



“THE BLIND SPOT”

Oklahoma Council of the Blind

Affiliate of the American Council of the Blind

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MISSION STATEMENT

**To promote equal opportunities for blind Oklahomans
to participate fully in society and achieve a better
quality**

Debbie Sanders, Editor

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Holidays, everyone! As your president, Elaine Boykin, I just wanted to reflect on some of our accomplishments this year at OCB. We had a fantastic time hosting a table at Disability Awareness Day, sent some of our members to the ACB National Convention, and worked hard on improving our bylaws and constitution. We also had a very successful state convention in Oklahoma City at the end of September. We are also already looking forward to heading to Tulsa next year for the 2026 state convention. It's been a wonderful year, and I'm so proud of all we've done together. Wishing you all a joyful holiday season.

FROM THE EDITOR

As we enter this holiday season, I want to extend warm wishes to each of you. May your days be filled with warmth, peace, and the simple joys that make this time of year so meaningful—twinkling lights, shared meals, and moments of laughter with those you hold dear. Our organization has so much to be thankful for, especially the dedication, resilience, and community spirit that continue to shape who we are.

This year's convention brought several important updates, including revisions to our dues structure and significant additions and changes to the constitution and bylaws. While change can sometimes feel challenging, these decisions were thoughtfully considered and approved by the membership to strengthen our foundation and prepare us for the future. We are grateful for all who serve and look forward to seeing new leaders step forward as we continue growing together.

It is truly a blessing for me to serve in this capacity as Editor. I know I'm filling some very big shoes—Vicki Golightly has given countless years of faithful service, and it was wonderful to see her honored at the convention. Her influence and commitment set a high standard, and I am grateful for the opportunity to help carry that work forward.

As we celebrate the season of hope and light, may your homes be filled with comfort, your hearts with gratitude, and the coming year with fresh possibilities and brighter days ahead.

NEWS FROM OUR CHAPTERS

Lawton Council of the Blind

The Lawton Council of the Blind is excited to participate in this year's Christmas Parade, which will be held in Lawton on November 22 at 6:30 PM! We will also host our annual Christmas party on December 13 at 12 PM, featuring a potluck lunch and fun holiday games.

We are looking forward to welcoming guest speakers at our January, February, and March meetings as we kick off the new year.

**Our new officers for the upcoming term are:
Dana Young, President; Debbie Hendrix, Vice President;
Robert Y, Treasurer; Paula Smith, Secretary; Board Members
at Large: Brittany Donnelly, Jeromy Love, and Rae
FitzPatrick.**

**Sincerely,
Dana Young
President, Lawton Council of the Blind**

Tulsa Council of the Blind Roundup News

Well, howdy there, cowboys and cowgirls! Go ahead and mark them calendars for September 25–27, 2026, because the Tulsa Council of the Blind (TCB) will be saddling up to

host the 2026 Oklahoma Council of the Blind (OCB) State Convention. Everyone's welcome to join this grand ol' roundup!

The Program Committee is rustlin' up a mighty fine lineup of speakers, events, and good-time activities sure to please every ranch hand and city slicker alike. So hitch up your wagon, grab your hat, and plan to join in the fun!

At our recent election, we're proud to announce the new 2026 TCB officers: President: Marilyn Sanders; Vice President: Joyce Southerland; Secretary: Debbie Sanders; Treasurer: Julie Bailey; Board Members: Paul Shelton and Julie Brantley.

Our meetings are held the first Monday of each month via Zoom. If you're not yet on the TCB mailing list, just send a holler over to, and we'll get you added quicker than a tumbleweed in a windstorm.

And don't forget, partners—we're planning a special Christmas-themed program on December 1, 2026. It's sure to be a festive hoedown full of cheer and cowboy spirit.

So dust off them boots and come ride with us as we round up another great year together with the Tulsa Council of the Blind!

2025 OCB CONVENTION SUMMARY

by Vicky Golightly

Approximately 75 people assembled at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Oklahoma City on September 26-28 2025 for the 2025 Oklahoma Council of the Blind Conference and convention. The theme was "Seizing Possibilities with OCB", which meant anything is possible when there's an enthusiastic, dedicated, and fun-loving group gathered in one place to work, imagine, laugh, support the auctions, and create new initiatives and possibilities.

Koni Sims, American Council of the Blind (ACB) Board member, joined us throughout the weekend with words of inspiration, an update of the latest happenings at ACB, and shared her personal story at the Saturday night banquet. Koni is from South Dakota, and we don't have enough space to review all of Koni's resume. Let's just say her career pursuits include sports and recreation, and her list of accomplishments on behalf of people who are blind or who have low vision on a state and national and federal level are many and impressive.

Programming on Friday included an overview of South Dakota services for the blind by Koni, an informative session on pertinent state and national legislation by Jennifer Hardin, Department of Rehabilitation Services legislative liaison, an overview of curriculum and services offered by the Hadley School for the Blind with Sarah Gerdes, Outreach and Development Specialist, an inspirational personal story spoken from the heart by SBVI counselor Hannah Dangle, and a presentation by T. L. Murdock, an Integris physical therapist, who shared information on traumatic brain injury in general and in particular to people who are blind or who have low vision.

After a delicious dinner provided by the Heartland Council of the Blind, the OCB Convention was called to order followed by welcoming convention first-timers, fellowship, laughter and competitive games.

The Saturday festivities began with the presentation of colors by the American Legion Post 12 and a welcome by President Elaine Boykin. Exhibits and a silent auction were ongoing throughout the day. After agency updates, SBVI Counselor Allison Freeman shared tips for dressing for success for a job or any interview. Following lunch, ABLE Tech passed out new products for the audience to see, and

Koni spoke about the importance of exercise and recreation which included audience participation.

Koni was the featured banquet speaker, with a motivational speech entitled "Resilience, Advocacy and the Courage to Dream". Our own Tom Love served as our banquet emcee. Allison Freeman received the LeRoy F. Saunders award, and Vicky Golightly was the recipient of the Gordon P. Stephens Award.

Then the fun and friendly competition began with OCB's customary live auction, where we all bid up, up, and, believe it or not, even higher on items, and then slapped ourselves in the face for bidding up and up! Ah, what can we say? It all goes to our wonderful OCB, and we all wanted to "Seize Possibilities"!!!

The most important session is always on Sunday morning. The president's report, minutes, and treasurer's reports were read and adopted; resolutions were heard and adopted, a new board was elected, and two documents were adopted, our new constitution and a separate bylaws document. Thanks to everyone who worked on preparing and presenting the constitution and bylaws documents, an intensive task of love and dedication.

The convention next year will be in Tulsa. Convention Chair, Marilyn Sanders and her committee, believe it or not, are planning to out do the 2025 convention with some yeehaw cowboy fun, and my bets are on them doing just that.

OCB COOKBOOK FUNDRAISER

By Joseph Bundy, Fundraising Chair

When you support one of our fundraisers like the OCB cookbook you are doing more than just purchasing an item. You are becoming part of a community effort that makes a real difference. The cookbook itself was a labor of love filled with recipes from our members and friends, each one representing connection, care, and creativity. Fundraisers like this helps us expand our programs and continue providing meaning opportunities to our blind and visually impaired community. Every purchase, every donation and every bit of involvement helps us grow and serve more people. We hope you will consider getting involved. By supporting fundraising, volunteering or simply spreading the word of what we are doing, together we can continue building a stronger, and more inclusive future. Check out the okcb.org website for full details.

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NEXT GEN

By Dana Young and Joseph Bundy

The Oklahoma Council of the Blind Next Generation is a committee whose purpose is to strive to reach and encourage younger individuals to become a part of the Oklahoma Council of the Blind. The last couple of years, they have helped with entertainment for the annual state convention. This year, they hosted a game night with a cornhole tournament, a bop-it tournament, and simple different games. The Next Generation Committee has already volunteered to provide the entertainment for the 2026 state convention in Tulsa, and we do not think you would want to miss what we have planned.

Next Gen is also currently still hosting their Fiction and Fizz book club on WhatsApp the third Friday of the month at 7:30 PM. If you would like to join, please let us know. All members are welcome. Contact Joseph Bundy or Debbie Sanders for the WhatsApp invite to the group.

If you would like to learn more or participate in one of our activities, or become a part of the committee, please do not hesitate to reach out. You can contact any of our committee

members, which are Dana Young, Megan Rowan, Rae Fitzpatrick, Debbie Sanders, or Joseph Bundy.

We welcome all ages to join in the fun, but our main focus is to reach the younger or next generation of people to be leaders and workers in OCB.

AROUND THE STATE

(What's happening around the state for the blind community).

Jeri's House

Jeri's House has had a full and meaningful season, beginning with a wonderful Thanksgiving social where residents, neighbors, and SSPs gathered for food, games, and community. The organization continues expanding its services, now offering weekly DeafBlind-focused vlogs on multiple social platforms, participating in events like the Oklahoma School for the Blind's Cane Quest, and holding twice-monthly Bible studies to support individuals who cannot easily access church due to transportation or communication barriers. JH emphasizes the importance of socials and community engagement for those with dual

sensory loss and remains committed to fostering independence and connection.

Excitement is building for the upcoming December 6 Christmas social, which includes a hands-on tour at the Military Museum, a group meal, and a party-bus trip to see Rhema Bible College's three-million-light display. Community support continues through fundraisers like the Jason's Deli event on December 9, where proceeds benefit Jeri's House and attendees can meet staff, purchase shirts, and receive a signed copy of Eyes of My Heart. Donations through the website, PayPal, or Venmo are welcomed, especially as JH raises funds to repair fencing and make the backyard more accessible.

With services and needs steadily growing, Jeri's House is seeking volunteers for tasks such as transportation to Bible study, gardening, interpreting, and general support for DeafBlind residents. Financial gifts—one-time or monthly—help sustain programs, socials, training, and community outreach. The newsletter closes with gratitude for the ongoing support that allows JH to continue serving and growing its mission.

MLV Foundation

There's a lot happening across our community, and we invite you to stay connected as we head into the new year.

The Seeing Without Limits Podcast is now available on Alexa and Apple Podcasts. Recent episodes include “Let’s Talk White Canes” with Debi Trout (O&M instructor for SVBI of Oklahoma), “Beyond the Harness: Discovering Leader Dogs for the Blind,” and our holiday shopping episode covering accessible tools like Walmart, Target, Instacart, InnoSearch, and Be My Eyes. Be sure to subscribe and listen in.

The MOKA Conference for the Blind will be held May 26–28, 2026. Early Bird registration is \$125 through the end of the year, and payment arrangements are available through February. Keynote speakers include Scott Thornhill and Wilma Chestnut-House. Meal tickets are \$175, and a transportation scholarship provides up to \$100 for gas or rideshare reimbursement. AER/ACVREP CEUs will also be available for professionals needing continuing education credits. Visit mokacfb.com for full details. MOKACFB offers breakout sessions, keynote presentations, exhibitors, and social opportunities for anyone on the blindness journey.

The Orbit Training Center for the Blind will soon begin scheduling new training sessions for the coming year. Watch for updates at orbitcenter.net.

During the recent government shutdown, the MLV Foundation was able to provide food baskets to several in our blind community in need thanks to generous donors. To stay updated or learn more about what we do, follow us at facebook.com/MLVFoundation or visit mlvfoundation.org.

Oklahoma AER

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (OAER) supports professionals serving people of all ages who are blind or visually impaired. Through AER eLearning, members have free access to online courses that keep them current with trends in the field while earning ACVREP CE credits (and CRCC credits for select courses). All sessions and ACVREP CEs are included with AER membership; courses can be found at www.aerelearning.org.

OAER also partners with Oklahoma-based organizations by offering ACVREP CEUs for workshops and trainings in blindness and low vision.

Interested organizations can email okaerbvi@gmail.com for details. OAER invites O&M specialists, TVIs, LVTs, VRTs, administrators, students, and others in the field to join or renew their membership—“There’s no place like AER!” Membership connects professionals to a community of excellence that strengthens their practice and career.

The chapter is currently working on a merger with the Arkansas AER chapter and has been busy drafting new bylaws. Members are encouraged to review the proposed bylaws at <https://sites.google.com/view/okaerbvi/home> and send comments or feedback to okaerbvi@gmail.com.

Oklahoma School for the Blind

The Oklahoma School for the Blind began the fall semester with a wide range of student leadership, enrichment, and community-building events. Students participated in the FCCLA Lead Conference, attended by chapter officers and future leaders who gained new skills and inspiration. OSB also welcomed visitors from the Oklahoma House Legislative Finance Committee for a

student-led campus tour and hosted several school-wide highlights such as Caught Being Good recognitions and preparations for the upcoming Ricochet Foundation Fundraiser concert. The annual Western Heritage Day at Silver Spur Ranch gave students hands-on outdoor experiences, including roping, riding, climbing, and fishing, while See You at the Pole brought together students, staff, law enforcement, and community guests for a morning of music, prayer, and reflection.

OSB continued to emphasize health, wellness, and positive school culture through Healthy Schools Oklahoma, which included monthly challenges centered on friendship, kindness, courage, gratitude, and joy. Recreational life on campus was equally full, with activities ranging from welcome-back celebrations, concerts by the European Academy of Music and Art, off-campus trips, crafts, birthday celebrations, and bingo hosted by Tulsa Delta Gamma.

Academics and career readiness remained at the forefront this fall. Students attended the Connors State College Fair, exploring colleges, military branches, and career pathways. The Future Shock Resource Fair brought together students, families, and professionals for transition planning, pre-employment training, and resource networking, while quotes

from participants underscored the event's impact. OSB also hosted its first blood drive of the school year, collecting 11 donations that have the potential to save 33 lives.

Looking ahead, OSB has a busy and exciting spring on the horizon. Upcoming events include the next blood drives in January and April, continued choir visits to nursing homes and community partners, and additional recreational outings. Transition and employment resources will continue through DRS and Pre-ETS. Spring will also bring more monthly wellness challenges, campus activities, and academic events designed to support students' independence, confidence, and future planning. As always, OSB remains committed to creating an environment where students can grow, explore, and build the skills they need for life beyond high school.

Wilderness Adventures Ministry (WAM)

WAM has been working hard to finish the year strong. This year has been different for them as they had to make some changes and restructure things, but they are looking forward to 2026 and have several ideas for events that they are strategizing how they can put them together.

This WAM partnered with the MLV Foundation to host Hooks, a fishing event that MLV Foundation has been doing for several years but this was the first time that it was made into a weekend event. And, what a blast it was. There were twenty of us, including leaders and volunteers, but it was so much fun. We hosted it at the Roaring River State Park in Missouri, and we got a tour of the trout hatchery and learned how they stock the river. There were a lot of things that we learned and had no idea about. They even let us feed the fish, which was a very cool experience.

At this time, WAM is finishing the year with their annual silent auction fundraiser, on December 12.

To learn more about Wilderness Adventures Ministry or to check out what events we have coming out, you can visit waministry.org or www.facebook.com/wildernessadventuresministry. While you are on our website, you can sign up for our newsletter to make sure you are first to hear about what we have going on.

5 TIPS FOR STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY COOKING

Simple ways to save time, stay organized, and actually enjoy the season.

The holidays are meant to be joyful, but let's be honest—kitchen chaos can steal some of that cheer. Between juggling meals, gatherings, and last-minute plans, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. The good news? A few simple strategies can make holiday cooking smoother, faster, and far less stressful. Here are five practical tips to help you keep your sanity while still serving up delicious memories.

1. Prep Ahead Like a Pro

Chopping vegetables, browning meat, washing produce, and measuring spices can all be done days before your big meal. Store prepped ingredients in labeled containers so cooking day becomes “assemble and heat” instead of “start from scratch.” Even desserts like fudge, cookie dough, and pies can be made ahead without losing quality.

2. Simplify Your Menu

You don't need five side dishes, three desserts, and two appetizers to impress. Choose recipes that are reliably easy,

use similar ingredients, or can cook at the same temperature. A smaller, smarter menu makes shopping quicker and reduces the stress of juggling oven space or last-minute surprises.

3. Use Time-Saving Appliances

Microwaves, slow cookers, air fryers, and electric pressure cookers can be lifesavers during the holidays. Make mashed potatoes in the slow cooker, reheat gravy in the microwave, crisp rolls in the air fryer, or cook meats quickly in a pressure cooker. Spreading the workload across multiple appliances reduces traffic jams in the kitchen.

4. Clean as You Go

A clean kitchen feels calmer. Keep a sink of hot, soapy water ready and wash dishes or wipe counters while food cooks. This keeps messes from piling up and makes post-meal cleanup faster. A tidy workspace also helps you find what you need without scrambling.

5. Make It a Team Effort

Holiday meals don't have to rest on one person's shoulders. Invite family or guests to bring a favorite dish, set the table, chop veggies, or keep an eye on the oven timer. Most people want to help—they just need to be asked.

Sharing the responsibility makes the experience more fun and meaningful.

Final Thought:

The heart of the holidays isn't found in perfect pies or picture-worthy tables—it's found in the moments shared with the people you love. Give yourself permission to let go of perfection and embrace what really matters. With a little planning and these time-saving strategies, your holiday cooking can be both delicious and stress-free.

CHRISTMAS RECIPES

Microwave Christmas Fudge

Ingredients:

1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk

2 cups chocolate chips (milk or semi-sweet)

1 tsp vanilla (optional)

Directions:

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate chips and condensed milk.

2. Microwave 1 minute, stir, then continue heating in 20-second intervals until smooth.

3. Stir in vanilla.

4. Spread mixture into a parchment-lined dish.

5. Add Christmas sprinkles on top.

6. Chill 1–2 hours, slice, and enjoy!

Easy Microwave Peanut Brittle

Ingredients:

1 cup sugar

½ cup light corn syrup

1 cup dry roasted peanuts (unsalted or lightly salted)

1 tsp vanilla

1 tsp baking soda

1 tbsp butter

Directions:

1. In a large microwave-safe bowl, stir together sugar and corn syrup.

2. Microwave 4 minutes on high.

3. Stir in the peanuts and microwave 3 more minutes, until light golden.

4. Add butter and vanilla; stir well.

5. Microwave 1½ minutes more.

6. Add baking soda and stir quickly—the mixture will foam and lighten.

7. Immediately pour onto a greased cookie sheet or parchment paper and spread thin.

8. Cool completely, then break into pieces.

Notes:

Works best in a large bowl to prevent bubbling over.