

October 30, 2023

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

From: Marty R. McKenzie, President

Positive Note 1942

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Dear Federation Family,

Blind Equality Achievement Month (BEAM) will conclude on Tuesday, October 31, 2023. The NFB of SC did a remarkable job of promoting public awareness of who we are and what we do. The Positive Notes featured many of these events to make our membership aware of the activities of various chapters. This Positive Note concludes with information from additional events held by chapters.

The Charleston Chapter celebrated BEAM admirably with a White Cane Walk. Additionally, President Michelle Scott and Vice President Lauren Reeves were interviewed by Live 5 Around the Way where they talked about what the NFB is, why it is important, programs, membership and volunteer opportunities. Michelle and Lauren did an excellent job and represented the NFB of SC well.

Gregg Jones reports that on Saturday, October 14, 2023, the NFB of SC Hampton Chapter presented an outreach and membership drive. We set up shop at the Food Lion shopping center where we shook hands with the community, passed out some literature, and educated our visitors about the blind and visually impaired. We also sold bottle opener keychains with our NFB of SC Hampton Chapter logo on them, and we accepted donations from the public. There were a few interested in joining the affiliate and the Hampton chapter. It was great to get out there, interact with the public and bring awareness about the blind and visually impaired. I'm looking forward to our next public event.

On October 21, 2023, Friendship United Methodist Church hosted the Rock Hill Chapter in honor of BEAM for a fish fry. Chapter members distributed NFB literature and had aids and appliances on hand for demonstration. On October 28, 2023, the Rock Hill Chapter was at the public library where NFB literature was distributed and aids and appliances used by blind people were on display. Great job, Rock Hill Chapter!

The Spartanburg Chapter of the NFB of SC participated in the Mayor's Walk in celebration of BEAM. There was also a proclamation presented. The chapter was invited to participate in additional activities with the Mayor's office.

From Debra Canty: The Sumter Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina is observing October as Blind Equality Achievement Month-BEAM. We began with an interview with yours truly, Debra Canty and Doug Hudson on WLTX-TV News Street Squad which brought awareness. We resumed meeting in-person, after three

and a half years during the pandemic on October 10th, and brought awareness in the community at the Sumter County Fair during the week of the seventeenth through the twenty-first. Our fundraiser drawing winner during the fair was Lori Anne Coley. We culminated with a table set-up with brochures, etc. We finished the day with a 3k Walk on the 28th in the community along with Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence observers as well. Kudos! Shirley Abrams, Trish Butler, John L. Carter, Teresa Davis, Joyce Engles, James Green, Eric Hilton, Lee & Laura James, Kherissa Morant, Judy L. Simon and Sheletha Taylor.

The Friends of Rocky Bottom fundraising campaign is now underway and will conclude on December 31, 2023. There are a variety of prizes available for those who contribute in certain amounts. This will assist Rocky Bottom with the winter months when income is low and rentals are non-existent. Individually and as chapters or divisions, please consider what you can give. For more information about this fundraiser, contact Thom Spittle at 803-331-3344 or via e-mail at nfbsc.lab.4@gmail.com for additional information.

The Clarendon County Chapter of the NFB of SC is raffling off a beautiful braille afghan made and donated by Glenda Culick who is a member of the chapter. The afghan will cover a queen sized bed. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The drawing will take place at the conclusion of the state board meeting on November 18, 2023. To get your tickets, contact any of the Clarendon County members including myself.

Things to Remember

- We Care Birthday Fundraiser
- Friends of Rocky Bottom Fundraiser
- State Dues
- Chapter Elections
- Clarendon County Afghan Raffle
- 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 Demetrius Williford, District 4 Board Member of the NFB of SC this week.

I was born at Anderson Memorial Hospital in Anderson County on June 26, 1981. I'm the only boy of three kids, and I'm the only one born with a visual impairment. The doctor told my mother I had macular degeneration; which is very rare for a child.

I thought I was the only one going through this issue, but God guided me to my great grandmother who was totally blind. She motivated me by answering my questions. For instance, I would ask her how would I make it being blind? She always would say look at me.

Mr. Carey Burris came into my life at the age of nine. I wasn't always receptive to his assistance, because I didn't want to believe that I had a vision problem. What brought things back into perspective was attending college in Spartanburg.

The cooperative program at Spartanburg Technical College gave me an opportunity to stay on campus at the South Carolina School for the deaf and the Blind. I was still somewhat in denial about my visual impairment. As I was getting on the bus, I heard a child laughing. I looked closer and realized the child was deaf and blind. I made my mind up to not be ashamed of my visual impairment. Joy permeated my soul!

I completed college with an associate's degree in business management and a marketing degree in 2005 at Spartanburg Technical College. Then I became a father! The love I have for my daughter is out of this world. God blessed me to see her for four years of her life.

I attended the Commission for the Blind and enrolled in their adjustment to blindness program. Then I heard about another program that could assist visually impaired individuals with starting their own business and went through the Business Enterprise Program. I was a part of this program for ten years. Throughout this process, I came back to ask Mr. Burris for assistance in teaching me braille.

Throughout the training, Mr. Burris told me about The NFB OF South Carolina. I attended one Christmas event that the Anderson Chapter had at a local church. I instantly fell in love with the Federation. I started as a member of the Anderson Chapter, and eventually I was elected Vice President. Later, I was elected to the position of Anderson Chapter President. I must say my Federation family has to be one of the most awesome families that's not blood related.

I remember going to a Rocky Bottom board meeting and whispering to my wife the individuals that serve on this board are so intelligent. I would love to be like them! I currently hold the NFB of SC district four seat. My goal in this up-and-coming year is to lead by example as a district rep or president should. Lead by galvanizing the members in my district and in my chapter, I'm so thankful that I have an opportunity to be in this leadership role. With the assistance of my Federation family, the growth of the Federation is soon to come.

Marty

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