

12061 Tech Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904 – 301-681-6636

[**https://washear.org/listener-newsletters**](https://washear.org/listener-newsletters)

March 28, 2025

Dear Listeners,

Good news continues to emerge in the area of medical research. Check out two new developments reported by the Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) [**here**](#FFB)and two more reported by the National Eye Institute [**here**](#NEI).

New this year is the Easter Service for the Blind at MWE conducted by Pastor Raymond Raysor. Details are [**here**](#Easter).

Also, of special note this week is a link to frequently asked questions on the rights of Federal employees with disabilities [**here**](#Fed).

We hope you find all of this week’s items useful and informative. As always, your comments and suggestions are most welcome at **sylvia@washear.org**.

Cheers,

Sylvia

Here are the links to all the items below:

* [**Research Developments from The Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB)**](#FFB)
* [**Research Developments from The National Eye Institute (NEI)**](#NEI)
* [**Section 501: Frequently Asked Questions On The Rights of Federal Employees with Disabilities**](#Fed)
* [**Update on Recent Challenges to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**](#Rehab)
* [**Tips on How to Protect Your Eyes**](#Tips)
* [**“Pink in the Park” - Free Music Series in Northern Virginia**](#Pink)
* **[Theater Update](#Theater)**
* **[Calendar](#Calendar)**
	+ **[Replay POB Events](#Replay)**
	+ **[America InSight: Verbal Description Art Tour](#InSight)**
	+ [**The Fairfax County All Access Book Club**](#Access)
	+ **[Celebrate Elizabeth Catlett with the Howard Gospel Choir](#Choir)**
	+ [**Celebrate Elizabeth Catlett with the Freedom Jazz Quartet**](#Jazz)
	+ **[MedStar Washington Hospital Center Low Vision Support Group Virtual Meeting: Glaucoma—Why So Many Drops, What Do They Do and How Do I Not Get Them Confused?](#MedStar)**
	+ [**LBPD Virtual Technology User Group (TUG) Meeting**](#TUG)
	+ [**LBPD Tactile Tour: Guinness Open Gate Brewery**](#Brew)
	+ [**Discover the Power of Accessible Reading: ACBVA's April Program Meeting**](#ACBVA)
	+ [**Easter Service for The Blind at MWE**](#Easter)
	+ **[Join a Virtual Community Forum on Virginia Transportation Accessibility](#Transportation)**
	+ [**Tea Tasting Workshop** **Online**](#Tea)
	+ [**2025 AAPD Virtual National Community Event**](#AAPD)
	+ **[Being the Light: Friends and Family Connection Event](#Light)**
	+ [**FFB Mental Health Webinar**](#FFBWeb)

###

**RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS (FFB)**

* **Luxa Biotechnology Reports Vision Improvements in Clinical Trial of Its RPE Stem Cell Therapy for Dry AMD** – Luxa Biotechnology reported encouraging results for six patients with dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) receiving a low dose (50,000 cells) of RPESC-RPE-4W, its proprietary retinal pigment epithelial stem cell therapy, in a Phase 1/2a clinical trial. **[**[**Read the full story]**](https://u35158275.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=u001.TwpWPek5144WRusuAV3MCTdZC3CLpGZUbwF8eVUqbM6DSh0m5ejVFlHKa2RQzxkeUpmkZX11Tu9Ds7wa7iaO4b-2FmwxkBZDDEAfX9vz1QlkxrN1n4vUY0mEMTG8CgO1wCJdoMSPs0szGrW6z1NJEP9xMmoInox1701cHw-2BpitzriuOvWBYcxINreY0cvEylXcc4OVwtegb-2BMokMC-2FV6gcZ9VCR8NGzxLV94VdC-2FfPGZR1JMCkhS3iOaGShBdjVnhF0JtTf4fvGhtPu1A-2F2DY7zw-3D-3D1Rgv_Gm0wzphATd0uQbd-2FHpE-2Bv2F-2Bbf-2FGTiacR0j91njw5-2FjfRZxe-2BoZli-2FhmBhdBrzrP8ol-2F1861TnQUhKi4pW0D2Jw3-2BbOSViLPvBhfP6-2FYeEg17He9AHrWijuF9gYXaHDQSjt85QBmnVWtbWPz0lmsNVKjmG5foguLHwmQOsJmeqU9sn3NuxOjrO76N-2BJpU-2FxE2w9DofSoCv59xWDvqbundNU2hmkRLJ5dLU0GoJryQRO5xxJr5UEYE1qFoDX9rs9Enay3e6ZBuoB08B4v0l8T5j7AsrqP3fXv-2FdU757Ja0lQ-3D)
* **Neurotech’s Encapsulated Cell Technology Receives FDA Approval** – Neurotech, a biotechnology company developing therapies for chronic eye diseases, has received marketing approval from the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for ENCELTOÔ (revakinagene taroretcel-lwey) for the treatment of macular telangiectasia type 2 (MacTel). [**[Read the full story]**](https://u35158275.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=u001.TwpWPek5144WRusuAV3MCTdZC3CLpGZUbwF8eVUqbM6DSh0m5ejVFlHKa2RQzxkeT-2FOK93Mps8g3xzf2AbK2MB28nI1-2FrXw8q7iKBuqmAq-2BqKvMpICle2UBApuXZS9YvJ4kRXp8M6vlwN2Yqvb-2B2Pke-2FHzmbLQCDXbYlaH-2F2LNh0jDBl08Xg1kgXeCWh1XXIObzgsW3SI0J6SSPE-2B18uShaB7wBERBP0U-2BfWDRAZYt-2FeRW4NOlw2vD6wPfI0p8COpJrMVamjAp4FRkk5T-2BL-2BEw-3D-3DL_vj_Gm0wzphATd0uQbd-2FHpE-2Bv2F-2Bbf-2FGTiacR0j91njw5-2FjfRZxe-2BoZli-2FhmBhdBrzrP8ol-2F1861TnQUhKi4pW0D2Jw3-2BbOSViLPvBhfP6-2FYeEg17He9AHrWijuF9gYXaHDQSjt85QBmnVWtbWPz0lmsNVKjmG5foguLHwmQOsJmeqUPljj-2FZiP-2FVZMdVcNuWjDVSL7AQMtvZUrgik5HY7ttz82uE-2BYSevrWN7lxY-2B2b4-2BK9oDbaF-2FNlAVSIXMOF6h2IR5uC66wlbno26DwfLHFkxcBZZ-2F-2Fe5sJbpDI-2FxBWz4GI-3D)

###

**RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE (NEI)**

* **Researchers 'seq' and find a way to make pig retinal cells to advance eye treatments -** Kim Edwards and David Gamm, University of Wisconsin, collaborated with Morgridge Institute researchers Ron Stewart and Beth Moore to develop lab-grown pig retinal organoids for testing stem cell replacement therapies for diseases that damage the eye's light-sensing photoreceptors. Organoids are tissue clusters that enable scientists to replicate cellular interactions in a lab dish. [**Morgridge news story**](https://morgridge.org/story/researchers-seq-and-find-a-way-to-make-pig-retinal-cells-to-advance-eye-treatments/).
* **Wayne State researchers find potential mechanism to protect against infection-induced vision impairment** - Susmit Suvas and collaborators at Wayne State University School of Medicine have unlocked a potential mechanism to protect against herpes stromal keratitis (HSK), a debilitating vision condition that occurs in response to a herpes infection in the eye. [**Wayne State news story**](https://today.wayne.edu/medicine/news/2025/01/16/suvas-lab-finds-potential-mechanism-to-protect-against-infection-induced-vision-impairment-65281).

###

**SECTION 501: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

From the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center E-Bulletin

This new document answers questions from federal executive branch workers who are concerned about removal of reasonable accommodations, lay-offs, or other adverse employment actions. The publication explains that these actions may be discriminatory if based on workers’ disabilities rather than considerations applied to workers with and without disabilities. Full details are available at [**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS on the Rights of Federal Employees with Disabilities in 2025**](https://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-Federal-Sector-FAQs.pdf).

###

**UPDATE ON RECENT CHALLENGES TO SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT**

From the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center E-Bulletin

This brief overview from the Great Plains ADA Center provides an update on the lawsuit that challenges recent rules issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as the constitutionality of Section 504 itself.

More details are available at [**Update on Texas v Becerra, Lawsuit Seeking to Have Section 504 Declared Unconstitutional**](https://gpadacenter.org/texas-v-bercerra/)**.**

###

**TIPS ON HOW TO PROTECT YOUR EYES**

From Theresa Breeden, ACBVA Treasurer

Fatigue, dry eyes, bad lighting, or how you sit in front of these screens can cause eyestrain. Symptoms of eyestrain include sore or irritated eyes and difficulty focusing. You may also have symptoms of eyestrain if you need glasses or a change in your glasses.
Get tips on how to protect your eyes **at**[**https://preventblindness.org/digital-devices-and-your-eyes/**](https://preventblindness.org/digital-devices-and-your-eyes/)**.**

###

**“PINK IN THE PARK” - FREE MUSIC SERIES IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA**

As part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, you can enjoy [**a free music series**](https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https%3A//nationallanding.org/pink-in-the-park/1/01010195d9019299-cb803ba7-f15c-4f61-844c-bdf492fe4865-000000/JLGIqh-fT2L6ctZpqxEbHGphrwQhjJneB0SiabAPZUk%3D398) on Thursdays at Water Park in National Landing. "Pink in the Park," presented by Amazon and produced by the National Landing BID, brings the spring celebration across the Potomac activating parks across National Landing with engaging free programming for all ages. Check it out at [**Pink in the Park | National Landing**](https://nationallanding.org/pink-in-the-park)**.**

###

**THEATER UPDATE**

The following performances will be described by an 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.

**Bad Books**

Round House Theatre Bethesda - 240-644-1100

**Described Saturday, April 12th matinee**

**Fake It Until You Make It**

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

Described Saturday, April 12th at 2:00 pm

**Sleepova**

Olney Theatre Center – Mulitz-Gudelsky Theatre Lab 301-924-3400

Described Wednesday, April 16th at 7:30 pm

**Uncle Vanya**

Shakespeare: Harman Hall: 202-547-1122

Described Saturday, April 19th 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)

###

**America InSight: Verbal Description Art Tour**Wednesday, April 2nd from 11:00 am to 12:00 pmSmithsonian American Art Museum
8th and G Streets, NW, Washington, DC

Join POB for an in-person docent-led tour for visitors who are blind or have low vision. Through rich verbal description and sensory experience, discover highlights from the Smithsonian's collection.
To RSVP, call (301) 951-4444.
###

**The Fairfax County All Access Book Club**

Thursday,April 3rd at 11:00 am

This month’s selection is [**The Devil in the White City**](https://fcplcat.fairfaxcounty.gov/search/title.aspx?ctx=1.1033.0.0.1&pos=5&cn=214381) by Erik Larson.

The All Access Book Club meets on the first Thursday of each month at 11:00 a.m. via free conference call.

To join the event:

* Call **703-324-1800**or toll-free number **1-877-862-8112**
* At the prompt, enter the code **389887#**

For more information, contact Access Services Library at 703-324-8380 or email **libas@fairfaxcounty.gov**.

###

**Celebrate Elizabeth Catlett with the Howard Gospel Choir**

Saturday, April 5th from 2:00 to 2:45 pm

National Gallery of Art East Building Auditorium

4th and Constitution Avenue, NW

Registration Required at [**Celebrating Elizabeth Catlett — National Gallery of Art**](https://tickets.nga.gov/events/0194b86d-4ac1-e753-b04d-57aca8ab4730).

Celebrate with the Howard Gospel Choir in a centerpiece performance honoring[***Elizabeth Catlett: A Black Revolutionary Artist***](https://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2025/elizabeth-catlett-black-revolutionary-artist.html)**,** on view through July 6, 2025.  Elizabeth Catlett, a Howard University graduate and DC native, tapped these local beginnings to launch a distinguished career that spanned almost 70 years.

###

**Celebrate Elizabeth Catlett with the Freedom Jazz Quartet**

Sunday, April 6th from 1:00 to 2:00 pm

National Gallery of Art West Building, West Garden Court

6th and Constitution Avenue, NW

Registration Required at [**Celebrate Elizabeth Catlett with the Freedom Jazz Quartet — National Gallery of Art**](https://tickets.nga.gov/events/01953ec1-d5f8-4f45-089b-ed507c418fb7).

Enjoy the music of the Freedom Jazz Quartet in a concert honoring the exhibition [***Elizabeth Catlett: A Black Revolutionary Artist***](https://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2025/elizabeth-catlett-black-revolutionary-artist.html), on view through July 6, 2025. Francisco Mora-Catlett, son of artists Elizabeth Catlett and Francisco Mora, leads this quartet of jazz emissaries.

###

**MedStar Washington Hospital Center Low Vision Support Group Virtual Meeting: Glaucoma—Why So Many Drops, What Do They Do and How Do I Not Get Them Confused?**

Tuesday, April 8th from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Alexandria Marshall, MD Ophthalmology Resident AND You can join via computer or phone or both—email Penny at **penelope.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.

Co-sponsored with: The Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington, DC. For further information, please call 202-234-101.

###

**LBPD Virtual Technology User Group (TUG) Meeting**

Saturday, April 12th from 10:00 to 11:00 am

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

[**https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/j/6562037293?omn=94648805523**​](https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/j/6562037293?omn=94648805523)​

Meeting ID: 656 203 7293​

**Call in:**

1-301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 656 203 7293​#

###

**LBPD Tactile Tour: Guinness Open Gate Brewery**

Saturday, April 12th at 12:00 noon

5001 Washington Blvd, Halethorpe, MD 21227.

LBPD asks that you please arrive no later than 11:45 a.m. to ensure your participation.

**Transportation will not be provided.**

Join a group tour of the Baltimore Experimental Brewery, where one of their charismatic guides will teach you all about the history of Guinness and the brewery's site. The guide will provide plenty of Guinness heritage, take you inside their innovative brewery to explain the brewing process, and answer any questions.

The tour should last approximately one hour. If you wish to stay past the event, feel free to do so. Please visit the Brewery [**website**](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https%3A//www.guinnessbrewerybaltimore.com/%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery/1/01000195bee552dc-f08da301-afdf-4f25-9def-4de482ca92af-000000/PBhgFJfmuuHjdr1-F9YlK6-DdsENHu2Vlmcu20fbnTk%3D397) for additional details about the facility.

**The tour is limited to 18 people and will be first come, first served. Due to limited availability, this event is open exclusively to LBPD patrons. They kindly ask that caregivers refrain from participating. Only those 21 and older are permitted to attend.**

**To register, please follow this link:**

[**https://marylandlibraries.libcal.com/calendar/ExternalCalendar/Brewery25**](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https%3A//marylandlibraries.libcal.com/calendar/ExternalCalendar/Brewery25%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery/1/01000195bee552dc-f08da301-afdf-4f25-9def-4de482ca92af-000000/CSGLuX01aFgo_NR0zs1WvuFlFjvrDuJQn_DsLW1HgC8%3D397)**.**

###

**Discover the Power of Accessible Reading: ACBVA's April Program Meeting**

Monday, April 14th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm

Imagine a world where books, magazines, and newspapers are always at your fingertips, accessible anytime, anywhere. That's the reality made possible by the [**National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS)**](https://www.loc.gov/nls/). Join an exciting discussion about how NLS and [**Virginia's Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)**](https://www.vdbvi.org/) are transforming reading for blind and low-vision individuals!

[**Donna Cox**](https://www.linkedin.com/in/donna-cox-b7648446/), Director of Education and Library Services at **DBVI**, will share insights about her role as Virginia's NLS regional librarian. In addition, a representative from **NLS's Patron Engagement section** will answer your questions about **BARD**, its many formats, and other exciting updates from NLS. Whether you are a longtime patron or simply curious about how NLS can enhance your access to books and information, this is a meeting you won't want to miss!

Zoom Information:

**Join Zoom Meeting:**[**Click here to join**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86481244260?pwd=ekgxYldXMnlqYk16MFlua0lIQnozZz09)

**Meeting ID:** 864 8124 4260
**Passcode:** 111222

**One-Tap Mobile:**+13017158592,,86481244260#,,,,\*111222# US (Washington, DC)

**Dial-In Option:**+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington, DC)

For any additional questions, feel free to contact **RoseAnn Ashby** at **703-403-0226** or via email at **beachrose9@verizon.net**.

###

**Easter Service for The Blind at MWE**

Sunday, April 20th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm

St. Didymus Church for The Blind

12061-B Tech Road, Silver Spring

For more information, contact Pastor Raymond Raysor at 301-377-6468

###

**Join a Virtual Community Forum on Virginia Transportation Accessibility**

|  |
| --- |
| Monday, April 21st from 7:00 to 8:30 pmThe Fairfax Area Disability Services Board is hosting a virtual community forum on transportation accessibility. They are looking for your ideas and feedback to help them find out where there are problems or barriers in transportation for people with disabilities in Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, and City of Fairfax.Your input can help make transportation better and more accessible for everyone. After you register, an email with the link to join the meeting will be emailed to you. Register at [**Participate in Community Forums to Provide Input on Services for Residents with Disabilities | Family Services**](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/disabilities/fairfax-area-disability-services-board/community-forums?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).###**Tea Tasting Workshop** **Online**Thursday, April 24th from 6:00 to 7:00 pmSponsored by the Friends of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, the Carroll County Public Library, and Tea and Whimsey, this tea-tasting workshop aims to introduce you to several new teas while exploring their history and flavor profiles!  The library will mail you three teas to taste for this workshop. You will need the following on hand to get the full benefit of the workshop:* Tea provided by the library
* Hot water to steep the tea
* Tasting cups

**Limited to 50 people. Registration is required.** **Registration closes on April 1st.****Register here:** [**https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\_R9fCdlUqTlaWVPK4ayCLUQ**](https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_R9fCdlUqTlaWVPK4ayCLUQ).**Event URL:**[**https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\_R9fCdlUqTlaWVPK4ayCLUQ**](https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_R9fCdlUqTlaWVPK4ayCLUQ)###**2025 AAPD Virtual National Community Event** |

Wednesday, April 30th at 6:30 pm

Join AAPD to celebrate our community's collective progress and power at the 2025 AAPD National Community Event.

This event is open to all in the disability community, and any ally who cares about advancing disability rights and inclusion.

Tickets are completely free, and the event is virtual.

Register at [**2025 AAPD National Community Event Tickets, Wed, Apr 30, 2025 at 6:30 PM | Eventbrite**](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-aapd-national-community-event-tickets-1245268554769).

The AAPD National Community Event is rooted in the disability community's advocacy and culture: they will bring you engaging conversations with national leaders, hear reports from across the nation about the critical work disabled people are doing across the country, celebrate disability representation in film and the arts, and more! Also celebrate and learn more about the work of the incredible 2025 Paul G Hearne Emerging Leader Award recipients.

Throughout the evening, they will also connect you to opportunities at the national, state, and local level to advocate for disability equality, accessibility, and inclusion.

Audio description will be provided and streaming links will be sent out to all who register.

###

**Being the Light: Friends and Family Connection Event**
**Keynote: When and How to Ask for Support from Family and Friends** Saturday, May 3rd from 12:00 to 2:30 pm
Collington Life Care Community
10450 Lottsford Road, Mitchellville

You, your friends, and your family are invited to join the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington (POB) for a luncheon panel discussion moderated by Suleiman Alibhai, O.D**.**, a low-vision specialist.

This POB special luncheon event will give your friends and family a unique opportunity to learn about low vision and its challenges. Ample free parking on-site.

Vendors will showcase their valuable resources, tools, and technologies, including the Prevention of Blindness Society Low Vision Resource Center and VOMA Technologies & Training (list subject to change).

**Tickets: $22 per person**

To purchase tickets, visit[**beingthelightpob.org**](https://youreyes.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=939b8acf4b5eb247b7120bcd9&id=1ed36ead1e&e=59825d4dc8)or contact **Tara Aziz at (202) 234-1010, ext. 233,** or email**taziz@youreyes.org**

###

**FFB Mental Health Webinar**

Saturday, May 17th at 12:00 Noon

Join the Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) quarterly vision webinar focused on mental health, coinciding with Mental Health Awareness Month this May. Navigating vision loss can deeply affect mental health, but finding tailored resources is often difficult, so they're here to support you.

They will cover:

* The emotional impact of vision loss
* Coping strategies and resilience
* Mental health resources
* Building community support

This is a valuable opportunity to connect, learn, and find support.

**Registration Page:**

[[**Quarterly Vision Webinar-Mental Health**](https://u35158275.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=u001.TwpWPek5144WRusuAV3MCTdZC3CLpGZUbwF8eVUqbM5kJ0p3uSBqBAikYDlVywGXK3-2F-2B-2FyqFmVKwtOi1PEASoMtAnWy1TyED4KCtIPSKnJQ5QJdeqc54wnSli0ktZz2xobtu3-2FnbTxkATSjIWM8K5Jmzafh6onvozStnaQpJWxJn-2B7Y9ZgWIhI0kxT1G-2FV2trh01oTEC8TPY3IyLyxT5CPpoTpuXkqNDpC3ALq0NnxU-3DE2Jq_Gm0wzphATd0uQbd-2FHpE-2Bv2F-2Bbf-2FGTiacR0j91njw5-2FjfRZxe-2BoZli-2FhmBhdBrzrPopBbkowQ2JxxZVrvxYo-2FOLkgeNNESkQ4z9uHwY9XcqziyBD3BQ0zP7BNrLAV-2B5ZisD9UhcYe4xKsBHigzevJ657-2FOpKuNtxjsradsuMDXf8-2BXApFZg-2BNCn-2BZsbYSYUK746Qxp-2FO63JT4Q1B8A9YNMzHUDoBaJzOkEtQglYEdiWlTaLDkC3R4KWBjrETbXIX-2F4O2j3j71fizQrCztRJMGPJdTY1J8ptt8Hv7jPEN43z4-3D)]

For more information, please reach out to Bailey Bostelman at**BBostelman@FightingBlindness.org.**

###

|  |
| --- |
|  |