



AGAPE

A Gateway to Advocacy, Perseverance and Education

NEWS

A Message

From President Patrick Patton

Greetings, all.

The summer months have begun, and the heat is here. How do you like those ninety-degree days? I believe that it's important to take every opportunity to step outside and feel the sunrays whenever you can. I want to start by wishing all the fathers a Happy Father's Day. Your contributions to your families are greatly appreciated. We're excited for some upcoming events. We hope to see you at the 62nd Annual ACB Convention, which will be held in Schaumburg, Illinois from July 2nd to July 7th. On July 25th, the Missouri History Museum will be hosting a Disability Pride Observance with a luncheon sponsored by AGAPE. More information about the luncheon will be provided on the events page of the newsletter.

July's monthly AGAPE meeting will be held virtually on the third Saturday, July 15, due to the holiday and the convention. We hope that you can attend. I would like to wish happy birthdays to our June and July birthday members and hope that all of our members are having a happy, safe, and cool summer!

Accessibility & Awareness

Did You Know...?

STL Huggs

STL Huggs is a local non-profit dedicated to giving individuals with disabilities the information and resources necessary for training their own service dog. You can train your dog for any service you need it to provide, even cross-training for services such as guiding for the sight-impaired, blood sugar detection for diabetes, and support for people with autism and mental conditions. STL Huggs offers a supportive group environment with monthly outings with a workbook. The cost to begin depends on whether or not you have your own dog already or if you'd like help getting on. There is also an \$800 starting fee plus two \$500 certifications. There is opportunity for payment plans. More information can be found at <https://stlhuggs.org/>

The OKO App

OKO is a smartphone app that helps the visually impaired navigate crosswalk signals. With it, you can know the state of a pedestrian traffic light.



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At an intersection, the pedestrian traffic light function gives you the state of the pedestrian light by playing with haptics and audio feedback, similar to a physical APS system. For more information, please watch the following YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/v1MvzKZOYs>

MCB & ACB News **State & National Happenings**

MCB Staff Changes

There have been some recent changes to the MCB leadership. Kay Malmquist is no longer the president. Chip Hailey has assumed the role of president. The vice president is now Linda Gerken, and the new secretary is Debbie Sanders. The office manager is Celita White, and Donna Wieldlich is now the office clerk after relinquishing her position of Public Relations.

MCB Sports & Rec Events

Wilma Chestnut is the Chairperson for this Sports & Recreations program. This program will include some new and exciting things to help members stay a little more fit. Activities and exercises will not just be entirely physical but some exercises will also work the mind. This Sports & Recreation program is not limited to St. Louis, but will include other cities in Missouri as well.

The event for White Cane Safety Day will be held at Ellis Riverfront Park on October 14, 2023. The address is 300 Ellis Porter Dr., Jefferson City, MO 65101. For registration and sponsorship info [contact Wilma Chestnut-House](#).

Message from MCB Transportation

Metro STL Transit has made more service cuts, which went into effect June 12. These cuts will reduce service on evenings and weekends. Thirty-one Missouri bus routes have been affected, and Call-A-Ride will reduce its service area to match the new changes. Robyn Wallen, Chairperson for the Transportation Committee of MCB, continues to work hard at pressuring Metro St. Louis to hear the voices of the disabled community. June 21st, Robyn and advocates for the disabled community met with executives from Metro to discuss the current issues facing our community. On June 22nd, the advocates for the disabled held a press conference to speak with reporters regarding the meeting with Metro. During the meeting, the executives acknowledged the



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problems with providing adequate service and concluded by saying “they have some work to do.” Metro STL continues to blame service cuts on staffing shortages.

The following is a message from Robyn Wallen of MCB Transportation:

“If you have stopped using Call-A-Ride because of the less-than-reliable service please let me know. Your name and information will not be shared. We are just trying to ascertain the number of people who have stopped using the service. Please email or call and let me know ASAP. My email is robynwallen@gmail.com or you may call me at (314) 878-3389. Thank you.”

VIA STL

Via STL has expanded its North County service hours to help with some of the reduced routes from Call-A-Ride. All Day Service is also now available in North St. Louis County, north of Interstate 270, seven days a week from 5am to 1am Here is the contact to call Via STL for questions: 636.251.332

Membership Updates

Stay Up-to-Date on Community News

We at AGAPE would like to wish Mae Holt a happy belated birthday. She celebrated her birthday in the month of May. As well, we would like to celebrate one of our members with a birthday in June. Happy birthday to Debra Reece!

Featured AGAPE Member of the Month

A Few Words from Elizabeth Brown

I was the founder of AGAPE Council of the Blind in 1995. I have held the positions of secretary, vice president, and president. While I am a firm believer in the village it takes to raise a child, I am most proud of my role in raising my two boys. As for AGAPE, I am most proud that we have our status as a nonprofit and that we are working on transportation opportunities for the blind. My words of wisdom are to remember that “the best is yet to come.” Things may look bleak but, with time and effort, you will see your way through this.

Wellness Corner

Improve Mind, Body, Soul and Quality of Life



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Exercise Bands

By Etefia Umana

I hope and pray that everyone is having a productive summer. Over the last few months we have strive to inform our members and the general public of very practical and inexpensive ways to maintain and develop themselves each month. The purpose of these articles is to make sure that people understand what they can do in their own homes without expensive equipment, expensive memberships, or expensive things just in general.

One of the components of fitness that you have to understand is that there are various elements to it. The primary elements include the following: strength, speed, balance, endurance, flexibility, and coordination. In this month's newsletter, we will focus on resistance bands and how they can help keep you fit.

Resistance bands are usually materials or bands with handles that provide some level of resistance against the muscles. Resistance bands can be used for a multitude of exercises for full body workouts including bicep curls, tricep kickbacks, tricep pulldowns, shoulder presses and chest presses. Resistance bands are also good for the lats, abdomen and the legs.

Here is a link to some resistance band workouts: [Tyler Merren resistance band exercises](#)

Entertainment Spotlight

Books, Movies, TV, & Podcasts

Tracy Anderson, our Editor in Chief, speaks on the media she enjoys for education, entertainment, inspiration, and peace of mind.

I like to spend my free time relaxing, and my favorite hobby is listening to a variety of podcasts from Spotify. I say variety because they are vastly different but all very informative and entertaining. My first choice is StarTalk radio. This podcast features Neil Degrasse, Tyson, and a sidekick, usually a comedian, and they explore topics regarding space, science, and mixing a little humor. I find it to be so funny but I learn a lot from it. Some other podcasts I like to listen to before I fall asleep would be *What's the Juice* podcast. This podcast shares a lot of invaluable information regarding Health. The host, Alivia, dives deep into some very interesting alternatives to promote healthy eating and lifestyle. The next one I like is called *Truth Be Told* with Tony Sweet. This podcast will explore urban legends, as well as aliens and paranormal. When you want to dive into some scary stuff as well as find out information about some factual topics, this is a good podcast to listen to. My last choice is called *The Rising* podcast. This podcast is an Internet show that is on YouTube, as well as on Spotify.



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The hosts deliver the news and current events mixed in with a little bit of a discussion format. This gives you a fresh take on what people are talking about and thinking about as it relates to political topics.

I used to love horror movies, but since losing my sight, they have not had the same effect. So I don't watch them quite as much. I will from time to time watch a series like *"And Just Like That..."* which is a spin off from another series that was on TV years ago. The characters are now in their 50s and when the show first started they were 30 something. It's a comedy about four ladies who explore relationships, love, and career. This show contains graphic content and may not be suitable for everyone. I also enjoy dramas and action movies when audio description is available. One of the movies I've enjoyed watching was "The Harder They Fall." This movie is a western-style film that contains a lot of action. It also has a very good soundtrack with music from artists like Cee Lo Green. Another movie I liked is a suspense drama titled "The Strays" on Netflix. Lastly, I enjoyed a movie titled "A Man Called Otto," starring Tom Hanks. With that in mind, I am always looking for new movie suggestions.

I use the Bard Mobile app to download books. I decided to start with the Toni Morrison series of books. The first one that I am reading is "The Bluest Eye". I also found other topics to be of interest that I will be searching for on Bard once I finish Toni Morrison.

Calendar of Events **Activities for the Month**

Monday, July 3rd: Saturday, July 8th - ACB Convention in Schaumburg, IL

Saturday, July 15th: AGAPE Monthly Meeting; To be held virtually. Please call the AGAPE conference number at 11AM

On-Going Activities **We Keep It Moving**

Every Tuesday & Thursday: Prayer Line from 8:30am-9 AM on AGAPE Conference Line

Every Tuesday: \$2 Tuesday Bowling at Olivette Lanes from Noon to 3 PM

Every Thursday: Chair Exercises with Wilma, Conference Line 2



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Upcoming Events A Look to the Future

Saturday, August 5th: AGAPE Council of the Blind Monthly Meeting at 11AM

Saturday, August 19th: Ice Cream Social; Location and time to be confirmed

Sunday, September 24th: AGAPE Annual Gospel Fest at Central Baptist Church (2842 Washington Ave, St. Louis, MO 63103)

Resources Need to Know Info

For an up-to-date list of all resources, contact a member of The Communications Team.

AGAPE Conference Line

605-313-4818

Access Code: 367629

Conference Line 2

(517)-525-1531

Access Code: #5620518

Missouri Council of the Blind (MCB)

To give every blind Missourian an opportunity to contribute socially and economically to society with the same expectations for success as all other Missourians.

<https://www.moblind.org/>

5453 Chippewa St, St. Louis, MO 63109

314-832-7172

Saint Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired

SLSBVI provides a variety of services and programs, and holds space for others to offer services and programs, to help people with sight impairment to have full lives.

<https://slsbvi.org>

8770 Manchester Rd, St. Louis, MO 63144

314-968-9000

American Council of the Blind



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The American Council of the Blind is a nationwide organization in the United States. It is an organization mainly made up of blind and visually impaired people who want to achieve independence and equality.

<https://www.acb.org>

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