**Dots and Dashes**

**March 24, 2025**

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# **Did You Go to Capitol Hill During the Leadership Conference?**

We hope everyone who came for Hill Day had productive meetings! We ask that those who visited their Senators and Representatives to fill out this survey for each meeting. If you include multiple members from your state affiliate, please only fill out one survey for each meeting. These surveys help ACB better understand how the Hill outreach went and what each office is prioritizing. The more detail the better.

Survey link:[**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025HillVisit**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025HillVisit)

Thank you!

# **ACB Awards Deadline Approaching Fast**

The deadline to submit ACB awards is fast approaching! Award nominations must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on April 1. To submit an award, send an email to **Acbawards1@gmail.com**.

ACB awards are national in scope. The reach of the candidate’s work MUST be national, not just local. To learn more about the awards the committee has prepared a podcast detailing all the information. To hear it, go to [**acboforegon.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ACB-Awards-Committee.mp3**](https://acboforegon.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ACB-Awards-Committee.mp3).

# **Deadline for Board of Publications Awards Also April 1st**

The deadline for the Board of Publications awards is also April 1st — no fooling! We’d love to have more nominees for the Ned E. Freeman Excellence in Writing Award, the Vernon Henley Media Award, and the Hollis Liggett Braille Free Press Award. To review the criteria for each of these awards, go to [**https://www.acb.org/bop-seeks-to-award-excellence**](https://www.acb.org/bop-seeks-to-award-excellence). Then send your nominations to **slovering@acb.org** by the deadline, 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on April 1. Late nominations will **not** be accepted.

# **Apply Now to Become a First-Timer or JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellow**

Take your leadership to the next level. Apply now to become a DKM First-Timer or JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellow for the Class of 2025.

If selected for either award, you'll attend the 64th ACB Conference and Convention in Dallas, TX from July 4-11, 2025. While there you'll participate in leadership activities and experience personal growth while networking with other attendees.

For more information, read the articles: <https://www.acb.org/take-next-step-acb>

<https://www.acb.org/are-you-leader-searching-more>

Then apply online by April 1 at [**https://forms.gle/vAPV5CFoVBsjG4f19**](https://forms.gle/vAPV5CFoVBsjG4f19). The link to the recommendation form is <https://forms.gle/gPJKg21tipw4YGqT7>.

# **Don’t Miss Your Chance To Be Published On the BADIE Blog!**

Submit your essay today and you might be featured on the May 2025 BADIE Blog! The deadline for entries is April 1, so keep reading for details.

The Audio Description Project (ADP) and the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) have expanded our essay contest into the BADIE Blog, with multiple opportunities to be published and win great prizes.

The BADIE Blog will accept entries until April 1 for the May edition. Prize winners will be chosen from the published essays and announced at the start of the next school year.

**How Students Can Submit Their Essays:**

1. Browse the free DCMP library at<https://dcmp.org/>[.](http://www.dcmp.org/)

2. Watch any audio-described film (there are more than 6,000 educational titles to choose from!).

3. Write an evaluation of the film’s audio description, commenting on the ways the audio description enhanced or detracted from your experience.

4. Visit <https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog> to read award-winning essays and submit your own entry. You’ll also find guidelines and prize details, tips on writing a strong review, and information about how audio description is created.

**Prizes:**

* There will be first, second, and third place winners in each category, as well as a grand prize winner who will be awarded an iPad mini and invited to record an award presentation for the Audio Description Awards Gala.
* Teachers of first-place winners also receive prizes.
* Entries will be accepted through April 1, 2025, for possible publication on the May blog.

**Categories:**

Alternate Assessment – students with non-traditional matriculation records

Sophomore – ages 7–10

Junior – ages 11–15

Senior – ages 16–21

Go to [**https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog**](https://dcmp.org/learn/595-badie-contest-blog) for complete details and to submit your entry!

# **ACB Community’s Volunteer of the Month**

The Community Support Committee would like to congratulate Karen Thomas, who was voted Volunteer of the Month for February.  Thank you, Karen, for all you do for our ACB Community!

# **Come to Dallas — and Bring the Kids!**

Are you planning to come to Dallas for the ACB convention, but unsure what to do about your children? Bring them along and enroll them in Kids Explorers Club!

Kids Club is open to children ages 5 to 13, and is a safe and fun environment with experienced leaders. A parent or guardian must sign a permission slip and a medical form prior to leaving their child, and the child will only be released to the parent or guardian or their designee.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided Sunday, July 6 through Thursday, July 10. In addition to daily field trips each day may include swimming, crafts and other fun activities!

## **Kids Explorers Club Schedule**

Saturday, July 5, 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.: Meet Kids Club leaders and get to know the other kids. Enjoy games and snacks.

Sunday, July 7, through Thursday, July 10, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m., and Thursday, 6:30 pm – 9 pm

While parents are at the banquet, your children will have a final dinner with Kids Club leaders and your new friends.

Please let Janet Dickelman know if you will be enrolling a child in Kids Club; email her at **janet.dickelman@gmail.com**. You will need to register each child individually. There will be a daily fee for activities; however, the convention administrative fee for each child will be only $10.

# **2025 Walk Theme Winner Is …**

It is time to begin to gear up for the 2025 ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk. And the winner of our Walk theme contest is Tyson Ernst, from Seattle, Wash. The 2025 Walk theme is Step by Step Together. Stay tuned for more information about how you can participate in the ACB Walk this year.

# **BITS Unleashing RIM Support**

Hey ACB Family:

Get ready to be blown away — because we’ve got some epic news! Ever find yourself wrestling with a tech glitch, wishing for a friendly expert by your side? Whether you’re diving into assistive technology challenges or exploring new horizons with BITS education, we’re here to help you crush those issues!

We’re taking things to the next level by unleashing our RIM support — now with absolutely no restrictions on time limits. That’s right: forget the old one-hour cap. With our unlimited RIM access, along with support from our all-star education, mentoring, and IT teams, you have a tech-savvy superhero on call, ready to swoop in and save the day whenever you need help (volunteer availability permitting, of course).

We’re all about empowering you, sharing our knowledge, and unlocking your full potential. It’s like having a pro right beside you, so you can keep reeling in success on your accessibility journey.

Not part of the BITS family yet? Now’s the time to jump in or renew your membership and keep the magic alive! Check it out at [**http://www.bits-acb.org/join**](http://www.bits-acb.org/join)**.** A huge shoutout to Microsoft Corporation for making this incredible service possible!

And if you think this is as far as we go — hold onto your hats, because we’re just getting started. Stay tuned for even more excitement!

# **Using Research to Strengthen Advocacy**

American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) will hold a webinar March 26th at noon Eastern time on how research can help strengthen your state and local disability advocacy. AFB staff will discuss their recently published research summaries and fact sheets — valuable tools to share with state legislators and local officials as you advocate for transportation access, accessible digital information, expanded funding for disability services, and more. Denise Jess, executive director of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, will share a three-part formula for effective advocacy and discuss the power of coalition building.

[AFB's research summaries](https://click.everyaction.com/k/103746670/533111864/1012444712?sourceid=1091350&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMy8xLzcyODI3IiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImZhZGNkYjA3LTg1ZmYtZWYxMS05MGNkLTAwMjI0ODJhOWZiNyIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAic2xvdmVyaW5nQGFjYi5vcmciDQp9&hmac=0mH1Dp6N_M-xIPGLp_o4kjcx_BzPQF9Yj4Gfn3PsZfo=&emci=e4334221-5aff-ef11-90cd-0022482a9fb7&emdi=fadcdb07-85ff-ef11-90cd-0022482a9fb7&ceid=8509542) cover findings from the past five years and provide an overview ofkey insights and recommendations for improving the lives of people who are blind or have low vision. [AFB’s fact sheets](https://click.everyaction.com/k/103746671/533111870/-173793394?sourceid=1091350&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMy8xLzcyODI3IiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImZhZGNkYjA3LTg1ZmYtZWYxMS05MGNkLTAwMjI0ODJhOWZiNyIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAic2xvdmVyaW5nQGFjYi5vcmciDQp9&hmac=0mH1Dp6N_M-xIPGLp_o4kjcx_BzPQF9Yj4Gfn3PsZfo=&emci=e4334221-5aff-ef11-90cd-0022482a9fb7&emdi=fadcdb07-85ff-ef11-90cd-0022482a9fb7&ceid=8509542) compile findings from multiple studies to highlight the real-world challenges faced by people who are blind or have low vision. This webinar will focus on how to effectively leverage these fact sheets and summaries.

To register, visit [**https://tinyurl.com/27s98tuk**](https://tinyurl.com/27s98tuk).

# **Last Chance to Register for the Interstate Auction**

If you’ve been thinking about registering for the Interstate Auction on March 29 at 7 p.m. Eastern, now is the time! Register by March 27th to participate and enjoy a night of fun. The auction will benefit the affiliates of Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Wisconsin. We can’t wait to see you there!

Coherent Automation company has generously agreed to provide space for our auction registration on their very secure website.

Register at [**https://coherentautomation.com/acb-interstate-auction.html**](https://coherentautomation.com/acb-interstate-auction.html)**.** The deadline to register is noon Eastern on Thursday, March 27.

Should you encounter any difficulty registering, please contact Cecily Laney Nipper at (470) 218-7885. Thank you from the Steering Committee of the Interstate Auction.

# **Social Security Strengthens ID Proof Requirements, Expedites Direct Deposit Change Requests**

Over the next two weeks, SSA will carefully transition to stronger identity proofing procedures for both benefit claims and direct deposit changes. Individuals seeking these services who cannot use their personal “my Social Security” account, which requires online identity proofing, will then need to visit a local Social Security office to prove their identity in person. At the same time, the agency will expedite processing all direct deposit change requests – both in person and online – to one business day.

To read the complete press release, visit [**https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2025/#2025-03-18**](https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2025/#2025-03-18).

# **MGM+ Now Offers Audio Description**

Joining our list of many streaming services offering audio description is MGM+, owned by Amazon. For some time now, Amazon's Prime Video has been offering MGM+ original programming and other titles with audio description, but the AD tracks were not available on the MGM+ streaming service itself. That has now changed, and we are able to list 101 movies and series with audio description on MGM+. The streaming service costs $7/month, or $59 per year, with a 7-day free trial. You can subscribe to the standalone app or purchase it as a channel subscription through Prime Video or various other places. The link to our MGM+ listing is now a main navigation link, but here is the direct link: [**https://adp.acb.org/mgmad.html**](https://adp.acb.org/mgmad.html).