**Dots and Dashes**

**October 10, 2023**

# **ACAA Public Awareness Campaign**

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ACB is proud to have partnered with the U.S. Department of Transportation on the #AccessibleAirTravel campaign to promote the Air Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights, a set of 10 rights that all airline passengers with disabilities are entitled to in both the airport and on the plane. Read the press release from DOT at [**https://tinyurl.com/5dzct7b2**](https://tinyurl.com/5dzct7b2). To read the Bill of Rights, visit [**https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/disabilitybillofrights**](https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/disabilitybillofrights)**.** View an audio-described video from DOT outlining the Bill of Rights at [**https://www.youtube.com/embed/a7U3rG08y8w?si=Napdc7F1rvD6qdpC**](https://www.youtube.com/embed/a7U3rG08y8w?si=Napdc7F1rvD6qdpC). ACB will continue to work with DOT and the Office of Aviation Consumer Protection to advocate for equitable access to air travel for all individuals with disabilities, including those who are blind and low vision.

**Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act Reintroduced**

On September 28th, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD) and Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX) reintroduced the Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act, which would require that entities currently covered by the ADA maintain websites and software applications that are accessible for Americans with disabilities. This legislation would establish a clear, enforceable accessibility standard, as well as establish a technical assistance center, grant program and advisory committee to provide advice, financial assistance and guidance on how to create and maintain accessible websites and applications. Additionally, it would authorize a study on addressing emerging technologies.

To read a full copy of the bill text, visit [**duckworth.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023\_-\_websites\_and\_software\_applications\_accessibility\_act\_bill\_text.pdf**](https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023_-_websites_and_software_applications_accessibility_act_bill_text.pdf).

# **Cogswell-Macy Act Reintroduced**

Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), and Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), along with Representatives Matt Cartwright (D-PA) and John Rutherford (R-FL), announced the reintroduction of the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act, legislation that would strengthen the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) while ensuring that that blind, deaf, deaf-disabled, and deaf-blind children receive the support and services from qualified personnel they need to succeed and thrive. The Cogswell-Macy Act would improve services and educational opportunities for students who are blind, deaf, deaf-disabled, or deaf-blind. It would also enhance reporting and evaluation measures for special education in each state, increase training for teachers and other special education professionals, and reaffirm the Department of Education’s mission and responsibility to ensure an accessible and quality education for all students.

The legislation can be found at [**https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/alice\_cogswell\_and\_anne\_sullivan\_macy\_act\_-\_092723pdf.pdf**](https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/alice_cogswell_and_anne_sullivan_macy_act_-_092723pdf.pdf).

# **Employment Committee Seeks Your Input**

The ACB Employment Committee needs your input concerning how we can best serve you as you address career challenges from figuring out your strengths to landing and thriving in your work journey.

Through October, we are running a survey to assist us in determining our future direction. Please visit [**https://forms.gle/mV3uEM1V4585Tej9A**](https://forms.gle/mV3uEM1V4585Tej9A) and take some time to share your thoughts and needs with us. This should take no more than 10 minutes.

If you have any difficulties with the survey, contact Peter Altschul at **creatingcommonground@outlook.com**.

# **Mark Your Calendars Now for This Year’s Audio Description Awards Gala**

Get your tux or sparkly evening dress ready — the Audio Description Awards Gala is only one month away! On Tuesday, November 14, at 7:30 p.m. Eastern, the third annual Awards Gala will recognize outstanding achievement in audio description by announcing winners in categories such as Innovation, Education, Popular Entertainment, Gaming, and Spanish Media. We’ll also be revealing which film and series got the most votes in the People’s Choice Award.

Join hosts Marilee Talkington and Conchita Hernandez, plus special celebrity guests, for the most glamorously inclusive awards show of them all! There will be captioning, audio description, and a simultaneous full Spanish translation. The show will be streamed on ACB Media, and there will be a Community watch party on Zoom and Clubhouse. Full details will be coming soon, so mark your calendar and visit [**ADAwardsGala.org**](https://adawardsgala.org/) for more information. You can also make a donation there to support ACB’s Audio Description Project and help us keep advocating for the audio description you love. We’ll see you on the virtual red carpet on November 14!

# **Save the Date!**

On February 10, 2024, the Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss will celebrate 25 years as an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind. We are planning a special two-hour celebration on Zoom on Feb. 10, 2024, to which you are invited. We will present the first Teddie-Joy Remhild Service Award in honor of the founder and first president of AAVL.

Nominations are now open. This award is to be given to a member of AAVL who has demonstrated service in advancing the purposes of this organization in one or more of the following areas:

1. By advocating for the improvement of the social, economic and cultural status of older adults with vision loss;
2. By promoting and/or participating in education awareness programs regarding the needs, ideas and capabilities of older adults with vision loss;
3. By helping to expand and improve rehabilitation and independent living skills training programs for older adults experiencing vision loss, or
4. By encouraging, supporting and/or assisting older adults who experience vision loss to realize their potential and assume their role as valued members of their community.

Nominations may be submitted via email to Larry Johnson at l**arjo1@prodigy.net**. Nominations will close on December 10, 2023.

# **And the MMS Winners Are …**

Congratulations to the winners of our 2023 ACB Conference and Convention MMS drawing. They will all be receiving Amazon gift cards.

$300 Gift Card - Peter Heide

$250 Gift Card - Jeff Thom

$100 Gift Card - Phyllis Blow

$100 Gift Card - William Burgunder

# **ACB Angels Memorial Tribute Program**

The ACB Angels Memorial Tribute Program is a powerful and personal way to honor departed loved ones or their guide dog(s). It provides an opportunity to memorialize friends and loved ones while supporting ACB. With a minimum donation of $500, you can ensure that your loved one's legacy lives on through the ACB Angel Memorial Wall and the Angels page of the ACB website. Donations can also be made in remembrance of guide dogs.

This memorial began in 2014 with the Angels Wall, a traveling tribute displayed annually at the ACB national conference and convention. The wall features plaques in both large print and braille, honoring the contributions of each Angel. A bound companion book shares names and memories in braille and large print.

Your ACB Angel's name will become the title of a dedicated tribute webpage, easily identified through search engines like Google and Bing. Each page will feature a photo and a written testimony, ensuring that your Angel’s memory lives on within the ACB family. What a wonderful way to honor those who matter most while supporting the American Council of the Blind!

The process for making your loved one an ACB Angel is simple. Please contact ACB Development Officer, Kolby Garrison, at **kgarrison@acb.org** with the following information:

* Your loved one’s full name as you want it to appear on the plaque;
* A photo, if desired; and
* A written testimonial of your Angel’s life and impact.

Contributions in any amount can be made by individuals or a group toward the $500 minimum donation. Please contact the ACB Financial Office at (612) 332-3242 for assistance with making your gift.

To have your Angel included in the presentations during our annual national convention, please submit all materials by May 1st. You will be offered the opportunity to record a video testimonial honoring your Angel.

For more information about the program, and to explore past Angels, visit [**https://www.acb.org/acb-angels-memorial-tribute**](https://www.acb.org/acb-angels-memorial-tribute).

# **Order Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests for Blind or Low Vision People**

As of September 25, 2023, you can place another order for one set of four free at-home tests with enhanced accessibility for blind or low vision people, while supplies last. Here’s what you need to know about your order:

* Limit of one order per residential address.
* Your order will include four rapid antigen COVID-19 tests with enhanced accessibility for blind or low vision people (COVIDTests.gov has more details about at-home tests, including extended shelf life and updated expiration dates).
* Supplies of tests with enhanced accessibility are limited. Only order these tests if you do not have other options for using the standard COVID-19 tests.
* Tests require you to use a compatible, Bluetooth-enabled smartphone, as well as download and install an app from the App Store (for iOS) or Google Play (for Android).

Orders will ship free starting the week of October 2, 2023. To order yours, visit [**https://www.covid.gov/tests**](https://www.covid.gov/tests), or call 1-800-232-0233.

# **Calling All Guide Dog Users from the U.S., Canada**

The Seeing Eye is conducting an online survey to learn more about the public access barriers guide dog users are facing as they go about their daily lives working their dogs and the impact those barriers are having on guide dog teams. Are you currently working with a dog or waiting for your next dog? Do you live in the U.S. or Canada, or do you travel there with your dog? If so, then this survey is for you! Please feel free to complete the survey regardless of where your dog was trained. Also, if you are blind or low vision and have decided not to work with a dog, you have the opportunity to tell us why. The information you provide will help us improve our advocacy and education efforts. Thank you for taking the time to share this information with us. The survey will close at midnight on November 30, 2023. Please go to the below link to access the survey:

[**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SeeingEye\_Access**](http://support.seeingeye.org/site/R?i=dv8koKdTufljBp9HYPIFzjTshAi573-DSHkoRF6q-WPGLMMqV95TWw)

# **Prospector Theater Survey Needs You**

A few months ago, Prospector Theater opened a survey to assess what it’s like to use audio description in movie theaters. They have re-opened the survey to try to get more responses, so if you didn’t complete the survey before, now’s your chance!

If you’ve experienced audio description in a movie theater, or wish you could, please complete this short survey and help our friends at the Prospector Theater create a training guide to educate other theaters across the country about AD! Find the survey here: [**https://apps.prospectortheater.org/231414971578059**](https://apps.prospectortheater.org/231414971578059)**.** If you have suggestions, in-depth comments, or additional information you’d like to share, please email **kathleen.eubanks@prospectortheater.org****.**