# Focus On ACBI

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# A Publication of the American Council of the Blind of Indiana

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# Convention Edition 2025

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## Ways to contribute to the American Council of the Blind of Indiana:

Those much-needed contributions, which are tax-deductible, can be sent to ACBI, Attn: Cindy Brooking, 676 VFW Road, Mitchell, Indiana 47446 or through our website noted above.

Vehicle donations: 1-800-929-8659. You can donate cars, trucks, vans, and boats. Live operators are on hand 7 days a week and it includes free pick-up.

Consider including a gift to ACBI in your Last Will and Testament.

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## From Your President

## By Rita Kersh

Summer is winding down. schools are back in session and our statewide picnic and joint state convention are fast approaching.

In our last issue, Maggie King gave us the details on the statewide picnic that will be at [Munger Park](https://www.lafayette.in.gov/facilities/facility/details/Munger-Park-4) in Lafayette. It will be on Saturday; September 6 and we’ll eat at noon. Make plans to join us for grilled hot dogs and burgers, our picnic auction and a fun time. If you are in one of our chapters, ask your president about transportation arrangements.

Then about two months later will be our joint state convention in Strongsville, Ohio, outside of Cleveland. This year’s theme is “Celebrate Resilience” and turtles will be featured on the convention shirts, which Blind Girl Design will be designing again this year.

I’ve heard from a few who said that Strongsville is too far to go, so they’re not planning to go. I hope they will change their minds. Dee Ann and I are talking to chapter presidents and members who are not in a chapter to see what kind of transportation can be arranged. Unfortunately, we don’t have an abundance of drivers, unless we find a few volunteers, like from a local Lions Club or church.

At our July 26th ACBI board meeting, the board agreed to cover the cost of no more than two van rentals, one to cover the southern half of Indiana and one from the northern half. This depends on where there are clusters of members or a central pickup location that members can get a ride to catch the van. If we have members who are drivers who are definitely planning to go, please consider giving more members a ride to Strongsville.

Just to let you know, some of us on the convention planning committee need to go up on Thursday, Nov. 13. I imagine most would prefer to go on Friday, Nov. 14. Again, if any drivers are going that day and there are members who are in your area, please give them a ride.

There is a lot happening this fall and I hope as many of our members as possible will be able to participate.

Stay cool and I hope to see you soon!

## CONVENTION 2025: CELEBRATE RESILIENCE WITH ACBO AND ACBI

## By Rachel Densmore

Editor’s Note: This article can also be found in the summer newsletter for ACBO.

Did you know that the green sea turtle migrates 1,200 miles or more each year? With an average swimming speed of just 0.9 to 5.8 mph according to the

Smithsonian, that takes some serious resilience!

Resilience is the capacity to quickly recover from difficulties, and it is something that we all need, especially those of us in the blind and low vision community. That’s why resilience will be our theme this year for the ACB-Ohio/ACB-Indiana convention.

Our banquet speaker this year might as well be the poster child for resilience with a smile. Tricia Waechter is the founder of Blind Girl Designs. A member of the low

vision community, Tricia did not let losing most of her vision keep her from continuing her career in the fashion industry. Tricia designs apparel that is both beautiful and tactile. She is always willing to take on new challenges, and to do it while having fun. She will not only share her story at our banquet but lead an extended workshop to help us all dress for success!

If that’s not exciting enough, we are hard at work in the planning phase of many other great workshops, exciting speakers, informative vendors, and opportunities for fun with friends.

The convention will take place at the Best Western Plus in Strongsville, Ohio, from Friday, November 14 through Sunday, November 16. The

room rate is just $89 per night plus tax. Strongsville is located right off of I-71 between Cleveland and Medina. We hope you will save the date and join us in November!

## Let Us Go Visit Strongsville, Ohio

## November 14-16, 2025

## By Dee Ann Hart

Strongsville, Ohio is a city in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, known as a vibrant and bustling Cleveland suburb with a blend of business and small-town charm. It's nickname, the "Crossroads of the Nations," comes from its historical role as a transportation hub due to the intersection of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and Southwestern Electric Line in the 19th century. Today, its proximity to major highways like I-71 and the Ohio Turnpike keeps it an important location for commuters and businesses.

History. Founded in 1816 by John Stoughton Strong. Strongsville was originally a part of the Connecticut Western Reserve. It was officially established as a township in 1818 and grew from a pioneer farming settlement to a village by 1923. Its population saw significant growth in the post-World War II era as families moved out of Cleveland to the suburbs, leading to its incorporation as a city in 1961.

Demographics. As of 2023, Strongsville has a population of around 46,000 people. The median age is approximately 46 years, and the median household income is over $100,000. The city is predominantly White (non-Hispanic), with a notable presence of Asian and Black or African American residents. Strongsville has a relatively low poverty rate compared to the county and state average.

### Things to Do and See

* Strongsville Historical Village: A living history museum dedicated to preserving the history of Strongsville, Ohio. It is operated by the all-volunteer Strongsville Historical Society, which was founded in 1962. This recreated 19th-century village features original and relocated buildings that preserve the architectural and social history of the area.
* Baldwin House: This building's basement is home to the Strongsville Society of Model Railroad Engineers, who have built an extensive HO scale train layout.
* Mill Stream Run Reservation: Part of the Cleveland Metroparks, this reservation offers extensive hiking and biking trails, as well as fishing and picnic areas. A major attraction in the winter is its Toboggan chutes.
* SouthPark Mall: A major shopping destination in the area, the mall features a variety of retail stores, eateries, and a movie theater.
* Town Center Park: A recent addition to the city, this park features a community pavilion, playgrounds, sports courts, and hosts a variety of events, including summer concerts and a community market.
* Don's Pomeroy House: A historic landmark that was a former stop on the Underground Railroad, this building is now a restaurant offering upscale dining. This is a top-tier choice for a special night out. Housed in a historic 19th-century mansion, it offers an elegant atmosphere and a menu of steaks, chops, and fresh seafood. They also have an extensive wine list and a more casual pub area.
* Cleveland Botanical Gardens: 11030 East Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44106, 216.721.1600. All-seasons living museum with a greenhouse, a conservatory, outdoor gardens and an education center.
* [Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cvsr.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cmstores%40iu.edu%7C66f34fe1bacb4708563608dddc3c6a0a%7C1113be34aed14d00ab4bcdd02510be91%7C1%7C0%7C638908874231642572%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=4McHpueKVndwqhkjJMRV2MqMh2vPgx%2BpwlSIT3jL48M%3D&reserved=0330.439.5708) 27 Ridge St., Akron, OH 44308
* Amtrak Cleveland Station: 200 Cleveland Memorial Shoreway, Cleveland, OH 44114 800.872.7245
* Strongsville hosts a number of community events throughout the year, such as the annual Homecoming Festival and the Harvest Festival.

Strongsville Ohio offers a rich tapestry of local history, allowing residents and visitors to explore the development of different communities in the greater Cleveland area. The Strongsville Historical Society's and the City of Strongsville websites are excellent online resources to discover how to enhance an ACB-Ohio/ACB-Indiana joint convention weekend.

### Reserve your hotel room today!

American Council of the Blind of Ohio-American Council of the Blind of Indiana Joint State Convention

Fri., Nov. 14-Sun., Nov. 16, 2025

Best Western Plus

15471 Royalton Rd, Strongsville, OH 44136

Rooms are $89.00 plus tax per night. For reservations call 1(800) 780-7234 or Hotel Direct Number (440) 238-8800.

When making reservation, mention this is for the ACBO convention.

Visit the affiliate websites for convention related information: [www.acbohio.org/convention](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.acbohio.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cmstores%40iu.edu%7C66f34fe1bacb4708563608dddc3c6a0a%7C1113be34aed14d00ab4bcdd02510be91%7C1%7C0%7C638908874231678423%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yrRfmwPLahhqAlK7vBaProtbUtx3LwwS%2B%2Bz74%2BDwtCQ%3D&reserved=0)

Facebook page:

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Questions call:

Michelle Spillan, Executive Director, American Council of the Blind of Ohio

Email Address: ACB.director@gmail.com Office Phone: 614-261-3561

Mailing Address:

3804 N. High St., Suite 305,

## Convention Auction: An Exciting Opportunity for Virtual and In-person Attendees!

## By Mel Wobschall

Don't Miss The annual ACBI and ACBO Convention Auction to be held in person Saturday evening during the convention. If you can't make it in person, we have you covered! We will be holding an online appetizer auction a week before the convention. If you are interested in donating items, please email me at mkwobsch@gmail.com or call or text me at 765-543-2281. Please note that items donated to the online auction may not include alcohol and must be shipped by the donor.

Some ideas for donations for the online auction include electronic or other gift certificates, or baked items with holiday themes. Please remember that all proceeds from the appetizer and In-Person auctions goes to the convention fund, ACBI or your ACBI chapter. Donating items is a great way to promote yourself or your business. All donation descriptions must be submitted to me by October 25 for the appetizer auction and November 1 for the in-person auction.

Thank you for your support of ACBI!

## ACBI Nominating Committee Seeking Nominations

## By Rita Kersh

This year we have several positions open for nominations from the membership. Here are the positions that can run for another term and one that the term will be finished:

* President (Rita Kersh completing two of three terms)
* Vice-president (Dee Ann Hart completing one of three terms)
* Secretary (Mary Stores completing one of three terms)
* Treasurer (Cindy Brooking completing last term, can be re-elected if no one is nominated)
* Board member (Gerry Koors completing one of two terms)
* Board Member (Pat Tussing completing one of two terms)
* Board member (Earlene Hughes completing one of two terms)

If you have any nominations for the above positions, please contact Kari Goodman, chair of the Nominating Committee at 812-276-7646 only in the evenings or weekends; or e-mail her at kgoodman1976@gmail.com.

## Plan A Road Trip

## Let Us Travel Indiana and Ohio

## By Dee Ann Hart

The state affiliates of American Council of the Blind of Indiana and Ohio have been hosting joint annual conventions for many years. The effective communication and collaboration of the two affiliates makes for an enjoyable convention weekend. The planning subcommittee recognizes that transportation is a major barrier to many of us participating in activities that others often take for granted.

Coordinating group transportation, especially for a large event, requires careful planning and communication to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone. Here are some best practices to consider:

* Plan Early and Gather Information
	+ Start well in advance: The earlier you start, the more options you'll have for drivers and vehicles, and the better rates you might be able to secure. This is especially true for renting larger vehicles like vans or buses.
	+ Get an accurate headcount: Use a registration form to collect essential information from attendees, including if they need transportation, where they are traveling from, and any specific accessibility needs. This is crucial for determining the number and type of vehicles you'll need.
	+ Identify key hubs: Based on the addresses of your members, use a map to identify "densely populated centralized places" that can serve as convenient pickup points. This reduces the number of routes and makes coordination more manageable.
* Choose the Right Vehicles and Drivers
	+ Match the vehicle to the group size: Make sure the vehicles you choose can comfortably accommodate all passengers and their luggage. If you're renting, check the vehicle's capacity and amenities, such as storage space.
	+ Prioritize safety and reliability: If you are using volunteer drivers, ensure they have valid licenses and insurance. If you are renting a vehicle, choose a reputable company with a good safety record.
	+ Designate a point of contact: Assign a single person to be the "transportation coordinator" for each vehicle or route. This person will be responsible for communicating with the driver and passengers and handling any issues that arise.
* Communicate Clearly and Continuously
	+ Create a detailed itinerary: Share a clear schedule with all participants, including pickup times, locations, and estimated arrival and departure times.
	+ Establish a communication channel: Use a group messaging app or an email chain to provide real-time updates to all drivers and passengers. This is essential for communicating any unexpected delays or changes in the plan.
	+ Share contact information: Make sure all drivers have the contact information for their passengers, and vice versa. The transportation coordinator's contact information should also be readily available to everyone.
* Consider Logistics and Contingencies
	+ Plan for unexpected delays: Build a buffer into your schedule to account for potential traffic, construction, or other unforeseen issues. This helps reduce stress and keeps the trip on track.
	+ Map out efficient routes: Use a navigation app to plan the most efficient routes, avoiding heavily congested areas where possible.
	+ Address accessibility needs: Ensure that any members with mobility challenges or other accessibility needs are accommodated. This might mean arranging a wheelchair-accessible vehicle or a specific pickup location.
* Create a detailed budget.
	+ Your budget should include all costs, such as vehicle rental fees, gas, tolls, and any potential stipends or food for the drivers.
	+ Determine how costs will be covered: Decide whether the cost will be shared by the passengers, subsidized by the organization, or a combination of both. Be transparent about these costs with your members.

## Contact Information for the ACBI Board

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