

IVIE Motivator Newsletter

WINTER 2025

Welcome to the quarterly IVIE Motivator Newsletter!

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MESSAGE FROM IVIE President

Hi members,

After a busy fall and winter, this year is moving fast. I'm running a bit late with this issue so the next issue will not be far off. Pay attention to the details of the ACB and IVIE annual conference and convention so you book your hotel. We have some great speakers lined up due to the hard work of our officers.

I encourage you to check the IVIE member directory for new and updated member listings. Please invite other blind and visually impaired entrepreneurs to join us for any of our upcoming events. I get notifications of new people joining our IVIE email discussion group. Please continue to share your tips and suggestions. The IVIE board appreciates all your involvement, whether providing info on the email discussion lists or participating in our monthly calls. If you would be interested on assisting with finding speakers or developing topics for our monthly calls, please let me know. We'd like to have more members involved with assisting our affiliate.

If any of you have suggestions for IVIE, particularly for reaching additional entrepreneurs, please let us know. If you have suggestions for the IVIE website: ivie-acb.org or the quarterly newsletter, please send them to info@ivie-acb.org. You can also reach me at 818-209-8684.

Happy reading,

Ardis Bazyn

MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES

IVIE will continue to provide opportunities for members to network and share ideas. If you have not already taken advantage of the following options available for members, please consider participating in one or all of them.

- On the second Sunday each month, 6 PM Pacific/9 PM Eastern, IVIE sponsors an ACB community call called the IVIE “Entrepreneur Exchange”. Each month, a speaker often gives tips on a particular topic and each attendee gets the opportunity to introduce themselves and their business. Comments and questions are appreciated on each call.

Join our upcoming calls, see the dates below for the next ones:

- : April 13 “Entrepreneur Exchange” topic: “open discussion”
- May 11: “Entrepreneur Exchange”
- June 8: “Entrepreneur Exchange”.
- June 22 Annual business meeting

- The IVIE email discussion list is available for members and others interested in creating or developing a business to share announcements, resources, opportunities, and other information of interest. If you are not on the general IVIE email discussion list, please subscribe by sending an email to ivie+subscribe@acblists.org
- All members should be on the IVIE-members email list for members only. If you are not currently subscribed, please send an email to ivie-members+subscribe@acblists.org. Members can share entrepreneur related information, IVIE business related information such as potential Constitution and Bylaw amendments, resolutions, and positive strategies to improve IVIE in the future. The quarterly Motivator newsletter is sent to the IVIE-members email list. All upcoming calls and events are also publicized on this list as well as anything members wish to share with other members.
- The IVIE business directory gives members a free chance to advertise their business and publicize contact information for networking or business purposes. If you'd like changes to your listing on the business directory, please send an email to info@ivie-acb.org or call 818-209-8684. We want to share your specific

details in your member directory listing. Those without businesses have their personal information on the list so anyone can contact them. If members would like to add why they joined, they can do so by saying retired business owner, their current job- title and company, someone with resources to share, etc.

- Our quarterly newsletter is sent to members via the IVIE-members email list. Members can submit articles about their business or give helpful tips to readers. See suggested topics under the article at the end of the newsletter called “SUBMITTING ARTICLES”.

On the fifth Sunday each quarter, if we do not have a book to discuss, we'll sometimes have an open discussion call.

Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs Annual Convention Information

- Affiliate Donation Fees- affiliate donation links are on the ACB registration link: Pre-registration: \$20; On-Site: \$25

(Registration fee includes 2026 IVIE annual dues)

- Sunday, June 22 6 PM Pacific/9 PM Eastern IVIE Annual Business meeting. All members should participate to elect officers and board members to serve IVIE. Also, We want more members to participate in choosing upcoming programs and activities.

- Friday, June 27

1:00-2:15 PM:

The Coaching Roundtable (zoom only)

Join ACB Women and IVIE for a conversation with three women coaches. You will learn about their training, their coaching philosophies, and their experience as coaching entrepreneurs. One of them might be the perfect coach for you.

- Saturday, July 5,

12:15-1:00 PM IVIE/RSVA luncheon And Program (ticket price pending)

1:00-2:15 PM: Bringing Meaning To Your Business

Dr. Dan Lococo PHD.

The speaker will use personal experiences to highlight how using the mission and goals of the business will help it thrive. The main focus is on bringing meaning into your business to ensure the passion for the business continues.

2:30-3:45 PM Tips For Preventing Identity Theft

Speakers will give participants ways to prevent identity theft. You will also learn about recent scams and how to identify them so you don't get scammed.

(Co-Sponsored by IVIE and RSVA)

- Sunday, July 6

1:00-2:15 PM: Speed Networking For Entrepreneurs Potential And Current Ones

Entrepreneurs will highlight current entrepreneur options including those in the Randolph Sheppard Program. Entrepreneurs will tell how they decided on entrepreneurship.

(Co-Sponsored By IVIE and RSVA)

- Wednesday July 9

1:00-3:45 PM

IVIE Business Expo

Blind and visually impaired business owners will showcase their products and services and answer your questions. Those interested in having a booth can pay IVIE \$10.

The Independent Visually Impaired Online Business Expo

This event was held on November 16, 2024 and it was a great success. Below is a list of those who participated. Please thank them by thinking of them when you next need a gift or service.

- Carla Hayes, CEO, Lengua-Learn Communications: She has a Language school and sells adaptive products from ILA including accessible digital recorders, and educational materials. Contact info: 724-941-8184, lengual@verizon.net, lengua-learn.com
- Hayley Agers, DOTERRA Wellness Advocate, provides education on essential oils; DIY groups make cleaning products, handmade gifts, room sprays, etc. Contact: C: 425-870-3865, H: 360-653-5572, Blindessentials@gmail.com, my.doterra.com/hayleyagers
- Cathy Schmitt Whitaker, CPC, ELI-MP, Ed.D., CLDS; E3 Coaching and Speaking LLC: Career and Energy Leadership Coaching, Motivational Speaking, Complimentary Discovery Coaching Session - Blending knowledge of self-improvement and meditation. Contact: Cathy@MyE3Coach.com, 840-588-7146, MyE3Coach.com
- Jeremy Johansen, Farmer Host: Website design and hosting. Contact: sales@farmerhost.com, 510-667-9577, farmerhost.com
- Edward Cohen, EZ2See® Products LLC: Uniquely designed, highly-accessible weekly planner, sticky note pads and no-bleed pens. Contact: 800-234-8291, Info@EZ2SeeProducts.com
- Robin Mandell, Songbird Yoga with Robin: Online yoga, meditation, and mindful movement classes for groups and individuals. Contact: robin@songbirdyoga.com, songbirdyoga.com

- Ray Wright, Wright Turn Only: Handcrafted wooden items including writing pens, seam rippers, back scratchers, ice cream scoops, pizza cutters, key rings and many other products. Contact: wrightturnonly@gmail.com, 801-560-9866
- Charlotte Lang, Mama Otter's Tidbits: Handmade gemstone and seasonal jewelry. Contact: Mamaotter1@gmail.com, 952-300-2188, mamaotter.com
- Christine Chaikin, Insightful Publications: Publisher of resource handbooks for the blind and visually impaired communities. Contact: insightfulpub@gmail.com, 808-329-9512, in-sightful.com
- Ardis Bazyn, CEO, Bazyn Communications: Speaker, Business Coach, and Writer. Contact: 818-209-8684, abazyn@bazyncommunications.com, bazyncommunications.com
- Christopher Peterson, President and CEO, Penny Forward: Offering Online financial wellness education courses and group and one to one financial coaching, for \$9 a month or \$99 a year. Contact: 888-332-5558, chris@pennyforward.com, pennyforward.com
- Antonio Guimaraes, Access To Places: Home of the tactile graphics club of the month. Contact: 954-222-2377, info@accesstoplaces.com, accesstoplaces.com/tgc

ABOUT IVIE MEMBER KEVIN FORTUNE

In June, 2024, Kevin Fortune, customer service representative and a member of the WI public policy team, was chosen by Governor Tony Evers to serve on the WI Rehabilitation council to contribute to this important mission.

Advising and assisting the [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (DVR), the WRC approves budgets,

ensures fiscal responsibility, and ensures that the department's programs are effective.

Kevin represents individuals who are blind or visually impaired, a role he takes very seriously, and one he considers a great honor. Kevin serves on the Services to Business Committee, which connects individuals with disabilities to vocational rehabilitation services in the business world. He admits that it's a commitment, but it's one he loves, especially as he grows in this new role as council member.

Recent policy shifts and a charged political landscape have definitely added more stress and uncertainty to Kevin's work with the WRC. However, he remains determined to keep the mission and vision front and center, as he's driven by the growing need for the services provided.

"It has been quite interesting, and that's an understatement" he said jokingly, while reflecting on the challenges ahead. "Budgets are tight, funding is unstable, and some of those who normally would be helping have chosen to retire, or not get involved altogether."

While these circumstances are challenging, Kevin sees the moment as a healthy opportunity for collaborative

service. “Some of this is good though – I’m big on accountability and ensuring taxpayer money goes where it’s supposed to. It’s healthy in that it makes us evaluate everything, it calls for us to process things thoroughly and ask tough questions instead of just checking boxes or going through the motions.”

Kevin also acknowledges that businesses are feeling stuck in this uncertainty too, with many facing hiring freezes. It’s an added layer they’ve had to contend with. “The temptation is to do nothing and kind of bury your head in the sand,” said Kevin. “But that’s been the problem in the past, so it’s motivation for us now to reach out and use the opportunity to educate others.”

For Kevin, it’s all about raising awareness and getting people involved. “If any good thing is coming out of the current challenges we’re facing, it’s that lots of people are coming out of the woodwork, speaking up, and supporting the cause.”

Speaking of motivation, Kevin emphasizes the WRC’s mission and vision, especially in their service across the state. “We’re there to get placements and get people with disabilities jobs out in the workforce. This includes equipping people with what they need to do just that. It’s what I truly love about this role and work. It’s not welfare,

it's not charity—we're trying to get people the opportunity to work, be self-sufficient, have dignity, and thrive. At the end of the day, that makes a huge difference."

A big part of that process is helping businesses understand which tools and technology is available to them, especially when it comes to what's needed to accommodate workers with disabilities. "Often they think this person is blind, they probably can't do this job...or this person has autism or down syndrome so they probably won't be as productive. This of course is wrong, but we're there to help educate, to help train, and to help inform these businesses of the many skills and talents awaiting them within this segment of the workforce."

Kevin also explained that even if it's not a full-time position, maybe it means simply establishing new internships, or starting similar programs to take steps forward. In his opinion, that kind of involvement and participation always leads to mutual growth taking place.

After having lived in a few cities across the US, Kevin feels honored to have seen so many successes along the way in his time here in Wisconsin. Reflecting on victories like the [new bus route in West Allis](#) and the [transportation tax credit in Madison](#), both are tangible changes that have impacted the lives of countless people across the state.

“It really makes you feel good that you’re making a difference. A lot of times politically, or with activism in general, changes take time. Sure, you may get the word out and you celebrate that, but you don’t always get actual ‘fruit on the tree’ so to speak. But we’re seeing productivity, we’re seeing doors open, people are talking, and those conversations are going beneath the surface to produce real changes, so that’s great.”

His involvement with the WRC is truly a win-win, both for the disabled community at large and for IBVI as well. Kevin is one of the few representatives to have served from the blind and visually impaired community, and it’s evident how vital and important that representation is. Whether it’s helping general protocol and procedures become more accessible and inclusive, or providing a new perspective on challenges, his impact is evident, and he’s thankful for that.

But it’s also a win for IBVI as well. Kevin’s presence has brought a lot of positive attention to IBVI, too. Kevin may be visually impaired, but everyone is seeing that he gets things done and is a difference maker. “They say they’re not playing down there about reaching out to the disabled community and employing people who are blind and visually impaired. So it’s great to see our name getting out

there and for us to be getting positive recognition.”

He continued, “I always tell our President CJ Lange, we’re the best kept secret in Milwaukee. We’re affecting the whole world from right here.”

Secrets for Coping with Challenges and Change

By: Ardis Bazyn

This is a very stressful time. With all the news and warnings, more and more people have to deal with new challenges and changes in their lives. These tips should help you adjust to the challenges a bit more easily.

1. Benefit from the support of friends and family. Talk to friends and family members about your challenges and they can either assist by giving you great ideas or just give you some mental support.
2. Use humor to keep your focus positive. Read some humorous stories, find a joke website, and look at life in a humorous way when you can. Try to cheer up others.

3. Learn strategies to deal with necessary changes in your life or job. Sometimes, the easiest way to cope is by developing new skills. Learn alternatives you've never tried: podcasts, online blogging, webinars, etc. Talk to colleagues or co-workers to see what they are doing to complete work in a new way.

4. View challenges or obstacles as opportunities. Sometimes, our lives get in a rut. When we face challenges, we need to look outside the box. Search online for stress relievers or a new exercise program.

5. Develop Visualization techniques. When I'm having a stressful time, I like to visualize a better time, usually a future goal. Then I can set some goals and priorities and visualize accomplishment. Times change and so can you!

IVIE “Entrepreneur Exchange” Call Tips and IVIE Email Discussion Posts

Read below for some of the valuable information learned at the recent “Entrepreneur Exchange” calls.

- December 8: Casey Matthews, Web Friendly Help, from Minnesota went through the process and changes for changing from Windows 10 to Windows 11. Your computer needs to have the specifications to download it. Contact Casey at

help@webfriendlyhelp.com>. Some were concerned about having to purchase a new computer but you can pay \$30 to get your Windows 10 extended for a year.

- January 12: This IVIE “Entrepreneur Exchange” call topic was “Handling inventory and other bookkeeping tips”. Our speaker was Jane Carona treasurer for the Braille Revival League and retired office manager of Guide Dogs, Inc. She explained how she used Excel for most of her functions as a treasurer and for inventory. She creates spread sheets for tracking bank accounts and for a ledger for bookkeeping. She also used a spread sheet to follow inventory. She is willing to share templates for bookkeeping if anyone is interested.
- February 9: Super Bowl is the time for companies to share new ads. This month, the topic was “How does your business currently reach new customers?” Do you network with organizations, have Facebook ads, search on LinkedIn? Many shared their experiences with marketing. Some made cold calls, networked within their community, had web contact links, and referrals were the most beneficial.
- March 9: This "Entrepreneur Exchange" will focus on what affects your business most. What are your biggest challenges and how do you adapt? Some challenges seemed to be finding the right assistants and marketing. Networking with others about good local services works.

Some content from the IVIE email lists posts follow as an example of some items you can share on the IVIE list.

- Synergies Work

Intensive 12-Week Business Accelerator Program, LIVE via Zoom. Spring cohort to kickoff April 2025.

Learn how to go from ideas to commercially sustainable business

Who is this program for...

Entrepreneurs with a deep desire to learn how to go from ideas to commercially sustainable business.

Founders who are pre-idea or idea-stage in their business; or who have an early-stage product or service..

For more information

<https://synergieswork.org/igniting-ideas/>

- THE ABC's Of Advocacy: Advocating for the Blind Community
- Bayview Chapter cordially invites all members and friends to attend our April 12, 2025 CHAPTER meeting WHICH will feature a guest speaker, Kevin Fortune, CEO, NATIONAL BVI Chamber of Commerce, and Owner, Fortune Agency, (Public Policy/Leadership Consulting),

Where: East Bay Center for the Blind 2928 Adeline Street Berkeley, CA 94576

When: Saturday, April 12, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Fortune, who hails from Wisconsin, and is speaking in person at our meeting, will share his journey to success as a coach for companies and business owners. Drawing from his extensive experience in public policy and leadership, Kevin will introduce the basic principles of effective advocacy for the blind and visually impaired community. We hope you will join us for an inspiring session that will equip you with the knowledge and the tools to make a meaningful impact in your advocacy efforts. If you wish to attend in person, and to have pizza, call Ray Marcus at 510-813-6766.

This meeting will also be on Zoom. You can get the link from Ray Marcus or Patty Nash: 707-798-1484.

- IVIE encourages you to share items of particular interest to business owners on our IVIE email discussion list.

What's New?

(Items in this column are not endorsed by the IVIE board. If you wish to contribute an item for this column, please send it to info@ivie-acb.org)

CANDLE IN THE WINDOW

Candle in the Window is proud to present its 2025 retreat which starts

on Wednesday, August 13 and ends on Sunday, August 17. Again we will be meeting at the beautiful and friendly Dogwood on Lake Norman Meeting & Retreat Center located in Sherrills Ford, North Carolina, not far from Charlotte.

Our topic will be Finding and Nurturing Community, Take Two. We used this topic during our 2024 retreat but were rudely interrupted by Hurricane Helene about a third of the way through. Since there was a great deal of enthusiasm for this important topic, we decided to revisit it this year.

Because there was so much interest shown last year, you might want to consider registering sooner rather than later for this year's retreat!

How much will the retreat cost? If you want a roommate, the cost will be \$530. If you want a room to yourself, the cost will be \$780. This includes the room, all meals, and transportation to and from the Charlotte airport.

Due to space constraints, the retreat is limited to 20 participants. A non-refundable \$40 deposit will reserve your spot. All registration fees must be paid in full by July 31.

Payment through PayPal should be sent to
candleinthefindow1@gmail.com

If you're paying by check, send it to: Carlos Taylor, 925 S. Luick Ave., Muncie, IN 47302. Make check payable to Candle In the Window.

If you have questions, contact one of our board members listed below:

Carlos Taylor: candleinthefindow1@gmail.com

phone: 765-208-0882

Becky Davidson,

beckyb1120@gmail.com

Phone: 914-393-6613

Kathy Szinnyey: joyfulrenegade@gmail.com

Phone: 502-759-1288

Gene Chelberg:

generaleyez@gmail.com

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415-bfi-9454

Peter Duffy:

wharfratpete@gmail.com

phone:

904-294-0375

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A candle placed in a window is a sign of welcome.

Smart Wallets for Blind Users

Blind and visually impaired individuals face several difficulties when dealing with cash:

- Identifying Banknotes to know the value of different bills just by touch.
- Spotting counterfeit notes is challenging, which can lead to financial loss.
- Staying Organized: Keeping cash, coins, and cards in order for easy access.

Smart wallets use technology to assist blind users in managing their money. They offer features like:

- Sensors that can read the color and other features of a banknote to determine its value. When a note is inserted, the wallet scans it and informs the user through vibrations or voice messages.
- Some smart wallets use ultraviolet (UV) lights and sensors to check security features on bills, helping to identify fake money.
- Designed with multiple sections, these wallets help users sort different denominations and coins systematically. Some even connect to smartphones via Bluetooth for additional features like tracking and voice assistance.
- Smart Vision Wallet combines color sensors, UV lights, and processors to help blind users handle cash confidently. When a banknote is placed inside and a button is pressed, the wallet scans the note to determine its value and authenticity. It then provides feedback through unique vibration patterns or voice output via a connected smartphone app. This discreet method ensures privacy and independence for the user.
- The Money Organizer Wallet offers practical benefits. Designed specifically for the visually impaired, this wallet features separate compartments for different

denominations and multiple change purses, making it easier to organize.

As technology advances, smart wallets may include:

- Digital Payment Integration: Allowing users to manage both cash and digital transactions.
- Better Security: Adding features like fingerprint scanning
- Improved Connectivity: Using Internet of Things (IoT) technology to provide real-time updates on currency changes

Smart wallets are a significant advancement in assistive technology, offering blind individuals greater independence and confidence in managing their finances. By addressing the challenges of currency identification, counterfeit detection, and organization, these devices play a crucial role in enhancing the daily lives of those with visual impairments.

<https://techfreedom.in/revolutionizing-money-management-smart-wallets-for-blind-individuals/>

Phone holder Navi Pal.

The phone holder is specifically made to hold your phone in the right place to use navigation app such as AIRA. It

has a specialized Velcro holder to secure your phone inside and help you line up your phone's camera and the right place on the pouch. You then have a zipper protective pouch around your phone. The straps go around your neck and around your chest to keep the phone from bouncing as you walk.

website: feeldomlife.com

SUBMITTING NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

I hope you've enjoyed reading this issue of the IVIE Motivator. Articles are due for the next issue by April 30, 2025. Please forward information you think other business owners might find useful. Our newsletters are more valuable when many members share resources. We welcome articles on technology particularly helpful for business owners, starting a business, and growing a business. Please share your business experiences in a "member profile" article about you and your business. Include: your name, business name or why you joined IVIE. How did you start your business? How do you advertise or market your business? What technology do you use? What tips would you like to share with others

starting their own business? Do you have other information of interest for other members. Please include any specials, new products, or new features of your business and add your best contact information. If you don't feel comfortable writing an article yourself, contact us and we'll give you a call.

We also welcome book reviews, technology reviews, online resources, or info about organizations or agencies you've found beneficial. Send any items for the newsletter to info@ivie-acb.org or abazyn@bazyncommunications.com.

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