



Media Release

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Governor Proclaims White Cane Safety Day

For people all over the U.S. who use them, a white cane is an important tool and a symbol that means safety, mobility and freedom. The white cane used by hundreds of thousands of blind and visually impaired Americans allows them to live fuller lives because they can safely travel.

Noting the importance of the white cane, Governor Asa Hutchinson has proclaimed October 15, as White Cane Safety Day. The Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind is coordinating a White Cane Safety Day observance with other blindness groups on that day at World Services for the Blind, 2811 Fair Park Blvd., Little Rock. October is Blindness Awareness Month, as well as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The event, which is open to the public, will start at 10:30 a.m. in the WSB auditorium on the second floor. This year's theme is "Perspectives from Three Generations of Cane Users" and will feature a first grader, a senior student, a vocational-age adult, and an older individual, each speaking briefly on what the white cane means in their lives.

Sharon Giovinazzo, the president and CEO of World Services for the Blind, will give the welcome and the history of the observance. The Governor's White Cane Safety Day proclamation will be read. White Cane Safety Day has been observed every year since President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law in 1964. The first White Cane Ordinance was passed in 1930 in Peoria, Illinois and granted pedestrians carrying a white cane protections and the right-of-way. Other states, including Arkansas, soon adopted similar laws. The white cane is a symbol of independence, because it increases mobility for people who are blind or visually impaired. The white cane also raises awareness for pedestrian safety.

For information about DSB's programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.

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