

Florida Outreach Center for the Blind Inc.

Spring 2016

Newsletter

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The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind (FOCB) started the new year out with many exciting developments, but first let us reflect on our accomplishments in 2015. To begin with, the Center provided more than 4,000 hours of service to over one hundred individuals with visual impairments and organized 200 activities that reached over 20,000 people. In addition, the Center has consistently met the high standards set by the National Accreditation Council for Blind or Low-Vision Services.

An important accomplishment is our Independent Living Outreach Program which teaches adults alternative techniques of doing everyday tasks. This program was expanded to include Mobility training where students learn how to overcome obstacles and to become capable travelers. Also our Kids' Club gives blind children and their families an opportunity to attend activities such as a beeping egg hunt and holiday parties where they share support and resources. In addition, a Transition Program was created to address the needs of visually-impaired youths who are taught the skills needed to find a job and live independently for the first time.

The Center also provides many opportunities for socializing such as Movie Days and luncheons. Our Book Club encourages reading and is led by the Talking Books Librarian. We also went on field trips to the Cinnamark Palace Theatre to watch descriptive movies, to the Borland Center for the Arts for a concert, and to the Library to see a murder mystery and a live radio show. FOCB staff, clients and volunteers also attended transportation meetings and Conferences for the National Federation of the Blind and the Florida Council of the Blind. FOCB Clients utilize their advocacy skills when informing the

representatives from the Department of Justice about the lack of accessibility of voting machines, and traveling to Tallahassee for Transportation Disadvantage Day to encourage Legislators to continue funding the TD Program. An adventurous staff and volunteer went to a Winter Camp for the Blind in Grayling, Michigan where they rode snow mobiles, went tubing and hiked using snow shoes. The Center hosted meetings of the Deaf-Blind Advisory Support Group, Palm Beach County Office of Equal Opportunity Grant Review Committee and the Transportation Disadvantaged Committee. It also held birthday parties, luncheons and holiday dinners which gave students a chance to use their cooking skills.

On April 24, 2015, the Florida Outreach Center for the Blind celebrated more than a decade of providing services by hosting an Open House. Guest received a guided tour of our facility, information about local resources, and a demonstration of the latest technology adapted for the blind. Some of the Center's visitors included representatives from the Cleveland Sight Center, Experience Works, and the Braille Club.



Approximately 200 guests attended FOCB's 9th annual "Dining In The Dark" event raising about \$20,000 for programs. The Center was very pleased when Jill Brondolo, Board Member, was presented with the Dr. Thomas Hartig Inspirational Community Award. In addition, the Center's participation in the "Great Give" raised \$5,005 and our Motorcycle Poker Run raised \$1,300. Additional fund raisers included yard sales, spaghetti dinners, and participation in the South County Fair Grounds "Garage Sale."

The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind increased awareness about our services by participating in exhibits, health fairs, parades, and open house for other organizations. The Center joined the Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce where literature about our programs was distributed. Presentations were given to the Macular Degeneration Support Group, Blinded Veterans Association, Women's Group at Belvadere Baptist Church, National Federation of the Blind, and the Florida Council of the Blind. The Center has been featured in local publications, and received coverage on Legends radio and television coverage.

Among the fresh ideas currently being considered for 2016 are a Technology Show Case, Me & My Apple device, Learning the Windows 10 Operating System, Popcorn and a Movie, Braille Building Blocks, and Jump Start to Independence.

FOCB Introduces the Deaf Blind Advisory- Support Group!



By: Jill Brondolo

“We cannot hear like the blind and we cannot see like the deaf”. These are words from one of our participants, which beautifully highlights the primary challenge of being deaf blind.

The purpose of the Advisory- Support Group is for FOCB participants who are classified as deaf blind to have the opportunity to express his/her unique experiences with dual sensory impairment and to have a place to connect with each other as a source of support. The Advisory-Support group allows members to be able to express what his/her unique needs are as a person who is experiencing both deafness and vision loss. Also, they can discuss what works best for them when communicating and interacting with others.

One of the primary purposes of this group is to advise FOCB by making recommendations for continuously improving methods for working with the Deaf Blind participants. Also, staying up to date with new technologies that would benefit this group. Finally, provide supportive community resources. This group will strive to reach out to the Deaf Blind community within Palm Beach and surrounding Counties by producing publications and hosting seminars and events. The meetings are held the third Friday of every month at the Florida Outreach Center for the Blind. The meetings begin at noon and adjourn at 1:30. Please contact the Florida Outreach Center for the Blind at 561-642-0005 if you are or know of someone who may benefit from this group.

NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR TECHNOLOGY LAB!

The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind was recently awarded a grant by the Palm Beach County Office of Equal Opportunity to purchase three new computers. The Center’s Technology Lab boast 4 workstations with high speed DSL Internet access and all the software and adaptive tools you need to master the PC without vision. The lab will provide instruction and ready access to both the Windows 8 and 10 operating systems; IMac, iPad and iPhones; JAWS and Window Eyes screen readers; MAGic and Zoom Text screen magnification software; Openbook scanner reading software; Braille Note Takers; Blaze ET and Victor Stream Reader; and Microsoft Office and other software.

While the funds afforded to our organization enhance our ability to meet your technology needs, if additional funding can be secured we can make our lab a premiere training facility. Additional funding would enable us to add more adaptive technology, as well as, new scanners and printers that will enhance productivity. If you would like more information on how your tax-deductible donation of any size can help us reach our goal, please contact our office at 561-642-0005.



ATTENTION PARENTS OF YOUTHS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED!



The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind is now planning our programs and activities for youths. If your child or teen is blind or low vision and could benefit from blindness or independent living skill building and access to adaptive technology, you will want to call today. Our Transition Program will provide teens with the skills that will help them transition from high school to adulthood and live independently for the first time. Our Kids' Club is working hard to arrange fun activities for our children and families. We believe that there is much to be gained from the support that these programs will offer you and your child, no matter what the degree of need. Please take a moment to call us and become part of the solution that makes the exciting dreams of our children a reality today!

2016 Programs and Activities

Beeping Egg Hunt.....	10 AM - 12:00 PM ...	Mar 19 th
Technology Showcase	10 AM - 12:00 PM ...	Apr 1 st
FOCB Open House	10 AM-3:00 PM	Apr 27 th
Dining in the Dark.....	5-8:00 PM	Nov 6 th
Peer Support.....	1:00 PM.....	Wednesdays
Deaf-Blind Advisory Support Group	12-1:30 PM	3 rd Friday of ea. month

For information about our dinners, field trips, yard sales, fund raisers and other activities, call us at 561-642-0005. Our classes include Braille, Assistive Technology, Daily Living Skills, Cooking, Peer Support, Leisure Time Activities, Transition Program for youths, Outreach Programs for seniors and a Kids' Club for blind children and their families. The Center has an onsite store with visual aids, an Equipment Loan Program and a Reading Center. **All of the Center's programs are free and offered in English, Spanish, French, and Creole.**



The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit training facility for blind and visually-impaired persons that depends on the generosity of others to meet our client's ever-growing needs.

AGENCIES AND SERVICES YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

The Braille Club of Palm Beach County has been providing social, recreational and informative activities for people who are blind and visually impaired every Wednesday since 1935. For more information about events, call 561-585-2301 or visit them at 2301 S. Dixie Highway. In West Palm Beach.

Florida Council of the Blind is an advocacy group that meets from 1:00-3:00 PM on the 3rd Saturday of the month at Napoli's located at 4469 S. Congress Ave. in Lake Worth. For more information, contact Rick Troiano, President, at 561-236-7427.

The Palm Beach Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind is an organization that provides persons with vision loss and their families with support and information while serving as a watchdog over legislation affecting the blind. The group meets the 2nd Saturday of each month from 11:00AM -1:00 PM at Duffy's located at 4746 N. Congress Ave., in Boynton Beach, FL 33436 For more information, call Tekesha Saffold, President, at 561-707-4799.

NFB-NEWSLINE is a free service offering over 350 newspapers,; along with breaking news from news sources, and over 50 magazines. There are also TV listings, job listings and weather reports, not to mention retail ads. Sign up by calling 866-504-7300 or visit www.nfbnewsline.org.

Palm Tran Connection is Palm Beach County's door-to-door service that will take you any where in the county for \$3.50 each way. For up-dates on the Para transit service, call the Information Line at 561-841-4300 or in south county 561-274-1475. For an application or more information, call 561-649-9838 or toll free at 877-870-9849 or through the T.D.D. machine at 561-749-0683.

Talking Books is a free service that provides Braille and recorded materials to anyone legally blind and physically handicapped in a way that they cannot hold a book. All materials and equipment are mailed postage free. For an application or more information, call the Library at 561-649-5500 or 888-780-5151.

DEEP DISCOUNTS ON USED CCTVs

Not many people can afford \$3,000 for a new close circuit television (CCTV). The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind has manual and auto focus, colored

and black and white used machines starting as low as \$100. All equipment has been fully tested and is ready for re-sale. Call Bill at (561) 642-0005 for more details.

FOCB Hours

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays
9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Tuesdays & Thursdays
By Appointment Only



Volunteer Opportunities

The Florida Outreach Center for the Blind depends on the generosity of volunteers to assist with our clients' ever-growing needs. As our enrollment continues to increase, we are always seeking helpers to assist with various duties! If you don't have time to spare out of your busy schedule, then consider donating funds, gift certificates, copy paper, printer ink, paper towels, toilet paper, cleaning products, etc. **If you or someone you know is interested in helping, call (561) 642-0005.**

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. Please help us create a future full of opportunity for people with vision loss by remembering the Florida Outreach Center for the Blind (FOCB) in your will or living trust. **If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation** or become one of our monthly pledge partners, please mail your gift to:

Florida Outreach Center for the Blind

2315 S. Congress Avenue
Palm Springs, FL 33406

We are very proud of the work being done at our Center and grateful for your support. Our best wishes for a safe and blessed Year.