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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BRaille INSTITUTE LIBRARY WINS 1<sup>st</sup> LIBRARY OF THE YEAR  
AWARD**  
**Local Talking Books Library Receives Highest Honor From  
Library of Congress**

Los Angeles, CA - July 15, 2005

Braille Institute Library has been recognized as the best in the nation by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) a division of the Library of Congress. The unique talking book and braille library emerged ahead of nearly 150 other libraries across the country to receive the first Network Library of the Year award. The award was presented June 1 in ceremonies at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., to Henry Chang, Ph.D., director of Braille Institute Library Services and Leslie Stocker, president, Braille Institute. "Braille Institute easily exceeded the award criteria," said Frank Kurt Cylke, National Library Services director. "Not only did the library continue to meet the needs of patrons during difficult financial times, but its readership and circulation increased substantially. Most importantly, the library received a 99 percent patron approval rating."

The Network Library of the Year award program was launched this year to recognize outstanding accomplishments among libraries dedicated to serving blind and physically handicapped people in the U.S. Braille Institute's Library was honored for its dedication to giving people who are unable to read traditional printed material the opportunity to explore the world of reading, despite their disability. A select committee of braille and talking book librarians

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and patrons selected the library for its record of patron satisfaction, as well as its mission to provide accessible reading materials to the more than 33,000 blind and physically handicapped patrons who use its free services each year to rediscover their love for the written word.

Braille Institute's Library Services program has been providing free books, periodicals and other texts in braille and recorded formats for more than 75 years. The library currently offers its patrons access to more than 81,000 book titles—in braille and “talking book” format—ranging from the classics to new favorites, such as the “Harry Potter” series. The library also offers several special programs, including the Telephone Reader Program—which gives patrons access to the newspaper through a digital recording system that features pre-recorded items from USA Today, as well as local news and store advertisements—and the Golden Seniors program, which recognizes the nearly 400 library patrons who are 100 years of age or older. Braille Institute's Library network includes its main library in Los Angeles, as well as branches in Orange County, Rancho Mirage, Santa Barbara and San Diego.

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If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Courtney Goines, Media Relations Manager, please contact her at (323) 663-1111, Ext. 3176, or by email:

Braille Institute is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate blindness and severe sight loss as a barrier to a fulfilling life. Through educational training, programs and services, Braille Institute helps tens of thousands of people each year regain and maintain their independence. Thanks to generous donations, Braille Institute services are available free of charge. More information can be found at [www.brailleinstitute.org](http://www.brailleinstitute.org).

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