



Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc.

Providing alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read

Summer 2025

Central Library Building 803 W. Wells St. Milwaukee, WI 53233
(414) 286-3039 www.ablenow.org

Save the Date!

To honor our amazing volunteer team, please join us at the Italian Community Center on **Thursday, October 23, 2025**. This is a special year, our 60th anniversary year!

Sixty years ago I was one of those first students getting her braille materials at the same time as her classmates. I am proud to say that today we are doing that very same work for other students. Today our commitment is stronger than ever. Our braille staff and volunteer team produce complex math and science braille and tactile assignments. We are getting braille books into the hands of blind children so our students can have books at home just like other students. Our tactile program has grown tremendously leading us to grow our volunteer and staff tactile team. And, we have a state of the art sound studio to record books by Wisconsin authors. We'll be showing videos at the luncheon so you will get to see our work in action!

Please consider sponsoring the ABLE luncheon in this momentous year. Contact Cheryl Orgas at corgas@ablenow.org if you are interested. We want to highlight and thank our 2025 Audio and Braille Advocate sponsors at the \$3,000 level here: Industries for the Blind, Beyond Vision, and Diana and Rich Pine.

Books for Youth at Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library

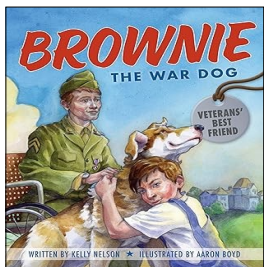


Photo of book cover:
Brownie, the War Dog

We are so pleased to introduce you to two books for youth, recorded in our ABLE Sound Center, that are available to WTBBL patrons. *Brownie, the War Dog* by Kelly Nelson, illustrated by Aaron Boyd, is the true story of a family pet who served overseas in World War II and went on to become a friend to wounded veterans back home. Brownie serves faithfully on the frontlines until an injury sends him home from the Pacific islands. His family welcomes him back with open arms. But Brownie is not content sitting around at home—he needs a job. He begins to go to the Veterans Home in King, Wisconsin, where his owner works. There, Brownie finds a way to serve his fellow veterans just as he served his fellow soldiers. Read by Jan Zoltan, an ABLE narrator for nearly ten years. This book has already been downloaded 60 times through BARD, the Braille and Audio Reading Download Site through the National Library Service.

Janna and the Kings by Patricia Smith, illustrated by Aaron Boyd, is a story about Janna and her grandfather. Saturdays are special for Janna. That's when she and Granddaddy spend the whole day together. Walking down the street with Granddaddy is like strolling through a kingdom with a king. He knows everyone and everyone knows him. Best of all, Granddaddy and Janna always head for her favorite place in the world: Terrell's barbershop. There, Granddaddy and his friends are kings in barber chair thrones, and Janna is a princess, showered with love and attention. One day Granddaddy passes away, and Janna feels she has lost their wonderful kingdom forever. But with great courage and some unexpected help, Janna finds her way back to the happiness of those special Saturdays. Read by our very own ABLE board member, Stephanie Holt.

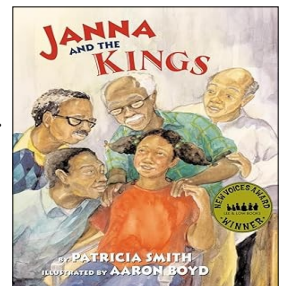
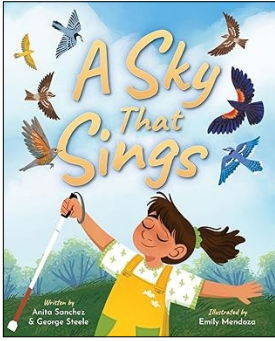


Photo of book cover:
Janna and the Kings

Thank You, Forest County Potawatomi Foundation



*Photo of book cover:
A Sky that Sings*

With funding from the Forest County Potawatomi Foundation, ABLE put 81 braille copies of *A Sky that Sings* by Anita Sanchez & George Steele, illustrated by Emily Mendoza, into the hands of braille readers, along with supplying print copies for family members.

Mia, a blind girl who enjoys identifying birds by their distinct calls and songs, leads her aunt through the park on a bird-listening adventure! Some people enjoy bird-watching, but as a blind person, Mia uses her other senses to identify different birds by their unique calls and songs. She calls it bird-listening. Mia loves naming each of the birds that she hears. Sweet! Sweet! Sweet! Is that the chipper call of a yellow warbler? At first Mia's aunt doesn't know what to expect, but with Mia's guidance,

she learns to listen and enjoy the bright melodies pouring from the sky. Perfect for bird lovers of every feather, *A Sky That Sings* invites us to open our senses to life's everyday treasures—the delights of nature and spending time with loved ones.

Welcome, Heather!

We are so excited to introduce to you our newest ABLE staff member, Heather Hasse. Heather has been with us for over six months. She has been a very quick learner, taking to tactiles like a duck to water. Meet her in her own words:

My name is Heather Hasse, and I'm excited to join the team as a Tactile and Braille Production Assistant. Prior to this role, I worked as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI), where I supported students in developing their braille, technology, and self-advocacy skills. I've always loved hands-on work and finding creative ways to make learning more accessible, so I'm thrilled to now support students from behind the scenes by helping to produce the high-quality braille and tactile materials they need to thrive. I'm truly grateful to be part of a mission-driven team and to continue supporting students in a new and meaningful way.



Photo of Heather Hasse

ABLE Keeps Up With New Technology



Photo of ABLE board member Xinyue Hippe using the Monarch braille display

The Monarch is a multi-line braille display machine that uses a 32-cell 3D line. It can display braille and tactile graphics on the same surface, which means that tactile graphics can include braille labels. Tactile staff and volunteers will be able to create tactile graphics with braille labels made by braille transcribers, which can be sent as electronic files that students can open on their Monarchs. A new file format, called eBraille, will allow students to access graphics within a book and seamlessly continue with the text once they have interacted with the graphic. This will not eliminate the need for paper tactiles but will serve as a convenient way to make tactiles more available. Transcribers who produce tactile graphics will be a critical component as products like the Monarch evolve. ABLE is fortunate that Jennifer Wenzel, one of ABLE's board members, is a product specialist with American Printing House for the Blind and is keeping us apprised of developments with the Monarch.