



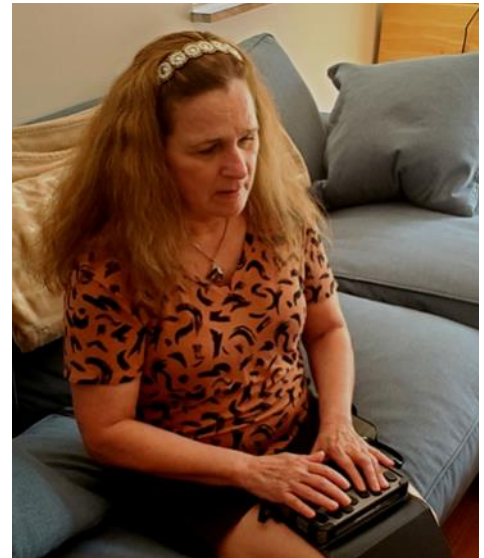
OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH MATCHING GRANTS: GAYLE'S STORY

By Michelle Spillan

ACBO's matching grant program provides up to \$1,000 for technology that helps people with blindness or low vision remain independent. As of September, nine grants have been awarded, totaling around \$5,000. In 2003, 11 grant recipients received a total of just over \$8,000. Any resident of Ohio can apply by completing an application and providing a few required documents. ACBO chapters can also tap into the matching grants program to get financial assistance for projects. Apply at <https://www.acbohio.org/matching-grants-application/> or call the ACBO office at 614-261-3561.



Gayle uses her braille display daily to stay organized and informed.

Gayle Horton heard about the program from a fellow Columbus chapter member. The grant Gayle received covered half the cost of her Braille Chameleon, a 20-cell braille display/notetaker that she finds indispensable. "I call it my brain in a box," she laughs. "It's very vital to my existence right now." She uses it for jotting notes, writing and reading documents, keeping track of passwords and phone numbers, and downloading books. Thanks to the Chameleon's easy-to-use help function, Gayle learned how to use it on her own, with no training required.

A retired social worker, Gayle faced some health challenges that affected her memory, and the device helped her stay informed, organized, and on track. Thankfully, she is doing much better now, and her braille display will be an indispensable tool as she pursues employment and moves forward with her plans.

The impact of this program for Gayle and other grant recipients is clear—those who need accessible technology are able to get it at a greatly reduced cost. As many of you know, these devices are expensive, costing hundreds or thousands of dollars, but they are necessary to maintain independence and quality of life. You can help ACBO sustain the matching grants by donating at www.acbohio.org/give/, calling the ACBO office at 614-261-3561, or sending a check to 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Your gift will make a difference!

JOIN US IN INDY FOR ACBI-ACBO'S CONVENTION WHERE WE'RE TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES!

By Brant Adams

We'll be holding our joint convention October 25 to 27 at the Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel, 2501 S. High School Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46241. For hotel reservations, call 1-877-227-6963 and use code "ACB" to get the discounted rate of \$139 plus tax per night. A free shuttle from the airport to the hotel is available.

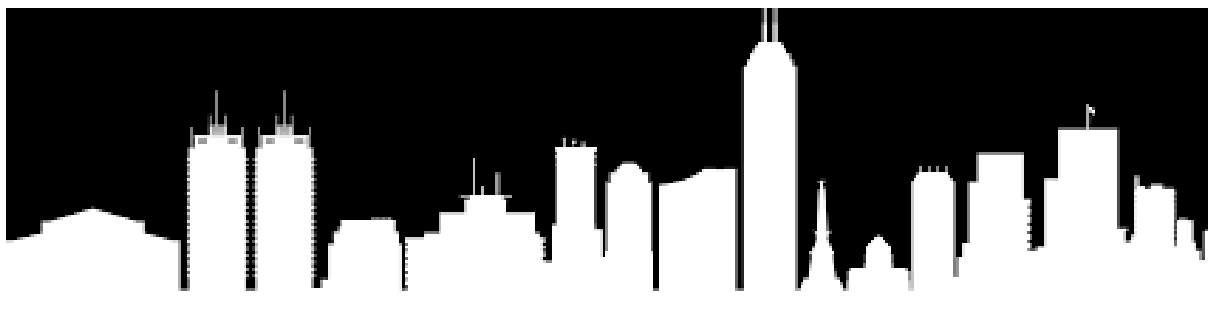
The registration form can be found at:

<https://acb-indiana.org/2024-convention/registration>

There are two attendance options—in person (\$80) and virtual by Zoom (\$40). All attendees are included in the door prize drawings! **The deadline for room reservations and convention registration is October 8.**

Check out <https://acb-indiana.org/2024-convention/agenda/> to find out what our convention weekend will include. It'll be packed with fun and lots of information. Kolby Garrison, ACB's development officer, will be our weekend guest and will begin our opening session by singing the national anthem and will speak at the banquet.

Questions? Please contact the ACB-Ohio office, or email rachel@acbohio.org, or Brant@acbohio.org.



SEEKING DONATIONS: ANNUAL AUCTION FAST APPROACHING!

By Lynn Powers

We are getting ready for the annual convention, and you know what that means—it's auction time! We're seeking donations for the in-person auction, which kicks off right after the banquet on Saturday night at convention. In the past, we've had great success with items like tech gadgets, gift cards, jewelry, delicious baked goods, and of course, ever-popular (and profitable!) wine and spirits.

There are three methods for getting items to the convention: bring them with you; ask a friend to bring them for you; or contact me about shipping to a friend of mine in Indianapolis. We need a description of each item for the auction lists that will be available in braille and large print at the convention.

We can accept a limited number of items for door prizes or auction items. Email item descriptions and door prize information by October 11 to me at powlynn@gmail.com or call me at 317-443-8458. We will confirm any details with you a couple of weeks before the convention. Hope to see you in Indianapolis!

NEW THIS YEAR: BASKET RAFFLE!

By Lynn Powers

ACBO is raffling off four exciting baskets at the annual state convention. For the low price of \$2 a ticket (or three for \$5), you could be a lucky winner. Simply drop your ticket in the bin next to the basket of your choice.

Purchase tickets at the ACBO table in the exhibit hall or from any fundraising committee member. Cash or checks made payable to ACB-Ohio are accepted. We'll draw the winning tickets during the auction intermission, so be sure to stick around! Winners (or their representatives) must be present to claim prizes.

Basket Details:

Home Baked: Indulge in delicious homemade treats crafted by talented ACBO members, friends, and family. Organized by Rachel Densmore and Michelle Spillan.

Bourbon Den: Unwind with a coveted bottle of Blanton's bourbon, glasses included. Organized by Lynn Powers and Molly Marcinick.

Potpourri: Discover a fun mix of tech and blind community-inspired items, such as a phone charger, braille playing cards, Blind Barbie, and other surprises. Organized by Katie Frederick and Kate Morse.

Guardians Grand Slam: Tickets to a Cleveland Guardians baseball game (any date except season opener) plus Guardians gear galore! Organized by Holly Carneal and Liz Lizanich.

One lucky ticket is all it takes to win! Proceeds from the raffle support ACBO's sports and recreation committee.



INTRODUCING THE ACBO BOARD SLATE FOR THE 2024 ELECTION

By Alex Densmore, Nominating Committee Chair

At the ACBO annual business meeting on Saturday during the ACB-Ohio and ACB-Indiana convention, we will hold elections for the offices of president, vice president 2, treasurer, and various director positions. Below are the candidates the nominating committee has slated for each office, as well as the term number and when that term ends.

President: Brant Adams, Term 1, 2026. Brant currently is serving as vice president 1, co-chairs the convention program committee, and chairs the matching grants and technology committees.

Vice President 2: Rachel Densmore, Term 2, 2026. Rachel is the ACBO Cleveland chapter president, co-chairs the convention program and membership committees, and chairs the scholarship committee.

Treasurer: D A Pimley, Term 3, 2026. D A served as treasurer of ACBO from 2021 to 2023 before stepping down from his second term due to personal reasons. The nominating committee will move from the convention floor to allow D A to serve an additional term beyond the two-term limit.

Director, Position 2: Jenna McCartney, Term 1, 2026. Jenna is a member of the Stark County chapter and has previously served on the ACBO Board.

Director, Position 3: Mary Karabinos. Partial Term, 2025. Mary is the vice president of the Columbus chapter. Since this position was vacated mid-term this year, the individual elected to this position will serve a one-year term.

Director, Position 4: Dave Bertsch, Term 1, 2026. Dave has extensive experience supporting the work of ACB, including helping to form a new affiliate in South Carolina, the Palmetto Council of the Blind. This would be his first time on the ACBO board.

Director, Position 6: Lindsey LaVere, Term 1, 2026. Lindsey is active with the Michigan Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, ACB Families, ACB Lions, and ACB NextGen, serving on committees of these affiliates. This would be her first time on the ACBO board.

Director, Position 8: Kate Morse, Term 2, 2026. Kate Morse is the vice president of our Cincinnati chapter and serves on ACBO's fundraising, membership, and matching grants committees.

Director, Position 10: Lynn Powers, Term 1, 2026. Lynn is currently serving as the ACBO treasurer and is a past president of ACB-Indiana. Lynn would like to take a step back from the treasurer position, but still actively support the work of ACBO through a director position.

Since Katie Frederick has chosen not to rerun for the office of president, she will replace Vicky Prahin as immediate past president regardless of who is elected president. Thank you to Vicky for all of the support she provided to the board in the immediate past president role these past two years.

The following individuals have chosen not to rerun for board positions and we thank them for their service this past term: Katie Frederick, Caleb McKinsey, Shawn Thiel, Tonya Adams, and Kelsey Nicolay.

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during the business meeting for anyone else wishing to run for these slated positions. The nominating committee has candidates on hand for positions that may be vacated during the election as a result of those currently holding positions being elected to higher offices. The committee will nominate candidates from the floor in such circumstances.

Thank you to the other members of the nominating committee, Katie Frederick and Vicky Prahin, for their hard work during the busy time of interviewing potential candidates and finalizing the slate.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ACBO BYLAWS

By Vicky Prahin

The organization documents committee has reviewed the ACBO bylaws and suggests two changes to update our documents; both relate to committee descriptions. Please read the following so you are prepared to vote on these changes at the convention in October.

Article III

3.6 Fundraising:

Current Text: The committee shall explore and implement ways to bring in donations to support the organization. With the support of the board, it will plan and carry out any resulting fundraising activities. The treasurer shall serve as chair of this committee, which shall be comprised of the executive director and at least two other members.

Proposed Change to the final sentence: This committee shall consist of a chair with the treasurer and executive director as members, along with at least two others.

3.11 Nominating:

Current text: The committee shall solicit candidates for incumbent and open officer and board positions prior to the annual convention. It shall prepare the slate for publication in the fall newsletter and to the ACBO list at least 30 days before the annual business meeting. The committee chair shall conduct elections during the annual business meeting. The committee shall consist of a chair appointed by the president and at least two other persons appointed by the chair, the committee having no more than one person from any given chapter. The committee shall not place any of its members on its proposed slate of nominees. However, members of the nominating committee are still eligible to be nominated from the convention floor.

Proposed Change: ... The committee shall consist of a chair and at least three other persons appointed by the chair, with no more than two persons from any given chapter and with no one chapter holding a majority of members on the committee.

SERVING AS DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE IN JACKSONVILLE

By Vicky Prahin and Janae Miller

Each affiliate provides a delegate and an alternate to cast its vote at the national convention. Janae Miller and I accepted the positions this year in Jacksonville. Since this is the first time Janae has served in this capacity, I will let her talk about the experience. I will preface her comments by saying that she did very well, being forced to take on the full responsibility during the last two days since I lost my voice. She calmly and smoothly took control of the situation and represented Ohio efficiently.

Thank you, Vicky, for your wonderful comments. When I signed up to be an alternate delegate, I had an idea of the duties and responsibilities, but I knew that there were questions I needed to ask. I took this role very seriously because I was tasked with reporting to the national membership what the state's vote was for certain issues and candidates. You want to make sure that your response is accurate and precise. Your duty is to let your membership know what issues and candidates are up for a vote, when and how they can vote, and how their votes will be counted.

There are sessions that we, as delegate and alternate, have to attend so that we are aware of all of the voting rules, even if we have done this job before. While attending convention, your members must have a way to reach you, whether its via email, phone, or text. They may have questions regarding what to vote on or who to vote for, so you have to stay plugged in to all the information.

When you are at the convention, it's best to attend all of the general sessions and be alert regarding what is on the program lineup and when your part of the session is coming up each day.

At the opening general session when the ACB secretary does the affiliate roll call, your duty is to go to the mic and announce your name and the name of your alternate, if you are the delegate. Also, you are to announce how many votes your state is allowed based on the number of members your state or special interest affiliate has. Currently, Ohio has eight votes, one vote for every 25 members.

At the mic, you should sound clear, professional, and cheerful. After all, you are representing your wonderful state. If you are not at the convention in person, you can participate using Zoom. The affiliate delegate or alternate is expected to be present at every general session.

I was happy to represent Ohio and step in and collect votes when Vicky was under the weather. I truly enjoyed this part of serving our state affiliate and representing us on a national stage. I hope to be able to do this again next year in Dallas.

ROWING IS LIFE, PART ONE

By Caleb McKinsey

My rowing journey started in college at a welcome fair for freshmen. As the only blind member, I was given the same instruction from coaches and varsity rowers as any other novice. Rowing with the Cleveland State Vikings was an incredible opportunity for me. My blindness was never a hinderance. Other members and coaches, however, made sure to be more descriptive when explaining how to properly do a rowing stroke, the correct way to help carry the boat to and from the water, and how to familiarize myself with the boat. The team was welcoming, and I felt like an integral part of something much bigger. I learned that once on the water, all have to work together. Timing and technique from each person must be one and the same. Rowing is group-oriented and never individualistic, much like every team sport.

I raced with Cleveland in the city's annual 5,000-meter regatta on the Cuyahoga River. I also raced in Pittsburgh and Columbus. The Cleveland State Vikings gave me a firm foundation in the sport and started my love for



Caleb (second from right) and his team on Lake Erie in Cleveland.

rowing. I will always be grateful to them because my background helped me immensely when I returned to rowing years later with a local adult club.

The Cleveland Sight Center (CSC) worked with Western Reserve Rowing Association (WRRRA) to expose people who are blind to rowing. I joined their team in 2016 and got to row with a team of blind and visually impaired people. Given my experience and background, I was able to help those brand new to the sport. We rowed in smaller sprint races. I became good friends with my teammates, and our competitive enthusiasm took us to Pittsburgh and Boston. Racing in Boston twice at the infamous Head of the Charles regatta was a crowning achievement for us. This regatta is an international race for clubs, high schools, colleges and universities, and even former Olympic rowers come to compete. The support and camaraderie were incredible, from volunteers who rowed with us to our coaches who helped organize and teach us.

When the pandemic shut everything down, the 2020 rowing season was affected. We did not row that year, and by 2021 there was a lot of restructuring and, unfortunately, fewer coaches in the club. The CSC rowing team folded, but I was invited to row with another team of all sighted rowers. Rowing has given me enjoyment and discipline in a unique sport I never was aware of until college. A second piece to come will go into depth about rowing and adaptations made to help me learn and succeed in this incredible sport.

INDEPENDENT VISUALLY IMPAIRED ENTREPRENEURS ONLINE BUSINESS EXPO NOVEMBER 16

IVIE is offering a great opportunity to blind or visually impaired business owners/entrepreneurs. When you join in our Online Business Expo shopping experience, you can describe your products and services, pass on contact information, and allow participants to ask questions. For IVIE members, the fee for presenting for fifteen minutes is \$10, for a half hour is \$20, or for an hour is \$30. Not an IVIE member? Then, the fee for presenting is an additional \$15—\$25 for fifteen minutes, \$35 for a half hour session, or \$45 for an hour session. Nonmembers have the option of having \$15 of the payment used to pay IVIE dues for 2025.

All those participating in the call, whether presenting or not, will use the same Zoom information to connect. The date and timeline be November 16, 2024, from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern. At 11:45 a.m., an introduction of all the vendors participating with their specific time slots would be given, along with instructions for those attending. A wrap-up after all the presentations would be available for anyone to ask any final questions of those exhibiting online.

The deadline for purchasing a time slot to give a presentation is October 31, 2024. To purchase a time slot or ask questions, send an email to info@ivie-acb.org with your

request to present/exhibit. Please send your business name, product line, your telephone number, and your email address. You will be sent a link for payment and additional information. If you wish to attend the IVIE Online Business Expo and listen to this unique shopping experience, there is no cost. However, please send an email to register so we can send you the Zoom call details. Send the email request to info@ivie-acb.org or contact Ardis Bazyn, phone 818-209-8684.

THE GAME-CHANGING PROSPECTS OF AI AND AT

By Melody Holloway

The age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be the best time period yet for enhancing independence, productivity, awareness, advocacy, and overall quality of life for the blind/visually impaired community. AI and AT (assistive technology) provide numerous options to help us navigate the world and remain independent. Be My Eyes and AIRA give users the option to use both AI virtual assistants and human volunteers or trained agents to read material, describe photos or the environment, take screenshots, and assist with nearly any task requiring eyesight.

VDScan, Envision, Seeing AI, and KNFB Reader Basic are a few apps using a combination of AI and images from a camera to identify currency and colors, describe photos and the environment, and read text (documents, product labels, handwritten material, etc.). Some apps are designed for reading medication information, digital interface panels, food expiration dates, restaurant menus, laundry care instructions, and light detection. Cash Reader, iNote, Vislens, Laundry Lens, ScripTalk, Light Detector, and Zuzanka are a few task-specific apps.

WayAround is an application allowing users to customize their own labels and tag items and locations for accurate, efficient identification. GPS applications help people find routes, locations, detect doors, recognize pedestrian signals, support indoor navigation, and other aspects of wayfinding. Example apps include GoodMaps, Outdoors, Explore, BlindSquare, and Oko.

External visual interpretation devices are also available. Some are task specific, such as the iBill currency identifier through the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the ScripTalk prescription reader. The StellarTrek is a bar code reader and GPS device in one package, no smartphone required.

Biped.AI is a wearable device conveying information through headphones about obstacles and landmarks for blind pedestrians. Glidance, a device that looks like a vacuum cleaner on wheels, uses built-in artificial intelligence robotics helping guide blind travelers to specific locations. These devices are cutting edge, state-of-the-art technologies testing limits of providing accurate, efficient, easy to understand, essential information to blind users.

Refreshable braille displays featuring QWERTY or Perkins-style keyboards are used for reading books, notetaking, editing files, and other tasks. These displays can be paired with mobile devices and computers running screen-reading software. Most refreshable braille displays have no speech output, but some offer text-to-speech software and braille. Some displays feature additional apps including calendars, calculators, clock, built in braille translation, and support multiple languages.

Audio description is available in movie theaters and from TV providers and streaming services. Viewers can receive accessible emergency public safety alerts, and weather warning information, enjoy movies, live entertainment, shows, and even advertising.

Accessibility of durable medical equipment has improved. Using talking glucometers, blood pressure monitors, thermometers, scales, continuous glucose monitors, heart monitors, and sleep equipment with mobile apps and Bluetooth, visually impaired people can, at times, manage our and our loved ones' health conditions with minimal to no sighted assistance.

Many mobile apps and AI services offer monthly, annual, or one-time purchases. This is one of the main barriers preventing access for those of us surviving on fixed, limited incomes. Some mobile apps and devices are free. The iBill and NLS eReader, refreshable braille display, are available if someone is an active patron of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS).

The Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) and Bookshare offer books and magazines in audio and braille formats for use with braille displays, or for listening to on mobile devices, specialized players, or in Bookshare's case, Echo smart speakers. BARD is offered by the NLS program previously mentioned. Bookshare is free for qualified subscribers through a grant from the US Department of Education. If an individual does not qualify for a free Bookshare subscription, an annual plan subscription is available. NFB Newsline, a free service of the National Federation of the Blind, offers newspapers, magazines, TV listings, job postings, and local weather reports via an automated telephone system, website, or mobile app.

What do we collectively make of this artificial intelligence-enabled technology? Is the recent acceleration/integration of artificial intelligence and electronic access interfering with or minimizing certain aspects of independent living? Is all of our personal information protected and kept confidential? If apps and devices identify location, destination, color, read personal documents, identify medications, and describe pictures and scenes, can sensitive private information fall into suspicious hands? Can daily routines be predicted and tracked?

Could Glide replace white canes and guide dogs? Could APS and GPS identification

replace accessible pedestrian traffic signals, orientation and mobility training, and cause us to lose previously learned personal skills and not learn new methods of performing tasks?

Could these technologies decrease human interaction, contributing to the global pandemic of loneliness and social isolation? Could O and M instruction, certified vision rehabilitation therapy, independent living training, and guide dog instructor positions be in jeopardy?

AI and technology enhance, improve, and increase independence, productivity, access to lifesaving instruction, healthcare, employment and education opportunities, daily living, parenting, travel, emergency preparedness, and much more. Many of these technologies benefit those who have other disabilities and medical conditions. People with autoimmune, neurological, hearing, processing, mobility, dexterity, respiratory, sleep, food intake, executive function, speech, learning, sensory, and emotional expression impairments experience enhancements and improvements in daily function, engagement, performance, independence, task completion, and self-confidence.

When investing time, money, effort, awareness, and training to implement AI and electronics in our lives, we must think about all positions and outcomes in order to become more self-sufficient and informed, while remaining safe, stable, connected, and supportive of those around us. This sparks constructive conversations, and increases our ability to advocate, make informed decisions, and improve access and quality of services.

DON'T MISS THE 2024 AUDIO DESCRIPTION AWARDS GALA!

ACB celebrates outstanding achievements in audio description in media at the **2024 Audio Description Awards Gala. The event takes place virtually on November 14 at 7:30 p.m.** Created in 2021 to recognize outstanding achievement in audio description in entertainment and educational media, the gala features celebrity guests, film clips, and more than a dozen awards, including the 2024 Audio Description People's Choice Award. Stay tuned for more information ...

Newsletter Committee: Katie Frederick, Caleb McKinsey, Malaina VanderWal, Michelle Spillan, Editor

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Brant Adams, Ardis Bazyn, Alex Densmore, Melody Holloway, Caleb McKinsey, Janae Miller, Lynn Powers, Vicky Prahin, and Michelle Spillan.** The *Ohio Connection* is a quarterly publication of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio. Please submit your material in print or via email, and include your name and phone number. Send items to acbo.newsletter@gmail.com or ACB-Ohio, 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214, Phone: 614-261-3561. **The winter issue deadline is November 15.**



American Council of the Blind of Ohio
3805 N. High St., Suite 305
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FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

SEPTEMBER 27–29, ACBO FALL FEST, WOOSTER, OH

OCTOBER 2, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

OCTOBER 8, DEADLINE FOR CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND ROOM
RESERVATIONS

OCTOBER 10, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7 P.M., VIA ZOOM

OCTOBER 11, DEADLINE FOR AUCTION ITEMS AND DOOR PRIZES

OCTOBER 15, WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY

OCTOBER 25–27, ACBI-ACBO CONVENTION, INDIANAPOLIS

OCTOBER 25, ACBO BOARD MEETING, 9 A.M., AT THE CONVENTION AND VIA ZOOM
(USE MEETING CODE 6142613561)

NOVEMBER 6, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

NOVEMBER 14, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7 P.M., VIA ZOOM

NOVEMBER 15, ACBO FALL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

DECEMBER 4, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

DECEMBER 12, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7 P.M., VIA ZOOM

