

Hawaii Association of the Blind Newsletter

February 1, 2024

Upcoming Events

Hawaii Association of the Blind Annual Convention

From Vickie Kennedy

Friday, March 1st is our Hospitality Night, and the dinner for all HAB members is FREE!!!

We will be meeting at 801 South Street(Howard's Condo) beginning at 5:00PM. Please come and meet our keynote speaker, Michael Garrett and his wife, Peggy.

come and welcome them in the spirit of aloha and get to know them.

If HAB members would like to invite friends, your guests will need to pay \$15.00. Please let us know in advance so we can plan on them for our count purposes.

You can pay for them at the door that Friday night.

Please make your reservations for the evening as soon as you can. Please email your RSVP to Vickie Kennedy at her email –

vreikok@gmail.com,

or call her at 808 222-8862. It is critical that you RSVP for Friday night no later than February 17th.

The Friday night buffet dinner will be catered by "A Catered Experience," and their menu will include the following dishes:

Kalua Pork; with cabbage, tofu stir fry, beef teriyaki, Chinese chicken salad, somen salad, assorted sushi platter and rice. For dessert, Chantilly cake will be served. Soft drinks and water will be included.

We will begin our dinner at 5:30PM. Please reserve your Handi-Van pickup for 8:00PM. We will need to clean up afterwards and be gone by 9:00PM.

Those of you who will be staying at the Ala Moana Hotel, please ask the Handi-Van driver to drop you off after the Friday night event at the entrance of the hotel porte cochere at 410 Atkinson Drive.

The next day, March 2nd, our 57th Annual Convention will begin with a Continental breakfast at 7:00AM, followed by the program at 8:00AM Lunch will be served at 12 Noon followed by the business meeting at 1:00PM. From 1:30 – 4:30PM, proceed to the Ilima Room and visit the various vendors who will be sharing their information and experiences with you. Learn about our Library for the Print disabled, resources at ATRC, Guide Dogs of Hawaii, Learn how to communicate as to how sighted friends can help you navigate through crowds, Guide Dogs for the Blind, fun activities for the blind, and there will also be a table with items for purchase and more. A detailed tactile map of the hotel will be given to you, courtesy of Guide Dogs of Hawaii. .

Please start to RSVP not only for Hospitality Night, but also for the Convention. Remember the RSVP for our convention must be done by February 10th.

This is to allow the hotel catering department to plan ahead.

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Hawaii Association of the Blind Presents

“Pineapples And White Canes”

A White Cane Refresher Training

When: Monday, February 12, 2024, 11am-2pm

Where: Dole Cannery Shops,
650 Iwilei Rd

Meet in front of the shops by Subway

Join Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists

Amy Downard, Sherri Martinez and Jeannie Camacho for a fun-filled training in a historical venue

Several lunch options are available for purchase onsite.

Some of the things we will focus on include:

- * White Cane Center
- * Constant Contact
- * Two-point touch
- * Diagonal Cane
- * Shore-lining

* Touch-slide

* Touch-Drag

And a few surprises!

Please RSVP to Amy Downard by February 7

Email:

adownard@gmail.com

Phone: (808)258-7525

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Meet Our Member

Maureen Sheedy

When I joined The Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB) it was known then as the Hawaii Federation of the Blind. (HFB) I started attending meetings as a totally congenitally blind twenty-year-old in 1972. HFB was the first organization I'd ever encountered

that discussed and dealt with blindness issues that were important to me—custodialism at Ho'opono and at a rehab center I'd attended previously in Arkansas—my unsuccessful attempts at finding and keeping a job, and the baby steps I was taking in attempting to become an independent blind adult. I felt that

I was trying to figure out all this in somewhat of a vacuum because, as the only blind person in my class from fourth grade on, I had no blind peers or

adults from whom to get life suggestions and feedback. The only two blind adults I knew briefly as I was growing up—one a fiercely independent but not

very emotionally supportive—was an itinerant teacher I met when I was ten. The other was the head of a summer camp I attended following the sixth and seventh grades. Those were people I saw only on a limited basis, and with whom I did not feel a connection.

Connecting with HAB members gave me my first chance to discuss my concerns with other blind people, to voice my frustrations, to get feedback, and sometimes to find solutions. Realizing that others were dealing with the same issues as I was made me feel supported and motivated me to do more of what I was already doing whenever possible—educating blind and sighted people about blindness. Somewhere along the way, I also discovered the importance of the legal aspect of our organization, such as the work it was doing to prevent blind people from falling back into the second-class citizenship that had been our lot in many places and situations for centuries. Getting into the history of where we came from, how far we'd come, and where we were going also fascinated me and gave me a sense of identity as a blind person that I'd never had before. In a sense, I'd found a home in the blindness movement.

In joining HAB, I also added another aspect to my life. I found ways to work within my organization — first on the Contact Committee, and eventually also as recording secretary. I still serve in both roles. This group had become my home, and my community. I was, and am, here to stay.

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December 21, 2023

Dear HAB thank you for the WalMart Gift Card.

It will be grate to go shopping with this gift card with my family.

I might buy some things that I need like some clothes, food and other things.

I thank you for this amazing gift.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

From Rn Noy

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HAB Holo Holo Shopping Event Whole Foods Market - Queen Recap

January 15, 2024

By Jeannie Camacho

HAB Holo Holo Shoppers had an impressive 22 attendees at the Whole Foods Market - Queen Store on the MLK Jr. holiday on Monday, January 15th. This was the first time HAB hosted a Holo Holo event at Whole Foods Market. For most participants, this was a new grocery store to explore. People were up for the adventure to shop at this new Holo Holo event location!

People who lived in the neighborhood walked to Whole Foods with their white canes and with support from their O&M instructor. Many rode the Handi-Van and some used the TheBus or were dropped off. The Handi-Van drop-off and pick-up is conveniently located at the trolley stop directly in front of Whole Foods at 388 Kamake'e Street.

After arrival, we gathered in the Whole Foods' restaurant, Two Tides. The restaurant is on the first floor near the store exit. Whole Foods provided our group with our own section of tables. It was great for our large group to have our very own area. It was wonderful to hear the buzz as everyone socialized over pupus and meals. Many opted for the special of the day, the \$8 chicken wings with fries. Other popular items were nachos, salads and sandwiches. Our server, Natalie, provided service with a friendly and attentive touch.

After filling their appetite with food and conversations, it was onto shopping! Whole Foods specializes in healthy and sustainable options such as organic, natural, and locally-sourced foods. People bought items that were new to them – such as chickpea snacks, lemon salts, protein bars and 365 Everyday Value brand items like peanut butter, oat milk, and nuts. Whole Foods also sells freshly

prepared foods. They have additional tables and seats outside on the first floor and indoors on the 2nd floor.

We had a good number of O&M instructors, O&M Interns and volunteers to support people from arrival to departure. Attendees were able to apply their safe travel skills – white cane, human guide, elevator, stairs and ramp skills. One Handi-Van rider got complimented by his driver for teaching her the proper ways to assist someone who is blind! Great advocacy skills!

Getting out for the Holo Holo assisted shopping event was a wonderful way to kick off the new year!

The following pictures have an image description caption above each picture and Alt+Text per picture.

Photo 1: Cynthia, Stanley, Lauren, Robert, Emerald, Jeannie and Troy at a table in Whole Foods' Two Tides Restaurant. Everyone is smiling and waving at the camera.

Photo 2: Vickie, Sean and Sharon laughing and talking at their dining table.

Photo 3: Jason, Jolene, and Haruka strike a pose holding their grocery items in the Wellness aisle.

Photo 4: Cynthia grins while holding onto a shopping cart. Kelly and Yvonne smile while navigating the wide store aisles.

Photo 5: Deb, Natalie, Terri and Art looking cheery in the dairy section.

Photo 6: Cynthia, Sherri, and Lance happy in front of the deli counter.

Photo 7: Deb and Amy camera ready on Kamake'e Street in front of Whole Foods, with Anthony in the background.

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Steam Trip To The Zoo Recap

Last Saturday's HAB parent and youth STEAM event at the Honolulu Zoo was an absolute splash – rain or shine! Our adventurous tour through the zoo introduced

us to the captivating world of Sumatran tigers, Komodo dragons, Galapagos tortoises, playful primates, and so much more!

Despite the morning downpour, we tuned into the animal kingdom, listening to their calls, exploring replica skulls, an elephant foot, playing tactile games

and even a touch-and-feel experience with a zebra's fur. It was an immersive experience filled with tactile fun.

The raindrops became a part of our wild journey, adding an extra layer of fun to our unforgettable day at the zoo. Thank you to everyone who joined us

in embracing the adventure and making it a roaring success!

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ARPA-H rolls out research program to restore vision to blind patients

January 15, 2024

By David Hutton

According to the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, its program aims to transplant human eyes and reestablish visual connection to the brain.

The Transplantation of Human Eye Allografts (THEA) program was announced by the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), an agency within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The program intends to transplant whole human eyes to restore vision for the blind and visually impaired.

According to its news release,¹ vision loss affects more than 7 million Americans, with the most common causes being age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. Trauma and some hereditary conditions may also lead to blindness, according to the ARPA-H news release, and while there currently are therapies available to slow the progression of vision loss, there are none that restore sight.

Moreover, more than 70,000 people in the U.S. donate their eyes after death each year. It turns out that only parts of the eye, most commonly the cornea, are able to be used for transplantation. As a result, the millions of people blinded by conditions of their retina and optic nerve have no options for improvement.

The program is focused on addressing the issue, which would ultimately transplant the whole donor eye and reconnect the nerves, muscles, and blood vessels to the brain so that the eye can function to provide sight to the patient.

ARPA-H THEA Program Manager Calvin Roberts, MD, pointed out that for centuries, physicians have held theories about the possibility of eye transplantation to repair vision, but never had success in this area.

“However, very recent discoveries in vision science and neuroscience may now help solve the hurdles of reattaching the donor eye’s optic nerve to the recipient,” Roberts said in the news release. “With THEA, we aim to revolutionize the reconnection of nerves to the brain and make these advancements accessible in the United States and around the globe, with the ambition to offer an alternative to lifelong blindness.”

In order to successfully transplant an eye and have it heal, THEA said in the news release it will leverage emerging microsurgical techniques, coupled with genetic and cell-based therapies, to restore, preserve or regenerate nerves from the eye to the brain. Ultimately, these regenerative solutions may prevent degenerative blindness and are a critical step towards successful whole eye transplantation to restore vision. ARPA-H is emphasizing collabor

ation across academia and industry to accelerate these discoveries with unique tools not yet applied to ocular surgery.¹

ARPA-H Director Renee Wegrzyn, PhD, noted that saving sight through transplant surgery has lagged behind successful transplants of other organs.

“While it has been nearly 60 years since the first successful human heart transplant, we have not been able to use similar approaches to restore a person’s

sight, and that’s what makes this an ARPA-hard problem to solve,” she said in the news release.

“Through THEA, we’re seeking to develop the next breakthroughs

in transplantation, preservation, and neuroscience to address the challenge: ‘What if we could restore vision to those who are blind?’”

According to the news release, THEA will test and evaluate the best potential therapies to repair damaged nerves, to retain key structures in the eye,

such as the retina and optic nerve viable after damage, and to prevent postoperative inflammation or rejection.

Through a forthcoming Innovative Solutions Opening, THEA will request proposals focused on three technical areas: retrieval of donor eyes and maintenance

of the health of donor eyes until transplantation; optic nerve repair and regeneration; and surgical procedures, post-operative care, and functional assessment.

While a number of awards under the solicitation are possible, the resources on hand will depend primarily on the quality of the proposals received and

the funds that are available.

<https://www.opthalmologytimes.com/view/arpa-h-rolls-out-research-program-to-restore-vision-to-blind-patients>

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A man has been part of a Colorado bowling association for more than 30 years.

By KCNC Staff

Published: Jan. 29, 2024 at 6:16 AM HST

DENVER (KCNC) - For as long as he can remember, Paul Trujillo has loved to bowl.

“I’ve been into bowling all my life. My whole family was into bowling, and when I turned 18 and found out there was a blind league, I wanted to keep it going,” he said.

Trujillo has done just that, bowling with the Colorado Blind Bowling League for 34 years.

“It’s just a way for blind people to bowl and get out and socialize and have a little competition,” he said.

For 30 weeks out of the year, a group of about 35 members bowl every Saturday at Crown Lanes over on Federal Boulevard in Denver.

“We have a good competition between people who are blind totally, partially sighted and sighted folks who help us spot pins when we can’t see the pins,” he said.

It builds a sense of community that Crown Lanes owner Jackie Falzgraf is proud of and said hits home.

“They were so welcoming and so wonderful with our daughter. She had cognitive delays; they welcomed her. She formed friendships I didn’t think she’d ever have in her life,” she said.

With fun and friendship at the core of the Colorado Blind Bowling League, there is never a shortage of strikes.

“I like to bowl, and it’s the only way I can bowl,” Trujillo said.

<https://www.hawaiiinewsnow.com/2024/01/29/blind-bowler-celebrates-more-than-30-years-with-his-bowling-league/>

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Self-Driving Tech to Power Glasses for the Blind: CES 2024

Lumen says its wearable tech replicates ‘the main features of a guide dog’

By Scarlett Evans

January 4, 2024

Lumen, a company that creates assistive tech to help people manage disabilities, is set to showcase its glasses for the blind at CES 2024, taking place

Jan. 9-12 in Las Vegas.

Described by the company as “replicating the main features of a guide dog,” the glasses use the same technology as self-driving vehicles but scaled down

to a wearable size to help a wearer navigate through their environment.

The company said their solution responds to the need for a scalable assistive solution for the blind, with guide dogs being a costly alternative that currently

help only a small portion of the world’s blind and visually impaired.

The glasses have been tested by more than 250 blind individuals, and are currently in Clinical Investigation.

According to Lumen, the glasses are currently being prepared for production and expected to reach the market in the second half of 2024.

"Having two booths at CES is yet another proof of our ambition to help people around the globe with a unique product at the limits of what today's technology

can do," said Cornel Amariei, Lumen's CEO. "To have this work recognized by the European Innovation Council, by inviting us to be one of the 15 European

companies present at our continent's pavilion is an honor.

"Also, the fact that our partners from Dassault Systèmes invited us to share a stand with them, a French giant present in dozens of countries, shows how

far we have come."

<https://www.iotworldtoday.com/health-care/self-driving-tech-to-power-glasses-for-the-blind-ces-2024>