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

From: Marty R. McKenzie, President

Positive Note 1924

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Dear Federation Family,

It's here! At the end of the week, Federationists will gather in Houston Texas for the National Federation of the Blind National Convention! Many members live from convention to convention and gain the needed strength and encouragement to go through another year, while others delight in presenting and sharing new information, techniques and ideas that help us change what it means to be blind so that we can live the lives we want. Old relationships are renewed, and new ones formed at this important world event! I am excited to attend the National Convention for 2023.

There are four Kenneth Jernigan scholarship winners who are attending the convention for the first time. They are Jamelia Camara of the Rock Hill Chapter, Vincent Downing of the Spartanburg Chapter, Eric Hilton of the Sumter Chapter and Ronda Phillips of the Columbia Chapter. Chapter presidents are asked to serve as mentors or assign them an appropriate mentor to ensure that these individuals meet all of the requirements of the Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship Fund. All scholarship winners have registered for the National Convention which is the first requirement. We are excited to have so many Kenneth Jernigan scholars attending the convention this year!

For those who are not able to attend the National Convention in-person this year, there are exclusive convention items that are available via live stream. Registration for the live stream activities is free. You may register at <https://nfb.org/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=573>.

Sponsorship letters were sent out on the listserv some time ago. Please use these to seek sponsors for the upcoming 2023 NFB of SC State Convention. If you need an electronic copy, please reach out to David Houck or me and I will be happy to assist you. Please contact David Houck at the Federation Center if you need printed copies.

Palmetto Convention Grants are back! There are three Palmetto Convention Grants being awarded valued at \$200 each. The application deadline is 11:59 p.m. on July 15, 2023. Please read the rules and instructions carefully found on the application. Each application must have a letter of recommendation and a personal statement. See the application for full details.

In order to qualify for a Palmetto Convention Grant, the applicant must be

- A dues paying member in good standing
- Registered for the NFB of SC State Convention

- Registered to stay at Embassy Suites
- A first-time NFB of SC Convention attendee

Please contact Shannon Cook at 803-605-4250 or via e-mail at coffeequeensc1@sc.rr.com for more information or assistance with your application.

Door prizes are always a fun part of the State Convention! This year, First Vice President, Lenora Robertson will serve as door prize chair and Second District Board Member, Andrew Adams, will assist her. Please gather your door prizes and bring them to the convention or drop them off or mail them to the Federation Center. When gathering door prizes, please keep the following in mind:

- Door prizes must be valued at a minimum of \$10
- Cash is acceptable
- Gift cards
- New gifts in their original packaging
- If anyone wants to contribute a large door prize either money or a hotel stay, dinner out, etc. that is also very welcome

Let's have an abundance of door prizes to share with convention attendees this year!

The Embassy Suites is now accepting reservations for the NFB of SC State Convention, which will take place August 18-20, 2023. Rooms can be booked at \$112 plus tax and any applicable fees for singles, doubles, triples and quads for August 17- 20, 2023. You may call the Embassy Suites at 803-252-8700. Members are not being charged the first night's room; instead, a hold is placed on your card until check-in. The Thursday night room block has been increased and we are assured that we can get additional rooms if needed.

Registration for the NFB of SC State Convention is now live! The cost is \$85 for adults, \$55 for students and \$25 for children under eighteen. These prices all increase after August 4, 2023. Parents must register all children under 18 years old at the cost of \$25 per person. Please visit www.nfbofsc.org to register online. If you need assistance submitting the online form, please contact me and someone will assist you. We are working on a print form for those who may need it.

Important Things to Remember:

- Palmetto Convention Grant applications are due by July 15, 2023
- State Convention hotel reservation deadline is July 27, 2023
- State Convention early registration deadline is August 4, 2023
- Bring your door prizes
- Convention sponsorships

If you need additional information about any of the items above, please contact David Houck at the Federation Center at 803-254-3777. You can also contact me as shown above.

Here is David Houck's Federation Fun Fact for this week! Let's continue to read and learn together about our rich history in South Carolina.

Back to the Future IV: From being a small group of blind people in Spartanburg in 1944 to becoming the largest statewide organization of blind people by the year 2000, the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina has grown to become a strong and diverse organization in both its people and programs. Have we accomplished all we set out to do? I should say not. We are standing on the shoulders of our past founders and leaders, but as time goes on, chapters and divisions need revitalizing and growth.

What new legislation will be needed? Agencies serving the blind will need our perspective and encouragement to expand new ways to train and place the blind in the job market, etc. Are we looking ahead to build the Federation in such a way that people, both blind and sighted, civic and corporate, governmental and private will seek us out for advice and support? You bet! We can get there by working together to set goals and work hard to reach them while reaching out statewide, demonstrating that blindness is not what holds you back. High expectations result in success and that draws the attention of the blind and sighted alike.

At the Assistive Technology Expo, someone noted how exceptional it is for the blind to do such things. I replied that to us it is normal, and that's as it should be!

Marty

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