

**March 2011**

# HAB FORUM

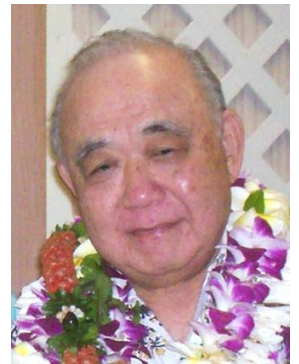
Advocating for  
Independence, Equality, Opportunity

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ALOHA! The Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB) is proud to introduce everyone to the **HAB Forum**. This newsletter is published twice a year.

HAB is an organization comprised of blind and sighted members, who strongly believe in advocating for independence, equality, and opportunity for all blind persons. The officers are:

- President: Warren Toyama, vendor at Tripler Army Medical Center
  - First Vice-President: Filo Tu, President and CEO of Blind Vendors Ohana
  - Second Vice-President & Scholarship Chairman: Don Thomson, Retired Professor
  - Secretary: Maureen Sheedy, Ho'opono Volunteer
  - Treasurer: Amelia Cetrone, retired hotel CEO
  - Board Members:
    - Myles Tamashiro, vendor at Kona Airport
    - Art Cabanilla, Access Technology Product Sales For the Blind
    - Landa Phelan, self-employed
    - Ronald Flormata, HAB webmaster
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**PRESIDENT'S CORNER** – Warren Toyama

The Pagoda Hotel was the site for HAB's 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. The day's program consisted of seven speakers addressing topics on: 1) Library news, 2) Vocational Rehabilitation, 3) Judy Dixon from the National Library Services addressing the topic of Digital Talking Books, 4) A thorough National Report from Kim Charlson on the activities of the American Council of the Blind (ACB), 5) Ho'opono activities by Lea Grupen, and 6) a report on the dynamic world of Teachers of the Visually Impaired.

The 7<sup>th</sup> speaker was a special guest from the State of Hawaii, our own Governor, Neil Abercrombie. Governor Abercrombie spoke for twenty minutes and then sat down for lunch with us.

Our evening banquet was emceed by retired Judge Reynaldo Grauly, and included a special presentation of the Eva H. Smythe Award to State Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland. Entertainment for this festive event was provided by Kuha'o Case, a student from Kamuela, Hawaii who played the piano, and Jon Koki, formerly of Ho'opono who also played some great music for the audience.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of monetary grants to every school district in Hawaii for the benefit of blind children. Ho'opono's Lea Grupen was also presented with a check for \$25,000 to help with renovations at Ho'opono.

Kim Charlson, ACB's 1<sup>st</sup> Vice president who hails from Watertown, Massachusetts, delivered the keynote address. In the audience, we also had ACB members from various parts of the country: Al and Connie Gil from Seattle, Washington; Bob and Donna Seliger from Des Moines, Iowa; Judy Dixon from Washington, D.C.; and Eunice Kitterling from North Dakota.

Thanks to everyone for making this a successful event, and hopefully you can join us next year for our 45<sup>th</sup> Convention!

## **Technology** – Ronald Flormata

One of the questions raised during the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual HAB Convention was how to get audio books from the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). I already did a column about this subject in a previous issue, but I'm happy to share it again. The NLS Braille and Audio Reading Downloads (BARD) website contains thousands of titles of books and popular magazines. So how do you get these books and magazines?



First you need the following: 1) An existing account with the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 2) A computer with internet access, 3) An email address, and 4) An accessible Digital Audio Player. Although there are quite a number of MP3 or digital audio players on the market today, not all of them are authorized to play audio books from the NLS and Bookshare. Personally, I use HIMS BookSense Xt. This marvelous electronic device can play NLS audio books and also MP3 music files, it can record audio in MPS format, and it can read text/HTML/Word documents. The Xt also has an FM radio tuner. Another popular player is the Victor Reader by Humanware.

To register with NLS visit <https://nlsbard.loc.gov/ApplicationInstructions.html>. Follow all the instructions specified on the page. Note that it will take some time to process applications since NLS needs to verify your qualifications. As soon as your NLS account is established, you

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can start downloading books and magazines to your accessible digital player and enjoy reading all your favorite titles.

To download books from the NLS website, log in to your account at <https://nlsbard.loc.gov/cgi-bin/nlsbardprod/index.cgi>. Make sure you have your login ID and password ready in order to commence selecting titles. As you are directed to the main BARD page, enter your book title or author's name and press go. A list of book titles will be displayed. Select your title of choice and press the download button to start retrieving the file to your computer. Note where you save the file as this information will be crucial in decompressing the zip file that you'll get. You actually have two options when you press the download button, either open or save the file. I usually choose open then wait for the file to download. As soon as the download finishes, I extract the compressed files into a new folder in the My Documents folder. On the BookSense I copy the entire new folder into the Daisy/NLS folder. On the VictorReader Stream, copy the new folder in the \$dtb folder.

Depending on the size of your storage, you can have as many titles in your digital book reader. Also, you can download as many titles while you're at the NLS website. This way, you copy several book titles at one time from your PC to your accessible digital player via a USB cable.

I strongly encourage all bona fide qualified blind or visually impaired citizen to use this free service provided by NLS. For a bookworm like me, I consider this a terrific medium of entertainment at a reasonable investment. If you love reading books or magazines but are hampered by vision loss, what are you waiting for? Need help? Don't hesitate to contact me!

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## **The Blind Vending Program** – Filo Tu

Hawaii's Vending Program could be very successful if the efforts of some very nice lawyers can be rewarded. In the latter part of last year, Warren and I received a call from Stan Levin asking us to come to his office right away. Of course, we were very concerned because we thought something was wrong with Stan of the Vending Program. When we got to Stan's office, the first thing he told us was that there is money out there. We didn't know what he was talking about, so Warren asked him what he was talking about. He then told us that he knows that there's a lot of money out there in City and County buildings and he wanted us to go and get it because those monies belong to the Blind Vending Program.



We knew our role in the Vending Program and we were not about to go along with our good friend and lawyer, Stan. We told him that we can't do it without getting various other people involved in this battle: the State Committee, the State Agency, and Susan Kern the Deputy Attorney General. We told Stan that Susan Kern has been doing a great job of fighting different Military departments to make sure that they follow the Randolph-Sheppard Act, and we would like to work together with her regarding these vending machines in the City and County buildings.

After we left Stan Levin's office, a task force was created to go out and inform the City and County that the money from the vending machines in ALL the City and County buildings belong to the Blind Vending Program by law. The people in this Task Force are: Lea Grupen, Administrator at Ho'opono; Joe Cordova, Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator; Kyle Aihara, Chairman of the Committee of Blind Vendors; and of course Attorney

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General Susan Kern, and Attorney Stan Levin with the help of Susan from Stan's office.

At our first meeting with Susan Kern, she suggested that we need to have some blind vendors file a grievance against the City and County. I told Susan and Stan that I would file the grievance. Before the meeting was over, Warren said that he would also file a grievance. For whatever reason, the attorneys decided to go after the City and County without having to file any grievances.

I am happy to say that both Stan Levin's office and Attorney General Susan Kern's office both say that they are coming along very well, and the City and County folks are willing to work with them to have this problem resolved. Let's hope that they will be able to come out with a good settlement!

### **All The Way From Nepal** – Stacie Phasouk

Most of us in the United States have never heard of Sazza Koirala. But in the country of Nepal, this young lady is a local celebrity. She was the host of two FM radio shows and wrote articles for her local paper about disability and women's issues.

Nepal is an underdeveloped country that sits between China and India, and is slightly larger than Arkansas with a population of 28,951,582 people. There isn't much education in Nepal in regards to disabilities, resulting in very limited if any accommodations. Sazza says she was the only blind student in her school and had no accommodations during her time there.

Sazza and her only sibling, a younger brother, were both born with a visual impairment. She left her fame and her family to seek a better life in the U.S., and to see what kind of accommodations are available to the blind. She now lives in Hawaii with her uncle

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and aunt who have lived here for 20 years. She is currently working on her AA at Leeward Community College, and eventually wants to move to the mainland to further her education to get her PhD in the field of Women and Gender studies.

## **Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired**

**(HAPVI)** – Amy Downard

HAPVI continues to promote education and advocacy for parents and families who have children who are blind and visually impaired. HAPVI's brochures are presented to parents at school meetings. They are also available at community fairs. The families that seem to benefit the most from HAPVI's assistance are the ones with very young children who are blind and visually impaired.



HAPVI member Landa Phelan (and her guide dog, Miss Pearline) has reached out to a high school student who is deaf and blind. She met his family at a recent talent show at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind. She continues to work with him on skills that promote guide dog ownership.

Ho'opono continues to support many HAPVI members by providing a summer program where students can strengthen their employment readiness skills while earning a stipend. For some reason the students are very attentive and hardworking in the summer. Must be something about getting paid that motivates them!

We look forward to celebrating 11 years of HAPVI later this year at our annual convention.

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**Keiki and Parents of the Visually Impaired (KAPVI) - Carol Hotta**

KAPVI of Maui will be celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary this spring, and it continues to grow by a few families every year. Most of our activities are now annual events that the kids and their families look forward to.



In October 2010, the KAPVI students and their parents marched with members of the Lions Clubs in Maui's first White Cane Day. It rained almost the entire morning! But spirits were high and we are optimistic for October 2011.

The annual Halloween pumpkin decorating contest which has become a real friendly rivalry between the KAPVI families took a different twist this past October. Carol made a new rule – whoever touched the pumpkin had to be under blindfold. Family members could advise, choose decorations, or work hand-over-hand, but no one could put a hand on the pumpkin except the blindfolded person. Parents really got an idea of what some of the students have to go through every day. An interesting solution came from one of the low-vision kids who decided that she wanted to be the one under blindfold because as she said, “I make a better blind person than you, Mom.” What a group of creative folks we had!

In December, the Christmas part was fabulous! The kids looked forward to the cookie decorating, pot luck, and BINGO where everyone was a winner. The families also collected toys for the homeless and over 100 pounds of food for the foodbank!

KAPVI continues to grow with new preschoolers and their families. The veteran families who have a wealth of experience and information have been a blessing for these younger families. We are grateful for the help from HAB not only for the daily



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activities that our students do, but also for the special help for these KAPVI activities.

Margy and Carol invite you and your students and members of HAB to join us for any of our activities, but especially for the unforgettable Christmas party planned for December 10, 2011 from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

KAPVI activities planned so far for 2011 include: Easter Egg Hunt at Wailuku Community Center on April 9, 2011; Fishing Tournament sponsored by Maui Lions Clubs tentatively set for June 4, 2011; White Cane Day with Maui Lions Clubs date TBA; Halloween Pumpkin party on October 28, 2011; Thanksgiving luncheon sponsored by Maui Lions Clubs date TBA; and Christmas Party on December 10, 2011.

### **State of Hawaii Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SHAER)** – Amy Downard

SHAER is happy to brag that this is another school year with no vacancies for teachers of the visually impaired who work directly with students. Less than six years ago there seemed to be at least one district that was short staffed in providing services, but not now! Another milestone is that 13 of the 18 teachers of the visually impaired state wide are dual certified in VI and Orientation and Mobility. That means our students are beefing up their skills to travel safely and independently in their communities.

Kudos to Liz Martin who is the newly elected President of SHAER. Liz has been a teacher of the visually impaired on the Big Island of Hawaii, Kona side, longer than I can remember. She radiates fun and enthusiasm in her professional interactions with

students and colleagues. I know she will bring that same pizzazz to her leadership role in our organization.

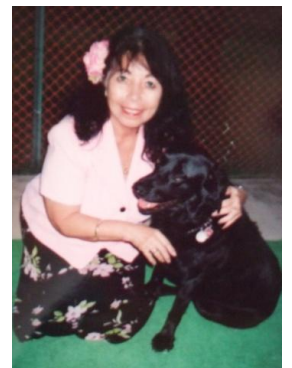
SHAER has benefitted from ongoing collaboration with the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind and the Deaf-Blind Project. A follow-up Workshop on Cortical Visual Impairment will be held in April 2011 as part of the Pac Rim Conference. The Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind is undergoing a long overdue renovation. The campus looks so bright and beautiful. They also continue to house the Braille and large print books that so many of our students use statewide.

Many of the teachers of the visually impaired were treated to a grand day at the HAB Annual Convention at the Pagoda Hotel on March 12, 2011. The presenters at the day session gave very detailed presentations on statewide and national issues for the blind. We were also treated to a fantastic surprise greeting from Governor Neil Abercrombie. He is truly supportive to providing quality services to individuals who are visually impaired and blind. The banquet later that night featured one food and generous grants to each school district. Big Mahalo to HAB for all that you do for our students!

## **BLINDSIGHT NEWS** – Landa Phelan

- Mentoring Ramon

What a rewarding experience it has been continuing to mentor Ramon, my young deaf and blind friend. I recently invited Ramon and his teachers over to check his recall skills. He knew exactly what to do and did everything right. He greeted me with a nice hug hello and then his attention went right to Miss Pearlina



whom he groomed with no help at all. He was very relaxed and seemed to feel comfortable.

Our next visit was at the veterinarian's office. I wanted Ramon to understand how important it is to maintain a dog's health. Miss Pearline's vet, Dr. Scott Harada did such a wonderful job explaining things in detail as he examined her, and Ramon's one-on-one palm sign interpreter kept him informed. Dr. Harada showed Ramon where Miss Pearline's heart was located and was surprised when he felt it beating. When Dr. Harada had to give her a shot, Ramon tried to hold back his tears while I held my breath. When it was all over, Ramon hugged Miss Pearline and Miss Pearline thanked her doctor with a kiss.

A week later I received an invitation in the mail from Ramon because he was going to perform in a talent show fundraiser for the Deaf and Blind Center. I was very excited to attend! It was an evening performance and when it was showtime the room was filled. There was a narrator that helped sometimes and also a sign interpreter. But, when it was time to clap, I didn't hear anything. I learned that instead of clapping, they use a different gesture where you raise your hands up in the air and rotate your wrist from side to side. I was amazed because some of the performers could dance or play instruments when they couldn't hear the music. Ramon was in two skits, and in one he even danced! I enjoyed the evening and the experience was very rewarding.

Ramon is a smart young man who is doing well learning Braille, and will soon learn how to use email. Someday he will have a communicator which will enable him to text people who have a Brailnote, and since I have one I am looking forward to the day when we can text back and forth. He now has a Para-

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Transit pass and will be using the Handi-Van. I will be conducting a training class for Handi-Van drivers to inform them how to communicate with deaf and blind passengers. I will continue to help Ramon and keep you posted on all our adventures.

- Outreach to Seniors

I recently gave a presentation to some Seniors about low vision and shared with them some of the technology that I use daily. I took my laptop and demonstrated my Eye Pal, Zoomtext, my talking watch, my magnifier, and my talking calendar. I also shared some brochures and information about HAB, Kupuna VIP Seniors, Library, Ho'opono, and Holo Holo. I was happy I could motivate and share information with them.

There were some very depressed and bored people there who had no idea that there were things out there that could help them. If I could help one person it was worth my time. One woman I met used to use her computer all the time before she became visually impaired. She was really excited to know that it is possible for her to access the internet again and be able to get in touch with family and friends and search the internet for information. She was a very sharp lady who was so miserable, but now has a chance to get back into the world again. It was a very long but very rewarding day for me.

## **iPhone** – Stacie Phasouk

When I first saw the iPhone 3GS back in July of 2009 I knew I had to have it. Though I had to wait until Christmas, I haven't regretted the decision. The question isn't what can the iPhone do, but what can't it do? Though there are several smartphones out in the market, the iPhone is still the only one that doesn't need any

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additional software to be fully accessible to the blind and visually impaired. It can tell me the weather, find me a business, give me turn by turn directions on how to get there, update me on the latest breaking news and traffic conditions, create and edit recordings, remind me of appointments, calculate a tip, scan and read me a document, tell me what song or movie I'm currently listening to or watching, identify an object, identify the color of that object, etc.

Now it can even identify U.S. currency. Apple released the LookTel Money Reader created by IPPLEX on March 8, 2011. What makes this money reader unique is the denomination is announced in real-time. This means as soon as the bill is placed in front of the phone's camera, the denomination is announced by a human sounding female voice. There are no pictures to take, no buttons to press, and no need to straighten and smooth out a bill to slide into a slot. What makes it even more appealing is its price. It's currently available at the App store for only \$1.99. The app works with the iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4 and iPod Touch 4<sup>th</sup> Generation. It requires good lighting for devices without flash. It recognizes U.S. denominations of \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. Check out this YouTube video to see how fast the app works: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvfDnGMPrkl>.

## **Humanware's New Keysoft Version 9.1** – Art Cabanilla

During the month of January, Humanware shared news about what users can expect to see in the upcoming version of Keysoft, 9.1. BrailleNote users, particularly those users of the BrailleNote Apex, will be happy to know that many of the long awaited features and/or improvements to its flagship product have been addressed and implemented in this upcoming version.

One of the long awaited requests was for better support for Word files or “.doc” documents. With this new version, users will now have full access to Word files and many of its advanced formatting features such as bulleted or numbered lists, and navigation of tables using keyweb’s table mode option. An exciting new feature is the ability to now activate imbedded hyperlinks within a Word document. What that means is that once this link is clicked, keyweb will open and the desired web page loads and is ready for your immediate viewing.

Links to an email address within a Word document works the same way. After clicking on it, keymail opens and a blank email message opens already addressed and ready for you to insert your message and then send it on its way. So, no longer will we have to cut and paste these hyperlinks into their respective applications for us to be able to use or access them.

Connecting the Apex to the internet has been greatly improved whereby the user interface now resembles that of a PC. The user no longer needs to know all of the necessary particulars regarding the network they wish to connect to. Simply scan for available networks and select one to connect to. You are then prompted with the name of that network and if a password is required an additional prompt for that appears. Enter the password and your connection is complete. Knowing the type of security connection (WEP, WPA, or WPA2) or encryption (AES or TKIP) for the network in question will be a thing of the past, thus simplifying the process for those users who just want to connect to the internet and get on their way.

In addition, the need to create a profile for an Ethernet connection is no longer necessary, as the unit automatically

recognizes this type of connection once an Ethernet cable is inserted and access to the internet is automatic.

Other new features implemented in this latest version of Keysoft include Braille support for Jaws 12, Window Eyes, and the Mac's Voice Over. Offering both refreshable Braille support and grade2 input, it allows the user not only the ability to read what's on the screen from Braille display but allows users the ability to control one's PC or Mac thru the Apex itself.

It also has a new security feature where you can password protect the unit so that your files and data are protected should the unit fall into the hands of someone unauthorized to access it.

In regards to web access, the ability to turn on or off file scripting and an increase in the size of the file download has greatly improved the speed of web pages as they load and offers the ability to download files of greater size, such as those found on Blind Mice Movie Vault.

The final point to note is the unit's ability to now zip and unzip files. Having this new feature design once again brings greater power and versatility to the BrailleNote family. Allowing the playing of NLS or the popular BARD books and magazines, which many users are now accessing thru devices like the VictorReader Stream and Booksense, can now be done right from their own Apex.

As exciting as these new or improved features to Keysoft 9.1 are, there is still much more that hasn't been revealed here. What's mentioned here is just a sample of what's to come once the official release is made. So, stay tuned and when the official release is made, I will be sure to share more with you later.

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**Inspirations** – Beth Flormata

We celebrated the New Year with the hope that it will surpass the blessings we have received in past years. This positive way of welcoming the New Year is a big step in keeping a healthy and positive outlook, and we must strive to keep it up all throughout the year. Yes, it's true that a lot of things are happening all around us – in our personal lives, within our family, at work, in our relationships, within our community, and within our nation as a whole. Let us continue to share that warm and joyous feeling that life is good and we should be thankful.

The way we view life is dependent on many things, such as how we were raised, the environment we grew up in, the people we related to and who influenced us from the time we were born up to the present, and the opportunities we have been presented with. A highly positive outlook will always see us through the hard and challenging times. In particular, people with disabilities like me, and others who are blind or visually impaired, will benefit greatly by keeping a “smiling” attitude. I keep reminding myself that it's alright to have a disability and try my best to make sure that my disability does not reach my heart, for that would be sad. That brings me to this short story that was sent to me by a good friend way back in my college days. It is my hope that your heart will be touched as you ponder on the message and the lessons from the story and that you share it with others so you can touch someone's heart today and forever. Here goes...

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said “I am blind, please help”. There were only a few coins in the hat. A man was walking by,



and took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon, the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way. I wrote: Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it."

Both signs told people that the boy was blind, but the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective? The Moral: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear. The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling...and even more beautiful is knowing that you are the reason behind it!!

## **Comments and Questions**

What do you think of this newsletter? If you have questions, would like more info, or have any ideas, please contact HAB by Phone: (808) 521-6213, or Email: [ToyamaJ005@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:ToyamaJ005@hawaii.rr.com).

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## *HAB Scholarship*

The Hawaii Association of the Blind is offering scholarships to legally blind college students who are also Hawaii residents. The students may be attending any accredited university or college regardless of location. May 15<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup> are the deadlines for Fall and Spring applications.

Scholarships may be offered on an annual or a semi-annual basis as determined by the scholarship committee. The committee reserves the right not only to accept or deny scholarship applications, but also to determine the amount and duration of the scholarship. Scholarship recipients must re-apply in order to be considered for future scholarships. Those who are denied a scholarship are eligible to re-apply in the future. Scholarships will not exceed one-year in duration and are not expected to be less than \$500 per semester.

### *Eligibility Requirements:*

- Must be legally blind as defined by national standards.
- Must be planning to attend college for the period which he/she is applying.
- Must be a resident of the State of Hawaii.
- Must not be a member of any national organization other than The American Council of the Blind, the parent organization of the Hawaii Association of the Blind (since other national organizations have their own scholarships).
- Persons who are not affiliated with any national organizations of blind people are encouraged to apply.

For further inquires please call (808) 521-6213.

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# *College Scholarship Application Form*

## Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Major (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Completed Credit Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

- Must be legally blind as defined by National Standards.
- Applicants must submit a letter of no more than two pages describing his/her educational goals, and informing us of information he/she deems relevant to the application.
- Applicant must provide the scholarship committee with official college transcripts. If the applicant has not attended college or is in the first semester of attendance, official high-school transcripts are required.
- Applicant must submit at least two letters of reference, one of which must come from a professor or teacher.
- The committee reserves the right to ask the applicant for further information.
- Relevant false information given will cause any scholarship recipient to have his/her scholarship terminated and legal action will be taken to reclaim money already awarded.
- Information omitted which is relevant to the requirements of the scholarship shall be considered to be falsely presented, and thus will result in the same penalty.

Please send scholarship applications to:

Hawaii Association of the Blind  
College Scholarship Committee  
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Hawaii Association of the Blind  
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

**FREE  
MATTER  
FOR  
THE  
BLIND**