

## Seniors

**Possibilities Fair for Seniors Who Are Losing Vision and for Their Families**—This annual program provides resources, tools, tips, and mentors that allow seniors to maintain their independence despite declining sight. The expertise of the NFB and area nonprofit and governmental organizations empowers four hundred local seniors, and many others in replication states, as we refine the Fair and develop other outreach models aiding seniors losing vision.

## Research

The Institute's expanding research and evaluation program is facilitating collaboration and relationships with investigators and graduate students. Research undertaken can then address the greatest needs of the blind, resulting in more meaningful program, product, and policy development.

## About the National Federation of the Blind

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is the largest organization of the blind in this country. Founded in 1940, the Federation's purpose is to serve as a vehicle for collective action by the blind and as a mechanism to help blind people achieve self-confidence, self-respect, and self-determination. Our goal is the complete integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality.

With more than fifty thousand members from over seven hundred local and state affiliates covering all fifty states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, the Federation is truly the voice of the nation's blind. The Federation's elected leader, Dr. Marc Maurer, has served the country's blind as President since 1986.

# Imagine

A Future Full of Opportunity



## Jacobus tenBroek Library

This unique research library, named for the founder and first president of the NFB, chronicles the history of the organized blind movement from the perspective of blind people with rare historical and contemporary writings by and for the blind. Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, while a distinguished Berkeley professor, wrote of constitutional law, social welfare reform, immigrant rights, and the philosophical underpinning of the NFB. A collection of the papers of his dynamic successor, Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, and our current leader, Dr. Marc Maurer; Braille, electronic, and large print documents; audio and video footage; and the first NASA rocket ever launched by blind youth, tell the story of the organized blind movement.

The Independence Market, housed in the tenBroek Library, retails aids and appliances, publications, and educational materials the blind find particularly useful. Visitors may also browse the NFB's extensive free literature collection and take items of interest home.



For more information contact:

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Programs of the NFB Jernigan Institute are partly made possible through the NFB *Imagination Fund*. Learn how you can support the revolution at: [www.imaginationfund.org](http://www.imaginationfund.org)



**The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Jernigan Institute**, the first of its kind developed and operated by an organization of blind people, leads the quest to understand the real problems of blindness and to develop innovative education, technologies, products, and services that help the world's blind to achieve independence.

# National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute Programs

## Education

**National Center for Blind Youth in Science (NCBYS)**—The Institute's NCBYS aims to make science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) real options for blind youth. The initiative inspires blind youth to pursue careers falsely believed to be out of their reach, stimulates the development of educational and technological innovations that allow the blind to enter advanced STEM careers, and is a clearinghouse on how to do it. The NCBYS now offers:

- **NFB Science Academy**—In these inquiry based summer workshops, modeling nonvisual exploration of scientific topics inspires blind youth to pursue careers in STEM. Students participate in hands-on activities and field trips and learn nonvisual techniques that can transfer to any astronomy, physics, chemistry, or biology classroom or lab setting. Participants interact with successful blind individuals working in STEM professions and are under the direction of blind mentors.



- **NFB Youth Slam**—Inaugurated in 2007, this historic leadership academy centered around STEM brought together nearly two hundred blind youth at Johns Hopkins University for challenging and inspiring activities. The NFB Youth Slam was the most dynamic gathering of blind youth ever and is scheduled to be bigger and better in 2009.

- **blindscience.org**—This Web portal centralizes tools, techniques, and other information for teaching science to the blind; biographical sketches of blind STEM professionals; conference proceedings; educational materials and resources; and access to online networks.

- **Collaborations**—Joint efforts will interest and prepare youth for STEM careers, including the improved accessibility of artificial intelligence chemistry and math tutoring software, development and dissemination of tactile books and materials, and testing of innovations to increase participation in science such as the Independent Laboratory Access for the Blind (ILAB) project at Penn State University.

**Braille**—Literacy is vital for education, employment opportunities, and countless aspects of daily life. The Jernigan Institute programs promote Braille literacy among blind people of all ages, provide education about Braille to the general public, and increase the quality and quantity of Braille produced in the United States.

- **Braille Certification Training Program**—Under a contract with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the



Institute operates the courses leading to Library of Congress certification in Braille transcribing and proofreading for mathematics, music, and literary Braille.

- **Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest**—This annual contest for children in grades K-12 promotes the joy of reading for pleasure and a pride in Braille as a viable literacy medium equal to print, demonstrates the importance of independent reading in the development of Braille literacy skills, and promotes the use of Braille by the blind in performing community service. This leading Braille reading program is conducted in partnership with the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children and the National Association to Promote the Use of Braille.



## Parent Outreach

Building a future full of opportunity for blind youth begins in the early years by empowering parents with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that support the development of the blind child in an environment of high expectations. The Institute is building new outreach such as the In-Touch seminar and related training through the establishment of a “parents university.” At the same time, the Institute is expanding successful programs like the Braille Reading Pals early literacy project.

## Technology

**International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind (IBTC)**—Since 1990 this comprehensive evaluation, demonstration, and training center has displayed over \$2.5 million worth of nearly all tactile and speech output technology. The access technology team consults with individuals, employers, rehabilitation and education professionals, and technology developers alike. This vendor-free access technology advice better ensures that the consumer perspective is represented and that technology choices are the best for each blind person.

**The Consumer Electronics Initiative**—Electronics and appliances are increasingly unusable without vision. In response, the Institute has established an online resource to inform consumers and manufacturers, maintains the Accessible Home Showcase display at NFB headquarters, and hosts an exhibit at the yearly national convention to highlight best practices among current product offerings. Discussions with manufacturers also encourage development of consumer appliances and electronics usable by the blind.

**Kurzweil–National Federation of the Blind Reader**—The first handheld portable reading machine resulted from a partnership between inventor Ray Kurzweil and the National Federation of the Blind. The Reader combines digital camera and enhanced optical character recognition technologies to produce synthetic speech translation of text, making print available at any time.



**The NFB Nonvisual Accessibility Web Certification**—This process ensures that Web sites of companies and organizations are usable with access technology for the blind.

**Access Technology Training**—Through the first fully accessible technology training lab, the Institute will provide cutting edge training on access technology and related issues to parents, educators, rehabilitation and technology specialists, and the blind themselves.

**The NFB Nonvisual Election Technology Project**—This project, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, evaluates and makes familiar the features of accessible electronic voting technology for voting officials and protection and advocacy state agencies. Training materials on the NFB Web site educate poll workers to work properly with blind voters, thus improving the implementation of this technology that helps protect the right of every blind voter to a secret ballot.



## Rehabilitation/Employment



**National Center for Mentoring Excellence**—In this five-year model mentoring program, blind adults in six states assist nearly two hundred transition age blind youth to develop the skills and attitudes to succeed as blind persons.

**Transition to Independence Club**—In partnership with the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services and the U.S. Department of Labor's High School High Tech program, blind mentors provide blind Baltimore youth with employment and blindness skills learning experiences that prepare for post high school work or higher education. Best practices developed will help NFB state affiliates establish similar clubs throughout the country.

**Career Fair**—In a daylong seminar, blind teens are exposed to positive blind role models in various careers and attend workshops on gaining early work experience, preparing for job interviews, and learning nonvisual techniques that can be useful for post-secondary experiences. Wherever replicated, this demonstration project will raise expectations and broaden the career horizons for blind teens.

