



On-Site Newsletter

Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc.

Providing alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read Spring 2009

Director's Corner

It has been a very busy year at ABLE as you will find as you read through our spring newsletter. We are steadily putting audio and braille materials of all kinds in the hands of print disabled children and adults throughout the Milwaukee area, in Wisconsin and beyond.



In no way could we carry on this mission without the dedicated financial support of our many donors who give to us year after year so we can open doors for many, creating many opportunities for print literacy. Please accept my wholehearted thanks to all the individuals, businesses, agencies and foundations who continue to walk this path with us and have done so for over 44 years. Your dollars create braille dots and audio reading for so many. Our hands and ears are a testimony to the results of your generosity.

I would especially like to thank Industries for the Blind for their steady, unwavering support. This company, a local organization that hires many blind people, gives its charitable dollars to the local blindness service agencies in the Milwaukee area. For years, Industries has funded our volunteer recognition event so that we can honor our volunteers with a wonderful luncheon. This company continues to give us general operating dollars, monies that are so appreciated in these stressful economic times.

Industries also funds new projects. In 2007, Industries funded ABLE to begin the ABLE Channel, a phone service connected to NFB-Newsline®, where eligible print disabled individuals can call a phone number to hear about local happenings, find out what local blindness organizations are doing, and read articles from local newspapers and magazines such as *Shepherd Express* and *Milwaukee Magazine*.

This year Industries for the Blind has again given us operating dollars, has funded the final stages of our audio digital transition and has funded our luncheon. Please come to our luncheon to meet the people from Industries, our recipients, volunteers and all the others who make this organization thrive.

-Cheryl Orgas
Executive Director

Please join us for our
Annual Awards Luncheon & Benefit
Sponsored by Industries for the Blind
Wednesday, May 13, 2009
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Volunteer Awards and our first-ever DVD
Special Performance: Milwaukee Public Schools'
Braille Club

Speaker: **Sandy Ernst, Associate Artistic Director,**
Milwaukee Rep

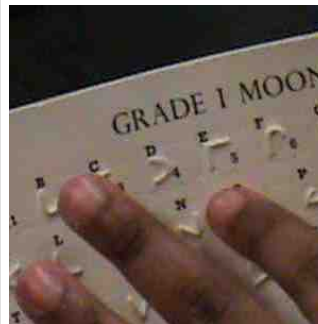
The Italian Conference Center, Ballroom 1
631 East Chicago Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Please call by May 7th for menu choices and prices
(414) 286-3039

Something for Everyone...



...at the
Louis Braille
Exhibit



...and the **Braille** **Games**



Giving

Giving

Giving

Giving

Giving

Ways You Can Support ABLE

by Matt Scholtes
Office Manager



Support ABLE while...

Shopping for Groceries

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 **Supermarket** grocery stores.

Searching the Internet

Pass on the news to co-workers, family and friends: they can all support ABLE simply 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.

Shopping Locally or Online

If you do any online shopping, you can link to almost all of your favorite online stores through onecause.com, 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 OneCause and every time you place an order, you'll earn money for ABLE. Or, procure a credit card through them and *all* your purchases, no matter where they are made, will benefit ABLE. Be sure to designate us as the charity you want to benefit. <http://www.onecause.com/causes/200586>

Spread the Word About ABLE

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.

ABLE is Now on Facebook!

If you are a member of Facebook, do a search for AudioBraille LiteracyEnhancement. You can be our friend and join the cause online!

We couldn't provide our services without the
generosity of our donors,
July – December, 2008.
Thank you!!

Donations through United Way of Greater Milwaukee:

Anonymous
Sherry E. Bingenheimer
Ms. Mary A. Hand
Patricia H. Lidicker
Donald Natzke and Erica Weiss
Lisa & Mike Wimmer

Donations through Greater Milwaukee Foundation:

Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Catherine and Walter Lindsay Foundation Fund
Spirit Gifts-SMS Fund

In honor of Cheryl Orgas:

Betty Orgas

In honor of Cecelia Pietrykowski on her 90th birthday:

Robert J. & Anita M Pietrykowski

In memory of Charles Waldemayer, Ben Alford, Betty Busse, and Arlene Lenz:

Edna Proeber

In memory of Jean Atkinson (children's braille books):

Elizabeth Rheingans

\$5,000 and up

Melitta S. Pick Charitable Trust
A.O. Smith Foundation, Inc.
Ladish Co. Foundation
Ziemann Foundation Inc.

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc.
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Greater Milwaukee Association of REALTORS® Youth
Foundation, Inc.

Giving

Giving

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Giving

Thank you to more of our generous donors!

(continued from previous page)

\$500 - \$999

Adonai Employment Inc.
Albert J. and Flora H. Ellinger Foundation, Inc.
North Shore Congregational Church
Wisconsin Energy Foundation

\$100 - \$499

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Alisa Wimmer

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Johnathan P. Wagner
Marian M. Weinberg
Sally and Scott Witte

Keeping Up with Our Newsletter

Help us save paper and money. Let us know if you would like to receive newsletters and mail from us via email instead of mail. Just send us your full name (as it appears on your newsletter label), and the email address you want us to send to you. Send to:

newsletter@ablenow.org

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.

Audio Transcription Audio Transcription Audio Transcription

Audio Bytes

by Richard Robbins
Audio Services Coordinator

Daisies

It's spring and the audio department is planting daisies. Well not the kind of daisies with yellow petals and green stems; we're talking daisies with USB plugs for computers and heading levels for the new Library for the Blind's digital talking book players.



DAISY books are a significant advance beyond the cassette technology available for the past forty years. They offer vastly improved audio quality and greater ease in navigation than anything previously available. The National Library Service and the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Visually Handicapped will begin distributing digital talking book players later this summer. These players use the alternative DAISY format, replacing cassettes.

It is an exciting time at ABLE, and we are eager to be moving to new formats for the books we provide our customers. ABLE is making much progress on the steps needed to begin providing digital books, formatted to the DAISY standard. We have been recording *Milwaukee Magazine* digitally since the beginning of the year. Recently we formatted an issue to a fully functional DAISY book. The resulting Daisy issue was compatible with Victor Stream players in addition to the library's machine.

The next step in our digital transition is to train a group of tapists to use digital recording equipment in their homes.

Many thanks to the Schoenleber Foundation for their assistance with our audio library services, and Industries for the Blind for their sponsorship of NFB-Newsline® ABLE channel.

Audio Awards

We are pleased to recognize five dedicated tapists who have reached the following hourly recognition levels:

500 Hour Award:

Judith Ebel
David Raasch
Leslie Armstrong

250 Hour Award:

Bonnie Mohrusen
Barbara Siebecker

Lifetime Achievement:

Eleanor Hoehn

We've Been Transcribing!

In 2008, audio volunteers donated 4,247 hours of specialized labor, an in-kind dollar value of \$82,859*, to place print materials into audio formats for blind, visually impaired and print disabled individuals. As for pages produced, 85,447 pages were distributed to over 900 individuals, schools and organizations. Some of these materials were prepared for the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped which are available to 6,000 individuals in Wisconsin and 793,000 patrons nationally.

A new program, the ABLE Channel, was started at the beginning of 2008. Synthesized material is continually placed on a phone service, National Federation of the Blind's NFB-Newsline®, now serving over 2,300 individuals in Wisconsin.

The read-aloud and synthesized materials produced in 2008 include:

- Adult and children's library books
- Adult educational and professional, job-related materials
- Materials for senior citizens facing eye diseases that diminish their ability to read
- Medical forms, handouts and crucial health-related materials
- Magazines and newsletters
- Disability-related materials
- Correspondences, brochures and informational materials from area organizations and agencies
- Manuals for electronics and appliances
- Personal requests for books not available anywhere else
- Notice of hearings, meetings and local events
- Restaurant guides and other local happenings

*Source: The Independent Sector reports a value of \$19.51 per donated hour of services which require specialized training, or carry professional value in the job marketplace.

Words of Appreciation for the Audio Transcribers

"It's wonderful that you're available to record my fantasy books. I can't get them anywhere else. I have enough material to keep you in business for years!"

-Anonymous Audio Transcription Patron

Braille Transcription Braille Transcription Braille Transcription

Transcriber's Notes

by Kathy Bruening
Braille Services Coordinator

We are happy to report that Judy Niederdorfer has submitted her trial manuscript for Literary Braille Transcription. Good luck, Judy!



John Graf and Patricia Palasz have also been working on their Literary Braille manuscripts. Way to go!

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) literary committee has approved the NEW *Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing* to be released soon. This new manual will replace the old and will include all the changes from the BANA Braille Codes Update 2007. Watch for details.

Thanks to the generosity of the Alvin and Marion Birnschein Foundation we were able to purchase updates to our Braille2000 programs. To run the program, we will be using a USB plug-in rather than the current 3.5 diskette. The USB plug-in, once installed, does not have to be removed each time you finish transcribing and close down Braille2000. How convenient!

Braille Award

We are pleased to recognize all our dedicated braille transcribers, and Edna Proeber who has reached the following service recognition level:

5,000 Hour Award:
Edna Proeber

Words of Appreciation for the Brailleists

"ABLE does excellent Braille transcription. They are dependable and accurate. I also appreciate the community outreach they have done, showcasing the work they do, and the services they provide. ABLE has helped our local students connect with the people who produce some of our educational materials. This organization has also developed some rapport with our students, with a message that lifts their self esteem."

-Jennifer Lopeman
Teacher of the Visually Impaired

We've Been Transcribing, Too!

In 2008, braille volunteers donated 5,642 hours of specialized labor, an in-kind dollar value of \$110,075*, to transcribe print materials into braille. As for pages produced, 37,293 pages were distributed to over 900 individuals, schools and organizations. Some of these materials were prepared for the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped which are available to 6,000 individuals in Wisconsin and 793,000 patrons nationally.

The materials we produced in 2008 include:

- Text books for students from first grade to college
- Daily math, science and reading materials
- Math and reading assessments
- Adult and children's library books
- Books for children so as to encourage reading in braille
- Brailled books for blind parents to read with their sighted children
- Adult educational and professional, job-related materials
- Materials for senior citizens facing eye diseases that diminish their ability to read
- Medical forms, handouts and crucial health-related materials
- Disability-related materials
- Brailled menus for a variety of restaurants
- Personal requests, including family trees, wedding programs, maps and tax returns
- Recreational materials, including newsletters, playbills, and knitting books

*Source: The Independent Sector reports a value of \$19.51 per donated hour of services which require specialized training, or carry professional value in the job marketplace.

More Words of Appreciation for the Brailleists

"Kathy and the team at Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc. (ABLE) have been a regular resource for us when we need to create braille programs for our Broadway shows. The team consistently outputs top quality works in a timely and proficient manner and we will continue to use their services on a very regular basis."

-Connie Place, Public Relations Manager
Marcus Center for the Performing Arts

Events

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Seventh Annual Braille Games

The seventh annual Braille Games, co-sponsored by The Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired and Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, were held on Friday, March 20th, 2009.

The Braille Games strengthen children's skills through creative, recreational competition. Schools from Waukesha, Kenosha and the Milwaukee Public Schools system brought excited youngsters to this tremendous event, an intergenerational competition that joins experienced, braille-literate adults with children from the Greater Milwaukee area who are learning braille. It was a great success, and a good time was had by all who attended.

This year the event was especially festive with two representatives from the Alliance Francaise teaching the attendees a French song in honor of the birthplace of Louis Braille. ABLE volunteer Lenore Tesch made cupcakes with braille letters and symbols in M&M's on the frosting, which delighted the children.

In this 200th year of the birth of Louis Braille, the man who brought independence to the community through the writing and reading medium of braille, ABLE carries on this tradition of literacy through braille. Every attendee at Braille Games is a testimony to the success of this tool in the lives of blind and visually impaired children and adults throughout the world.



The event was funded by The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Dr. Samuel S. and Anne W. Blankstein Family Fund II and the Greater Milwaukee Association of REALTORS® Youth Foundation, in collaboration with The Badger Association and ABLE.

Save the Date!

Monday Evening, June 8th Kodi Lee Fundraiser for ABLE

Kodi Lee and his band have been together for five years, performing across the globe from their hometown in Utah to Beijing, China. Kodi's dream is to share his music with those who are willing to open their hearts and share his special connection to the world.

Kodi was born on July 7, 1996. At just three months old, he was diagnosed as legally blind from a condition known as Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH). From a very young age, Kodi's love and passion for music have been prevalent. Before he was even able to crawl, his feet played rhythmic beats—not simply random noises—but actually melodies, rhythms and sounds. With his hands he beat on anything that resonated sounds, from doors to trash cans to windows and light posts, composing musical numbers to mesmerize the senses. Then, at the age of 4½, Kodi was diagnosed with Autism on top of his ONH.

His repertoire of songs could test the library of any jukebox—from the soulful sounds of Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder to the classical strains of Mozart and Chopin and the pop/rock sounds of Billy Joel and Sting. Not only does Kodi possess an amazing ability to recall and play what he's heard, but he has also been diagnosed as a prodigious savant in musical expression, an amazingly rare occurrence. According to Wisconsin based psychiatrist, Dr. Darold Treffert, who has studied savant syndrome for over 40 years, "There are probably fewer than 50 prodigious savants living worldwide at the present time. A prodigious savant is a person who manifests abilities that would be considered extraordinary even in a person who is not autistic." Dr. Treffert has contended that a musical savant has never before displayed such a level of expertise in musical emotion and expression.

Kodi's autism and blindness do not encompass all that he is, but rather play a role in shaping him into a truly unique and exceptional individual and a channel for his given gifts.

Watch for further details of this upcoming event, and please plan to join us on June 8th.

Events

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Events

Louis Braille Hands-On Exhibit Tour

During the week of January 26th, 2009, over 100 blind and visually impaired children and adults, as well as other interested members from the Greater Milwaukee



community, joined the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (WRLBPH) and ABLE for hands-on tours celebrating the life of Louis Braille and the history of braille through the years.

In addition to information about Louis Braille and the raised-dots system he developed, participants were introduced to other writing systems that aid blind and visually impaired people, including Boston Line, New York Point and Moon Type. There were tactile maps and diagrams, braille books and magazines, braille games, clocks and other everyday items for participants to experience. Everyone who attended was given a tactile map of Wisconsin from ABLE to take home with them.

Our knowledgeable and entertaining tour guide was Bill Graczyk, Reader Advisor with the WRLBPH, assisted by staff and volunteers from ABLE.

Hundreds of library patrons visited the exhibit while it was on display at the Central Library Building and at other libraries. An abbreviated Louis Braille exhibit will be at the East North Avenue library in May.

A Letter to Louis Braille About Our Library Adventure

Dear Louis Braille,

Happy Birthday! Guess how we celebrated your 200th birthday this year? We went to the library in downtown Milwaukee to visit a special exhibit in honor of you. My name is Carlos, and I am a student at J.W. Riley School. Here are the people who came with me on the adventure: two students from Hamilton High School, one student from Lincoln Center of the Arts Middle School, four students from MEC Middle School, one student from Vieau School, and one student from Allen-Field School. The teachers who came with us are Ms. Egan, Mrs. Wejrowski, Mrs. McGinty, Ms. Hapeman, and Ms. Kapperman.

Now I would like to tell you about what we did. First, we visited ABLE (Audio and Braille Literacy Enhancement). The people at ABLE put our books into braille. The names of the people we met at ABLE are Cheryl Orgas, Kathleen Bruening, Richard Robbins, Matthew Scholtes, and Cheri McGrath. These people help us by writing our assignments in braille so we can do our work in school. They are so nice.

Next we went upstairs in the library so we could learn about your life and how you became blind. That's where we met Bill Graczyk, the reader advisor at the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Bill told us your story, and he showed us some old papers written in braille. The braille was kind of weird because it was shapes, like triangles and circles, instead of braille dots. After that, Bill showed us a reading device called the Victor Stream. You can download different books onto the Victor Stream and it will read the books to you. It is so cool!

Louis, I like the braille that you invented for us. How did you come up with that? You would probably be surprised to know how many different ways we can write braille in this century. People can write braille with a slate and stylus, a braille writer, a computer, or an electronic braille note-taker. In fact, I am writing this letter on an electronic BrailleNote. If you were alive now, I wonder which device you would like to use to write your braille.

Sincerely,
Carlos
Age 9



Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc.
Central Library Building
803 W. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1436

From the Board Room

We are deeply grateful to our board of directors for their willingness to think creatively and innovatively during these times of economic challenge. They are stepping up to the plate!

We would like to welcome a new member to our Board: Meredith Wittmann, Librarian for the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. We are very excited to work with Meredith! Together we will develop new programs for blind and visually impaired children.

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	Meredith Wittmann
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 recipients!