

## **News You Can Use - May 2016 Edition**

### **Welcome to our second addition of News You Can Use from The Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind**

I'm Blake Lindsay the manager of communications. For those of you who missed our first April addition, I am a longtime radio broadcaster and author of the book titled Blind for a Purpose. Turning life challenges into Purpose in life. I've been blind since infancy. I'm passionate about staying current on assistive technology and educational events supporting people with visual impairment. I also gain inspiration through success stories. I'm happy to observe that people who are sighted as well find value on these topics. Our newsletter will identify these subjects, along with expansions in our services, and special activities which include you. Thank you for spreading **News You Can Use** to your families and friends.

### **Website and Mobile Application**

SPARTANBURG, S.C., 2016 - Denny's Corporation (NASDAQ: DENN),

One of America's largest franchised full-service restaurant chains Denny's, web site and mobile application have been redesigned to meet new guidelines issued by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), making each platform available to and usable by all patrons, including those who are blind. "We congratulate Denny's on upgrading its mobile app and website. Our members applaud the company on recognizing the diversity of its customer base" said Kim Charlson, President of the American Council of the Blind (ACB). Denny's worked with consumers with visual disabilities to gain functionality feedback that would impact the improved website and mobile application. Using critical user response, Denny's was able to tailor the functions of each platform to ensure they are readily accessible and useable without assistance. Lisa Irving, a long time Denny's patron in Southern California, was involved in the effort. "I appreciate improvements the company has made to its website and mobile app," says Irving. "As a result of Denny's upgrades I am now able to read the menu without assistance and to make healthy choices, something I really value." The implemented guidelines are of particular benefit to visually impaired computer and mobile app users who rely on screen reader voice output or magnification technology and who, like others, rely on a keyboard instead of a mouse for computer navigation.

### **Southwest Airlines Outstanding Support and Community Spirit**

Last month a group for Southwest Airlines visited with the Dallas Lighthouse to help brighten the appearance. According to McElroy, "Southwest Airlines has an incredible sense of community service that through their welcome support refreshed our courtyard garden with beautiful flowers and plants and repainted our factory entrance to make it look brand new. Hats off to SWA and all its associates for being a great company that is also active and supportive of others." THANK YOU TO: **Andrea Cavanagh** Advisor, Volunteerism, Community Outreach Southwest for coordinating these helpful and appreciated efforts.

## **Matt King, Facebook's first blind engineer**

One billion people, check their Facebook feeds every day, mindlessly scrolling through texts and photos to keep up with friends and family. Matt King joined Facebook in June as the company's first blind engineer to make sure millions of visually impaired Internet users around the world are not handicapped in their personal relationships simply because they can't do the same. King unveils the result of the first big project he's been a part of at Facebook. The same mechanical voice uses artificial intelligence to identify broad but crucial elements of the friend's photograph. The image, it says, "may contain sky, tree and outdoor." A second photograph from another Facebook contact is said to include "pizza". Vague, sure, but at least it tells you something to keep you in the loop — more than that dark screen.

This AI-powered tool [officially released](#) in its applications, is part of what Paul Schroeder, VP of programs and policy at the American Foundation for the Blind, described to me as a "tipping point with accessibility." The same technology that some scoff at or even fear today — artificial intelligence, self-driving cars, voice-powered personal assistants and robotics — could fundamentally transform the lives of the visually impaired in the coming years. As a member of an accessibility team at the world's largest social network, and one of the few engineers anywhere in Silicon Valley with first-hand experience of blindness, King has the potential to shape the broader conversation and influence products built by other technology companies for the visually impaired. Both [Microsoft](#) and [Twitter](#) announced tools similar to the one King has been working on at Facebook for months. More than many others tackling this problem, it is deeply personal for King. He wants to be able to work and live online and offline just as well as anyone else.

"I've always had a competitive streak,". As a result, he continues to set new standards, both technologically and physically, for what visually impaired people everywhere can accomplish. King has pushed himself physically to set racing records as a bicyclist. He has put in the hours to study how to play the pipe organ. He designed and built a house for his family. And he has worked as an engineer at some of the biggest and most revered technology companies around. Meeting others who'd lost their vision while in college and through the National Federation of the Blind mentored him and showed you could "lead great lives while blind."

## **Topnotch Technology Training for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

There are 4 State Approved Instructors, teaching assistive technology at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind. Whether you are learning computers for the first time, or you want your technology skills to shine, our experts are equipped to get you there. Your instructor will be blind or visually impaired, enabling them to relate with your vision impairment. The DLB technology instructors can also teach you to be competent IOS users with Apple products utilizing voice over feature.

Call Brad Snyder, at (214) 420-9439 to learn more. Get set to grow your technology skills.

## **Inexpensive Computers for the Blind in Excellent Condition From David Jeppson - Executive Director**

Although our expenses have increased, we are keeping the computer prices the same.

- \$110 for a desktop
- \$160 for a laptop
- All computers are custom made to meet consumer needs for accessibility. Options include:
  - NVDA and JAWS demo screen readers
  - Fully licensed copy of MAGic screen magnification software valued at \$395
  - Large flat screen monitors, speakers, mouse, keyboard, etc.
  - Free shipping
  - All the necessary software to access the internet, do word processing, e-mail, Facebook, etc.
- We continue to accept purchase orders. Several state agencies for the blind are now saving thousands of dollars on assistive technology for their consumers.

**Contact info:** [www.computersfortheblind.net](http://www.computersfortheblind.net)  
[info@computersfortheblind.net](mailto:info@computersfortheblind.net)  
214-340-6328

Computers for the Blind - [www.computersfortheblind.net](http://www.computersfortheblind.net)  
[djeppson@computersfortheblind.net](mailto:djeppson@computersfortheblind.net)

## **Woman Sees For the First Time in Years Thanks to Bionic Eye**

More than a decade after losing her eyesight, Carmen Torres can finally see again, thanks to a bionic eye and a first-of-its-kind surgery. "[I was happy and I was just laughing like crazy,](#)" Torres told reporters at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, describing what it felt like to see light after so many years in the dark. "It was very emotional but I'm very strong, I didn't cry." Torres, 58, began losing her sight at the age of 18 due to [retinitis pigmentosa](#), a degenerative genetic disease in which eyesight degrades over time. By the time she reached 45 [she was completely blind](#), the Miami Herald reports. Things began to look up in November of last year, when Torres underwent a procedure to install the [Argus II Retinal Prosthesis System](#), in the first surgery of its kind in Florida. Her doctor acknowledged the procedure itself was fairly complicated and involved many intricate steps. "[It's a meticulous technique,](#)" [Dr. Nina Gregori told reporters](#), one that requires "exact, precise measurements of where to place these components on the eye and we really took our time."

The system works by translating images from a small video camera affixed to Torres' glasses into electrical signals, which are then beamed to a tiny implant in her eye. Those electrical impulses stimulate the retina and the brain interprets them as light, allowing Torres to "see." Only about 100 patients worldwide have received the implant so far, [according to the hospital](#). The system received approval from the Food and Drug Administration in 2013. Over time, Torres learned how to understand the visuals -- which she said was like learning a new language -- and she's now able to engage in all manner of activities, including playing with her grandson, reports Miami's 7News. Now, nine months after the surgery, Torres can,

for the first time in more than a decade, see things like sidewalks and buildings. When she gazes at the night sky, she can even see the stars.

## **Come Have Fun**

Join your friends at Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, for Bingo night, Friday, May 20th. Food, prizes, and plenty of fellowship. Bingo is on the third Friday evening of the month from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. We'll look forward to hearing and seeing you soon.

NFB Dallas Chapter Invitation

Join us for our Seminar taking place on Saturday, May 14th, from 1:30-3:30pm at Central Market 5750 E. Lovers Lane, Dallas, TX 75206, in the Community Room upstairs. Some topics we plan to discuss will be services of the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, the Talking Book Program at the Texas State Library, the DART Travel Training Program, and News line. Light refreshments will be available. Please RSVP by May 7th so we can estimate refreshments. It's a good idea to have your ride drop you off at the entrance marked "Cafe" as this is closest to the elevator and stairs leading to the Community Room. Rhanda Hasley may be reached for further info, at [rhanda.hasley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rhanda.hasley@sbcglobal.net)

## **Netflix Agrees To Add Audio Description to Many of Its Shows and DVD Rentals By Kevin Fritz and Minh Vu**

In what has been deemed the first of its kind, Netflix has entered into an agreement with the American Council of the Blind, the Massachusetts-based Bay State Council of the Blind, and a blind individual to add "audio descriptions" to many of the programs offered on its video streaming and DVD rental service. "Audio description" is narration added to the soundtrack of a video that describes important visual details that cannot be understood by viewers who are blind from the main soundtrack alone. Under the agreement, by December 31, 2016, Netflix will provide audio description for many popular titles in its streaming and disc rental libraries, as well as "Netflix Original" shows such as Orange is the New Black and House of Cards. If Netflix does not control the audio description rights to a title, it will "make commercially reasonable efforts to secure and offer audio description." Adding audio descriptions to soundtracks describing what is happening visually on the screen can be more challenging than adding closed captioning for the deaf. Closed captioning translates the words and sounds on soundtrack into captions and requires little to no interpretation. Audio descriptions, on the other hand, require a description of what is going on visually and can be a much more subjective exercise.

Netflix will also make its website and mobile application accessible to individuals who are blind and use screen-reading software to access its site and app. The agreement adopts the British Broadcasting Corporation's Mobile Accessibility Standards and Guidelines version 1.0 ("BBC Standard") as the accessible standard for the mobile application. In 2012 Netflix entered into a consent decree with the National Association of the Deaf which brought suit under Title III of the ADA because Netflix allegedly did not providing adequate closed captioning on its video streaming service. As a result of that decree, 100% of Netflix's US-based On-demand Streaming Content is now captioned or subtitled. It appears that when

approached by disability rights advocates this time around, Netflix decided to work with them rather than litigate. The agreement is part of a continuing trend in which businesses are voluntarily taking action to make their websites and mobile applications more accessible.

## **The Dallas Lighthouse News**

The Dallas Lighthouse is celebrating its 85<sup>th</sup> year in 2016. And under the new leadership of CEO Hugh McElroy; it is engaged in positive transformation. The Dallas Lighthouse serves 11 counties and over 150,000 people who are blind and visually impaired. To prepare for the explosive growth and the influx of 1500 new families each month into North Texas, which will double the blind and visually impaired over the next ten years there is need to expand our accessibility, support services and job opportunities. Main campus refurbishments, increasing the capacity of our assistive technology area, job coaching, training department and our manufacturing capacity are already underway. Stay tuned to our newsletters for updates on the Dallas Lighthouse.

## **Monthly Thought presented by a Hospital Chaplin**

My brother and I like sports related movies. We have seen almost all of the Rocky movies together. As many of you know, some editions were better than others. All had inspirational moments and motivational lines. The quote below comes from what was thought to be the last movie, Rocky Balboa, with these characters. However they kept with the characters and made a new movie that was released recently called Creed. (It's on our list.) In Rocky Balboa, Rocky is trying to be a good father to his son, who is played by his real son in the movie. The quote below is one of those touching, inspiring father-son talks. Whether you are a parent or not, this quote can motivate you and how you deal with difficult situations in life.

"Nobody is gonna hit as hard as life, but it ain't how hard you can hit. It's how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. It's how much you can take, and keep moving forward.

That's how winning's done."

[Rocky Balboa]

## **Jobs At The Dallas Lighthouse For The Blind**

**There are 6 careers to consider.**

Purchasing Manager

Warehouse Admin.

Assembler

Assemblers

Community Outreach Specialist

Technology Instructor

**If interested, please reach Melissa Hildebrand, HR Director. Email [Melissa.hildebrand@dallaslighthouse.org](mailto:Melissa.hildebrand@dallaslighthouse.org)**

### **Your Input...**

Do you have an upcoming event you want our readers to know? Email or call me with the info we'll spread the news. What are your favorite topics? If you have a personal story to share, please email or call me with the most convenient time for an interview. Make comments and suggestions by emailing [info@dallaslighthouse.org](mailto:info@dallaslighthouse.org)

call me, at (214) 420-9419.

Stay tuned for more **news you can use**, for the blind, visually impaired, and beyond.

**Blake Lindsay**

*Manager, Communications*

**Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind**

Direct Line: 214.420.9419

4306 Capitol Avenue, Dallas TX, 75204

[www.dallaslighthouse.org](http://www.dallaslighthouse.org)