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

From: Marty R. McKenzie, President

Positive Note 1986

843-939-8091 president@nfbofsc.org

Dear Federation Family,

I note that this is Positive Note 1986 which is the year I graduated from Kingstree Senior High School in Williamsburg County. Our class song was "We Are the World" which my graduating class fully embraced. Our class also sang "God of Our Fathers" at both our graduation and our class baccalaureate service held at a local church. There were no hand-held cell phones, landlines still were prevalent, my family had only had a home phone for three years and computers were generally large mainframe things that the typical person did not use. We have changed so much since that time, most of it good and some not so good. Through it all, we have adapted and improved the lives of our blind brothers and sisters in this movement.

The Presidential Release is scheduled for 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 3, 2024. You are encouraged to attend the monthly informative gathering of Federationist from across the country. The phone number is 929-205-6099 and the Zoom meeting ID is 913 3339 9714.

Due to the Presidential Release occurring on September 3, 2024, we will move the Palmetto Connects meeting to September 10, 2024 at 8:00 p.m.

I am currently working on committee assignments and I appreciate those who have reached out to express interest or asked to be removed from committees. For your benefit, below is a list of committees that exist. There are some committees that the president appoints without input and these committees are not included here. Please reach out to me with interest or a request to be removed by 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 2, 2024.

Blind Equality Achievement Month Committee

Braille Literacy Committee

Convention Arrangements Committee

Diabetes Action Network Committee

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Doing Our Fair Share Committee

Fundraising Committee

Legislative and Advocacy Committee

Membership and Mentoring Committee

Public Relations and Social Media Committee

Resolutions Committee

Scholarship Committee

We Care Committee

Blind Equality Achievement Month (BEAM) is one month away and we need exciting BEAM events that showcase our many talents and success stories within the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina. Please share your events so that they can be shared in the Positive Note as well as on www.nfb.org.

I am happy to share information from the Federation family in the weekly Positive Note. After working with the Positive Note for two years now, I understand that brevity is very important and I work hard to keep it at two pages. That is not always possible however. When you prepare announcements for the Positive Note, please confine them to one paragraph of approximately 100 words or less. All announcements should be in my in-box by 8:00 p.m. each Saturday. I appreciate your assistance with this request.

From Marty R. McKenzie, President of the Clarendon County Chapter

The Clarendon County Chapter is raffling off a beautiful multi-colored Christmas afghan made and donated by Glenda Culick. Tickets are \$2 each or three tickets for \$5. You can mail a check to Marty McKenzie, 1516 Lucky Road, Lake City, SC 29560 to purchase your tickets. Checks should be made payable to Clarendon County Chapter NFB of SC. The lucky winner will be drawn at the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina Board Retreat which is scheduled for November 22-24, 2024 at the Rocky Bottom Retreat and Conference Center of the Blind.

Derique Simon has accepted a new position in Baltimore, Maryland where we all know he will excel. Derique served on the NFB of SC Board of Directors and brought the perspective of a young Federationist to the board. We are all proud of Derique and the future that he is building for himself. He is working diligently to change what it means to be blind by living the life he wants. We will miss Derique but wish him well in his new endeavor. We thank Derique for his service on the NFB of SC Board of Directors as well as for his

many other leadership roles within the organization. We will miss his charm and enthusiasm and hope he will not be a stranger to us in South Carolina.

There was only one change on the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina Board of Directors at the 2024 state convention. Belinda Banks was voted into the one-year unexpired term. Belinda is the mother of Derique Simon who vacated his At Large position because of a career change. We welcome Belinda to the Board of Directors. Please see her biography below.

Belinda Banks was born and raised in Saint Mathew's South Carolina. She attended school there until the 6th grade and deeply felt the struggle of being a blind student receiving limited services. At the start of her sixth grade year, Belinda and her family decided she would attend the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind in Spartanburg, SC.

Belinda's time at the SC School for the Blind played an important role in shaping her views on blindness. While the early days were difficult, she was empowered with independent living skills, learning Braille and socializing with new, blind friends. She shares that some of her fondest memories involve traveling across the state for sports and as a part of the Blind Pride Clubb. This club worked to teach public school students that it was respectable to be blind.

While at the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind, Belinda was also first exposed to the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina, as the school had its own chapter. She describes herself as having an on again off again relationship with the NFB of SC and the national organization for a time, but when her son Derique had difficulties receiving the services he needed for education, she knew her Federation family were the only ones who could help. Belinda now proudly serves as the president of the Spartanburg Chapter of the NFB of SC, the president of the SC Blind Merchants Division and on the board of the National Association of Blind Merchants.

Belinda is the newest member of the NFB of SC Board of Directors. When asked what thoughts she would like to share with the membership she said:

"Never give up. No matter what you're going through, always have hope."

Belinda also says that she loves talking to people and is excited to help anyone however she can.

Things to remember

Presidential Release on September 3, 2024

Palmetto Connects on September 10, 2024

Clarendon County Chapter fundraiser drawing on November 23, 2024