

October 16, 2023

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

From: Marty R. McKenzie, President

Positive Note 1940

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Dear Federation Family,

On October 12, 2023, I traveled to Lancaster and visited with the Lancaster Chapter and shared information about what is happening in the NFB of SC with the attendees present. The Lancaster chapter dates back to the 1970's and has a rich history in the affiliate. It was great to spend time with President Tomecki Williams and the members of our Lancaster Chapter. Jenniffer Duffell-Hoffman has a scare crow representing a blind teacher of the visually impaired with a white cane near the library where the chapter meets. The scare crow represents the Lancaster chapter and blindness well in the community. Light refreshments were enjoyed by all and members had questions that I was able to answer. Keep up the great work!

Blind Equality Achievement Month is underway, and many exciting events are taking place in the affiliate. I also traveled to Gaffney on Saturday, October 14, 2023 for a special BEAM event with the Cherokee County Chapter where I served as the keynote speaker. District 4 representative Demetrius Williford and his wife, Kimberly, were also present and he delivered remarks as well. Jamie Allison provided a historical overview of the Cherokee County Chapter. A White Cane Day proclamation from the Gaffney City Council was read to the attendees. President Byers presented several awards to special members within the chapter including an award named the Allison and Dawkins Award. He compared this award to the Donald C. Capps Award at the state level. This award was first presented to IVY Dawkins for all of her hard work to assist the blind of Cherokee County. Congratulations to President Byers and the Cherokee County Chapter on a job well done!

Second Vice President, Debra Canty has been a very busy lady over the past few weeks. She was recently interviewed by WLTX Channel 19 regarding the Sumter Chapter's 50th anniversary in conjunction with Blind Equality Achievement Month (BEAM). Debra represents the NFB of SC well! Congratulations on a job well done! Please enjoy the interview. Ms. Canty also attended the Columbia Chapter BEAM Breakfast on October 14, 2023 and shares this report with her Federation family.

It was a beautiful rainy Saturday morning and yours truly, Debra Canty journeyed to the NFB Columbia Chapter's Fundraiser Breakfast. Cheerful voices greeted each other with, "Good Morning" and smiles graced the atmosphere from the early morning risers who participated and observed Blind Equality Achievement Month (BEAM) at the Federation Center. Kudos to those such as NFB Columbia Chapter President, Isaiah Nelson, Magdaline Floyd, Pathronda Anderson, Catherine Williams, David Houck, John Carter and several from area churches and a businesswoman as well. We enjoyed a hearty-delicious breakfast which consisted of buttered grits, crispy bacon, tasty sausages, pleasing to the taste eggs, a variety of juices, a fruit cup, dessert, coffee, water and I think that was all. Great way to recognize October as Blind Equality Achievement Month!

At the NFB of SC State Convention, the Columbia chapter raffled off a Carolina and Clemson blanket as a chapter fundraiser. The winner of the Carolina blanket was Caigoh Lee and George Martin won the Clemson blanket. Congratulations to these individuals.

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 nfbsc.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 Andrew Adams, District 2 Board Member of the NFB of SC this week.

Andrew Adams was born to Monica and Anthony Adams on April 02, 1990, in Spartanburg, SC and is the second youngest of six children. He played baseball, basketball, football, and ran track and field. In his Junior year of High School, Adams was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease called Guillain-Barre Syndrome. Due to muscle weakness, he spent time in a wheelchair strengthening his body and preparing to walk without assistance.

During the first semester of his senior year, Adams was diagnosed with Leukemia and spent the majority of that year in and out of the hospital battling cancer. He received the last round of radiation a week before his high school graduation where he independently walked across the stage with Airport High School class of 2008.

Adams was diagnosed with Retinitis in 2013 and began wearing Bifocals and facing challenges of photophobia. Even though he fought another battle with Leukemia and had a stroke, challenges could not prevent him from becoming a Program Director at the Boys and Girls Club and receiving a degree in Early Childhood Education from Midlands Tech. In 2017 Adams was diagnosed with a severe brain infection called Meningitis, which caused more vision loss. Currently, Adams is attending Limestone College, where he will be graduating with a degree in Social Work in December 2023.

While receiving services at the SC Commission for the Blind in 2019, Adams heard Pathronda Anderson speak about an NFB meeting and began researching the National Federation of the Blind. He came across Tiffany Mitchells contact information. He learned all about the NFB and soon became a member.

Adams hit the ground running as a part of the organization, becoming a co-chair of the Fundraising committee and second vice president of the Computer Science and Technology Division all in his first year. He now serves on the State Board as 2nd District Representative, 2nd Vice President of CSTD, Secretary/Treasurer of the SC Association of Black Leaders Division, Co-chair of Fundraising committee and Co-chair of Community Service Committee. In his three years of being a member of the organization, he has attended three state conventions and two national conventions. In his free time, he Co-Hosts SC Tech Talk with newly elected president of the Hampton Chapter Gregory Jones and assists with the Pop-Up technology training with Steve and Shannon Cook and David Bundy.

Adams says: "What makes me a leader is my resilience, my ability to inspire and motivate others, and showing initiative. As someone who has been sighted the majority of my life, I refuse to allow my blindness to keep me from living a fulfilling life."

Marty

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