



On-Site Newsletter

Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc.

Providing alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read

Fall 2008

Director's Corner

We've experienced a very exciting six months here at ABLE! Our name change is complete and our logo has been changed to highlight the new name. We offer our deep appreciation to the Nonprofit Management Fund for their generous grant that allowed us to have our new identity professionally designed. We were able to hire Linsey Seger at Third Sector Creative to create a look that helps us stand out in the crowd. We couldn't be happier!



New Look Unveiled – Open House a Memorable Event

On Tuesday, September 23rd, ABLE opened its doors to showcase an entirely new environment. Gone were the furnishings circa 1950s, replaced by contemporary modules that promote a much more appealing and efficient workplace.

The result has been remarkable. Staff and volunteers now have dedicated areas that support the concentration and focus that transcription specialties require, yet at the same time promote collaboration. Shared areas such as mail, fax and copier work spaces have been streamlined.

These changes were celebrated by an impressive turnout of people at the September Open House, showing their support for both ABLE and the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which was showcasing its new environs as well. Nearly 200 ABLE recipients, volunteers, and area professionals serving blind and visually impaired clients and the general public from all of Southeast Wisconsin joined in the celebration.

We want to take this opportunity to offer a very special message of thanks to **Jeff Dittl** of Recycled Office Environments for his dedication and patience over the last three years, and his professionalism and competence in creating this tremendous change. We very much appreciate **Margaret Meeker** for her design expertise and seemingly inexhaustible patience, all given to us as an in-kind gift. Thanks, too, to all the staff and volunteers who so generously contributed their time and energy to making the vision of our new look become a reality!

Thank You, Logo Development Team!

Designer: Third Sector Creative, Linsey Seger
Funder: Nonprofit Management Fund
Marketing Committee:
Harold Mester, Board Member
Cheryl Orgas, Executive Director

After three years of planning and fundraising, our office is completely redesigned. Our staff and volunteers have a space that is professional, efficient, attractive, and will allow for growth in our organization. We give many thanks to the donors who helped us bring this redesign to fruition.

Thank You, Redesign Funders!

Greater Milwaukee Foundation Community Grant Fund
Elizabeth Elser Doolittle Charitable Trust
Wells Fargo Foundation Greater Milwaukee
The Faye McBeath Foundation
Pilot Club of Milwaukee Fund
Industries for the Blind

We are so very delighted with the results. Please come by to get a tour of our redesigned office located in the Milwaukee Public Library, Central Library Building, Wells Street entrance. And, save the date of May 13th, 2009 for our annual volunteer recognition and fundraising luncheon when we will be unveiling our new DVD about ABLE!

-Cheryl Orgas
Executive Director

Volunteers—The Heart of Our Organization

We are pleased and proud to highlight our volunteers in this issue by giving them a voice as well as our immeasurable thanks. We will introduce you to several of our exceptional volunteers. They are representative of the many extraordinary people who make this organization what it is—a way to give the priceless gift of reading to people with print disabilities.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to each and every one of our outstanding volunteers!

Braille Update

Where has the year gone?

It certainly has been a busy one here in the Braille Department at ABLE. Our transcribers have worked tirelessly to produce elementary school textbooks and assessments, medical forms, legal documents, newsletters, children's books, menus, fiction literature, and much more.



Our braille transcriber, Barbara Althoen, and I had the opportunity to attend the fall National Braille Association (NBA) conference in Lexington, Kentucky last month. We came away with some valuable information focusing on formatting, and mathematic and science transcription. We will be sharing this information with our transcribers soon.

Also, effective January 1, 2008, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) came out with a 2007 Braille Codes Update. Included in this update are changes to the English Braille American Edition 1994/2002 for Literary Braille instruction, which all transcribers received during their course instruction with VSVH/ABLE. Please call me at the office to receive your copy of the update.

We are continuing our online Braille Certification course. Sandy Rowley, our trainer/mentor, has been assisting us in preparing John Graf, Judy Niederdorfer, and Patricia Palasz for certification in Literary Braille transcription. If you are interested in becoming a Braille transcriber for ABLE, please give us a call!

We want to congratulate **Lenore Tesch** on completing and receiving her Literary Braille Certification from the Library of Congress this past summer. CONGRATULATIONS, LENORE!

A special thank you goes out to **Audrey Hemmer**, Barbara Althoen, Phyllis Bullis, Patricia Diel, and John Kaczmarowski, for all your time and talent in transcribing the textbooks we received this year. Your commitment and tireless effort is incredible, and very much appreciated.

We also want to thank our production team: Giles Daeger, Katherine (Kay) Effinger, Cheri McGrath, Mary Kellison, Edna Proeber, Wioletta Puzyrewska, Lenore Tesch, and Guadelupe Torrijos. Your support in preparing and shipping the requests we've received this year made the process that much easier.

Thanks to all our transcribers for a great year!!

-Kathy Bruening
Braille Services Coordinator

Braille Volunteers Make the Difference!

Our longest working braille volunteer, Audrey Hemmer, began her braille class at MATC in 1981, and she's been brailleing ever since. Audrey wanted to prepare for her retirement by acquiring a skill that would give her the opportunity to give back to her community as a volunteer. She was trained on the manual Perkins brailier, moved to the computer keyboard, and now is using a computer program called Braille 2000. Audrey has enthusiastically changed with the times, learning more complex technology as the production of braille advanced.

Not only has Audrey brailled from home, she served as the director of VSVH in the 80s, and continues to donate her time in the office as a production volunteer while still doing her brailleing from home. Every week when Audrey comes to the office she brings two other dedicated volunteers: Edna Proeber, who has been with us since 1992 and has contributed nearly 5,000 hours, and Kay Effinger, who has come back to us after a hiatus of many years. These women truly make a noticeable difference in our community.

Audrey, thank you for a remarkable 15,000+ hours of service!

Audio News



In spring 2008, we held a highly successful four-part audio tapist training course for new volunteers. We found that students learn a lot from each other, and many common errors are uncovered and corrected in the training. The program was expanded to a six-session curriculum for the fall. Materials were added to include recording techniques in a home setting. The goal of the training is to anticipate high quality sound recording in the digital age. We expect seven new volunteers will finish the session ending in December. We are indebted to Eleanor Hoehn, who after 30 years continues to train our audio volunteers. Thank you, Eleanor!

I recently visited the Iowa Department for the Blind in Des Moines. Their audio professional provided a wealth of information pertaining to their transition to digital transcription, which is now in its third year. I am pleased to say that we are closer than ever to making some preliminary decisions for digital recording. A crucial piece of equipment was purchased to provide audio recordings on cassettes for materials originally recorded on computers. This step will allow us to provide service for existing customers while moving forward with our digital conversion. My efforts are centered on making recording in the digital world continue to be the rewarding experience it has always been for our dedicated volunteers.

We are continuing to make advances in other areas as well. For nearly a year, we have been posting information on the National Federation of the Blind's NFB-NewsLine®. NewsLine offers current news and announcements over the telephone. At present we provide *Milwaukee Magazine* and *Shepherd Express*. We also feature *Badger Bytes*, and *KEY Milwaukee* cover stories. Current Milwaukee restaurant lists are included, too! We are tremendously grateful to Viola Puzyrewska for her assistance in putting pertinent materials on our NFB-NewsLine® ABLE channel.

Some clients have requested we provide MP3 files for Microsoft Office documents. We have been pleased to fill these requests and remain available to do more. We can also scan materials and use optical character recognition to convert documents to audio.

Stay tuned as we move forward using new and exciting technologies currently available!

-Richard Robbins
Audio Services Coordinator

Audio Volunteers Receive Award

We offer great thanks to **Carl and Ginny Abendroth** who have been audio readers and in-office volunteers for Volunteer Services for the Visually Handicapped (now ABLE) since 1975. Ginny loves to read our children's books, and Karl has read Milwaukee Magazine since the mid 1990s. Thanks to both of you for all you do. Your able volunteerism has made a tremendous difference in the lives of many!

See Page 5 of this newsletter for the award Karl and Ginny received at our May volunteer recognition and benefit luncheon.

Contact Us

Our office is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. ABLE is closed on days that the Central Library is closed. You may reach us by phone at **414-286-3039**, or visit our Website at **www.ablenow.org**, or email us at **info@ablenow.org**.

Volunteers Volunteers Volunteers Volunteers Volunteers

What Volunteerism Means to Me by Lenore Tesch

Once upon a time, my mother said the word “volunteer” to me, and once upon another time, my nephew’s wife said the word “braillist” to me. Somehow, these two words melded in such a way as to convince me to sign up for a Literary Braille Transcribing Course. I call it fate. I became a volunteer because my mother told me to. How I became a volunteer braille transcriber is another story. But I *am* a volunteer braille transcriber, and I love it.



Volunteerism is defined as “the act or practice of doing volunteer work in community service.” What the definition does not say is how being a volunteer benefits the volunteer. It just makes you feel good. When I became a volunteer, I told myself that I could come and go as I pleased, just work a few hours a week and that’s it. But before I knew it, I was hooked!

Learning another language is supposed to be one way of keeping your brain active. Learning braille has certainly kept my brain active. My brain can jump through hoops. What a challenge! After an eight-month course and almost three years of braille transcribing, it still amazes me that I can visually read dots on a page.

I also consider myself a lucky person, and volunteering is my way of giving back for all my good fortune. Another plus when volunteering is getting to meet so many wonderful and interesting people.

Some people have asked me why I work so hard without getting paid. Oh, I get paid. The only difference is that it doesn’t increase my bank balance, but I think my heart has grown a few sizes larger. If you know what a “warm and fuzzy” feeling is, then you know what volunteerism means to me.

My Experience as an Intern at ABLE by Guadalupe Torrijos

My name is Guadalupe Torrijos. I work at ABLE as an administrative assistant; I am an intern. My job is very interesting because I get to do many duties. For example, I help put the braille books together, and perform reception duties. Plus, I use the computer to research information for the organization and to see how easy is for blind people to access our Website. I also have had the opportunity to translate our ABLE brochure into Spanish for a presentation I gave on July 14th at the 16th Street Clinic. I like how the presentation went, and I look forward to another similar opportunity.

I think this agency is very important in that it helps people in the community get the material in a format that is accessible for them. I have been learning a lot these few weeks. For instance, I have applied my communication skills. We all know that in a work setting you need to have excellent communication skills because that will help you communicate with your co-workers and clients. Before I came here, my communication skills were not very good.

I came to ABLE as an intern for eight weeks, which went fast. I feel that the time I have spent here and in the internship program has helped me; however, I know I still have a lot to learn! Therefore, I have decided that I want to keep working here as a volunteer because I think that being here will help me continue to develop my skills. I feel proud to work here because I want to help the people who are visually impaired like me. I thank the Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired and ABLE for the opportunity they have given me.

We Thank Our Amazing Volunteers!

Karl Abendroth
Virginia Abendroth
Barbara Althoen
Leslie Armstrong
Bob Balderson
Sue Bronson
Phyllis Bullis
Debby Clemons
Giles Daeger
Jerry Danks
Patricia Diel
Judith Ebel
Katherine (Kay) Effinger
Janice Eisen
Bill Fudge
Eunice Gauger
Nancy Gill
Audrey Hemmer
Eleanor Hoehn
Ann Huml
Elizabeth (Nan) Jacoby
Patricia Jipson

Cindy Kaczmarowski
John Kaczmarowski
Mary Kellison
Roger Kissinger
Julia Kleppin
Mary Krey
James Kuehn
Ying Li
John Lonsdale
Holly Loveland
Kathleen Luglio
Paula Lund
Ruth Marks
Cheri McGrath
Margaret Meeker
William Meeker
Shirley Miller
Phyllis Mittelstadt
Bonnie Mohrusen
Barbara Nevers
Janet Peterson
Diana Pine

Margaret Plevak
Stephanie Pribyl
Karyl Price
Edna Proeber
Wioletta Puzyrewska
David Raasch
Karen Riccobono
Lorie Rieden
Barbara Siebecker
Alan Skubal
Arlene Smieja
Nicolette Snyder
Nancy Sowa
Patricia Spannraft
Ruth Spoerri
Lisa Stackpole
Lenore Tesch
Virginia Trimble
Helen Ward
Dorothy Wittenberg
Sharon Zarling

Our Board of Directors

The following volunteers were recognized for their service at our Annual Luncheon on May 20, 2008:

<u>250+ Hours</u>	<u>500+ Hours</u>	<u>1,000+ Hours</u>	<u>5,000+ Hours</u>	<u>15,000+ Hours</u>
Judith Ebel	Roger Kissinger	Mary Krey	Patricia Diel	Audrey Hemmer
David Raasch	Cheri McGrath	Lenore Tesch		
Diana Pine		Paula Lund		

Karl and Virginia Abendroth were honored with a plaque presented to them that read:

“We at Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement (formerly Volunteer Services for the Visually Handicapped) honor you for your steadfast commitment to this organization for nearly 35 years, and your extraordinary generosity, giving nearly 20,000 hours of volunteer time to the blind and print disability community. Your conscientiousness in giving many hours of dependable audio recording and center work epitomizes the spirit of volunteerism. We offer our deepest gratitude for your unwavering commitment to accessibility of the printed word.”

Marsha Valence, Management Librarian Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (WRLBPH), was also honored with a plaque at the Annual Luncheon that read:

“We at Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement (formerly Volunteer Services for the Visually Handicapped) honor you for your dedication and commitment to reading for all! We commend you for your tireless efforts in ensuring that blind and print disabled people have access to the printed word. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering commitment to print accessibility, collaborative spirit, and your friendship.”

Giving

Giving

Giving

Giving

Giving

Giving

Who benefits from ABLE? Here are some examples:

A third grader reads a braille copy of her language arts textbook at the same time as her sighted classmates read print versions of the same text. Like her peers, she can also take this book home to do her homework independently...

A 21 year old, with a physical disability which prevents him from turning pages, works towards an engineering degree with the aid of audio copies of school materials...

A 76 year old with macular degeneration is able to read an audio version of the latest book by his favorite author...



All of this is possible because individuals like you have given generously to help support the work of ABLE. There are many ways you can contribute, but in this newsletter we're highlighting...

4 EASY ways to support ABLE

1. Support our work as you search the Internet:

Pass on the news to co-workers, family and friends: They can all support ABLE by doing their Internet searches through GoodSearch (Powered by Yahoo). If just 100 people do an average of 2 searches per day, that alone can earn ABLE \$730 per year without spending a dime! To sign up, and to learn how to put a handy search tool on your browser, go to www.goodsearch.com or click the link on our website. Be sure to designate "Audio and Braille Literacy Enhancement – ABLE" as the Charity you want to benefit.

2. Holiday Shopping: If you do any online shopping, you can link to almost all of your favorite online stores through GoodShop (by GoodSearch), and up to 37 percent of each purchase you make will benefit ABLE! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, Ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop, and every time you place an order you'll earn

money for ABLE. Again, be sure to designate us as the charity you want to benefit. Go to www.goodsearch.com or click the link on our Website. We are also listed at onecause.com.

3. Grocery Shopping: If you shop at any Pick 'n Save Supermarket, you can ensure that a percentage of your purchases goes to ABLE by signing up for their Advantage Plus Saver's Club card and designating ABLE/VSVH as your charitable organization of choice. **Our Charity Code number is 899100.** Forms are available at our office and at the service desk of all Pick 'n Save grocery stores.

4. Let others know about our good work: Whether you are a service recipient, a volunteer or a donor, your word-of-mouth recommendations mean a lot to us! While you're at it, drop us a note, and let us know what you think. We always appreciate your feedback.

Want to make a deeper impact?

Look in future newsletters for more about:

- ✧ Estate Planning and bequests
- ✧ Major Donations, trusts and annuities
- ✧ Volunteering

If you are interested in more info on any of these, please let us know!

Call me at 414-286-0226, or email mscholtes@ablenow.org

-Matt Scholtes
Office Manager

We Thank Our Generous Donors! January—June, 2008

\$1 - \$49

Adaptive Technology Resources
 F. Thomas Ament
 Cathy Arney
 Helen & Gary Brashear
 Sandra Christensen
 Judith Ebel
 Frank Gedelman
 Joanne Gerszewski
 Brent Gregory
 Mary Ann Hand
 Audrey Hemmer
 Kathleen Herbst
 E. Vanessa Jones Uelmen
 Gary Kendziorski
 Louise Ladd-Whitson
 Dawn Lauber
 Helen & Dan Lococo
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 Nancy Sowa
 Third Sector Creative, LLC
 United Way (Awards Luncheon attendees)
 Marsha Valance
 Doris Wadzinski
 Linda & Edward Wagner
 Marian Weinberg
 Bill and Bridget Winston
 Wisconsin Council of the Blind
 & Visually Impaired, Inc.

\$50 - \$99

Tim & Victoria Bouquet
 Sue Bronson
 Kacz & Cindy Kaczmarowski
 Randall & Janet Peterson
 Stephanie Pribyl
 Sister Melmarie Stoll, Sister Marie Gabriel Stoll,
 and Sister Pierre Lemanczyk
 Winifred & Arthur Thrall
 Carolyn Kott Washburne
 Alisa Wimmer

\$100 - \$499

Adonai Employment Inc.
 Badger Association of the Blind
 and Visually Impaired, Inc.
 Richard and Roanne Barnes
 Yvonne Durieux-Gruis & Hans Durieux
 Linda & Homer Eshbaugh
 Janet Tippit & Fred W. Goldsmith
 Greendale Lions Club, Inc.
 IndependenceFirst
 Cheri McGrath
 Margaret Meeker and Jeff Fletcher
 MPS vision staff (Awards Luncheon attendees)
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 South Central Library System

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Evan & Marion Helfaer Foundation
 Lions Club, North Milwaukee
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 WEYCO Group Charitable Trust

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Dr. Harry J. Heeb Foundation
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\$5,000 and up

Industries for the Blind, Inc.
 David Marvin III
 The Faye McBeath Foundation

Greater Milwaukee Foundation:

Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Community Grant Fund
 Dr. Samuel S. and Anne W. Blankstein Family Fund II
 Halbert & Alice Kadish Fund 2
 Sunrise Foundation Fund

Donations through United Way of Greater Milwaukee's Community Campaign Donor Choice program:

Anonymous
 Sherry E. Bingenheimer
 Patricia H. Lidicker
 Donald Natzke
 Lisa & Mike Wimmer

From the Board Room

Our Board of Directors has been very active in helping us with our transition to a new name and a new look. As Executive Director, I offer my deepest gratitude to all of you being so instrumental in guiding us into the future.

We would like to welcome a new member to our Board. William Holbrook, the President of Adonai Employment Inc., is a great addition to the board with his tremendous experience in employment issues for the disabled as a rehabilitation counselor and advocate, and his personal experience as a visually impaired person, having lost his sight in adulthood. Thank you, William!

Our board roster is now as follows:

Cheri McGrath, President	Richard Barnes	Harold Mester
Barbara Althoen, Vice President	Frank E. Gedelman	Elizabeth Waterfall
Tom Gauthier, Secretary	William Holbrook	Marsha Valance—Ex-Officio
Michael Schiek, Treasurer	E. Vanessa Jones	

Tape, Braille, CD of Your Document Is Only a Phone Call Away!

Does your business or organization print newsletters? brochures or flyers? menus? manuals?

Have you considered that many of your customers would benefit from having these materials available to them in an audio or braille format?

We can provide you with recorded or brailled copies of these and other items. To receive an estimate of cost please contact ABLE staff at 414-286-3039.

Our Next Issue of On-Site

You won't want to miss our next issue, which will highlight our donors!