



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

VIRGINIA

Live the life you want.

**Advancing Advocacy, Breaking Barriers, Creating
Change**

66TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF VIRGINIA
Tracy Soforenko, President

October 31 – November 3, 2024
Renaissance Portsmouth
425 Water Street
Portsmouth, Virginia 23704
(757) 673-3000

Co-Hosted by The Tidewater and Peninsula Chapters
OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF
VIRGINIA

Stewart Prost and Uricka Harrison, Presidents

Our National Representative:

**Anil Lewis, Executive Director – Blindness Initiatives,
National Federation of the Blind, Atlanta, Georgia**

Table of Contents

The Federation Pledge	5
Convention Registration	5
Inclusivity, Diversity, and Social Conduct	5
Thursday, October 31, 2024	7
FRIDAY, November 1, 2024	9
General Session	9
Friday Afternoon Concurrent Seminars	14
Friday Evening Concurrent Sessions and Hospitality	17
Saturday, November 2, 2024	21
General Session	21
Saturday Afternoon Breakout Sessions	27
2024 Convention Banquet	30
Sunday, November 3, 2024	32
General Session	32
Convention Notes:	35
Virtual Meeting Access over Zoom	35
Convention Registration & Information	36
Meal Functions	36
Door Prizes	37
Action Auction	37
Information Table	38

DOG Relief Area	38
Assistive Listening Devices	39
Daylight Saving Time	39
Hospitality Room	39
Thank You to Our Sponsors and Exhibitors	40
Vanguard	40
Innovator	40
Trailblazer	41
Pioneer	42
<u>Dream Makers Circle</u>	48
<u>Vehicle Donations</u>	48
<u>Preauthorized Contributions (PAC)</u>	49

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. If you register before October 7, 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.

Early registration registration on or before October 7 is subsidized.

Virtual participation is free of charge.

Details regarding registration and other logistics can be found on our [convention landing page](#).

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 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>

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2024

5:00 PM to 8:00 PM Registration – Portsmouth
Registration Desk.

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM Welcome Meet and Mix –
Commodore Room

Come meet and mix on Thursday night with members from across the Commonwealth in a relaxed environment. Grab some dinner, meet some friends, and unwind before the convention fully swings into gear. The cost for this event is \$17. Register on or before October 27th.

Remember that prices will go up after the early registration deadline of October 7.

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM Silver Bells Reunion and Open House
Dinner – Portsmouth 7. 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 180+ alumni, find out about upcoming training opportunities. Discover how our training will help you live the life you want! Please make certain to include dinner in your registration because this meal has a separate charge of \$31 with early registration.

8:30 PM to 10:30 PM Día de los Muertos...and other Halloween Lore from Around the World – Portsmouth 4.
Renee Valdez, Chair, NFB of Virginia Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee welcomes you to a night of wonder, education, and entertainment. Experience the Halloween tradition as observed by various cultures. As an example, Día de los Muertos is a tradition observed in the Mexican culture. We will bring it to life in a dramatization featuring costume, music, movement, aromas, taste, and textures. Audience members will be invited to participate in role play activities, playing musical instruments, dancing, and implementing sound effects. Halloween is more than just trick or treat and the Great Pumpkin. Learn the cultural elements inherent in the celebration of Halloween in a way that is engaging of all the senses, the biggest sense being the sense of fun! All who attend are encouraged to wear their favorite Halloween costume! Whatever you wear, dress comfortably because we will be moving, grooving, and laughing during this exciting program.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2024

8:00 AM to 8:50 AM Registration – Portsmouth
Registration Desk.

GENERAL SESSION

Portsmouth 5 Ballroom

Zoom Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

9:00 AM Opening Ceremonies.

- Call to Order – Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia
 - Invocation – Deborah Prost, Member, Beth Messiah Synagogue of Tidewater, Norfolk, Virginia
 - Presentation of the Colors – NFB of Virginia Veterans Pledge of Allegiance – Jimmy Cunningham, , Prince George, Virginia
 - Star Spangled Banner – Charles Stanley, Member, Peninsula Chapter, Newport News, Virginia.
 - Recognition of Veterans – Jimmy Cunningham
 - Federation Pledge – Uricka Harrison, president, Peninsula Chapter, Newport news, Virginia
- Greetings from Mayor Shannon Glover, Portsmouth, Virginia
- Greetings from Our Host Chapters – Stewart Prost, President, Tidewater Chapter, Norfolk, Virginia; and

Uricka Harrison, President, Peninsula Chapter, Newport News, Virginia

- Convention Arrangements – Joe Orozco, Chairperson, Convention Organization and Arrangements, Arlington, Virginia

9:25 AM National Report – Anil Lewis Executive Director, Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind, Atlanta, Georgia.

9:55 AM Seniors In charge: Life After Silver Bells.

- Sandy Halverson, Moderator, Arlington, Virginia
- Millie Davenport, Reston, Virginia
- Terri Green, Virginia Beach, Virginia

10:05 AM Accessible Prescription Labels: Take the Meds You Want

- Bonnie O'Day, Legislative Committee Chair, NFB of Virginia, Alexandria, Virginia
- Caroline D. Juran, RPh, Executive Director, [Virginia Board of Pharmacy](#), Virginia Department of Health Professions, Richmond Virginia
- Jenna Reed, Director of Marketing, [En-Vision America](#), Palmetto, Florida

Hear about the Accessible Prescription Labeling Act and some options for accessible medication labeling. Learn how to work with your pharmacist to obtain accurate information about the medications you take.

10:25 AM Action Auction.

10:35 AM Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Virginia – Rick Mitchell, Commissioner, [Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired](#)

10:50 AM Protecting the Rights of All Blind People: Ensuring Equal Access and Effective Communication for Blind Prisoners. Monica Basche, Attorney, [Brown Goldstein & Levy](#) Baltimore, Maryland and Mary Durbin, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Prison is meant to be a place where individuals have the opportunity to better themselves before being released back into society, but that isn't usually the case for blind prisoners. Instead, blind prisoners are routinely denied access to programs and services that their sighted peers receive, including jobs, recreation opportunities, and safe and appropriate housing. As a result, blind prisoners are punished twice—once for their crime and a second time for being blind.

11:10AM The Convention Rollercoaster – Reflections from Virginia's 2024 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
- Andrew Barksdale, Suffolk, Virginia
- Nikita Razinkov, Bridgewater, Virginia
- Renee Valdez, Alexandria, Virginia

11:30 AM Building a Brighter Financial Future.

- Jeremy Grandstaff, Consultant, [Penny Forward](#), Burke, Virginia
- Brittany Bullock, Relationship Marketing Specialist, [Virginia 529 ABLENow](#), North Chesterfield, Virginia

This session will demystify the power of ABLE accounts in transforming financial independence. Through a dynamic interview, discover the key benefits, eligibility criteria, and diverse possibilities ABLE accounts offer, from everyday expenses to life-changing investments. Gain valuable insights and explore how ABLE accounts can pave the way for a more secure financial future.

11:45 AM Demonstrating for Our Rights with Uber and Lyft.

- Julie Orozco, First Vice President, Potomac Chapter, Arlington, Virginia
- Elizabeth (Lizzy) Muhammad-Park, Board member, Potomac Chapter, Arlington, Virginia

11:55 AM Reports and Announcements.

12:00 PM General Session Adjourns.

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Registration – Portsmouth Registration Desk.

12:00 PM to 6:00 PM Exhibits – Portsmouth Foyer
Immerse yourself in a vibrant showcase of innovative products, services, and technology designed to empower

and enhance the lives of blind and low vision individuals. From cutting-edge assistive devices to helpful community resources, our exhibitors offer a unique opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, explore new horizons, and discover the latest advancements in accessibility. Don't miss this chance to be informed and empowered!

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

12:30 PM to 1:00 PM Virginia Sports & Recreation Group Interest Meeting – Portsmouth 6. Nathan Green, Member, At Large Chapter, Lexington, Virginia.

National Sports & Rec division board member, Nathan Green, will facilitate a discussion for anyone interested in joining and helping to form a Sports & Rec group for the Virginia affiliate. Anyone who is even slightly interested should join us as we decide the next steps.

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM Practical Tips for using ride share, grocery delivery, and meal delivery services using assistive technology – Portsmouth 8. Yadiel Sotomayor and Chelsey Duranleau, Instructors, Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Richmond, Virginia.

Learn both the technology and the practical tips for ordering your food or car and getting to the delivery person or the vehicle. Learn how to de-escalate conflicts and make the experience easy and lower stress.

1:00 PM Nauticus Maritime Discovery Center and the Battleship Wisconsin Tour – Hotel Lobby

Join us for an exciting tour of the Nauticus Maritime Discovery Center and the Battleship Wisconsin. The tour departs from the lobby of the Renaissance Hotel at 1:00 PM. Participants should come prepared to climb stairs and ladders aboard the Wisconsin. We should return by 5:30 PM, but participants may be able to see more of the museum before taking the ferry back to Portsmouth and our hotel. Please purchase passes for this tour as part of your [convention registration](#).

FRIDAY AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SEMINARS

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM Elevate Your Career Workshop – Portsmouth 5. Cindy Roberts, Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and Julia Ford, Manager, IMPACT Operations, DC Public Schools, Co-Chairs

It's time to elevate your Career! Please come and meet the DBVI Business team and attend interactive workshops designed to provide you with additional skills to move forward in your profession.

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Elevate Your Career Breakout Sessions – Portsmouth 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Regardless of where you are in your career, there is always something to learn. For example, do you know that DBVI offers paid work-based learning experiences? Are you familiar with the S.T.A.R. framework that enables you

to provide clear, concise, and engaging answers to interview questions? Are you thinking about requesting reasonable accommodation but don't know where to start? Have you updated your LinkedIn profile and want to learn how to leverage it to land your next career? Or perhaps you need a headshot and help writing your professional bio for use in advertising your small business. No matter where you are in your career, there will be something that you can take away from the Elevate Your Career interactive workshops.

1:00 PM to 4:00 PM Possibilities and Resource Fair—
Portsmouth 7. Sandy Halverson, Program Coordinator,
Silver BELLS; and Patty Droppers, President, NFB of
Virginia Senior Division

Have you stopped reading the newspaper or books, writing checks or other correspondence, or completing other tasks that require vision? If the answer is yes to any of the above, join us to learn about low- or no-cost solutions to these and other aspects of your daily life. This program is made possible through the generous funding by the Virginia Board for the Blind.

2:00 PM to 4:45 PM Orientation and Mobility Mini Lab:
Your O&M Tune Up – Portsmouth 8. Domonique Lawless
and Jimmy Morris.

Could your cane skills use a tune up? Would you like to learn to use a cane for the first time? Many of us could improve our travel skills with some coaching and guidance from an O&M instructor. We are arranging for 30-minute

hands on sessions by appointment only. Please sign up for one of our O&M Mini Sessions to work on specific indoor challenges. We all can benefit by refining our skills with one of the talented O&M staff members from the Virginia Department for the Blind & Vision Impaired and the Alabama Freedom Center. These 30-minute sessions are by appointment only. [Secure your time slot here!](#)

2:00 PM to 3:15 PM – Blind Parents meet Up: Sharing Techniques that Work– Portsmouth 6. Julie Orozco, Arlington, Virginia.

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

3:30 PM to 4:45 PM Resolutions Committee – Portsmouth 6. 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.

3:30 PM to 4:45 PM Lessons from the Kenneth Jernigan Leadership In Service: Growing In your Leadership Journey – Commodore Room.

- Anil Lewis, Executive Director – Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind
- Charles Tate, First Vice president, National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas, Harrisburg, Arkansas
- Renee Valdez, Secretary/Treasurer, Greater Alexandria Chapter, Alexandria, Virginia.

Chapter members and leaders wanting to grow in their leadership potential should join us for this interactive session where participants in the national Kenneth Jernigan Leadership In Service Program will share some of the insights gained through their participation in the program. We will address the challenges faced by many affiliates, chapters, and divisions where leaders want more people to help run the organization and many members want to help in manageable ways to contribute but don't know how. We invite members on the chapter or divisions board, committee members, and anyone wishing to find ways to be involved in our movement to learn from this dynamic team and share your own ideas.

FRIDAY EVENING CONCURRENT SESSIONS AND HOSPITALITY

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM Registration – Portsmouth
Registration Desk.

5:00 PM to 6:00 PM Public Meeting on DBVI Divisions,
Programs and Services – Portsmouth 5, Deborah Collard,
Senior Program Analyst, Virginia Department for the Blind
and Vision Impaired

Zoom Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

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

5:30 PM to 6:30 PM At–Large Chapter Meeting –
Portsmouth 6. Patrick Johnson, President, At Large
Chapter

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: Commodore Room. Angie Gruessing, Vice President, Virginia Association of Blind Students, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Join the Virginia student division leaders, scholarship finalists, 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: Game Social for Families – Portsmouth 7
Calling all blind kids ages 0–13, siblings and parents! Join us for snacks and a chance to meet other families from across the state. Email louisewalch@gmail.com with questions and any food allergies we need to be aware of).

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM Students' Feet on the Street– Renaissance Lobby
Join us for an instructional night out on the town. Project RISE participants, members of the student division, and scholarship finalists are invited for an evening of interactive learning in a real-world scenario.

7:00 PM to 10:00 PM Take Me to the River: Tidewater and Peninsula Convention Hospitality – Portsmouth 4.
Brought to you by [En-Vision America](#), our premier Vanguard sponsor! The Tidewater and Peninsula Chapters invite you to join us for an evening of music, food and conversation. Come connect with friends old and new. Listen to music by DJ “Melody Man” Charles Stanley from the Peninsula Chapter featuring music from the 60s to the present. Enjoy a variety of snacks selected by our host

chapters. Even though the event is free to enter, you must choose “Yes” when registering for the convention to attend this activity. 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 – Commodore Room. Jimmy Morris, Chairperson
This event is limited to the NFB of Virginia 2024 Jimmy Nelson Scholarship Finalists and the members of the Scholarship Committee.

10:00 PM to 11 PM Game night and socializing with the Virginia Association of Blind Students – Portsmouth 6

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2024

8:00 AM to 8:50 AM Registration – Portsmouth
Registration Desk.

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM Parents with Young Children
Overflow – Portsmouth 6

GENERAL SESSION

Portsmouth 5 Ballroom

Zoom Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

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

Invocation – Stewart Prost, Member, Congregation beth
El, Norfolk, Virginia.

9:05 AM Blind Tennis – Break Point and Breaking
Misconceptions – Jennifer Roth, PhD, board member,
[United States Blind Tennis Association](#), Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania

9:15 AM Advancing Inclusivity in Architecture with Non–
Visual Teaching Methods – Andrew Gipe-Lazarou, PhD,
Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech, [School of Architecture](#),
Blacksburg, Virginia.

9:30 AM Accessible Video Games within Reach – Chad M. Bouton, President, [Unsyted LLC](#), Bradenton, Florida. Level up the way you think about blind gamers playing video games.

9:45 AM [NFB BELL Academy](#)® : Growing Possibilities for Students throughout Virginia.

- Louise Walch, NFB BELL Academy Coordinator, Virginia Beach Virginia.
- Nora Nadeem, NFB BELL Academy Participant, Staunton, Virginia
- Michelle Nadeem, Staunton, Virginia
- Jodi Nicholson, NFB BELL Academy Teacher, Orange, Virginia.

10:00 AM Advancing Advocacy, Breaking Barriers, Creating Change: The Virginia Report – Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

10:30 AM Making the Right Move – Empowering Student Success – Noah Carver, Board Member, [National Association of Blind Students](#), Rochester, New York.

10:40 AM Action Auction.

10:45 AM Students Depart for Youth Track programming. (A parent or guardian must be present at drop-off and children six years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult.)

10:55 AM Introducing the 2024 NFB of Virginia James F. Nelson, Jr. Scholarship Finalists. Jimmy Morris, Chair, Glen Allen, Virginia.

11:10 AM The Future of Disability Rights after the Overruling of *Chevron* – Monica Basche, Attorney, [Brown Goldstein & Levy](#), Baltimore, Maryland.

The Supreme Court recently issued an opinion, *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, which eliminated the requirement that courts give deference to a federal agency’s interpretation of the laws that it is tasked with enforcing—sometimes called “*Chevron* deference.” But why is this such a big deal? What does this mean for disability rights moving forward?

11:30 AM Action Auction.

11:40 AM Stuck in the Middle with You: Discussing Low Vision and the NFB

- Domonique Lawless, Director of Low Vision and Orientation & Mobility Services, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Mechanicsburg, Virginia, Moderator.
- Renee Valdez, Secretary/Treasurer, Greater Alexandria Chapter, Alexandria, Virginia.
- Chris Infante, Member, Richmond Chapter, Henrico, Virginia

11:55 AM Reports and Announcements.

12:00 PM General Session Adjourns.

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Youth Track – Latitude, 1st Floor
[Youth Track registration required](#). Students 13 and younger 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. Plus, get creative with accessible art and make something uniquely you!

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM – Parent Track Part I – Portsmouth 6

Parents, join us for a fun and interactive session featuring multiple guest speakers! The first part will include an introduction round and a panel of experienced parents who will address your questions and share their insights.

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

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Registration – Portsmouth registration Desk

12:00 PM to 4:30 PM Always In Control: Accessible Gaming Showcase – Portsmouth 8. Chad M. Bouton, President, Unsyted LLC, Bradenton, Florida
Harness the power of accessibility in gaming by going hands on with blind accessible games. When everybody plays, everybody wins! [Choose your time slot here!](#)

12:00 PM to 5:00 PM Serving Up Fun and Possibility – Try Your Hand at Blind Tennis – Portsmouth 1, 2, and 3. Jennifer Roth, board Member, United States Blind Tennis Association. [Choose your time slot here!](#)

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Parent and Youth Track Lunch – Portsmouth 6.

Join us for lunch and connect with other parents. This is a great opportunity to learn about resources for your children and ask questions about our programs, which cater to students from toddlers to graduate school. Whether you grab a boxed lunch or bring your own, we encourage you to participate in our informal roundtable discussion. This conversation is open to parents of children of all ages with low vision, blindness, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities. Discover year-round and summer mentoring, skill-building, and social programs we offer across Virginia and nationwide.

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM Seniors Division Luncheon and Business Meeting – Portsmouth 7. Patty Droppers, President, NFB of Virginia Senior Division

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM Virginia Association of Blind Merchants Division Luncheon and Business Meeting– Commodore Room, 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 – Portsmouth 5. Angie Gruessing, Vice President, Virginia Association of Blind Students, Fredericksburg, Virginia. All students, including Project RISE participants, are invited.

12:30 to 1:45 PM Community Lunch – Portsmouth 4
Make friends and build your network in this informal community lunch.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1:15 PM to 4:15 PM Parent Track Part II – Portsmouth 6. Parents, please join us for another fun and interactive session featuring multiple guest speakers! In this second part, we'll provide a sneak peek into our IEP Academy program and explore key topics such as inclusive education in public schools, transitioning to college with blindness, low vision, or multiple disabilities, and the latest in accessible technology. Additionally, don't forget to bring any Braille or large print books your child no longer needs, and take advantage of our free Braille book exchange table to pick up some new books for your child. A brief 20–25 minute business meeting will also be held.

1:15 PM to 4:15 PM Youth Track – Latitude, 1st Floor [Youth Track registration required.](#) Bring your sighted siblings and join us at interactive stations: 1) Adaptive Sports like Blind Tennis; 2) Hands on Blind Design; 3) accessible Video Games; 4) Drawing Braille pictures using a slate and stylus; and 5) audible scavenger hunt. (Children six years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult).

2:00 PM to 4:15 PM Silver Bells and Senior Track – Making Your Silver Years Golden: Wellness and Happiness Moments Seminar– Portsmouth 7. Patty Droppers, President, NFB of Virginia Senior Division. Join fellow seniors for this exploration of Health, Wellness, and Fitness topics. Learn approaches to care for yourself.

Build your community of peers and positive role models across Virginia. This program is made possible through the generous funding by the Virginia Board for the Blind.

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Using AI at Work: – Portsmouth 4.
Is AI really for you? Unlock the potential of AI in your personal and professional life with this dynamic workshop. We'll dive into how AI works; explore its applications in communication, creativity, and productivity; and engage in hands-on activities designed to bring AI concepts to life. Our expert presenters will guide you through the basics and beyond, answering your burning questions and helping you harness AI's power to enhance your daily work. Don't miss this chance to gain practical AI skills and insights that can transform your approach both at work and in your overall life!

Presenters:

Yadiel J. Sotomayor, MA, NOMCT, NCRTB, NCUEB, Access Technology Instructor, Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Richmond, Virginia.

Harry Staley, CISSP, Senior Software Engineer / Senior Data Scientist, M1 Technology, Sterling, Virginia.

Teisha Gillespie, Director of Demand Generation, Waterford.org and Communications Committee Chair, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Herndon, Virginia.

Jeremy Grandstaff, Program Director, Penny Forward & VP of Business Development, CurbCutOS

2:00 PM to 4:15 PM Blind Design Hands on Sessions—
Commodore Room. Andrew Gipe–Lazarou, PhD.
Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech, School of Architecture.

2:00 PM Student Track Only

2:45 Pm Open to All

3:45 PM Youth Track Only

The first two sessions will introduce the architectural design process using AI and hands–on modeling techniques.

The Youth Track program will have students building structures which will be load tested and we will discuss the results.

2:00 PM to 4:15 PM Informed Choice: Exploring Your Alternative Skills Training Options – Portsmouth Registration Desk. Melody Roane, Director, [Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired](#), Richmond, Virginia and Jessica reed, Louisiana Center for the Blind graduate, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Accessing great training can be the bridge to a better future. You have many choices including training in your community, at the Virginia rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and at one of the structured discovery training centers. We will arm you with the information to make an informed choice that is right for you. Sign up for a 20-minute appointment with our team to understand your options and create your own change.

[Choose your time slot here!](#)

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM First Timers Reception – Commodore Room. Jacki Bruce and Tracy Soforenko, Coordinators. NFBV Membership Chair Jacki Bruce 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 – Portsmouth 6. Becky Keller, Diane Johnson, 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 Families 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. All children must be accompanied by a supervising adult.

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM Project RISE Meet Up, Portsmouth 7

2024 CONVENTION BANQUET

Portsmouth 4 and 5 Ballrooms

Zoom Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

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

7:00 PM to 10:00 PM Banquet Program – Portsmouth 4
and 5 Ballrooms, Joe Orozco, Master of Ceremonies.
Invocation –Rev. David Andrews, Pastor, Faith Temple
Newport News, Hampton, Virginia.

En-Vision America, Vanguard Sponsor

Banquet Address – Anil Lewis, Executive Director –
Blindness Initiatives, National Federation of the Blind.

2024 James F. Nelson Scholarship Awards Presentation –
Jimmy Morris, Scholarship Committee Chairperson.

Action Auction – Jacki Brown, Chairperson and
Auctioneer.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2024

7:30 AM Project RISE – Commodore Room

7:30 AM to 8:15 AM Chapter Building in Loudoun County Planning Meeting – Portsmouth 6. Tracy Soforenko and Jacki Bruce.

We are excited to begin building a chapter in Loudoun County. If you are interested in being part of building the Federation in Loudoun County or understanding the steps to build a new chapter, we welcome you to participate.

GENERAL SESSION

Portsmouth 4 and 5 Ballrooms

Zoom Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

8:30 AM Call to Order – Tracy Soforenko, President, NFB of Virginia.

Invocation

8:35 AM Business Session.

- Audit Committee Report – Sean McMahon, Chairperson, Arlington, Virginia
- Treasurer’s Report – Mark Roane, Treasurer, Richmond, Virginia
- Nominating Committee Report, Chris Walker, Chair
- Elections

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2015 (CONTINUED)

- Resolutions – Deepa Goraya, Chairperson, District of Columbia
- Committee Reports
- 2025 Richmond and Washington Seminars – Bonnie O’Day, Alexandria, Virginia, Legislative Director
- Communications – Teisha Gillespi, Herndon, Virginia
- Membership, Jacki Bruce, Williamsburg, Virginia
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Renee Valdez, Alexandria, Virginia
- Fundraising – Renee Valdez, Alexandria, Virginia
- 2025 National Convention
- 2025 NFB of Virginia Convention
- Contribution to National Office for Blind Prisoner Legal Fees – Mark Roane and Tracy soforenko

10:00 AM Action Auction.

10:20 am Ask the President Town Hall Discussion:

- Annette Carr, Moderator, Fairfax, Virginia
- Anil Lewis, Executive Director – Blindness Initiatives, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Tracy Soforenko President, NFB of Virginia, Arlington Virginia

Our Town Hall team will pose a set of questions about our work in the Federation and related topics. Questions must be submitted in advance to the Town Hall Committee by October 15.

11:00 AM Action Auction.

11:15 AM [Project RISE](#): Resilience, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment. Joe Orozco, Project RISE Program Coordinator, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Arlington, Virginia.

11:25am Reports and Announcements.

11:30 AM General Session Adjourns.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2015 (CONTINUED)

CONVENTION NOTES:

VIRTUAL MEETING ACCESS OVER ZOOM

The 2024 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 (11/1 – 9 AM to 12 PM) General Session
- Friday (11/1 – 5 PM to 6 PM) DBVI Public Meeting
- Saturday (11/2 – 9 AM to 12 PM) General Session
- Saturday (11/2 – 7 PM to 10 PM) Banquet
- Sunday (11/3 – 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM) 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=SFAYamIQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMTV4RmhCQT09>

Meeting ID: 829 725 6345

One Tap Mobile: +13017158592, 8297256345#

For those using a land line telephone to access the meeting, we have kept 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 at the Portsmouth Registration Desk, located on the 2nd Floor outside the Portsmouth ballrooms. The cost of on-site registration is \$30. Pre-registration packet pick up and on-site registration will be open the following times:

- Thursday, October 31 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- Friday, November 1 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 2 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 information desk beginning on Thursday evening.

MEAL FUNCTIONS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2015 (CONTINUED)

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 2.

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

For more information about registration or meal functions, please contact the NFBV Membership Line at: 757-354-4170.

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, visit our [auction page](#).

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 Portsmouth 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 Renaissance Hotel has designated a place for dog relief by proceeding out the doors across from the front desk in the lobby of the hotel. The designated place has a trash receptacle near the hotel entrance. Please do not use the terrace on the 2nd floor for dog relief.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2015 (CONTINUED)

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 Portsmouth 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 Convention Hospitality Suite is the Commodore Room on the 2nd floor. The Commodore Room is located just off the elevator bank, in the opposite direction of all other conference rooms. Please review the schedule for pre-planned activities by invitation in this space.

Thank you to our Tidewater and Peninsula Chapters for hosting the 2024 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 Portsmouth Foyer on Friday, November 1 from 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

VANGUARD

- En-Vision America

En-Vision America partners with thousands of pharmacies throughout the U.S. and Canada to provide free accessible prescription labels to patients who need them. These labels include ScripTalk Talking, Large Print, Braille, Dual Language/Translated and Controlled Substance Safety Labels (CSSLs). Call us at 1-800-890-1180 to get signed up. Learn more at www.envisionamerica.com

INNOVATOR

- Department 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/>

TRAILBLAZER

- **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

- 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>

PIONEER

- 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

- Volunteers for the Blind

Volunteers for the Blind is a nonprofit that provides volunteer readers and shopping assistants

Learn more by visiting volunteersfortheblind.org

- 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

- 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

- 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

- ABLEnow

ABLEnow is a tax-advantaged savings program for individuals with disabilities that empowers them to save and invest money without jeopardizing eligibility for public benefits.

Learn more at ABLEnow.com

- SelvasBLV

Manufacturers and providers of the leading blindness and low vision products on the market.

Learn more at SelvasBLV.com

- Telegrocers

Bill Socki started TELEGROCERS in October of 2004.

The idea came to him while working for an internet grocery delivery service. He would receive calls daily from people that didn't have computers that wanted to place grocery orders by phone. Most of the calls were from people that were elderly or disabled and didn't have computers or had a difficult time getting to the store themselves. He decided to open a business and take calls from people that needed their groceries delivered. They accept orders by phone

and through a partnership with Giant, place them through online grocery delivery websites. Orders can usually get delivered the next day in most cases.

Bill is a disabled man himself due to a diving accident that happened in 1990, so he understands the difficulties of getting out to the store. He enjoys getting a chance to help people in need while also fulfilling his own goals of living a productive life as a disabled man.

Learn more at Telegrocers.com

- Access Virginia

Transform your visit to the theater with access to visual and audio aids that will unlock the sights and sounds of the theater. With accommodations like open captioning, C.A.R.T, audio descriptions and backstage tours, you will enjoy an immersive theater experience like none you've had before.

Learn more at AccessVirginia.info

- 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 and Alexa. Additionally, screen reader (RTF) and notetaker (BRL) files as well as DAISY and 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 JW.org

- The Alabama Freedom Center for the Blind
The Alabama Freedom Center for the Blind, part of the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, is an intense, hands-on nine-month immersion into Braille, Independent Living, Assistive Technology, Cane Travel, Residential Living, and confidence-building activities which gives adults in Alabama and the Southeast geographic access to this proven service option. Structured Discovery encourages and empowers the student while honing existing and building new skill sets.
Learn more at Aidb.org/afc
- saavi Services, For The Blind
We are a non-visual training center located in Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona. We concentrate on structured discovery learning. Armato is it's not what you can see. It's what you can do. Saavi Services for the Blind is a blindness rehabilitation training center providing skills training in nonvisual techniques to people of all ages. Whether a student is new to blindness or has

received training in the past and would like to learn new skills, our goal is to provide skills training so our students may lead productive, independent lives. Our programs serve individuals of all ages, from children to seniors, all with the goal of providing confidence and skill-building opportunities through training and education. By participating in our programs, our students can gain the confidence and skills that allow them to return to the workforce, pursue secondary education, or begin the path towards a new career. Learn more at saavi.us

Accessible Resources and Services- Virginia Beach Public Library

Accessible Resources and Services, in cooperation with the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, provides library services to Virginia Beach residents with visual, physical, and reading disabilities. Audiobooks, audiobook players, electronic braille displays, large print books, and descriptive DVDs are mailed directly to customers' homes. To receive the service, eligible customers must fill out and submit an application. Customers can submit an online application or print out and mail an application to Accessible Resources and Services at 4100 Virginia Beach Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452 or email it to AccessibleLibrary@VBgov.com. Learn more at libraries.virginia-beach.gov/books-more/accessible-resources-services

Dream Makers Circle

You can help build a future of opportunity for the blind by becoming a member of our Dream Makers Circle (DMC). It is easier than you think. You can visit your bank and convert an account to a P.O.D. (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 {insert state} 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.

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:
<https://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 (PAC) plan. Starting at \$5 monthly, you can help us turn dreams into reality and raise expectations.

Call 877-632-2722, visit:

<https://nfb.org/pac>

to fill out the online form, or email pac@nfb.org for additional information.

You can leave a legacy through planned giving. Please consider including us in your estate planning. It is easier than you think.

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 to fill out the online form or email pac@nfb.org for additional information.