

*Two blind students
examine a
tactile map.*

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND





PRODUCE
FLORAL
NUTS
SALAD BAR
HOT FOOD BAR

DELI
POTATOES
DRIED FRUIT

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BAXTER'S

We Believe

“The real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight. The real problem is the misunderstanding and lack of information that exist. If a blind person has proper training and opportunity, blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance.”

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is the largest organization of blind people and people with low-vision in the United States. Founded in 1940, the Federation has grown to over fifty thousand members. The organization consists of affiliates and local chapters in every state, in the District of Columbia, and in Puerto Rico. Members gather in chapter meetings each month, and there are conventions of Federation affiliates every year. All affiliates are represented at an annual national convention. We also do our work through special interest divisions and committees. Blind teachers, blind lawyers, blind entrepreneurs, blind students, blind clerics, blind engineers, blind people in the social sciences, parents of blind children, and others provide each other with information and support.

The Mission

The mission of the National Federation of the Blind is to serve as a means for blind people to come together to work collectively to improve our lives. By providing public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, literature and materials about blindness, specialized aids and appliances, adaptive equipment, and support for blind people and their families, the members of the NFB strive to spread the word that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on equal terms with their sighted peers. The National Federation of the Blind consists of blind people throughout the United States working together to achieve democratically adopted goals. Our members meet in local chapters in cities throughout the nation to consider the problems of blindness on the local level and to carry out national programs in their local communities. Because we have pursued this course of action from our inception, we are known as the Voice of the Nation's Blind. Underlying our purpose is the firm belief that blind people must be a primary element in the solutions affecting their lives. By engaging in self-help, mutual assistance, and concerted action, we speak for ourselves and promote our own self-sufficiency.

Our Goal

The goal of the National Federation of the Blind is the complete integration of the blind into society on the basis of equality. The organization works to change widely held but false beliefs that the blind are helpless and incompetent. Our members seek out individuals needing our help in all parts of the nation. To achieve our goals, we conduct programs to educate the public about the true ability of the blind, in every situation, to function at the same level as their sighted peers.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

I have served as President of the National Federation of the Blind since 1986, and each year brings new educational programs, new technologies, new research, new training, and new innovations that enhance the quality of life for the 1.3 million Americans who are blind or have low vision. The year 2008 was no exception. But it would not have been such an exciting year without your constant support, so let me first take the opportunity to thank you for your generosity and for your commitment to the cause of equality, opportunity, and security for the blind. The monetary donations you make, the volunteer time you commit, and your sharing of the truth about blindness with your family and friends advance our cause and make our movement stronger, and for that I express my profound gratitude. Let me now tell you about some of the exciting things your support brought to fruition this past year.

As many of you know, in 2006 the National Federation of the Blind, working with Kurzweil Technologies, brought to market the first portable reading device for the blind, the Kurzweil–National Federation of the Blind Reader. The year 2008 began with the launch of a new iteration of this device, the knfbReader Mobile. This new reader combines the powerful character recognition and text-to-speech technology featured in what is now called the Reader Classic with the latest in cellular phone technology. The reader software has been paired with a state-of-the-art cell phone with a high-resolution camera to create the first pocket-sized reading device for the blind. The cell phone camera is used to snap a picture of a document, and the powerful optical character recognition software translates the document into synthesized speech in a matter of seconds. The software has also been enhanced with the ability to highlight text on the screen as it is read aloud, making it useful for people with learning disabilities like dyslexia. Reading technology for the blind has certainly come a long way since Raymond Kurzweil invented the first reading machine for the blind in 1975; that device was the size of a washing machine. Now, a blind person can read a restaurant menu, text the kids to make sure they are safely home from school, and call to set up a business meeting, all with the same device. The National Federation of the Blind is committed to continued improvements to this technology, giving blind people unprecedented access to the printed word.

For the second year in a row, the National Federation of the Blind kicked off its national convention (held in Dallas, Texas) with a March for Independence. The theme of this year's march, which helps to raise funds for the programs of the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute and our affiliates across the nation and beyond, was "A Walk for Opportunity." For the blind, nothing represents opportunity more powerfully than Braille, the tactile reading and writing code. It was therefore only fitting that the march concluded with a rally at Dallas's beautiful Victory Plaza at American Airlines Center, during which the Director of the United States Mint unveiled the design of the Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar, which commemorates the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the code's inventor in 1809. Proceeds from the sale of this beautiful coin—which is also the first coin in United States history to feature Braille characters that a blind person can read—will fund a major initiative to reverse a shocking downward trend in Braille literacy. Currently only 10 percent of blind children are learning Braille, even though mastery of the code is correlated with better educational and employment opportunities for the blind. The Braille Readers are Leaders initiative is an unprecedented campaign with the goal of doubling the number of blind children learning Braille by 2015. To learn more about the Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar and the Braille Readers are Leaders campaign, please visit www.braille.org.



Since it opened in 2004, the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute—our state-of-the-art research and training facility—has conducted programs to encourage the participation of blind middle and high school students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects. STEM fields have falsely been thought to be closed to the blind, and so these programs are critically important because they develop educational techniques that enhance the

participation of blind students in the science classroom while giving the students confidence that they can succeed in the careers of their choice. 2008 saw the expansion of these unique STEM academies to include elementary school students, ages eight to twelve, with the first Junior Science Academy. For four days, these young scientists learned about the environment and about alternative energy sources through hands-on experiments, while their parents learned how to set high expectations for their blind children and how to use various techniques to help their children gain independence and self confidence. As always, the program was conducted by blind mentors, thereby reinforcing to these students and their parents the message that blind people are normal individuals who, given proper training and opportunity, can live independent, productive, and happy lives.

These are just a few of the exciting and innovative programs that your support helped to create in 2008, and you can read more about them and many others in the following pages. The year 2009 is already bringing new challenges and opportunities, and with your invaluable help, there is no doubt that it will be another outstanding year for the blind of America.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marc Maurer, President
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



and better employment opportunities and higher earnings for blind people. Following Director Moy's presentation, three young Braille readers presented a resolution expressing the commitment of the National Federation of the Blind to Braille literacy and to the future of America's blind children.

All of the proceeds raised by the March for Independence benefit both local projects and the programs and initiatives of the NFB Jernigan Institute—programs like the 2008 Junior

Second March for Independence and Launch of the Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar



Continuing a tradition begun at the 2007 convention of the National Federation of the Blind in Atlanta, the kickoff event for the 2008 convention was the March for Independence. This year the march took place in beautiful downtown Dallas, with participants walking from the Hilton Anatole Hotel, headquarters of the convention, to Victory Plaza at American Airlines Center. As in 2007, the march concluded with a rally. This year, the rally focused on the launch of the Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar by the United States Mint. The Mint's director, Ed Moy, was on hand to unveil the official design for this beau-

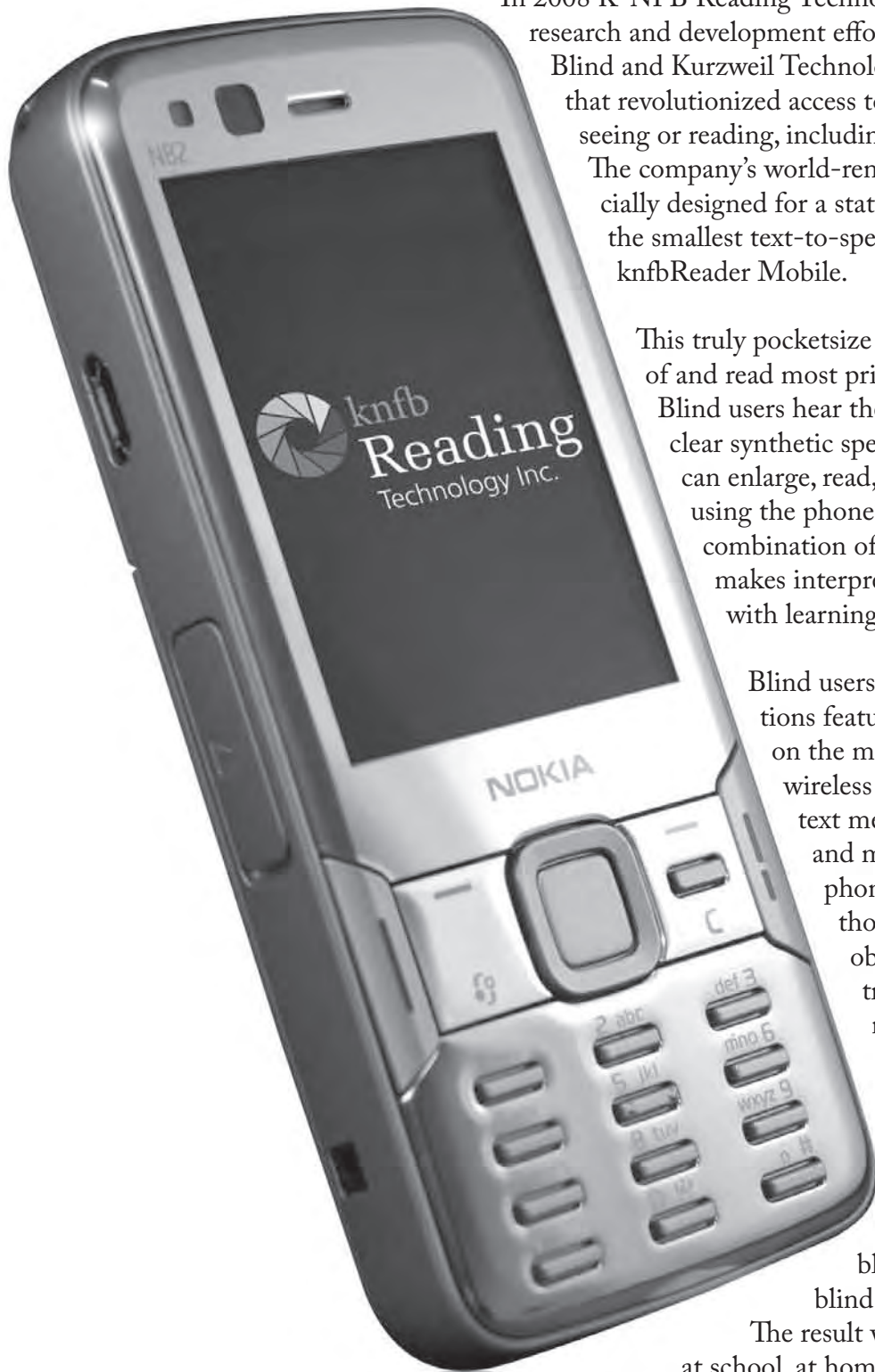
tiful commemorative coin, which features a portrait of Louis Braille on the obverse or "heads" side and the word "Braille" written in readable tactile Braille code on the reverse or "tails" side. Sales of this coin will benefit the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to double the number of blind children reading Braille by 2015, establish a national certification standard for teachers of Braille, and create other programs and initiatives to reverse the downward trend in Braille literacy. Currently, only about 10 percent of blind children in the United States are learning Braille, even though there is a correlation between use of the code



Science Academy, the Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium, mentoring programs, seminars for blind children and their parents, Braille literacy programs and initiatives, youth leadership and training seminars, and a vast assortment of other educational, social research, training, and advocacy programs.

knfbReader Mobile

In 2008 K-NFB Reading Technology, Inc., a company combining the research and development efforts of the National Federation of the Blind and Kurzweil Technologies, Inc., unveiled an exciting product that revolutionized access to print for anyone who has difficulty seeing or reading, including the blind and learning disabled. The company's world-renowned reading software was especially designed for a state-of-the-art mobile phone to create the smallest text-to-speech reading device in history: the knfbReader Mobile.



This truly pocket-size reader enables users to take pictures of and read most printed materials at the push of a button. Blind users hear the contents of the document read in clear synthetic speech, while users who can see the screen can enlarge, read, track, and highlight printed materials using the phone's large and easy-to-read display. The combination of text-to-speech and tracking features makes interpreting text much easier for individuals with learning disabilities.

Blind users also have access to all of the functions featured in the most advanced cell phones on the market: video and music playback, GPS, wireless communications, photography, e-mail, text messaging, calendar and task functions, and more. The combination reader and cell phone weighs 4.2 ounces and can store thousands of printed pages with easily obtainable extra memory. Users can transfer files to computers or Braille notetakers in seconds.

No other device in the history of technology has provided such portability and quick access to print materials. The National Federation of the Blind promotes equal opportunity for the blind, and the knfbReader Mobile makes blind people dramatically more independent. The result will be better performance at work, at school, at home, and everywhere else we go. The knfbReader Mobile has the ability to improve substantially the quality of life for the growing number of blind people and people who are losing vision, including seniors.

PROGRAM AND SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



The 2008 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards

Each year the National Federation of the Blind distributes Dr. Jacob Bolotin cash awards at its annual convention. These awards recognize individuals and organizations working in the field of blindness that have made outstanding contributions toward achieving the full integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality. The Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award Program is funded through the generosity of Dr. Bolotin's nephew and niece, Alfred and Rosalind Perlman. The late Mrs. Perlman established the Alfred and Rosalind Perlman Trust to endow the award program. Mrs. Perlman also wrote *The Blind Doctor: The Jacob Bolotin Story*. The book was published by Blue Point Books and is available through the National Federation of the Blind.

Dr. Jacob Bolotin (1888-1924) was a blind physician who lived and



practiced in Chicago in the early part of the twentieth century. Dr. Bolotin fought ignorance and prejudice to gain entrance to medical school and the medical profession. He became one of the most respected physicians in Chicago during his career, which spanned the period from 1912 until his death, and was particularly known for his expertise on diseases of the heart and lungs. Bolotin used his many public speaking engagements to advocate for the employment and full integration of the blind into society. Interested in young people in general and blind youth

in particular, Dr. Bolotin established one of the first Boy Scout troops consisting entirely of blind boys and served as its leader.

The first-ever Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards, totaling \$100,000, were presented to ten innovators in the blindness field at the National Federation of the Blind's convention in Dallas on Friday, July 4, 2008. Awards in the amount of \$30,000 were given to Dr. George Kerscher, a pioneer in creating and distributing accessible electronic books to the blind, and collectively to BLIND, Inc., the Colorado Center for the Blind, and the Louisiana Center for the Blind. Deborah Kent Stein and Adaptap received \$10,000 cash awards. Ms. Stein was recognized for her efforts

in promoting the safety of blind pedestrians and others by drawing attention to the problem of silent vehicle technologies such as those used in hybrid and electric vehicles. Adaptap is an innovative solution for blind swimmers that helps them maintain awareness of lane boundaries and pool walls. Noreen Grice, author of astronomy books with tactile illustrations for blind students; Bookshare.org, an online community distributing accessible e-books; Linda Miller, a longtime leader in the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico; and Robert Leslie Newman, who publishes short stories intended to spark thought and discussion among blind Americans about the nature and effects of blindness, were each awarded \$5,000.

NFB-NEWSLINE®

Since July 1995, the National Federation of the Blind has operated the world's largest audible newspaper service for Americans who are blind or have other print disabilities. The service, free to eligible individuals, offers access to national and local newspapers, including the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. NFB-NEWSLINE® also offers magazines, including the *Economist*, the *New Yorker*, all three AARP publications, and *Diabetes Self-Management*; as well as five Spanish-language publications. Subscribers have access to over 280 publications and, as of 2006, TV listings through any touchtone phone. In 2008, 5,915 new subscribers signed up for the service, bringing the total as of December 2008 to 64,371. Subscribers called into the service 1,675,387 times in 2008 and a total of 32,793,945 minutes of news were delivered to subscribers; the number of minutes used increased by approximately 3.5 percent in 2008. In 2008 the service experienced a significant (near 75 percent) increase in the number of subscribers receiving content by e-mail; in total, subscribers received 1,156,020 e-mails. NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers also benefited from a dramatic increase in the variety of publications offered with the addition of 22 publications to the service, so that by the end of 2008 NFB-NEWSLINE® offered 91 of the top 100 American newspapers by circulation.



PROGRAM AND SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Scholarships

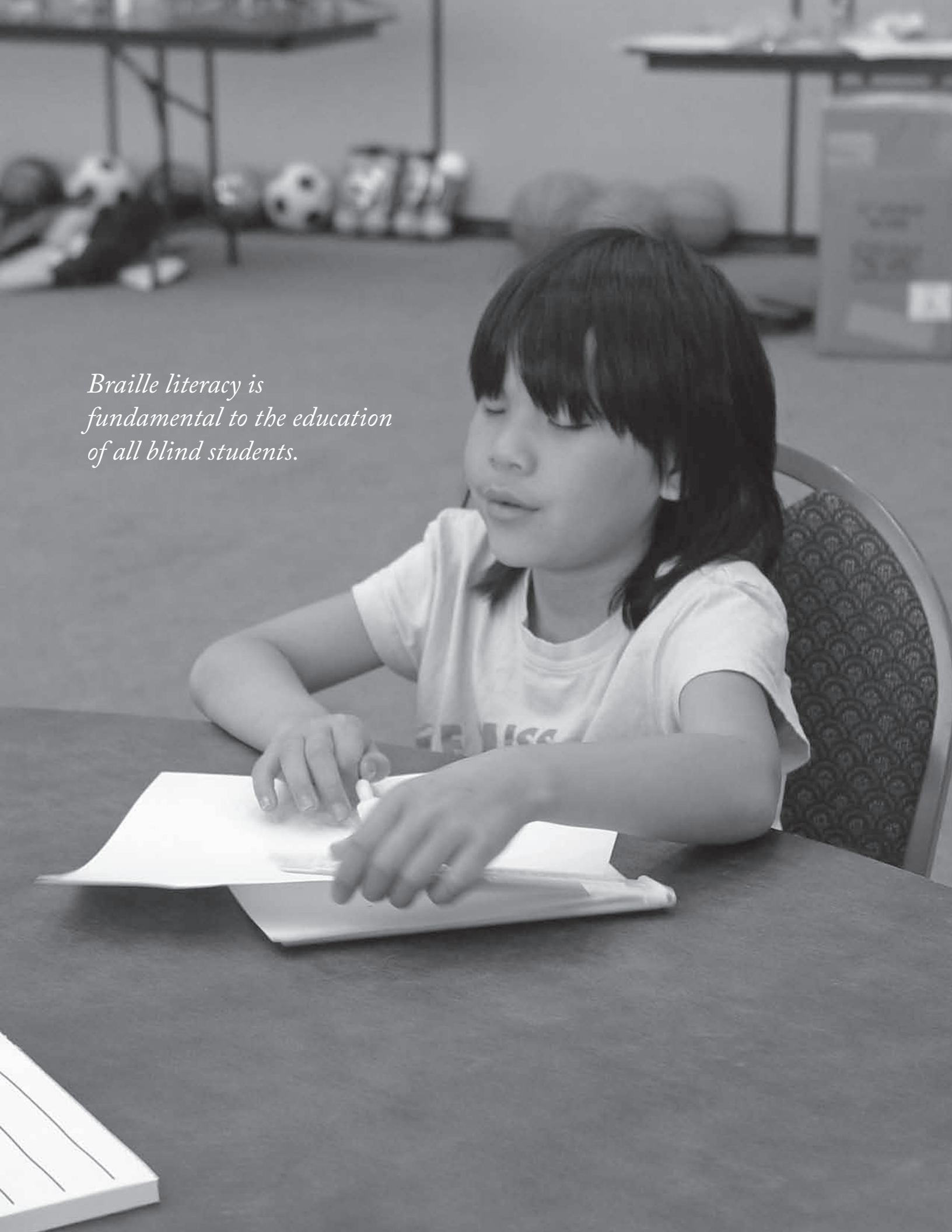
Each year, the National Federation of the Blind awards thirty scholarships to blind high school seniors and college or graduate school students from across the nation. The scholarship awards range from \$3,000 to \$12,000, and each year over \$100,000 is awarded to the thirty winners. The scholarships are presented at the banquet of the National Federation of the Blind convention, which in 2008 took place in Dallas, Texas. The winner of the \$12,000 Dr. Kenneth Jernigan Memorial Scholarship, named for the outstanding leader and visionary who served as president of the organization from 1968 to 1986, receives the honor of briefly addressing the banquet. Those receiving their second scholarships are designated as tenBroek Fellows in honor of the founder and first president of the National Federation of the Blind. In 2008, five of the thirty winners were tenBroek Fellows. In addition to his or her NFB scholarship, each 2008 winner also received a \$1,000 check and plaque from the Kurzweil Foundation, a brand new knfbReader Mobile presented by Ray Kurzweil himself, and the latest Kurzweil 1000 reading system software from Kurzweil Educational Systems.

The members of the 2008 scholarship class studied in fields ranging from political science and law to medicine and meteorology. They represent the best and brightest our country has to offer; and just as important, they represent the future leadership of the National Federation of the Blind. The 2008 Kenneth Jernigan Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$12,000 was won by Leslie Penko, an aspiring counselor from Cleveland, Ohio, who was also attending her first NFB national convention. In her brief address to the convention banquet, Ms. Penko expressed her gratitude to the people she had met during the week for teaching her that she could be herself and that there was no need to be self-conscious about her blindness.

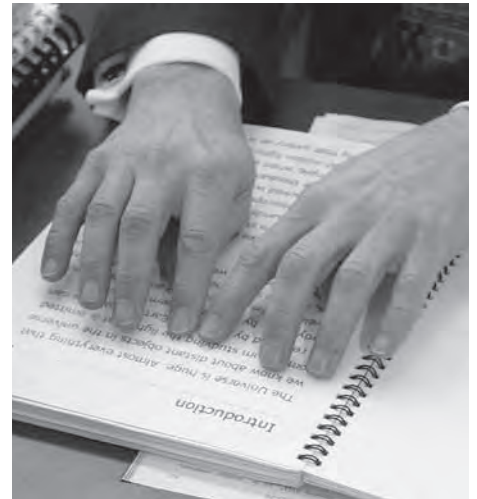
Here is a complete list of the scholarship winners and the awards they received:

- \$3,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarships: William Black, Kathryn Carroll, Chelsey Duranleau, Timothy Elder, Joseph Engel, Justin Hodge, Janice Jeang, John Mahler, Trevor Saunders, Matthew Simpson, A. J. Smith, Amanda Swanson, and André Tynes
- \$3,000 National Federation of the Blind Educator of Tomorrow Award: Tomás Cintrón Rivera
- \$3,000 NFB Computer Science Scholarship: Isaiah Wilcox
- \$3,000 Hermione Grant Calhoun Scholarship: Rebecca Ledder
- \$3,000 Kuchler-Killian Memorial Scholarship: Nikki Singh
- \$3,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Scholarship: Faith Penn
- \$3,000 Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship: Allison deFranco
- \$3,000 E. U. Parker Scholarship: Nijat Worley
- \$3,000 Guide Dogs for the Blind Dorthea and Roland Bohde Leadership Scholarship: Elizabeth Allred
- \$3,000 Network 2000 Betsy Zaborowski Memorial Scholarship: Carolyn Watson
- \$5,000 Michael Marucci Memorial Scholarship: Sara Minkara
- \$5,000 Jennica Ferguson Memorial Scholarship: Mika Baugh
- \$5,000 2008 Dan Ryles Memorial Scholarship: Andrew Johnson
- \$5,000 Hank LeBonne Scholarship: Alyssa Bates
- \$7,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarship: Buna Dahal
- \$7,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarship: Stacy Cervenka
- \$10,000 Charles and Melva T. Owen Memorial Scholarship: Michelle Gittens
- \$12,000 Kenneth Jernigan Memorial Scholarship (Donated by the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults): Leslie Penko

*Braille literacy is
fundamental to the education
of all blind students.*



PROGRAM AND SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Braille Initiatives

Braille Transcribing and Proofreading Certification Program

In late 2006 the NFB Jernigan Institute was awarded a contract by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress (NLS) to conduct that agency's National Braille Transcribing and Proofreading Certification Program. The NFB Jernigan Institute now conducts all administrative functions of the certification program, including the recruitment, training, and evaluation of individuals wishing to become certified Braille transcribers and proofreaders. The implementation

of this program by the National Federation of the Blind has significantly increased the number of qualified Braille transcribers and proofreaders, thus making Braille literature, instructional materials, and musical scores more available to the blind of America. As of December 2008 the program has submitted more than 465 individuals to the Library of Congress, indicating that they have successfully completed the certification courses in literature, mathematics, and Braille musical notation.

Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest and Literacy Program

The Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest and Literacy Program

helps blind children become good Braille readers. Good readers have confidence in themselves and in their ability to learn and to adapt to new situations throughout their lifetimes. Braille literacy is one of the highest predictors of success in later life for blind students. It is estimated that 85 percent of all employed blind people are proficient Braille readers, yet only about 10 percent of blind students are currently being taught Braille. The Braille Readers Are Leaders contest and literacy programs seek to increase the success rate of blind students by encouraging

them to read Braille. Around seven hundred blind children, from infants to high school seniors, participated in the Braille Readers Are Leaders literacy programs in 2008. No other single Braille literacy program in the nation involves so many children with such a wide spectrum of ages, degrees of vision loss, and other disabilities.

Braille Is Beautiful

This innovative diversity-awareness program teaches sighted students how to read and write the Braille alphabet and increases blind students' acceptance by their sighted peers. The program targets grades four through six; however, it has also been used effectively with younger or older children and in community youth programs, as well as in the classroom. Program kits for instructors, including videos, student workbooks, and Braille materials, are distributed through the NFB Independence Market.

Braille Letters from Santa

In December the National Federation of the Blind once again offered a special service for children who read Braille. For the third year blind children were able to submit Braille letters to Santa in care of the NFB Jernigan Institute, which sent Santa's replies in Braille and print. The NFB Jernigan Institute staff sent personalized replies from Santa Claus to all the letters received from blind children and

their parents. Each reply was in Braille and print so that parents and children could read together. Proficiency and fluency in reading Braille are best achieved by taking every opportunity to read Braille, and the Braille Letters from Santa program is another enjoyable way to implement that goal.



October is Meet the Blind Month

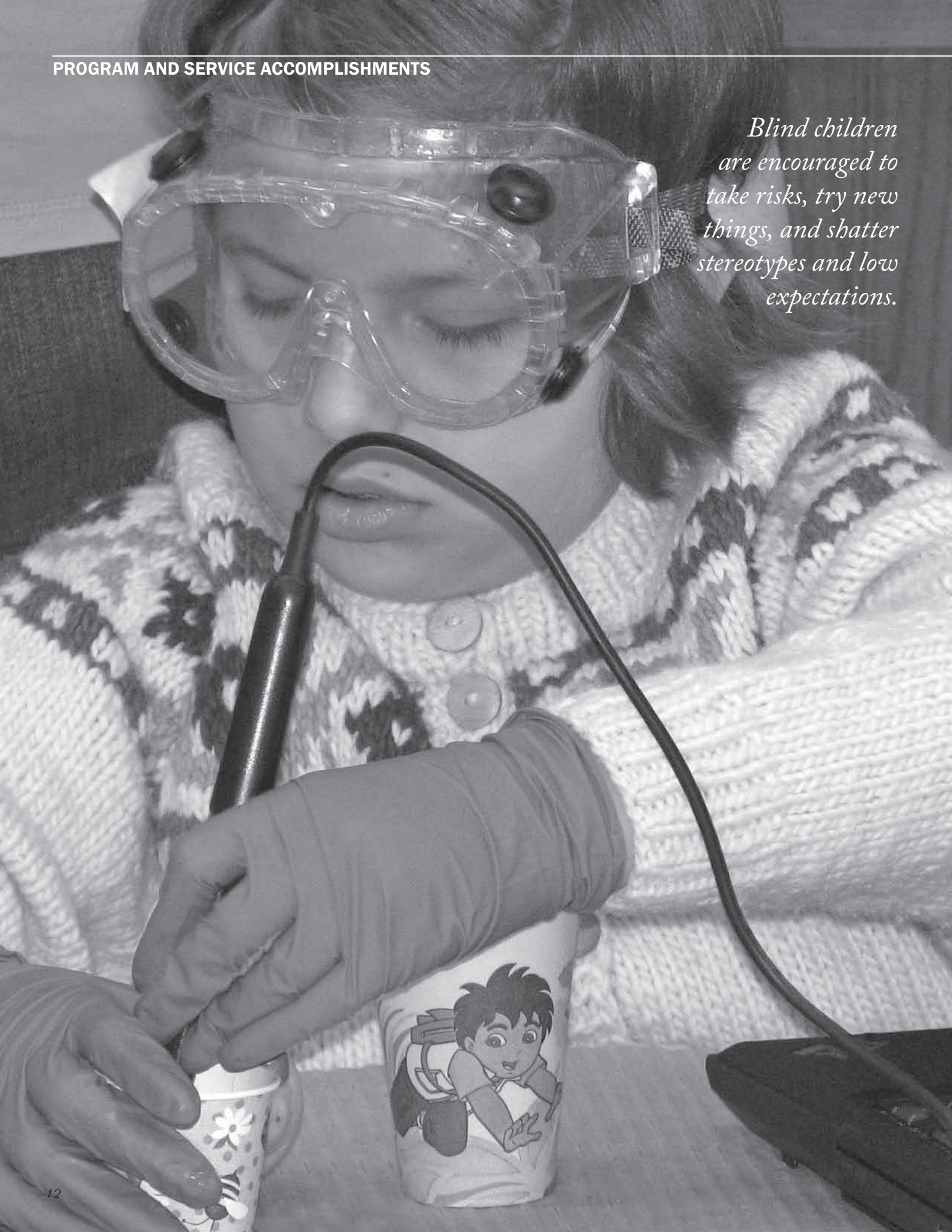
The Meet the Blind Month campaign is a coordinated nationwide project designed to provide opportunities for NFB members to reach out to others in their communities. In the seventh year

of Meet the Blind Month, the National Federation of the Blind once again increased the number of events held around the country. More than 400 events took place in October 2008, making this the most active year to date. Various activities at retail establishments, health fairs, libraries, senior centers, schools, and community events, often in partnership with local civic groups, let our neighbors know the facts about blindness and the National Federation of the Blind, ensuring that the public continues to learn more about our movement.

Early planning by affiliate and chapter presidents—along with President Maurer's providing organizers with free Braille alphabet cards, NFB literature, and Kernel books—again increased the number of events and energized our chapters to seek new ways to broadcast our message.

Many of our chapters promoted the beginning of the NFB's 2008-2009 Braille literacy campaign by presenting the Braille Is Beautiful program at local schools, screening the video *Jake and the Secret Code*, handing out Braille alphabet cards to students, and taking questions about Braille and about blindness. White Cane Walks, fundraising events, participation at community events, Meet the Blind Month proclamations issued by public officials, radio and TV interviews, newspaper articles, and literature tables at shopping malls were just some of the myriad ways our members reached out during October 2008.

Blind children are encouraged to take risks, try new things, and shatter stereotypes and low expectations.



Youth Initiatives

Junior Science Academy

During the summer of 2008, the NFB Jernigan Institute opened its doors to forty families from across the country for its first-ever Junior Science Academy. The NFB's National Center for Blind Youth in Science (NCBYS) celebrated its fifth year of successful science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs by expanding their scope with two sessions of this brand new initiative. This program for children ages eight to twelve was created to empower children at an earlier age than ever before with the skills necessary to pursue study in STEM subjects. This four-day event was jam-packed with activities designed to help show the children how various concepts could be taught and learned in a nonvisual way. Activities were designed to be challenging, but positive, thus filling the students with a sense of empowerment.

The children's curriculum included a number of hands-on activities on topics from environmental engineering to space science. The program jumped on the charge to "Go Green" as the children learned about alternative energy resources. One activity taught the children how natural resources could be harnessed to produce electricity by making fruit batteries. First the children inserted a nail and penny into a piece of fruit. After doing this, the children attached the clips from a talking voltmeter to the nail and the penny to see

how much voltage the fruit could produce as the fruit's juice interacted with the metal of the nail and the coin. They compared the results from different pieces of fruit to see which produced the highest voltage.



By the end of one day, the children had constructed some method for harnessing energy and producing electricity from each of the four kinds of alternative energy—water, wind, solar, and vegetation. The children then were divided into teams, given a specific biome (e.g. desert), and asked to design a "house of the future" which would

harness the resource that was most plentiful in its biome. Each house was constructed from everyday items like shoeboxes, paper plates, and straws; and included a water pump, solar cell, or fruit battery to produce electricity within it. A mock press conference was held for parents where the children presented their houses and explained why they chose the components they did. This proved to be a great way for the children not only to show what they had learned, but also to tell their parents about some of the accessible tools they used or nonvisual techniques they learned during the activities.

Noreen Grice, noted astronomer and author of several tactile books on space phenomena, also led a number of activities for the children. When teaching about various planetary environments, Noreen used things like containers of sand and hot packs (to represent the surface of Mars) or cotton balls sprayed with window cleaner (to represent the gaseous atmosphere of Jupiter).

Another noteworthy aspect of this program, in addition to the new alternative techniques being taught and discovered, was its involvement in new cutting edge mainstream curricula for general education elementary students. The Access Computing program from the University of Washington led the children in a variety of games and sorting puzzles to explain principles used by computer programmers. This new curriculum, *Computer Science Unplugged*, aims to teach

PROGRAM AND SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



computer science to elementary students in a hands-on, conceptual way and is being introduced now in many mainstream classrooms.

What sets the NFB Jernigan Institute youth science academies apart from other programs for blind youth is twofold: first, that blind children are mentored by successful blind role models, and second, that these children are encouraged to take risks, try new things, and shatter stereotypes and low expectations that are unintentionally placed on them. The highlights of the Junior Science Academy were those moments when a child or parent experienced a paradigm shift and suddenly realized that blindness did not have to be a barrier anymore. One such moment came when an eight-year-old girl was asked to open a padlock with a key during a treasure hunt activity. For most eight-year-olds, this would be a simple task, but not for her. She had never been expected to open a lock or use a key by herself before. Well-meaning individuals in her life had always done this for her because they believed it was something that vision was needed to do. After nearly twenty minutes of demonstration from a blind adult and practice herself, she successfully opened the lock. Her mother stood by watching with tears in her eyes at the realization that higher expectations were possible for her daughter. This is what these programs

are all about—raising the bar of expectations for our blind children.

One parent accompanied each child, and attended their own programming in conjunction with the children's activities. Their sessions were customized around the needs of parents of blind children and included presentations or hands-on activities designed to provide parents with a vast array of techniques and resources. The following are some of the parents' comments about their experiences:

It was an excellent decision to make this a "dual" child/parent event. The agenda for the parents was exceptionally well done. The content was clearly "spot-on" from the parent group interest and discussion I observed. The subject experts who led the meetings were very knowledgeable and well prepared.

—John Butler, AZ (Grandfather of Alex Butler, age 13)

My son had a great time, met new friends and learned new things as well. As a parent, I learned a great deal as well as far as the future for my son.

—Anita Velazquez, NJ (Mother of Matthew Howell, age 11)



PROGRAM AND SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*We have dreamed,
we have planned,
we have built;
now we devote
ourselves to a
future full of
opportunity.*



We came home with that action-packed information...and I have already put many things in motion... Don't you all feel so charged up!! I am ready to make some positive changes around here to help Dillon and to arm ourselves with as much information as I can about Dillon's eye condition.

—Kathleen Smith, WV (Mother of Dillon Smith, age 10)

The NFB Jernigan Institute plans to continue to provide such empowering programs for more blind children and youth in years to come. Those interested in reading more about this or any of the other NCBYS programs should visit www.blindscience.org.



NFB Teen Empowerment Academy

The NFB hosted the first-ever Teen Empowerment Academy in the summer of 2008. This eight-week residential program helped blind high school students from across the country build skills, gain work experience, and increase self-confidence. Each student took

classes in the following blindness skills: Braille, cane travel, independent living skills, and access technology. Using completely nonvisual techniques, the blind teens increased or improved their Braille skills, prepared meals for the first time independently, learned to cross busy streets, and most importantly, learned firsthand that vision loss does not have to stop them from leading an active and productive life.

In the evenings, the students participated in a variety of fun-filled activities that included bowling, swimming, going to the movies, and other student-initiated adventures. They also attended the

convention of the National Federation of the Blind. While at convention, the students met countless positive blind role models, learned about the latest in access technology, and interacted with many other blind teens.

To expose students to the working world, each student completed a paid internship that reflected their

job interests. Students worked at a variety of settings including a birthing clinic, a tutoring center, a geriatric hospital, and an animal shelter. Overall, the NFB Teen Empowerment Academy helped the students understand that with the right attitudes, training, and opportunities, they could truly fulfill their dreams and change the world.

NFB Youth Leadership Academies

One hundred and fifty high school students and mentors from over thirty states who participated in the 2007 Youth Slam gathered at the headquarters of the National Federation of the Blind to engage in a variety of leadership development and confidence building activities. To accommodate the large number of Youth Slam graduates, the NFB Affiliate Action department hosted four action-packed sessions. Participants learned about leadership, discussed blindness philosophy, and participated in activities like changing a car tire and using a chainsaw.

The academies also gave students opportunities to interact with positive blind role models. In this way, the students learned about college life, getting involved with community activities, and obtaining gainful employment. In the evenings, the students participated in social activities that helped form friendships and create many fond memories. These students will surely evolve into the next layer of leaders of the National Federation of the Blind.

Jernigan Institute

2008 represented the fifth year of innovation and imagination from the National Federation of the Blind's Jernigan Institute. The Institute, the only one of its kind in the world, continued to deepen its influence and further the mission of developing innovative education, technologies, products, and services to help the world's blind achieve new horizons of independence. Examples of the Institute's growing influence and impact are the expansion of Braille-related programs, the extension of science programs to elementary school age children and their families, and a growing network of Institute education programs being replicated in local NFB affiliates.

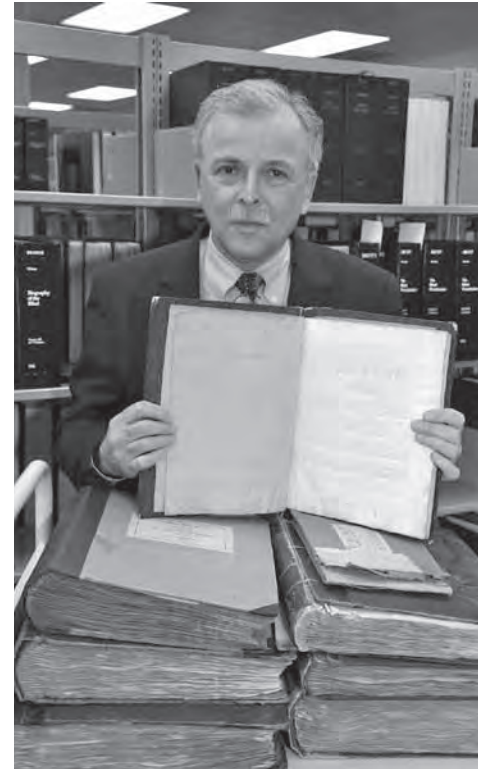
Jacobus tenBroek Law Symposium

The NFB Jernigan Institute helps to stimulate discussions about improved policies and programs to empower the blind to exercise their full right to live in the world. To that end, the NFB Jernigan Institute developed and hosted the first-ever Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium. This dynamic symposium was organized around the theme "Disability Law: From tenBroek to the Twenty-first Century" and featured a who's who of expert disability rights professionals from around the country. This symposium served to bring disability rights experts together to consider what steps still need to be taken to ensure the right of all people with disabilities to participate fully in society. The symposium further illuminated the tremendous contributions that Jacobus tenBroek, founder of the NFB and its president for nearly twenty-eight years, made as the earliest and most insistent voice for the legal rights of all people with disabilities. Every distinguished speaker noted tenBroek's vision and leadership in setting the foundation for every significant advancement in the civil rights of people with disabilities. A short documentary film about tenBroek's contributions was developed as a result of the symposium and the entire proceedings were published in the *Texas Journal of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*.

Access Technology

The Jernigan Institute continues to house the world's top experts on access technology for the blind, the only accessible home showcase of mainstream consumer electronics that are designed in such a way that they are "usable" by the blind, and the most comprehensive access technology evaluation center—the International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind (IBTC). In 2008, Institute access technology specialists were asked to present at many national conferences, including a session at Oracle's Open World Conference in San Francisco. In addition to the popular Technology Answer Help Line, new Internet-based services were added such as an Access Technology Blog and Access Technology Tips (providing specialized resource knowledge to consumers).

Our mission to improve accessibility and usability of technology was advanced by creating new partnerships with many manufacturers of mainstream and specialized technologies. Additionally, the Institute provided leadership on a number of important technology policy-related issues. One example was the Institute's partnership with Towson University to organize the Symposium on Accessible Privacy and Security at Carnegie Mellon University. This effort discussed ways to provide computer security that is accessible and usable by the blind, thus ensuring that the blind are not left out of important Internet-based services such as online banking systems. The Institute continues to lead the nation in best practices for nonvisual Web accessibility including the only Web-based certification that takes into account both accessibility standards (such as Section 508) and actual usability by blind people. Six companies were certified for the first time last year in the NFB Nonvisual Accessibility Web Certification program.



Jacobus tenBroek Library

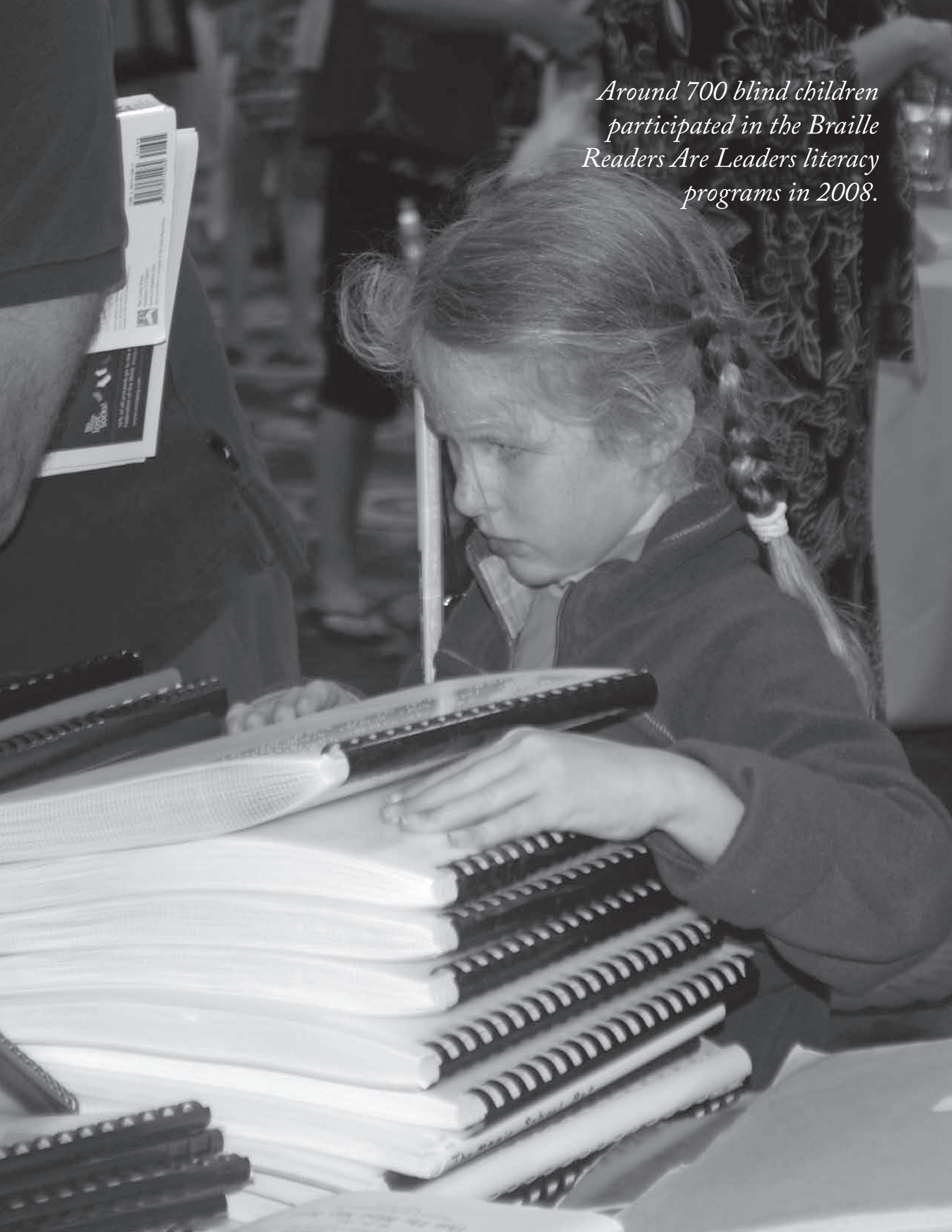
We continue to make progress on building the most comprehensive library on the non-medical aspects of blindness in the world: the Jacobus tenBroek Research Library on Blindness. The library hosted a number of researchers during 2008 and made some important acquisitions of rare materials in order to build this one-of-a-kind research facility.

Research

The Institute partnered with individuals from Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland, University of Vermont, Virginia Tech, and a number of other academic institutions to complete research and development projects. This included a number of major studies related to the blind. One of these innovative studies surveyed five hundred blind voters, revealing that blind people are active in the voting process and that there is a significant correlation among voting, Braille literacy, employment, and income. The Institute's continued work to bring together blind people along with the brightest minds in engineering, technology, research, and business will continue to build previously unimagined opportunities.

In a short five years, the National Federation of the Blind has built successful educational programs, technology development efforts, and policy and academic research initiatives that are helping to empower more blind people than ever before. The leadership of the NFB Jernigan Institute is becoming increasingly recognized across the nation and even outside its borders. Because of the Institute's work in education, the NFB was honored with one of the prestigious 2008 Mutual of America Community Partnership Awards.

*Around 700 blind children
participated in the Braille
Readers Are Leaders literacy
programs in 2008.*



Our Donors

We would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions given in 2008. It is only because of their generosity that the National Federation of the Blind can continue to fulfill its mission to achieve widespread emotional acceptance and intellectual understanding that the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the misconceptions and lack of information which exist.

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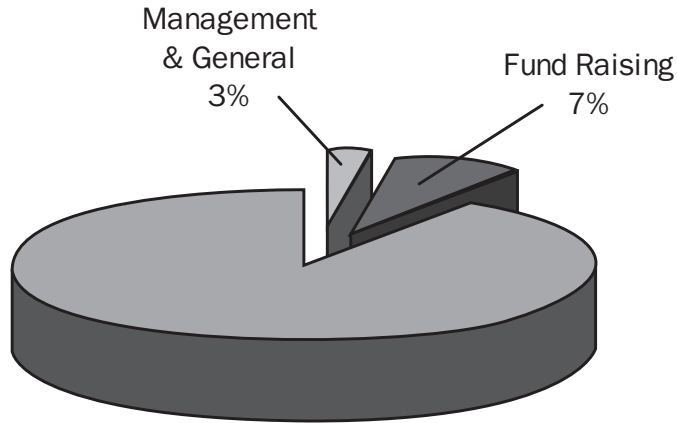
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Financial statements presented have been audited by Rosen, Sapperstein and Friedlander, Chartered. Complete audited statements with accompanying notes for the National Federation of the Blind can be obtained by contacting the offices of the National Federation of the Blind, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, (410) 659-9314.

Contributions to the National Federation of the Blind are tax-deductible under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

Statements of Activities



Fund Raising and Management and General Expense as a Percent of Total Public Support

REVENUE AND GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support:

Contributions	\$18,508,305
Donated Services	3,481,241
Government Grants	322,294
Total Public Support:	22,311,840

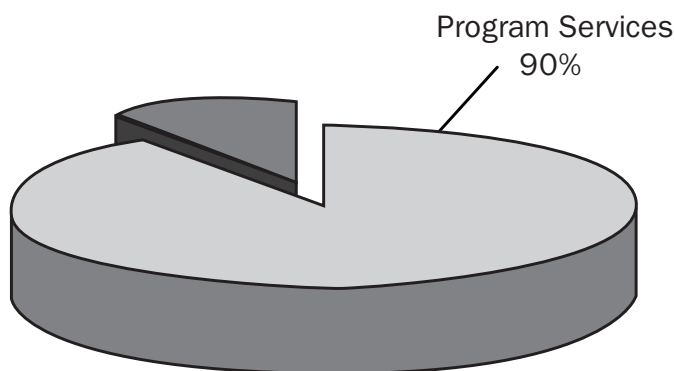
Revenue:

Sales - Independence	
Products and Publications	468,790
Investment Income	(4,474,622)
Royalties	12,068
Total Revenue:	(3,993,764)

Total Revenue and Gains and Other Support **\$18,318,076**

STATEMENT

Year Ended December 31, 2008



Program Service Expense as a Percent of
Total Expenses and Losses

EXPENSES AND LOSSES

Program Services:

Blindness Integration	\$9,430,669
Civil Rights, Advocacy and Self-Organization	5,601,951
Nonvisual Access Technology, Methods and Systems	5,141,822
<u>Total Program Services</u>	<u>20,174,442</u>

Supporting Services:

Management and General	577,168
Fund Raising	1,574,986
<u>Total Supporting Services</u>	<u>2,152,154</u>

Total Expenses and Losses **\$22,326,596**

Changes in Net Assets	\$(4,008,520)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$28,304,431
Net Assets - End of Year	\$24,295,911



Bobcat

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How You Can Help

As you have read in the previous pages, the National Federation of the Blind is a dynamic organization with numerous programs that dramatically improve the lives of blind Americans. We could not do this critical work without the generous support of others. Here are some ways that you can help us continue to do this important work:

Donate Online—Contributions by credit card may be given in a lump sum or pledged over a period of time. Credit card donations can be made online at www.nfb.org.

Donate by Mail—Checks should be made out to the “National Federation of the Blind” and mailed to the National Federation of the Blind at 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230.

Honorary or Memorial Gifts—Contributions made to honor a special person, to commemorate a special occasion, or to pay tribute to an individual may be made by family members or friends. These gifts may be made online or by mail.

Bequests—You can designate the National Federation of the Blind as the recipient of part of your estate in your will. You might also consider designating the National Federation of the Blind as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, thereby giving a substantial gift for a relatively modest annual outlay of funds.

Life Income Gifts—These gifts provide income to the donor or other beneficiaries during their lifetimes, with the remainder being given to the National Federation of the Blind upon the death of the donor or beneficiary.

Appreciated Securities—Gifts of securities can be made by transferring ownership to the National Federation of the Blind. By making a gift of appreciated securities, the donor may claim an income tax charitable deduction based on the full market value of the gift.

Matching Gifts—Matching gifts are made by companies in order to encourage charitable giving by their employees. For more information on this type of program, contact the human resources department at your place of employment.

The following types of gifts are also appreciated, but please contact us first to make sure that your gift will be of use to the National Federation of the Blind or one of its affiliates:

Real Estate—Gifts of real property may be claimed as an income tax charitable deduction based on the fair market value of the property. Donors may also avoid capital gains taxes and eliminate certain costs associated with the transfer of real estate title.

In-Kind Donations—In-kind contributions of goods and services are welcomed by the NFB and its affiliates.

How else can I help?

Become a Volunteer—Americans today devote millions of hours to helping charitable organizations.

You too can make a difference by helping the NFB with your skills and talents. The National Federation of the Blind can match those skills and talents with our volunteer opportunities. For more information on our volunteer opportunities, please call Patricia Maurer at (410) 659-9314, extension 2272, or contact your local chapter or state affiliate.

For more information on making a donation or gift to the NFB, please contact Outreach Programs at (410) 659-9314, extension 2406.

Donations to the National Federation of the Blind, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, are deductible for computing income and estate taxes. Donors should consult their attorney or financial advisor to discuss the tax implications of any donation they make or contemplate making to the National Federation of the Blind.



The National Federation of the Blind meets the rigorous Standards for Charity Accountability set forth by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

*Thank you for your
continued support!*





NFB

**National Federation
of the Blind**

(Voice of the Nation's Blind