**The**

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**Advocate**

**Spring Edition 2024**

**PCB- A Peer Network for All Impacted by Vision Loss**

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

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MISSION

To promote independence and opportunities for all people with vision impairments.

VISION

To continue to be recognized as the leading advocacy organization for people with vision impairments in Pennsylvania. The aim of all our efforts is to encourage and assist people in achieving their potential as valued members of society. PCB assistance, advocacy, and encouragement will be carried out in such areas as, but not limited to, all aspects of accessibility, transportation, education, employment, entertainment, recreation, and quality of life.

DISTRIBUTION

The PCB Advocate is available in large print, braille, audio cartridge, and email. Send changes of address or format preference to the PCB office. Contents are available to the public via pcb1.org and the PCB Information Line at 773-572-6314.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles in this publication reflect the views of the individual writers. They do not necessarily represent the views and policy of PCB.

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If you wish to submit articles for consideration, submission deadlines are:

March 1, Spring

June 1, Summer

September 1, Fall

November 20, Winter

Email articles to: advocate@pcb1.org

Address inquiries to: PCB Office, pcboffice@pcb1.org, 717-920-9999

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# Announcement:

One of the benefits that all dues paying PCB peers enjoy is the ability to choose a format for

THE PCB ADVOCATE. Everyone else on the PCB mailing list receives the email version of the newsletter. Therefore, before the Summer issue of THE PCB ADVOCATE is distributed, we will be removing people who have not paid their 2024 PCB dues from the alternate format lists. If you have been receiving THE PCB ADVOCATE on cartridge, or as hard copy braille or large print, and you want to continue receiving your chosen format, be sure that your PCB dues for this year have been paid. Check with your chapter, if you belong to one, or check with the PCB office if you are an at large member. We hope to continue sending you your issues in the preferred format.

# Just a Few Words From the President of PCBBy Debby Hill

Welcome to the first issue of The PCB ADVOCATE for 2024 and my first Advocate as president of PCB. I have a few quick items to mention. First, I want to bring up PCB teams. It is never too late to join one of our teams. The more peers on the teams, means the more things we can do. The information for contacting the team leaders is at the end of this Advocate. The Conference Planning and Program Team is specifically looking for some enthusiastic peers to help share the work we need to do for the fall conference. So, please consider lending a hand if not to the Conference Team, to one of the other teams. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Are you an organized person? Do you like to dabble in writing? Would you like to support PCB in a new way? Then become the Editor in Chief of The PCB ADVOCATE. We have a good editorial staff to make your job easier. If you would like more information, or want to volunteer, please contact me at
dm-hill@comcast.net.

Finally, I am probably singing to the choir, but here goes. Recently, I was at a gathering where I was the new kid on the block. It seemed that everyone knew everyone else and no matter how hard I tried, I felt like an outsider. So, just make sure that when you do have new members in your chapter, try your best to include them and don’t leave them on the sidelines.

Thanks for reading, and I hope you have a good spring!

# Accessibility: A Buffet of Choices By the Conference Planning and Program Team

Chris Hunsinger here with a message from the Conference Planning and Program Team. It’s all about our Conference and Convention.

Who: Anyone who is blind or has low vision, their friends and family, and professionals in the blindness and low vision community

When: Oct. 17 through Oct. 20

Where: Anywhere you are if there is phone or internet access.

How: Virtually, Via Zoom or ACB Media

Why: because you want to join PCB at our conference which has the theme of “Accessibility: A Buffet of Choices”

At its February meeting the PCB Board of Directors approved the team’s recommendation to keep the conference and convention virtual for at least another year. We obtained a slot on the ACB Media calendar for October 17 through October 20. That means that our conference planning and program team has been hard at work creating a theme, brainstorming about presentation ideas, thinking about new ways to alert us to innovations increasing accessibility, and creating some fun interactive events for the conference. As always, we will have a board meeting and our business meeting during the conference. We are looking for exhibitors who are blind or have low vision. We are looking for audio described movies, plays, or tours to air during the conference. Of course, we will have our PCB Auction to end the weekend on Sunday afternoon. The fund development team will have an article in this Advocate that gives more details on the auction, and how you can help them make it more exciting.

Please join us at the conference and or help us fill that buffet with accessibility choices.

What do we mean by “A Buffet of Choices”? This theme recognizes the idea Accessibility is not a single concept because what makes something accessible for one person may well not solve the accessibility issue for another person. Some people just want to know about the availability of many more resources which would allow for innovative problem solving. Some people want to know about a particular product to help make life more accessible. Others may want information for an organization helping with or teaching about accessibility. Don’t think that all accessibility is technology related. Those methods some of us may have forgotten about may well still bring additional accessibility to life. Rubber bands, twist ties, safety pins, tape, bump dots, and braille all have a place in making things accessible.

You can help the Conference Planning and Program Team in this way. Please spread the word about our dates and theme. You, as peers or members of PCB teams, can help us find presentations which address our theme.

IF you have an idea, you can complete the Request for Presentation form. That form will be on our PCB website, and it will also be a part of this issue of The PCB Advocate. If you know of a person, business, or organization, who might have ideas or products fitting the theme, give them the link to the presentation form. If you would rather the Conference Planning and Program Team get in touch with whomever you have identified, please let us know by sending an email to presentations@pcb1.org or leaving a message by email or phone for me, Chris Hunsinger, the lead for the team. We look forward to your help and accessibility ideas.

# Request For Proposals Form

Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB)

Conference & Convention

2024 Request for Session Proposals

Theme: “Accessibility: A Buffet of Choices”

Location: Virtual Conference on the Zoom platform

Dates: Thursday, October 17 – Sunday, October 20

WHY PCB?

With its virtual platform, this year's PCB Conference promises to be the state's largest conference for people impacted by blindness or vision loss. Attendees will include:

• Blind Students & Adults of all abilities and interests

• Individuals and family members newly adjusting to vision loss.

• Professionals in various industries including blindness services and education.

• Consumers of both general and blindness specific products

• Active and involved members of the community

Sessions are tentatively scheduled for:

Thursday, October 17, 2024 Afternoon & Evening

Friday, October 18, 2024 Morning, Afternoon, & Evening

Saturday, October 19, 2024 Morning

Sunday, October 20, 2024 Morning

The theme for the 2024 PCB Virtual Conference is

“Accessibility: A Buffet of Choices”

An important consideration for individuals who are blind or in the process of losing vision:

There are many ways to accomplish a task, and for people who are losing their vision or have vision loss that fact is very important. A solution that might work for one person might not work well for another person. A good example of this is that some people with vision loss prefer to use a white cane for travel and others like using a guide dog. In your area of specialty, what are the various ways to solve a problem and achieve a goal? It can be high tech, low tech or no tech at all. On your conference form, tell us what choices you have in your buffet that you can describe or demonstrate to our audience to get a job done. Specifically, we request proposal submitters to create a presentation which discusses or demonstrates alternative methods for achieving accessibility, or the process of building problem solving skills which utilize alternative methods for accomplishing tasks

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The following items must be included in each submission:

• Contact Information for the Session Organizer - the session organizer is the person submitting the application and will be the primary contact for all information pertaining to the session.

• Brief bios of all session presenters

• Proposed Session Title - Titles should quickly describe the content and relevance of your presentation/workshop, i.e., which theme (e.g. type of Access Choices being offered,) is addressed by your presentation/workshop

• Session Audience - Who will find your session content valuable?

• Description of the Proposed Session - The description explains the focus of your presentation. It should be written to market the session and attract attendees.

• Three Learning Objectives of the Proposed Session Topic - The objectives should describe what the session attendee will learn and take-away from the discussion.

• Proposed length of session: 30, 45, or 60 minutes

• Preferred first and second choices of availability

for the day/time of session.

• AV Needs

Proposals should be composed electronically in either .doc or .txt format and submitted by June 15, 2024. Send all proposals to: presentations@pcb1.org.

Selection Criteria

The PCB Conference Planning Team will review the proposals and decide based on the following criteria:

• Educational Value

• Relevance

• Practical Application

• Overall Quality

• Target Audience

• Presenter Qualifications and Expertise

• Originality and Inventiveness

Timeline:

• March 15 2024 Open Call for Presentations

• June 15, 2024 Submission Deadline

• July 31, 2024 Notifications to Accepted

Proposers

• August 15, 2024 Publication of Speakers

POLICIES GOVERNING ACCEPTED PROPOSALS

• All sessions may be recorded and used by PCB. This includes internet streaming and downloading.

• Speakers must agree that any material presented during their session may be reproduced and that the material presented does not infringe any copyrighted material.

• Due to preparation time for alternate formats, all handouts must be provided to PCB in electronic format by September 20, 2024.

• If selected, sessions MAY NOT include any promotional material for an individual, a specific company or product.

• PCB is a non-denominational, nonpartisan organization. Submissions geared to promote a specific political or religious agenda are prohibited.

• Sessions should not be used as a platform to discredit or attack another organization or individual

• Sessions are monitored by PCB representatives. PCB reserves the right to terminate broadcast of any session that violates this or any other PCB policy. In addition, any presenter in violation of these policies may not be permitted to present at future PCB programs.

Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB)

2024 Virtual Conference and Convention

Session Proposal Form

All fields must be completed. Only fully completed forms will be reviewed. Email forms to presentations@pcb1.org by June 15, 2024.

Presenter Information

Session proposed by:

\_\_\_Community organization

\_\_\_PCB Chapter/Affiliate

\_\_\_PCB Team

\_\_\_PCB Peer

\_\_\_Private Individual/Professional

Name of session leader:

Address:

Email:

Phone Number:

Bio

Co-Presenter 1 Name:

Email:

Phone:

Bio:

Co-Presenter 2 Name:

Email:

Phone:

Bio:

Session Information

Type: \_\_\_Workshop/Breakout Session

\_\_\_Lecture \_\_\_ Panel Discussion

Time Required: \_\_\_30 Mins. \_\_\_45 Mins. \_\_\_60 Mins.

Session Title:

Target Audience:

Session Summary/description:

Expected Lessons – Provide 3 audience take-aways.

1.

2.

3.

Check all dates/times you would be available to present:

Thursday, October 17, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_Evening

Friday, October 18, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_Morning \_\_\_\_\_Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_Evening

Saturday, October 19, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_Morning

Sunday, October 20, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_Morning

Indicate any A/V requirements (i.e., screen sharing, assistance with pre-recorded audio, etc.):

Will handouts be provided? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Please note: Handouts must be emailed to PCB by September 20 in order to make sure they are provided in accessible formats.

Would you like information about becoming an exhibitor? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

All forms must be submitted electronically by

June 15, 2024 in Word or Text. Submit to presentations@pcb1.org.

# Help Us Fill The Technology Buffet By The Technology Team

As you have seen elsewhere in this issue of The PCB Advocate, the conference theme for this year’s event in October is: “Accessibility, A Buffet of Choices.”

We on the Technology Team believe that your experiences and observations will be of great benefit to our conference presentation. We are attempting to collect a comprehensive list of accessible household mechanical and electronic appliances which are at least reasonably accessible and usable. You can assist us by submitting your observations.

Have you purchased or used a stove, dishwasher, washing machine, clothes dryer, thermostat, type of lighting system or light bulb, or any other household appliance or gadget which you would recommend as accessible? We eagerly await your recommendations.

What do we want to know?

Tell us what kind of appliance it is, the manufacturer, its model number, any other information which would identify the product, and whether the item is still being sold.

Explain what makes your recommended appliance accessible for you. Does the appliance have a braille overlay, dials and or buttons which are easy to mark, an accessible app for use with a smart phone, or some sort of feedback when settings are changed? Does it have another feature which contributes to its accessibility? In addition, we'd like to learn what accessibility features are most important to you when you are looking for a household appliance.

On the other hand, perhaps you have found a particular household appliance to be inaccessible and would like to warn us against a regrettable purchase. We want to hear that as well. Tell us what, in your opinion, makes an appliance inaccessible.

While the Technology Team will do our own exploring, there's no better way to begin the process than by hearing from you. Please send an email directly to our Team Leader, Joe Fagnani, at joefagnani@atlanticbb.net, with your recommendations, observations, and opinions. If you don’t have email, call Autumn at the PCB office. She will then pass your information on to the team.

We are also looking for interesting stories about appliance experiences, so your story may be an opportunity for you to be interviewed as a part of our presentation.

In our conference presentation, we'll present our findings. In the meantime, please tell us what your experience with household appliances has taught you.

# Safe Space for Conversation By Jule Ann Lieberman, CLVT CATIS and Vision Loss Resource Team

It has come to my attention over these past many years that our significant others, parents, siblings, spouse, children and all who we may interact with on a regular basis may not understand us with blindness and vision loss. When our needs or vision changes the significant others view us as different than before and this is confusing and frustrating for them. Recently my sister has begun to experience a greater decline in her vision acuity and my niece has contacted me several times for advice and support as she has observed all these changes. My sister was a registered nurse and managed her household quite successfully and now she makes mistakes that are a result of her decrease in vision. This confuses and frustrates my niece as she does not understand the amount of vision that is still functioning and where it is no longer useful.

Where do these significant others go for peer support? PCB peers have each other to reach out for support and discussion yet few options exist for our sighted family or friends. Where can they go to feel safe to express their confusion and frustrations with living with us who are blind or have low vision? The Vision Loss Resource Team would like to offer a time and space when these significant others can come together virtually or over the phone and share stories both positive and negative on how they are coping with our unique status as blind or vision impaired.

The Vision Loss Resource team would like to explore creating a peer support group for these significant others to learn as we do from each other coping strategies and resources that can be helpful to both groups. Our team needs your help to spread the word to our Families and friends that PCB wants to help. Our team would like to start with an open discussion phone call on Monday, April 29th at 7:30. For the call we will use Free conference call at

605-475-4715 or toll free at 844-844-0414

Access Code: 815419#

One-Touch Dialing:

605-475-4715,,815419#

Or 844-844-0414,,815419#

The call can then lead to a continuing conversation and potentially a PCB Virtual Chapter.

# Let’s Have Some Fun with Fundraising By Debby Hill

The planning is underway for this year’s PCB Fall Conference which is being held from October 17th through the 20th. Part of the conference is our annual auction which raises funds for PCB. During the auction, we always have a good time with a lot of camaraderie and competition. For this year let’s try another twist on having fun with the auction. The Fundraising Team would like you to suggest some items that you would like to bid on at the auction. Yes, I know they will reject my request for a self-driving car to bid on, but I know that all of you can come up with some interesting items that you, a family member or friend would like to buy to support PCB. So please put on your shopping caps and send your suggestions to Sandy Marsiglia. We need those suggestions as soon as possible because we want to start sending out ideas for auction items to everyone by the end of May. Sandy’s contact information is at the end of this article.

But there’s more! … Remember we have some other fun fundraisers. There is our annual calendar raffle. Each ticket costs $20, and you can choose or be given a three-digit number for each ticket you buy. You are a winner if your number is drawn in one of the Pick 3 nightly drawings in the Pennsylvania lottery, from March 31st through September 30th. You will win more cash if you win on a holiday or the first or fifteenth of the month. Be sure to get in touch with Autumn in the PCB office and order to sell or buy for yourself those lucky tickets. If you are a part of a chapter of PCB, any tickets sold using your chapter and your name will raise the amount that your chapter receives after the raffle winners are paid. The contact information for the office is at the end of this article.

Then there are the Terri Lynn treats to buy. When you buy some of those yummy things like giant salted cashews, sweet and salty trail mix, or milk chocolate pecans PCB gets 20 percent of the proceeds. At this time of year near Easter I often think of malted milk balls, and Terri Lynn has those too. Just think you get to eat something special and help PCB all at the same time. The ordering information is at the end of this article.

Finally, there is the Monthly Monetary Support Fund MMS. This program operates through ACB, but if you donate an amount monthly to ACB, you can designate PCB to receive up to 50 percent of your donation. So, contact ACB with the information at the end of this article and have fun making a donation to two top-notch organizations which advocate for folks with vision loss.

Contact information for our fun fundraisers:

To suggest items for the auction contact Sandy Marsiglia at sdm240@comcast.net or call her at 717-676-2349

To buy tickets for our Calendar Raffle:

Call Autumn in the PCB office at 717-920-9999 ext. 800 or if needed toll free 877-617-7407 ext. 800. You can email her at pcboffice@pcb1.org.

To raise funds with Terri Lynn go to:

[https://tinyurl.com/PCBTREATS](https://pcb1.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d5eb9a98d8892113686a744a1&id=86adb447c5&e=ea16bad5ff) or if this link doesn’t work try,
<https://pennsylvania-council-of-the-blind.terrilynn.com/>

or call toll-free at: 800-323-0775, and let your customer service representative know that you are part of the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind fund raiser.

As a bonus, orders that total more than $30.00 are shipped free.

To join or add to your ACB Monthly Monetary Support plan go to:

<https://www.acb.org/acb-monthly-monetary-support-program>

Or Call the Minnesota office at 612-332-3242

Thank you for supporting PCB.

# 2024 Merit Award AnnouncementBy Suzanne Erb Peer Engagement Team Leader

Are you an aspiring blind or visually impaired student who will be attending a post-secondary educational program this fall? If so, then you are eligible to apply for a 2024 PCB Merit Award. If you are a student attending a vocational training program, an undergraduate or graduate college or university, and are a Pennsylvania resident, then you should apply for this award.

This is not a scholarship. It is an award that is given in order to recognize your achievements and your future commitment to your chosen career or field of study. We recognize that, as a blind or visually impaired student, you will have unique needs, so it is important for you to remember that you can spend this money however you wish—no strings attached.

To obtain an application, please contact the PCB Office at pcboffice@pcb1.org. In order to be considered for this award, please send your completed application, along with proof of attendance or letter of acceptance from the school you will be attending, along with two references to meritaward@pcb1.org.

If you are selected to receive an award, you will be asked to be present at a short ceremony which will take place during our 2024 Conference and Convention between October 17, through October 20, 2024. The convention will be virtual, and there will be no cost for you to attend. All of this is explained on the application form.

All completed applications should be received no later than September 16, 2024. The two award recipients will be notified on or by October 1st.

Should you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Erb at suzerb1@comcast.net or 215-313-0550.

We at PCB wish you success in all your future endeavors, and look forward to reviewing your application for the 2024 PCB Merit Award.

# PCB, Our Future Is In Our HandsBy PCB Long-Range Planning Team

We are the Long-Range Planning Team of PCB. Our members are Debby Hill, Chris and Doug Hunsinger, Sandy Marsiglia, Rose Martin, and Jason Miller.

Our objective is to present long-range planning strategies to the PCB Board of Directors so that it can chart the future course of PCB by developing the means of retaining current peers, finding ways to recruit and retain new peers, and attracting supporters.

By the end of May, we will be conducting a survey that will help us make our recommendations to the PCB Board about a long-range plan. How is PCB meeting your needs? What can PCB do better? When you receive the survey, you can direct our future course by completing it. The survey will be offered in several formats: braille, large print, and a Google Form. Also, if you prefer, you will be able to answer the survey by phone.

Why should you participate? The Long-Range Planning Team can’t do this job alone. We need everyone’s ideas on how to better meet peer expectations and we need your suggestions for expanding PCB’s membership statewide to better advocate for the blind and low vision community.

But wait, there’s more. By completing the survey, we’re giving away four prizes, and you could win one. Prize details will be included in the survey.

We all have a stake in shaping the future of PCB to insure that it continues to be an advocate for blind and low vision Pennsylvanians. As the title of this article says, our future is in our hands.

# Reward With An AwardBy PCB Awards Team

PCB seeks to reward excellence at its upcoming virtual Conference and Convention (October 17-20, 2024) with four prestigious awards: John A. Horst Champion of Independence, TheReImage Leadership Award, Anthony B. Swartz PCB Peer Excellence Award, and PCB Community Impact Award.

Anyone, a PCB peer or not, can make a nomination. Send your contact info, the name and contact info of the person/entity you are nominating, which award you would like them to receive, and an explanation on why you think they deserve the award. The deadline is September 1, 2024. Email nominations to awards@pcb1.org. Current members of the PCB Board are not eligible for these awards.

Here are the four PCB Awards:

John A. Horst Champion of Independence

The award will be given to an individual who has performed at least 20 years of professional service in fields related to the rehabilitation or the education of people who are blind or visually impaired or has Dedicated more than 20 years of service to collective advocacy and public awareness efforts that promote independence and opportunity for people with blindness or vision loss, and the recipient’s service contributions must be well recognized in the community in which they live or throughout the state or nation as significant to the betterment of the lives of those with vision loss.

TheReImage Leadership Award

The recipient must have overcome both the real and perceived challenges of blindness or vision loss to achieve an active, multi-faceted life, have proven him/herself as a role model and leader within the blindness community through service, perseverance, empowerment, or achievement, and have demonstrated to the world, through his/her independence and action, TheReImage of people with vision loss.

Anthony B. Swartz PCB Peer Excellence Award

The recipient must be or have been a member of the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind for more than 10 years, have provided a long history of volunteer service to PCB’s events, projects, or chapters, and have demonstrated distinguished service by taking on leadership roles within PCB or regularly going beyond expectations in service to PCB and fellow peers.

PCB Community Impact Award

The recipient of this award shall have made a significant difference in the lives of people with blindness or vision loss through a product, a service, or an employment practice that leads to greater independence and opportunity. This award may be presented to a corporation, agency, or foundation that has provided significant support to the mission or projects of PCB.

# Spring 2024 PCB Outreach UpdatesBy Thaddeus GrahamPCB Outreach and Engagement Specialist

We made it through another Pennsylvanian Winter! As we look towards the promise of springtime and warmer weather, I wanted to take a few minutes to update our peers on what we are working on in outreach.

Photo Ops

First, I wanted to thank the peers that have already been providing photos for use on PCB’s social media pages. Next, I would like to invite any peer to submit photos for us to share on PCB’s social media platforms. Whether you are going to the park with some friends or having a quaint lunch with family, we want to share these moments with the world. We want the public to understand that our peers are not just surviving, they are thriving! So, on your next walk in the park, or date to an audio described play, remember to take a moment to snap a picture for your fellow peers at PCB. Once you have your photos, please email them to me at pcboutreach@pcb1.org so that we can share them with your peers.

Spring into Action

As our days become longer and our temperature warms, the number of possible outreach events increases. Spring is the official start of the Convention and Expo Season! This means there are more opportunities to tell our communities about this wonderful organization of like-minded peers. With so many possibilities for outreach, I need your help. Is your local community organization or church hosting an event? Local state senator hosting a Senior Expo? Local senior center hosting a health fair? Local sports team hosting a Low Vision/Blind Awareness Night? If you see or hear of an event that maybe beneficial for our peers to attend, please pass it along. Is it a local event that your chapter is interested in attending? Please contact us immediately as we can provide support and materials for these events. We have been working and will continue to work on updating and creating new materials to make our outreach events the best they can be.

Coming Soon

Last but certainly not least, we are working on the creation of a PCB Newsletter to allow us to better update our peers and the entire Commonwealth on PCB Outreach and Engagement. The newsletter is still a work in progress, but the plan is for this to be an additional tool during outreach events as well as within our own communities. More information is to come but I am excited about the opportunities the newsletter will provide.

Chapter Visits

Let’s get together at your next chapter meeting to discuss PCB, outreach, engagement, and your chapter. Whether in-person or on the phone/virtually, I want to hear from you. With the warm weather finally upon us, let’s chat.

For more information, questions, comments, concerns, or to schedule a chapter visit please contact Thadeus Graham, PA Council of the Blind Outreach and Engagement Specialist at 717.920.9999 Ext. 900 or email pcboutreach@pcb1.org

# ACB’s Guerrilla Approach to MarketingBy Thadeus GrahamPCB Outreach and Engagement Specialist

Before starting this position as Outreach and Engagement Specialist for the PA Council of the Blind, I understood my philosophy to outreach, education and engagement was shaped by my past experiences, as we all are. We develop solutions to overcome the adversities that are in front of us. One of my favorite mantras is “improvise, adapt and overcome”. My children, my colleagues and even the young adults I coach, hear this saying all the time. In life, we must improvise with what we are given, we must adapt to the situation, and we must find a way to overcome adversity. When I started conducting outreach many years ago, I understood the organization had little to no money for outreach. We were an educational institution; outreach was tertiary. A few years later when I went to work for a nonprofit organization, that truth did not change. Our budget was microscopic even if my job was solely outreach. Over the years I developed my own strategies for outreach based on these facts. It was not until after starting this position did I learn that the American Council of the Blind had a name for this type of outreach, coined Guerrilla Marketing.

The ACB has an entire handbook available virtually on its website for its peers to review and reference at any time. I would highly recommend reading through this material as it is very helpful for any chapter looking to increase their brand awareness and expand membership in their community. I wanted to take a few minutes to summarize ACB’s Guerrilla Marketing for you. Hopefully this will intrigue my fellow peers to dive deeper into the material.

ACB’s handbook on guerrilla marketing provides a comprehensive guide to planning, developing, and launching effective campaigns for affiliates and chapters with limited budgets. Guerrilla marketing, coined by Jay Conrad Levinson, emphasizes free and low-cost methods to compete against larger organizations. The guide covers various strategies including bulletin boards, flyers, media releases, social media utilization, and more.

Planning a guerrilla marketing program starts with crafting a clear and concise mission statement, focusing on passion, expertise, and impact. A three-sentence guerrilla mission statement should succinctly describe the organization's purpose, activities, and impact. Promotable events and activities are suggested, such as music concerts, audio-described movie nights, accessible devices and technology exhibits, tournaments, fundraisers, and awareness campaigns. These activities can serve as platforms for implementing guerrilla marketing tactics effectively.

What really excited me about ACB’s Guerrilla Marketing was the creation and implementation of a three-sentence guerrilla mission statement for your chapter. For this mission statement you need to focus on the three things that will make your chapter the most successful. What are they? What makes your chapter different? What makes you, you? The first sentence is your passion, the second is what you are best at, and the third is a clear sense of what the bottom-line impact you are trying to make really is. I would like to invite you to dive into this handbook, talk with your chapter and possibly develop your own chapter guerrilla marketing mission statement. If your chapter is interested but would like a little assistance, please just let me know. I would love to assist your chapter in any way that I can! I can be reached at PCBoutreach@pcb1.org or by calling the PCB office at 717-920-9999 ext 900 or if needed toll-free 877-617-7407.

You can find the ACB information on Guerrilla Marketing at

Website:

https://www.acb.org/guerrilla-marketing-handbook-acb-affiliates-and-chapters

# Come to D.C. with MeBy Chris Hunsinger

What did we do at the D.C. Leadership Conference and Legislative Seminar from Friday March 1st through Tuesday March 5th?

We learned a lot, walked a lot, and will probably revisit some presentations as podcasts. Some of us were virtual; and some went in person. As you can read in another article, there was a tour of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing on Friday afternoon. ACB showed off the office that they recently moved into on Friday evening for all of the in-person attendees who wanted to see it.

There was a meeting of the ACB Board of Directors on Saturday which gave those who attended as guests, either virtually or in person, a better insight into how the Board of Directors does its work. Our new Executive Director of ACB, Scott Thornhill, was introduced at that meeting. On Saturday evening there was a reception with a cash bar and hors d’oeuvres where we who attended in person could mix and mingle with each other.

On Sunday there was a Presidents’ meeting. That didn’t really mean that the meeting was for only presidents of affiliates, but the meeting had an emphasis on issues internal to ACB and affiliates. For virtual attendees, this meeting was on Zoom. For anyone else who didn’t register as a participant, much of the meeting was streamed on ACB Media, and when appropriate there was a simultaneous Spanish translation both on Zoom and on ACB Media.

Rachel Patterson, a White House disability consultant, brought the attendees up to date on activities of the White House which would have positive impact on people with disabilities. Those twenty minutes were not streamed on ACB Media.

There was a presentation which explained, to those of us who might not recognize it, the value that Special Interest Affiliates have for state affiliates and vice versa.

We next got significant food for thought about Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. This was the beginning of thought-provoking conversations that we all should have about how to expose ourselves to diversity, be more inclusive in our actions, consider equity rather than equality, and always think of accessibility which has a different meaning for different groups of people.

During our lunch time, Susan Bailley from Procter & Gamble gave a presentation on the company’s tactile marking program for products which could help people with no vision and low vision without the use of braille. If you think that this was a presentation from another well-meaning sighted person who has developed a system to help us without us being a part of it, Susan, herself, is a low vision person. We saw several pages of tactile symbols which could help us all recognize everything from shampoo to eye care products, floor care products to baby wipes, just by the symbols on the containers. Also, an interesting part of Susan’s story is that at some point in her professional life she decided that she needed a change and took time to learn the art and science of being a perfumer.

After lunch we dealt with ways of resolving conflicts, especially when you have to resolve a problem with several differing points of view. Do you compromise, come to a consensus, learn from each other and come to a realization or understanding, or do you just get out of the way and let everyone else solve the problem? Those of us in person had a chance to see how different methods of dealing with conflict can make for better or worse results.

We then had two break-out sessions, one on fundraising, and another on holding hybrid meetings. Both will be valuable podcasts for anyone who needs them.

Our final presentation of the day was about leadership opportunities from the ACB Inspire program and the rewards of encouraging new leaders through this program and other resources of ACB.

That evening, we had the opportunity to dine at several restaurants in the local area with people we could get a chance to know as individuals and not as part of the organization.

Monday’s legislative seminar came from a somewhat different perspective. All of us who are interested in the ACB Legislative Imperatives should have access at least to the one-page document that we handed out to the offices that we stopped at or visited virtually.

We started the morning with the two bills that deal primarily with web accessibility and communications via video, and television with other accessibility issues. These bills are:

H.R.5813 and S.2984 The Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act, and

H.R.4858 and S.2494 Communications Video and Telecommunications Act.

We then had two break-out sessions, one on paratransit and the other on seniors with vision loss. Both of these will be valuable podcasts for anyone with a special interest in these areas.

Karla Gilbride was the keynote speaker during our lunch. She graduated from law school in 2007. She is now General Council at the EEOC. She is someone with vision loss and her appointment had to be confirmed by the Senate. She was an inspiring speaker whose presentation showed us how what you may think of as setbacks may well be positive if you can change your point of view.

We had afternoon break-out sessions on Accessible Pedestrian Signals and Accessible Voting. There is a rather complete hand-out on the Pedestrian Signal issue that may be helpful when advocating for such signals, and Pennsylvania is at a stop in the accessible voting area until the legislature does more work on accessible ballot submission to go along with accessible ballot delivery.

We then received information on the legislative imperatives dealing with medical issues. That is:

H.R.33 and S.842 the Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefits Act and

H.R.1328 and S.3621 The Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act. H.R.33 and S.842 may well be the way for those low vision devices that we have been fighting for to be funded by Medicare and possibly Medicaid. If this bill passes, it will depend on how broadly the regulations are written in order to cover different levels of low vision devices such as magnifiers, CCTVs, certain kinds of cameras and glasses, and possibly scanners.

The imperative that was added at the last minute but which has a significant impact on people with disabilities is Reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. The most important part of this legislation for people with vision loss would be the service animal section which would standardize the forms in use for documenting service animals, and possibly create a national registry similar to the TSA pre-check system which would allow a one-time completion of the form that would be valid for a specified period of time. The reauthorization would also mandate more airport accessibility, make airlines improve accessibility on websites and applications, create a better reporting system for airline accessibility issues, address the problem of broken wheelchairs and other devices by undertrained staff, and give airports the ability to apply for grants for accessibility improvements.

Finally, we did a little talking about logistics for the trip to speak to legislators on Tuesday, and there was a bit of role playing to end the Monday afternoon events.

On Tuesday, Debby Hill, Jason Miller, and I went to seven offices in four different buildings, rode the train between the house office buildings and the Capitol, rode the train between the Capitol and Senate offices, and couldn’t really find enough space for all of us to sit down and eat any lunch.

Jason’s wife came with him to this event and she graciously became the sighted guide for the three of us on Tuesday. We certainly thank you Keesha.

Let me remind you that we only get 30 minutes at best to talk to any legislative assistant, and we really would have liked to have included other items that are of interest, but that really wasn’t possible. With five different items, being sure to tell personal stories related to the imperatives, and being sure to have time for questions, it was really a challenge to just get through these five imperatives.

On Tuesday after we got back to the hotel, my phone said that I had walked nearly 8,000 steps that day, and I still had to add my airport walking. I finished the day with just under 10,000 steps. Keesha and Jason still had to drive home to Philadelphia after that day of walking.

We continue working on virtual visits with other legislators. We had two more zoom meetings on March 8, and we hope to have more before we finally send out the one-page information without our personal stories.

We will keep everyone aware of the availability of the podcasts of Sunday and Monday’s programming. The legislative imperatives with a call-to-action section, the accessible pedestrian signal hand-out, and the one-pager can be accessed on the ACB website. Alternatively, we can supply electronic versions of those documents to anyone who wants them. Just let Autumn know which you want.

All in all, those of us who went in person had a productive weekend and then some. I have not yet checked with my virtual companions about their experience, but if they got sidetracked for some reason, they will be listening to podcasts just like you.

# Show Me the MoneyBy Chris Hunsinger

On March 1, I went to the ACB Leadership Conference. The first official activity on the schedule was a trip to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for a two-hour tour on Friday afternoon.

A group of us left the hotel in Uber rides to get to the money factory by 12:30. We had to surrender our bags and phones so we could neither take samples nor take pictures of what we saw. They didn’t tell us how many cameras were watching us at all times.

They walked us through the process of creating a $20.00 bill. We saw sheets of uncut bills, and then we watched all of the equipment working at the printing and cutting.

We were able to touch samples of the printed paper after several of the intermediate processes would have been completed. We also got to hold wrapped packages of $20.00 bills which contained $80,000.00 in cash, multiple packages called bricks, and several bricks of bills packaged for shipment to the Federal Reserve. There was even a pallet of bills that totaled more than 8 million dollars which looked ready for shipment. We learned that it takes more than a week to make paper money because of the many different processes involved. The ink on the money has to dry after each printing process.

There are drying ovens that the money goes through for a short time during the printing process. There are jets that blow air under the money so it doesn’t stick together as it is running through the equipment. The production line can handle only one type of bill at a time, and we were there on a $20.00 bill production run. Much of the processing is automated with skilled workers monitoring the equipment. The serial numbers are created by equipment that changes the numbers for each bill automatically with something that looks kind of like a date stamp where the digits are changed.

As we walked through the tour, we saw that there were pictures of employees on the walls doing their jobs throughout history. Interestingly, even at the turn of the 20th century there were women working at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The pictures showed how the equipment has changed over time. I forgot to make a note of how old the current production equipment is, but I think that it is made by a company in Germany. I have no idea of how long the process took in the past or how many more workers were needed to create the bills before this fancy equipment came on line.

Families have worked at the money factory for several generations. I believe that three generations of the family of the man leading our tour have worked at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

We also saw how other documents are created at the Bureau of Engraving. They showed us different stages of the printing of certificates that go with medals awarded by the military and the Federal government. We were shown how the certificates got their raised areas like eagles, ribbons, and other embellishments.

I don’t remember seeing any postage displays, but we were focused on the money aspect of this agency. We did see a prototype of the “accessible Currency” which now has a probable due date in 2026. They chose the $10.00 bill because it is actually one of the least used bills in production. It doesn’t have braille on it, but it will have a dot pattern of some sort.

We heard a cautionary story of a long time employee of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing who found a way to trick the inventory system so that he could take money home and spend it. Someone noticed something reportable and Secret Service investigated.

The supervisor who was our guide on the tour was asked questions about particular groups of bills because, by the use of the tracking system, he was able to tell when they were printed. That helped in the investigation. Because they had those facts and other information, Secret Service then arrested the man. He went to prison and lost his pension.

I hope that none of us tried to take samples although we did make a few jokes about all of that money in our hands and what we could do with it.

We collected our bags and phones and went out the door to call our drivers to take us back to the hotel. All in all, we really had an informative tour. Perhaps you will be able to do something similar if you take a trip to Washington DC in the future.

# Volunteering: A Winning CombinationBy Ann Chiappetta, M.S.

"Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity."

— Author unknown

If you have been waffling about whether or not to join a group or organization, why not step up and give it a try? An hour of your time once or twice a week could change someone else’s life.

What I find the most satisfying about volunteering is being able to take part in an organization that parallels my beliefs and life issues. For years I flitted from one blindness organization to another, not satisfied with the mission or purpose of any of them, which left me feeling like I didn’t really belong to anything other than blindness.

I felt like I finally belonged after returning home with my first guide dog in 2009. Training with a dog is fulfilling, challenging, and transformative. I began accepting my disability and surpassed my own self-imposed mobility limitations after receiving my first dog guide.

Once I realized my life was on a new and more fulfilling path, I began to explore being part of something besides the immediate community and thus, developing a desire to volunteer on behalf of guide dog users became a wonderful opportunity.

A selfless act of volunteerism is fulfilling for not only the recipient but also the person doing the giving. It could also assist you in brushing up on other skills. For example, taking part in organizing small projects can be fun and challenging. Applying your expertise or talent is another unforeseen gift of volunteerism. Organizations, clubs and civic projects seek individuals with training in accounting, leadership, public speaking, fundraising, marketing and hospitality. Another benefit is meeting other people who also want to pitch in and help. It could mean discovering and fostering long-lasting friendships. I still talk to people with whom I worked twenty years ago.

Making a difference in someone else’s life is satisfying. Some people say it is paying forward a kindness they received in the past. Others express how much joy it brings them to know they’ve helped a neighbor, church or local sports group.

# Better Together RhythmBy Lisa Busch

Like the starlings, let us form

to lift each other high,

our destination not sole earth

but interdependence sky.

Alone, one travels raging winds

falling to the ground,

together, we subdue the gale

and friendliness surrounds.

"I need help," glows in darkness,

"I'll do it for you," not allowed,

superiority, a way to plummet,

grateful wingspan, rises proud.

If all give and receive

PCB will soar,

welcoming peers to come right in—

who could ask for more?

## Underwriting Contributions

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