



NextGen Insight

**Volume 5, Issue 1
February 2025**

Publications Committee Chair: Greg Lindberg

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Title Page Image Description: Background - Black night sky with dim stars in a horizontal rectangle. Foreground - All text is in white font. NextGen spans the width of the image with the N and G capitalized. ACB is in capital letters above the word Next. A yellow star is shooting out of the top right corner of the letter x and hovering over the word Gen. Underneath and spanning the width of the word NextGen are the words Develop Lead Elevate (1/3 of the font size of ACB NextGen) with a dot between each word.

Did You Know? One of the greatest ballerinas of all time relied on strategically placed spotlights to find her way around the stage. Alicia Alonso lost sight in both of her eyes at the age of 19 but continued to perform in her native Cuba and all over the world into her late 70s.

Source: perkins.org

President's Message

Dear ACB Next Generation Family,

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. It's hard to believe that by the time you read this message, we will be halfway through February. As I begin this term as president, I take some time to give thanks and to reflect on how much this opportunity means to me. I first want to thank all of the members who participated in the annual business meeting and the election process and for putting your confidence in my ability to serve you in this role. I would also like to thank those who have worked alongside me and those who have encouraged me and helped me along the way as I sought out opportunities for growth and development. I would like to thank Matt Selm, Melanie Sinohui, and Hindley Williams for their service to the ACB Next Generation Board of Directors. I know that for some of you, your service to ACB NextGen or to ACB has not

reached its end but has reached a milestone. I know you will serve in other areas. I also would like to express my appreciation to Amanda Selm for her service as president over the last four years.

As we continue to find stability and rhythm during this period of transition, I am super excited to begin this new chapter in the history of this affiliate. Please join me in welcoming the newly elected officers and directors to our board: First Vice President, Maria Kristic; Second Vice President, Megan Meigs; Secretary, Joseph Hernandez; Treasurer, Monica Carpenter, and Directors Amber Grant and Justin Graben.

As I considered how to write my first president's message, I thought it important to share my hopes and dreams for this affiliate during my term as president. One of my goals for this affiliate is to bring our affiliate into at least one other state. Our Membership Committee has been communicating with other states, and I know that the interest is out there. I would also like to see more members get involved in the work we do within ACB Next Generation. One way you can get involved is by joining one of our committees that help keep this affiliate moving forward. If you would like to know about our committees, please feel free to reach out to us via the contact information at the end of this newsletter. We would love to

chat with you about the amazing work of our committees and help you get connected.

In closing, I am anxious and excited for the future of ACB Next Generation and the opportunities this year may bring. I hope ACB Next Generation can be a safe and welcoming place that helps you to learn new skills, make new friends, and build new connections.

Warmest regards,
Kristen Kelling
President, ACB Next Generation

Membership Renewal Announcement

by ACB NextGen Membership Committee

If you have not yet done so, we encourage you to renew your membership for ACB Next Generation for 2025, and bring a friend along, too. Joining ACB Next Generation not only provides you with access to our numerous member perks, programs, events, and other opportunities, but you can be a part of one of the greatest affiliates in ACB. We hope you will renew, and please encourage your friends to join our growing affiliate this year.

You can renew by completing our membership application at: <https://acbnextgeneration.org/membership/>.

Dues are only \$15 per calendar year or \$150 for a lifetime membership.

If you have any questions or issues, feel free to contact membership@acbnextgeneration.org.

We look forward to another great year with you along for the ride as a member of ACB NextGen!

2024 ACB Next Generation Election Results

ACB Next Generation held an election in December 2024. The following are the results of this election:

Elected by acclimation for two-year terms were:

Kristen Kelling – President

Maria Kristic – First Vice President

Megan Meigs – Second Vice President

Moe Carpenter - Treasurer

New board members elected for one-year terms were:
Amber Grant – Director
Justin Graben – Director

Joseph Hernandez was appointed Secretary by President Kristen Kelling at the January board meeting.

Amendment 2024-05 passed. This amendment clarifies that at-large members who are 40 are able to assume office if elected.

New Board Member Bios

Megan Meigs – 2nd Vice President

Megan Meigs resides in San Leandro, CA with her husband and son, along with her guide dog, her husband's guide dog, and two cats. Originally from Iowa, Megan moved to California in 2005 to attend college where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees in criminal justice. She enjoys being a stay-at-home mom. She has been a member of ACB NextGen for several years and serves on the Awards, Constitution and Bylaws, Convention, and Fundraising Committees. She is also a member of her local ACB chapter and Guide Dog Users International.

Joseph Hernandez – Secretary

Joseph was born and raised in California, now resides in Kentucky, and has Retinopathy of Prematurity. He attended Los Angeles Harbor Community College where he earned three associate degrees in social behavioral health, health and fitness, and arts and humanities. He has worked as a DJ since age 14, and he goes by DJ Vision. He has been active throughout his life, riding bikes, skateboarding, rafting, and writing personal watercraft.

Moe Carpenter – Treasurer

Moe Carpenter returns to the ACB NextGen board as the new Treasurer. Residing in Iowa with her husband and four children, she has been a member of ACB NextGen, the Iowa Council of the United Blind, and ACB Families. She created her “Unseen Strands” YouTube channel about her life as a blind fiber artist. A founding member of Penny Forward, she is working toward becoming an Accredited Financial Counselor and is already becoming the first blind You Need A Budget Certified Spendfulness Coach. She is passionate about helping blind parents find community and is working to develop a chapter of ACB Families for blind parents and parents of blind children. Most recently, she is developing her Money Matters with Moe financial coaching and counseling personality.

Justin Graben – Director

Justin Graben is from Valley, AL. A few of his hobbies include music and amateur radio, or ham radio. He has been involved in ACB NextGen for a little over a year and serves on the Programs and Fundraising Committees.

Tech Grant Recipients

by Amber Grant

In December, the ACB Next Generation Awards Committee awarded three members with a technology grant designed to help them purchase a practical and accessible piece of technology. The winners of the technology grant were as follows:

Janeen Lea of Orlando, FL – Apple iPad

Lisha Pottackal of Cherry Hill, NJ – Meta Smart Glasses

Moe Carpenter of Des Moines, IA – Way Around Air Tags

All three of these winners were awarded the grant at our annual business meeting held in December. If you are interested in applying for our next tech grant, be on the lookout for more information later this year.

Fundraising Update

by ACB NextGen Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is hard at work ready to bring you exciting opportunities to support ACB Next Generation! Here's what's coming up in 2025:

A Relaunch of the Monthly Monetary Support (MMS) Program

Get ready to make a lasting impact by joining the MMS program. This is a simple and effective way to provide ongoing support to ACB Next Generation. Stay tuned for more details!

Snacks for Convention Fundraiser

Our popular convention snack fundraiser is returning in June! Stock up on delicious treats while supporting our mission. More information will be available soon. In July, we will participate in the Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk. This is also a great opportunity where we can work together to raise money not only for ACB NextGen but also for ACB.

Save the Date: General Auction on Sunday, September 7

Mark your calendar for our ACB NextGen Auction! If you'd like to donate an item, please send a description to fundraising@acbnextgeneration.org. Your generosity will help make this event a success!

RaiseRight Year-Round Fundraiser

Remember you can support ACB Next Generation all year long by purchasing gift cards through RaiseRight. For more information, email fundraising@acbnextgeneration.org.

We would also like to thank everyone who has donated time, auction items, or supported any of our fundraisers in any way! We appreciate each and every one of you!

Advocacy Committee Seeks Contributions

by ACB NextGen Advocacy Committee

The ACB Next Generation Advocacy Committee is currently looking for volunteers to assist with our Accessible Gaming Officer position. Those who join this effort would support the officer by engaging in tasks such as conducting research in the field of video game

accessibility, helping individuals become video game consultants, reaching out to studios and developers to provide accessibility feedback, and more.

Any NextGen members who are specifically interested in video game accessibility and would like to either join the Advocacy Committee or contribute to this specific initiative are encouraged to get involved. For more information, please email advocacy@acbnextgeneration.org.

KCBNG Update

Hello everyone from a very cold Kentucky,

I don't know about you all, but we are waiting in anticipation for spring to arrive. Things have been busy and moving along these past few months. First of all, we had elections of officers for our chapter held during our state conference and convention. The following officers were elected: Joey Couch, President; Ben Wright, Vice President; Matt Selm, Secretary; and Samantha Hubbard, Treasurer.

We also passed two amendments to our constitution, the main one being raising the age of 40 to 45 so that we can

draw in new members as well as give extra time for new members to get acclimated with how the organization runs and how they can best fit in.

We are also looking at doing an activity at one of the local bowling alleys toward the first part of March.

Take care and I hope everyone has a great upcoming spring!

Sincerely,

Joey Couch

President, Kentucky Council of the Blind Next Generation

2025 ACB DC Leadership Conference

Source: acb.org

The 2025 American Council of the Blind Leadership Conference will be a hybrid event. ACB's Board Meeting, Presidents' Meeting, Legislative Seminar, and Capitol Hill visits will take place from March 14-18, 2025, at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel in Arlington, VA.

Visit our conference page for details:

<https://www.acb.org/acb-2025-leadership-conference>

To register, log in to your ACB member account at <https://members.acb.org/>. To register by phone, or if you need assistance, call our Minnesota office at 612-332-3242. Please note that we are unable to accept any in-person registrations this year. The deadline to register is Friday, February 28.

This year's Leadership Conference will feature a tour of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) at the Library of Congress on the afternoon of Friday, March 14. Space is limited, so reserve your spot today!

You can book your room at the Sheraton Pentagon City now. The room block cutoff date is Monday, February 17. For more information, click here: <https://www.acb.org/2025-acb-leadership-conference>.

In-Person Schedule of Events

- Friday, March 14: Afternoon Tour (12:45 pm - 2:30 pm ET)
- Saturday, March 15: Board Meeting (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET) & Evening Welcome Reception
- Sunday, March 16: Presidents' Meeting (including luncheon) (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET) & Evening Dine Around in Pentagon City

- Monday, March 17: Legislative Seminar (including luncheon) (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET)
- Tuesday, March 18: Attendees may visit Capitol Hill to meet with their representatives.

Financial Assistance for DC Leadership Conference

by ACB NextGen Membership Committee

The American Council of the Blind DC Leadership Conference is an opportunity for ACB to gather and hear updates on the various advocacy imperatives and issues facing the blind and low vision community. Many state affiliates also take the opportunity to meet with their congressional delegation and ask for their support of proposed legislation.

Registration is \$104 for in-person attendees and \$30 for virtual attendees. You must register by Friday, February 28.

ACB Next Generation is excited to offer financial assistance for its members to attend the DC Leadership Conference. For those who need financial assistance, we will reimburse the preregistration fee of \$104 for in-person

or \$30 for virtual participants to attend DC Leadership. Assistance will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. We anticipate providing assistance for two in-person and five virtual attendees.

In return, we require that you are a currently paid member of ACB Next Generation for 2025 and that you tell us what you found interesting or what you enjoyed about the seminar. You will be asked to participate in an interview about your experience as a guest on our Next Up with NextGen Podcast and to contribute your thoughts in writing to our ACB NextGen blog.

After you register for DC Leadership, please send a copy of your receipt to both treasurer@acbnextgeneration.org and to membership@acbnextgeneration.org. Please note that your reimbursement will be issued after the event in early April and only after we have verified your participation with the podcast and blog.

2025 DKM First-Timer and JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows Awards

By Durward K. McDaniel Fund Committee

If you're looking to take a positive step in your leadership journey or if you're a leader looking to experience a higher level of responsibility, connection, and achievement, the following opportunities might be just for you.

The Durward K. McDaniel (DKM) Fund Committee seeks to identify two ACB members (one from east of the Mississippi River and one from west) as DKM First-Timers and five ACB members who wish to expand their leadership skills as JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows Experience personal growth by participating in the many convention activities while you learn and connect with others during the 64th Annual ACB Conference and Convention from Friday, July 4 through Friday, July 11 in Dallas, Texas. And as a DKM First-Timer or JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellow, you will have the opportunity to connect with previous recipients and other leaders in ACB.

To be eligible for consideration for either award, you must be age 18 or older, blind or visually impaired, and a current ACB member. To be eligible for the DKM First-

Timer Award, you must have never attended an in-person ACB Conference and Convention either as a member or non-member, and you must be a member for at least two consecutive years of an ACB state or special interest affiliate, or an ACB Member At Large serving on an ACB committee. To be eligible for the JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows Award, you must be a member for at least three consecutive years of an ACB state or special interest affiliate, or an ACB Member At Large serving on an ACB committee.

If you meet the above requirements, you are ready to complete the online application form. A recommendation form must also be completed online on your behalf by the president of your referenced qualifying ACB state or special interest affiliate, or if you are an ACB Member At Large, by the chair of the ACB committee on which you serve.

Both the application and recommendation forms must be received by the deadline of April 1, 2025.

The next step includes a 30-minute interview with a team from the DKM Committee in mid-April.

ACB provides recipients round-trip air travel and supporting transportation, hotel accommodations (double

occupancy), per diem allowance for meals and incidentals, reception, banquet tickets, the general convention registration fee, and other activities determined by the committee. Funding for tours and other optional activities are not included in the program.

If chosen, you must arrange for all necessary accommodations that allow for your attendance and full participation in the entire week of in-person convention including attendance at all general sessions and active participation in other predetermined events as well. Selection by the DKM Committee will occur in late April following the review of the application and recommendation forms and interviews. You will be notified shortly thereafter. The process will conclude with two recipients being selected as DKM First-Timers — one from east and one from west of the Mississippi River.

The DKM Committee reserves the right to recognize two recipients from the east or west if there are no qualified applicants from one of the specified areas. All questions should be sent to DKM Committee Chair Zelda Gebhard at zgeb@drtel.net or (701) 709-0262.

We encourage you to take your next step in ACB and apply to become a DKM First-Timer or a JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellow.

Cosmic Committee Corner: Awards Committee

By Amber Grant

The Awards Committee works throughout the year to assist our members of ACB Next Generation with such things as purchasing assistive technology, scholarship opportunities, and much more. Our first key project of the year was the technology grant, which was awarded to three members of our affiliate with financial assistance to purchase the technology of their choosing. Our next project is to implement a scholarship program for students. We also want to award some of our members for their outstanding achievements within the affiliate.

Announcing the ACB NextGen Writing Awards

by ACB NextGen Publications Committee

The Publications and PR Committees are excited to announce a new writing award for 2025! We plan to award two writers for a high-quality article published in either the NextGen Insight newsletter

(<http://acbnextgeneration.org/newsletter>) released in

February, May, August, and November, or on the ACB NextGen blog (<http://acbnextgeneration.org/blog>). The first award will be presented at our midyear meeting in June, and the second will at our annual business meeting in December. Each award will also include a \$50 gift card.

We are looking for articles relevant to blind and visually impaired individuals between the ages of 18 and 40 geared toward college students, young professionals, and younger parents. Examples of topics include advocacy, employment, technology, relationships, sports and recreation, and guide dogs, but we are open to ideas.

To submit an article for consideration or if you have any questions, please e-mail publications@acbnextgeneration.org.

Thank you for your interest!

Blog and Podcast Roundup

In addition to publishing the NextGen Insight, the Publications Committee also produces blog posts and the Next Up with NextGen podcast. Below is a roundup of recent blog and podcast content

Blog Posts

What NextGen Board Members Are Thankful For:

<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2024/11/26/what-nextgen-board-members-are-thankful-for/>

Passion Project Portal: Melanie Sinohui (by Hindley Williams):

<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2024/12/23/passion-project-portal-melanie-sinohui-by-hindley-williams/>

Unlocking Potential: How AI Tools Like Copilot, Google Gemini, and ChatGPT Transform Accessibility (by Jessica Dail and Danielle Stephens):

<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2025/01/27/unlocking-potential-how-ai-tools-like-copilot-google-gemini-and-chatgpt-transform-accessibility-by-jessica-dail-and-danielle-stephens/>

Next Up with NextGen Podcast

An Overview of RaiseRight, a Gift Card Fundraising Platform:

<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2025/01/06/an-overview-of-raiseright-a-gift-card-fundraising-platform/>

Calendar of Events

Everyone is welcome to attend these events by accessing the Zoom mobile app, visiting the Zoom website at <https://zoom.us>, or calling (312) 626-6799, and entering the appropriate meeting ID and passcode.

You may sign up to receive reminders and Zoom details by subscribing to the ACB Next Generation email list.

Please send a blank email to

main+subscribe@acbnextgeneration.groups.io

In addition, many ACB Next Generation events are listed on the ACB Community Call schedule. Please watch your email for program details and possible updates.

February 2025

10 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting – 8 p.m. ET

15 - February NextGen Insight published

18 - Tuesday Night Huddle: SOARing Higher to Our Goal with Guest Speaker Peter Heidi, ACB Board Member – 8 p.m. ET

23 - Game On with NextGen: Don't Get Me Started – 9 p.m. ET

March 2025

10 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting – 8 p.m. ET

18 - Tuesday Night Huddle: Breaking Barriers in Communication with Guests from the International Relations Committee (IRC) and Multicultural Affairs Committee (MCAC) – 8 p.m. ET

30 - Game On with NextGen: Sports Trivia – 9 p.m. ET

April 2025

10 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting – 8 p.m. ET

15 - Tuesday Night Huddle: Pitch Fast and Tell Your Story – 8 p.m. ET

27 - Game On with NextGen: Talent Showcase – 9 p.m. ET

May 2025

10 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting – 8 p.m. ET

13 - Tuesday Night Huddle: Tech It Out Featuring Note Taking Techniques – 8 p.m. ET

15 - May NextGen Insight published

18 - Game On with NextGen: Chain Reaction – 9 p.m. ET

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed in the content of this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of ACB Next Generation as an organization.

The NextGen Insight is published four times per year: (February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15) in a digital format via email and posted to our website the following month. Send newsletter items for consideration to publications@acbnextgeneration.org.

ACB Next Generation Board of Directors

President - Kristen Kelling

1st Vice President - Maria Kristic

2nd Vice President - Megan Meigs

Secretary - Joseph Hernandez

Treasurer - Moe Carpenter

Immediate Past President – Amanda Selm

Director - Michael Babcock

Director - Justin Graben

Director - Amber Grant

Director - Lindsey LaVere

Director - Vika Trussell

How to Reach Us

Email Address: ACBNextGen@gmail.com

Phone Number: (202) 524-0909

Website: <http://www.acbnextgeneration.org>

Social Media:

<http://www.acbnextgeneration.org/contact-us>

ACB NextGen Blog:

<http://www.acbnextgeneration.org/blog>

ACB Next Generation Committees

Interested in joining a committee? Fill out the committee interest form at <https://forms.gle/kNpzgMBW3ZWzPS7S6>

Advocacy/Legislative Committee

Chair: Aaron Espinoza

Contact: advocacy@acbnextgeneration.org

Awards Committee

Chair: Joseph Hernandez

Contact: awards@acbnextgeneration.org

Budget/Finance Committee

Chair: Moe Carpenter

Contact: treasurer@acbnextgeneration.org

Constitution and Bylaws/Resolutions Committee

Chair: Matt Selm

Contact: constitution@acbnextgeneration.org

Convention Committee

Chair: Amanda Selm

Contact: convention@acbnextgeneration.org

Fundraising Committee

Co-Chairs: Moe Carpenter and Lindsey LaVere

Contact: fundraising@acbnextgeneration.org

Membership Committee

Chair: Matt Selm

Contact: membership@acbnextgeneration.org

Nominating Committee

Chair: TBD in Q4 2025

Contact: elections@acbnextgeneration.org

Programs Committee

Chair: Amanda Selm

Contact: programs@acbnextgeneration.org

Public Relations and eCommunications Committee

Chair: Vika Trussell

Contact: pr@acbnextgeneration.org

Publications Committee

Chair: Greg Lindberg

Contact: publications@acbnextgeneration.org

Website Committee

Chair: Michael Babcock

Contact: website@acbnextgeneration.org