dear friends

When Francis B. Ierardi founded National Braille Press in 1927, the goal was to promote “finger reading” and to assist the blind “…to become happier and better informed citizens of their communities” with braille. The support and momentum for braille has had some significant peaks and valleys in these past 83 years, particularly during the last two decades of the twentieth century when a braille literacy crisis emerged. In the past year, there have been a number of articles on the fight for braille, with authors debating—is braille literacy and is it facing extinction?

The debate will continue for quite some time because there are subjective definitions of what one defines literacy. Some people claim that having great communication skills is literacy. Others believe in a more traditional definition. As digital technology has increasingly shaped our society, the skills we need to function successfully have gone beyond reading, and the discussion about how to define literacy has come to include computer skills as well.

At National Braille Press we believe that braille is literacy for blind and visually impaired people. It provides the ability to read, spell, learn proper grammar and punctuation, and to lead a more independent life. There is also strong evidence that braille provides a greater opportunity to gain employment.

We also realize that braille isn’t the only solution in today’s fast-paced technological world—but it is a critical tool that helps blind people be truly independent. While screen readers and digital voice can be incredibly efficient and, in some cases, easier to use, there is no substitute for the ability to read and write.

Advocating for the path of least resistance is one of the threats to blind children becoming literate. In today’s competitive job market, blind people need access to all the tools that can help them be successful. NBP, braille readers and many educators know how important braille is to one’s future. We will continue to advocate for braille literacy and participate in the debate for decades to come. Stay tuned!

Brian A. Mac Donald
President

accomplishments

Celebrated the first accessible iPods with Anna Drester’s thorough look at all their features in the braille book, Using the Accessible iPod.

Offered, due to popular demand, Social Networking and You: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn for Blind Users by Anna Drester.

Distributed 1,079 braille book bags to families of blind children through our ReadBooks! Because Braille Matters family outreach program, a 55% increase.

Cross-trained 6 staff to do finishing work for both the Collating and Bindery departments which reduced lead-time for completing jobs.

Hosted over 300 corporate and community volunteers to help assemble children’s print/braille storybooks.

Braille is Literacy

Partnered with the China Braille Press in a historic signing ceremony to create literacy tools to help reverse the decline of braille literacy worldwide.

Created for his 200th birthday, NBP’s Louis Braille Exhibit toured dozens of cities across the country, appearing in libraries, museums, nonprofit organizations, and universities.

Published by NBP, Mike Mellor’s award-winning biography, Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius, was translated and published in China, France, India, Japan, Korea, Poland, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as ‘an individual’s ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society.’

According to Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, literacy refers to:
1) “able to read and write,” and
2) “versed in literature or creative writing...having knowledge or competence <computer-literate> <politically-literate>.”

All About Braille

Produced 11,000,000 pages of braille.

Expanded our selection of Bumpy Basics board books for blind pre-readers with 4 new titles.

Produced 12 new books as part of the Children’s Braille Book Club, with a focus on classics that included Madeleine and Hallowstones and Halibut Bones.

Center for Braille Innovation

Awarded Jeffrey Killebrew, a teacher at the New Mexico School for the Blind, the Touch of Genius Prize for Innovation for his exciting new teaching method for blind and visually impaired students that introduces spatial concepts such as linear math problems and measurement.

Developed an in-house Tactile Graphics Department resulting in an improved response time to requests for tactile graphics and our ability to produce large quantities of copies.

Created over 71,000 tactile graphics, primarily for tests and textbooks produced for blind schoolchildren nationwide.

Featured Tactile American Flags from The Kansas Braille Transcription Institute, to explore by touch the design of the stars and stripes.

Produced the book, Noah’s Ark, complete with a merry band of animals to touch, sculpted by tactile artist Ann Cunningham, along with a print/braille story and fun facts about the animals.

Modified an off-the-shelf educational toy, Chunky Puzzle Shapes - and offered the Giraffe Grasping Toy to help promote tactile, cognitive, and motor skill development.

Instructed 6 new braille transcribers of NBP’s in-house Braille Transcriber course who later became certified by the Library of Congress.

Renovated NBP’s historic building to create space for the Center for Braille Innovation and enhanced our ability to produce standardized tests in braille.

Received, for the first time, federal funding through a $200,000 appropriation in the Omnibus Bill sponsored by Senators Kerry and Kennedy for NBP’s Center for Braille Innovation.

Produced 12,000,000 braille pages during the last two decades of the twentieth century when a braille literacy crisis emerged. In the past year, there have been a number of articles on the fight for braille, with authors debating—is braille literacy and is it facing extinction?

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Brian A. Mac Donald
President
thank you donors

The publishing, information access, and outreach programs of National Braille Press depend substantially on philanthropic support.

Every person’s gift, whether $1 or $100,000, makes a significant difference in the lives of blind children and adults who benefit from the work of NBP.

The names listed below represent those individuals, corporations, and foundations who have made contributions through our annual campaign, gala, the Vision 5K and other ways, at the level of $50 or more during our Fiscal Year 2010: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010. Our donors care about literacy for everyone – blind and sighted; and we are honored that a full 26 percent of our donors are braille readers who also benefit from our braille publications.

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SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS FOR OPERATIONS

Revenues

Publications Revenue $2,351,976

Education Services Revenue $1,101,661

Contract Revenue $1,166,101

Charitable Support and net assets released from temporary restrictions $1,200,567

Support from Endowment & Interest Income $260,329

Gain on sale of investments $8,900

Center for Braille Innovation (exclusive of grants) $4,456

Total Operating Revenue $3,977,640

Expenses

Braille Production Costs $2,083,315

Publications Expenses $449,936

Education Services Expenses $144,573

Contract Expenses $41,838

Center for Braille Innovation $195,877

Administrative Expenses $710,485

Charitable Support / Development Expenses $442,731

Oligarchy (Building) Expenses $132,541

Total Other Expenses $4,278,042

Change in Net Assets, General Fund ($300,402)

UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT FUND ACTIVITY

Beginning Net Assets Endowment Fund $355,048

Change in Net Assets, Endowment Fund $724,102

T Trustee

M Member of the Corporation

March 31, 2010  March 31, 2009

Net Assets (Fund Balances)

Unrestricted General Fund $355,048  $657,343

Temporarily Restricted Fund $414,414  $481,364

Endowment Fund $5,922,483  $5,198,381

Plant Fund $1,050,325  $1,048,432

Total Net Assets (Fund Balances) $5,742,270  $5,385,520

Total Liabilities $496,283  $252,906

Total Assets $6,238,553  $5,638,426

Sources of Charitable Support

Events (net of expenses) $286,124  24%

Net assets released from restrictions $539,617  45%

Foundations and Corporations $204,578  17%

Other Individuals $59,797  5%

Donated Books and other in-kind $62,438  5%

Endowment Fund $224,050  2%

Total $1,200,567

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