**Dots and Dashes**

**January 6, 2025**

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# **Call for Nominees for ACB Awards**

Do you know someone who has made a profound impact on the blindness community? Consider nominating them for an ACB award! Information for the McDaniel, George Card, Robert S. Bray, James R. Olsen, Margarine G. Beaman, and the Affiliate Outreach Awards can be found at <https://www.acb.org/call-nominees-2025-acb-awards>. The submission deadline is 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on April 1, 2025. Nominations should be sent to [acbawards1@gmail.com](mailto:acbawards1@gmail.com). This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize that special person during the upcoming ACB convention!

# **Call for Nominations for the 2025 ADP Awards**

The ADP Awards are sponsored by the ACB’s Audio Description Project to recognize achievement in audio description in seven categories, including media, performing arts, museums, the public sector, and research and development. Nominations will be accepted from January 6 to April 7, 2025, and the winners will be announced in July at the American Council of the Blind’s conference and convention.

For more details about the criteria, visit [**https://www.acb.org/announcing-call-nominations-2025-adp-awards**](https://www.acb.org/announcing-call-nominations-2025-adp-awards). To nominate yourself, your local theatre or museum, or a well-known institution, complete and submit the nomination form at [**https://forms.gle/G8Wxwuf4kKzrP6Ds7**](https://forms.gle/G8Wxwuf4kKzrP6Ds7) **by April 7, 2025.**

# **Introducing the BADIE Blog!**

The Audio Description Project (ADP) and the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) encourage students who are blind or have low vision to engage with audio description. We’ve expanded our essay contest into the BADIE Blog, with multiple opportunities to be published and win great prizes.

The BADIE Blog will accept entries from January through June 2025. Every month, selected submissions will appear on the blog. We’ll all enjoy a summer holiday in July and August, and winners (chosen from the published essays) will be announced at the beginning of the next school year.

## **How Students Can Submit Their Essays:**

1. Browse the free DCMP library at [**https://dcmp.org/**](https://dcmp.org/)[.](http://www.dcmp.org/)

2. Watch any audio-described film (there are more than 6,000 educational titles to choose from!).

3. Write an evaluation of the film’s audio description, commenting on the ways the audio description enhanced or detracted from your experience.

4. Visit [**https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog**](https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog) to read award-winning essays and submit your own entry. You’ll also find guidelines and prize details, tips on writing a good review, and information about how audio description is created.

## **Timeline and Prizes:**

* Winners will be chosen from the essays submitted and published between January 1 and June 30, 2025.
* There will be first, second, and third place winners in each category, as well as a grand prize winner who will be awarded an iPad mini and invited to record an award presentation for the Audio Description Awards Gala.
* Teachers of first-place winners also receive prizes.
* Entries are accepted throughout the school year, so don’t delay! The last chance to be considered for publication and a prize for the 2024-25 school year is **June 30, 2025.**

For more information, visit [**https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog**](https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog).

# **New Year, New Goals**

Are you interested in energizing your chapter or affiliate to achieve successes in 2025 and beyond?  Would you like to have more of your members participate in your projects?  Join Jeff Thom and Doug Powell from the Berl Colley Leadership Training Institute on January 9 at 9pm ET for proven techniques stemming from creating updated Vision, Mission, Core Values, and smart goals. Check Thursday’s list of Community Events for the Zoom link and phone information.

# **Community Volunteer of the Month**

The Community Support Committee would like to congratulate DeAnna Noriega, who was voted Volunteer of the Month for November. Thank you, DeAnna, for all you do for our ACB Community!

# **Advocacy Update: Meet Peter Heide**

On this episode of the ACB Advocacy Update, we get to know one of our newly elected board members from the 2024 annual Convention. Claire and Swatha speak with Peter Heide to learn more about who he is and his hopes as a member of the ACB board. Listen to the podcast at [**https://acb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co/**](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Facb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR02drBf6-B6D9GgO4TYr5W8exns2FNfKpg7DC1-ljblZ23BhEZ7dp10O9E_aem_lfvmAvL19NFYaw__0akivA&h=AT1vyBpdrzo_0Q877PpzczC5S4rzGrF85rsks_wVGbZNXFKe9caFgkMc-qbXCfSOT3hX-PAhTWbqGAHGqNhpIhAi3_4bVLdJzfC5mLPK_zwuXZ3AasDUKq05VnJQ_zXKfw&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT2zWg8Yivm5Sk_WERQOsgUWE2CjQm40WweBSUSB6Ai8UMIf5C798kPv6VlkjYkOgdwkHuP5Sn_X5vD1kFAoGXq6kxHyro3Bff9L5ewMz3fX6WhCMomGbpB4iA4M17CgxgKkAY1h4qykdScegF-SBvHWi_TY3p4m3Dg2Bl6FZsrW81VFwk6WqC4n1XGrJYnSmHRqU7KB6mkoM-GVcnAT9jEmMiM).

# **Applications Open for AFB's Digital Accessibility Bootcamp**

The American Foundation for the Blind's Digital Accessibility Bootcamp is a three-month summer experience that provides students studying computer science or a related field with the opportunity to develop foundational skills in assistive technology and inclusive design and development practices. Participants will receive hands-on learning and mentorship from industry experts, gaining valuable skills that will give them a competitive edge in the rapidly growing field of accessibility. Applications for the Summer 2025 Digital Accessibility Bootcamp are now open: [**https://afb.org/internships/bootcamp**](https://afb.org/internships/bootcamp). Apply by January 31, 2025.

# **Bringing Stories to Life: Go Behind the Mic with Audio Description Performers**

What makes audio description truly resonate? In “A Voice Actor’s Guide to Audio Description Performance,” Roy Samuelson dives into the nuance, timing, and artistry that bring stories to life for audio description (AD) audiences. Whether you’re a seasoned pro or just curious about the process of crafting and performing AD, this book offers tips and insights to deepen your understanding of how AD professionals create meaningful connections to storytelling.

Go behind the scenes and discover how AD performers make their voices a bridge to the visual. Learn more and grab your copy at [**roysamuelson.com/book**](http://roysamuelson.com/book). “A Voice Actor’s Guide to Audio Description Performance” is written and performed by Roy Samuelson.

# **Urgent Eyedrop Recall**

Alcon Laboratories is voluntarily recalling one lot of their Systane Lubricant Eye Drops Ultra PF, Single Vials On-the-Go, which are in a 25-count package and are used to relieve dry eyes. The Texas-based company got a customer complaint of foreign material inside one of the sealed vials, which was determined "to be fungal in nature," according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

If the contaminated drops are used, the fungus could cause an eye infection that may threaten the users' vision, and is potentially life-threatening for immunocompromised patients. No customers have reported an infection thus far, according to the [FDA recall announcement.](https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/alcon-laboratories-issues-voluntary-nationwide-recall-one-1-lot-systane-lubricant-eye-drops-ultra-pf)

These recalled eye drops were shipped to retailers nationwide and also are available online, the FDA said.

The affected Systane Lubricant Eye Drops Ultra PF, Single Vials On-the-Go is limited to lot number 10101, with an expiration date of September 2025. They come in a green and pink carton, and again are sold in quantities of 25. The lot number and expiration date are printed on the back of the box, and on each individual vial.

Any customers who have these eyedrops in their home are advised to stop using them immediately and return them to the place of purchase for a replacement or refund.

Consumers with questions regarding this recall can contact Alcon Laboratories at 1-800-241-5999 between 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (Eastern), Monday to Friday.

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

We invite you 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.

Our study is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

You are invited to participate in this study because you live in the United States and are:

* A deaf adult
* A hard-of-hearing adult
* A blind or low-vision adult
* An adult with a mobility disability

Your views are valuable to us.

If you agree, we will ask you questions about your views on health research, especially Precision Medicine Research. You will also be asked to provide some background information about you (e.g., your race, ethnicity, etc.). You do NOT need to have prior knowledge about Precision Medicine Research to participate in this study.

It will take up to about 45 minutes to complete the survey.

The survey will be conducted online (see link below). You can complete the survey on a tablet, computer or smartphone. You can ask another person to help you to complete the study. We can also schedule a one-on-one Zoom meeting to support survey completion. If you need any disability accommodations, please let us know.

Please note, the survey is currently in English. It will soon be available also in Spanish and ASL. If you prefer to complete the survey in Spanish or ASL, let us know by clicking on the link below. We will let you know when these languages are available.

If we have questions about your survey responses, we will reach out to you to discuss.

Only the research team will have access to your responses. In the future, we may share data from this study with other researchers. We will NOT share your identifying information with anyone outside of the research team.

The study will help us understand how Precision Medicine Researchers and research institutions can create health research studies that include, and are respectful of, people with disabilities.

You are offered a $30 gift card for completing our online study.

[**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, please contact the lead researcher, Dr. Maya Sabatello, at [**trust-study@cumc.columbia.edu**](mailto:trust-study@cumc.columbia.edu).

# **Update on Social Security Overpayment Policies**

The National Center on Law and Elder Rights will hold a free webinar, Update on Social Security Overpayment Policies, this Thursday, January 9, 2025, beginning at 2 p.m. Eastern (11 a.m. Pacific).

In 2024, SSA made major changes to its policies on overpayments. This training will review the recent changes SSA has made to various overpayment policies, with a particular focus on the waiver application process.

This webinar will cover:

* An overview of overpayments at the Social Security Administration
* Changes to overpayment policies SSA made in 2024
* Updates to the waiver application process

**Presenters:**

* Kate Lang, Director, Federal Income Security, Justice in Aging
* John S. Whitelaw, Advocacy Director, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (Delaware)

To register, visit [**https://tinyurl.com/bdej9k67**](https://tinyurl.com/bdej9k67).

# **Access Board AI Findings**

As part of the Developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) Equity, Access & Inclusion for All Series, the Access Board will present its preliminary findings on the risks and benefits of AI for people with disabilities. The presentation will take place virtually on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. (ET).

To attend, use the following:

Zoom Link: [**https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1601731944**](https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1601731944)

Meeting ID: 160 173 1944

Passcode: 524293

For more information, visit [**https://tinyurl.com/2k9d7dt4**](https://tinyurl.com/2k9d7dt4).

# **EEOC Workshops**

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is pleased to announce its first workshop series of the new year on the Americans with Disabilities Act. Join experts in the field for these exciting learning opportunities.

The topic for January 14, 2025 is the ADA and Accommodations: What Employers Need to Know. In Part I, you will learn ADA basics, common challenges, effective strategies, and how to handle complex accommodation requests. Visit [**https://tinyurl.com/23tc8zuu**](https://tinyurl.com/23tc8zuu) to view the agenda. To register, go to [**https://tinyurl.com/e7f22pdp**](https://tinyurl.com/e7f22pdp).

February 6th’s topic is Tackling Employer Defenses Under the ADA. During Part II, you will master employer defenses under the Americans with Disabilities Act, including undue hardship and direct threat analysis, by utilizing current court decisions and case studies. To view the agenda, go to [**https://tinyurl.com/4j7dwz5r**](https://tinyurl.com/4j7dwz5r).

Visit [**https://bit.ly/EEOCTraining2025**](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fbit.ly%2FEEOCTraining2025%3Futm_content=%26utm_medium=email%26utm_name=%26utm_source=govdelivery%26utm_term=/2/01000193648c97ef-da80377d-e0c4-46b2-a2b0-96305517e03e-000000/PbVpM_3mVoQgLtDtiem1CyKVARQSrCxxyI6Xmkjv8mU=380) for more information about each workshop and to register.

# **New Spanish Resources Available from the NRTC**

Independence begins with access to the right tools. Our collection of Spanish resources was created for Spanish-speaking individuals who are blind or have low vision (B/LV). These tools offer practical guidance on topics such as transportation, disclosing visual impairment, and working while receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Lack of access to reliable transportation is a barrier that keeps many B/LV individuals from finding and maintaining employment. One of our most popular resources, "A Transportation Guide for Persons Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision," has been translated into Spanish and is now available on our website. It contains helpful information about finding and using transportation services effectively.

Visit our [**Spanish resources page**](https://www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu/spanish-resources) to explore these resources and share them with others!

# **Apply Now for AAPD’s Fall Internship Program**

The 2025 AAPD Fall Internship Program Application is now open!

AAPD’s Internship Program places students and recent graduates with disabilities in paid internships. Interns build leadership skills, explore career opportunities, and connect with the disability community.

The 2025 Fall Internship Program will be fully virtual and part-time. The program will run for 14 weeks, from September 2 to December 5, 2025.

Interns will:

* Attend a virtual kickoff call on April 4, 2025
* Work 15 hours a week
* Attend an optional in-person gathering in Washington D.C. during the week of July 21, 2025
* Participate in a virtual orientation on Sunday, August 24 from 12-4 p.m. Eastern with breaks
* Take a disability advocacy class every 2 weeks, currently planned for Fridays between 12-3 p.m. Eastern
* Connect with a virtual mentor
* Join virtual community events throughout the fall

Want to learn more? Join AAPD for a virtual information session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 from 4-5 p.m. Eastern time to learn more about the program and the application process and get your questions answered. CART and ASL will be provided. The session will be recorded and available on the AAPD website. To register for the information session, go to [**https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\_\_XzLrGPbS2iDfnnLCNW-2Q#/registration**](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__XzLrGPbS2iDfnnLCNW-2Q#/registration).

To apply, visit [**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FIP25**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FIP25).

# **Solidd Corp. Introduces Smartglasses at CES 2025**

SolidddVision (TM) Smartglasses, the first true vision correction for people living with vision loss due to macular degeneration, make their CES 2025 debut in Venetian Expo, Eureka Park booth #62037.

Soliddd's scientifically formulated and user-tested virtual reality smartglasses are lightweight and feel like normal eyeglasses. SolidddVision provides the first true vision correction — and, indeed, sight restoration — for those living with vision loss due to macular degeneration.

The smartglasses use Soliddd's unique and proprietary lens arrays, which resemble a fly's eye, to project multiple separate images to the areas of the retina that are not damaged. This allows the brain to naturally construct stereopsis (the making of a 3D image in the brain) and a single full-field image with good acuity that feels like normal, in-focus sight.

For more information, visit [**https://www.soliddd.com/**](https://www.soliddd.com/).

# **Free Screening of National Geographic’s BLINK**

Picture Motion is thrilled to share the extraordinary new National Geographic Documentary Film, [BLINK](https://picturemotion.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a45587d6d85770726ade748ce&id=845d13ebe4&e=515950cf1b), directed by Edmund Stenson and the Academy Award-winning Daniel Roher ([Navalny](https://picturemotion.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a45587d6d85770726ade748ce&id=c3c9bfcfea&e=515950cf1b)).

BLINK tells the deeply moving story of the Pelletier family, who, upon learning that three of their four children will lose their sight to retinitis pigmentosa, set out on an unforgettable global journey to fill their visual memories with the beauty of the world. From swimming with dolphins to trekking the Annapurna mountain range, the family’s resilience and unbreakable bond shine through in every frame.

To celebrate the release of [**BLINK on Disney+**](https://picturemotion.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a45587d6d85770726ade748ce&id=a6d09ea226&e=515950cf1b), Picture Motion is launching an exclusive screening window, providing free access to the film and a discussion & action guide and promotional toolkit. Screenings can be hosted virtually, in person, or as hybrid events until January 31, 2025. French subtitles and audio descriptions are available upon request to ensure accessibility for audiences.

To access the film, go to [**https://screenings.picturemotion.com/e/blink**](https://screenings.picturemotion.com/e/blink) and use the code **natgeorp**.