



Summer 2024

# OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH MATCHING GRANTS: DAVID'S STORY

By Rachel Densmore

ACB-Ohio's Matching Grants program has two purposes, it supports individuals who purchase adaptive equipment and chapters that need financial support for projects. Each individual or chapter can receive up to \$1,000. The individual or chapter is then responsible for securing the remainder of the cost. This program is available to any blind or visually impaired resident of Ohio and any of ACB-Ohio's chapters. To qualify, interested individuals or chapters must complete an application and provide a few required documents. Incomplete applications will not be considered. In 2023, ACBO awarded 11 grants to 10 individuals and one chapter for a total of \$8,103. As of July 2024, ACBO has awarded \$4,278 to eight individuals.

Meet one of our grant recipients, David Green. He joined the Greater Cleveland Chapter in 2023 after experiencing vision loss. David and his 9-year-old son, Jordan, regularly attend chapter events and meetings. David spent his career as a professional chef, and Jordan readily reports that his dad still makes the best mac and cheese in town!

David heard about the program when Brant Adams, the matching grants committee chair, spoke at the March Cleveland chapter meeting. He reached out to the ACBO office to get his application filled out. He was approved and now is the proud owner of a new talking watch.

David uses the watch and its alarm features throughout his day for tasks such as getting Jordan to and from school, being on time for paratransit, and keeping track of time when he is out and about. "I feel safer," he explained, "I no longer have to ask others 'Excuse me, do you have the time?'" He emphasizes that the watch is easy to use and has increased his independence. "I know that it does not seem like much,



***David, with his son, Jordan, shows off his talking watch***

but since I am on a fixed income, the [Matching Grants] program allowed me to get the watch faster. I am very grateful and hope others will use the program.”

ACBO is pleased to help David and others. Stay tuned to future issues of this newsletter where we will highlight the Matching Grants program. If you are interested in learning more about the program or applying for a grant, visit <https://www.acbohio.org/matching-grants-application/> or call the ACBO office at 614-261-3561. Individual applicants must be blind or visually impaired and reside in Ohio, but ACB-Ohio membership is not required.

To donate to this program, visit <https://www.acbohio.org/give/>, call 614-261-3561, or send donations to American Council of the Blind of Ohio, 3805 North High Street Suite 305, Columbus, OH 43214.



## BECOME A BOLD BUCKEYE! HELP ACB AND OUR OHIO AFFILIATE



ACB-Ohio is participating in the Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk, a fundraiser supporting the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and our Ohio affiliate. Half of the funds raised will come back to Ohio in support of our Matching Grants program when you donate to our Bold Buckeyes team (<https://tinyurl.com/3ux85hv6>). Donations are tax deductible and accepted through August 31.



Show your team spirit and purchase an apron, zippered tote, T-shirt, sweatshirt, or hoodie from Blind Girl Designs (<https://blindgirldesigns.com/collections/bold-buckeyes>). The design features an outline of Ohio with five stars showing chapter locations around the state and says “The Bold Buckeyes” in print and braille.

Find more information about the Matching Grants program and a link to the walk donation page on our website, [www.acbohio.org](http://www.acbohio.org).

Please share this with your local chapter, friends and family, and others in your community. Thank you in advance for supporting ACB and our Ohio affiliate.



**HOP ON OUR BOLD BUCKEYE BANDWAGON AND DONATE TODAY!**

# GET READY TO “TRANSFORM ATTITUDES” AT THE 2024 ACBI-ACBO CONVENTION, OCTOBER 25-27

By Rachel Densmore and Brant Adams

The ACBI-ACBO convention will be here before you know it! Here’s a sneak peek:

- **ACB-Ohio and ACB-Indiana Business Meetings**-Learn what your state affiliate has been up to over the past year, elect officers and board members, and gain a better understanding of the important business that keeps each organization running.
- **Informative Workshops and Speakers**-Hear from our keynote and banquet speakers and choose from several informative workshop sessions. Potential topics include school transitions and experiences; independent living and cooking; disability etiquette; and conflict resolution.
- **Engaging Fundraisers**-Whether you’re bidding on an item in the auction, getting a convention T-shirt, participating in a raffle, or donating as an individual sponsor, there are many ways for you to get involved and support the work that makes this convention possible!
- **Friday Afternoon Excursion**-Explore the multisensory exhibits at the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis. This fantastic museum is a great experience for participants of all ages. A hands-on dinosaur exhibit is one of many fun and educational activities.

Who: All are welcome.

When: Friday, October 25 to Sunday, October 27

Where: Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel, 2501 S. High School Rd., Indianapolis, Indiana 46241, Phone 317-244-6861, <https://www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/us/en/indianapolis/indap/hoteldetail>

Guest rooms are \$139 per night. A \$30 per night reimbursement will be given to the person whose name is on the reservation for Friday and/or Saturday nights. Use code “ACB” when making room reservations.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

By Alex Densmore

During the annual business meeting at our state convention each fall, we vote for director and officer positions for our board. The board consists of 11 directors and five officers. We elect half of the director and officer positions one year and the remaining positions the following. This helps ACBO have an influx of new talent and ideas while retaining year-to-year knowledge of how the board works.

Each year, the nominating committee creates a slate of candidates. One candidate is slated per vacant position. During the election, members present can nominate others

from the floor to run against the slated candidate for each vacant position.

This year's slate will consist of the president, second vice president, treasurer, and five director positions. If you are interested in serving or want to learn more, visit <https://www.acbohio.org/about/board/>.

Contact nominating committee chair Alex Densmore at 440-554-2138 or by email at [alexander.densmore@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.densmore@gmail.com). If you are not sure you have the time to be a board member, but you want to do more for ACBO, think about serving on a committee. Help shape our future!

## **CONVENTION SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

By Rita Kersh, ACBI President

If you, someone you know, or a business, wish to become a sponsor for our 2024 ACBI-ACBO state convention in Indianapolis, go to [acb-indiana.org](http://acb-indiana.org) and click on the link that says "Send sponsorship funds with Square." Be sure all the blanks are filled in or the payment may not be processed. If preferred, sponsorship checks can be mailed to: ACBI, PO Box 2216, Bedford, IN 47421. All sponsorships are tax deductible, and businesses or individuals who are top sponsors are offered special benefits. Help us transform attitudes!

### **Sponsorship Levels:**

#### **\$1,000 Palladium**

This level provides an opportunity to speak at our awards banquet on Saturday evening (Oct. 26), plus mention on our website and in our convention program.

#### **\$500 Gold**

This level provides the opportunity to speak to convention attendees at the luncheon on Saturday (Oct. 26), plus mention on our website and in the convention program.

#### **\$400 Platinum**

This level provides an opportunity to speak on Friday (Oct. 25) at our opening session, plus mention on our website and in the convention program.

#### **\$300 Silver**

This level provides an opportunity to speak on Friday (Oct. 25) at our opening session, plus mention on our website and in the convention program.

#### **\$200 Bronze**

This level provides an opportunity to speak on Friday (Oct. 25) at our opening session, plus mention on our website and in the convention program.

# WHAT HAS THE MEDINA CHAPTER BEEN UP TO?

By Don Kalman, Medina Chapter President

- For years, ACBO's Medina chapter, known as Friends-N-Focus, has been distributing donated CCTVs to people in need around the state. The 70th CCTV was just given out!
- Last year, 16 magnifiers were given out, along with level indicators, talking watches, "Bold Line" pens, and bump dots. These were available to anyone in the community who needed them.
- Ruby magnifiers are loaned to members for three months at a time.
- One person said the equipment was the only reason she could remain in her home. Others said the CCTVs have transformed their lives more than they would have thought possible.
- We have a variety of speakers and most recently the group enjoyed playing bingo.
- Members are encouraged to share their experiences coping with vision loss.

If anyone has an idea how we can better serve our members and the community, please contact me at 330-635-7027.

# VOTING AT THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE

By Vicky Prahin

Each affiliate sends a delegate and an alternate to cast the affiliate vote at the national convention. Janae Miller and I have accepted the positions this year and will do our best during elections. You will receive instructions for voting individually. As most of you know, Ohio has eight affiliate votes this time. To include your choice of candidate or to pass a resolution or amendment to the constitution, text or call 614-949-7757. You can leave a voicemail message if the line is engaged. I will tally all votes cast in this manner to determine Ohio's affiliate vote. Let's participate fully in the 2024 elections!

# ACB-OHIO AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE

Nominate a person, business, or organization for one of ACBO's seven awards. What a great way to show appreciation and honor those who consistently go above and beyond. For more information, go to <https://www.acbohio.org/convention/awards/>. You can write your own nomination or use the simple form provided. Send nominations or questions to [acbo.director@gmail.com](mailto:acbo.director@gmail.com) or contact this year's awards committee chair, Vicky Prahin, directly at [vickyprahin@gmail.com](mailto:vickyprahin@gmail.com). **Award nomination deadline is September 8.**

# FALL FEST 2024: FRIENDS, FUN, FOOD, AND MORE!

By Catherine Bister

ACBO, in collaboration with local Lions' clubs, invites you to attend Fall Fest 2024 in beautiful Wayne County from Friday, September 27 through Sunday, September 29. Woosterfest, history, hiking, fishing, great food, and chill times are all included! For more information call, text, or email me at 330-464-1355 or [acbo.recreation@gmail.com](mailto:acbo.recreation@gmail.com). (Please note: I respond quickest to texts.)

**COST:** Registration is \$80. Those in need of financial assistance to attend should contact their local chapter.

**REGISTRATION:** [Register for the event here.](#) Please note that you must also contact the hotel to reserve your room. The deadline for both registration and the hotel is August 27.

**TRAVEL:** Bus travel is through Greyhound on the Barons line with routes from Cleveland and Columbus. If you are arriving by bus, please let us know so we can arrange a pickup and dropoff.

**LODGING:** We have a block of rooms reserved at the Best Western, 243 E Liberty, in Wooster on Friday, September 27 and Saturday, September 28 at a rate of \$124.99 plus tax. Amenities include free hot breakfast, fitness room, and lounge. ACBO has secured the Imperial room for hospitality. To reserve directly with the hotel under ACBO call 330-264-7750 or use this link: [https://www.bestwestern.com/en\\_US/book/hotels-in-wooster/best-western-plus-wooster-hotel-conference-center/propertyCode.36082.html](https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotels-in-wooster/best-western-plus-wooster-hotel-conference-center/propertyCode.36082.html)

**MEALS:** Friday dinner will be pizza at the Long Military Museum. Saturday lunch is on your own. There is no restaurant in the hotel, but there are great eateries within a short walking distance, or, check out the many food trucks at Woosterfest. Saturday and Sunday breakfast is included with your room at Best Western. Saturday group dinner is at TJ's restaurant downtown, just blocks from the hotel. Sunday, we'll give you a snack bag for the road or to enjoy after your hike at Clear Creek Park.

**HOSPITALITY ROOM:** Hang out, play games, relax, meet up regularly with friends, and get to the next scheduled activity.

**WOOSTERFEST:** "Woosterfest is an annual Oktoberfest-style festival organized by the Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce and held in downtown Wooster. In its 41<sup>st</sup> year, the event continues to attract thousands throughout northeast Ohio, by offering free entertainment, unique food vendors, an ever-expanding bier and winegarten, and activities for the young and the young at heart." (from <https://www.woosterfest.com/>)

**LONG FAMILY MILITARY MUSEUM:** Friday evening, we will take a meal together and tour this beautifully curated museum honoring local service men and women. The

Long Family Military Museum is privately owned and operated by Greg Long, a retired certified public accountant and lieutenant colonel in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Army Reserve Command. The museum contains artifacts from World War II and more recent conflicts. Some of the items on display include a wooden tank carved by Greg Long's father, a surgical instrument kit carried by an American soldier from World War II, and a 1942 Willys MB World War II Jeep that was restored for the museum.

**IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE:** Saturday morning, we travel to the pristine Izaak Walton League, a 200 acre preserve for fishing and hiking. Insect repellent is a must!

**CLEAR CREEK PARK:** Sunday, following check-out from the hotel, we travel a short distance to Clear Creek Park for a gentle hike and relaxing with friends. The park is situated on a beautiful 11-acre wooded wetland on the edge of the city, and offers inner and outer loop trails with gentle grade changes over paved or boardwalk surface covering three fourths of a mile. There is a newly constructed pavilion, accessible restrooms, and a dog relief area. The trail includes an observation deck with benches overlooking Clear Creek.

#### **EVENT SCHEDULE** (Subject to change)

##### **Friday September 27**

4:00 pm check in, Best Western Hotel

5:00 pm Long Military Museum tour & pizza from Mariola's

Evening Activities: Woosterfest at downtown square, euchre & games @ hotel hospitality room

##### **Saturday September 28**

7:00 – 10:00 am Free hotel breakfast

8:30 – 11:00 am Fishing & hiking @ Izaak Walton League

Lunch on your own

Afternoon Activity - Woosterfest @ downtown square

6:00 pm Group dinner @ TJ's Restaurant

Evening Activities: Woosterfest @ downtown square, euchre & games @ hotel hospitality room

##### **Sunday September 29<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 – 10:00 am Free hotel breakfast

11:00 am check out from the Best Western Hotel, Following check-out from the hotel travel to Clear Creek Park for a hike; snack bags will be provided.

#### **Related Links**

Best Western Hotel [https://www.bestwestern.com/en\\_US/book/hotels-in-wooster/best-western-plus-wooster-hotel-conference-center/propertyCode.36082.html](https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotels-in-wooster/best-western-plus-wooster-hotel-conference-center/propertyCode.36082.html)

Clear Creek Park <https://www.woosteroh.com/clear-creek-park>

Greyhound (Barons) [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)

Izaak Walton League <https://sites.google.com/view/waynecounty/>

Mariola Italian Restaurant <https://www.mariolaitalian.com/>

TJ's Restaurant <https://www.tjsrestaurants.com/>

Woosterfest <https://www.woosterfest.com/>

# HEARTFELT THANKS FROM ALEEA CHAFFIN, WRIGHT STATE/ACB-OHIO SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Thank you so much for being the donor of the ACB-Ohio Scholarship. It is an honor to be one of the selected few Wright State University students, who are blind/visually impaired, to be supported by ACB-Ohio since 2008.

Some of my educational and career interests at the moment are to finish my Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry with an ACS Certification. Afterward, I plan to stay at WSU and be a part of their master's and Doctoral Programs. With this, I hope to gain field experience with internships and become a graduate teaching assistant. Once I complete my educational pathway, I hope to find a position in a laboratory doing research or becoming a professor of chemistry. My area of interest currently is organic chemistry, due to the fact I found an interest in it while in the class. Yet, I do not want to limit myself to a specialization until I finish my undergraduate program, since there might be other areas of chemistry that suit me better for a career.

Other future goals of mine are to move to a place off campus and start a family after my educational pathway. I want to be financially stable and have a stable career before this. I have also thought about relocating to a place where there would be better opportunities for positions in my field depending on what I decide to specialize in.

This scholarship benefits me because it will help me financially get through my undergraduate program and focus on my academic studies to help me be qualified for positions in my field. Due to being visually impaired, it is hard to attend college full time while taking upper-level STEM courses and working at the same time. This is difficult since I have Aniridia and it takes me two to three times longer than the average student to complete assignments. With this scholarship, I can focus on my academics and not worry about how I am going to financially cover my academics.

Again, thank you so much for your support of me and Wright State University.

—*Aleea Chaffin*



# REMEMBERING MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY

It is with a heavy heart we share the passing of two ACB-Ohio members.

Calvin Keuchler was born January 15, 1966 and passed away February 22, 2024. He received the JoAnn Fischer scholarship in 2004 and soon after joined the organization. He participated in Columbus chapter activities, holiday gatherings, picnics, and he tried his hand at horseback riding when we toured Dreams on Horseback in 2016.



***Calvin at Dreams on Horseback***



***Jacque Perry***

Jacque Perry passed away April 30, 2024. She actively participated in activities and

events of the Greater Cincinnati chapter. Jacque enjoyed attending several summer and winter sports retreats. She served on many committees at local and state levels of ACB-Ohio and was a member of the ACB-Ohio board of directors.

We send condolences to friends and family of Calvin Keuchler and Jacque Perry. Both are greatly missed.

## LIBRARY NEWS

- After much consideration and mixed emotions, Tracy Grimm, manager of the braille and talking book programs at the State Library of Ohio, has decided to retire after 33 years of service. Ryan Burley, Director of Library Operations at the State Library, will assume her work and continue to move initiatives forward.
- The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) is providing free HumanWare braille eReaders to patrons. The device has a 20-cell braille display, eight-key Perkins-style keyboard, and can download electronic braille through BARD or transfer from cartridges sent through the mail. If you are interested in receiving one, contact OLBDP for more information at 800-362-1262 or email [olbpd@cpl.org](mailto:olbpd@cpl.org).

# NATURE FOR ALL: CREATING A SENSORY TRAIL AT HOGBACK RIDGE PARK

By Catherine Bister

Casey Smith, outdoor connections manager for Preservation Parks of Delaware County, reached out to ACBO in February. She sought our input for a proposed sensory trail to benefit hikers who are blind or have low vision. She joined the sports and rec committee in March to talk about the project.

"For our park district, one of our goals is to provide 'wow' experiences. We're trying to find communities that are underserved and things that no one else in central Ohio has and we can provide," Casey said.



The Delaware Board of Developmental Disabilities reached out to Hogback Ridge to create the trail and provided a \$20,000 grant for trail modifications and construction of accessible, single-family restroom with an adult changing table. Hogback Ridge is home to Preservation Parks' district offices, nature center, a small conference room, and restrooms (currently, only a port-a-john is available on evenings and weekends when the nature center is closed). This location was chosen from the district's 12 parks in part for its unique topography—a ridge between two deep ravines. The project is slated for completion this year.

***We found a turtle!***

Casey, along with park planner Zach Messinger, researched existing sensory trails and strategies for making natural habitats accessible. They read articles, talked with other park planners, talked to service providers (for example, O & M instructors), and members of the blind community. They traveled to northeast Ohio this spring to tour the Highbrook Lodge ropes trail for practical ideas.

"What we found out really quickly is that finding where trails were was really challenging. It seems like it would be very, very difficult if you wanted to go visit a trail but you didn't know what was accessible," Zach said. "We want people to feel very capable of what they're doing."

Members of the ACBO sports and recreation committee, along with members of the Sunbury Lions Club, took part in a hike and discussion in May. The focus group walked the three-fourths mile gravel loop, discussing solutions for independent exploration. The design will focus on a self-guided nature hike.

"We want to incorporate signage as you go through that pauses you at different trees. There are a number of different trees that have really distinct bark. The shagbark hickory is going to feel totally different than the oak tree over there," Zach explained.

A bronze relief map of the area will be available at the trail head. Braille signage, tactile markers, and set areas inviting hikers to touch trees and wildflowers are some of the proposed modifications. Website design, use of audible narratives, mapping apps, and other ideas to support blind visitors were discussed following the hike.

Many thanks to Casey and Zach for a wonderful day spent in nature, good conversation, and the opportunity to share ideas on this important project. We are all looking forward to opening day in the near future.



***The focus group discusses trail modifications at Hogback Ridge***

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

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Brant Adams, Catherine Bister, Alea Chaffin, Alex Densmore, Rachel Densmore, Katie Frederick, Don Kalman, Rita Kersh, 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 via e-mail, and include your name and phone number. E-mail items to [acbo.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:acbo.newsletter@gmail.com) or send them to ACB-Ohio, 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214, Phone: 614-261-3561. **The fall issue deadline is August 15.**



**ACBO Community Shares Campaign Codes**  
State of Ohio 19003 City of Columbus 60240  
Franklin County 60240 Ohio State University 60240  
Columbus State 1061



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

FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND

## **ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK**

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

**JULY 5–12**, ACB NATIONAL CONVENTION, JACKSONVILLE, FL

**JULY 18**, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7 P.M., VIA ZOOM

**JULY 20**, ACBO BOARD MEETING, 2 P.M., VIA ZOOM (USE MEETING CODE  
6142613561)

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

**AUGUST 8**, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7 P.M., VIA ZOOM

**AUGUST 15**, ACBO FALL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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

**SEPTEMBER 8**, ACBO AWARD NOMINATION DEADLINE

**SEPTEMBER 12**, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7 P.M., VIA ZOOM

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

**OCTOBER 25–27**, ACBO-ACBI CONVENTION, INDIANAPOLIS

