



Fall 2022

OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

A MESSAGE FROM ACBO'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear ACBO Family,

It is my pleasure and honor to introduce myself and share my vision as the new executive director. My name is Ying-Ting Chiu; you may call me Ting. I'm from Taiwan and currently live with my husband, who is an Ohioan, in Columbus. I came to the United States to pursue my Ph.D. at The Ohio State University in 2016 and graduated in 2020. My expertise is in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education for the blind and visually impaired, and I have been in this field for more than a decade.

I came from a working-class family that taught me to work hard to survive. My father is a farmer; he was also a garbage truck driver. My mother is a housewife, but she also had to work in the factory when my siblings and I were little. I have five siblings, so back then it was very tough for my parents. I'm glad my siblings and I are now grown and financially independent.

I was never taught to dream bigger; it never crossed our minds because every day was about survival. I am a middle child who always thought I got less attention from my parents than my older and younger siblings. I hated that, however, as I grew older, I found myself given more time and space to cultivate self-reliance compared to my siblings. Deep in my heart, I always dreamed bigger, even when my family considered dreaming bigger



At the State of Ohio Charitable Campaign kickoff, Ting shows a visitor to the ACBO table how to write his name in braille.

dangerous. I do not blame my parents because we needed to survive. (I did when I was younger, to be honest.) It is hard for me to imagine how my parents made it. All I have for them is appreciation and gratitude!

Being a dreamer is where I started, but, much later, I learned that putting ideas into practice is far more important. I spent a lot of time searching for my purpose in my twenties. After working in Taiwan for a few nonprofit organizations that served the blind and visually impaired, indigenous students, and students with visual or hearing impairments, I found my purpose in improving science education for the blind and visually impaired when I was 28 years old. In my thirties, I spent the majority of my time in graduate school preparing myself for this purpose. Along this journey, I started to dream bigger and bigger. ACBO gave me multiple scholarships when I was in dire financial need during my Ph.D. studies. Wow! Back then, I could not even express how much I appreciated ACBO because I had little hope to be chosen for a scholarship since I am not blind or visually impaired and I'm a foreigner.

Nevertheless, I was chosen because of my work in the visual impairment field. I was invited to receive my scholarships a couple of times at our annual convention. There was also a time when Vicky Prahin and Katie Frederick represented ACBO and came to Ohio State's Columbus campus for a scholarship celebration held by the College of Education and Human Ecology for me. I was deeply moved by how ACBO did its work and how much the organization cared about the future of the visual impairment field.

I have lived in Columbus for six years. I trained to make STEM education accessible for students who are blind or have low vision, and I am still committed to this area of work. I am a natural, but also a well-trained, problem solver. I appreciate ideas, particularly putting good ideas into practice to benefit the blind and visually impaired community, and even more broadly, the disability community. To me, action speaks much louder than words—what we *do* is much more important than what we say. This does not mean we cannot advocate for ourselves, but we need to advocate and take action to make a real change.

I took ACBO's executive director position because I love ACBO and want to contribute to doing things that matter to us! There are four aspects that I

consider important. These four aspects are resources, networking, education, and visibility, as explained below:

1. **Resources:** To build a thorough list of resources that includes all the needed information to direct blind and visually impaired Ohioans to find what they need.

2. **Networking:** To hold in-person and online activities for blind and visually impaired people, their family members, and educators and professionals in the visual impairment field to make us a stronger family.

3. **Education:** To provide programs for those who are mentioned above, as well as those who do not know much about blindness and low vision, to learn needed skills and knowledge, create more of a sense of inclusion in our environment, and increase understanding of the blind and visually impaired.

4. **Visibility:** To use social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, more regularly to keep our blind and visually impaired Ohioans informed of ACBO's most recent work, make ACBO's work visible to the public, and provide educational information for the public to learn about things in the visual impairment field.

I care about what you would like to see ACBO do. If you have any thoughts or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone. My email is acbo.director@gmail.com. Our office number is 614-261-3561.

Again, I am happy to be here as part of the ACBO family!

Sincerely,

Ting



**ACBO Community Shares
Campaign Codes**

State of Ohio 19003
City of Columbus 60240
Franklin County 60240
Ohio State University 60240
Columbus State 1061

CONVENTION 2022: SEEING THE FUTURE, SALUTING THE PAST

By Rachel Densmore, *et al.*

Registration is live for the ACB-Indiana/ACB-Ohio convention; go to acb-indiana.org to get started. This year's activities will take place November 11 to 13 in Bloomington, Indiana, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 245 North College Avenue. Call 812-331-1335 to make your reservation, using "ACB" as the group code to get the room rate of \$133.00 per night, including taxes. If you need transportation, contact Vicky Prahin at 614-949-7757 (Columbus area), Karen Spry at 513-498-4781 (Cincinnati area), or Rachel Densmore at 614-390-9587 (Cleveland area). The deadline for room reservations, conference registration, and auction item submissions is October 14.

The hotel is right on the square in downtown Bloomington, an area that's fully accessible, easy to navigate, and filled with lots of restaurants and shopping opportunities. Since it is Veteran's Day weekend, we will recognize and salute our vets throughout the event.

The convention offers a variety of great sessions, such as benefits and ABLE accounts, ADA updates, health and fitness, and eye research. Consider participating in a focus group on autonomous vehicles conducted by students from Indiana University's School of Optometry; it's a unique opportunity to provide valuable input on this quickly developing field.

On Friday evening, enjoy live entertainment provided by local duo Davis and Devitt. Sharlee Davis is a well-known singer and songwriter and a member of the Heartland Association of ACBI. As always, we will hold a live auction on Saturday night.

Our keynote speaker will be Kathy Nimmer, a public school teacher and administrator who was Indiana's 2015 Teacher of the Year and was one of the top five national finalists that year. If you've heard her speak before, you know you don't want to miss another opportunity! The banquet speaker will be athlete and advocate Lonnie Bedwell, a blind veteran who travels the country engaging blind and visually impaired vets and others in extreme activities like kayaking the churning rivers of West Virginia, mountain climbing in Alaska, and hunting and fishing expeditions throughout the

country.

We will partner with Dr. Georgia Frey to “get up and get moving.” She is currently at the Indiana University School of Kinesiology and her specialty is exercise and wellness for people with disabilities. Her recreational therapy students will join us throughout the weekend for walkabouts to explore downtown Bloomington, part of the B-Line trail, and other engaging movement opportunities that can be replicated at home.

Exhibitors include HIMS, Vanda Pharmaceuticals, Stitching Sisters, Vispero, and APH. Join us for an action-packed weekend!

2022 ACB-OHIO SLATE OF CANDIDATES

By Brant Adams

One of the core responsibilities of ACBO members is electing officers and directors during the annual business meeting during the conference and convention. This year’s meeting is Saturday, November 12. Members must be in good standing to vote. We have seven two-year terms and a single one-year term to fill. This is the slate the nominating committee proposes. Remember, we will be accepting nominations from the floor as well.

President: Katie Frederick

Vicky Prahin has chosen not to run for another term; we would like to express tremendous gratitude for her many years of service and amazing amount of work, including filling in as executive director for many months.

Katie Frederick is our recommendation for president. She has served in just about every capacity in the organization—on the board as a director and secretary, as a member of many committees and chair of several, and previously as executive director—and on the national level as a board member and as chair of the Board of Publications. She knows what it means to be a leader!

Second Vice President: Rachel Densmore

We have nominated Rachel Densmore for this position. She finished a term and has completed year one of her first full term. She has been very active with the convention committee, and I don’t know how we ever did

without her. She is also an officer in the Cleveland chapter. She will do very well!

Director, Position 2: Caleb McKinsey

Don Kalman has chosen not to run for another term, and we thank him for his service. Caleb McKinsey has agreed to run for this term. He has been an active member of the Cleveland chapter for five years and will bring new energy and ideas to the board. Says Caleb, "As a director, I am looking forward to meeting others from different chapters, to be able to see how Cleveland's members work with others to further the vision of the organization."

Director, Position 4: Shawn Thiel

Lori Woodall resigned from the board earlier this year and we thank her for her many years of service. Shawn Thiel is ably completing her term and is our recommendation to serve a full term. Shawn has served on the board and was executive director for the state affiliate. He will bring experience and ideas to the board, as well as a great deal of technology knowledge, which is a huge help to us all.

Director, Position 6: Tonya Adams

Tonya Adams has agreed to run for a second term. She has served on several committees. This year she has chaired one of the most successful scholarship committees in years. We are very pleased by her offer to continue.

Director, Position 8: Kate Morse

Dana Metcalf has declined to run again, and we would like to thank him for his service. Kate Morse, vice-president of the Cincinnati chapter, has agreed to run in his place. She has served as secretary and chapter rep as well. She retired from the Army Corps of Engineers after 28 years and we know she will bring new energy and ideas to the board.

Director, Position 10: Kelsey Nicolay

Though she has chosen not to run, we would like to thank Marilyn Allison for completing a term. The committee nominates former board member Kelsey Nicolay for this position. In addition to Kelsey's work on several ACBO committees and positions in ACB special-interest affiliates, she is a

well-respected member of Michigan Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired (MCBVI) technology committee.

Director, Position 11: Linda Wyman

If Rachel is elected second vice-president, we will need a replacement for her director position. Former ACBO president Linda Wyman will run to complete her term. Linda was very helpful with the legislative committee. Thank you, Linda, for agreeing to this.

I hope these introductions are helpful. I want to thank the committee (Alex Densmore, Karen Spry, Malaina VanderWal, and Melody Holloway) for its hard work this year.

Remember, nominees do not need to be physically present, but they do need to be available to accept the nomination virtually. Elections allow your voice to be heard, so participate and help move the organization forward.

ACBO'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS—WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

By Vicky Prahin

Some people hear “board of directors” and cringe; others get excited. What is it really and what the heck does it do?

The mission of ACBO is to improve the quality and equality of life for persons who are blind or visually impaired. The board is intimately involved in seeing that this happens.

The board of directors consists of five officers—president, first vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, and treasurer—and 11 directors. The membership chooses these 16 people to see to the implementation of the constitution and bylaws and, therefore, the wishes of the membership as a whole. Responsibilities include:

- strategic and organizational planning
- ensuring strong fiduciary oversight and financial management

- fundraising and resource development
- selecting and evaluating the performance of the executive director
- approving and monitoring ACBO's programs and services
- enhancing ACBO's public image

Board members are expected to:

- know the organization's mission, policies, programs, and needs
- faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements
- serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization
- prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings
- participate fully in one or more committees

Breaking it all down, it means that a board member is more involved in what ACBO does and how things get done. This requires being part of one or more committees, attending four board meetings (three of them virtual), and helping to keep things running smoothly. You can be involved in planning the annual convention, visiting with senators and congresspeople, fundraising, and representing ACBO at other conferences and meetings.

We elect several members to the board during the business meeting at the state convention, and any member in good standing can run for a position. If you want to learn more about what ACBO does and have a stronger voice in managing the organization, contact the nominating committee or have someone nominate you from the floor during elections. Make your voice heard!

ACB CONVENTION DELEGATE REPORT

By Brant Adams

My wife and I were honored to represent ACB-Ohio at the 2022 ACB national convention. The first hybrid convention went well, with a few first-time glitches. A Covid outbreak put a damper on the event, but everybody seems to have come through it in one piece. I am grateful to my wife, Tonya, for coming with me, taking care of me, and keeping me supplied with pizza.

For us, the highlight of the convention was a tour of the Mormon Trail Center across the river in Iowa. The missionaries there were very welcoming and pulled out all the stops for us. They removed several display items from their cases so that we could get a hands-on understanding of items that were used around the time the Mormons were staying in the Omaha area. A hand-forged chain, a sisal rope, tools, iron pots, and wooden bowls were some of the artifacts we examined, along with models of their temple. We even got to touch parts of a taxidermied ox! They gave us little handmade dolls for the ladies and bandanas for the gentlemen. It was one of the best museum tours I have experienced, and I cannot thank the missionaries enough for being so thoughtful and accommodating!

Overall, it was a good convention, and, most importantly, we all survived. I would have included a picture, but we were all masked or isolated by the end. On to Schaumburg for next year!

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP CALLS

By Katie Frederick

Join us on the second Sunday of every month, starting at 7:30 p.m. Eastern time, for ACB-Ohio membership calls. We are planning the final quarter of 2022 and have some interesting topics, like gift-giving ideas for individuals who are blind or low vision, getting to know ACB-Ohio's new executive director, and ways to combat the winter blues. The dates are October 9, November 13, and December 11. The calls take place on the Zoom platform. To join, use the following link or phone method of preference.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6142613561>

One-tap mobile

+1 312 266 7999,6142613561# US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656,6142613561# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 614 261 3561

HOTT PODCASTS #4

By Irwin Hott



Last issue I told you about *Talk Description to Me*—that podcast is now on hold and may come back in some other form in the future. This time I want to tell you about *Echo Tips*, a podcast all about the Amazon line of products including the Echo and related devices.

I ran into a problem listening to the podcast on my Echo. Since “echo” was the first word of the request to play the podcast and it is also my wake word, I could not get the podcast to play. If you use other wake words such as “computer” or “Alexa” you should not have this problem. If your wake word is “echo” try tapping the “actions” button, wait half a second, and then say, “Play the latest *Echo Tips* podcast.” The actions button is the power button when held down; it has a small dot on it.

Echo Tips has been around for quite a while, and I have found a lot of valuable information there. This was brought to mind as a recent episode concerns how to play podcasts on Amazon devices. Episode 211 details how to request a podcast, find a particular one, skipping forward and back within an episode, skipping from one podcast to another, and much more.

The description reads “Brief educational episodes highlighting and demonstrating features of the Amazon Echo. Commands for alarms, timers, phone calling, reading books, and much more are all laid out by New Vision's technical instructor David Ward. These episodes are especially helpful for new ones to the platform and seniors who are learning how to use their new device.”

More than 200 episodes of *Echo Tips*, running from five to 15 minutes each, can be found at <https://tunein.com/podcasts/Education-Podcasts/Echo-Tips-Podcast-p1118403/>. Episodes include:

- “Voice Pad vs. Notes”
- “Quiz of the Day and Trivia with Samuel L. Jackson”
- “Star Trek Trivia Skill”
- “New Photo Frame Mode for Echo Shows”
- “Skills for Braille”
- “Turning on Request Sounds via Voice [An Accessibility Feature]”

I'm not sure how much I will use my Echo to listen to podcasts, but it might be a good way to find new ones. If you need help using your Victor Stream or Trek to sign-up for a podcast, drop me a line at lshott263@att.net. Happy listening!

CONSIDER AN ACCESSIBLE ABSENTEE BALLOT

By Vicky Prahin

November 8 is Election Day and will be here very soon. All 88 counties in Ohio are required to make it possible for anyone with a disability to cast a secret ballot at the polls; check with your county's Board of Election (BOE) for more information.

If you prefer to or must use an absentee ballot, give thought to using an accessible form, available in approximately ten states, including Ohio. You can obtain the form in Ohio by contacting your BOE, either through email or by mail. If you have not used the form before, you will need to provide information verifying that you have a disability. A link to the online form will be emailed to you, and you can mark it using your computer or smartphone. Complete your ballot, print it, sign it, and mail it or deliver it to the BOE by November 7 to ensure that your vote will count.

If you are a US citizen and at least 18 years old, you have the right to vote and thereby help put those you want into office and pass the laws we all live by. Make your opinion known this year!

Michelle Spillan, Editor / Newsletter Committee: Katie Frederick, Irwin Hott, Dana Metcalf, Vicky Prahin

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Brant Adams, Ying-Ting Chiu, Rachel Densmore, Katie Frederick, Irwin Hott, and Vicky Prahin**. The *Ohio Connection* is a quarterly publication of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. Please submit your material in print or through e-mail, and include your name, address, and phone number. E-mail items to acbo.newsletter@gmail.com or send them to the address below. The winter issue deadline is **November 15. ACB-Ohio, 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214, Phone: 614-261-3561**



American Council of the Blind of Ohio
3805 N. High St., Suite 305
Columbus, Ohio 43214

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

OCTOBER 3, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

OCTOBER 9, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

OCTOBER 14, DEADLINE FOR CONFERENCE REGISTRATION, HOTEL
ROOM RESERVATION, AND AUCTION ITEM SUBMISSION

OCTOBER 15, WHITE CANE AWARENESS DAY

NOVEMBER 7, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

NOVEMBER 11, ACBO BOARD MEETING, 9 A.M., VIA ZOOM

NOVEMBER 11–13, ACBO / ACBI CONVENTION, HILTON
GARDEN INN, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

NOVEMBER 13, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

NOVEMBER 15, ACBO NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

DECEMBER 5, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

DECEMBER 11, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M., VIA ZOOM

JANUARY 13–16, WINTER SPORTS RETREAT, PUNDERSON

