**Dots and Dashes**

**February 18, 2025**

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# **Working Hard to Keep You Up to Date**

The ACB national office is working hard to keep members up-to-date on current events in Washington, D.C. Things in our nation’s capital are changing rapidly and we want everyone to stay informed and know how to help advocate for the blind and low vision community. The advocacy team is utilizing the announce listserv to circulate quickly evolving news. The things shared will not come at pre-planned times and dates; information will be shared as it arises.

Please know that all of the same information is shared promptly on our website under news and the advocacy specific page under the quick links. We work hard to keep the website up to date, so we encourage members to visit it often for timely information. A link to the quick link is pasted below.

[**https://www.acb.org/updates-current-news-and-advocacy**](https://www.acb.org/updates-current-news-and-advocacy)

# **Register Now for the 25th Audio Description Institute!**

Register now for the Audio Description Project’s 25th Audio Description Institute, taking place virtually March 24-28, 1-5 p.m. Eastern. The fee is $575; two scholarships are available (details below). Space is limited.

[**Click to register now!**](http://weblink.donorperfect.com/ACBADInstituteMarch2025)

Registration will close on Tuesday, March 18, 2025. Zoom links to attend the institute will be emailed later that week.

Two full scholarships are available; priority will be given to people with disabilities. To be considered for a scholarship, send an email outlining how and why you are a strong candidate, your reason for requesting financial assistance, and your plans for implementing what you’ve learned in the ADI. Send the email to Kim Charlson, co-chair of the Audio Description Project, at kim.charlson@perkins.org, by March 2, 2025. Applicants will be notified of the status of their request for assistance by March 10, 2025.

If you have questions, contact Dr. Joel Snyder, jsnyder@audiodescribe.com.

# **Member on the Mic Is Back — And We Want to Hear from YOU!**

Hey ACB family! We're pleased to announce Member on the Mic is back, highlighting the incredible people who make up our community. A huge thank-you from the ACB Board of Publications to our current Member on the Mic team — Lisa Brooks, Tim Cumings, and Anthony Corona — for their talent and time, helping bring ACB members' voices to the ACB Voices Blog.

Each month, we feature a fellow member, sharing their journey, advocacy work, achievements, or wisdom. Look for a Member on the Mic on the ACB Voices blog in early March.

Know someone with a story worth sharing? Email Sharon Lovering with their name, why they'd be a great feature, their contact info, and their ACB affiliation, committee, or project. Submit nominations to **slovering@acb.org**. Please put Member on the Mic in the subject line.

Want to help bring these stories to life? If you have skills (or want to learn!) interviewing, editing, or transcription, we'd love to have you. If interested, email slovering@acb.org.

# **Guide Dog Book Club**

The next Guide Dog Book Club guest author will be New York Times best-selling author Suzannah Charleson tomorrow, February 19, 2025, at 7 p.m. Eastern. The book selection is “Scent of the Missing: Love and Partnership with a Search and Rescue Dog” (2010).

To join via Zoom, use this link:

[**https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3201714670?pwd=dU9XZGh3bDBwQzhULzkxM0pzOEdIUT09&omn=89996258983**](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3201714670?pwd=dU9XZGh3bDBwQzhULzkxM0pzOEdIUT09&omn=89996258983)

To join by phone, dial (312) 626-6799. Then use the following meeting ID and passcode:

Meeting ID: 320 171 4670

Passcode: 206615

# **Membership Focus Call**

The ACB Membership Committee’s monthly "Membership Focus" call will be held this Sunday, February 23, at 9 p.m. Eastern/6 p.m. Pacific. Discussion will focus on "How to maintain members by getting them involved in different aspects of your affiliate/chapter." Speakers include: Julie Brannon, past president of Washington Council of the Blind; Amanda Selm, past president of ACB Next Generation; and Doug Powell, president of AAVL. Check the Community Events schedule for the login information. It will also air on ACB Media 6 and in Clubhouse.

# **Iowa Council of the United Blind Scholarship**

The Iowa Council of the United Blind is offering a one-year non-renewable $2,500 college scholarship to be available for the 2025-2026 academic year. The scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school senior planning to attend on a full-time basis a fully accredited community college, college, or university. The ICUB membership invites eligible students with a broad range of business, professional, skilled/technical, or service career aspirations to apply.

All application materials should be submitted to the ICUB President by **April 15.** For more information, or to apply, visit [**https://www.icublind.org/post/announcing-the-2025-iowa-council-of-the-united-blind-scholarship**](https://www.icublind.org/post/announcing-the-2025-iowa-council-of-the-united-blind-scholarship). If you have questions, send an email to President@icublind.org.

# **AFB Webinar on AI for People with Disabilities**

AFB’s Public Policy and Research Institute (PPRI) will hold a webinar tomorrow, February 19th, at noon Eastern, breaking down findings from its report, “[Empowering or Excluding: Expert Insights on Inclusive Artificial Intelligence for People with Disabilities](https://click.everyaction.com/k/102227405/528502727/-732263662?sourceid=1091101&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMy8xLzcyODI3IiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImQ3MjU2MWJiLTc2ZWMtZWYxMS05MGNiLTAwMjI0ODJhOTRmNCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAic2xvdmVyaW5nQGFjYi5vcmciDQp9&hmac=W4eP2yZAMFO9krbgJOmIRMCK-BWoytq-I2UTKspM3mc=&emci=339bb96e-f9ea-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&emdi=d72561bb-76ec-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=8509542).” This webinar will be especially beneficial for innovators involved in developing and deploying AI technologies. To register, visit [**https://tinyurl.com/mw5euued**](https://tinyurl.com/mw5euued).

# **Slam the Scam with SSA**

Mark your calendars for Thursday, March 6th! The Social Security Administration and the Office of the Inspector General are partnering with other government agencies for the 6th annual Slam the Scam Day.

Visit [**Slam the Scam Resources**](https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https%3A//www.ssa.gov/scam/resources.html%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery/1/01010194b7aeca25-53d56ad8-9ef5-44cd-84c9-2920b87868ec-000000/pHbjwu2kMd3Xp3ZlzI3jrnByRsVOa-TVvbOvWlsu5TY%3D390) page for more information on this year’s campaign, including the organizations dedicated to helping us “Slam the Scam!”

For more information, contact SSA via email, OEA.net.post@ssa.gov.

# **Intro to Sight Loss Seminar**

The Hull Foundation and Learning Center will hold an Intro to Sight Loss Seminar March 11th – 14th. To find out more, visit [**https://hullflc.org/contact-us/**](https://hullflc.org/contact-us/), or call (503) 668-6195.

# **National Library Service Internship Opportunity**

This paid internship offers legally blind individuals the opportunity to work at NLS in areas that support services for the blind, including collections building, program delivery, and business management. The next session runs for 10 weeks during the summer of 2025.

Who is eligible? Currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students and those who have graduated within the past five years from an accredited two- or four-year college or university. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, legally blind, and able to work remotely.

A complete application package includes a cover letter expressing interest, a resume, a recent official or unofficial transcript, and an application form that is completed online. Apply by **Saturday, March 1, 2025.**

For more information, visit [**www.loc.gov/nls/about/internship-program**](https://www.loc.gov/nls/about/internship-program/).

# **Braille Challenge Writing Workshops**

High School Braille Readers, 10th to 12th grades

Saturdays, 10 AM to 12 PM Pacific on Zoom

03/16/2025 to 04/26/2025 - Writing Workshops

Join us for a virtual learning series centered around writing with everyone's favorite six-dot system. Develop your unique voice as a writer and share your ideas with the world! Find out how being literate in braille can give you a leg up in life and integrate the dots into your daily groove. You'll bond with a group of passionate blind and visually impaired youth who can appreciate the thrill of reading by touch. Students will grow as writers by studying with seasoned educators and connecting with blind and VI leaders to discuss ideas that are changing the world for the better. Student writers will learn about opportunities to highlight youth voices through publishing. Both learning tracks will be fun, welcoming spaces to grow as writers while making new friends.

**CLICK HERE TO** [**SIGN UP**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfhnhvwq4qKZCkrk4amFY0J8CmUmt9OqYs2xZtzdNWFdu3XDw/viewform?usp=dialog) **FOR THE BRAILLE CHALLENGE WRITING WORKSHOPS. Space is limited. Register by March 1, 2025.**

# **Invitation to Participate in an Online Survey Study at Columbia University**

You are invited to participate in an online survey at Columbia University that explores views on inclusion of people with disabilities in a type of health research called “Precision Medicine Research.” Precision Medicine Research looks at a person’s genetics, environment, and lifestyle. Knowledge from this type of research can help physicians improve prevention and diagnosis of diseases and develop new treatments.

The survey will be conducted online (link below).

[**Click here to participate in our study**](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8102215/Links-to-3-Versions-of-the-Trust-Study-National-Survey)

If you have any questions, contact Dr. Maya Sabatello at **trust-study@cumc.columbia.edu**.

# **AFB Scholars Program Now Taking Applications**

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has launched the [AFB Scholars Program](https://click.everyaction.com/k/101893351/527404341/217940653?sourceid=1091081&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMy8xLzcyODI3IiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogIjQzMTIyYTNhLWUxZTctZWYxMS05MGNiLTAwMjI0ODJhOTRmNCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAic2xvdmVyaW5nQGFjYi5vcmciDQp9&hmac=Ubcap-UotVg7mp-Ra64uIkYsx9WvMg-Kp81U9MLaiqs=&emci=c7a3041b-68e5-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&emdi=43122a3a-e1e7-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=8509542), providing substantial scholarships for blind students in the United States. The scholarship awards are available for graduate and undergraduate students who meet the qualifications for legal blindness. The maximum amount available will be $8k for community college students, $20k for undergraduate students, and $28k for graduate students.

The first round of scholarships will be awarded for the coming 2025-2026 school year. The application deadline is **March 21, 2025**. Visit [**www.afb.org/scholarships**](http://www.afb.org/scholarships)to learn more.

# **Virtual Diabetes Classes**

Accessible Pharmacy Services Diabetes Lifestyle Coaches announces that new classes are starting this spring. These courses are taught by blind and sighted Diabetes Lifestyle Coaches, including a course in American Sign Language for the Deaf community.

There will be 22 virtual sessions spread out over the course of one year. To register, send a message to **info@AccessiblePharmacy.com**.

# **Survey on Social Media Platform for People who are Blind or have Low Vision**

Alan Toleu, a User Experience Designer, is seeking input regarding a social media platform designed for people who are blind or have low vision. You can fill out a survey by visiting [**https://forms.gle/NhLE8X6eF58imxXS8**](https://forms.gle/NhLE8X6eF58imxXS8).

# **Xavier Society Celebrates 125th Anniversary**

The Xavier Society for the Blind is celebrating 125 years of helping generations of Catholics, either blind or vision-impaired, participate in worship through braille texts, large-type books and audio books.

So Malachy Fallon, executive director of the society, told OSV News in a phone interview that he wants to remind people that his organization — so reliable for so many years that some may take it for granted — is still highly active and producing new products.

To read the full article, visit **https://tinyurl.com/mrx3nxtv**.