

LIBRARY AT THE TOUCH OF A FINGER

PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL

919 NEWS

LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA

NO. 64

SPRING, 2008

TELL A LEGISLATOR...

If you haven't already contacted your Pennsylvania representative, senator, or the governor, there's still time in this budget year—also an election year! Why contact them? We hope you received our message that the funding for the Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia and Pittsburgh) has been the same for 7 years. Without an increase, the libraries can still provide basic services to existing customers. What we will be less able to do is expand outreach to the 133,000 Pennsylvania residents who are eligible for services but are not yet receiving them. We will be limited in providing such 21st century library services as digital books. The number of readers who qualify for services is expected to increase by 11% over the next ten years; the technology is ever changing and the needs and expectations of our user community are changing with it. So—NOW is the time for us to take action to make sure that funding is increased to accommodate current and future readers.

A coalition of the National Federation of the Blind in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind, Community Legal Services, the Friends of the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh has approached legislators and other government

officials. Please add your voice to theirs to ask for an increase in annual funding from \$2.9 million to \$4.5 million to preserve and enhance the services you and others are entitled to.

For more information, to find out who your legislator is, obtain addresses, and get a sample letter, contact the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 215-683-3213 or email us at flpblind@freelibrary.org.

OPAC

The Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) of the Philadelphia Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) is available on our web site. A link to this catalog can be found at <http://lbph.freelibrary.org>. The catalog lists recorded cassettes, Braille and large print books in our collection. You may search this catalog by **author, title, word in title, subject** or **narrator**.

Anyone can search the **OPAC**, but you must be a registered patron of the Philadelphia LBPH to borrow books through the **OPAC**. If you are a registered patron and you want to sign up for the OPAC, please call the Library at 800-222-1754 or 215-683-3213 to receive your **User ID** and **Password** necessary to borrow books through the **OPAC**.

You may contact us by mail, fax, telephone or email. We are located at 919 Walnut Street (first floor), Philadelphia, PA 19107; (fax) 215-683-3211; (toll free) 800-222-1754 or (local) 215-683-3213; and flpblind@library.phila.gov

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THE LIBRARY IS OPEN MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

LIBRARY FOR BLIND AND
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**FREE
READING MATTER
FOR THE
BLIND OR PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED**

NFB-NEWSLINE UPDATE

For those of you who are set up to access NFB-NEWSLINE, the free telephone newspaper service, we would like to tell you about another great feature available to you. The system now has the ability to receive all the newspapers you have saved in your "Favorites" file as DAISY formatted files, which are then attached to email messages and sent to you each morning. To listen to the attachments you must have an email account and a hardware or software product capable of reading DAISY files.

If you have not signed up for this wonderful service, but would like to please call your Library at 215-683-3213 or 800-222-1754.

BRILLE FLAG AT ARLINGTON

Representative Todd Tiahtr, a Republican from Kansas introduced legislation that would place a tactile Braille American flag at Arlington National Cemetery, where four million people visit annually.

The Department of the Army contacted Tiaht's office in December, 2007, informing the Congressman that legislation was not necessary and that the Army fully supported the placement of the Braille flag at the Cemetery.

A promise was made to work with Tiaht and the Kansas Braille Transcription Institute on design specifications. The target date for the new flag at Arlington was set for Memorial Day, 2008.

READER'S DIGEST AND NEWSWEEK

This library provides subscriptions to both *Reader's Digest* and *Newsweek* to patrons by notifying the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville that a subscription is needed for a particular patron. We also notify them when we get a change of address for a subscriber and when a subscriber is no longer receiving our service. We do not have direct access to their mailing list.

Once a year, The American Printing House sends a letter to each subscriber asking for a donation and also asking if the subscriber wishes to continue the subscription. It is **not necessary** to send a donation for the subscription in order to continue to receive the magazine. You must send the letter back indicating that you wish your subscription to continue or your name will be removed from their mailing list.

ACCESS WORLD

An updated 2008 edition of the American Foundation for the Blind's **Guide to Assistive Technology Products**, includes detailed profiles of more than 280 products for people who are blind or visually impaired, including more than 30 new products.

The guide available in both print and CD, includes facts about items ranging from cell phones, PDAs and GPS systems to screen readers, Braille printers and CCTVs.

A resource section contains manufacturer names and other contact information. Additional details about the guide are located at www.afb.org/store. The Library has a two-year online subscription to the Guide and a print copy is available in our reference collection.

FREE GOLF CLINIC

The Middle Atlantic Blind Golf Association (MABGA) is sponsoring a golf clinic on Saturday, May 31, 2008, rain or shine. The clinic is for girls and boys from the ages of five years old to twenty-one, who are blind or visually impaired and interested in learning to play golf.

The MABGA will provide each player with a PGA teacher who will give lessons at a golf course near his/her home. They will provide golf clubs, golf balls and a golf bag. Transportation to the lessons is **not** included.

The MABGA will also have a golf clinic twice a year at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. There will be prizes, free pizza and soft drinks. Additionally, this year the MABGA is hoping to have two new places, one in South Philadelphia and one in New Jersey.

Please contact Norman Kritz at 856-428-1420 or email jerrynorman2@aol.com or Gil Kayson at 215-8846589 or email sasgil@voicenet.com to sign up or for more information.

NEW EYES FOR THE NEEDY

“Give us your old glasses so we can give new glasses to someone who needs them” said the late Ms. Julia Lawrence Terry of Short Hills, New Jersey, founder of *New Eyes for the Needy* in 1932. She began collecting glasses from her friends and the idea spread. From an initial caring act by Ms. Terry, *New Eyes for the Needy* has grown over the years to become a worldwide project.

New Eyes sends reusable donated eyeglasses and sunglasses to medical missions and international charitable organizations in over twenty-five countries around the globe in Africa, Asia, Europe, Mexico, Central and South America.

Gold-framed eyeglasses and metal scrap are sold to a refinery. Proceeds from the sales are used to purchase new prescription eyeglasses for the needy in the United States.

New Eyes for the Needy is endorsed by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Opticians Association of America, and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

You may bring your used eyeglasses and sunglasses to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped during our hours of operation. Several times a year the Library mails the donated eyeglasses to *New Eyes for the Needy*.

ABE/GED PROGRAM UPDATE

In our ABE/GED Program, several students achieved both their personal and educational goals during the past academic year. We are gearing up for another summer of intensive study for some very dedicated adult students. For those who hope to earn their GED diploma in early fall, the summer will be a good time to get some one-on-one help.

If you would like further information about this program, you may contact Jill Gross at 215-683-3213, 800-222-1754 or email at jgross@tacticus.com. The ABE/GED Program staff wish you all a great summer!

BRAILLE REVIVAL LEAGUE

Jenny Beck Chapter

The JB Chapter of the Braille Revival League promotes the use and teaching of Braille. The Chapter, brailles for individuals and institutions, things like theater programs, restaurant menus and appliance instructions for examples. The BRL also teaches Braille one-on-one. Anyone who is interested in learning Braille or getting something put into Braille, can call the Jenny Beck chapter at 215-829-9997.

REASONS TO VOLUNTEER

Spring is here and people want to get out and enjoy the lovely weather. Why not make volunteering at the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped one of the stops on your spring walk.

People hear the word volunteer and it usually evokes a good response of something positive being done for someone else. But people often want to know what volunteer would do to enrich their own lives. The following are some reasons volunteering can be good for you:

Achievement – the opportunity to accomplish something to see direct results from one’s personal effort is reason for personal satisfaction.

Recognition – having ones skills and talents recognized by a group of organization is very rewarding.

Personal Growth – discovering new skills and learning more about oneself and other people can help you overcome personal challenges.

Bringing about social change and giving back to society – there is an overall belief that change begins with me and this motivates people to give back to the community in some way.

A feeling of belonging and support – Volunteering gives people the opportunity to meet and make new friends.

So, if you are thinking about venturing out on a beautiful spring day and have no place to go, consider coming out to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Consider adding a ray of sunshine to our organization. Please contact Ms. Angel Chambers-Gilliam at 800-222-1754, 215-683-3213 or chambersa@freelibrary.org

NLS BARD

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) recently announced the addition of two players which are compatible with the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) program. Besides the Victor Reader Stream, patrons can now purchase the Icon from LevelStar or the Braille+ Mobile Manager from American Printing House for the Blind in order to participate in BARD. For more information visit the Icon and Braille+ user guide at www.aph.org/tech/pda_info.htm or the Reading Devices page at the Accessible Devices Home Page, www.accessible-devices.com/reading.html.

In September 2007 the digital collection included more than 6,000 titles, and that number has increased daily. Both books and magazines are available for download in the form of zip files which users can save in a personal library.

Currently, more than 60 LBPH Philadelphia patrons are participating in BARD. Patron involvement in the program assists NLS in improving the quality of the digital talking books which will begin wide circulation at the end of this year. The library encourages and considers user feedback.

To begin receiving digital books and magazines visit www.nlstalkingbooks.org/dtb and register for an account; an individual must be an active NLS patron and own a digital player to be eligible for this service.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

The National Federation of the Blind was formed to help blind people achieve self confidence, self respect and to act as a vehicle for collective self expression by the blind.

Members of the NFB strive to educate the public that blind people are normal individuals who can compete on terms of equality.

The NFB provides public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, publications, adaptive equipment, aids and appliances. For information about NFB in Pennsylvania, go to www.nfbp.org, email at nfbofpa@att.net or 215-988-0888.

“READ THIS TO ME” PROVIDES NEW SERVICE

A free service reads printed documents to the blind and visually impaired over the telephone. All the client needs is a telephone line and a fax machine.

“Read This to Me”, staffed by volunteers, is available throughout the United States. The blind or visually impaired individual sends a document by fax to 877-333-8848.

The first page of the fax must be a cover sheet that includes the client’s first name and a callback phone number. As long as the pages are in the range of 5-10 or fewer in length, the document can range from a handwritten letter, a bill, or a label from a can of food to a multi-page magazine article.

Shortly after the fax has been sent, usually within an hour or two, a volunteer reader from “Read This to Me” will call the client and read the document.

For detailed information about the service, go to www.readthistome.org or call 877-333-8847.

BOOKSHARE

Would you like to be reading books from Bookshare? The Free Library of Philadelphia and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped have a grant to provide readers with Bookshare books that will continue to next year. We encourage you to sign up!

Bookshare.org is a company that provides readers who need alternate formats to share books they’ve scanned with other users. The Free Library’s grant allows us to download those books in text or electronic Braille formats. Everything from children’s books to bestseller, with many other things in between, can be downloaded and sent to you.

Please register by sending an email to bookshare@freelibrary.org, noting your full name, D.O.B and phone number. Browse www.bookshare.org to find books you would like to read and send the title and author information for each book to bookshare@freelibrary.org.

If you have questions, please call Jeremy Congdon at 800-222-1754 or 215-683-3213.