Librarian.

No Boundaries In Sight.
The 2020 Summer Reading Program for Adults at the Braille Institute Library is right around the corner! The program is simple: your challenge is to read for 30 minutes a day for 50 days between June 10th and July 29th. Everyone who signs up will receive a gift, and those who complete the challenge will be eligible for raffle prizes. Like all Braille Institute services, the 2020 Summer Reading Program for Adults is free. All Braille Institute Library patrons 18 years and older are welcome to participate!

Participants can log their reading between June 10th and July 29th by downloading the smartphone app “READsquared” and searching for “Braille Institute,” or by visiting the website brailleinstitute.readsquared.com. Choose the “Adult 2020” program and start logging your reading on June 10th.

If you need help registering, or if you have any questions about the program, contact Reed Strege at rwstrege@brailleinstitute.org or call 323-906-3185.

To celebrate the end of the Adult Summer Reading Program, we are hosting an author visit on Wednesday, August 5th at 1:00 p.m. in the library at the Los Angeles Center. Matthew McGough, author of the bestselling LAPD true crime story The Lazarus Files: A Cold Case Investigation, will read from this work, answer questions, and sign books. Please plan on joining us for the event. Happy reading!
California is Cutting State Funding for the Braille Institute Library. We Need Your Help.

Without notice or explanation, the State of California recently cut all funding for the Braille Institute Library, which provides free access to braille and audiobooks for Southern California residents with blindness, low vision, and physical disabilities.

Eliminating state support for our library is unprecedented, unfair, and needlessly punishes some of the most vulnerable residents of Southern California.

In his preliminary budget proposal for 2020/21, Governor Newsom has proposed $500,000 to support our program. While this is a step in the right direction, it is less than 20% of what is required. We are the only National Library Service branch in the United States that relies so heavily on private donations.

If this decision stands, Braille Institute library services will suffer. Southern Californians with visual impairments will have fewer books from which to choose, experience longer wait times, and have access to fewer opportunities to learn about new technology.

Here’s how you can protect Braille Institute Library in 2 minutes or less:

Visit bit.ly/braillepetition or text BRAILLE to 52886 to sign our digital petition in support of funding for Braille Institute Library. We need to show state lawmakers that community support for our libraries is stronger than ever. It only takes a few clicks to make a difference.
DeAnn Trimarchi
Los Angeles Volunteer

DeAnn Trimarchi is a volunteer reader for the Telephone Reader Program (TRP) at Braille Institute. Her voice helps patrons who have difficulty reading the newspaper because of vision loss stay current. Since 2006, she has recorded world news, advice columns, and sports. Last year, she also provided the audio description for the Centennial Exhibit at Braille Institute headquarters in Los Angeles. Originally from Pittsburgh, DeAnn is an accomplished actress, singer, and voiceover artist with appearances in film, television, and commercials.

She performed at the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC.

“Whether you are a great plumber, a designer, a teacher or a performer earning a living at your craft, you can and should give back to your community.”

– DeAnn Trimarchi, Braille Institute volunteer

When asked why she volunteers at Braille Institute, she said:

“I have always felt that by sharing our God-given gifts we enrich one another’s lives. Whether you are a great plumber, a designer, a teacher or a performer earning a living at your craft, you can and should give back to your community. When I choose to volunteer for something, I like to make sure that I enjoy it, as well. I always loved reading, creating voiceover, and performing. I learn, too, by keeping up to date on current events. I love that! TRP is perfect because I get to be the eyes for someone else and use my voice to do so!”
Bill Shaw
San Diego Volunteer

Bill Shaw grew up in Oakland, California and served for five years in the Army. He attended San Francisco State University, where he met his wife of 56 years. He spent his career in the commercial real estate development and construction industries.

Part of his job was to find new negotiated work, and while on that constant search he heard about an organization in Los Angeles called Braille Institute. He met with their management and he ended up working on the San Diego building project where he now volunteers.

When asked why he volunteers at Braille Institute, he said:

“Three years ago, my macular degeneration got to the point where I called Braille Institute and made an appointment to see what was new on the market to help me see better.

When they asked me about my hobbies, I said reading. I now volunteer in the library helping with the distribution and management of the audio books.

“...come volunteer and meet our fabulous patrons. Their spirit and toughness will be something you will take away with you forever.”

– Bill Shaw, Braille Institute volunteer

If you have a spare couple of hours and are sort of feeling sorry for yourself, come and volunteer and meet our fabulous patrons. Their spirit and toughness will be something you will take away with you forever.”
News and Updates for Library Patrons

Braille Institute Class & Service Suspension Related to Coronavirus

While there have been NO reported coronavirus cases at a Braille Institute facility, we are taking precautionary measures to eliminate risk by electing to suspend classes and services at all of our centers. Please note that all of our Library facilities will be closed to public visits until further notice and at least through April 26. We are asking you to kindly refrain from returning any books or machines to us in the mail at this time. As always, there are no late fees or fines for our service.

With the recently issued “Safer at Home” mandate, we have suspended providing books through the mail. However, you can continue to download books digitally using BARD. If you need assistance with BARD, please email rwstrege@brailleinstitute.org or call 1-323-906-3154. We will respond to you as quickly as possible.

Also due to the mandate, we will not be able to produce new content for the Telephone Reader Program at this time. We recommend 89.3 KPCC for breaking audio and written news in Southern California for Coachella Valley, Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, and Santa Barbara area residents, and KPBS for San Diego area residents.

We apologize for the inconvenience, but our first priority is ensuring the health and safety of our community. We will continue to monitor the situation and operational plans may continue to evolve. Updates on when we will reopen will be provided via email, on our website (www.brailleinstitute.org) and social media channels. You can also feel free to call 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553).

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BARD Mobile app update for iOS and Android

Patrons who use an iPhone or Android phone to download books with BARD should update their BARD Mobile app today! BARD Mobile includes several new features that will make the experience more enjoyable, including simultaneous downloads and improved functionality with VoiceOver. You can also now switch quickly between titles – just swipe left on the “Now Reading” screen to see a list of other books on your device that you’ve
already opened. Best of all, you can now subscribe to magazines via the app just like you can on the BARD website.

The release also includes significant download reliability improvements. If you need more information about the new features, or if you need any assistance with BARD, please call 323-906-3154.

New Coachella Valley Neighborhood Center Now Taking Appointments

Our new Coachella Valley Neighborhood Center offers free technology training, low vision consultations, independent living skills classes, library service, and more. The center is located at 74-245 Highway 111, #101E, Palm Desert, CA, 92260 at the east corner of El Paseo and Highway 111. Call 760-321-1111 to schedule your first visit today.

Accessible Books Consortium Global Book Service Coming Soon!

The Braille Institute Library will soon be joining the Accessible Books Consortium Global Book Service, an online service that allows our patrons to search for audiobooks in foreign languages from around the world.

Soon, our collection of books in foreign languages will expand significantly. For more information, email Reed Strege at rwstrege@brailleinstitute.org or call 323-906-3154.
New Book Recommendations

Unfollow
by Megan Phelps-Roper (read by the author)
10 hours, 19 minutes

The Kansas-based Westboro Baptist Church is best known for its incendiary protests at military funerals. In this new memoir, the granddaughter of the founder recounts her experiences in the church, her time as its spokeswoman on Twitter, and her decision to leave after meeting her husband.

Agent Running in the Field
by John Le Carre (read by the author)
9 hours, 34 minutes

The master of espionage fiction returns with a contemporary novel for lovers of politics. Nat, a former agent runner for Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service, undertakes one final job to staunch a growing threat from Moscow. He must take over a defunct substation of London General with a ragtag band of spies. Meanwhile, a mysterious interloper leads the team down a path of political anger.

The Yellow House
by Sarah Broom (read by Bahni Turpin)
14 hours, 21 minutes

Winner of the 2019 National Book Award for Nonfiction. The author shares a memoir of her family and their shared relationship with a home in a neglected area of post-Katrina New Orleans. The Yellow House is a powerful tale of pride, shame, family, race, and love.
Such a Fun Age
by Kiley Reid (read by Nicole Lewis)
10 hours, 0 minutes
In this darkly comic and sharply observed new novel of social conventions, an African American babysitter is accused by a security guard of having kidnapped the toddler she is caring for when she takes the girl to an upscale market. After the incident is caught on film, her employer sets out to try and make things right.

Canyon Dreams: A Basketball Season on the Navajo Nation
by Michael Powell (read by Darrell Dennis)
7 hours, 46 minutes
Called “unmistakably beautiful” by NPR, Canyon Dreams tells the true story of a Navajo high school basketball team whose members face substantial challenges off the court as they try to navigate life on the reservation.

Long Bright River
by Liz Moore (read by Allyson Ryan)
13 hours, 21 minutes
In a Philadelphia neighborhood rocked by the opioid crisis, two once-inseparable sisters find themselves on different sides of the law. Kacey lives on the streets in the throes of addiction and Mickey walks those same blocks on her police beat. When Kacey disappears just as a string of murders begins, Mickey investigates. Long Bright River is one of the buzziest books of 2020 so far and is strongly recommended for fans of gritty mysteries.
For many, the greatest joy of reading isn’t when you finish the last page, it’s when you take time to sit down, sip a cup of coffee, and discuss the book with new friends. Our book clubs offer just that opportunity, and maybe even a doughnut (or two).

For more than 20 years, book lovers have gathered at our Los Angeles center to enjoy lively discussions as part of our book club. The titles are selected by the group across a wide variety of genres, including new bestsellers, mysteries, and biographies. One reason the group has thrived for so long is that the diversity of the selections has introduced them to authors and genres they may not have otherwise read.

“I listen to a lot of audiobooks, but the book club opens me up to other genres of books that I wouldn’t read if I weren’t in the book club.”

—Philip Wui Ang, Library Patron and Book Club Member

“I listen to a lot of audiobooks, but the book club opens me up to other genres of books I wouldn’t have known about if I wasn’t in the club,” said member Philip Wui Ang. Another member, Michael Conrad, said “I do a lot of reading, but there are authors I would have never heard of. The book club chooses the title and once I read one of the books, I follow up and read the rest of them, because they’re good. There’s a wide variety.”
All library patrons are welcome! If you are interested in joining the book club in Los Angeles, please call Siran Aytayan at 1-800-808-2555.

There are two book clubs at the San Diego Center – one that discusses U.S. History titles and meets every Tuesday from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., and a literature club that meets on the third Thursday of the month at 12:00 p.m. Refreshments are served! Please call Julius Ancho at 858-404-5011 to learn more about these two clubs.

The Santa Barbara book club meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. and typically reads about four books per semester. Call Elena Garcia at 805-898-8318 for more information.

The Laguna Hills book club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Call Babak Aghaaskary at 949-330-5062 if you are interested in joining.

“For me, the book club is a must. I just can’t live without it.

Sometimes I get up in the middle of the night and listen to the book that we’ve selected. It’s a very nice group.”

– Ellen Levin, Library Patron and Book Club Member

For more information about Braille Institute Book Clubs, contact:

Los Angeles
Siran Aytayan
1-800-808-2555

San Diego
Julius Ancho
858-404-5011

Santa Barbara
Elena Garcia
805-898-8318

Laguna Hills
Babak Aghaaskary
949-330-5062
Braille Institute Class & Service Suspension Related to Coronavirus

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However, you can continue to download books digitally using BARD.

If you need assistance with BARD, please email rwstrege@brailleinstitute.org or call 1-323-906-3154. We will respond to you as quickly as possible.

We apologize for the inconvenience, but our first priority is ensuring our students’ health and safety.

We will continue to monitor the situation and operational plans may continue to evolve. Updates on when we will reopen will be provided via email, on our website (www.brailleinstitute.org) and social media channels. You can also feel free to call 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553).