



On-Site Newsletter

Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc.
Providing alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read

Spring, 2016

ABLE Sound Center a Reality!

We couldn't possibly be more excited about showing off our new digital recording studio! Our state-of-the-art sound center allows our readers to narrate books in a professional studio. This now makes ABLE's newly recorded books eligible for national distribution through the National Library Service. There are already six books available nationally including *A Tale of Two Soldiers*, which has been requested by over 400 blind and visually impaired people across the country. Thank you to all who made this dream a reality, including the Milwaukee Public Library and Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, and YOU, our generous donors.



The space in Milwaukee Public Central Library before ABLE's Sound Center was constructed.



The sound center has separate work areas to accommodate up to two simultaneous recordings.



Tom Littellmann, ABLE audio volunteer, and Audio Services Assistant Andrew Jambura work together on the production of an audio book.



Library patron Bill Meeker enjoys his book that was recorded in ABLE's new sound center.

Celebrating 50 Years!

For fifty years, ABLE has had a simple, yet profound, mission: to provide alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read. ABLE has provided thousands of children and adults who are blind, visually impaired, or have other print disabilities with access to information and knowledge that most sighted people take for granted.

On September 29, 2015, we celebrated our 50th anniversary by offering a tour of our new state-of-the-art sound center, a demonstration of our braille and tactile production processes, and a memorable gathering at the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) to introduce the community to our partnership with the Museum on the Crossroads of Civilization exhibit.

MPM and ABLE have collaborated over the last several years to create accessibility for visitors who are visually impaired. ABLE supported the museum's needs through advising and education, and also joined in creating a museum-wide understanding of accessibility and awareness. This partnership is truly unique, and has allowed MPM to provide accommodations not found at other institutions in the area.



Through our partnership, ABLE has assisted the museum staff and interns in creating adaptations that include Exhibit Explorer Kits. These kits are available for individuals, families or teachers/aides to check out and use during their museum visit. The kits include three-dimensional objects for visitors to hold and feel, braille and large print exhibit guides and overviews. An app that offers audio and large print scripts is also available. Plans are underway for future specialized tours. Because of the groundwork ABLE and MPM have created, all new exhibit installation plans now include consideration for accommodations for visitors who are visually impaired.



A Partnership That Can Change Lives



My name is Carlos Garcia. I'm a sophomore in high school, and I have been blind for most of my life. Being a blind person I always loved and hated the museum as a child. I loved learning about history, geography, and many other things the museum had to offer. However, I hated it because there was very little I could actually interact with. Everything was behind glass, so I had to rely on people's descriptions of objects. This all changed with the Crossroads of Civilization exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum. This exhibit really leveled the playing field for the blind and visually impaired community in several ways. It features tactile objects, braille descriptions, and even a depiction of a town that we can feel. Clearly, ABLE and the Milwaukee Public Museum

have put a lot of thought and effort into this exhibit. The exhibit allows me to go into the museum and read about Egyptian King Tut. I then can interact with realistic pieces of armor, as well as a bust of his head. Now I can get those little details that no one ever thought to tell me about. Little things like the shape of the king's head, or the shape of the armor plating. All of these details have coalesced into a great exhibit that a blind person can truly enjoy.



Much to Celebrate!



Milwaukee Public Schools student Myra joined other MPS students in acknowledging ABLÉ's 50th anniversary by handing Executive Director Cheryl Orgas a jar filled with fifty golden coins at the 2015 Annual Awards Luncheon. Each coin was brailled with a date from 1965 to 2015. What a treasure!

We'd love to see you at this year's luncheon on May 18th at the Italian Conference Center. Help us celebrate the contributions of our amazing volunteers, hear about the great work being done in our sound center, enjoy a display of the detailed tactile drawings for math and science students, and be entertained by a surprise performance by MPS students. RSVP by May 11th.

Jerry Ganoni, Retired President Commercial Insurance Division, Humana, Inc. (left) and Mark Murphy, Green Bay Packers President and CEO, present ABLÉ volunteer Audrey Hemmer with the Community Quarterback Award in recognition of her service to ABLÉ. The Packers and Humana hosted the award recipients at a luncheon in the Legends Club inside the Lambeau Field Atrium. Audrey was presented with a grant check for ABLÉ and tickets to a Packers game. We also received a grant from the Green Bay Packers Foundation in 2015. Congratulations, Audrey, and thank you, Green Bay Packers and Humana!



Meet our fabulous 2016 board members! Left to right: Harold Mester, President; Fredrick Lynk; Don Natzke, Vice President; Linda Vincent; Robin Brisco; Thomas Gauthier; Erica Reib; Cindy Kaczmarowski; Dr. Karen Petric; Dawn Kocejka; Diana Pine, Secretary; Robert Watson, Treasurer