**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE**

**WELCOME TO THE 52nd ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF LOUISIANA!**

**REGISTRATION & INFORMATION** **– *Atrium***

The NFBL Registration Desk will open at 3:00pm on Friday, April 19, 2024, and will remain open at scheduled intervals throughout the convention. All convention participants must register to be eligible for convention meals, door prizes, hotel convention rates, and to participate in all activities. Both print and Braille agendas are available at the Registration Desk. For those who have pre-registered, a separate table will also be located in the Atrium where meal tickets and agendas may be obtained.

The onsite registration fee is $40 for adults. Registration for children six years and under is free. Registration for children between the ages of seven and eleven is $20, and children who are twelve and older is $40. Banquet tickets are $40 and may be purchased at the NFBL Registration Desk. Tickets for complimentary meals will be issued to each convention attendee upon registration, and meal tickets must be presented at each meal. A complimentary continental breakfast will be served to convention attendees between 7:00am and 8:30am on Saturday and Sunday in the atrium.

All registered, first-time convention participants should sign up at the NFBL Registration Desk to participate in a special drawing on Sunday morning. The first-time attendee, the individual who invited the new member, and the chapter to which the new member belongs will each receive $100. Attendees must register for the convention in order to receive conference rates at the Crowne Plaza.

**CANE TRAVEL INSTRUCTION – *Atrium***

Instructors will be available at the NFBL Registration Desk on Friday from 4:00pm to 6:00pm and on Saturday morning from 8:00am to 8:45am if you have questions about basic cane travel.

**FAMILY ROOM – *Mississippi Queen***

The family room is available for families with children who need a space to stream the general sessions. All children must be accompanied by and supervised by an adult at all times. We appreciate everyone working together to cultivate a calm and welcoming space. It will be available from 8:30am to 5:00pm on Saturday and 9:00 to 11:30am on Sunday.

**TALENT SHOWCASE – Cypress II**

Our annual auction, starting at 8:45pm on Friday, will also feature a showcase of talent. If you have any questions or would like to sign up for the showcase, you may contact Kristen Sims.

**EXHIBITS – *Creole Queen***

Exhibits will be open on Friday from 2:00pm to 9:00pm. Exhibits will also be open from 8:00am to 9:00am and from 11:00am to 2:00pm on Saturday.

Exhibitors:

HIMS, Inc.

Description of Product/Service: Maker of the BrailleSense 6 Braille Notetaker, Braille Displays, and the SensePlayer Media Player.

Website: <https://hims-inc.com/>

Non-24 Hr Disorder/Vanda Pharmaceuticals

Description of Product/Service: Education on Non-24 Hr Disorder

Website: <https://www.non-24.com/>

OrCam Technologies

Description of product/service: Our mission is to enrich people's daily experiences with personal assistive handheld and wearable AI devices that increase confidence and independence.

Website: <https://www.orcam.com/en-us/home>

State Library of Louisiana - Talking Books and Braille Library

Description of Product/Service: Provides Talking Books and access to Braille Library

Website: <https://www.state.lib.la.us/special-services/tbbl>

 Come meet the Monarch. A new way of accessing Braille. Together with our partners at [HumanWare](https://www.humanware.com/en-usa/home) and the [National Federation of the Blind](https://nfb.org/), APH has created the Monarch, an unparalleled multipurpose device which revolutionizes the digital Braille experience for blind and low vision users.

 Available on exhibit Saturday 8:00-9:00am and 5:00-6:00pm.

**NFB LITERATURE AND SUPPLIES – *Cypress II***

On Saturday and Sunday, there will be an exhibit area at the back of Cypress II. Canes, cane tips, slates, and styluses will be available for purchase. NFB literature and information from agencies and service providers will also be available. We will have T-shirts and other Braille-themed items for sale in the back of general session in order to raise money for the NFBL BELL® Academy and other youth activities. LCB will also have jackets and hats for sale.

**DOOR PRIZES**

Shake 'em up! You may be the lucky winner of a fabulous door prize. Names will be drawn throughout the convention general sessions and banquet. To be eligible to win, you must be registered for convention and be present in the room when your name is drawn. All donations of door prizes should be turned in at the NFBL Registration Desk. The door prize chairperson is Treva Olivero.

**NOTES:**

* **Individual hand sanitizers will be available at the registration desk and at the NFB table in the back of General Sessions. We appreciate everyone working together to maintain the health and well-being of all attendees!**
* **The National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana seeks to provide a convention environment in which diverse participants, including members, speakers, exhibitors, staff, and volunteers, may learn, network, and enjoy the company of friends and colleagues in an environment of mutual respect. As an attendee at our convention, you not only represent yourself but also represent our organization.**

**We recognize a shared responsibility to create and uphold a welcoming and harassment-free atmosphere for all!**

**We are committed to diversity, equity, integrity, and respect in all aspects of our conference.**

**Please contact Jewel Ardoin or Marco Carranza if you have concerns or questions.**

* **Please be courteous and silence all cell phones during convention meetings and the banquet. If you need to use your phone, please step outside of the meeting room.**

**CONVENTION AGENDA**

***FRIDAY, April 19, 2024***

**Noon-5:00pm STEM2U**

 ***Delta-Mississippi Queen***

 **Only open for participants who pre-registered.**

**1:00 - 4:00pm UPWARD MOBILITY**

**Randolph-Sheppard Vendors’ Meeting**

 ***Riverboat***

**2:00 - 9:00pm EXHIBITS**

***Creole Queen***

**3:00 - 7:00pm REGISTRATION – *Atrium***

**4:00 - 6:00pm CANE TRAVEL INSTRUCTION**

 *NFBL Registration Desk – Atrium*

**5:00 - 6:30pm HOSPITALITY DINNER – *Cypress II***

Enjoy a delicious buffet featuring jambalaya. Tickets will be collected to enter (included in registration packet). Sponsored by Greater Baton Rouge chapter.

**6:00 - 7:00pm RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

 *Executive Boardroom*

Roland Allen and Tammy Green, Chairpersons

**6:45 - 8:30pm LOUISIANA PARENTS OF BLIND CHILDREN DIVISION**

*Premier 3*

Alison Tarver, President

Mindy Lavern, Vice President

Krystal Guillory, Secretary/Treasurer

If you are a parent, grandparent, teacher, or individual interested in the education of blind students, please join us.

**6:45 - 7:00pm REGISTRATION FOR LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF BLIND STUDENTS**

 *Delta Queen*

**7:00 - 8:30pm LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF BLIND STUDENTS MEETING**

 *Delta Queen*

 Lindsay Adair, President

All high school, college, and graduate students are invited to attend this exciting and informative meeting. Share your experiences and get ideas from other successful students.

**7:00 - 8:30pm NFBL MERCHANTS' GROUP MEETING**

 *Riverboat*

Shelly LeJeune, Chairperson

 All Randolph-Sheppard vendors and persons interested in business enterprises are welcome.

**7:00 - 8:30pm SENIOR BLIND MEETING**

 *Bayou*

Wendy Ortego, Coordinator, LCB Techniques for Living Confidently Program

Janet Bernhardt, TLC Outreach Specialist

Stacey Purgahn, TLC Outreach Specialist

Come join us and learn tips and techniques for seniors experiencing vision loss. Losing your vision does not have to mean losing your independence.

**8:45pm until… NFBL AUCTION & TALENT SHOWCASE**

 ***Cypress II***

 **Georgie Sydnor, Auctioneer**

 **Kristen Sims, Talent Show Host**

Chapter gift baskets, homemade goods, and collectibles along with other surprises. In between items being auctioned, our talented members will entertain you. Join us for a fun way to raise money for our affiliate!

**SATURDAY, April 20, 2024**

**7:00 - 8:00am NFBL STATE BOARD MEETING**

 *Natchez*

7:00 - 8:30am **COMPLIMENTARY BREAKFAST**

 Free for convention registrants

 *Atrium*

**7:45 - 8:30am SCHOLARSHIP BREAKFAST**

 For 2024 NFBL scholarship finalists and committee members.

 *Executive Boardroom*

**8:00 - 8:45am REGISTRATION**

 *Atrium*

**8:00 - 8:45am CANE TRAVEL INSTRUCTION**

*NFBL Registration Desk, Atrium*

**8:00 - 9:00am EXHIBITS**

 *Creole Queen*

**8:00 - 9:00am NFB LITERATURE AND SUPPLIES**

 *Cypress II*

**8:30am - 5:00pm FAMILY ROOM**

 *Mississippi Queen*

 The family room is available for families with children who need a space to stream the general sessions. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

**GENERAL SESSION**

**Saturday, April 20, 2024**

***Cypress II***

**9:00am - 11:00am**

**9:00am CALL TO ORDER**

**Pamela Allen, President, NFBL**

**"HAVE GAVEL WILL TRAVEL"**

**Treva Olivero, President, North Central Chapter, NFBL**

 **WELCOME AND NFB PLEDGE**

**Diane Legendre, President,**

**Greater Baton Rouge Chapter, NFBL**

**9:15 - 10:00am TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO REALITY - Our National Perspective**

**Adelmo Vigil, NFB Board Member, New Mexico**

**10:00 - 10:15am CHALLENGES OF CHANGE**

 **David Martin, Ed.D., Superintendent, Special School District, Baton Rouge**

 **Susan Covington, Principal, Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, Baton Rouge**

**10:15 - 10:35am RAISING THE BAR: Partnering for Independence and Employment**

 **Kevin Monk, Executive Director, Blind Services, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Louisiana Workforce Commission, Baton Rouge**

 **Jamar Ennis, Executive Director, Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs**

**10:35 - 10:45am GOING FOR THE GOLD: Age is Just a Number**

**Janet Bernhardt, TLC Outreach and Low Vision Specialist, Breaux Bridge**

 **Rayeleen McNaughton, TLC graduate, Rayville**

**10:45 - 11:00am GET THE GAME PLAN: Accessing Information and Resources**

**David Rainey, Library Manager, Special Services, Talking Books and Braille Library, Baton Rouge**

***The following concurrent sessions will provide excellent information and a chance for participants to share ideas and learn from blind people about tools and techniques that increase independence and confidence. Blindness does not hold you back from living the life you want! Come find out what is possible...***

***Exhibits will be open during concurrent sessions.***

**11:00 - 3:00pm Parent Power Track**

 ***Premier 3***

 **Parents, grandparents, and teachers of blind children are encouraged to participate in this interactive seminar. Boxed lunch provided to registrants.**

**11:10 - 12:00pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

 **SESSION 1: What’s App?**

**Jewel Ardoin, LCB Access Technology Team**

***Cypress II***

**Learn about some apps that are helpful and share your favorite with others.**

**SESSION 2: Anytime Anywhere Fitness**

**Roland Allen, LCB Cane Travel Instructor**

 ***Natchez***

**Learn about ways to stay fit and have fun! Great techniques that are good for the mind and body. [Repeats in same location at 1:30pm.]**

**SESSION 3: Making a Positive Impression**

**Treva Olivero, North Central Chapter President and 1st Vice President, NFBL**

***Riverboat***

 **Questions about speaking in public? Wondering how to make sure you are communicating effectively in presentations? You won’t want to miss this opportunity to strengthen your skills and make a positive impression.**

**SESSION 4: NFB-Newsline®**

 **Zena Pearcy, LA Newsline Coordinator**

 ***Delta Queen***

**Access to newspapers, magazines, weather alerts, job listings, TV listings and retail aids. [Repeats in same location at 1:30pm.]**

**SESSION 5: Blind Parent Meet-Up**

**Cameron Loehr, LCB Living Skills Instructor**

 ***Samuel Clemens***

**Here is a great chance to connect with blind parents, guardians, and grandparents to share ideas and learn about resources. We can’t wait to welcome you!**

**11:00 - 2:00pm EXHIBITS**

 ***Continues in Creole Queen***

**11:00 - 3:00pm PARENT POWER TRACK**

 ***Continues in Premier 3***

**12:15 - 1:15pm COMPLIMENTARY BOX LUNCH**

 ***Atrium* (Must have ticket)**

 **Hosted by North Central chapter.**

**12:15 - 1:45pm Deaf-Blind Division**

**Cathy Miller, Coordinator, Lake Area Chapter**

***Executive Boardroom***

**Meeting for those interested in learning about and discussing issues affecting deaf-blind individuals. All** are welcome. **Please bring your box lunch.**

**12:15 - 1:15pm REGISTRATION – *Atrium***

**1:30 - 2:15pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**SESSION 1: How to Make AI Work for You**

**Jewel Ardoin, LCB Access Technology Team**

***Cypress II***

**Interested in discovering what is possible with the advancements in artificial intelligence? Come learn about the latest developments and practical applications in your daily life.**

**SESSION 2: Anytime Anywhere Fitness**

**Roland Allen, LCB Cane Travel Instructor**

 ***Natchez***

**Learn about ways to stay fit and have fun! Great techniques that are good for the mind and body.**

**SESSION 3: Ins and Outs of the NLS E-Reader**

**Georgie Sydnor, LCB Braille Instructor**

***Riverboat***

**Come learn about the free Braille E-Reader from the National Library Service. We’ll be discussing how to get one, and the basics of how to use it once it arrives; what it does, and what it doesn’t do; and general information and guidelines on using Braille devices both at work and as a means of improving your Braille skills. There will be time for questions and hands-on opportunities with the device, so come listen, ask, and check one out for yourself.**

**SESSION 4: NFB 101**

**Adelmo Vigil, NFB Board Member, New Mexico**

 ***Samuel Clemens***

 **New to the NFB? Interested in learning more about our organization? You won’t want to miss this dynamic session.**

**SESSION 5: NFB-Newsline®**

 **Zena Pearcy, LA Newsline Coordinator**

 ***Delta Queen***

**Access to newspapers, magazines, weather alerts, job listings, TV listings and retail aids.**

**2:15 - 3:00pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**SESSION 1: Technology Drop-In**

**Chuy Vaca, LCB Access Technology Team**

***Delta Queen***

**Do you have general questions about technology, thinking about purchasing a computer but not sure about the best specs, looking for affordable options for your tech needs? If so, come and join us.**

SESSION 2: Let’s Go Build the Federation

Treva Olivero and Kiva Smith

*Samuel Clemens*

**Bring your questions about building your chapter. Share ideas for creating a welcoming and inclusive meeting. Learn about building your membership profile in the NFB portal.**

SESSION 3: So, You Are Thinking about Getting a Guide Dog…

Georgie Sydnor, LCB Braille Instructor

*Riverboat*

All about Dogs: sit, stay. Come Learn about guide dogs from an experienced dog handler and puppy raiser. We’ll be discussing the process of obtaining a dog, what to expect, and general guidelines for traveling with a dog. There will be plenty of time for audience questions.

**GENERAL SESSION**

**Saturday, April 20, 2024**

***Cypress II***

**3:00 - 5:00pm**

**3:00 - 3:45pm Breaking Barriers and Transforming the Field of Blindness**

 **Casey Robertson Ed.S., Teacher of Blind and Visually Impaired, Faculty at Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness, La. Tech University, Mississippi**

 **Kristen Sims, Orientation & Mobility Instructor, Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness, La. Tech University, Monroe**

 **Lauren Beall, La. Tech University Graduate Student in Orientation & Mobility**

 **Kerri Clarkin, Teacher of Tomorrow, Luling**

**3:45 - 3:55pm Chasing the Olympic Dream**

**Cody Kirchner, La. Tech University Graduate Student, Student Member of US Blind Men’s Soccer Team**

**3:55 - 4:05pm It Takes Two – Tandem Cycling**

**David Green, Greater New Orleans Chapter**

**4:05 - 4:30pm The Ties that Bind (panel discussion)**

Bonita Abadie, New Orleans

Marco Carranza, Ruston

Chuy Vaca, Ruston

**4:30 - 4:40pm Passing the Torch – Student Perspectives**

**Kinshuk Tella, NABS Representative, LCB Student, Ruston**

**4:40 - 5:00pm Vaulting into the Future: Braille Readers are Leaders, NFB BELL® Academy, and Braille Challenge (panel discussion)**

 **Krystal Guillory, NFB BELL® Academy Coordinator, Ruston**

 **Kayleigh Horst, Downsville**

 **Stephanie Martin, Ruston**

 **Jessica Turner, Lafayette**

 **Narjis Karimipour, New Orleans**

**5:15pm NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**7:00pm BANQUET**

 ***Cypress II***

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF LOUISIANA**

**Annual Banquet**

**Cypress II – Crowne Plaza, Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

**7:00 PM**

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES…….................................................... Treva Olivero**

**President, North Central Chapter and 1st Vice President, NFBL**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS ................................................................... Adelmo Vigil**

**NFB Board Member**

**SCHOLARSHIPS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Following the banquet,**

 **Dance and DJ in Cypress I**

**Bingo in Natchez ($10 admission)**

**SUNDAY – April 21, 2024**

**7:00 - 8:30am COMPLIMENTARY BREAKFAST**

 ***Atrium***

**8:15 - 8:45am DEVOTIONS**

 **Brenda Gardner, President, Morehouse Chapter, Bastrop**

***Cypress I***

**8:00 - 8:45am NFB LITERATURE AND SUPPLIES**

 ***Cypress II***

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**GENERAL BUSINESS SESSION**

**Sunday, April 21, 2024**

***Cypress II***

**9:00am - 11:30am**

**9:00am CALL TO ORDER**

**Pamela Allen, President, NFBL**

**9:10 - 9:40am Living the Life You Want (panel discussion)**

 **Tamara Lundy, New Orleans**

 **Horace Grayson, New Orleans**

 **Lindsay Adair, Baton Rouge**

 **Rachel Grider, Ruston**

**9:40 - 9:50am Preserving Our Legacy and Sharing our Dream**

**9:50 - 10:20am Taking Care of Business**

**Secretary’s Report, Kristen Sims**

**Treasurer’s Report, Krystal Guillory**

**Reflections, Pam Allen**

**10:20 - 11:00am NFBL in Action**

 **Committee updates and Chapter and Division reports and fundraising Contributions.**

**11:00 - 11:15am Nominating Committee Report and Elections**

**11:15 - 11:30am Closing Remarks and Announcements**

 **Countdown to Orlando**

**"Have Gavel Will Travel" Award**

 **ADJOURNMENT**

The National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana seeks to provide a convention environment in which participants, including members, speakers, exhibitors, staff, and volunteers, may learn, network, and enjoy the company of friends and colleagues in an environment of mutual respect. As an attendee at our convention, you not only represent yourself but also represent our organization.

We recognize a shared responsibility to create and uphold that atmosphere for the benefit of all.

We are committed to diversity, equity, integrity, and respect in all aspects of our conference. Our Code of Conduct can be found at <https://nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct>.

Please contact Jewel Ardoin or Marco Carranza if you have concerns or questions. Thank you for your help to make our community safe and welcoming for all!

“To stand apart from the competition, we must first stand together as a team. When a group of dedicated individuals makes a commitment to work together, the sky is the limit!”

With Gratitude from the State President:

To our Greater Baton Rouge Chapter – your warmth and hospitality made everyone feel welcome!

To Adelmo and Soledad Vigil – your approachability, wisdom, loving leadership, and dedicated service motivate us all! Thank you for the many ways you shared your stories and experiences with us to help make this convention a success!

To our distinguished guests and presenters – your partnership and collaboration are essential! Thank you for working with us to effect positive change.

To our first-time convention attendees – we are so excited to welcome you! Remember, you are not alone!

To everyone who assisted with convention planning, helped with registration, coordinated transportation, assisted with convention logistics, collected and contributed door prizes, organized exhibits, marshaled for meetings, assisted with panels and breakouts, and welcomed new members – your dedication and service are critical to our success and made this convention memorable and meaningful for all!

To all who contributed and purchased auction items, participated in Bingo, made or increased PAC pledges, supported our Museum of the Blind People’s Movement campaign, purchased items to support our NFB BELL® Academy, and contributed to other fundraising activities – your generosity makes our programs, scholarships, and outreach efforts a reality!

To Leslie Alleman and the staff of the Crowne Plaza – your exceptional customer service and professionalism are evident in every detail of our convention! Thank you for always going above and beyond!

To LCB students, staff, and alumni and to our students, staff, and alumni of our Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University – your never-ending commitment to learning and growing encourages others and raises expectations! Your contributions are invaluable and deeply appreciated!

To chapter, division and state officers and committee chairpersons – your selfless service and loving leadership show others they can live the lives they want! Thank you for the countless hours you volunteer and for the commitment you have to bring our message of hope to others!

To our beloved mentors no longer with us, who truly championed change and paved the way for each of us, your legacy lives on! Your work made the opportunities we have possible. We will continue to pass the torch to the next generation and carry on the work you loved so much!

To each NFBL member — your hopes, ideas, dreams, and loving commitment unite us! Never underestimate the impact you have and the positive difference we make when we come together! Let’s go build the National Federation of the Blind!

With love and appreciation,

Pamela Allen, President

*Live the Life You Want*

Tune and lyrics by J.P. Williams, James Brown,

Richie Flores, and J.J. Meddaugh

Live the life you want

nobody can stop you,

Shoot for the sun,

break on through,

So you’re blind, you'll be fine, we've got good news,

you can live the life you want

we know the truth.

Grab a cane, get trained, gotta get moving.

Make a change, earn a wage, that's what we're doing.

Come with me,

to live the life you want,

nobody can stop you,

Shoot for the sun,

break on through,

So you’re blind, you'll be fine, we've got good news,

you can live the life you want

we know the truth.

You and me, NFB

let's dream together,

NFB, you and me

lives on forever,

you will see.

You can live the life you want, nothing can stop you.

Shoot for the sun, break on through,

So you’re blind, you'll be fine, we've got good news,

you can live the life you want,

‘cause we know the truth.

you can live the life you want,

‘cause we know the truth.

**NFB 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.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

**The National Federation of the Blind advances the lives of its members and all blind people in the United States.**

**We know that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Our collective power, determination, and diversity achieve the aspirations of all blind people. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back!**