

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped



# BRIGHT FUTURE

SHARE OUR VISION, THAT ALL MAY READ. Vol. 39, No. 2, Summer 2024



*Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Department of Corrections*



**OKLAHOMA**  
**Rehabilitation Services**  
Oklahoma Library for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped

New Program Creates  
Children's Braille Books  
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# Letter from the Director

## *Applauding Longevity and Dedication*

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Dear Patrons and Readers,

The OLBPH has employed many admirable and accomplished people during its history. They dedicate many years to serving Oklahomans with visual and physical disabilities. In the last issue, I highlighted two talented new employees. I would now like to spotlight two veteran employees who recently celebrated notable work anniversaries, Mable Stripling (25 years) and Andrew Shockley (20 years).

Mable has worn many hats at the OLBPH since starting in 1998. She has served as a Library Technician I, II and III and has worked in both Circulation and Outreach. Mable is currently the Material Management Officer and is responsible for the distribution and maintenance of Digital Talking Book Machines (DTBMs). Mable has maximized resources to ensure that, while no new DTBMs are being manufactured, we have ample supply for patrons.

Andrew started at the OLBPH as a Library Technician in 2004. In 2008, he was promoted to Librarian and began providing reader advisor service. Andrew is noted for his friendliness and professionalism when engaging with patrons. Andrew was promoted to Administrative Librarian in 2018 and is the librarian supervisor. He and his team have navigated challenging times, including COVID and our transition from a collection-based library to duplication on demand (DOD) service.

I am proud of both accomplished library veterans. From book recommendations to maintaining the DTBMs that play the books, and many points in between, Andrew and Mable rock the OLBPH! Read more about Mable and her work at the OLBPH on page ten.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Treese

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Bright Future is also available by email, in braille, on the Oklahoma Telephone Reader (405-522-1896 or 1-855-887-6397), as an audio file on our website and as an accessible PDF document on our website at [oklahoma.gov/olbph](http://oklahoma.gov/olbph).

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# Cover Story

## *Program Creates Braille Books for Children*

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*By Pepper Watson, AIM Center Director*

Sitting on my mother's lap while she read to me is one of my fondest childhood memories. Listening as the words on the pages came to life turned me into a lifelong reader. While I was unable to read the words in my earliest years, reading with my mother taught me to recognize small words, and so began my journey to literacy.

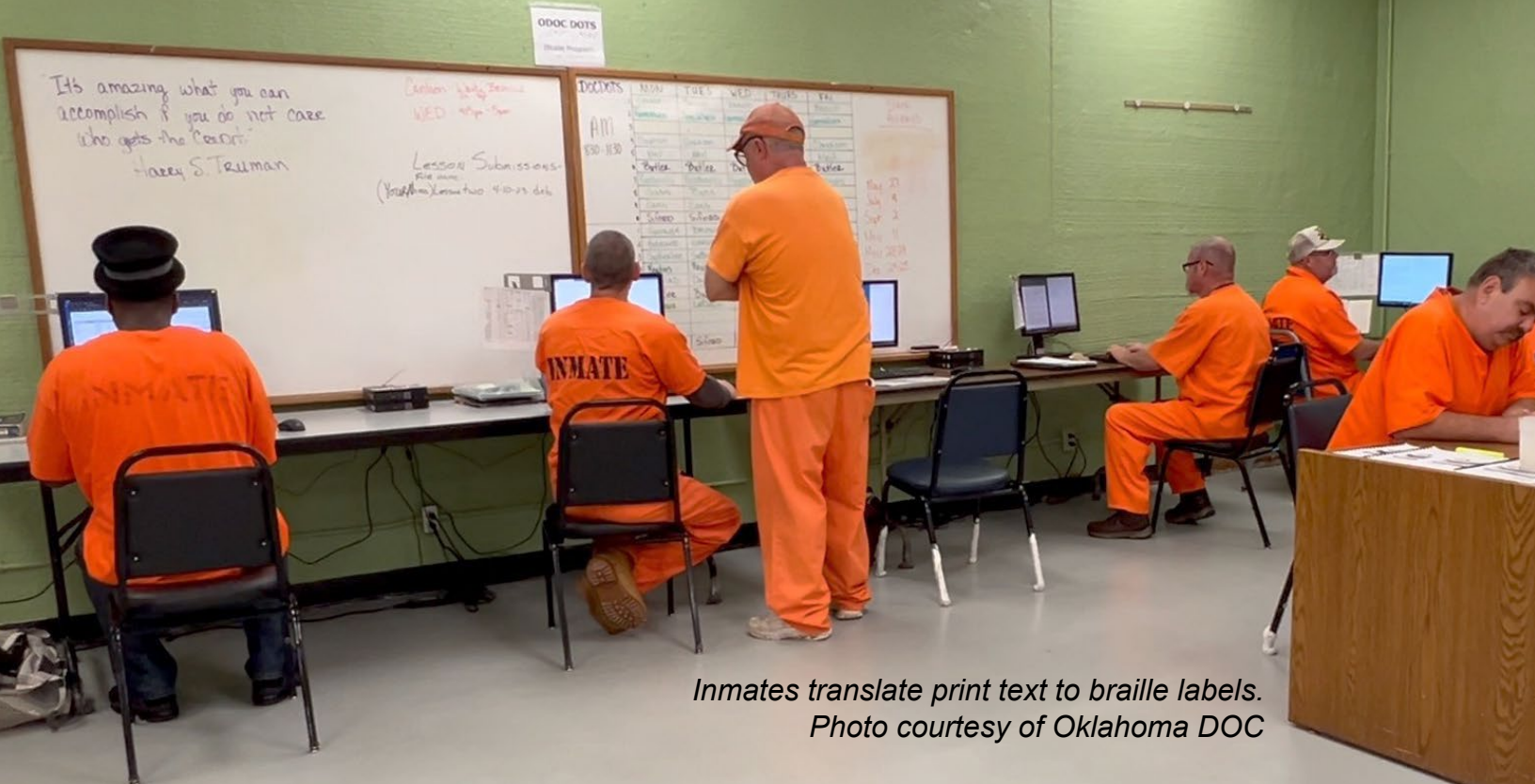
But what about Oklahoma's low vision and blind children who cannot see the words on pages? How do we give them the same experience as our sighted children?

*Enter the world of braille!* Braille is a reading and writing system made up of raised dots that can be felt and read with the fingertips. The basic unit is an arrangement of six dots, two across and three down. Each dot, or combination of dots, represents a letter of the print alphabet.

Braille literacy is vital for children with visual impairments. Becoming braille literate enables them to learn punctuation, grammar, and spelling just as sighted children do when learning to read and write print.

Additionally, braille gives people with visual impairments access to information. Consider all the printed materials a sighted person reads in a day: textbooks, menus, articles, directions and more. Now imagine if none of those materials necessary for navigating daily life were written in a medium that was accessible. Braille enables people with visual impairments to live, work and study independently. Braille literacy can also be important to self-esteem, providing the ability to express oneself in written form and engage fully with written texts.

To support braille literacy, getting braille into the hands of Oklahoma's visually impaired children from an early age has become a goal of the Accessible Instructional Materials Center at the Oklahoma Library for the



*Inmates translate print text to braille labels.  
Photo courtesy of Oklahoma DOC*

Blind and Physically Handicapped. To accomplish this goal, the AIM Center and the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services have partnered with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections to establish the Prison Braille Program at Oklahoma State Reformatory in Granite, Okla..

In the Prison Braille Program, inmates first translate the text of children's books into braille, then produce clear, adhesive braille labels which are later applied to the pages of a print book alongside corresponding print text. This creates a twin vision book that can be read together by sighted and visually impaired people, such as sighted parents with visually impaired children.

Ten inmates have voluntarily joined the Prison Braille Program to learn braille, pass certification tests and produce braille. This is not an easy undertaking, as it takes a minimum of one year to complete the required courses and assignments and to pass the examination for certification.

Staff from the AIM Center have met with the program team to answer questions about braille and to give direction on how to produce twin vision books. With the team's hard work and commitment to making a difference in children's lives by mastering braille, we are on our way to creating

something special for Oklahoma's blind and low vision children. The Prison Braille Program has now completed and applied braille labels for seven titles: A Cuddle for Little Duck, Are You My Mother, I Love You Because You're You, I Love You Like No Otter, Guess How Much I Love You, I Like It When, I Love You to the Moon and Back, and Just Like Mommy. This has created 140 twin vision books.

The Prison Braille Program is now working on another set of braille books for children ages 2 to 5 years old which will expand that number of titles available for distribution.

The twin vision books produced by the Prison Braille Program are available to children receiving AIM Center services and will be distributed by the AIM Center. To ask about receiving twin vision books for your child, contact the AIM Center by phone at 1-800-523-0288 or by email at [pwatson@okdrs.gov](mailto:pwatson@okdrs.gov).

For more information about the Prison Braille Program, see <https://youtu.be/AKI3pvmZPIQ>.

*I Love You Like No Otter is one of seven completed twin vision titles.  
Photo courtesy of Oklahoma DOC*



# Library Friends

## *OSLS Hosts Annual Meeting*



On May 16, Oklahomans for Special Library Services, the library friends group of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, hosted its annual meeting.

OLBPH staff attended the meeting and presented an annual report and library update. Staff were joined by OLBPH volunteer and special guest speaker, Miss Grand Lake Alyssa Payne.

Alyssa spoke on the importance of her volunteer experience and expressed her appreciation for OSLS's support of library services, including recent contributions to new equipment for the Recording Studio.

OSLS gave its annual report of activities and spending and elected its 2024-2025 Board of Directors.

OSLS is a nonprofit organization supporting the operations of the OLBPH. Membership is open to the public and annual individual membership dues are \$15.00. Donations can also be made to OSLS and are tax deductible.

To contact OSLS about membership, or to donate, mail P.O. Box 53593, Oklahoma City OK 73152.

## Book Corner

### *Hot as Summer Romances*

#### **The Kiss Quotient by Helen Hoang, DB 91563**

Stella Lane, an econometrician with Asperger's, has little experience with dating. She decides the practical solution is to hire a male escort. Michael Phan can't afford to turn down her offer, but they are both surprised when Stella's logical checklist turns into a real relationship.

#### **The Spanish Love Deception by Elena Armas, DB 106611**

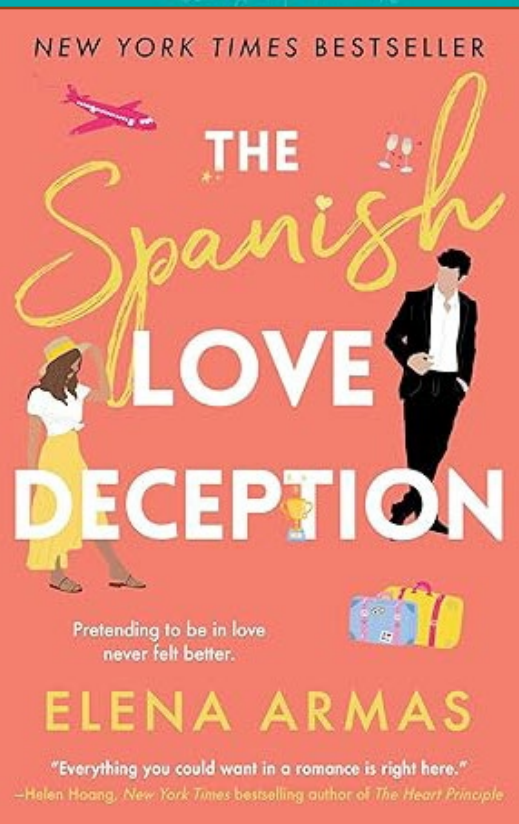
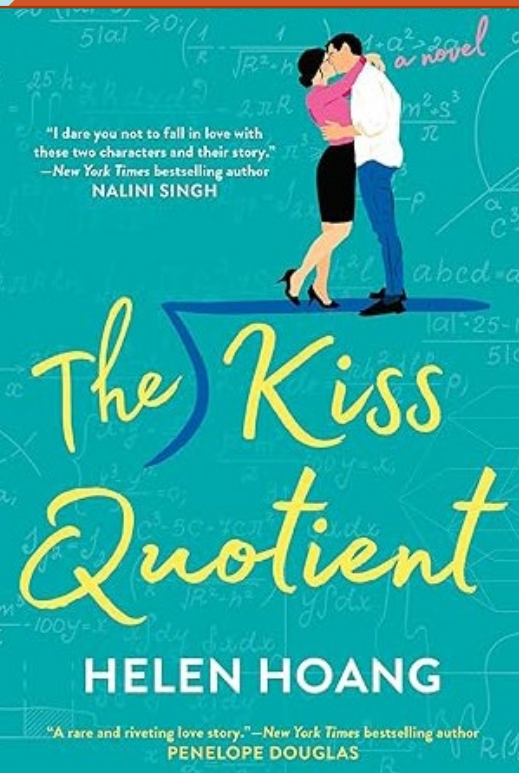
Catalina Martín needs a date to a family wedding being held in Spain, especially as her ex will be there. She is surprised when her coworker and mortal enemy, Aaron Blackford, volunteers to go with her and pretend to be her boyfriend.

#### **The Deal by Elle Kennedy, DB 84485**

College student Hannah Wells falls for the bad boy on campus but can't find a way to get his attention. Hockey player Garrett Graham agrees to help Hannah get her crush if she tutors him. But sparks fly when they kiss.

#### **American Royalty by Tracey Livesay, DB 112175**

Despite being in line for the throne, Prince Jameson lives a fairly quiet life in the shadows, and he likes it that way. Being a royal isn't all it's cracked up to be. The humdrum of the prince's day to day existence gets thrown into chaos upon the arrival of Duchess, a saucy rapper looking to expand her horizons. It's lust at first sight for the total opposites when they're forced to work together for a royal charity benefit





concert, complicated by a mutual disdain for each other's polarizing lifestyles that threatens to undo the good work they're doing. Maybe they can mix a little bit of business with a little bit of pleasure.

### *Act Your Age, Eve Brown* by Talia Hibbert, DB 102611

Eve is a walking hot mess. When she applies for a chef position at Jacob's bed-and-breakfast, his answer is an obvious no. But when she accidentally hits him with her car, he finds himself short-staffed. As unpredictable Eve tackles job after job, she soon makes a place for herself at the inn - and in Jacob's heart.

### *My Killer Vacation* by Tessa Bailey, DB 110244

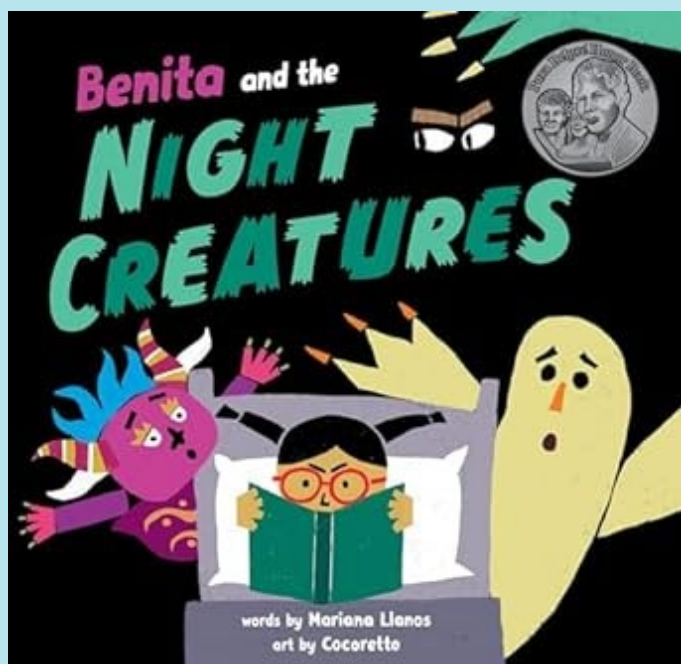
Taylor's vacation plans go awry when she finds a corpse in her Cape Cod rental! A true crime podcast enthusiast, Taylor is determined to help catch the killer - but crude, motorcycle-riding bounty hunter Myles is set on doing his job without interference from the spirited second grade teacher. But resisting Taylor is proving to be difficult - and as she stirs a hunger in him, he's finding her to be his biggest weakness yet.

## Oklahoma Reads: *Showcasing Oklahoma Stories*

*Benita and the Night Creatures* by Mariana Llanos, DBC 18973

*Benita and the Night Creatures* is the winner of the 2024 Oklahoma Book Award for children.

Benita loves to read in bed but keeps getting interrupted by a whistling Tunche, a scary Supay and other spooky creatures from Peruvian lore. To the creatures' disbelief, Benita is so absorbed by her book that she's not the least bit scared of them. Soon, the creatures become interested in reading too.



# Inside the Library

## *Stripling Celebrates 25 Years at OLBPH*

Mable Stripling began working at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped as a Library Technician in December of 1998. What began as a temporary position, meant to last only three weeks, has turned into a career of over 25 years.

Mable found out about the job opportunity at the OLBPH through a friend. She was hired through a temp agency with the understanding that the job would only last three weeks. However, when Mable asked when her last day would be, Geraldine Adams, then current Director of the OLBPH, told her to stay because her work had been exceptional.

Mable then went on to complete a state training program for temporary employees and was later offered a full-time, permanent position at the OLBPH. Since then, she has worked in multiple positions and departments in the OLBPH, fulfilling the roles in which she was most needed and learning new skills to better serve patrons.

Mable first worked in the Circulation Department, the part of the OLBPH that sends out talking books to patrons in the mail and receives returned talking books. Mable started in the Circulation Department



*Mable Stripling  
Photo by Kait Evans*



*Mable repairs a DTBM.  
Photo by Kait Evans*

back when talking books were on cassette tapes, before digital duplication on demand and digital talking book machines.

Mable was responsible for checking-in and rewinding returned tapes, repairing broken tapes, and shelving tapes for storage. The returns process was much more complicated and time intensive than it is today, when we simply erase digital files from returned cartridges and download new titles to the same cartridge.

Mable later took on new responsibilities in Circulation, preparing tapes to go out to patrons instead of checking them in. This included creating new tapes to meet patron demand and producing braille labels for each tape. To do this, she learned how to read and write braille.

Mable then worked alongside the OLBPH's public information officer to distribute outreach materials and raise awareness for the library's services. This included attending and exhibiting at resource fairs and expos and making presentations to potential patrons in nursing homes, caregiver groups and more.

Mable currently works as the OLBPH's Material Management Officer. She manages the OLBPH's inventory of equipment available to patrons, including digital talking book machines, headphones and more. She also repairs broken DTBMs. Mable is responsible for making sure that the OLBPH has equipment available to patrons while no new DTBMs are being made. By repairing the OLBPH's existing machines, Mable ensures that the OLBPH has working DTBMs in plentiful supply.

Mable has enjoyed her years serving the patrons of the OLBPH. "Out of all the jobs I've worked, this has been the most fulfilling," she said. "It's been my joy, hearing how we make a difference."

Mable plans to continue in her position at the OLBPH until her retirement. "This will be my last stop," she said. However, she enjoys her work and is no hurry to retire any time soon. "This job keeps me active, mentally. I'm not a sit-around person and never have been."

# Braille Transcription Update

## *Demand for Braille Materials Increases*

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One perhaps lesser-known function of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is to provide braille transcription services to Oklahoma state agencies, and to various social service entities, nonprofits and others interested in making print materials more accessible for the blind and visually impaired.

Lacey Downs, the OLBPH's certified braille transcriptionist, has been busy. In the last year, the OLBPH has transcribed a script for the Metropolitan Library System's public service video, programs for the 2024 People with Disabilities Awareness Day, agendas for four meetings of the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services, citations for constituents of a State Senator's district and various materials for the OLBPH's Summer Reading Program.

Additionally, the OLBPH continues its partnership with the Bethany Library, part of the Metropolitan Library System, on its StoryWalks®. Since last summer, the OLBPH has transcribed nine books to be used in StoryWalks®.

A StoryWalk® is a way for people of all ages to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. It involves attaching laminated pages from a children's picture book to signs or stakes along an outdoor path, such as in a park. As people walk along the path, they find the next page in the story.

To create a StoryWalk® with braille, the print text from a children's book is transcribed into braille and then embossed using a braille printer onto clear, adhesive sheets which are then added to the laminated picture book pages before they are attached to the signs or stakes. Braille can then be read on each sign. Alternatively, braille is transcribed and embossed onto braille paper, then bound into a book which can be carried and read as someone walks along the StoryWalk® path.

The OLBPH has partnered with the Bethany Library to transcribe braille for

its StoryWalks® since the summer of 2022. The Bethany Library holds StoryWalks® monthly, and Lacey at the OLBPH transcribes braille for each StoryWalk®.

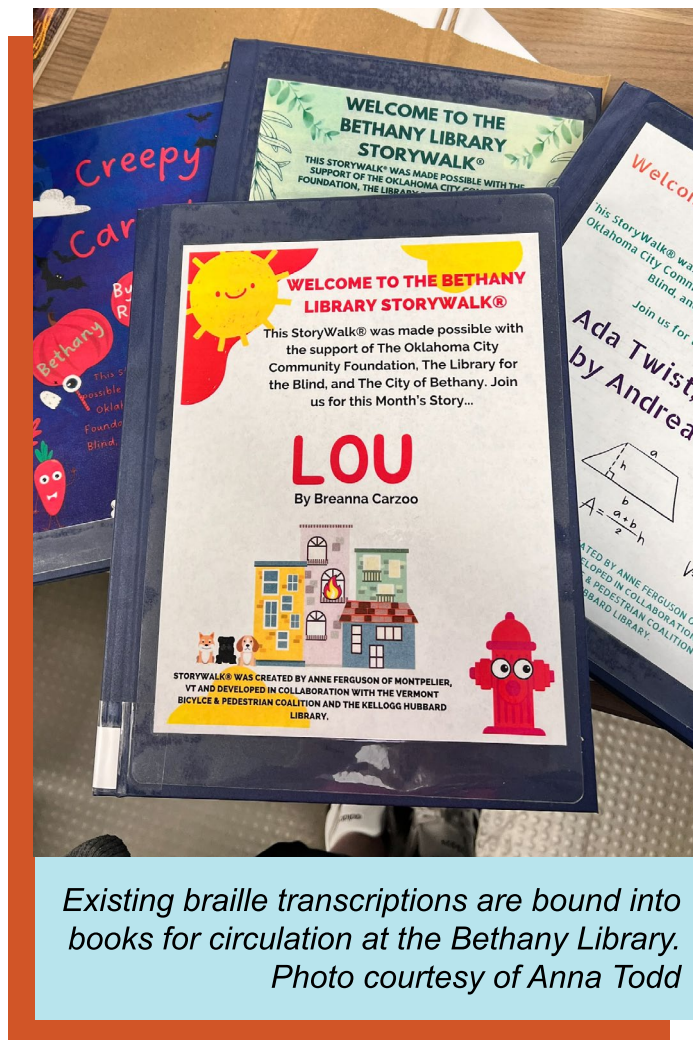
The Bethany Library is now expanding its braille offerings by binding existing and future braille from StoryWalks® into books and adding the books to its circulation.

“I had several local teachers request the braille signage to share with their classrooms,” Anna Todd, a librarian at the Bethany Library and organizer of the StoryWalks®, said. “I brought up the idea of circulating the pages to our Collection Development department so that teachers beyond the Bethany community could access the pages. It turns out that all our (the Metropolitan Library System’s) libraries have seen requests for more braille materials.”

Todd recommends that other public libraries consider including braille signage in StoryWalks® and other activities.

“Access is such an important factor when it comes to library usage,” Todd said. “Our mission statement at Metro is ‘Connecting our diverse communities with resources and experiences to educate and enrich lives.’ By providing as many formats as we can, whether braille, audio or various languages, we are helping to reach the diverse community we serve in Oklahoma County.”

Binding the braille signs into books was the next logical step in furthering accessibility, Todd said. “This seemed like a great way to meet the needs of our community and share all of Lacey and the OLBPH’s hard work!”



*Existing braille transcriptions are bound into books for circulation at the Bethany Library. Photo courtesy of Anna Todd*

# Volunteer Spotlight

## *Volunteer Draws on Radio Background*

Dan Eischen first began volunteering at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in the early 1990's. However, due to budget, the volunteer program was discontinued shortly after. Nearly twenty years later, after leaving a 14-year career working in radio broadcast, Dan remembered the OLBPH's volunteer program and began volunteering once again.

“Volunteering gives me the opportunity to use my voice again in front of a microphone,” Dan said. “Something I have missed.”

Dan records brochures and publications for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, including the OLBPH newsletter, Bright Future. Additionally, Dan records “This Day in History” and “The Upper Room,” a daily devotional, for the Oklahoma Telephone Reader program.

Dan has dedicated a large portion of his life to helping others in his role as a pastor, and carries this dedication and his experience in radio over into his volunteer work.



*Dan operates professional sound equipment.*

To volunteer at the OLBPH, call 405-521-3514 or email [olbph@okdrs.gov](mailto:olbph@okdrs.gov). Apply online at [oklahoma.gov/olbph](http://oklahoma.gov/olbph).



*The Recording Studio uses specialized equipment, including microphones.*

“Volunteering for the OLBPH is a lot like working in radio in that I hopefully make a difference in the life of someone I will never know or get to meet,” Dan said.

Because of his familiarity with recording equipment from working in radio, Dan is one of few OLBPH volunteers who can record and edit from home. Because of this, he can work independently on many projects the OLBPH’s Recording Studio does not have time to complete.

“Dan does many smaller projects such as brochures that we just don’t have the scheduling time to get to ourselves,” Kat Jensen, OLBPH recording studio director, said. “He’s been an incredible asset to the Recording Studio and I appreciate all he has done for us.”

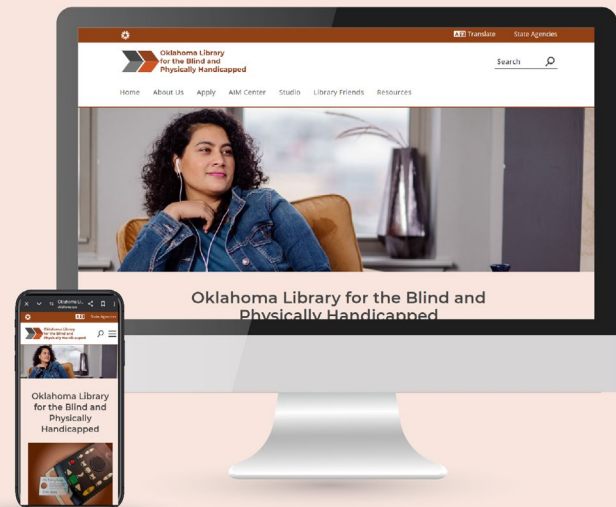
“It is a personal joy to be a volunteer. Every night I look forward to going into my little home studio, turning on my phone or firing up my computer and recording to hopefully make a small difference in the lives of others,” Dan said. “I recommend it to anyone!”

## OLBPH launches *new website*

The OLBPH has a new website with improved navigation and a new look!

The old website address will redirect to the new web address, but you may need to update your bookmarks and saved pages.

Go check it out at <http://oklahoma.gov/olbph>.



[oklahoma.gov/olbph](http://oklahoma.gov/olbph) 🔍

# ADVENTURE — BEGINS AT — YOUR LIBRARY™



## *Participating in the Summer Reading Program?*

Don't forget to submit your reading logs and activity logs by July 26 for your chance to win prizes, including a raffle entry for one of three iPads!

RSVP to attend our Summer Reading Wrap-Up Party at Science Museum Oklahoma in Oklahoma City on July 27 at 2 p.m. Free admission to the museum is included. Winners will receive prizes. Those reading at least ten books will receive a program completion certificate.

Contact Kaitlyn Evans at [olbph@okdrs.gov](mailto:olbph@okdrs.gov) or at [kaitlyn.evans@okdrs.gov](mailto:kaitlyn.evans@okdrs.gov) to submit logs and to RSVP or with any questions.

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**FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND**