,520,779
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$79,620	\$83,277
Accrued Expenses	\$181,678	\$182,794
Deferred Revenue	\$1,560	\$99,129
Total Current Liabilities	\$262,858	\$365,200

Net Assets	2016	2015
Unrestricted	\$1,145,649	\$1,058,196
Temporarily Restricted	\$663,746	\$568,687
Permanently Restricted	\$533,196	\$528,696
Total Net Assets	\$2,342,591	\$2,155,579
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,605,449	\$2,520,779

Operating Statement

Revenue, Support and Gains

Contributions from individuals and organizations	\$555,212	\$332,497
Legacies and bequests	\$26,404	\$163,486
In-kind contributions	\$9,133	\$9,695
Assessments and dues from local member units	\$62,715	\$58,417
Program fees	\$427,403	\$300,853
Other activities	\$124,480	\$116,101
Miscellaneous income, including interest income	\$19,920	\$181,199
Gain on investments	\$96,750	\$(70,265)
Thrift store activities, net	\$75,174	\$22,966
Total revenue, support and gains	\$1,397,191	\$1,114,949

Expenses by Function

Program Services

Scholarships	\$83,847	\$87,541
Conventions	\$229,283	\$219,074
Audio Description Project	\$76,871	\$83,204
ACB Radio	\$60,234	\$63,430
Telephone Hotline	\$44,030	\$50,162
Advacacy and Government Affairs	\$112,447	\$104,698
Program Consultation	\$91,275	\$126,733
Membership Services	\$92,883	\$90,492
Public Awareness	\$195,654	\$224,666
Liaison with External Organizations	\$53,585	\$65,007

Support Services

Management and General	\$84,246	\$92,343
Fundraising	\$85,824	\$96,358
Total Expenses by Function	\$1,210,179	\$1,303,708

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets Beginning of the Year	\$2,155,579	\$2,344,338
Net Assets End of the Year	\$2,342,591	\$2,155,579

Total Volunteer hours

In kind value	\$418,388	\$212,936
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ACB Officers and Board of Directors:

Front row, seated: Kim Charlson, Carla Ruschival, Sara Conrad, Katie Frederick, Denise Colley, Ray Campbell, Dan Spoone, Jeff Bishop.

Top row, standing: Patrick Sheehan, David Trott, Eric Bridges, Jeff Thom, Dan Dillon, John McCann, Mitch Pomerantz, Allan Peterson.

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