Include Braille Institute IN YOUR WILL

While it’s natural to leave bequests to loved ones, there’s another group that deserves your generosity: children and adults who are blind or visually impaired. By including Braille Institute of America in your will or trust, you’ll help brighten the lives of the thousands of children and adults served by Braille Institute each year.

Please designate your bequest to:
“Braille Institute of America, Inc., a California Nonprofit Corporation with principal offices currently located at 741 North Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029-3594.”

Tax Identification Number: 95-1641426. To request more information, call our Philanthropy Department at 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 1256.

Our Locations:
Anaheim, Laguna Hills, Los Angeles, Rancho Mirage, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. Plus more than 300 Community Outreach locations.

CONTACT US TODAY
Braille Institute of America
Headquarters: 741 N. Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 1238
www.BraillleInstitute.org

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Braille Institute of America, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

LET US HELP

OUR FREE SERVICES help people of all ages with vision loss learn practical skills and techniques to help them live more fulfilling lives.

Arts & Healthy Living Classes
Braille Books for Children
Daily Living Skills Training and Classes
Library Services
Low Vision Consultations
National Braille Literacy Programs
Orientation and Mobility - Safe Travel Techniques
Services for Families with Young Children
Technology Training
Youth & Young Adult Programs

And Many, Many, More

Many Thanks!
Thank You!
Bless You!
Gracias!

Gracias!
Thank You!
Many Thanks!
Bless You!

DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH OUR NEW “TECHSPERT” PROGRAM

A native of Kumamoto, Japan, 48-year-old Nikki W. was born visually impaired due to optic nerve malformation. In Japan, she was educated at a school for the blind, and then went on to a two-year college. She first visited the United States as an exchange student, eventually settling in San Diego, where she worked at an information center for people with disabilities until 2013.

(Continued on next page)
LIFE TRANSFORMED  (Continued from previous page)

Four years ago, Nikki W. began attending Braille Institute to improve her computer skills through Connection Pointe, our state-of-the-art technology discovery lab. Today, she has become one of our latest “Techsperts”—technology experts trained to share their knowledge one-on-one with people who are blind or visually impaired.

“I really enjoyed Braille Institute as a place where I could make friends, share experiences, and have fun,” she says. That feeling of community led her to volunteer the following year, first at the front desk and then in Connection Pointe.

Nikki’s enthusiasm, outgoing personality, and grasp of technology made her a natural fit for Braille Institute’s new nine-month, paid Techspert training program. “We carefully select tech savvy students who are looking for full-time tech-related jobs,” explains Ben Pomeroy, Braille Institute’s Director of Digital Programs. The Techspert program also has another goal: to prepare its graduates for employment beyond Braille Institute. “Of those who have entered since 2015,” says Pomeroy, “half have already completed the program, and nearly all now have full-time tech-related jobs.”

“I really enjoyed Braille Institute as a place where I could make friends, share experiences, and have fun.”

—Nikki W.

As for Nikki W., she’s enjoying the opportunity the program offers to learn and grow. “I hope,” she says, “it will turn into a greater opportunity to help more people with vision loss learn technology.”

HOME VISITS SPARK INSPIRATION

Helen V. first called upon Braille Institute for one specific need—Orientation and Mobility training. The call opened a new world of possibilities.

She was diagnosed at age 5 with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a congenital condition causing progressive loss of the retina’s light-sensitive cells. That didn’t prevent her from spending 5 years in the United States Marine Corps and then going on to a 30-year career in accounting. Although her eyesight started to become an issue in her mid-twenties, it wasn’t until she retired that she became legally blind.

In 2015, she applied for a guide dog through another organization, which first required her to have Orientation and Mobility training to make sure she was able to travel safely and effectively through her environment before she could begin training with a guide dog. A specialist from Braille Institute came to her home and provided that instruction. Today, Helen has her guide dog and credits those one-on-one visits for giving her the exact training she needed.

That initial experience with Braille Institute impressed her with our wide range of services and classes. Once she came to the campus, the welcoming students, staff, and volunteers added to the experience.

“I wanted to keep active in that inspiring community,” she says. She has begun learning braille at our Santa Barbara Center, where she’s also exploring computer technology and other classes. “Once you get involved with Braille Institute,” Helen concludes, “you realize that there is so much more that you can do to help yourself.”

GROWING UP WITH SIGHT LOSS
An Extraordinary Kid ...Jorge G.

When Jorge G. graduated from middle school last year, he received an award as one of 10 “extraordinary kids” in his class of 900 students. “He’s good at everything he does,” says his mom, Fernanda. Jorge also has very limited sight, caused by a retinal detachment during his premature birth.

Throughout public school, Jorge received one-on-one in-classroom assistance. “But he was very shy,” says Fernanda. “I wanted him to start meeting others like himself.” Jorge began attending the youth program at Braille Institute’s Los Angeles Center in 2015. Soon, the staff had him dancing, cooking, and socializing with others just like him. “I met new people and learned I wasn’t alone,” he recalls. “It was fun.”

Braille Institute Los Angeles’ youth program instructor, Jessica Gonzalez, remembers a dramatic example of Jorge’s growth. “His dance class went to Union Station to do a flash mob,” she says, referring to a seemingly random group of people suddenly coming together in public and bursting into dance or song. “His mom, crying, told me, ‘I never thought I would see my baby dance.’”

Fernanda and her husband, Jorge Sr., have seen Jorge continue to blossom. Now in high school, he hopes to attend the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), studying video game design or, if his mom has her way, medicine. His future seems bright, thanks in part to Braille Institute. “They go out of their way,” says Fernanda, “to make kids feel comfortable with themselves and believe that they can achieve whatever they want.”
DR. BILL TAKESHTA KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO REDEFINE A DREAM

Dr. Bill Takeshita achieved his childhood dream of helping people to see better, only to find that dream suddenly snatched from him by blindness. Now, through his work with Braille Institute, he has found a fulfilling new purpose in life.

A third-generation Japanese-American, Dr. Bill—as he likes to be known—discovered his calling at the age of 6. “My first pair of glasses changed my life. Suddenly, I could see the blackboard in school. I could hit the baseball. I wanted to be an eye doctor.”

He earned his Doctor of Optometry degree in 1987, then went on to work at the Center for the Partially Sighted in Los Angeles, primarily treating children. That’s where he first learned about Braille Institute. “Many patients stated that they had been there and received different kinds of low-vision aids.”

In 1989, Dr. Bill became more involved with Braille Institute’s youth and child development programs. “Eventually, and together with the staff, I designed a program to teach parents how to use games and other tools to help enhance what remaining vision their children had.”

He found his career immensely satisfying. “I worked seven days a week,” he says. “It gave me so much pleasure.”

Then, in a challenging twist of fate, in 2003, Dr. Bill began losing his own sight due to retinal degeneration and he had to retire. “It was a very difficult time,” he says. “I became isolated and very depressed because I was afraid there was nothing for me to do.”

That’s when Braille Institute contacted him again. We asked Dr. Bill to help enhance service quality for our students. Since then, Dr. Bill has served as Consulting Director of our Low Vision Program, helping to train staff and other consultants at our centers. He has also created a free, telephone education series for the Child Development Program, providing information on pediatric eye conditions for parents, teachers, and other professionals throughout the country.

He has been a Braille Institute student as well. “I learned how to read and write braille, how to cook, and do household repairs. Braille Institute has given me the understanding that you don’t need perfect vision to enjoy life.”

As both consultant and student, Dr. Bill Takeshita feels Braille Institute has taught him an important lesson. “It’s not fun to hear that your vision is poor,” he says. “But anything you want to do, you can still do. You just need a teacher to show you how.”

A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY HONORS THE MEMORY OF A TALENTED AND GENEROUS WIFE

“My wife’s name, Joyce, was so fitting,” says Paul Christopher. “For she brought joy to everything she created throughout her long life.”

“We had a very special partnership,” says Paul of their 56-year marriage.

They met at The Claremont Colleges in Southern California, where Joyce majored in sculpture and Paul in history. In addition to extraordinarily versatile fine art sculpture, paintings and drawings, Joyce created some of the most famous commercial dolls of the twentieth century as a freelance doll sculptor, including Barbie, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. Paul, meanwhile, became a tenured professor at the University of Southern California (USC) as its first full-time university archivist after a brief college teaching career in history.

Joyce’s love of the arts and nature, as well as her and her mother’s lifelong devotion to strong religious beliefs, led her to contribute regularly to Braille Institute. “She tacitly viewed her artistic gifts as divinely-inspired, yet shared them with the world with such modesty and generosity,” adds Paul.

In memory of his late wife, who died in April 2015, Paul recently made a generous contribution through a charitable gift annuity to Braille Institute.

ROLLOVER YOUR IRA TO HELP BRAILLE INSTITUTE

Don’t miss this opportunity to support Braille Institute and enjoy a significant tax benefit at the same time—take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover. Here’s how it works:

- Donors age 70½ or older rollover assets from their IRAs to Braille Institute.
- Funds must be transferred directly from the donor’s financial institution to Braille Institute.
- Gift can be in any amount, up to $100,000 per person per calendar year.
- Gift counts toward your annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) requirement.
- You pay no income taxes on the IRA distribution.
- Much better than taking an IRA distribution yourself and then making the gift.

For more information, call our Philanthropy Department at 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 1256.
Maurice Charles Lucky—or Charles, as his wife Gail called him—always had a tender spot for others. His particular concern for those with vision loss began when he was a child.

At the age of 11 in his hometown of Houston, Texas, Charles and his best friend won a trip to Washington, DC as a prize for selling magazine subscriptions door-to-door. On the drive home from visiting the nation’s capital, a tragic accident resulted in his friend’s death; and Charles lost sight in his left eye.

A decade later, while he was studying engineering in graduate school at Cornell University, an infection led to the removal of the same eye. “Charles wore a prosthetic for the rest of his life, and always identified with people who had visual handicaps,” says Gail.

He overcame that challenge to build a successful career as an international mechanical and industrial engineering consultant based in Santa Barbara. “Charles was not one to brag about his accomplishments,” says Gail. “Instead, he was a man who counted his blessings.”

Both widowed, Gail and Charles were introduced by mutual friends, and they married in 1997. A supervisor of student teachers in local schools, Gail had been a longtime member of the Braille Institute Auxiliary of Santa Barbara, actively participating in its fundraising efforts. She introduced Charles to the good work being done there, “and he was truly impressed with the loving kindness they show to people who come for help,” says Gail.

Charles and his best friend won a trip to Washington, DC as a prize for selling magazine subscriptions door-to-door. On the drive home from visiting the nation’s capital, a tragic accident resulted in his friend’s death; and Charles lost sight in his left eye.

A decade later, while he was studying engineering in graduate school at Cornell University, an infection led to the removal of the same eye. “Charles wore a prosthetic for the rest of his life, and always identified with people who had visual handicaps,” says Gail. “Instead, he was a man who counted his blessings.”

Struck by what the organization could accomplish, Charles began volunteering alongside Gail at Auxiliary events. And, he also decided he wanted to help even more by making Braille Institute a beneficiary of his estate.

Gail and Charles moved to a retirement community in Scottsdale, Arizona, in 2004. But they never lost touch with their Braille Institute connection. In fact, Gail remains a member of the Santa Barbara Auxiliary.

Sadly, Charles passed away last December. But Charles’ significant bequest attests to the devotion the couple felt for Braille Institute.

Gail credits their commitment to the deep empathy and upbeat attitude of the staff and volunteers, and the good work they do for people on a daily basis. “If you contribute to Braille Institute,” says Gail, “you’ll gain back much more than you ever give.”
KEY PROGRAM STATISTICS

Library Services
- Registered Library Patrons: 30,597
- Books Circulated: 864,768
- Depositories at Partner Locations: 1,426

Adult: Group Instruction
Classes - Onsite
- Students Served: 2,200
- Contact Hours: 159,864
Classes - Offsite
- Students Served: 2,677
- Contact Hours: 17,542

Onsite Student Registration by Class Type
- Daily Living: 48%
- Arts & Healthy Living: 52%

Adult: One-on-One Instruction
Students Served by Location
- Onsite: 2,643
- In-home: 547
- Mobile Solutions: 443
- Other: 1,081

Orientation & Mobility
Students Served: 878
Consultations: 5,144

Low Vision Services
Students Served: 2,476
Consultations: 2,765

Connection Pointe
Students Served: 1,140
Consultations: 3,933

Adult Counseling Sessions
Students Served: 169
Consultations: 582

Personal Connection
Students Served: 400
Consultations: 624

Child Development: Birth to age 6
Families/Children Served: 273

Youth Services: Ages 6 to 18
Youths Served: 209
Contact Hours: 7,177

National Programs
The Braille Challenge*
- Number of Participants: 1,125
- U.S. States & Canadian Provinces Represented: 40
Braille Special Collection
- Active Subscribers: 5,890
- Children’s Books & Story Kits Distributed: 6,242
Cane Quest*
- Number of Participants: 175

Community Training Programs
Professionals Trained: 965
Eye Disease Seminar Attendees: 1,613

Volunteer Services
Center Volunteers: 1,103
Service Hours: 94,869
Special Event Volunteers: 1,356
Service Hours: 6,081

*All Offsite Classes Focus on Daily Living Skills.

Statistics provided here are based on both actual data collected and estimations.

LEADERSHIP

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- Chair, Department of Ophthalmology
- Director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute

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- Reza Rahman, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President, Finance
- Anthony J. Taketa, Vice President, Corporate Secretary and General Counsel

Our FREE SERVICES help people of all ages learn practical skills and techniques.

WHO WE SERVE

Gender
- Male: 35%
- Female: 65%

Age
- Up to 19: 6%
- 20 to 64: 28%
- 65 and Over: 59%
- Unknown: 7%

Primary Known Causes of Visual Impairment
- Macular Degeneration: 36%
- Cataracts: 12%
- Glaucoma: 16%
- Diabetes Related: 13%
- Retinitis Pigmentosa: 5%
- Other: 18%

HOW WE HELP

At Braille Institute, we demonstrate vision loss is not the end of independence, but the beginning of a new way of living.

Our FREE SERVICES help people of all ages learn practical skills and techniques.

OUR MISSION:
Braille Institute is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate barriers to a fulfilling life caused by blindness and severe sight loss.

Statistics provided here are based on both actual data collected and estimations.
Thank You

Donors are the key to providing Braille Institute’s free, life-changing help for people who are blind or visually impaired. You are the foundation our students rely on to transform their lives and communities.

To view a list of major donors from calendar year 2016, please visit our website at www.BrailleInstitute.org/donor-recognition, or call 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext 1238 and we’ll be happy to send you the list.

“Since I was six years old, I always had a book in my hand. But recently, due to macular degeneration, I had to stop reading. When I made my first visit to Braille Institute, it was like walking into a magic store. Being able to listen to books has been a life-changer - but it’s not just one thing that Braille Institute does, its the positive, helpful attitude of everyone there that is the biggest gift of all.” — Shimon B., student

Bob A. (left), Access Technology specialist, and Shimon B., student

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Income ($000)

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<tr>
<th>Years Ended June 30</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Public Support</td>
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<td>Bequests and Trusts</td>
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<td>Contributions and Foundations</td>
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<td>Total Public Support</td>
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<td>Other Revenue</td>
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<td>Royalties</td>
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<td>State Library and Grants</td>
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<td>Investment Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Other Revenue</td>
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<td>Total Income</td>
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Expenditures ($000)

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<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>Child Development</td>
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<td>Rancho Mirage Center</td>
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<td>Orange County Centers</td>
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<td>Santa Barbara Center</td>
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<td>Braille Publishing</td>
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<td>Library Services</td>
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<td>Volunteer Services</td>
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<td>Marketing and Public Relations</td>
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<td>Total Operating Expenditures</td>
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<td>Total Net Assets</td>
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For complete financial results, prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in the USA, refer to the Report on Audited Consolidated Financial Statements for Braille Institute, which is available on our website: www.BrailleInstitute.org.