



Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc.

Providing alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read **Fall 2018**

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Celebrating a Special Graduate

In 2009, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille who developed the special code that has become a lifeline for so many, we had the great honor to begin working with a third grader named Carlos Garcia. Our task was to make sure that he had his math assessments in braille so he could participate alongside his sighted peers.



When Carlos was in fourth grade, nine ABLE volunteers and one staff member spent over 563 hours preparing daily assignments, a spelling book and a dictionary so that he could participate on equal terms with his classmates during the 2009-2010 school year. We continued to follow Carlos through the years, preparing many braille assignments and some audio assignments as well. In fifth grade, Carlos became a part of the bilingual program at Allen-Field School and we were tasked with finding audio readers who could record two books in Spanish for this very bright, deserving young man. Another exciting project came to us when

Carlos in third grade Carlos entered the Project Lead the Way program in middle school. The volunteer and tactile team of Audrey Hemmer and John Kaczmarowski spent hundreds of hours creating tactile drawings with braille text so that Carlos could be a part of this engineering class. Then, when Carlos entered high school, so did our volunteer staff team, taking on German, chemistry, biology and higher math assignments.

At this point, not only was Carlos receiving materials from ABLE but he also became a part of our volunteer team, bursting, binding, proofreading, and consulting on the tactile drawings he would be using in class! In the spring of 2018, Carlos graduated as an honors student in the International Baccalaureate program at Rufus King High School.

Carlos has been admitted to the University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy League school which has an acceptance rate of less than 10%. We are all so *very* proud of this young man.

“I can personally say that ABLE has helped not only me, but all of the students in MPS (Milwaukee Public Schools) with braille needs. Our braille is always delivered in a timely fashion, so that we can all do our work in class along with the other students. We are not left behind—because we have our braille.” –Carlos Garcia

“I know just how important our work is to students such as Carlos. More than fifty years ago I was that student who needed brailled assignments. ABLE gave me the tools I needed to succeed academically in a sighted world, eventually leading me to run the very organization that served my educational needs for so many years.” –Cheryl Orgas



*College-bound Carlos.
Congratulations!*

ABLE Visited by National Library Service Representative

All is going very well in our state-of-the-art ABLE Sound Center, which is now three years old. We had the great opportunity for Phillip Carbo, member of the digital recording team from the Library of Congress National Library Service, to tour our facility. "I am thoroughly impressed with everything ABLE is doing," said Phil.

ABLE's audio staff—Andrew Jambura, Audio Manager, and Richard Robbins, Audio and Network Specialist—spent numerous hours showing off the results of their hard work and the dedicated results of our amazing volunteer audio readers.

We are so proud to be able to make our recorded books by Wisconsin authors available to nearly 550,000 patrons because of our partnership with the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library. In the short time our ABLE Sound Center has been up and running, nearly 100 books have been made available to blind and physically handicapped individuals throughout the whole country.



Pictured left to right: Cheryl Orgas, Richard Robbins, Phillip Carbo, Andrew Jambura

Milwaukee: City of Neighborhoods



John Gurda (pictured above), well-known author and Milwaukee historian, stopped by our Sound Studio in April to read the introduction to his book, *Milwaukee: City of Neighborhoods*. This book has been read by our volunteers at ABLE, and will be available through the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library to 7,000 WTBBL patrons in Wisconsin and to nearly 550,000 individuals and organizations throughout the whole country.

We are so grateful to John Gurda and our ABLE volunteers for bringing this amazing book to life through their efforts in ABLE's state of the art Sound Studio!

Have you checked out our redesigned website? Visit us at **www.ablenow.org**, and follow us on Facebook!

Fun Times at the Milwaukee Public Museum

Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Vision Forward Association, the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library and the Milwaukee Public Museum, in cooperation with the Milwaukee and suburban school districts, once again collaborated to host Braille Games in March of 2018. Braille Games strengthens literacy skills through creative and recreational activities by pairing experienced, braille-literate adults with children from the Greater Milwaukee area who are learning braille. Blind and visually impaired children explored the Native American exhibits. They participated in interactive braille games that were integrated into the four areas: Plains, Woodlands, Southwest and Pacific Northwest. In the Wisconsin Woodlands, children played bingo. A museum staff person introduced the Wisconsin Woodlands and showcased tactiles such as baskets, arrowheads and wild rice.

Each student was then given a 9-square brailled bingo card and tokens. Each square contained a word from something the educator showed or talked about. The blind adult mentor picked a card from a deck and read the word. The students placed a token on the corresponding square until someone had 3 in a row and yelled BINGO!



In the Pacific Northwest, a museum staff person introduced life in that area and talked about the importance of the totem pole. There was a replica of a carved totem pole for students to feel and discuss. With the help from the mentors, children created a story about what their family's totem pole would look like. Students then rotated through the other two areas. Over 75 students, volunteers and staff from each organization enjoyed a full day of fun and activity.

Each child wrote a story about their family totem pole. Here is an example:

"I will carve my family animal, an eagle, because we are brave like eagles. And I will also carve a fish.

For fun my family likes to swim so I will carve a shark. Our favorite meal is shrimp and the steps I will carve on my totem pole are, grab the shrimp, boil the shrimp, wait for it to be done, then eat the shrimp."



Top: Children enjoyed playing bingo with mentors.

Center: A child examines a totem pole representative of the Pacific Northwest.

Bottom: Children experienced various Native American items through touch.

Leadership Changes at the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library



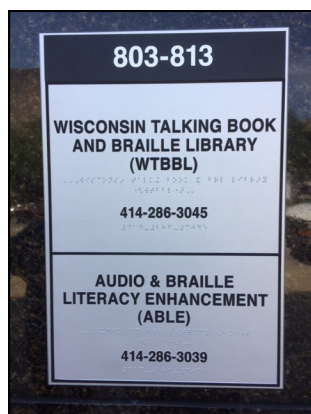
We are pleased to welcome Zarina Mohd Shah (pictured at left) to the position of Management Librarian at the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBBL). We so look forward to working with her and her team. Zarina has been with the Milwaukee Public Library since 2002, most recently as Atkinson's Branch Manager. Her experience includes cataloging, reference librarian, and outreach librarian at WTBBBL, and now we get to work closely with her in her new role.

And as delightful as it is to welcome Zarina, we say a sad goodbye to Linda Vincent (pictured at right), retired from WTBBBL as its Management Librarian. In acknowledgement of her collaborative spirit and her influence in our establishment of the ABLE Sound Center and thus a stronger connection with the National Library Service of the Library of Congress, we acknowledged her partnership at ABLE's luncheon in May of 2018. We are so grateful to you, Linda, for all you did for ABLE!

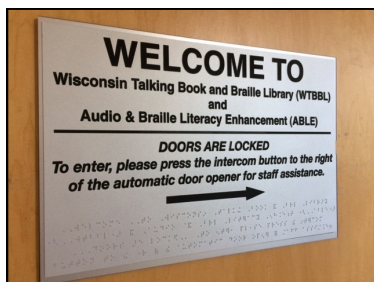


We're Easier to Find!

When you visit ABLE to witness the wonderful work of our volunteer and staff team, you will be able to see and touch the new outside print and braille signage at the Wells Street entrance to Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library and Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement. We offer our deep appreciation to Gwendolyn Long and the Milwaukee Public Library Communications Department for this accessible signage.



New Wells Street sign



New Interior sign

Thinking about Legacy

You never see a hearse dragging a U-Haul! That's why it's important to plan ahead to support the people and organizations that *you* care about in a manner that would make you proud.



A good estate plan manages your present needs while anticipating the future. By making your intentions clear, you make life easier for your heirs while maximizing the impact of your legacy. Distributions made directly from an IRA to ABLE may avoid taxes that would otherwise be incurred.

Please consider supporting ABLE in your future estate plans. We would love to share our story with you over a cup of coffee!

For more information regarding estate planning, please contact Cheryl Orgas at (414) 286-3026.

"You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson