

October 2, 2023

Memo To: Executive Officers, Board Members, Chapter & Division Presidents & Others

From: Marty R. McKenzie, President

Positive Note 1938

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Dear Federation Family,

Blind Equality Achievement Month is here and we are excited about the Federation activities taking place in our state and across the country. Each activity has the potential to touch many people in your communities, making them aware that blind people are capable, able and willing to participate fully in society on an equal footing with others. We all live for the day when we are just people and blindness is only a characteristic just like how short or tall we are. As chapters and divisions plan events, please share with everyone via the NFB of SC listserv. Events should also be registered at [www.nfb.org/blindmonth](http://www.nfb.org/blindmonth). We, as members of the most powerful blindness organization in the world, know that truth, but we must communicate it to others! Let us use this month to bring positive attention to what it means to be blind and successful.

Remember, the National Federation of the Blind knows 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. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back!

From Balinda Banks -- Home Coming for the School for the Deaf and the Blind will be held Saturday, October 7, 2023. The Blind Alumni will hold a meeting in Robertson Hall starting at 9:30 a.m., and dues are \$15. We encourage all blind alumni to come and join us as we elect new officers and gear up for the 175th anniversary next year. We would love to have a large showing of the blind as we celebrate this awesome occasion. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at 864-909-5587.

Announcement from the National Office: Free at-home COVID-19 tests are again available to blind people. This is made possible through a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response and the United States Postal Service (USPS). Order online through <https://special.usps.com/testkits/accessible> or by calling 1-800-232-0233.

Please note: to use the test, you will need to install an app on a Bluetooth-enabled smartphone. The app will guide you through administering the test and interpreting results.

The Rocky Bottom Board Retreat will take place the weekend of November 17-19, 2023. Please contact Thom spittle at 803-331-3344 or via e-mail at [nfb-sc.lab.4@gmail.com](mailto:nfb-sc.lab.4@gmail.com) to make your reservations. This event is open to board members at this time. If we determine that we can expand it, we will share that information.

#### Things to Remember

- We Care Birthday Fundraiser
- BEAM Events
- State Dues
- Rocky Bottom Board Retreat – November 17-19, 2023

Here is David Houck's Federation Facing Fact.

The Blind Who Lead the Blind will provide background information on each board member over the next fifteen Positive Notes. We continue with Valerie Warrington, Treasurer of the NFB of SC this week.

Valerie Warrington grew up in Newberry County with her parents and brother. She has been legally blind since birth. Growing up blind in a small town had its own challenges, but Valerie continued to focus on her academics and graduated with honors from Mid-Carolina High School.

Valerie learned of the Federation from Ed Bible while attending the Summer Teen Program at the SC Commission for the Blind. Since there was no NFB of SC Chapter in Newberry, she helped to organize one. In her senior year of high school, she was elected president of the Newberry Chapter. After high school, Valerie continued her involvement in the Federation. She was elected to the State Board and Treasurer of the Student Division.

Valerie attended Clemson University where she received her Bachelor's in Accounting. She later obtained her Master's in Accounting and Information Technology from the University of Maryland Global Campus to set herself apart from others in the accounting profession. Valerie worked hard to become a Certified Public Accountant. She is the only blind CPA in South Carolina and is one of only a few blind persons in the nation to hold this designation.

Valerie began her accounting career in the manufacturing industry, then moved into public accounting, and later to SCANA Services. During her career, she published business articles and PowerPoint training tutorials and was a member of the Institute of Internal Auditors.

In 2001, she married her husband Larry whom she had been friends with for many years. In 2013 when she and Larry adopted their daughter, Alivia, Valerie accepted a position that allowed her to work remotely during audit season with Price-Waterhouse. She tutored accounting students at various universities the remainder of the year. After one year, she became the lead accounting instructor for the website and maintained a 5-star rating during her employment.

When Alivia began school, Valerie went to work with the State Treasurer's Office. In 2022, she worked briefly with the NFB of SC's Successful Transitions program before joining our National Office in September of 2022 as head of Affiliate Finance. Valerie recently became a QuickBooks Certified Pro-advisor and she is teaching the software to other affiliate leaders.

Valerie continues her involvement in the Federation by serving on various committees and in leadership roles. She currently serves as treasurer for the NFB of SC, Rocky Bottom, and the Computer Science and Technology Division. Also, she continues to serve as president of the Newberry Chapter and is a member of the Federation Center Board. For many years she served as Chair of the Resolutions Committee. She filed the Midlands Gives Campaign registration for the last 6 years for both Rocky Bottom and the NFB of SC. In 2009, she worked to find a way to Stream our State Convention for the first time and has assisted with the streaming every year since. Valerie has also received the Donald C. Capps Award for her work in the Federation.

To Valerie, the NFB of SC is more than an organization, it's family. When she attended her first State Convention in 1990, she was not only encouraged by the organization's efforts and philosophy, she was impressed with the people. She made many friendships and gained confidence to grow academically and professionally. Valerie attended every

State Convention since 1990 except for last year when her grandmother passed away the day before convention. She also attended several National Conventions and serves on National Sun Shares Committee.

When Valerie is not busy with Federation activities, she enjoys spending time with her family. She and Alivia often make crafts using pottery and try new recipes in the kitchen. Valerie is an active member of her church and helps with Alivia's Girls Scout Troup. She and her family loves traveling and spending time outdoors.

Marty

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