President’s Q2 Report

June 30th, 2024

Dear FDBA Family members,

Hello Sunshines! Wow, Summer is already here in the State of Florida - Time flew so fast before we knew it. Our amazing Board of Directors and I had been super, super busy arranging our FDBA’s State Meeting and 20th Anniversary Celebration. Mission accomplished! Thank you, board, for all your hard work and amazing teamwork. We had a very rich experience with FDBA’s first field trip and Carble tournament in History. Excellent job, Board! I am very proud of you all with full support and love for FDBA. You all Rock!

From my last report, I mentioned that Mr Secretary, Jesse and I went to visit Fort Myers back in January – Jesse met a CEO, Holly Shaffer who helped Jesse to connect me to an amazing Tour Guides, Karen Maxwell - Karen and I really enjoyed discussing with so many ideas within six weeks before State Meeting, Karen is amazing because she has tons of motivation in learning more about DeafBlind Community.

Last March. I appointed a new assistant, Tracie Inman, because Secretary Jesse and I had our full plates to do so many things to do. We appreciate all her help with writing invitation letters to many vendors and submitting the forms. Jesse and I had learned so much from her within eight weeks before the big event. Thank you, Tracie, for all your help and it was a success.

One of my new favorite quote:

“You make the difference! Together we make an amazing difference!”

Last May 17th, most of the members headed to Edison and Ford Estates for the tour of grounds and museum. We learned a lot, especially about Thomas Edison. Some of us were amazed to learn that the famous inventor is Deaf and that he appreciates music by resting his teeth on his musical instrument, the phonograph - his invention! The tour guides, Karen Maxwell and Fred Rubino, did a wonderful job arranging tactile experience on various plants and trees throughout the beautiful estate and brought in various plants, a variety of flowers, pieces of diverse tree and bark in air-conditioned cottage for our DeafBlind folks to touch and smell all the delightful fragrances and feel the character of all numerous vegetation. It put smiles on many faces, it was an enlightening moment.

Kudos to Holly Shaffer, Karen Maxwell and Fred Rubino at Edison and Ford Estates for their thoughtful and enjoyable experience for our members. They even provided free water for all of us, which was greatly appreciated, especially during hot weather. They also gave us coconut water, fresh out of their coconuts grown on their estate. The taste experience is unique! Our interpreters, Hannah Rutherford and Sarah Blasko did a tremendous job and so did the CoNavigators. This was our first field trip in our FDBA state meeting history.+

We held our first Carble tournament in DeafBlind history on Friday night. Everyone enjoyed playing the game and we were happy to teach this wonderful DeafBlind friendly game to anyone new. We thank with all of our heart to Ed Borrone who made this event possible. He made all of those wooden game boards and pegs

We had six boards with three or four players on each board. Six winners, one from each board joined the championship round which was held on Saturday night.

We all truly loved playing the game and it’s smashing success!

Friday Night first round winners: Edward “Buddy” Shepherd, Mary Christopher, Kimberly Williams, David Williams (He gave his place to Winfield Sainpreux), Karen Shepherd, and Vicky Magliocchino

Saturday Night Championship round winners:

1st: Edward “Buddy” Shepherd - $150, 2nd: Vicky Magliocchino - $100 and 3rd: Mary Christopher - $50

Congratulations to our first Carble tournament winners! We are looking forward to more Carble tournaments in the future!

On Saturday, May 18th, I held a PT Style meeting in a conference room at Drury Inn in Fort Myers, FL. I connected with members individually to share our FDBA agenda and in private if necessary for their feedback, address their needs and concerns. Most members provided positive feedback on FDBA. I thanked them for their support and loyalty to FDBA.

I had made a possible collaboration with Massachusetts DeafBlind Association regarding assistance on writing grants for FDBA. They have experience with grants and they have connections with charities, like Lion Club, Shriners, Kennedy Foundation, etc. who can provide funds for grants.

I also have made a possible collaboration with the Minnesota DeafBlind Association to help out each other and perhaps arrange Carble tournaments between our associations in the future.

During the meeting, we collected $305 in raffle sales. $150 of the raffle sales went to the prizes, netting $155 raised. We gained $55 in membership dues and donations. We collected $480 for the Carble tournament and paid $300 for prizes, netting $180 raised for FDBA. We also raised a total of $461 for the silent auction. Four members donated their handmade items, products and artwork for the auction.

Items donated by Ed Borrone - Carble game board, President Wall - Carry Case for Carble, Scentsy Basket Gift, and her artwork “Coastal Love”, David Ennis - his artwork “Hellos” and “Seeds for the Big Dream”, and Karen Shepherd - Handmade Quilts. Thank you, Ed, David and Karen for donating to support FDBA.

David Ennis and Kathryn Zarate hosted the FDBA Trivia for members to play. Jagannath Einhorn got the most correct answers and won a $25 Starbucks gift card which was donated by David Ennis. It was so much fun for everyone. Thank you, David and Kathryn for doing the Trivia game.

We celebrated the 20th FDBA anniversary event by providing cupcakes and appetizers after dinner. I gave a heart warming message for wonderful support from all of our members. We thank with all of our heart to Martin Zarate and Vice President Kathryn Zarate for their generous donation of delicious dessert and charcuterie. They also surprised me with a birthday cake on Friday night. Thank you all for wishing me happy birthday with smiles.

I announced that the next FDBA state meeting will be held in Tallahassee next year. Stay tuned!

I would like to thank you all for coming to State Meeting to support FDBA - FDBA Registration, David Williams & Jesse Wall,

FDBA Trivia Kathryn Zarate &David Ennis, PT Dream Adventures (PTDA)Jennifer Ricca, Bethany Stratton, Rose Wall & Dana Dehaesus (Not able to attend due to illness),Scentsy Lara “Rose” Wall & Iris Cruz-Whidden, Maria’s Boutique Maria Marquez & Deborah Dee, T-Mobile

Sarah Morrison & Senette Jenkins, Florida CoNavigators & ProTactile Victoria Magliocchino & Kimberly Williams, Florida and Virgin Island DeafBlind Collaborative Michelle Pearson, National DeafBlind Equipment Distribution Program I Can Connect Helen Keller National Center Bapin Bhattacharyya, David Volper & Joseph Trelstad, Florida Alliance of Assistive Services & Technology (FAAST) Sofia Manhood & Cathy Brown, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Cory Parker & Deja Hightower.

And one more thing, I was so excited and wanted to thank Maria Marquez for contributing her time by making tactile art of FDBA’s logo for DeafBlind to touch and feel. It was displayed at the State Meeting. Stomp! Stomp! Everyone enjoyed touching a huge black canvas with yellow airdry clay texts that spells Florida DeafBlind Association with 2 beautiful palm trees touching each other. I was super stoked because it made everyone smiling. Thank you, Maria Marquez, for all your time and love for the DB community.

Our FDBA Motto - You make the Difference! We together make Our Amazing Difference!

My goal: Traveling in the State of Florida for an opportunity to help improve DeafBlind’s quality of life. Also, to help to connect DeafBlind’s Community throughout the state. Another goal is to create a network of CoNavigators. We already have a good number of CoNavigators in Jacksonville and St Augustine and it's time to recruit more CNs in other parts of Florida.

I am still looking for new FDBA representatives to set up DeafBlind Social events in each major city such as Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Orlando, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Tampa, and etc. If you are interested, please contact the FDBA President.

I would LOVE FDBA Members and Sponsors to come and help us as a volunteer for fundraising programs and support FDBA. Please email me if you have any new ideas to raise money in 2024. It would be greatly appreciated!

Wishing you lots of warmth and happiness - Happy Summer!

All the best,

President Lara “Rose” Wall