

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped



BRIGHT FUTURE

SHARE OUR VISION, THAT ALL MAY READ.

Vol. 40, No. 2, Winter 2025



Winter is coming! Are you up for the challenge?



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation Services
Oklahoma Library for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped

Winter Reading Challenge is
coming! Are you ready?
>> Page 6

Letter from the Director

Season's Greetings

Festive fall greetings to all,

So glad I'm done writing about building heating and air. Perhaps you all are too. Complete one challenge and start another one though. Public Information Officer (PIO) Kaitlyn Evans left DRS for another agency back in August. Best wishes to her. I am happy to wear the outreach hat again as I really enjoy the traveling aspect of our service. Studio director Kat Jensen, having the gift of tech savviness, is currently handling the electronic side of outreach. Kat has also represented us at Oklahoma Council for the Blind and other events. Our multi-talented building manager Lacey Downs has put together this issue of "Bright Future." She wrapped up the last issue as well.

The hiring process takes some time and much consideration. Library program supervisors are all involved with the interviewing tasks. We should have a new PIO in early December. These are yet more examples of Team Library pulling together. I am grateful for all of Team Library.

Speaking of gratefulness, we are about to roll into Thanksgiving and beyond. Even given current concerns about the economy and politics, we have much to be thankful for. For one, the core federal library resources we rely upon to provide for our patrons remain for the most part unaffected. Some National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) support functions have ceased until further notice. Thought is to simply keep the books circulating.

We can all hope for speedy resolutions and a return to relative normality.

Please be well.

-Kevin Treese

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Federal Shutdown and the OLBPH

We're still here!

As many of you are no doubt aware, the federal government has been shut down for 38 days as of this writing. Many federal employees are furloughed, and some Oklahoma State agencies have begun to furlough employees as well.

Staff at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped are paid entirely with State funds, so we are not facing furloughs. All our services remain operational despite the federal shutdown. The Studio continues to record but is unable to upload finished books and magazines to the collection. While those items are ready for patrons, we must wait for the federal level to reopen before patrons can borrow them. (*Fire in Beulah* in "Oklahoma Reads" fall into this category.) Cartridge circulation continues as normal.

Services performed by the National Library Service, our federal level counterpart, are mostly paused. New books and magazines have not been added to the collection since NLS employees were furloughed. Catalog records are not currently being updated. The Music Services section staff are furloughed. BARD, BARD Mobile, and BARD Express remain operational, but high-level technical support is unavailable. Some Android users of BARD Mobile have encountered issues that cannot be resolved by library staff. NLS is aware of the issue, but the Android support person is furloughed until the shutdown ends.

Note: patrons who use BARD Mobile on Android and *have not* experienced any technical issues preventing them from downloading and listening to Talking Books should not be affected by the current technical problem.

The My Talking Books skill on Alexa devices was taken offline temporarily on November 1, 2025. NLS retained all user profiles and will restore My Talking Books as quickly as possible when the federal government reopens. NLS will provide a BARD alert message and a notification on the BARD support and Patron Announce listservs.

-Lacey Downs

Update: After finishing this issue, the President signed a bill funding the government through January 30. The federal level is in the process of reopening. Please bear with us as NLS and we navigate hiccups related to the backlog due to the shutdown.



It might be warm enough to sit outside now, but winter is coming...

Winter Reading Challenge Returns in December!

The OLBPH will host an Adult Winter Reading Challenge again this year from December 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026. This year's challenge will be a winter-themed Book Bingo. Patrons who read five books and complete a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line on the bingo card will earn a "Reading is for Everyone" mug. Patrons who get a blackout (read 25 books) will earn an entry for the grand prize drawing for an iPad.

Book Bingo cards maybe downloaded from the OLBPH website at <https://oklahoma.gov/olbph.html>. You may request a bingo card be sent to you either by calling the Library at 405.521.3514 or by emailing us at olbph@okdrs.gov.

Book titles may be used only once per card. Patrons may submit one entry. All books must be from the OLBPH or BARD.

Entries must be submitted and received by 5 p.m., Friday, March 6 by:

- 1) Mailing your bingo card to the OLBPH at 300 NE 18th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3212; or by
- 2) Emailing a scanned PDF or picture of your bingo card, or a typed list of books read with title, author and matching bingo square to olbph@okdrs.gov.

Funding for the Book Bingo Challenge is generously provided by Oklahomans for Special Library Services. For full rules and to download your bingo card, visit <https://oklahoma.gov/olbph/winter-reading.html>.

OK DRS Older Blind Independent Living Program

Are you age 55 or older and unable to work? Do you need to learn some new independent living skills after vision loss?

It's possible that the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services Older Blind Program is just what you need. Eligibility is based on vision, with no financial limitations. Vision loss is assessed for eligibility from your most current eye report, visual acuities, and functional limitations.

A Rehabilitation Teacher will do an assessment and determine areas where you need training in independent living skills. This could include house cleaning, cooking, banking, personal care, health management, and more.

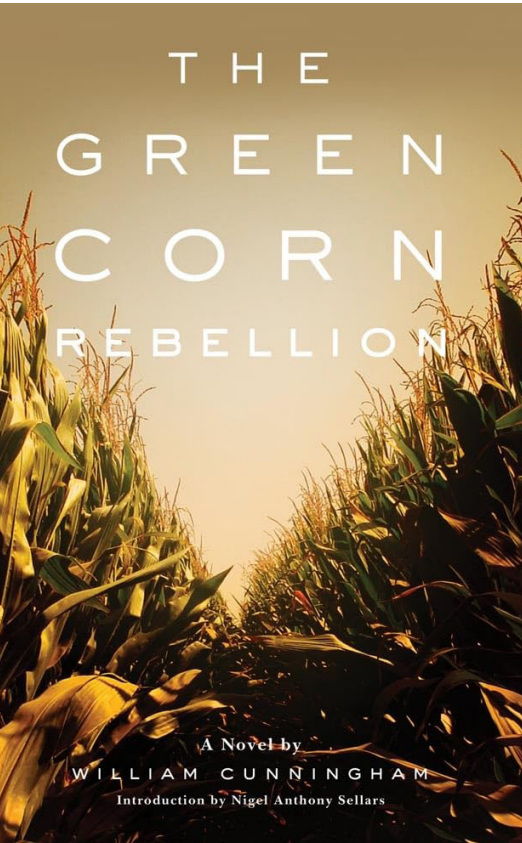
If you have questions about the program or feel it might be what you need, please call the toll-free number to find the local office nearest you at 800-845-8476.

You can also contact OIB Program Manager Julie Bailey at 918-606-9353 or jbailey@okdrs.gov.

-Julie Bailey, CRC, CVRT

Oklahoma Reads

Showcasing books about Oklahoma



The Green Corn Rebellion by J. Brent Clark DBC 18960

These days, rural Oklahoma is the last place anybody would look for leftist revolutionaries, but in 1917, the area exploded into full-blown insurrection. The state's tenant farmers, many of whom were Socialist Party members, viewed the Great War in Europe as a conflict that benefited only the rich. When the federal government enacted a draft, an uprising in eastern Oklahoma saw local townspeople skirmishing with rebellious farmers, including whites, Blacks, and American Indians. More than 250 men were arrested, some sentenced for up to ten years' imprisonment. This is the backdrop of William Cunningham's powerful novel *The Green Corn Rebellion*. First published in 1935, it tells the story of Jim Tetley, who wants simply to be a good farmer if the banks will only let him. As Jim copes with poverty, family rivalries, and community tensions, he must also weigh the need to respond to the call for armed rebellion. Although the insurrection itself succeeded only in undermining the socialist movement and fueling the Red Scare of the 1920s, Cunningham's incendiary writing has been compared to that of Erskine Caldwell. A uniquely American story with roots set deep in Oklahoma soil, *The Green Corn Rebellion* will attract all readers interested in the state's tumultuous history and in populist causes.

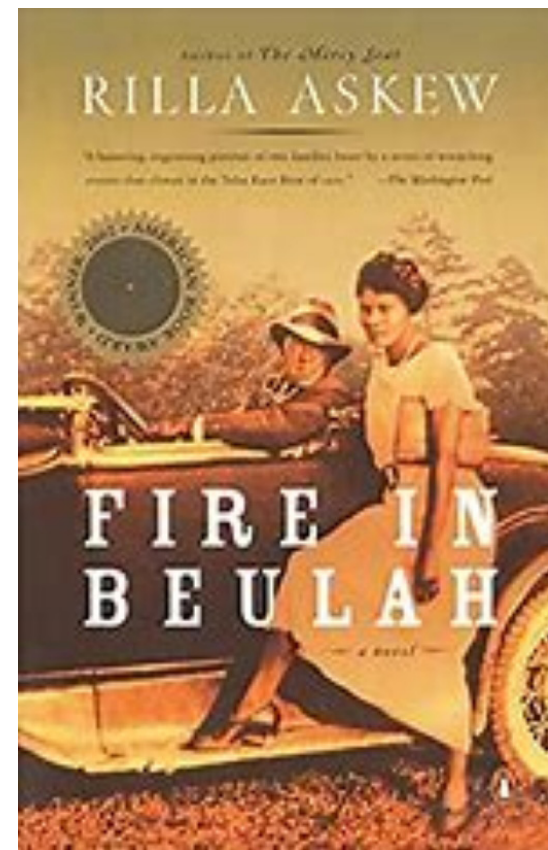
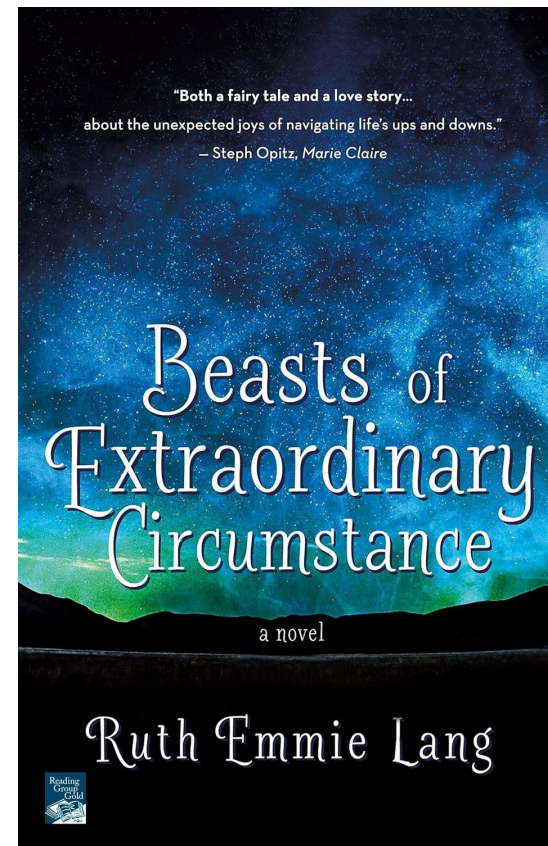
Beasts of Extraordinary Circumstance by Ruth Emmie Lang DBC 18965

Beasts of Extraordinary Circumstance tells the story of Weylyn Grey's life from the perspectives of the people who knew him, loved him, and even a few who thought he was just plain weird. Although he doesn't stay in any of their lives for long, he leaves each of them with a story to tell. Stories about a boy who lives with wolves, great storms that evaporate into thin air, fireflies that make phosphorescent honey, and a house filled with spider webs and the strange man who inhabits it.

There is one story, however, that Weylyn wishes he could change: his own. But first, he has to muster enough courage to knock on Mary's front door.

Fire in Beulah by Rilla Askew DBC 18956

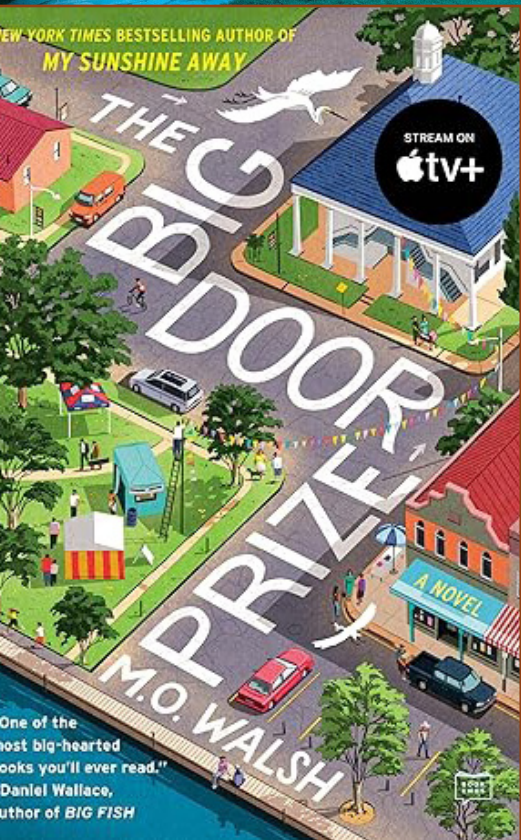
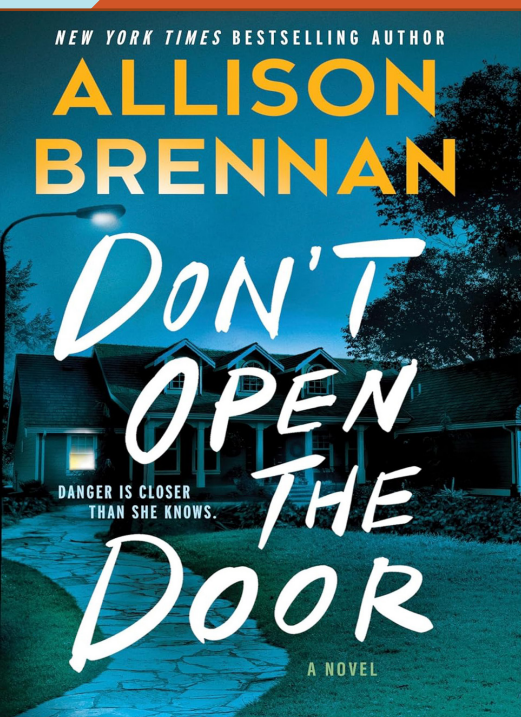
Oil-boom opulence, fear, hate, and lynchings are the backdrop for this riveting novel about one of the worst incidents of violence in American history. Althea Whiteside, an oil-wildcatter's high-strung white wife, and her enigmatic Black maid, Graceful, share a complex connection during the tense days of the Oklahoma oil rush. Their juxtaposing stories – and those of others close to them – unfold as tensions mount to a violent climax in the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, during which whites burned the city's prosperous Black neighborhood to the ground. The massacre becomes the crucible that melds and tests each of the characters in this masterful exploration of the American race story and the ties that bind us irrevocably to one another.



Book Corner

Knock, knock! Who's There?

Don't Open the Door : A Novel by Allison Brennan DB114559



“US Marshal Regan Merritt never bought the FBI’s theory that her ten-year-old son’s murder was tied to her job. Yet as leads went cold, she’d had to walk away from the marshals, the case and her now ex-husband, Grant, who blamed her for Chase’s death. After Regan receives a chilling voice mail from her former boss, Tommy, claiming new information about Chase’s murder, she can no longer stay away from her pain-filled past. Especially when Tommy’s murdered before she can return his call. Now more than ever, Regan’s determined to find the truth, but the more she digs, the more evidence points to Grant as the killer’s true target. But Grant isn’t talking. As she tries to pin down her ex, Regan discovers something much bigger and far more sinister is at play—and she’s running out of people she can trust.” -- Provided by publisher. -- Unrated. Commercial audiobook.

The Big Door Prize by M.O. Walsh DB100535

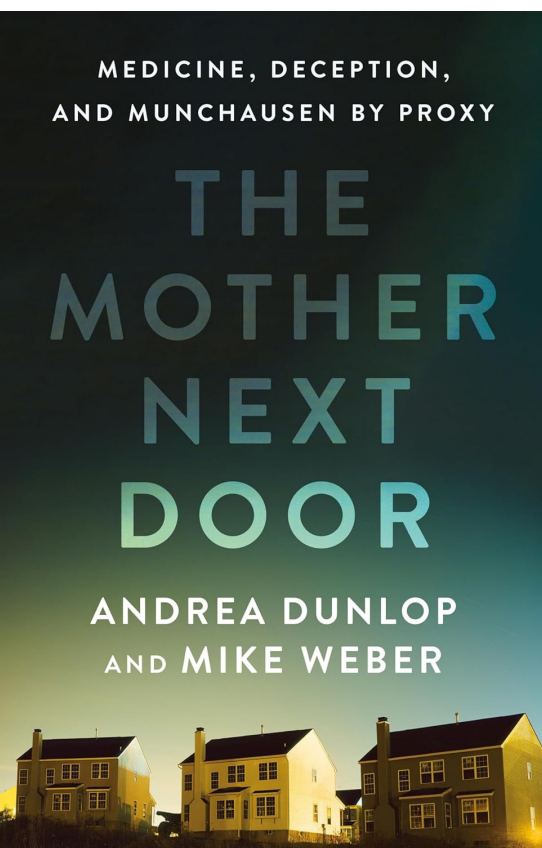
The residents of Deerfield, Louisiana, are intrigued when the mysterious DNAMIX machine appears in their local grocery store. With just a quick swab of your cheek and two dollars, the device claims to use the science of DNA to tell you your life’s potential. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2020.

The Lion at the Door by David Attoe DB028970

In a small English mining town abuse, ignorance, and misunderstanding mix with emotional memories and the awareness of nature's beauty. Mother, daughter, and the mother's childhood friend tell separate views of their intertwined and ruined lives. Some strong language, violence, and descriptions of sex.

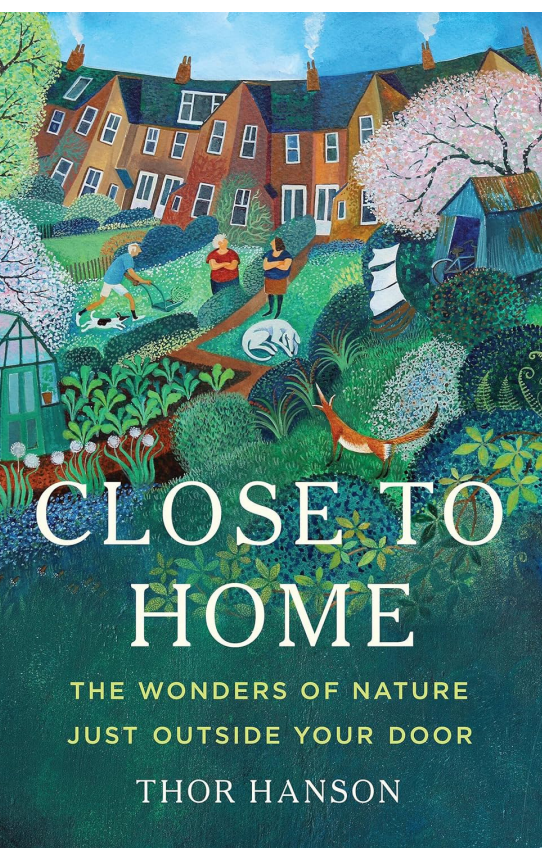
The Scholar and the Last Faerie Door by H.G. Parry DB125966

1921. Years after a botched spell lets loose a faerie into our world, killing hundreds, the study of faerie magic is banned. But for those who survived, their wounds cannot be fixed by bandages and bedrest. A magical curse requires a magical solution. Clover is determined to find a way to save her brother, Matthew—one of the few survivors of the faerie attack. At Camford, England's premier magical academy, she's nobody, just a scholarship witch with no lineage and no connections. But when she catches the eye of golden boy Alden Lennox-Fontaine and his friends, doors that had been previously closed to her are flung open, and she finds herself enmeshed in the glittering and seductive world of the country's magical aristocrats. The summer she spends in Alden's orbit leaves a fateful mark: months of joyous friendship and mutual study come crashing down when experiments go awry, and old secrets are unearthed. Years later, when the faerie seals break again, Clover knows it's because of what they did. And she knows that she must seek the help of people she once called friends—and now doesn't quite know what to call—if there's any hope of saving the world as they know it.”-- Provided by publisher. -- Unrated. Commercial audiobook.



The Mother Next Door : Medicine, Deception, and Munchausen by Proxy by Andrea Dunlop DB127090

The Mother Next Door offers a groundbreaking look at MBP from an unlikely duo: a Seattle novelist whose own family was torn apart by it, and the Texas detective who has worked on more medical child abuse cases than anyone in the nation. Readers ride along on three high-stakes MPB investigations; through riveting reporting and shocking stories from the family members, friends, and doctors caught in the blast zone of these unthinkable acts, a twisted portrait of motherhood and deceit is revealed. With help from some of the top MBP experts in the world, Dunlop and Weber uncover the complex maze of psychological, systemic, and cultural issues that compound MBP and offer solutions for how we might find our way out.” -- Provided by publisher. -- Unrated. Commercial audiobook.



Merle's Door: Lessons from a Freethinking Dog by Ted Kerasote DB065346

Award-winning outdoor writer relates his adventures with a mixed-breed Labrador dog, Merle, who he found wandering in the Utah desert and adopted. Describes how Kerasote allowed Merle to come and go freely to promote self-reliance and intelligence. Discusses canine psychology and the lessons they exchanged about partnership. Bestseller. 2007.

Close to Home : The Wonders of Nature Just Outside Your Door by Thor Hanson DB128540

“We all live on nature’s doorstep, but we often overlook it. From backyards to local parks, the natural places we see the most may well be the ones we know the least. In *Close to Home*, biologist Thor Hanson shows how retraining our eyes reveals hidden wonders just waiting to be discovered. In Kansas City, migrating monarch butterflies flock to the local zoo. In the Pacific Northwest, fierce yellowjackets placidly sip honeydew, unseen in the treetops. In New England, a lawn gone slightly wild hosts a naturalist’s life’s work. And in the soil beneath our feet, remedies for everything from breast cancer to the stench of skunks lie waiting for someone’s searching shovel. *Close to Home* is a hands-on natural history for any local patch of Earth. It shows that we each can contribute to science and improve the health of our planet. And even more, it proves that the wonders of nature don’t lie in some far-off land: they await us, close to home.” -- From publisher. -- Unrated. Commercial audiobook.

Lizards on the Mantel, Burros at the Door: A Big Bend Memoir by Etta Koch DBC18189

In this book based on her journals and letters, Etta Koch and her daughter June Cooper Price chronicle their family’s first years (1944–1946) in Big Bend National Park in Texas. Etta describes how her photographer husband Peter Koch became captivated by the region as a place for natural history filmmaking — and how she and their three young daughters slowly adapted to a pioneer lifestyle.

Volunteer Spotlight

An overdue introduction

For this issue, we would like to introduce you to Kimberly Lane. Kim started volunteering with us in June 2024. She reads for us each Friday morning from the *Tulsa World*. Kim says, “It’s been such a rewarding experience to know that my voice helps make the news accessible to others. While my schedule has shifted a bit lately, I’m looking forward to getting more involved again—especially as fall brings a renewed sense of routine and energy. I would encourage anyone who’s thought about volunteering to give it a try, whether it’s once a day, once a week, or even once a month. It’s a wonderful way to give back and connect with the community.”

Kim also has an interesting background that lends itself well to our library services and patrons. She currently works at Kiamichi Tech in Stigler as a Pre-Employment Transition Services Specialist (Pre-ETS). “In this role, I have the privilege of helping high school students and young adults with disabilities build the skills they need for future employment and independence. I truly love what I do—it’s incredibly rewarding to see students grow in confidence and reach their goals. I am so glad to have this position as it gives me the ability to assist Oklahomans with DRS.”

Kim is one of our own, not only working with some of our younger patrons, but also really understanding our patrons and our mission. Kim first heard about us while working at DRS as a counselor for SBVI (Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired). “I loved it so much that I wanted to continue to be a part of it in some way.”

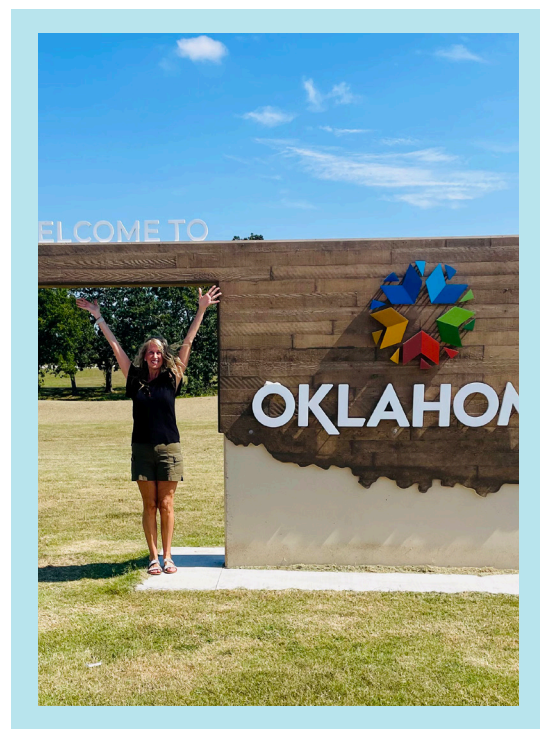
Kim says she is proud to call Oklahoma home, although she has had the opportunity to live and travel all over the country, thanks to her family and her husband’s military service. She graduated from Stigler High School near the beautiful Lake Eufaula and obtained her master’s degree from Southern Nazarene University in Bethany.

“I’ve always loved learning, maybe that’s why I enjoy helping others so much. When I’m not working, I love spending time with my family, especially my four-year-old grandson, who always keeps me smiling! My favorite thing to do is travel, whether it’s going to the beach, taking a cruise, or heading out on a camping trip, I’m always ready for a new adventure.”

Kim says what she likes most about volunteering for the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is that she really hopes listeners enjoy her voice even when she makes the occasional stumble or mistake. “Whether someone lives alone or simply enjoys a friendly voice, I love the thought that I might brighten their day or help them feel a little more connected. For me, it’s not just about reading—it’s about sharing something meaningful and helping others feel included, valued, and informed.” If she had the opportunity to do more for the library, she says she would love to help students participate or would also really enjoy reading children’s books.

As you can see, Kim’s enthusiasm and passion for our patrons are why we are honored to have her as a volunteer for the library. She really understands what we are all here for and our mission, “So All May Read”.

-Kat Jensen, Recording Studio Director



Holiday Closures

The OLBPH will be closed on the following days for state holidays:

- November 27–28, 2025
- December 24–25, 2025
- January 1, 2026
- January 19, 2026
- February 16, 2026

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**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND**