

**Charting Our Course:**

**Navigating Together Towards Success**

**65TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF VIRGINIA**

**Tracy Soforenko, President**

**November 2 - 5, 2023**

**Doubletree by Hilton Williamsburg**

**50 Kingsmill Road,**

**Williamsburg, Virginia 23185**

**(757) 220 - 2500**

**Hosted by the Greater Williamsburg Chapter**

**Bob Meter, President**

**Our National Representative:**

**Donald Porterfield, President, National Federation of the Blind of Arizona, and Member of the Board,**

**National Federation of the Blind**

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# The Federation Pledge

“I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its Constitution.”

# Convention Registration

Convention registration is available online. We ask everyone, whether a Virginia resident or not, to register using the correct virtual or in-person registration form. If you register before October 12, you will be entered into a drawing for $100. Current members of a Virginia chapter or division will be eligible to vote for resolutions and in our elections.

Advanced in-person registration on or before October 12 is subsidized.

Virtual participation is free of charge.

Details regarding in-person and virtual registration can be found at:

https://www.nfbv.org/convention

# Inclusivity, Diversity, and Social Conduct

We are committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone. Thank you for cultivating an atmosphere in which participants from diverse backgrounds can learn, network, and share with each other in an environment of mutual respect. We are committed to diversity, equity, and the free expression of ideas.

These principles have been outlined in our code of conduct found at:

<https://nfb.org/code-conduct>

We recognize a shared responsibility to create and uphold that atmosphere for the benefit of all. Prohibited behaviors include harassment, unwelcome sexual attention, and inappropriate use of the NFB of Virginia virtual convention platform. Prohibited behavior or misuse of the platform will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the convention and/or other consequences. For assistance or to report an incident at the convention, please call 703-672-1339, or email [help@nfbv.org](mailto:help@nfbv.org) for immediate attention. All reports will be fully investigated according to the steps in our code of conduct. Thank you for doing your part to contribute to our community and the high expectations we strive to maintain.

To file a confidential Code of Conduct violation, please do so at: https://tinyurl.com/43f5jrds

## Virtual Meeting Access over Zoom

The 2023 National Federation of the Blind of Virginia convention is an in-person event with a limited virtual experience. We will be streaming the following convention sessions over Zoom:

* Friday (11/3 - 9 AM to 12 PM) General Session
* Friday (11/3 - 5 PM to 6 PM) DBVI Public Meeting
* Saturday (11/4 - 9 AM to 12 PM) General Session
* Saturday (11/4 - 7 PM to 10 PM) Banquet
* Sunday (11/5 – 9:00 AM to 12 PM) General Session

We have embedded the Zoom links into the agenda to make it easy to just select the link and access your meeting.

Standard Virginia Zoom Room:

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAyamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09>

Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

One Tap Mobile: +[13017158592,,8297256345#](tel:+13017158592,,8297256345)

For those using a land line telephone to access the meeting, we have made the information the same.

The telephone number to call for all meetings is: 301 715 8592

The Meeting ID is 829 725 6345

If prompted, the Password is always 2020 1940

# Convention Registration & Information

Convention registration and information will be held in the Promenade as you enter the hotel's conference center. The cost of on-site registration is $30. Pre-registration packet pick up and on-site registration will be open the following times:

* Thursday, November 2 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
* Friday, November 3 from 8:00 AM to 8:50 AM, and from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM and then again from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
* Saturday, November 4 from 8:00 AM to 8:50 AM and 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Door prizes and auction items can be brought to the registration desk beginning on Thursday evening.

## Meal Functions

Tickets for all meal functions are available via the online registration form and can be picked up at the registration desk as part of your registration packet. Banquet and box lunch tickets must be purchased by 8:50 AM on Saturday, November 4.

The $30 Late On-site registration does not include meal functions.

For more information about registration or meal functions, please contact the NFBV Help Line at: (703) 493-1107.

## Door Prizes

Door prizes will be drawn periodically throughout convention sessions on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and at the banquet. To be eligible for door prizes, you must be registered for the convention and present in the room. Additionally, participants in the convention virtual experience will be eligible for door prizes. When participants in the convention virtual experience hear their name, they should email doorprizes@nfbv.org within 10 minutes to claim their prize.

## Action Auction

Throughout the convention we will be holding an Action Auction to raise money for the affiliate. The auction will be great fun with many valuable items up for bid. You will have a chance to preview auction items on Friday afternoon in the exhibit area. For more information, go to

https://nfbv.org/auction.

## Information Table

If you need assistance from the NFB of Virginia (such as helping a blind child get a good education, getting access to blindness skills training, learning to use NFB-NEWSLINE®, or resolving an employment discrimination problem), please go to the information table located at the rear of the Taylor ballroom. After the convention, a member of the NFB of Virginia will contact you. In addition, if you would like to sign up to receive any of our publications or would like to get regular updates about our programs and legislative efforts, please also visit the information table. The table will be open after the opening ceremonies on Friday, during General Session on Saturday, and all morning Sunday.

## DOG Relief Area

The DoubleTree has grassy areas outside its main entrance for dog relief. Please ask the front desk for assistance if you require help finding the trash cans.

## Assistive Listening Devices

A limited number of assistive listening devices are available during all convention sessions and during the banquet. For an assistive listening device, please go to the information table located at the rear of the Taylor Ballroom during all convention general sessions. A credit card or identification card is required as a deposit for the equipment.

## Daylight Saving Time

Don’t forget to set your watches back one hour for the change that occurs early Sunday morning. Smart phones, of course, should handle this change automatically.

## Hospitality Room

The Hospitality Room is Room 18 on the 2nd floor, accessible via stairs or elevator in the Conference Center. Please review the schedule for pre-planned activities by invitation in this space.

# Thursday, November 2, 2023

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM Registration – Promenade.

6:00 PM to 8:30 PM Welcome Meet and Mix - Room 18, 2nd Floor.

Come meet and mix on Thursday night with members from across the Commonwealth in a relaxed environment. Grab the dinner, meet some friends, and unwind before the convention fully swings into gear. The cost for this event is $16. Register on or before October 27th. Remember that prices may go up after the early registration deadline of October 12.

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Silver Bells Reunion and Open House Dinner - Harrison Room: Sandy Halverson, Silver Bells Program Coordinator.

Please join us to learn about our transformative senior empowerment programs. Reconnect with alumni and staff. If you have never attended Silver Bells, find out more about the program from past participants. If you are one of our 120+ alumni, find out about upcoming training opportunities. Discover how our training will help you live the life you want! Please make certain to include the dinner in your registration because this meal has a separate charge.

8:00 PM to 10:00 PM Immersive History: A Celebration of Our Rich History and Culture - Central Lounge, Renee Valdez, Chair, NFB of Virginia Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee welcomes you to an evening program of interactive dance, music, and storytelling from the colonial era to the present. Learn dance and music from across the centuries and hear dynamic stories from guests and members alike. Dress comfortably because we will be moving, grooving, and laughing during this exciting program.

# FRIDAY, November 3, 2023

8:00 AM to 8:50 AM Registration – Promenade.

## General Session

Adams Ballroom

Zoom [Meeting ID: 829 725 6345](https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAyamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09)

9:00 AM Opening Ceremonies.

* Call to Order - Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia
* Invocation - Stewart Prost, President, Tidewater Chapter, Norfolk, Virginia
* Presentation of the Colors - NFB of Virginia Veterans Pledge of Allegiance - Gerald Meredith, President, Richmond Virginia Blinded Veterans Association, South Chesterfield, Virginia
* Star Spangled Banner – Deborah Jackson, Jackie Greenhow, Deborah Prost, Julie Orozco, and Dana Dishman
* Recognition of Veterans – Gerald Meredith
* Federation Pledge – Collin Bruce, Member, Greater Williamsburg Chapter, Williamsburg, Virginia
* Greetings from Williamsburg Vice Mayor Pat Dent
* Greetings from Our Host Chapter – Bob Meter, President, Greater Williamsburg Chapter, Williamsburg, Virginia
* Convention Arrangements - Joe Orozco, Chairperson, Convention Organization and Arrangements, Arlington, Virginia

9:25 AM National Report – Donald Porterfield, President, National Federation of the Blind of Arizona and Member of the Board of Directors, National Federation of the Blind, Tucson, Arizona.

9:55 AM Seniors Setting Our Course - Silver Bells and DBVI - A partnership empowering blind and low vision seniors.

* Sandy Halverson, Moderator, Arlington, Virginia
* Melody Roane, Director, Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI), Richmond, Virginia
* Melinda Pugh, Herndon, Virginia
* Hazel Jones, Richmond, Virginia
* Judy Taylor, Bumpass, Virginia

10:20 AM Action Auction.

10:30 AM Revolutionizing Personal Safety for the Blind: Nathan Green, Chief Operating Officer for Safety Positive Foundation and Advanced instructor for the SEED program, Lexington, Virginia.

10:40 AM Protecting the Rights of All Blind People: Ensuring Civil Rights for Blind Prisoners. Rebecca Herbig, Director of Litigation – Virginia Disability Law Center, Richmond Virginia.

10:55 AM Deep in the Heart of the NFB - Reflections from Virginia’s 2023 McDonald Fellows and Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship Fund Winners.

* Moderator: Mary Durbin, Chairperson, McDonald Fellowship Committee, and NFB of Virginia Liaison, Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship Fund, Virginia Beach, Virginia
* Pam Balensiefen, Ashburn, Virginia
* Nathan Green, Lexington, Virginia
* Bob Meter, Williamsburg, Virginia

11:15 AM Charting A New Course: Running for the Virginia House of Delegates. - Michael Kasey, Past President, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

11:25 AM Action Auction.

11:35 AM Finding Your Compass, Finding Your Place in the Blindness Movement – Julie Orozco, Recording Secretary, Potomac Chapter, Arlington, Virginia.

11:45 AM Reports and Announcements.

12:00 PM General Session Adjourns.

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Registration – Promenade.

12:00 PM to 5:00 PM Exhibits and Resource Fair – Taylor Ballroom.

Why read about interesting gadgets when you could experience them? Why take our word for excellent services across Virginia when you could talk directly to the people who offer them? This and much more is at our Exhibit Hall/Low Vision Resource Fair.

12:00 PM to 12:30 PM Box Lunch Pickup - Promenade (Please bring your meal ticket).

12:30 PM to 2:00 PM Rock your Growth: Becoming a Dynamic Leader- Adams Ballroom.

This is an exciting seminar for chapter board members and rising leaders in our affiliate. Do you serve on your chapter’s board or are you seeking to grow your leadership in our movement? Grab your lunch and join us for this interactive session led by Evelyn Valdez, President, Greater Alexandria Chapter and Joanne Wilson, Federation Leader to learn how you can grow your leadership skills and learn from fellow leaders from across the Commonwealth.

1:00 PM Full Colonial Williamsburg Tour - Bus departs from the main entrance.

## Friday Afternoon Concurrent Seminars

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Navigating to your Destination - O&M and tech can help you get there - Room D, Domonique Lawless and Jimmy Morris.

How can travel skills and technology come together to help you chart your course and reach your destination? Armed with solid skills and the latest technology tools, you can safely achieve greater independence and chart your own adventures. Come check out our interactive panel discussion and rotate through our workstations to experience tools that can help you effectively and safely get to your goals.

2:00 PM to 3:30 PM First Aid and Emergency Preparedness Training Empowering Safety & Protecting Your Family – Room A and B. Christine Grassman and Braden Flax, Certified CPR/First Aid/AED Instructors.

Do you know how to use a fire extinguisher, how to assist a person who is choking, what to do about a severe cut or burn? What about how to detect a stroke, shock, hypothermia, or hyperthermia? Come to the NFBV state convention in Williamsburg, where Christine Grassman and Braden Flax, Certified CPR/First Aid/AED Instructors will cover such topics. This class is limited to the first twenty class registrants who write to Christine Grassman cfgrassman@icloud.com

4:00PM to 5:00 PM Resolutions Committee – Room A and B, Deepa Goraya, Chairperson.

We encourage the participation of all members in setting Federation policy, and the best way to influence policy is through resolutions. As a grassroots organization, we serve our movement through collective action, and such action begins with policy making and debate. Come help shape the policies of the NFB of Virginia.

4:00PM to 5:00 PM Blind Veterans Meet Up - Room 18, 2nd Floor, Gerald Meredith, Veterans Social President, Richmond Virginia Blinded Veterans Association (RVBVA) and member, Richmond Chapter, South Chesterfield, Virginia.

We invite all those serving and those who have served, family and friends, to meet members and learn about the BVA. Sherri Geiger (VIST Coordinator) of the VA's Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation (VISOR) Program will be present to share information about services. Come out and meet veterans and make some new friends.

## Friday Evening Concurrent Sessions and Hospitality

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM Registration – Promenade.

5:00 PM to 6:00 PM Public Meeting on DBVI Divisions, Programs and Services - Adams Ballroom, Pam Cato, Deputy Commissioner for Services, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

Zoom [Meeting ID: 829 725 6345](https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAyamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09)

We are grateful that DBVI will hold a public meeting where attendees can ask questions and speak with agency leadership. DBVI wants to hear from you, so come and share your thoughts and ideas on how DBVI can better meet the needs of blind and low vision Virginians. Let your voice be heard. Virtual participants can email questions and comments for the public meeting at [help@nfbv.org](mailto:help@nfbv.org)

5:30 PM to 6:30 PM At-Large Chapter Meeting - Room D, Jody Silverberg, At Large Chapter Vice President.

Are you interested in joining the NFB but do not live near a chapter? Join our At Large Chapter that meets virtually throughout the year but meets for a great community gathering at the state convention. Join our Federation team!

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Student Dinner Party, Room 18, 2nd Floor, Ally Kelso, President, Virginia Association of Blind Students.

Join the Virginia student division leaders and members for fellowship with old and new friends to kick off the convention weekend. Open and free to all students over the age of fourteen.

6:30 PM to 8:00 PM Youth Track: Cookie Decorating and Game Social for Families - Room A and B.

Calling all blind kids ages 0-13, siblings and parents! Join us for cookie decorating and drinks and a chance to meet other families from across the state. Bring any Braille or large print books your child no longer needs and pick up some free books from our free Braille book exchange table. (Email bsellers31@gmail.com with questions and any food allergies we need to be aware of).

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM Project RISE Opening Exercises - Room 18.

Project RISE participants, members of the student division, and scholarship finalists are invited to stay for an evening of interactive learning and social skills you can put to work right away in your personal and recreational lives.

7:00 PM to 10:00 PM Williamsburg Convention Hospitality – Harrison and Taylor Ballrooms, hosted by the Greater Williamsburg Chapter.

The Greater Williamsburg Chapter invites you to join us for an evening of music, food and conversation Friday, November 3. Come listen to the local band “Manhattan Affair” led by Tony Ingram. Tony encourages participation and dancing. He performs everything from Sinatra to contemporary tunes. Enjoy a variety of appetizers chosen to fit each member’s specific food requirements. You must register for this program to attend. We are looking forward to hosting this evening, which will give members an opportunity to take a break and reunite with old friends and make new ones.

9:30 PM to 10:30 PM Scholarship Mixer – Room 18, 2nd Floor, Jimmy Morris, Chairperson.

This event is limited to the NFB of Virginia 2023 Jimmy Nelson Scholarship Finalists and the members of the Scholarship Committee.

# Saturday, November 4, 2023

8:00 AM to 8:50 AM Registration - Promenade.

## General Session

Adams Ballroom

Zoom [Meeting ID: 829 725 6345](https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAyamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09)

9:00 AM Call to Order - Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

Invocation – Ameenah Ghoston, Project RISE Mentor and Dallas Theological Seminary Student, Springfield, Virginia.

9:05 AM Why You Should Choose Structured Discovery Training.

* Amy Porterfield, Moderator, President SAAVI Services for the Blind, Tucson, Arizona
* Mary Jo Hartle, NOMC, TBS, Adjunct Professor, Towson University, Lutherville, Maryland
* Neel Sheth, Braille Instructor, Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Richmond, Virginia
* Elizabeth Schoen, College Student, Arlington, Virginia

9:25 AM Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Virginia - Rick Mitchell, Commissioner, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

9:40 AM NFB BELL Academy® : Growing Possibilities for Students throughout Virginia.

* Louise Walch, NFB BELL Academy Coordinator, Virginia Beach Virginia.
* Luise Schmidt-Eisenlohr, NFB BELL Academy Participant, Arlington, Virginia
* Tim Schmidt-Eisenlohr, Parent, Arlington Virginia

9:55 AM Action Auction.

10:00 AM Charting Our Course: Navigating Together, Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

10:30 AM Empowering Students Through Self Advocacy – Lauren Altman, President, National Association of Blind Students, Livingston, New Jersey.

10:40 AM Action Auction.

10:45 AM Students Depart for Youth Track programming. (Children six years old and younger should be accompanied by an adult).

10:50 AM Introducing the 2023 NFB of Virginia James F. Nelson, Jr. Scholarship Finalists. Jimmy Morris, Chair, Glen Allen, Virginia.

* Kenneth Elijah Calhoun, The College of William and Mary, Aldie, Virginia
* Angie Iraheta Gruessing, University of Mary Washington, Henrico, Virginia
* Laura Poston, Campbell University, Virginia Beach, Virginia
* Casey Reyes, University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Virginia
* Elizabeth Schoen, St. Olaf College, Arlington, Virginia
* Lea Schiefele, The College of William and Mary, Huntley, Virginia
* Kamryn Tynes, Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia

11:00 AM Building Confidence Through Parenting Partnerships. Jessica Reed, Virginia Blind Parents Coordinator, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

* Natasha Hubbard, Member, Peninsula Chapter, Hampton, Virginia
* James Shobert, President, Winchester Chapter, Stephenson, Virginia
* Alysha Hiller, Project RISE Deputy Coordinator, Montclair, Virginia

11:20 AM Action Auction.

11:30 AM Why I Am a Federationist. Mausam Mehta, Immediate Past Vice President National Association of Blind Students, New York, New York.

11:50 AM Reports and Announcements.

12:00 PM General Session Adjourns.

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Youth Track - Central Lounge and Room D.

Students will connect with national student leaders in a small group session to learn about our positive philosophy and share what they wish their parents really knew.

12:00 PM to 12:30 PM Box Lunch Pickup – Promenade (Please bring your meal ticket).

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Registration – Promenade.

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Parent and Youth Track Lunch – Room D. Beth Sellers, President.

Network with other parents, learn about resources for your children, ask questions about our programs for students from toddlers to graduate school. Grab the boxed lunch or bring your own, but please join us for our parents’ lunch. Our lunch hour is an informal roundtable conversation for parents of children of all ages with low vision, blindness, deaf-blindness, and multiple disabilities. Find out about fun year-round and summer mentoring, skill building, and social programs we offer across Virginia and across the country. We will also hold a 10–15-minute business meeting.

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM Seniors Division Luncheon and Business Meeting - Harrison Room. Patty Droppers, President.

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM Virginia Association of Blind Merchants Division Luncheon and Business Meeting- Room 2 and 3, Yasiah Hurtado, President, Alexandria, Virginia.

Empower your future and discover your destiny by building your entrepreneurial business. Learn from others in our NFBV Merchants division so you can explore a profitable and engaging future.

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM Virginia Association of Blind Students Business Meeting – Room A and B. Ally Kelso, President, Virginia Association of Blind Students, Burke, Virginia. All students, including Project RISE participants, are invited.

12:30 to 1:45 PM Community Lunch – Room 18

Make friends and build your network in this informal community lunch in our hospitality space.

## Saturday Afternoon Breakout Sessions

1:15 PM to 3:45 PM Parent Track – Room D.

Parents, please join us for a fun and interactive session with multiple guest speakers! We will have opportunities to discuss inclusive education in public schools, going to college with blindness, low vision and/ or multiple disabilities, financial planning for the future, and orientation and mobility in the home and community.

1:15 PM to 4:15 PM Youth Track – Central Lounge

Bring your sighted siblings and join us at interactive stations: 1) orientation and mobility travel tips and tricks for all; 2) Braille literacy fun; and 3) tactile art. (Children six years old and younger should be accompanied by an adult).

2:00 PM to 4:15 PM Senior Track - Staying in the Game - Harrison Room, Patty Droppers, President, Seniors Division.

Join fellow seniors for this exploration of low vision and non-visual techniques including individual instruction and demonstration of nonvisual methods to help you succeed in your kitchen, manage your health, access information, and use accessible cell phones. Learn approaches to care for grandchildren and address safety concerns from within our own families. Build your community of peers and positive role models across Virginia.

2:00 PM – 4:15 PM Charting Your Path to Job Success: Navigating the Workday with Confidence – Room 2 and 3. Mausam Mehta, Coordinator.

Are you ready to embrace your full potential in your career journey? Ever wondered how to advocate for yourself confidently in various workplace scenarios, both in and out of the office? Join us for an interactive seminar designed to empower blind working age adults. In this unique session, we will dive into real-life work scenarios, offering practical role-playing exercises that empower you to advocate for yourself effectively, whether you are in a corporate office, healthcare, education, or any other industry. Gain confidence, build essential skills, and connect with peers who share your journey. Elevate your work and personal life by mastering the art of self-advocacy. Plus, get a few chuckles along the way.

2:00 Pm to 3:00 PM No Holds Barred: Your Real-World Introduction to Effective Debate - Room 18, 2nd Floor, Joe Orozco, Project RISE Coordinator.

In today's evolving job environment, learning how to debate nurtures essential skills in creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. If you learn how to negotiate the monthly bills you want, you will gain the confidence to advocate for the workplace accommodations you need. Open to students and adults, come learn how to cleverly defend your blindness philosophy in a world that tries to tell you it cannot be done.

#### Self Defense Classes:

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM Self-Defense with SEED - A Blind-Centric Approach - Room A and B.

3:15 PM to 4:15 PM Self-Defense with SEED - A Blind-Centric Approach - Room 2 and 3.

Learn your options for defending yourself from unwanted touch during one of two identical presentations of the SEED program, a self-defense system designed BY the blind, FOR the blind. In this brief introduction, SEED Advanced Instructor Nathan Green, a Virginian and member of the at-large chapter, will teach some hands-on techniques that you can use right away to protect yourself. Learn how to be aware of your surroundings, how to de-escalate safety situations, and learn 2-3 hands-on self-defense techniques in this interactive seminar. Both sessions are identical, but capacity is limited to 15 participants per session. To secure your participation, write to Nathan Green at ngreenseed@gmail.com.

3:15 PM – 4:15 PM A Blind Lawyer's Guide to the Legal Profession- Room 18, Lea Schiefele, Coordinator.

Meet successful blind and low vision attorneys and others in the legal field as we discover ways to help each other.

This meeting is a chance for lawyers to come together and share their knowledge and experiences with other lawyers, law students, and students interested in studying law. During the first part of the event, lawyers and students will share knowledge and experiences with each other. The second part of the event will feature multiple discussion groups addressing topics such as LSAT and Bar prep, legal research, trial and appellate advocacy, navigating law school as a legally blind student, and more! Whether you are a lawyer, current law student, or thinking about going to law school, please join us for this interchange of ideas.

4:30 P M to 5:30 PM Blind Parents Meet Up – Room 2 and 3. Jessica Reed, James Shobert, and CJ Fish, Coordinators.

Being a parent is hard. Being a blind parent can appear impossible. Whether you are a current or prospective parent, join the blind parents group as we exchange techniques and continue to build community and connection which will empower us in our parenting journeys.

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM First Timers Reception – Room 18.

John Halverson and Tracy Soforenko, Coordinators.

NFBV Membership Chair John Halverson and President Tracy Soforenko welcome first time Virginia convention attendees to an informal gathering. We want to help you get connected with your Federation Family. Due to space constraints, this Rookie Reception is best suited for first timers.

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM Sighted Partner Meet Up – Harrison Room. Becky Keller and Sharon Soforenko, facilitators.

Share and learn techniques and strategies to support your loved one while ensuring their independence and your own sanity.

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM Parents of Blind Children by the Poolside - Indoor Pool.

Grab the kids and join your new friends by the pool, or if the mood strikes you, in the pool, as the hotel has a nice indoor pool for your convenience. It is the perfect way to relax before the evening's festivities.

## 2023 Convention Banquet

Adams Ballroom

Zoom [Meeting ID: 829 725 6345](https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAyamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09)

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Pre-Banquet Reception (Cash Bar) – Promenade.

7:00 PM to 10:00 PM Banquet Program – Adams Ballroom, Tracy Soforenko, Master of Ceremonies and President, NFB of Virginia.

Invocation – Naim Abu el Hawa, Member, Potomac Chapter, Vienna, Virginia.

Banquet Address – Donald Porterfield, President, National Federation of the Blind of Arizona and Member of the Board of Directors, National Federation of the Blind.

2023 James F. Nelson Scholarship Awards Presentation - Jimmy Morris, Scholarship Committee Chairperson.

Action Auction - Jacki Brown, Chairperson and Auctioneer.

# Sunday, November 5, 2023

## General Session

Adams Ballroom

Zoom [Meeting ID: 829 725 6345](https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAyamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09)

9:00 AM Call to Order - Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

Invocation – Althea Pittman, President, Eastern Shore Chapter, Melva, Virginia.

9:05 AM Project RISE: Resilience, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment. Joe Orozco, Project RISE Program Coordinator, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Arlington, Virginia.

9:15 AM Helping Others Find Their Path: Teaching Structured Discovery Techniques in Africa – Domonique Lawless, President, Richmond Chapter, Mechanicsburg, Virginia.

9:25 AM Achieving Success/Overcoming Obstacles at the College of William & Mary: Lessons in Self Advocacy.

* Rachel McDonald, Ph.D., Pre-Employment Transition Services Facilitator, Center on Transition Innovations, Virginia Commonwealth university, Williamsburg, Virginia
* Lea Schiefele, Law Student, Huntly, Virginia
* Chris Infante, M.Ed., Elementary School Counselor, Richmond Public Schools, Henrico, Virginia

9:45 AM Action Auction.

Note: Project RISE participants should leave the General Session and meet in Room 18.

9:55 AM Brag & Steal – Federation Chapters and Divisions Sharing Their Successes.

10:20AM Action Auction.

10:30 AM Interactive Town Hall Discussion with Donald Porterfield, President, National Federation of the Blind of Arizona and Tracy Soforenko, President.

Bring your questions to this open discussion about your questions about our work in the Federation. Virtual participants can email questions and comments for the town hall at president@nfbv.org.

10:50 AM Action Auction.

10:55 AM Business Session.

* Audit Committee Report - Sean McMahon, Chairperson, Alexandria, Virginia
* Treasurer’s Report - Mark Roane, Treasurer, Richmond, Virginia
* Resolutions - Deepa Goraya, Chairperson, District of Columbia
* Committee Reports
* 2024 Richmond and Washington Seminars - Deepa Goraya, District of Columbia, and Bonnie O’Day, Alexandria, Virginia, Legislative Directors
* Communications – Jacki Bruce, Williamsburg, Virginia
* Public Outreach – Uricka Harrison, Stewart Prost, and Corlis Jones, Co-chairs
* Membership, John Halverson
* Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Renee Valdez
* Fundraising – Renee Valdez
* 2024 National Convention
* 2024 NFB of Virginia Convention

11:50 AM to 12:00 PM Reports and Announcements.

12:00 PM General Session Adjourns.

Thank you to our Greater Williamsburg Chapter for hosting the 2023 NFB of Virginia State Convention. Your hospitality made us feel like family and it made the convention one of our best.

# Thank You to Our Sponsors and Exhibitors

Please thank this year’s Convention Sponsors and Exhibitors located in the Harrison Ballroom on

Friday, November 3 from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

## Trailblazers Level

**Dxdt Engineering and Research- Farmer Noah Team**

Farmer Noah is a new system and approach for teaching and refining orientation and mobility skills. In the children’s version of this system, eight electronic “farm animals” are positioned randomly within a room or any indoor or outdoor environment. There are four different types of farm animals. The orientation and mobility (O&M) trainee is challenged to find the pairs of animals. When one animal is found, and tapped with a cane, it makes the sound of the animal it represents. The system registers the animal. If the next animal the trainee “finds” is the same kind of animal, those animals have been paired and are taken out of play (they are put on the ark). The paths between the animals are characterized by different objects, scents, sounds and sensations that most sighted people take for granted. While the trainee is completing the exercise- which seems like a game - our system is challenging and training them to detect and use all of the characteristics of the environment to make mental maps that they can then use to navigate with more safety and confidence. Learn more at www.farmernoah.com

**Molina Healthcare**

Molina Healthcare of Virginia is one of the five Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO's). We have been providing government-funded, quality health care since 2017. The Company serves members through Medicaid and Medicare programs throughout Virginia. Molina Healthcare, Inc., a FORTUNE 500 company, provides managed healthcare services under the Medicaid and Medicare programs and through the state insurance marketplaces. Molina Healthcare served approximately 5.2 million members as of June 30, 2023, located across 19 states. For more information about Molina Healthcare, please visit [molinahealthcare.com](http://molinahealthcare.com).

**Penny Forward**

Penny Forward is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization offering accessible financial wellness education and counseling programs for people who are blind or disabled. Our self-paced online courses will provide you with tools and techniques you can use to navigate the complicated landscape of personal finance. In addition, you will also have access to exclusive member-only Zoom chats where you can ask questions and practice your growing money management skills with other members and our instructors. You can also schedule one-to-one sessions for more personalized help. If that isn’t enough, you’ll also get early access to all Penny Forward podcast episodes, a members only newsletter, and bonus content created exclusively for our members. All of this costs just

$9.99 a month or $99 a year. Learn more at https://www.pennyforward.com

## Pioneers Level

**Access Virginia**

Access Virginia was created to provide open captioning and audio description at live theatrical performances so that Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Blind/Visually Impaired persons could attend show performances and experience the pleasure of live entertainment at public facilities and to ensure that no individual with these disabilities is denied access or treated differently than other individuals because of absence of necessary accommodations. Learn more at accessvirginia.info

**Achilles International**

Achilles International is a nonprofit running organization that is located in over 19 states and in 17 other countries. We offer free weekly workouts for individuals with any type of disability and help cover race fees. Learn more at https://www.achillesinternational.org/

**Blind Girl Designs**

All of the garments at Blind Girl Designs are designed by founder, Tricia, the inspiration behind the name Blind Girl Designs. She also hand prints our graphic design apparel with tactile ink. T-shirts and hoodies size small through five XL, printed with tactile inks. Of our 22 styles 20 of them have white Keynes integrated into the art. One other style has Braille, and the last style is “I love my guide dog” with a big paw print. We work with customers to touch our prints, and we audio describe our products at the booth. Call us for accessible shopping! 862-448-1011

Learn more at www.blindgirldesigns.com

**Integration Technologies Group**

ITG is a distributor, trainer, and authorized repair facility of adaptive technology from HumanWare, Vispero, and OrCam. For more information, visit www.itgonline.com

**JW.org**

JW.ORG provides many free Bible study aides for those who are blind or visually impaired. These include Braille and large print publications. Also, audio publications can be accessed via JW.ORG, JW Library, or Amazon Alexa. Additionally, screen reader (RTF) and notetaker (BRL) files as well as MP3 formats are available. Videos with audio descriptions are also published on JW.ORG. These resources assist individuals, married couples as well as their teens and young children to have uplifting Bible-based information that assists them to face daily challenges successfully and provide answers to life’s big questions. Learn more at [WWW.JW.org](http://WWW.JW.org)

**Non-24 Vanda Pharmaceuticals**

Vanda Pharmaceuticals is dedicated to raising awareness of Non-24-Hour Sleep-Wake Disorder (Non-24) and supporting the blindness community. Non-24 is a rare circadian rhythm disorder affecting people who are totally blind. People living with Non-24 experience excessive daytime sleepiness and nighttime sleeplessness, which leads to impaired social and occupational functioning. Learn more at vandapharma.com

**KMC Essentials, LLC**

KMC produces the Essential Cane Keeper, which is a case for the folding white cane. Learn more at [http://www.theKaneKeeper.com](http://www.thekanekeeper.com)

**Prevention of Blindness Society of Greater Washington Low Vision Resource Center**

POB delivers free vision support services and resource navigation to assist individuals with low vision maintain their independence. Our Resource Navigators provide personal guidance as clients move through their vision journey. Our resource navigators have personally faced vision challenges and wish to help others in similar situations. One of the Navigators, Rachel Schreiman, a member of the Fairfax and Potomac Chapters will be on hand to demonstrate low vision resources. Learn more at <https://www.youreyes.org/programs/low-vision/>

**PS You Are Fabulous**

PS You Are Fabulous is a nonprofit organization that helps the blind and visually impaired with the clothing and organization of the closets. A Fashion Stylist for the blind. Learn more at psyouarefabulous.org

**Safety Positive Foundation & Strive4You SEED Program**

Safety Positive Foundation is a non-profit focused on providing resources and training in proactive safety and security to the blind and visually impaired community.

The SEED program from Strive4You is a self-defense program designed BY the blind FOR the blind. For more information, visit safetypositivefdn.org & strive4you.org

**Virginia Beach Town Center Blind Lions**

Serving the Hampton Riads area, we provide vision screenings, hearing exams, glasses, hearing aids and

surgeries for those in need. We work with the local food bank, provide hot meals to homeless teens, recycle eyeglasses and more. We serve our community anyway we can. Learn more at [www.towncenterblindlions.org](http://www.towncenterblindlions.org)

**Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired/Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired**

The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) is an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia that is dedicated to its mission of providing quality services to assist Virginia's citizens who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind in achieving their desired level of employment, education, and personal independence. The Department provides a wide array of specialized services and programs for Virginia residents of all ages who are experiencing significant vision impairments attain the skills, confidence and positive outlook that are critical to independence. Our primary focus is to assist blind Virginians in achieving quality employment outcomes. Vocational evaluation, job training, job development, placement, follow-up, and other services are provided to assist consumers in obtaining jobs in the public and private sectors. Training for and employment as food service managers and vendors is available in cafeterias, snack bars, and other vending facilities in public and private buildings. The Virginia Industries for the Blind provides another employment option for blind Virginians at its two plant locations in Charlottesville and Richmond, its satellite store operations and administrative service positions across the Commonwealth.

Learn more at https://www.dbvi.virginia.gov/

**Vispero**

Vispero® is the world’s leading assistive technology provider for the visually impaired. We have a long history of developing and providing innovative solutions for blind and low-vision individuals that help them reach their full potential. Learn more at www.vispero

**Volunteers for the Blind**

Volunteers for the Blind is a nonprofit that provides volunteer readers and shopping assistants. Learn more by visiting www.volunteersfortheblind.org

**You Cane Give Initiative/Kustom Cane**

You Cane Give is a 501C3 nonprofit providing canes, mobility training, and other support to the international blind community. Kustom Cane is an extension of YCG, allowing individuals to purchase customized canes and accessories with all profits supporting YCG. Learn more at www.youcanegive.org

### **Dream Makers Circle**

You can help build a future of opportunity for the blind by becoming a member of our Dream Makers Circle. It is easier than you think. You can visit your bank and convert an account to a POD (payable on death) bank account, which is payable after your passing to the National Federation of the Blind or one of our affiliates. Your legacy gift to the National Federation of the Blind or the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia can be made in the form of a will or living trust, an income-generating gift, or by naming us as the beneficiary of a retirement plan, IRA, pension, or a life insurance policy. You can designate a specific amount, a percentage, or list the NFB as one of several beneficiaries. For additional information, please contact Patti Chang at 410-659-9314, extension 2422, or at [pchang@nfb.org](mailto:pchang@nfb.org).

### **Vehicle Donations**

The National Federation of the Blind uses car donations to improve the education of blind children, distribute free white canes, help veterans, and so much more. We have partnered with Vehicles for Charity to process donated vehicles. Please call toll-free 855-659-9314, and a representative can make arrangements, or you can donate online by visiting [www.nfb.org/vehicledonations](http://www.nfb.org/vehicledonations).

### **Preauthorized Contributions (PAC)**

Can you help the National Federation of the Blind on a regular basis? Please consider joining our preauthorized contribution plan. Starting at $5 monthly, you can help us turn dreams into reality and raise expectations for blind people. Visit [nfb.org/pac](https://nfb.org/pac) to fill out the online form or email [pac@nfb.org](mailto:pac@nfb.org) for additional information.