



The Braille Buzzzz....

A way to stay connected to the dots!

December 2015



IDAHO REGIONAL BRAILLE CHALLENGE FOR 2016

Another Braille Challenge is approaching! Here are the testing dates:

Idaho Falls: February 27, 2016

Gooding: March 3, 2016

Meridian: March 5, 2016

For practice material, please visit the following

link: <http://www.brailleinstitute.org/braillechallenge-for-teachers/sample-contest.html>. Remember, Apprentice and Freshmen level participants will just take the Reading Comprehension, Proofreading, and Spelling tests. If your student is at the Sophomore, Junior Varsity, or Varsity level, they will take Chart and Graph, Speed and Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, and Proofreading tests.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Baker at 208-761-3588.

BOISE BRAILLE CLUB (BBC)

This new initiative gives all braille readers and aspiring braille readers of any age the opportunity to come together to read and share books, poems and even just words! We keep track of the number of pages we are reading through the month to gain braille belts (like in karate). We will use any way we can to encourage one another to improve our braille skills and enjoy our reading. Braille readers meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 4-5:30 in the 2nd floor conference room at the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired at 341 W. Washington Street, Boise. We would welcome anyone who just wants to visit the BBC. For more information, contact Alison Steven at pecans65@gmail.com or 208-761-6286.



Meet Certified Braille Transcriber Rebecca Wynkoop . . . who, in 2015, successfully completed the Literary Braille Transcribing Course offered by the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute. The 20-lesson course is rigorous in that it requires task-specific, rule-dependent formatting. Lesson 20 tests cumulative knowledge by requiring participants to transcribe a portion of a book.



What has been your experience in working with students who are blind or visually impaired?

In 2010, I began working for IESDB as a preschool aide with both the D/HH and B/VI programs. I began to learn the basic braille alphabet and to transcribe simple cardboard books into grade 1 braille. I took a summer course offered at the Gooding campus where I learned about cane travel, O&M skills, braille contractions, technology for the blind, and living skills. In January of 2013, I was asked by a local school district to work as a one-on-one aide with a student who was blind from birth. I began taking the braille transcriber's course through the Jernigan Institute at this time. I worked with this student until the end of the school year 2015. While working with this student, I transcribed class materials, created tactile graphics to represent pictures, maps, and graphs shown in the text, and taught daily living skills such as cooking, sewing, tying shoes, and signing a legal signature with a pen.

What is/was the most enjoyable part of your job?

The most enjoyable part of the job for me was helping my student become more independent. When my student wanted to learn how to cook some favorite foods for school lunch, we practiced and practiced during free time until eventually the student was able to boil water, strain pasta, crack an egg, measure liquid, stir batter, and operate the stove and oven. It was a lot of fun.

Describe how you felt when you received word that you passed the braille transcriber's course.

The braille transcriber's course was more challenging than I originally expected. I thought it would be easy compared to my Bachelor's Degree. Silly me. It starts out slow and simple, but each lesson becomes lengthier and more complicated. It took me over two years to complete the course. When I received word that my final manuscript had passed, I was thrilled. I shared the news with everyone I knew! I was very proud of my hard work and the skills I had developed.

WELCOME TO OUR LIBRARY!

Welcome to the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind Library! We are home to over 40,000 books, videos and teaching materials! Our library is very unique, housing a variety of items from large print and braille books to professional materials for the deaf and visually impaired.

- Our High School-Middle School Library looks similar to any school library with the addition of a special Idaho Collection and a Professional Library for aiding teachers. We currently have about 200 large print fiction titles, but monthly, we add new titles. Also available is a Parent Resource Room in which we have parent-child kits for teaching various subjects.
- Our Smaller Elementary Library contains specialty books, like big books, books that make sounds, audio and captioned DVD's, along with regular print picture books. Off one side of this room is our Elementary VI (Visually Impaired) Library for Twin Vision and Braille children's books. We have been adding the new UEB (Unified English Braille) as fast as we can to our braille collection.
- In our Copy Center, open year round, we take textbooks and required reading books and reproduce them in large print format with spiral binding. We currently house over 1,400 large print titles.
- Our Braille Center produces textbooks and other materials in much-needed braille formats for students. We currently have approximately 700 braille textbooks housed in two large storage areas. Upon request from our educational specialists, both large print and braille volumes are mailed out to qualified students throughout the state. For easy access, all books are entered in our circulation program. Students are allowed to keep textbooks for the whole school year.

We also have a healthy high school fiction and non-fiction braille collection. If you realize that one Harry Potter book consists of 12 braille volumes, you can imagine how much space this library collection takes!

Altogether, our libraries, copy center, braille production, and storage areas encompass over 9,000 square feet of books and teaching materials. Please drop by and visit our library when you come to Gooding!

- Dorothy Ogden



CHRISTMAS TREE PROJECT

Submitted to pathstoliteracy.org by Liz Eagan 2014

A fun way to introduce concepts and tactile exploration to our beginning braille readers!

Materials needed: Artificial garland (or can use real pine tree branches cut into small segments), corrugated brown paper, tactile star, colorful pom poms, and poster board.

To make: Cut out a large triangle from an old plastic folder or binder. Glue it onto a small piece of poster board for stability. Use glue or sticky back paper to adhere the garland (or branch segments) inside the triangle. Cut out the shape of the tree trunk from the corrugated brown paper and adhere to the poster board. Finally, glue on colorful pom poms for ornaments and a shiny, tactile star to the top! Positional concepts can be discussed while the student is assembling the different parts of the tree.



Thank you to all of our contributors for the month of December!

This newsletter has been transcribed into braille by Melodee Davies and translated into Spanish by Mariza Sanchez. For questions or comments, please contact: Susan McCoy at susan.mccoy@iesdb.org.

