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Words From the President

by President Tracy Anderson

Dear Members,

I am honored to step into the role of President of the Missouri Council of the Blind during this important time for our organization.

Like many of you, I care deeply about MCB and the work we do to support blind and visually impaired individuals across Missouri. Over the past several weeks, our organization has experienced a period of transition and reflection. While change can be difficult, it also gives us an opportunity to come together, refocus on our mission, and strengthen the way we work moving forward.

My goal is to help foster a culture of communication, teamwork, respect, and transparency within MCB. I believe our organization is strongest when we listen to one another, support one another, and stay focused on the people and communities we serve.

As we celebrate MCB's 70th anniversary, I believe this is also an opportunity to strengthen our core as we continue building an organization that is welcoming, collaborative, and focused on growth and service.

I want to remind you of some important dates. MCB is very proud to be the host of this year's ACB national convention held in St. Louis Missouri. Join us July 24 through the 31st at the national convention. I would love to meet you there! And in October, join us again in St. Louis for our state convention October 15 through the 18th. We are expecting that to be informative, entertaining and an all-around good time!

Thank you for your continued support, your patience, and your dedication to MCB. I look forward to working together as we move ahead in a positive direction.

Sincerely,

Tracy Anderson

President

Missouri Council of the Blind

2026 ACB Convention Information

The 2026 ACB Conference and Convention registration opens soon.

Here are the key registration details:

- Convention dates: July 24–31, 2026
- Location: Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch
- Member registration opens: May 28, 2026 at 7:00 a.m. Central
- Non-member registration opens: June 4, 2026
- Registration deadline: July 6, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. Central

Pricing:

- Early member registration: \$55
- Early non-member registration: \$70
- Regular member registration: \$75
- Regular non-member registration: \$90

Hotel rates start at \$104 per night plus tax for single or double occupancy.

Official convention site:

[ACB Convention 2026 Information](#)

ACB member portal for registration:

[ACB Member Portal](#)

- To make reservations online go to:
[hyatt.com/events/en-US/group-booking/STLRS/G-ACBL](https://www.hyatt.com/events/en-US/group-booking/STLRS/G-ACBL).
- If you prefer to make your reservations by telephone, please call central reservations at [\(888\) 591-1234](tel:8885911234).
- Make sure to let them know you are reserving a room at the Hyatt St Louis Arch at 315 Chestnut street and use group code G-ACBL
- Book by July 5, 2026, to secure the special hotel room rate

Room amenities:

- All sleeping rooms have safes, ironing boards, refrigerators and k-cup coffee makers.
- The hotel has a twenty-four-hour fitness center; it does not have a pool.
- There are not guest washers and dryers, there is a dry-cleaning service.
- The hotel is cashless; any purchases must be made with a credit or debit card.

New Officers

By Debbie Platner

We are pleased to announce two new officers for the Missouri Council of the Blind. Please join us in congratulating Kim Reese on her new role as Vice President and Lisa Eleazer as our new Secretary.

We appreciate their willingness to serve and their commitment to supporting the mission of MCB. Their leadership, dedication, and passion for the blind and visually impaired community will be a valuable asset as we continue moving our organization forward.

We look forward to working with Kim and Lisa in their new positions and are excited for the contributions they will bring to the organization. Congratulations to both of them on their new roles!

Debbie Platner

President, SWMO Vision Connections

PR, Missouri Council of the Blind

417-529-3668

Education and Advocacy Report

By Kim Reese

The Missouri Council of the Blind remained active at the Capitol during the 2026 legislative session advocating for issues important to blind Missourians. One major success this year was HB 2180, sponsored by David Griffith, which modifies provisions relating to certified mail sent by state agencies. This bill has been worked on for several years and has now successfully passed the legislature and been delivered to the Secretary of State. We also saw positive movement on HB 2408, sponsored by Danny Busick Shields, which improves grant and support services for deaf-blind individuals and their families. The bill received Senate committee approval and continues moving through the legislative process. Another bill we monitored was HB 3354, sponsored by Tim Taylor, concerning the Blind Pension tax levy. While the bill advanced through committee, it has not moved further at this time. The most

significant concern this session involved HB 2002, the state budget bill sponsored by Dirk Deaton. Throughout the session, Denny Huff and Kim Reese made several trips to the Capitol advocating to protect the Blind Pension Fund surplus reserves. Initially, the Senate chose not to transfer the funds, but during conference committee negotiations lawmakers approved transferring \$45 million from the reserve. On May 6, the House approved an additional \$27 million transfer, bringing the total to approximately \$72 million. Currently, about 2,500 Blind Pension recipients receive monthly benefits, which are expected to increase to \$949 per month beginning in July. Although the fund is projected to remain stable at this time, the Missouri Council of the Blind remains concerned about the long-term impact these transfers could have on the financial stability of the Blind Pension Fund. Despite the disappointing outcome on HB 2002, the Missouri Council of the Blind will continue advocating to protect the Blind Pension program and preserve services for blind Missourians.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Reese

Education Advocacy Chair

Missouri Council of the Blind

Understanding Dual Sensory Disability: Breaking Barriers for Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind

By Elizabeth Reece Brown

Imagine moving through your day without being able to clearly see the world around you or hear the sounds that guide and connect you. Conversations become distant or inaccessible. Everyday tasks require more planning, more effort, and often, more support. For individuals living with dual sensory disability—commonly known as deaf-blindness—this is not a temporary challenge. It is a daily reality.

Dual sensory disability is often misunderstood. It is not simply the combination of vision loss and hearing loss. Instead, it creates a unique and complex experience that affects how a person communicates, gathers information, builds relationships, and navigates their environment. The world, which is largely designed for those who can see and hear, does not always

pause to consider those who rely on touch, structure, and specialized tools to engage with it.

One of the most significant challenges faced by individuals who are deaf-blind is communication. For many, traditional spoken conversation or written text is not fully accessible. Instead, communication may take place through tactile sign language, braille, print-on-palm methods, or assistive technology. Even with these tools, communication often requires the cooperation, awareness, and patience of others. Without that understanding, meaningful interaction can become limited, and at times, frustrating.

This challenge becomes even more apparent when considering something as common as using the telephone. For most people, picking up a phone and making a call is second nature. For someone who is deaf-blind, however, that same action can be impossible without the right technology. This is where relay services play a vital role. Relay services act as a bridge between individuals. A deaf-blind person may type a message using a braille display or text-based system, and a trained relay operator will speak that message aloud to the person on the other end of the call. When the hearing individual responds, the operator types the message back so it can be read in braille or text. Through this process, what would otherwise be an inaccessible form of communication becomes possible. It is a powerful reminder that access is not about ability—it is about opportunity.

Access to information presents another significant barrier. So much of the world communicates through visual and auditory means—announcements, signs, videos, conversations, and digital content. Without adaptation, individuals who are deaf-blind can miss critical information that others receive effortlessly. This can impact education, employment, healthcare access, and participation in community life. When information is not accessible, independence is limited.

Mobility and orientation also require careful consideration. Navigating spaces without visual or auditory cues means relying heavily on touch, memory, and structured guidance. Familiar environments may be manageable, but new or crowded spaces can present additional challenges. Simple changes—such as rearranged furniture, poor lighting, or unexpected obstacles—can significantly impact safety and confidence.

Perhaps one of the most profound challenges, though less visible, is social isolation. When communication becomes difficult and access is limited, opportunities for connection can diminish. Relationships may be harder to build and maintain. Conversations may require more effort. Over time, this can affect emotional well-being, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Statistics help shed light on the scope of this issue. It is estimated that between 0.2% and 2% of the population experiences some form of dual sensory loss, with the numbers increasing significantly among older adults. Research has shown that individuals with both vision and hearing loss are at a higher risk of social isolation, reduced employment opportunities, and depression. These are not just numbers—they represent real people navigating a world that is not always designed with them in mind.

This is where organizations have the opportunity—and responsibility—to step in and make a meaningful difference. The Missouri Council of the Blind (MCB) is uniquely positioned to be a powerful force for inclusion, advocacy, and support. Through intentional action, MCB can help ensure that individuals with dual sensory disabilities are not only included but empowered.

One of the most impactful ways MCB can serve this community is by prioritizing accessible communication. This includes providing tactile interpreters, Support Service Providers (SSPs), and materials in braille and accessible digital formats. It also means ensuring that meetings, events, and communications are designed with accessibility in mind from the very beginning—not added as an afterthought.

Education and awareness are equally important. By offering training to staff, volunteers, and members, MCB can foster a deeper understanding of how to effectively communicate with and support individuals who are deaf-blind. When people feel confident in how to engage, barriers begin to fall, and genuine inclusion becomes possible.

Access to assistive technology is another critical area. Devices such as refreshable braille displays, screen readers, and communication tools can open doors to independence and connection. MCB can play a key role in educating members about these technologies, providing demonstrations, and advocating for greater access and affordability.

Creating inclusive programs and events is also essential. True inclusion means that individuals who are deaf-blind are able to participate fully—not just be present. This requires thoughtful planning, accessible environments, and a commitment to ensuring that no one is left out of the experience.

Advocacy remains at the heart of meaningful change. By working with community partners, policymakers, and other organizations, MCB can help shape a more accessible and equitable future. This includes advocating for improved services, increased funding, and greater awareness of dual sensory disability at both the local and state levels.

Equally important is the inclusion of individuals who are deaf-blind in leadership and decision-making roles. Their lived experiences provide invaluable insight. When their voices are heard, solutions become more effective, more relevant, and more impactful.

While many of these supports and technologies are already being offered and fostered, there is always room to grow. If there are additional ways to better serve members of MCB—or prospective members—who are living with dual sensory disabilities, it is essential that we take the time to listen, learn, and respond.

This is not just about services. It is about commitment. It is about ensuring that every individual, regardless of how they experience the world, has the opportunity to connect, contribute, and thrive.

When we take intentional steps to remove barriers, we do more than improve access—we create belonging. And in doing so, we move closer to a world where no one is left on the outside looking in.

Membership Report

By F. Booker

The Membership Committee is hard at work making sure our database is up to date along with the ACB national database known as AMMS. We will be going over data from the website transition to make sure all of our information is up to date. As always if you need help or have any questions, reach out to me at membership@moblind.org. I'd like to highlight some important information members should be aware of below.

MCB First-Timer Program:

The Missouri Council of the Blind First-Timer Program helps individuals who have never attended an MCB Convention experience for the first time.

This program gives participants the opportunity to:

- Learn about resources, technology, and services available to blind and visually impaired Missourians
- Meet and connect with others in the blind community
- Learn more about MCB and ways to get involved

Selected First-Timers will receive:

- Three nights lodging at convention
- Transportation to and from convention
- Meals during convention
- Guidance and support from MCB ambassadors throughout the event

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be a Missouri resident
- Be legally blind
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have never attended an MCB Convention before

[First Timer Program](#)

ACB Grant Application:

Only members whose names appeared on the membership list received by the MCB office February 1, 2026 will be eligible for this grant. In accordance with the MCB Bylaws, you are required to attend all official business meetings as follows:

Saturday through Thursday morning sessions

Applications must be received in the office or postmarked by Monday, June 1, 2026. As per the Bylaws, the grant shall be payable to members AFTER attending the ACB Convention.

Hotel receipts must be turned into the office no later than Friday, August 15, 2026

Link Below:

[ACB Grant Application](#)

MCB Survey:

As MCB celebrates 70 years of serving blind and visually impaired Missourians, we want to hear from you.

We've put together a member survey to learn more about your experiences, your needs, your ideas, and how we can continue to grow and improve as an organization.

Your feedback truly matters and will help shape the future of MCB.

We'll also be doing a \$50 drawing for one lucky participant! If you'd like to be entered, please include your contact information in the survey. Your information will only be used for the drawing and will not be shared.

Survey Link: [Your Voice Matters, Now More Than Ever!](#)

Missouri Council of the Blind web site

By Debbie Platner

Hello all!

I wanted to give everyone an update on the Missouri Council of the Blind website, moblind.org.

As part of our complete website overhaul, the site will be temporarily unavailable on Thursday, May 14th, while we finalize the transition. Our brand-new website will officially go live on Friday, May 15th!

We are excited for you to check it out. The new site is much more user-friendly, easier to navigate, and designed to better serve our members and community. We have also moved many of our service forms online to make accessing programs and resources more convenient than ever.

Thank you for your patience during this transition. We can't wait to share the new and improved MCB website with all of you!

Getting Along in the workplace

By Robyn Wallen

“Naming it when you see it”

It's one of the most important—and sometimes hardest—tools we have for reducing conflict and keeping our conversations productive.

When something starts to feel personal or dismissive, addressing it early can prevent things from escalating. The key is to do this in a way that keeps the focus on the behavior and the group's shared goals, rather than calling out or blaming individuals.

Here are some simple, practical ways to do that:

In a meeting:

- “I'm noticing this is starting to feel a bit personal. Can we bring it back to the issue?”
- “Can we pause for a moment and refocus on what we're trying to solve together?”

On email or a listserv:

- “I’m hearing a lot of strong feelings here, which makes sense. I also want to note that this is starting to feel like we’re directing frustration at each other rather than the issue.”
- “I’d like to keep this conversation focused on solutions and avoid making it about individuals.”

In a one-on-one conversation:

- “It sounds like there’s a lot of frustration here. I’m wondering if some of that might be getting directed at others in the group.”
- “Can we step back and look at what the bigger concern is?”

If the behavior continues:

- “I want to be direct—this is starting to feel unproductive and a bit personal. We must keep things respectful so we can work together.”

A few things that make this approach more effective:

- Focus on what you’re noticing, not on labeling a person.
- Use calm, neutral language.
- Keep it short and clear.
- When possible, include a redirect (for example, back to the agenda or the shared goal).
- Choose whether to address something publicly or privately based on the situation.

This isn’t about shutting down disagreement. It’s about making sure we can disagree in ways that are respectful and productive, so we can keep moving our work forward.

Heritage Council of the Blind

By Wilma Chestnut-House

This year Heritage decided not to celebrate “Black History”.

We will be celebrating “Juneteenth” on June 20. This event will be held at Home Heights Park. This park is in St. John, MO. It is on McKibbon and Hume Rd.

We will be serving a wide variety of African, Jamaican, and Caribbean dishes. From jerked chicken, ox tails, lamb, goat, and all the delicious sides that compliments them. Come and join us. The time is noon until ?. For a

full meal of tasty delights the cost will be only \$15. You are guaranteed a great time and some learning to go along with that.

For more information, contact Wilma at (314)614-0278. We will have other events later this year.

The great news is that Heritage has the honor of hosting the 70th anniversary of MCB. This will be held from October 16 thru October 18, 2026. The event will be held at Crown Plaza Airport in Bridgeton, MO. The address is 11228 Lone Eagle Dr.

There will also be a gathering on October 15 before the board meeting at a park in Bridgeton about one mile from the hotel. There is no cost.

When you celebrate 70 years, the color is platinum. So if you would like to participate in the "Platinum Ball" be ready on October 17. We will share more information about the convention as the time gets closer.

Sports and Recreation

By Wilma Chestnut-House

We have had a slow year for S & R this year, but it is about to be on! Last year we had to cancel two float trips due to weather. We are going to do these two events, one in June and one in September. I apologize, these are full. We will have summer camp at Strong Tower Ranch in early September. This is held in Wright City, MO. The dates and more information will be posted on the new web site. This is also taking the place of Cobblestone. We do a few more activities than what you might be used to. But if you just want to sit around and chill, have at it.

In the fall we will go back to BINGO, art class, and gardening herbs from containers. Stay tuned for these activities.

My own events

By Wilma Chestnut-House

This Mothers Day Tea Party and Hat Fashion Show was a success. It was held at St. Ann's Community Center on May 9.

We really had a great time. We all got a chance to socialize and talked on every topic you could think of.

The winners of the hat fashion show part were all members of MCB. This was a first! 3rd place winner was Courtney Tramble (Heritage member), 2nd

place was June Lenk and tied with Lillie Wilson (member at large), and 1st place was Tiffany Dennis (Heritage member). All the ladies were “Strutting their Stuff”. This was June's second time winning. For my very first tea party she won first place.

We had fruit dipped in chocolate with mint tea, we had tea cakes and macaroons with peach tea, and we had garden salad with chicken and the dressing was made with tea (my own creation). For dessert we had cheesecake bites with green tea. We had great give away gifts and goody bags for everyone. Next year will be DNA Events & Recreations fifth anniversary, so I hope you can make the next one. It's going to be special! Men, you are welcome to come, bring your woman, wife, mother, daughter, or granny.

Last but not least, I finally got someone to format the articles for the Chronicle! Her name is Molli Jones (Brandis' daughter). So after this issue, we will be getting back on track. I apologize for the delays.

Wilma

Uses for dog fur

By Denny Huff

Are there any uses for dog hair?

Yes, surprisingly, dog hair can actually be useful. It's not just waste. Here are the most practical ways people use it:

1. Natural fertilizer

Dog hair breaks down slowly and adds nitrogen to soil.

You can:

- Mix it into compost
- Bury small amounts in garden soil
- Use it around plants as a slow-release nutrient

Just avoid large clumps, as they can mat and block water.

2. Pest deterrent

The scent of dog hair can keep certain animals away.

- Scatter it around gardens to deter deer, rabbits, and squirrels
- Works best when refreshed regularly

3. Bird nesting material

Birds often collect soft fibers for nests.

- Put small amounts outside in spring
- Don't use chemically treated or flea-medicated hair

4. Oil spill absorption (less common at home)

Dog hair absorbs oil well.

- It's been used in environmental cleanups
- At home, it can soak up greasy spills in a pinch

5. Crafting and yarn (if you're adventurous)

Dog hair can be spun into yarn, sometimes called "chiengora."

- Can be knitted into hats, mittens, or scarves
- Works best with long-haired breeds

6. Stuffing material

Cleaned dog hair can be used for:

- Pet beds
- Pillows (less common, but doable)

What I would NOT recommend:

- Don't burn it indoors (smells strong and unpleasant)
- Don't leave large piles in your yard (can clog drainage or attract pests)

If shedding is heavy, it may also be seasonal (spring/fall coat change), but excessive shedding can sometimes point to diet or health issues. If it seems unusual, a quick check with your vet is a good idea.

Here's a straightforward, effective plan to reduce your dog's shedding. You don't need anything complicated—just consistency and the right tools.

1. Brush regularly (this is the biggest factor)

Frequency depends on coat type:

- Short hair: 2 to 3 times per week
- Medium to long hair: daily or every other day

Use the right tool:

- Shedding blade or rubber brush for short coats

- Undercoat rake or de-shedding tool for thick coats
- Slicker brush for longer hair

Brushing removes loose hair before it ends up in your house.

2. Bathe, but not too often

- Every 4 to 6 weeks is typical
- Use a dog-specific de-shedding shampoo

Bathing loosens dead hair so it comes out during brushing.

3. Blow out the coat (very effective)

After a bath, if possible:

- Use a pet dryer or even a shop vac set to blow
- This pushes out large amounts of loose undercoat

This step alone can dramatically reduce shedding for weeks.

4. Improve diet (often overlooked)

Healthy skin equals less shedding.

Look for:

- High-quality dog food with real protein
- Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids

You can add:

- Fish oil (one of the best supplements for coat health)
- Ask your vet for proper dosage

5. Keep your home environment balanced

- Dry air increases shedding and dandruff
- Consider a humidifier in winter

6. Wash bedding and vacuum strategically

- Wash your dog's bed weekly
- Use a vacuum with a pet hair attachment
- Lint rollers or rubber gloves work well on furniture

7. Watch for abnormal shedding

If you notice:

- Bald patches
- Itching or redness

- Dull coat or flaky skin

Then it could be:

- Allergies
- Parasites
- Hormonal issues

In that case, a vet visit is important.

Quick summary:

Brush consistently, feed well, and occasionally bathe and blow out the coat. Those three steps handle most shedding problems.

Just a word from the editor:

When you want to post something, please put your subject at the top with your name under that.

When you send me something, please check with me or I will let you know that I got it.

Thanks