

OLBPD DIMENSIONS NEWSLETTER

**Ohio Library for the Blind & Physically Disabled at Cleveland Public Library
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The Year in Review, and Moving Forward to 2020

As 2019 comes to an end, the Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled (OLBPD) has enjoyed another busy and productive year. OLBPD circulated approximately 515,717 items to 10,208 active readers. The collection has more than 56,000 titles, including new Playaway books as well as described Blu-Ray and DVD titles. Patrons using BARD downloaded 146,773 books and magazines, and OLBPD answered over 2,000 BARD service and tech support requests. OLBPD inspected over 462,000 returned books, and less than one-percent were damaged or missing media. OLBPD added nearly 9,100 copies of high-demand digital talking books to meet patron reading needs. OLBPD answered over 22,000 patron phone calls requesting service and over 6,200 mail and email requests.

This year, OLBPD conducted a patron satisfaction survey to evaluate our effectiveness in providing this service, and collect feedback from readers about services from OLBPD in the future. A special thank you to all those patrons who participated! Responses were overwhelmingly positive, and we are pleased that so many readers are happy with the service they are receiving.

While there were many updates shared from the National Library Service (NLS) throughout the year, perhaps the most significant news was their name change in October. Now referred to as the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled, NLS believes the name change helps them address the use of outdated language and more clearly communicates the breadth of those they serve and may serve in the future.

OLBPD continues to receive feedback from patrons concerned with the heavy emphasis on technology as services move into the future. Much in the same as last year, we want to remind our readers that technology will be used to enhance services for those who use it and provide another level of service options to enjoy. For those who simply prefer less technology, library materials will remain accessible and available in much the same way as they are today.

OLBPD will strive to continue providing readers with the best service possible, and keep patrons aware of any future service updates as they are announced by NLS, and develop here locally. Thank you for a great 2019 and for all of your continued support, and we will all be working hard for an even better 2020.

NLS Testing Voice-Activation Technology

NLS has recently signed a contract with the Australia-based company RealSam, to conduct proof-of-concept testing of a voice-activated digital device. In this assessment, NLS will acquire a limited number of voice-activated devices for testing with focus groups. NLS will then use the results as part of their plans to incorporate voice-activation as part of their next-generation talking book player. This testing is one of the first major steps in what will be an in-depth and thorough look at the needs of patrons and the ability of new technology to fulfill those needs.

Through this testing, NLS expects to accomplish a number of important objectives. First, they hope to gather data on patron acceptance and usability of a voice-activated user interface. Second, they hope to gauge the ease of connecting a voice-activated device to existing Wi-Fi networks. Third, they hope to assess discoverability features for devices using the voice-activated user interface. Finally, NLS hopes to identify other associated requirements such as speaker quality and sound levels.

As part of this testing, NLS also hopes to come away with a better understanding of the technical support that will be required to initiate and sustain the use of such devices. Planning for this field testing, including selection of participating libraries and patrons, is currently in process. Field testing is expected to take place in spring of 2020. NLS will continue to update the network as they make progress on this project.

NLS Pilot Program to Test Expanding Certifiers

NLS began a year-long two-state (Pennsylvania and Texas) pilot program to ease access for individuals with reading disabilities by expanding the list of certifying authorities on a limited basis. Currently, only medical doctors are allowed to certify applicants with reading disabilities. Texas is participating based on the recently enacted S.B. 2075 that mandates Texas schools refer students with reading disabilities to the Texas Talking Book Program. Pennsylvania was selected because the commonwealth also has a comparably large, diverse population served by a limited number of network libraries.

This pilot will allow NLS to build a better understanding of the demand for NLS services once the requirement for a medical doctor's certification of reading disability is removed. The pilot will also test a BARD-only policy—with the option of players being made available in limited cases based on hardship—and will allow NLS to ascertain the impact of an increased load capacity to BARD.

NLS will be collecting extensive data during the pilot to help guide their decision-making for a future expansion of service. This pilot represents a significant first step toward extending service, and NLS will share interim findings from the pilot at the National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Print Disabled Individuals in May 2020.

Reminder about the U.S. Census 2020

This coming April 1st is Census Day. Census results play a large part in determining how government entities allocate hundreds of billions of dollars each year for services that communities rely on. But certain groups of people historically have been undercounted in the census. We want to make sure that the people NLS and OLBDP serve are aware of and participate in the 2020 census.

On March 12th, the Census Bureau will mail households an invitation to respond to the census. For the first time, households will have three ways to respond: online, by calling a toll-free number, or by mail. In mid-April, census workers will begin visiting homes that have not responded to collect information in person. For general questions, visit the Census frequently asked questions (FAQ) page at <https://ask.census.gov/> or call 1-800-923-8282.

NEWSREEL Magazine

Established in 1958, NEWSREEL Magazine is a monthly audio publication for and by individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Each three-hour issue includes a variety of articles about news and adaptive products for people who are blind and visually impaired, and also share experiences with guide dogs, travel, careers, as well as recipes, music, book reviews, and so much more. NEWSREEL is not offered by OLBDP to patrons. Instead, patrons interested in a personal subscription can request a three-month free trial subscription of NEWSREEL by email at info@newsreelmag.org or call 1-888-723-8737 (toll free). After the three-month trial subscription, a one-year subscription costs \$30 for the audio cartridge. For additional information, please visit <http://www.newsreelmag.org>.

2020 Ohio Regional Braille Challenge

Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in collaboration with the Braille Institute of America, will host the Ohio Regional Braille Challenge on Thursday, February 27, 2020. The Braille Challenge, now in its nineteenth year, is the only national reading and writing contest in braille for students who are blind and visually impaired. Regionals are open to students of all abilities. Students from all over Ohio will gather at Clovernook Center to test their braille skills in five categories: reading, comprehension, braille spelling, chart and graph reading, proofreading and braille speed and accuracy. Student contests are organized by grade level. All test formats are UEB.

For more information or to register and request a permission form, email kathy@pinchange.com or braillechallenge@clovernook.org or call 513-702-4878 and reference Ohio Braille Challenge.

Winter Library Closings

OLBPD will be closed on Christmas Eve Day, Tuesday, December 24th; Christmas Day on Wednesday, December 25th; New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1st; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, January 20th; and Presidents' Day, Monday, February 17th.

OLBPD Winter Holiday Reading List

Here are some cozy holiday and seasonal titles from books made into movies featured on the Hallmark Channel during Christmastime.

“The Christmas Secret” by Donna VanLiere – DB 89747

“The Bridge” by Karen Kingsbury – DB 75882

“Trading Christmas” by Debbie Macomber – DB 73827

“The Mistletoe Secret” by Richard Paul Evans – DB 86630

“The Christmas Town” by Donna VanLiere – DB 86731

“Call Me Mrs. Miracle” by Debbie Macomber – DB 73685

Season's Greetings

Wishing all of our readers a happy holiday season, and peace, good health and good reading in the New Year.



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