

November 8, 2024

Dear Listeners,

As we observe Veteran’s Day on Monday, The Metropolitan Washington Ear extends heartfelt gratitude to the many listeners and others who have served in our military branches. We appreciate their dedicated service to our country and hope the day is meaningful for everyone.

Cheers,

Sylvia

Here are the links to all the items below:

* [**Seeking Participants with Low Vision for a Research Study**](#Study)
* [**Researchers Seek New Treatment for Blinding Diseases AMD and Stargardt**](#AMD)
* [**Order Free COVID Tests to Be Sent Via Mail**](#Tests)
* [**Yelp's Newest Features Help People With Disabilities Find Accessible Businesses**](#Yelp)
* [**Smart Speakers Beta Registration Now Open**](#Beta)
* [**Braille Magazine Update**](#Mag)
* [**AFB’s PPRI Team Discusses Impact of AI on Workers with Disabilities**](#AFB)
* [**Understanding the Needs of Veterans and Service Members in Arlington**](#Vets)
* **[Theater Update](#Theater)**
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  + **[Replay POB Events](#Replay)**
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  + [**Android TalkBack Drop-In Clinic**](#Android2)
  + [**Low Vision Support Group Virtual Meeting: Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness**](#Disease)
  + [**Stargardt's Network Virtual Meeting**](#Stargardt)
  + [**Leisure World Lions Group: MetroAccess Paratransit Program Update**](#Metro)
  + **[America InSight: Verbal Description Tour](#InSight)**
  + [**Talk Health with the University of Maryland School of Nursing Blood Pressure Clinic**](#Health)
  + [**Michael Hayes Performs! - In-person**](#Hayes)
  + **[Ellington’s Nutcracker presented by the US Navy Band Commodores](#Navy)**
  + [**Tech Talk Tuesdays: Windows PC Accessibility (Virtual Event)**](#Tech)
  + [**Low Vision Virtual Town Hall: Baking and Cooking with Low Vision**](#Hall)
  + **[Mid-Atlantic ADA Center Webinar](#ADA)**
  + [**Vision Resource Group: Short Dark Days - More Light To See**](#Vision)
  + [**Social Security Administration: Retirement Information**](#SSA)
  + **[Cultural Crossroads: Dvorak in America](#Culture)**
  + **[Virtual Blind Health Expo 2024](#Expo)**

**###**

**SEEKING PARTICIPANTS WITH LOW VISION FOR A RESEARCH STUDY**From Marybeth Cleveland at A to B and Back, Orientation and Mobility Services, LLC and forwarded by Paul D’Addario

You can help evaluate how different crosswalk markings affect street crossing by pedestrians with low vision. The crosswalks being evaluated may be marked with typical white crosswalk markings, or they may have different colors.

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center, in conjunction with Accessible Design for the Blind, is looking for volunteers who are low vision to participate in a study on the effect of crosswalk markings on the accessibility of crossing in the Washington, D. C. area in early November. The study will take about two hours, and the compensation is $75 and travel to the study area will be reimbursed.  There will be day and evening appointments.

They are looking for experienced travelers who don't have full vision and who regularly travel independently outdoors, including crossing streets. This study is limited to travelers with reduced acuity, restricted fields, sensitivity to glare, or loss of contrast sensitivity but who can see crosswalks. Travelers who typically travel with a cane, use a telescope, or just use their remaining vision may qualify. Guide Dog users with low vision and who own and use a cane will be asked to use their cane rather than their Guide Dog.

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to find crosswalks, align to cross, and cross when it is safe. An orientation and mobility specialist will be with you while you travel all routes.  

If you are interested in participating in this study, please call Marybeth Cleveland at 301-412-4224 or email her at [**mbcleveland@fastmail.net**](mailto:mbcleveland@fastmail.net) to find out if you are eligible for the study.   
  
Also feel free to share this information with anyone who may be eligible to participate.  
###

**RESEARCHERS SEEK NEW TREATMENT FOR BLINDING DISEASES AMD AND STARTGARDT**

Christopher Cioffi, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Konstantin Petrukhin, Columbia University, are using NEI funds to conduct preclinical testing of a treatment that targets the build-up in the retina of toxic yellow-brown pigment granules called lipofuscin. AMD is the leading cause of blindness among older Americans; Stargardt is a rare genetic eye disease that typically begins in childhood. Both conditions involve the build-up of lipofuscin in an area of the retina crucial for vision called the macula. [**Rensselaer news story**](https://news.rpi.edu/2024/10/31/rensselaer-researcher-seeks-new-treatment-blindness-causing-diseases).

**###**

**ORDER FREE COVID TESTS TO BE SENT VIA MAIL**

Marylanders can now order another round of free COVID-19 nasal swab tests that will be delivered directly to their homes. Each household can get four tests through [**COVIDtests.gov**](http://COVIDtests.gov).   
  
Already have some at home? Check [**here**](https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-covid-19-and-medical-devices/home-otc-covid-19-diagnostic-tests#list) to see if your tests' expiration dates have been extended.   
  
Forms to apply for the kits can be accessed at [**this lin**k](https://special.usps.com/testkits).   
  
Updated rapid tests are expected to be able to detect newer variants just as a new COVID variant, XEC, arrives in Maryland. It is a member of the Omicron family.   
  
The availability of free at-home tests comes just after the Food and Drug Administration approved two updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is urging everyone 6 months or older to get a new shot this fall since last year's shots were geared toward a strain that is no longer around.   
  
As flu and RSV season approaches, health officials recommend residents stock up on tests and update all vaccinations.

###

**YELP’S NEWEST FEATURES HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FIND ACCESSIBLE BUSINESSES**

By [**Rachel Chang**](https://www.travelandleisure.com/author/rachel-chang)for Travel + Leisure

For the [**42.5 million Americans with disabilities**](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/07/24/8-facts-about-americans-with-disabilities/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20there%20are%20about%2042.5,care%20or%20independent%20living%20difficulties.), navigating businesses that accommodate their specific accessibility needs can be a daily challenge. In recent years, Yelp has noticed more people looking for specific accommodations, … spiking 40 percent from 2020 to 2023.

So earlier this summer, the business reviews company added eight additional accessibility attributes that can be searched.

For vision accessibility, both are in regards to the menus: "Braille menus available" and "QR code menus available," with the latter allowing guests to enlarge content on their devices or use assistive screen readers.

###

**SMART SPEAKERS BETA REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

From the LBPD Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Exciting news! NLS recently opened beta registration for the new "My Talking Books" skill on Alexa-enabled devices.  Patrons are being onboarded on a rolling basis.

Patrons who wish to register for the open beta should fill out the Patron Registration Form at [**www.surveymonkey.com/r/mtb-open-beta**](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/http:%2F%2Fwww.surveymonkey.com%2Fr%2Fmtb-open-beta%3Futm_medium=email%26utm_source=govdelivery/1/0100019302f59129-9b9180df-5ccf-4934-9ae8-578b72ef047b-000000/mcLXRRLX3_o7TIJDwqaI-WsfAeytWcrhL0czKwgfWOs=378).

###

**BRAILLE MAGAZINE UPDATE**

From the LBPD Bi-Monthly Newsletter

A new audio magazine has been added to the NLS collection and is also available on BARD.

***Washington Council of the Blind Newsline*** is published quarterly by the Washington Council of the Blind and produced in digital format by the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library in Seattle, Washington. Each newsletter-style issue is approximately 80 print pages with a running time of 2½ to 3 hours. Topics covered include human-interest stories, advocacy, legislation, local events, history, entrepreneurship, science, and technology.

###

**AFB’s PPRI TEAM DISCUSSES IMPACT OF AI ON WORKERS WITH DISABILITES**

Members of AFB’s Public Policy team joined leaders in the technology and workforce space to share how AI could affect workers with disabilities at the first AI Skilling Fair held by the AI Workforce and Skills Roundtable and House Taskforce on AI. AFB’s Senior Advisor of Public Policy & Research, Sarah Malaier, spoke during the briefing and shared her thoughts after the event.

New technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) is exciting when they open up greater opportunities and make accessible work, education, and community living experiences available to all. Yet, we are well aware that people with disabilities are often overlooked in the development, deployment, oversight, and regulation of new technologies, at least at first. The question is: Will AI create opportunities, or will it further exclude people with disabilities?

Read the full details at [**AFB’s PPRI Team Discusses Impact of AI on Workers with Disabilities | American Foundation for the Blind**](https://www.afb.org/blog/entry/ai-impact-disabled-workers).

###

**UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS IN ARLINGTON**

Arlington County’s [**Military and Veterans Advisory Committee**](https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Military-and-Veterans-Affairs-Committee)(MVAC) is interested in hearing from members of the military, veterans, and their families who live and /or work in Arlington about types of programs, services, and resources that could be helpful.  They appreciate your participation so that they can explore programs and services that may better serve our Veteran and Active Military Community.

Full details are at [**Understanding the Needs of Veterans and Service Members in Arlington - PublicInput**](https://publicinput.com/y2401).

###

**THEATER UPDATE**

The following performances will be described by a MWE volunteer. Note that recorded program notes will be available at the theater just prior to the actual performance and on Dial-In before and after the performance at Publication 8, Category 10, Branch 11.

**The Other Americans**

Arena Stage Fichandler at the Mead Center - 202-488-3300

Described: Saturday, November 9th at 2:00 pm

**Six**

National Theater – 1-800-514-3849

Described: Saturday, November 16th at 2:00 pm and Sunday, December 1st at 7:30 pm

**A Hanukkah Carol or Gelt Trip! The Musical**

Round House Theatre Bethesda - 240-644-1100

Described Saturday, November 30th at 2:00 pm

**Data**

Arena Stage Kogod Cradle at the Mead Center - 202-488-3300

Described Saturday, November 30th at 2:00 pm

###

**CALENDAR**

**Replay POB Events**

**Listen and watch replays of recent webinars and other POB events at**[**www.youreyes.org/replays**](https://youreyes.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=939b8acf4b5eb247b7120bcd9&id=21719989f4&e=59825d4dc8)

###

**DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**November 8th from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm  
Attendance in-person or virtual

397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227

Join virtual: [**Zoom link**](https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fdsa-virginia.zoomgov.com%2Fj%2F1600919879%3Fpwd=UuoxVmski9ysxAAFNqqPQ0MJAm96y0.1%26utm_medium=email%26utm_source=govdelivery/1/01010192bb4107d5-c31c0afd-907d-4a99-bce5-8a52695d992b-000000/OgLBfqUjGZhNyRCf8h8-_xr-Z4EZi03pwhBwyDJCOLo=376)  
Password: 464336  
Or Telephone: Dial:(646) 828 - 7666 (US Toll)   
Meeting ID: 160 091 9879  
Password: 464336

PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE RECEIVED AT 10:10 A.M.

###

**Android TalkBack Drop-In Clinic**

**Friday, November 8th from 10:30 am to 12:00pm**

[**Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library - Central Library**](https://dclibrary.libnet.info/event/11670962#branch)

901 G Street, NW, 205-B Accessibility Program Room

Learn to use the TalkBack screen reader for Android.

They will practice the gestures and other basic skills and try to trouble shoot your individual issues as much as possible, to learn to use Android phones without sight. To register please call 202-727-2142 or email DCPLaccess@dc.gov.

###

**Low Vision Support Group Virtual Meeting: Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness**

Tuesday, November 12th from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Join guest speaker Hailey Robles-Holmes, MD Ophthalmology Resident at the Washington National Eye Center to learn about the eye diseases diabetics are more likely to develop, such as diabetic retinopathy.  
You can join this virtual meeting via computer or phone or both—email Penny at [**penelpe.a.helfgott@medstar.net**](mailto:penelpe.a.helfgott@medstar.net) to receive an electronic link to the program. If you have any questions, please call Penny Helfgott at 202-877-5329 and leave a message or call the POB number below.

Hosted by The Washington National Eye Center at MedStar Washington Hospital Center

Co-sponsored with: The Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington, DC.

For further information, please call 202-234-1010.

###

**Stargardt's Network Virtual Meeting**

**Tuesday, November 12th from 6:00 to 7:00 pm  
Festive Fun for Everyone**Join the conversation on accessible holiday activities and must-visit spots in our area.  
Hosted by **Prevention of Blindness Society**.  
To register, call **(301) 951-4444** at least 24 hours before the event.

###

**Leisure World Lions Group: MetroAccess Paratransit Program Update  
Wednesday, November 13th from 2:00 to 3:00 pm  
Leisure World Clubhouse II Edmondson Room**3300 N Leisure World Blvd., Silver Spring  
MetroAccess is a shared-ride, door-to-door, paratransit service for eligible customers whose disability prevents them from using bus or rail. Join a WMATA representative to learn about the latest updates to the MetroAccess Paratransit program.   
To RSVP, call Larry at **(908) 770-9111**.  
###

**America InSight: Verbal Description Tour**

Thursday, November 14th at 5:30 pm

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Free

Registration required at [**Overview ⋮ America InSight: Verbal Description Tours  ⋮ Blackthorn Events**](https://events.blackthorn.io/en/5f4ZMUx7/america-insight-verbal-description-tours-4a2bVRv3KX/overview)

Join a docent-led tour designed for participants who are blind or have low vision. Discover highlights from the collection through rich verbal descriptions that invoke a multisensory experience.

These tours are held bi-monthly and can also be scheduled upon request. For more information, email [**SAAMAcess@si.edu**](mailto:SAAMAcess@si.edu) or call 202-633-8550.

**###**

**Talk Health with the University of Maryland School of Nursing**

**Blood Pressure Clinic**

Friday, November 15th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

[**Greenbelt**](https://www.pgcmls.info/event/11663029#branch) Library Auditorium

11 Crescent Road, Greenbelt

Take charge of your health at free blood pressure screening sessions. Led by University of Maryland School of Nursing students, get your blood pressure checked, and bring your medications for a personalized review. Empower yourself with valuable insights to manage your health better. Open to all.

###

**Michael Hayes Performs! - In-person**

Saturday, November 16th from 2:00 to 3:00 pm

[**Davis Library**](https://mcpl.libnet.info/event/12139676#branch)

6400 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda

Michael Hayes, who recently retired from a 35-year opera/musical theater career, will bring his Broadway and opera experience to a performance at Davis Library. It is open to people of all ages. No registration required.

Questions about this program? Contact Davis at 240-777-0922.

###

**Ellington’s Nutcracker presented by the US Navy Band Commodores**

Sunday, November 17th at 3:00 pm

National Gallery of Art West Building, West Garden Court

6th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW

Register at [**https://tickets.nga.gov/events/01919fcb-c7eb-f62e-5d08-e1a9ad2790cb**](https://tickets.nga.gov/events/01919fcb-c7eb-f62e-5d08-e1a9ad2790cb)

[**82nd Concert Series**](https://www.nga.gov/calendar/concerts/82nd-concert-series.html)

###

**Tech Talk Tuesdays: Windows PC Accessibility (Virtual Event)   
Tuesday, November 19th from 1:00 to 2:00 pm**

**Speaker: Luke Scriven, M.S., CATIS, Assistive Technology Specialist, Vision Forward Association**Join a discussion on Windows accessibility with an expert with over a decade of experience working with the visually impaired. Bring your questions!  
To RSVP, call **(301) 951-4444.**

**###**

**Low Vision Virtual Town Hall: Baking and Cooking with Low Vision  
Wednesday, November 20th from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm  
Speaker: Debra Erickson, MS, Executive Chef and Founder, The Blind Kitchen**  
Join to learn about practical adaptive cooking tips, tricks, and tools for blind and visually impaired cooks, which can assist them with a safe, confident, and independent cooking experience in their kitchens.  
Call **(301) 951-4444** to register.

###

**Mid-Atlantic ADA Center Webinar**

Wednesday, November 20th from 2:00 to 3:30 pm

Marilyn Morrison, Director of the Maryland Work Incentives, will outline the differences between SSI and SSDI, explain the working rules, and discuss available work incentives that enable individuals to work while maintaining their benefits.

To register please visit the [**November 2024 Webinar registration page**](https://7azbrycab.cc.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=0017ozorucg-ZEuu23tHV9IKyJCC-JOnaMfPwvXA8uwoIAaNEm9UNQhZTgoNfvh43qxR16pCVxhHEtSy40-0tsGo8cC_D96s4SYotbuL9HP_QLNy3ew0Q5Lcdx6ZPwJAIlJoET5C5j64nyajuMzZRbrsScXtdZIygZWRlb_G0fH6wrikAsXZtq_2MCynSQbsR-tBRbEHzVqMGRS4ZpkoUWOOheJQyDoJvwuvfHK0J2Yc3hm2n-RSjVQvHdjfHXc5prfe_SWf7WPIL7g7gjhwZMuIBogjQRL3OOgJPV-4KDD8_iP1bulyBsT37IdHFWojcSiv64BinIo2uhRmoR20M3RQw==&c=CNNWs7ZtLsFcQpFrlGvS44i1kFawq3oRPMkaVTpRPtCmuqAU9kJabA==&ch=cotpR8AU946I81D7U_TGi3H93-CbMf2dnMA06aRUJwdqiYFMOnCg7w==)**.**

Questions? Contact the [**Mid-Atlantic ADA Center**](mailto:adatraining@transcen.org)!

###

**Vision Resource Group: Short Dark Days - More Light To See  
Thursday, November 21st from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Friendship Heights Village Center**4433 South Park Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD

Proper lighting is one of the most effective tools in our toolkit for optimizing vision, especially with winter approaching. But what types of lighting should you consider? Join a discussion to explore various lighting options to enhance your sight.  
To RSVP, call **(301) 656-2797**.  
###

**Social Security Administration: Retirement Information**

Thursday, November 21st from 5:30 to 6:30 pm

Prince George’s County Memorial Library [**Virtual Branch**](https://www.pgcmls.info/event/11983798#branch)

Learn more about retirement eligibility requirements, family benefits, options, and the application process.

Presentation by Diana Varela, Public Affairs Specialist for the Social Security Administration followed by Q&A. This event will not be recorded.

Register at **https://calvertlibrary.libnet.info/event/11968569**.

###

**Cultural Crossroads: Dvorak in America**

Sunday, November 24th from 3:00 to 4:15 pm

National Gallery of Art, West Building, West Garden Court

6th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW

Registration required at [**Cultural Crossroads: Dvořák in America — National Gallery of Art**](https://tickets.nga.gov/events/0191a368-fe98-b8ba-855c-1c3528efb1a0)**.**

Listen to how Native American melodies and uplifting African American spirituals influenced the music of beloved Czech composer Antonín Dvořák with *Cultural Crossroads: Dvořák in America*. With its stellar cast of musicians, this ensemble entertains, educates, and inspires through a program drawn from the curiosity of a Czech composer a century ago.

###

**Virtual Blind Health Expo 2024**  
Friday, December 6th from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

The 3rd annual Blind Health Expo is the world’s largest virtual expo of healthcare information, products, and services for individuals, organizations, and companies in the blindness, and disability communities.

FREE to attend

Hundreds of exhibitors! health

[**Click Here to Register to Attend**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSedZ-pjdWivnuuOpXx0uuNaIRiH0nNSPg-s-Vf6HI9jjiW4jg/viewform?usp=sharing)

###