**Dots and Dashes**

**August 12, 2024**

# **General Sessions, Banquet Now Available in Podcast!**

We are proud to announce that the recordings of the 2024 ACB conference and convention general sessions and banquet that originated from Jacksonville, Florida July 7-11, 2024, are now available as podcasts, including podcasts of the simultaneous translation into Spanish, and on YouTube.

Below please find the direct links to the podcasts in English and Spanish as well as YouTube links.

The direct links are presented in tabular form followed by a list of the links if you are unable to navigate the table. You may listen to the podcasts from these links and/or download them. Please note that your email client must be set to receive email in HTML format to use the links.

## **2024 Convention Event**

July 7 Opening Session:

English – [July 7 Opening Session](https://pnc.st/s/acb-convention/11347ca5/20240707-1900-general-session-july-7-2024)

Spanish – [July 7 Opening Session ES](https://pnc.st/s/acb-espanol/7a41c39e/20240707-1900-general-session-july-7-2024-spanish-simultaneous-translation-)

July 9 Session:

English – [July 9 General Session](https://pnc.st/s/acb-convention/48abef23/20240709-0830-general-session-july-9-2024)

Spanish – [July 9 General Session ES](https://pnc.st/s/acb-espanol/fec66e09/20240709-0830-general-session-july-9-2024-spanish-simultaneous-translation-)

July 10 Session:

English – [July 10 General Session](https://pnc.st/s/acb-convention/3a1d35cb/20240710-0830-general-session-july-10-2024)

Spanish – [July 10 General Session ES](https://pnc.st/s/acb-espanol/a68d9763/20240710-0830-general-session-july-10-2024-spanish-simultaneous-translation-)

July 11 Session with Roll Call:

English – [July 11 General Session](https://pnc.st/s/acb-convention/3b02e2b3/20240711-0830-general-session-w-2-pm-roll-call-july-11-2024)

Spanish – [July 11 General Session ES](https://pnc.st/s/acb-espanol/0e2138e3/20240711-0830-general-session-w-2-pm-roll-call-july-11-2024-spanish-simultaneous-translation-)

July 11 Banquet:

English – [July 11 Banquet](https://pnc.st/s/acb-convention/4a72e98b/20240711-1900-banquet-july-11-2024)

Spanish – [July 11 Banquet ES](https://pnc.st/s/acb-espanol/5f59b2eb/20240711-1900-banquet-july-11-2024-spanish-simultaneous-translation-)

## **Podcast Feeds**

The original General Sessions and Banquet Podcasts are in the “ACB Conference and Convention” podcast feed: RSS <https://pinecast.com/feed/acb-convention>

The Simultaneous Translation into Spanish of the General Sessions and Banquet Podcasts are in the “Podcasts en español de la ACB” podcast feed: RSS <https://pinecast.com/feed/acb-espanol>

Visit ACB’s YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI_nLwS9Cw2Bm1IA4qIBw3Q>

The ACB Media volunteer production team is hard at work editing to bring you the podcasts of all the virtual, hybrid and breakout sessions that occurred throughout the convention that began June 24, 2024. This is a Herculean task, and we appreciate your support and patience as this work continues. All ACB business meetings are already available as podcasts. We plan to release the podcasts of the virtual sessions by the end of August and all other sessions by the end of September.

Please complete the Post-Convention Satisfaction Survey distributed to all registrants. The data from your responses are meticulously compiled and analyzed and carefully considered in the planning of future ACB conventions. Be sure to fill it out no later than 11:59 p.m. on August 18th! Survey link: [**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LH6KNM2**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LH6KNM2)

# **Advocacy Update**

On the August 1st episode of the Advocacy Update, Claire and Swatha spoke with Cassie Trosper, president of Veterans of ACB and DKM First-Timer recipient, and Rachel Schroeder, ACB board member, about their experiences at the 2024 conference and convention in Jacksonville, Fla. Listen to the podcast at [**https://acb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co/**](https://acb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co/).

# **We Want to Hear from You!**

The ACB Advocacy Team wants to hear from you! As more and more stores and businesses rely on an online presence to generate revenue, we are interested in your experiences with the following:

Have you experienced accessibility barriers when shopping online at home improvement stores, e.g. Home Depot? If so, please describe the barriers you encounter, and whether you were able to successfully complete your shopping experience.

Some urgent care centers across the country are implementing online appointment scheduling portals as an alternative to walk-ins. Have you encountered such a portal at your local urgent care? If yes, have you encountered accessibility issues, and have the issues prevented you from successfully scheduling an appointment? Please describe the issues you encountered.

Send an email to **advocacy@acb.org** to respond to these questions. Please note that by doing so, you give your consent for ACB to share your name and email to our advocacy partners, including in the federal government and legal sector.

# **Older Americans Act Update**

The eight-member bipartisan subcommittee of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee of the Senate has completed its draft of sections of the Older Americans Act (OAA) that they are willing to amend during this reauthorization. So far, it includes none of the language that the Aging and Vision Loss National Coalition (AVLNC), VisionServe Alliance (VSA), the American Council of the Blind (ACB), or the Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss (AAVL) have submitted and advocated for. But Pris Rogers and Mark Richert from the AVLNC continue to communicate with the legislative staff working on the draft to see if there is any way they would include any or all of the proposed most important language to heighten awareness of and elevate the need for improved outreach and services to the blind and low vision community of older citizens.

In our previous advocacy efforts, I think we have, through our use of VSA’s Big Data Project information, done a great job of demonstrating how underserved our community is. We have also demonstrated that lack of services leads to much higher incidence of health crises such as falls, strokes, depression, and other issues that the OAA is supposed to address and reduce. So no one argues that we shouldn’t be covered by OAA.

What we have not yet demonstrated, and what we need from ACB members, are anecdotes when we have gone to our local Area Agency on Aging (AAA), senior centers, and independent living centers (ILCs) and have been turned away or given inadequate services. So, I am asking you to write up (or have someone write up for you) those incidents for us to present to lawmakers showing them that current generic disability language has been, and still is, insufficient. If you have had an incident, especially in the last five years, where inaccessible materials have been presented to you for your participation in programs and activities, or you have been excluded from activities at a senior center because activities had no accessible materials such as braille playing cards or Bingo cards, and similar issues, we need to hear from you with:

* Your name (and the name of the person you interacted with, if known);
* Date of interaction;
* Location of interaction (including the name of the agency, city, and state);
* The request you made;
* Their response;
* Any follow-up by you or them; and
* The current status of your request.

Please submit your anecdote by **September 10th** to **advocacy@acb.org**. Even if we cannot resolve your specific issue, we appreciate your contribution to our advocacy efforts. And, if you’d like to be involved with our ongoing communications with federal, state and local officials at AAAs, senior centers, and independent living centers, please include your contact information with your submission above. We’d love to have you on your local AAA Advisory Council, or other advisory body having long term input into programs and services so you can help inclusion of people who are blind or have low vision.

# **Illinois Council 50/50 Summer Raffle**

There's less than a month left for you to buy your tickets for the Illinois Council of the Blind's annual 50/50 Summer Raffle! Ticket sales will close on Labor Day, Monday, September 2, 2024. Tickets are $5 each or 5 tickets for $20. We'll draw the winning ticket on Monday, September 9.

You can purchase tickets in several ways: call the ICB office at (217) 523-4967, and Maggie, our awesome office manager, will help you purchase tickets using a credit card. If you get voice mail, leave your name and number. Or you can send a check to Illinois Council of the Blind, PO Box 1336, Springfield, IL 62705-1336. In the memo section of your check, please indicate how many tickets you would like.

You can also send your ticket request via Pay Pal or Zelle to **icb@icbonline.org**. In the comment field, please indicate how many tickets you want and give your name and a telephone number.

# **BARD Express Release**

NLS is pleased to announce the release of BARD Express, version 3.0.0.7. This release includes the long-awaited BARD Express Player, which allows patrons to choose an audio book or magazine from their BARD Express bookshelf and listen to it directly on their PC.

Much like BARD Mobile, the BARD Express Player allows users to adjust the narration speed; jump to navigation points such as part, chapter, and article; create bookmarks; and much more. Users can also create global settings for narration speed, auto-play, auto-rewind, and more.

To read the full press release, visit [**https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USLOC/bulletins/3ade280**](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USLOC/bulletins/3ade280). To view the user’s guide, visit [**https://www.loc.gov/nls/how-to-enroll/sign-up-for-bard-and-bard-mobile/welcome-to-bard-express/**](https://www.loc.gov/nls/how-to-enroll/sign-up-for-bard-and-bard-mobile/welcome-to-bard-express/). For more information, please [**contact your network library**](https://www.loc.gov/nls/find-your-library/).

# **M-Enabling Summit in D.C. This Fall**

ACB is proud to be a supporting organization for the 2024 M-Enabling Summit, organized by the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict). This year’s event will take place October 15-17 in Washington, D.C.

The M-Enabling Summit is the leading global conference and showcase covering the technology innovations that enable people with disabilities to access digital content and services in new ways. The in-person summit will feature a hybrid track, general and break-out sessions, interactive roundtables and workshops, panel discussions, and more.

Visit [**https://m-enabling.com**](https://m-enabling.com) to learn more.

# **SFL Celebrates Golden Anniversary**

Ski for Light, Inc. (SFL) will celebrate its 50th anniversary at Soldier Hollow, January 26 through February 2, 2025. Ski for Light, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, hosts an annual, week-long event where adults with visual or mobility impairments learn the basics of cross-country skiing.

Participants will stay at the Provo Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, and ski on expertly groomed trails at Soldier Hollow, near Midway, Utah. Each visually or mobility impaired participant is paired with an instructor guide for a week of skiing, sharing and learning.

Join the celebration by participating as a skier, a guide or a volunteer. Applications and additional information are available at [**www.sfl.org**](http://www.sfl.org); meanwhile, join our community on Facebook (Ski for Light, Inc.), and check out our YouTube channel (Ski for Light International).

# **OrCam to Halt Developing Visual Aid Devices**

Israeli company [**OrCam**](http://orcam.com/), which develops devices to assist those with visual and hearing impairments, is to halt development of its flagship product for visual aid. The company, which was founded by [**Mobileye Global Inc.**](https://www.mobileye.com/) (Nasdaq: MBLY) founders Amnon Shashua and Ziv Aviram, will focus on its development of devices for the hard of hearing. As part of the new focus, dozens of employees will be laid off, according to market sources. The company has 80 employees in Israel, according to IVC.

OrCam’s visual aid division has been the core activity since the company was founded in 2010. The company focused on the development of spectacles and various visual aids for those with impaired eyesight.

The device developed by OrCam helps, among other things, in reading texts and signs. However, AI giant OpenAI is developing similar technologies that can be used from mobile phones without the need to purchase special visual aids.

To read the full article, visit [**https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-orcam-to-halt-developing-visual-aid-devices-1001485309**](https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-orcam-to-halt-developing-visual-aid-devices-1001485309).

# **Updated Notice of Proposed Settlement of Class Action Lawsuit**

Attention: All blind or visually impaired individuals who allege they have been or in the future will be denied the full and equal enjoyment of Dollar Tree Stores, Inc.’s payment terminals’ cash-back feature in its U.S. stores.

This notice is to inform you about a proposed settlement that would resolve the class action lawsuit Julie Dalton, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, v. Dollar Tree Stores, Inc., Civil Case No.: 23-cv-00368 (KMM/LIB) (D. Minn.).

The class action lawsuit alleges that Dollar Tree violated Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its implementing regulations by failing to ensure that its payment terminals provide private, safe, independent, and full and equal access to persons who are blind or have low vision within the meaning of the ADA.

Dollar Tree denied and continues to deny liability relating to the claims described in the lawsuit, but takes its responsibilities under the ADA very seriously; recognizes the importance of continued attention not and keeping pace with accessible electronic and information technology, and has agreed to take the steps necessary to effect a complete resolution and settlement of all claims and controversies relating to the allegations of Plaintiff and Class in this case.

The settlement, which must be approved by the Court, would resolve the class action lawsuit. You have the right to object to the settlement, provided you do so by November 1, 2024.

The Court will hold a final hearing to determine whether to approve the settlement on November 12, 2024.

The date of the fairness hearing may change without further notice to the class. Check the settlement website at [www.dollartreeadapossettlement.com](http://www.dollartreeadapossettlement.com), or the court’s PACER system, <https://pacer.uscourts.gov/find-case/search-specific-court>. For more information about the settlement, visit [**www.dollartreeadapossettlement.com**](http://www.dollartreeadapossettlement.com).

# **Understanding Assistance Needs of Shoppers with Vision Loss in Supermarkets**

Do you find it challenging to shop independently at the supermarket due to your vision condition? If given the opportunity, would you suggest ways to make your shopping experience more favorable? Do you use technology to help you navigate everyday tasks?

If you answered YES to these 3 questions, read on to learn about an opportunity to participate in a research study designed to improve the shopping experience for those that are blind or visually impaired.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Q. What is the purpose and goal of the study?**

**A.** The objective of this study is to ascertain whattypes of assistive technology would be most helpful for improving the supermarket shopping experience for the visually impaired. Our goal is to diagnose real world pain points, then address concerns identified by developing solutions that can be implemented and piloted.

**Q. How long will it take to complete the survey?**

**A.** The survey should not take more than 15 minutes to complete from start to finish.

**Q. Will participants be compensated for their time?**

**A.** Participants will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win one of four $50 gift cards.

**Q**. **Who is conducting this research?**

**A.** Assistive Technology Publishers is a startup company of dedicated professionals that advocate, conduct research and develop projects that facilitate supermarket shopping and other daily life activities for people who are blind or visually impaired.

We are committed to improving the lives of the visually impaired by learning what is important to them and taking action. We are creating partnerships with other organizations who can help us help others.

**Q. I'm interested in participating in the survey. What should I do now?**

**A.** Thank you so much for being a willing participant! The survey can be completed by clicking on the link below.

**Survey link:**[**https://forms.gle/3eEYKwb7JUXfuFTYA**](https://forms.gle/3eEYKwb7JUXfuFTYA)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All responses will be recorded and analyzed. Your insights are invaluable to us in making supermarkets more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

# **Blind-Biz by Penny Forward**

Penny Forward is thrilled to announce the launch of blind-biz, a platform dedicated to providing blind-owned businesses with a direct line of communication to their customers. By subscribing to this list, you will receive advertisements from our carefully vetted list of blind-owned businesses.

What to Expect:

* You will receive no more than one advertisement per day from each participating blind-owned business.
* This service is completely free for both blind business owners and supporters of blind-owned businesses.

Rules:

* Blind-owned businesses are welcome to post one advertisement per day.
* To apply to post ads, send an email to **blind-biz+owner@pennyforward.groups.io**.
* Customers may not post to the list but are encouraged to reply directly to any email to contact a business owner.

Join us in supporting blind entrepreneurs and discovering unique products and services designed with you in mind. Subscribe today and be part of a thriving community that champions innovation and accessibility. Send an email to **blind-biz+subscribe@pennyforward.groups.io**.

# **2025 Braille Calendars from Xavier Society**

It’s hard to believe we are more than halfway through 2024. That can only mean one thing: getting our braille calendars ready for 2025!

These handy, small spiral calendars contain the Saints and Feast days throughout the year, Holy Days of Obligation, as well as federal holidays for both the United States and Canada. Request yours here by emailing our Client Services Coordinator Saul Buchalter at **clientservices@xaviersocietyfortheblind.org**, or give him a call at (212) 473-7800 or toll-free 1-800-637-9193.