

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

Live the life you want.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.



WHO WE ARE

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), headquartered in Baltimore, is the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans. Founded in 1940, the NFB consists of affiliates, chapters, and divisions in the fifty states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico. The NFB defends the rights of blind people of all ages and provides information and support to families with blind children, older Americans who are losing vision, and more. We believe in the hopes and dreams of blind people and work together to transform them into reality.

NATIONAL OFFICERS

Mark Riccobono, *President*

Pam Allen, *First Vice President and Board Chair*

Ron Brown, *Second Vice President*

James Gashel, *Secretary*

Jeannie Massay, *Treasurer*

BOARD MEMBERS

Denise Avant

Everette Bacon

Amy Buresh

Shawn Callaway

Norma Crosby

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Ever Lee Hairston

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Carla McQuillan

Amy Ruell

Joseph Ruffalo, Jr.

Adelmo Vigil



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

Live the life you want.

200 E Wells St
Baltimore, MD 21230
410-659-9314
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

Relationships are key to the work of the National Federation of the Blind. Our organization is a very large family, comprised of blind people, our families, and our friends. The loving relationships we have with each other form the bonds that help us to accomplish our goals as an organization and to support each other's dreams.

We also seek to expand the relationships we have outside the organization. Increasing understanding among the public about our capacity to live the lives we want and the expectational and societal barriers that need to come down for us to live them is a critical part of our mission. Although each of us help to accomplish this goal through our participation in our workplaces, schools, churches and communities, it's important that we also seek partnerships with companies and organizations that are willing and able to help amplify our message.

The National Federation of the Blind had a banner year for partnerships at the national level in 2018. We worked with Kellogg, the maker of many popular breakfast cereals and the spinoff snack Rice Krispies Treats, on a project that brought joy to many blind children and blind parents while advancing the causes of Braille literacy



Eleven-year-old Eme Mitchell-Butler holds a Rice Krispies Love Notes audio box. (Photo courtesy of Edelman.)

and accessible packaging. And the Baltimore Orioles, the Major League Baseball franchise in our hometown, helped us celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of our national headquarters, the NFB Jernigan Institute, in Baltimore.

Rice Krispies is a popular breakfast cereal, and Rice Krispies Treats, which include the cereal along with marshmallows and other ingredients, are also a popular snack. Kellogg sells ready-made Rice Krispies Treats with a heart-shaped space on the wrapper so that parents who put the snack in their children's lunch boxes can write a note of love and encouragement on the wrapper. Until 2018, there was no way for parents to Braille notes on the wrapper, and no accessible way for blind parents to fill in the heart-shaped space. Kellogg worked with the National Federation of the Blind to create eight Braille stickers with messages like "Love you lots" and "You've got this." For parents and kids who don't read Braille, the company also created boxes for the treats which, when opened, played an audio message recorded by the parent. The stickers and audio boxes were made available for free through the Kellogg website, but those who ordered them also had an opportunity to donate to the National Federation of the Blind to support our Braille programs. The initiative was so popular that Kellogg ran out of the stickers and audio boxes in a matter of weeks rather than months as originally expected. Furthermore, the initiative received extensive media coverage, helping the public to understand the importance of Braille literacy and accessibility.

Blind people are sports fans, too, and some of us who work at our national headquarters regularly attend Baltimore Orioles games. The Orioles approached us with the idea of putting visual Braille lettering on their game-day jerseys to increase awareness of Braille and its importance to blind people. On September 18, 2018, the Orioles hosted National Federation of the Blind Night at their beautiful home field, Oriole Park at Camden Yards to celebrate our fortieth anniversary in Baltimore. Players and coaches wore the jerseys with their last names and numbers in Braille, along with the words "Orioles" and the letters "NFB." I was also presented with an official Orioles jersey with my name and the number 40 representing our anniversary and had the honor of throwing out the ceremonial first pitch – which was a strike by the way. Members of the Greater Baltimore chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland handed out Braille alphabet cards, co-branded with both the NFB and Baltimore Orioles logos, to thousands of fans. The youngest fans were particularly delighted and eagerly decoded the "secret" message on the cards, "Go Orioles!" Sports media across the nation ran stories about the event, and an auction of the Braille jerseys raised significant funds.

Partnerships with organizations and businesses large and small make our fifty-two affiliates and their hundreds of local chapters strong as well. If your business or organization has partnered with a state affiliate or local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind to raise funds or just raise awareness, we thank you for your love and support. I also want to thank each of you who have made personal contributions to our movement, through volunteering, financial support, or both. The National Federation of the Blind looks forward to partnering with you again, or perhaps for the first time, throughout 2019 and beyond.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Riccobono, President
National Federation of the Blind



**6,508 PEOPLE
RECEIVED FREE
WHITE CANES!
nfb.org/donate**

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND FREE WHITE CANE PROGRAM

The National Federation of the Blind believes that the long white cane is a means to independence for the blind. The white cane has proved a useful tool to millions of blind people in navigating their environments with confidence and safety. It is a tool that allows blind people to travel where and when they want, and as such promotes independence and self-sufficiency. Each year we celebrate [White Cane Awareness Day](#) to increase public awareness and understanding of the positive effect this simple tool has on the lives of blind people.

We believe that independence and freedom to travel are so critical to the quality of life of blind people that every blind person should have a cane, regardless of ability to pay. That is why the National Federation of the Blind offers free fiberglass canes to blind users through its [Free White Cane Program](#).



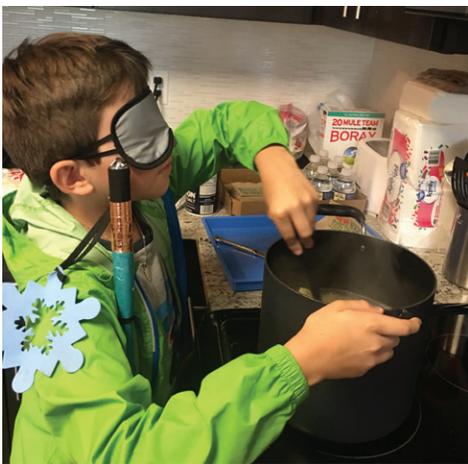
BRaille PROGRAMS

Braille literacy is an essential pillar of success for all blind Americans, yet only about 10 percent of students who need Braille are taught it in schools.

To address this lack of appropriate education, the National Federation of the Blind offers numerous Braille outreach programs each year to promote and increase Braille literacy.



BELL ACADEMY



The NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Academy provides blind children with instruction in Braille, cane travel, and the other nonvisual skills they will need to achieve their dreams and live the lives they want. In 2018, over two hundred students continued to grow their Braille skills with NFB BELL Academy sites in thirty-one states. Participants also expanded their financial skills with the theme “Banking on Blindness” through the participation of our partner, Wells Fargo. By bringing students and successful blind mentors together, NFB BELL Academy fosters a positive attitude about Braille and about blindness itself. In addition, the parents of BELL Academy participants engage in activities designed to give them the tools they need to ensure their blind child’s success. The results speak volumes:

“He learned he can make his own meals and has been asking to pack his own lunch ever since.”

“He loved the field trips. NFB BELL encourages him to be independent and improve his use of his white cane.”

“For the first time, I was not scared of my daughter’s blindness but felt equipped with the tools to face the challenges [that] lie ahead head on.”





BRAILLE LETTERS FROM SANTA

For over ten years staff at the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute have served as Santa's "honorary elves" to get Braille letters to blind boys and girls at Christmastime. Parents can request a letter from Santa that comes along with ideas for crafts and other activities. In 2018, over five hundred Braille letters from Santa were sent. The idea that Braille is important to Santa sends a powerful message to children learning Braille. As the parent below explains, this simple gesture can touch a child's heart in unimaginable ways:

"Louise absolutely loved getting the letter and trying out her developing Braille reading skills to read as much as she could of the letter. Nothing promotes reading like a letter from Santa! Last year's letter inspired Louise to Braille her own letter to Santa to leave with milk and cookies, since as she put it 'Santa must be able to read Braille if he can write it!' Thank you!"

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND SUPPORTS BLIND VETERANS

Many members of the National Federation of the Blind have served in our nation's armed forces, and we actively advance the rights and support the aspirations of these proud Americans. In 2018, the National Federation of the Blind and our veterans division were successful in persuading Congress to permit more service-disabled veterans to use the Space Available program that provides transportation on military aircraft to veterans and their families when space permits. But our support for veterans goes beyond legislation and public policy. Here's what one veteran says about his membership in the NFB:

"The National Federation of the Blind believed in me more than I believed in myself. Being around other blind veterans who traveled the same road provided me with numerous mentors and taught me that it is respectable to be blind. I have lost my eyesight, but I never lost my vision to succeed as a husband or father, to be employed, own a home, pay taxes, and enjoy my life." – Joe Ruffalo, New Jersey





NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND NFB EQ

Far too often blind youth are denied the opportunity to explore science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects because it is assumed that sight is required to succeed in these disciplines. Unfortunately, many teachers, parents, and students are unaware of the nonvisual solutions that enable blind people to engage in STEM education and careers, many of which have been created by blind scientists and engineers. Due to this lack of knowledge and the resulting low expectations, blind students are discouraged from pursuing an exciting area of potential interest, exploring employment in lucrative STEM careers, and participating in the development of ideas and innovations that will change the world.

For nearly fifteen years, the National Federation of the Blind has pioneered programs to increase the participation of blind youth in STEM fields. Our latest program, supported by a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation, is NFB EQ (“Engineering Quotient”). NFB EQ is a week-long summer engineering program for blind and low-vision teens from around the United States. Participants spend each day engaged in activities designed to strengthen their knowledge of engineering as well as their problem-solving abilities. In the evenings, they explore the local community and participate in various recreational activities. The first program took place in 2018 and programs are planned until the summer of 2021.

“Before the program, I didn’t know that you could use power tools to build, even if you can’t see it, you can feel it and build it just the same. I am going to tell my teachers at school that I can build things too.” – Naveha, Massachusetts



"I've been taking engineering classes at school and now that I know there are tools that are easy for me to use, accessible drafting boards, I'm going to ask for [them] next year. This program has made me more confident in what I can do." – Yang, Florida



"Last year, I got a C+ in geometry because I had trouble understanding all the pictures. At NFB EQ, I learned how to draw a cube using tactile drawing tools and now the things I was taught in geometry make more sense. I want to take the drawing techniques I learned back to use in my pre-calc class next year." – Riley, Louisiana

**30 BLIND
STUDENTS
LEARNED THAT
STEM IS
WITHIN REACH!!**
nfb.org/donate



DR. JACOB BOLOTIN AWARDS

Dr. Jacob Bolotin (1888-1924) was the first physician in history who was born blind. His passion and tireless advocacy for the rights and independence of blind people helped to change entrenched, yet incorrect attitudes toward blindness. Each year the National Federation of the Blind awards initiatives, innovations, and individuals that are a positive force in the lives of blind people with a monetary award in his name. Winners of the prestigious award continue Dr. Bolotin's legacy by breaking down barriers, changing negative perceptions of blindness, and inspiring blind people to achieve new heights. Winners of the 2018 awards included the creator of a Braille code for the Navajo language; an innovative method for creating tactile maps; an organization that introduces blind people to cross-country snow-skiing; the developers of an app that connects blind people with sighted volunteers who can help them with various tasks; and more. You can learn more about the awards and past recipients at www.nfb.org/bolotin.

NFB-NEWSLINE®

Adults who are losing vision often tell us that the first thing they miss when reading becomes difficult is perusing the newspaper each day. To support them, and to allow all blind and low-vision people to be well-informed citizens, we created NFB-NEWSLINE. This unique, free-to-users service provides access to nearly five hundred national and international daily newspapers, magazines, and online news sources. The service can be accessed via touchtone telephone, computer, mobile app, and now with smart speakers like the Amazon Echo and Google Home. To learn more about the service, visit www.nfbnewslineonline.org.

NFB JERNIGAN INSTITUTE

The headquarters of the National Federation of the Blind, located in Baltimore, Maryland, is the NFB Jernigan Institute. The original building, once the home of various manufacturers, was purchased by the Federation in 1978. It houses the International Braille and Technology Center; sleeping accommodations; and more. A newer structure with state-of-the-art conference spaces; the Jacobus tenBroek Library, which houses the NFB archives and a growing collection of research on the nonmedical aspects of blindness; more office space; and other amenities was completed in 2004. In 2018, over 1,600 people from across the United States and around the world visited the facility. At least forty-eight different meetings and events were held, including our annual Jacobus tenBroek Law Symposium, NFB EQ, and training sessions for affiliate leaders. We also began planning for a major remodeling of the north-facing wing of the building to create more and better sleeping accommodations. With these exciting renovations, expected to be completed by the end of 2019, the NFB Jernigan Institute will remain a premier facility to serve the needs of blind Americans and our friends and supporters for decades to come.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We could not do this critical work without our many generous supporters. [We are grateful for the contributions of our 2018 donors.](#) Here are some ways that you can help us continue to help blind people live the lives they want:



DONATE ONLINE

Contributions by credit card may be given at one time or pledged over a period of time. A one-time credit card donation can be made online at nfb.org/donate. To make a recurring donation, please call our accounting department at 410-659-9314, extension 2213.

DONATE BY MAIL

Checks should be made out to the “National Federation of the Blind” and mailed to the National Federation of the Blind, attention Outreach, at 200 East Wells Street at *Jernigan Place*, Baltimore, MD 21230.

DONATE A VEHICLE

You can donate a vehicle to the National Federation of the Blind by calling 855-659-9314 or by visiting nfb.org/vehicledonations.

DONATE CLOTHING

If you live in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, or Virginia, you can donate clothing and other household items to the NFB. You may take your items to a GreenDrop collection site or call 888-610-4632 for home pickup. Learn more by visiting nfbpickup.org.

PLANNED GIVING

Including the National Federation of the Blind in your estate plans is a thoughtful way to transform dreams into reality for the next generation. Learn more at nfb.org/planned-giving.

[The Dream Makers Circle](#) honors friends of the National Federation of the Blind who are helping build a successful future through their commitment of a legacy gift to the organization.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31, 2018

REVENUE AND GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support	
Contributions	\$18,392,636
Donated Services	5,519,868
Government Grants and Contracted Services	1,871,910
 Total Public Support	 25,784,414
 Revenue	
Sales - Independence Products and Publications	533,064
NET Investment Income (loss)	(1,527,387)
 Total Revenue	 (994,323)
 Total Revenue and Gains and Other Support	 \$24,790,091

EXPENSES

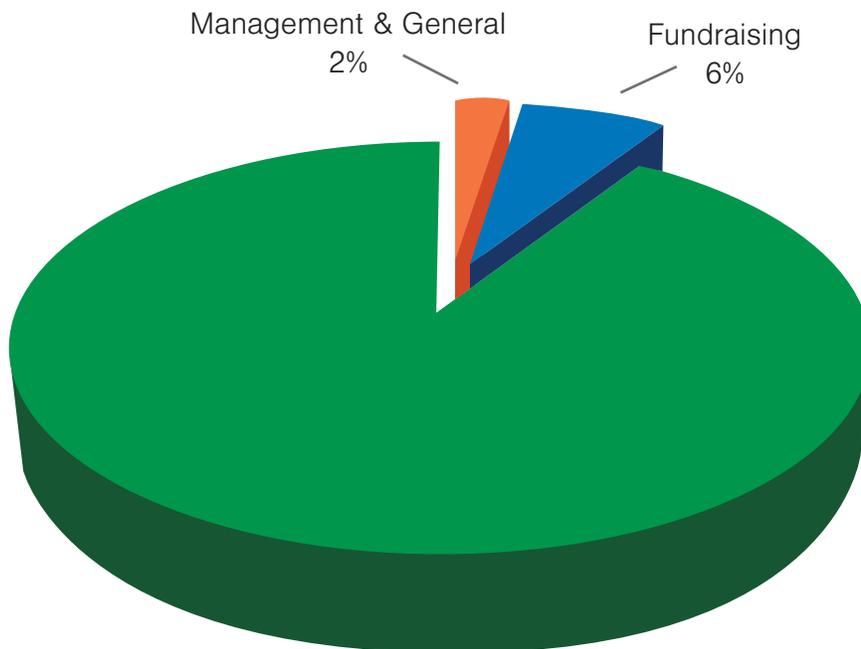
Program Services	
Blindness Integration	\$10,933,315
Civil Rights, Advocacy and Self-Organization	6,616,797
Nonvisual Access Technology, Methods and Systems	5,498,355
 Total Program Services	 23,048,467
 Supporting Services	
Management & General	599,861
Fundraising	1,529,125
 Total Supporting Services	 2,128,986
 Total Expenses	 \$25,177,453

Changes in Net Assets	\$(387,362)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$25,468,474
Net Assets - End of Year	\$25,081,112



The National Federation of the Blind meets the rigorous Standards for Charity Accountability set forth by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The NFB maintains a GuideStar Exchange Gold Participant status and is an approved charity participant in the Combined Federal Campaign.

FUNDRAISING AND MANAGEMENT & GENERAL EXPENSES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT



Financial statements presented have been audited by Rosen, Sapperstein and Friedlander, LLC. 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, 200 East Wells Street at *Jernigan Place*, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, 410-659-9314.

The National Federation of the Blind, a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is eligible to receive contributions that 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.