A Mother’s Inspiration

David and Dawn Gross are both Members of the Corporation at NBP, busy participants in their community, and parents of three children - Jacob, Ryan and Audrey. Their eldest son, Jacob, is an emerging braille reader who began his love of reading through National Braille Press’s Children’s Braille Book Club when he was three years old. Dawn has played an active role in his education by advocating for quality braille - not only for her son but for every blind child who is pursuing the path to literacy.

Jacob, now almost 12 years old, is just like his sighted peers; he teases his siblings, loves technology, and asks for help with his homework from his parents. This simple request for help could have been complicated for his sighted parents; instead, Dawn saw it as a challenge she was ready to tackle. She was inspired to pursue her license as a braille transcriber and is now an independent contractor currently helping Alternate Text Production Center (ATPC) through the California Community College system. ATPC was created to improve access to materials for blind and visually impaired students. Dawn currently focuses her time on overseeing a braille transcription course within a California correctional facility, where Jacob is her inspiration, “I have a vested interest in [the prisoners] work and getting the right kind of training. Down the line they could be providing braille for my son, and I want to make sure they are putting out good braille.”

Leveling the playing field by providing braille materials to Jacob and others is what drives Dawn. As many parents of blind and visually impaired children are aware, getting quality braille is an ongoing issue. It is reassuring to know Dawn is out there advocating. “[Jake] needed what any other sighted peer would need. For him it was important for me to do this.”

Give Yourself a Round of Applause!

Reader’s Digest Challenge

Reader’s Digest Partners for Sight Foundation challenged National Braille Press to raise $25,000 for our Hands On! Books for Blind Children initiative by March 31, 2011, and pledged to match it. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and friends, we met the Challenge ahead of schedule and exceeded our goal, raising over $47,500!

Breast Cancer Awareness

In October, NBP asked its online community to help raise the funds necessary to re-publish the American Cancer Society’s For Women Facing Breast Cancer, a free braille publication offered by NBP. Thanks to many individual donors, NBP now has more copies available for women facing this diagnosis. Special thanks to Sue Ammeter for her generosity, leadership and guidance.

Red, White, and Braille

National Braille Press is a member of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) through the Aging and Disabilities Charities of America. Federal employees can support NBP through their workplace by using our five digit charity code: 25435.
Unlock the Power of Braille

In 2005, National Braille Press sought to honor the extraordinary work of those promoting braille literacy with the creation of the annual Hands On! Award. The first recipients, David J. Stern, commissioner of the National Basketball Association, and Erik Weihenmayer, the first blind mountaineer to summit Mt. Everest, were honored at NBP’s 2005 Gala.

Hands On! Awardees

To find out who the 2011 Hands On! Awardee will be, please sign up for National Braille Press’s e-Newsletter on www.nbp.org. An announcement will be made in a few months.

2005

David Stern, for using the power of the NBA’s Read to Achieve program to help inspire blind children. Working with NBP, the NBA held reading events across the country where basketball players read to blind schoolchildren from print/braille children’s books.

Erik Weihenmayer, for promoting braille literacy internationally after his summit of Mt. Everest and subsequent appearance as Time Magazine’s Man of the Year. As an in-demand public speaker, he never fails to mention the role that braille literacy plays in his many accomplishments.

2006

First Lady Laura Bush, for her role as honorary co-chair of NBP’s family outreach program, ReadBooks! Because Braille Matters.

Cindy Rogers, a Starbucks barista extraordinaire, for her leadership in including children’s print/braille books at Starbucks’ reading events.

2007

J.K. Rowling, author of the famed Harry Potter novels, for allowing NBP to produce her last novels at the same time as the print versions, so blind children could be part of the phenomenon.

2008

Bill Raeder, former president of National Braille Press, for his dignity and vision in dedicating his adult life to serving blind people. Bill guided NBP over 32 years through its transition from a neighborhood braille print shop to a national braille publishing house dedicated to advancing braille literacy for children and adults.

Sabriye Tenberken, for her work as founder of Braille Without Borders, providing a better education and life for blind children in Tibet and India. One of Oprah’s 10 Phenomenal Women, see a video of her inspiring story at www.npb.org.

2009

Rocco Fiorentino, a then 12 year old dynamo, for his perseverance in advocating for braille education and convincing New Jersey’s state legislature to restore its funding.

2010

Dr. William Henderson, retired principal of the newly renamed William Henderson Inclusion School, for his commitment to implementing the highest standards of public education for children with disabilities.

David Stern and Erik Weihenmayer, First Lady Laura Bush, J.K. Rowling, Rocco Fiorentino
Partners in Philanthropy

State Street Corporation

State Street Corporation, one of the world’s leading providers of financial services to institutional investors, has a very personal impact on its local nonprofit partners. Whether volunteering time, funding grants or making donations through the company’s employee matching program, State Street has supported National Braille Press (NBP) in a variety of ways.

The time and expertise of its employees are some of the most valuable resources an organization can donate, and State Street is well known for the dedication of its community volunteers. Teams of current employee volunteers and Spirit of State Street (retired and former employees) volunteers have given many hours to NBP. They have assembled braille children’s books, staffed our Vision 5K road race and provided much-needed support at our annual gala, A Million Laughs for Literacy.

Our longest-tenured State Street volunteer is Executive Vice President and General Auditor, Jayne Donahue. Jayne joined NBP’s board of trustees in 2009 after serving on the planning committee for NBP’s annual gala. This year, she is taking on the new role of gala co-chair to the delight of our development team, and recently presented NBP with a $25,000 grant awarded through State Street’s Executive Community Leadership Program.

NBP recognized State Street’s ongoing commitment to braille literacy at its 2008 Annual Meeting, honoring the company for its philanthropic and volunteer support. Three years later, State Street’s ongoing support continues to enrich our work and we are proud to be a part of their global community outreach efforts.

Please Join Us…

SAVE THE DATE!

NBP Annual Meeting, June 14
Northeastern University, International Village

Touch of Genius Prize for Innovation, Sept. 1
2011 Application Submission Deadline

A Million Laughs for Literacy Gala, Oct. 14
Featuring a Performance by Jimmy Tingle
Westin Copley Place Hotel, Boston
The Making of Goodnight Moon to Touch

Precious few “picture” books for blind children actually contain pictures. Those that do are often special graphics books rather than beloved classics. So our staff decided to challenge themselves and make Goodnight Moon a real picture book. Most pages were too busy to replicate in full, so we asked artist Irma Goldberg (Creative Adaptations for Learning) to re-create only those images mentioned in the text—the bowl of mush, the comb, the mittens, and so forth.

A year later, the drawings arrived; they were stunning, but complex. We considered making them easier to understand by touch, but Irma declined saying, “I cannot alter Clement Hurd’s original illustrations; they make Goodnight Moon the classic it is.” Of course she was right.

So we asked ourselves, do we use these images? Will children be confused? We solicited advice and made a discovery along the way: blind adults were intrigued - the images were challenging, but full of new details about the beloved classic. So it seems we have created a classic picture book for precocious children and curious blind adults.

The set includes three pieces:
- 20 tactile images
- A guide for navigating around the images as well as more descriptive text about the pictures in the book
- A print/braille edition of Goodnight Moon

Keeping Braille Alive

Thank you to all of the members of our Braille for Life Alliance who have pledged to keep braille alive by making NBP a priority in their estate plans. A simple way to become a member is to name NBP as a beneficiary of a life insurance plan or a savings account. To learn more, please contact Jennifer Stewart at 617-266-6160 x 436.