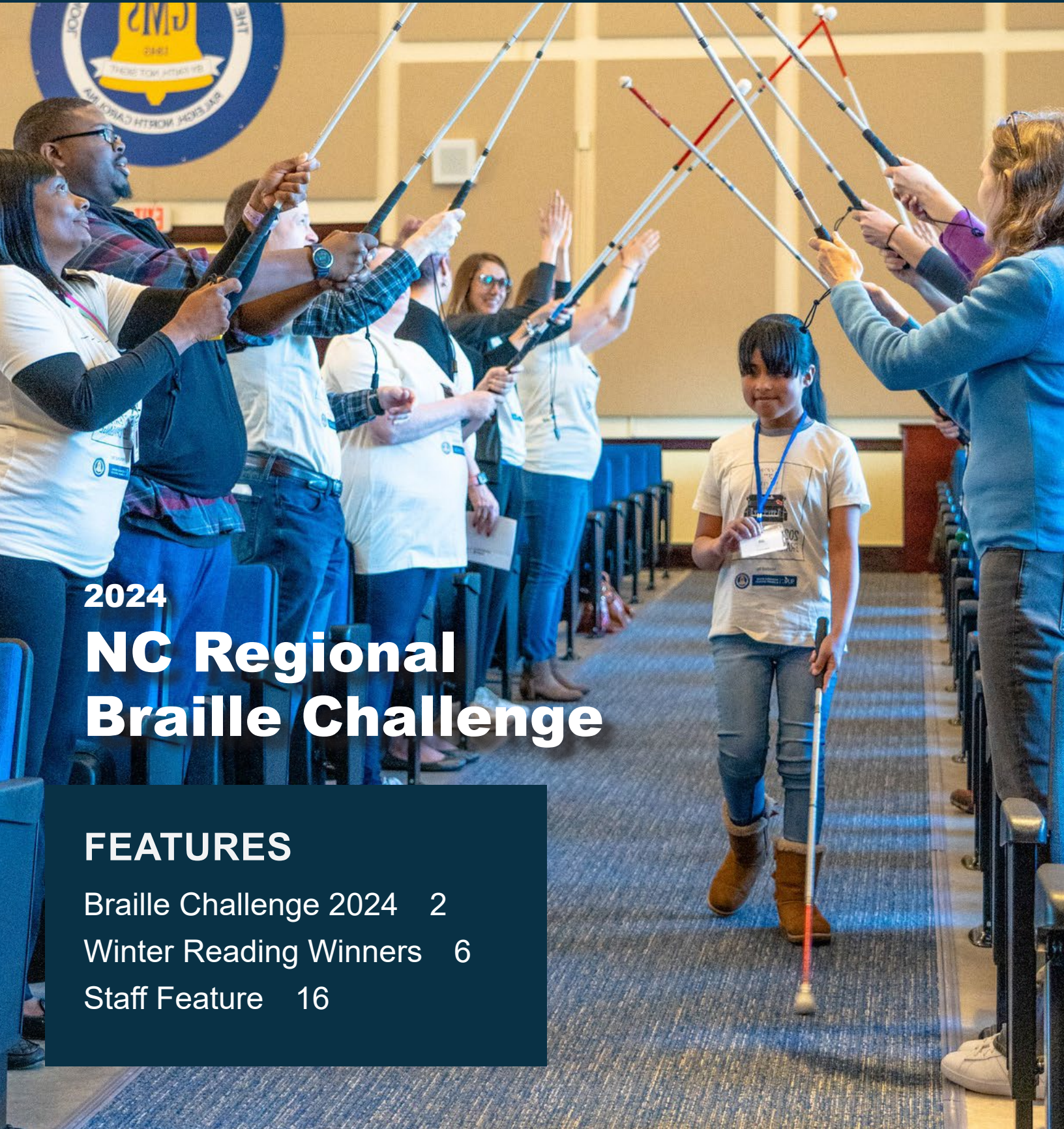


TAR HEEL TALK



2024
**NC Regional
Braille Challenge**

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BRAILLE CHALLENGE



Eastern North Carolina Braille Challenge 2024

Our library, in collaboration with the Governor Morehead School, recently hosted the 2024 Eastern NC Braille Challenge for the second time, and we were honored to have this privilege. The event took place on Presidents' Day 2024, February 19, 2024.

The Braille Challenge is an academic competition designed for

students who are blind or visually impaired, focusing on testing their proficiency in braille. Beyond assessing braille skills, the challenge provides a unique opportunity for students to meet new peers and form lasting friendships.

This year, we saw an increase in participation, with 21 students taking part in the Braille Challenge—marking a significant rise from the 12 students in the previous year. The competition comprises five levels: Appren-

tice, Freshman, Sophomore, Junior Varsity, and Varsity. Rather than being categorized by age, students are placed in competition levels based on their current braille proficiency, as recommended by their teachers.

While students were engaged with testing, parents enjoyed a morning filled with resourceful program sessions. We treated parents to an NC trivia program centered on Blind North Carolinians, thanks to our colleagues at the [SLNC Government & Heritage Library](#). Representatives from the [North Carolina Assistive Technology Program \(ATP\)](#) enlightened parents on ATP's statewide assistive technology services for residents with disabilities. The final session before the students concluded their testing was a Q&A session with the National Library Service

for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) Music Section, hosted by our Assistant Director, Joshua Berkov. In this session, parents gained insights into the NLS Music Section and the accessible musical scores and materials available for patrons to borrow.

The morning commenced with opening remarks and a cane tunnel ceremony as students had their names called. Following the opening ceremony, students began their official testing while parents attended their respective sessions. After the testing, students and parents were treated to a delightful lunch of pizza and cupcakes in the Governor Morehead School Cafeteria. After lunch, we collaborated with the NC Symphony to deliver an educational music lecture and host an instrument petting zoo. This allowed students to gain

hands-on experience with various instruments. The event concluded with a closing ceremony, where each participating student received a certificate recognizing their efforts throughout the day.

Volunteers played a pivotal role in making this event a success. We extend our heartfelt thanks for their invaluable assistance before, during, and after the event. Volunteers were involved in setup and breakdown, test proctoring, running completed tests to scorers, lunch service, cupcake preparation, and post-lunch cleanup. With approximately 30 volunteers, including the staff of NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and Governor Morehead School, parents, teachers, and members of the general public, we would not have been able to orchestrate this event without their generous support.

CATALOG WEBSITE UPDATE

Attention to all patrons who have saved the online catalog address nclbph.klas.com as a favorite: A significant change has taken place, and it's time to update your bookmarks!

We want to inform you that as a result of our recent name change, the URL you have saved as a favorite—nclbph.klas.com—will no longer redirect you to the intended destination. Instead, we have migrated to our new URL: ncabls.klas.com.

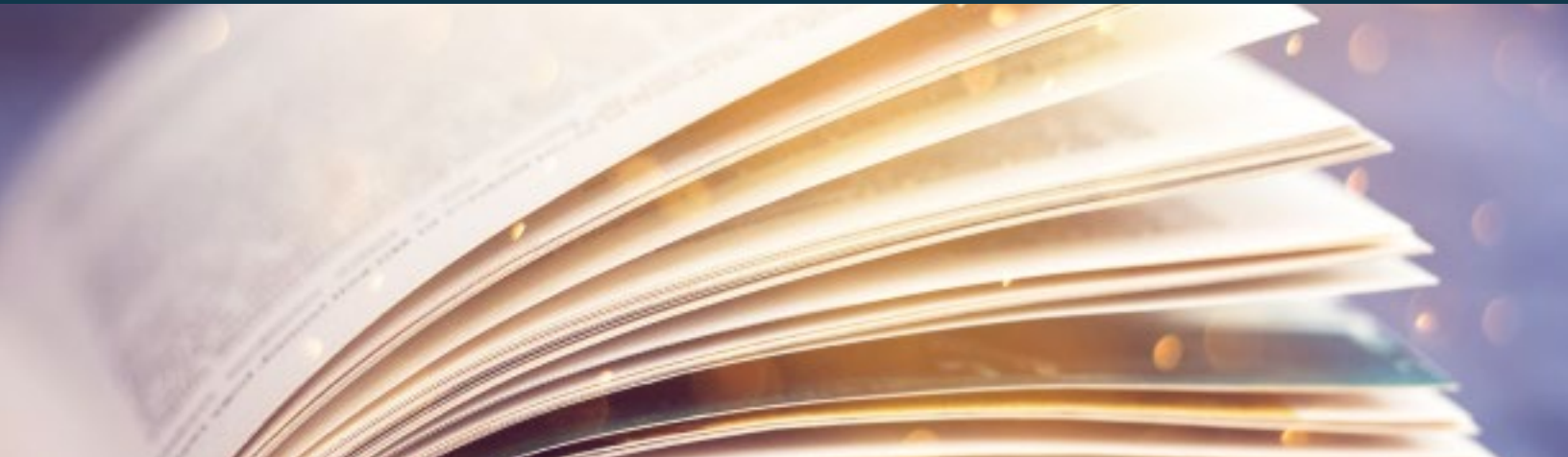
It is essential to update your bookmarks to ensure seamless access to our services and resources. Here's how you can do it:

- 1. Locate Your Bookmarks:** Open your web browser and find the bookmarks or favorites section. This may vary depending on the browser you are using.
- 2. Find the Old Bookmark:** Look for the bookmark labeled nclbph.klas.com.
- 3. Edit the Bookmark:** Right-click on the old bookmark and select 'Edit' or 'Properties'. (Control Click for Macs)
- 4. Enter the New URL:** In the URL field, replace nclbph.klas.com with ncabls.klas.com.
- 5. Save the Changes:** Once you've updated the URL, save the changes to your bookmark.

By following these simple steps, you'll ensure that you can easily access our services without any disruptions. We apologize for any inconvenience this change may cause and appreciate your cooperation in making this transition smooth for everyone.

Should you encounter any difficulties or have questions regarding the update process, please don't hesitate to reach out to us for assistance. Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to continuing to serve you at our new online catalog address, ncabls.klas.com.

WINTER READING WINNERS



Once again, our Winter Reading Program has come to an end, and we have reviewed the numbers and selected our winners!

We had 30 people participate in our Winter Reading Program this year, and almost everyone who participated will receive a prize provided by the **Friends of NC Accessible Books & Library Services for having read at least 5 books during the duration of the program. Those who read the most books in either a digital or physical format won the top prizes, gift cards!**

In addition to reading digital and physical books, during the month of January for National Braille Literacy month, we encouraged patrons to read more braille books. The patron who read the most braille books in January would also win a prize for their braille literacy efforts. Without further ado, here are our Winter Reading Champions!

CONGRATULATIONS...



Digital Books

1st *Jessica Smith*

2nd *Guy Bobbit*

3rd *Karen Reynolds*



Physical Books

1st *Dorothy Wildermuth*



January Braille Literacy Award

Karen Reynolds

SUMMER READING 2024



Get ready for our Summer Reading Program, running from **June 1st to **August 31st**. So, mark your calendars and get set to explore the world of books!**

Whether you're a digital book aficionado or prefer the tactile feel of a physical book, there's something for everyone in categories:

- **Digital and Downloadable Books for Adults**
- **Digital and Downloadable Books for Youth (20 and younger)**
- **Physical Books for Adults**
- **Physical Books for Youth (20 and younger)**

Please note that Digital and Downloadable Books include books received on cartridges and downloadable from BARD. Physical Books include large print and physical braille books you receive in the mail from our library. If you read from multiple mediums, your highest medium used will be counted.

Joining the Summer Reading Program is easy! Simply register on-line starting May 15th and let the any book you read from June 1st to August 31st count towards your total score. Challenge yourself, explore new genres, and discover captivating stories that will ignite your imagination all summer long.

Register today at <https://fs25.formsite.com/statelibrarync/gx1qx-9r3ty/index>.

STAFF RETIREMENT

Dick Vincent

As the years pass, I see many seasoned staff members take well-earned retirements after their time working for the library, making way for fresh faces with new sets of skills to contribute. After a dozen years of dedicated service as a Reader Advisor, Dick Vincent will embark on his well-deserved retirement journey at the end of May 2024.

Throughout the years, Dick provided excellent customer service to our countless callers. Whether they were patrons, family mem-

bers and friends of patrons, other State employees and social workers, or even accidental callers, Dick delivered the assistance they were seeking. He provided help to all who called by selecting the next set of books for patrons to read, answering questions about our library services, and helping patrons with questions about their accounts. During my community outreach events, I often hear about the patrons' pleasant experiences when speaking with our Reader Advisors. Our patrons know the names of the people who help them, and Dick is no stranger to them. When he leaves, he will definitely be missed by our patrons. The reader advisor who will eventually take his place will have a daunting task ahead of them.

Our patrons are not the only

people who will miss Dick. Over the span of twelve years of working with someone, bonds of camaraderie have formed among the staff through shared experiences and mutual respect. Some of Dick's colleagues wish to share their sentiments about the privilege of working alongside him.

Dick has always been willing to help out wherever needed and has been a real team player during our current staffing shortage.

-Josh

Dick is a really nice person, very helpful and always took time to answer any of my questions. He will be truly missed. Enjoy your retirement; you have earned it.

-Tawanda

It has been a pleasure to work with Dick. He is very kind and friendly. I will miss hearing him say “hi Debbie” in the morning when I arrive at work.

-Debbie

Dick is so personable, and always ready to help. For years, he has helped me get patron information straightened out in the database to allow our patrons to get their media shipped to them.

Thank you, Dick, for helping us serve our patrons. We are so going to miss your easy going, friendly style.

-Teresa

Dick has always been wonderful to work with. He’s so knowledgeable about books, makes great book selections and works so well with patrons and staff.

He’s an exceptional team player, always willing to help. In particular, he readily goes above and beyond to monitor book selections for patrons who need extra care.

He’s also willing to be a guinea pig for new processes and has come up with many helpful ideas for patrons and staff over the years.

He makes a substantial contribution to ABLIS, and we’re truly going to miss him.

-Catherine

FRIENDS CORNER



“There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate.”

-Linda Grayson

Happy spring to all of our Friends of the NC Accessible Books and Library Services! I found the quote above, and I identified with it very quickly. You see, I’m a chocoholic, and I freely admit it! When I was working, I had a drawer for chocolate, and even though I have been retired for a number of years, I still have a drawer for chocolate in my home. Particularly, Dove dark chocolate. But I digress!

By now, if you are a Friends member, you have received renewal notices reminding ev-

eryone to renew their Friends membership.

For those who have renewed, we thank you very much for your continued support. If you have not renewed, we hope you will do so soon, and we thank you too.

Shown below is a list of accomplishments for 2023 that your membership and donations have supported for the Friends and for the Library. I think you will be amazed!

During the 2023 fiscal year, 420 large print titles were purchased, and 3 books were transcribed into braille. Seventy-two DVDs were purchased for the Descriptive Video Pro-

gram. With Friends support for studio needs, volunteers recorded 4 digital books, 33 magazines, and 4 digital newsletters in the Library's studio. The Friends provided funds to purchase prizes for the writing and reading contests at the Library. The 2024 Eastern NC Braille Challenge had 67 participants including students and volunteers. The winter reading program had 147 participants (138 adults, 9 youth). There were 2 summer reading programs, one with 99 participants (69 adults, 30 youth), and the other youth program with 9 participants. The writing contest had 13 entries. The Friends provided support for a VIP Book Discussion Group in Raleigh with 101 participants, and a Char-

lotte Book Discussion Group with 72 participants. The Friends also held a Volunteer Recognition event in September 2023 with 36 attendees. All told, the Friends had 544 participants or attendees in its FY23 programs.

So, you can see how important your membership and donations are to us, and how your support provides the necessary resources to carry out the best Library and Friends services and programs to the North Carolina blindness community. Again, we thank you!

Also, this is a heads up to let you know that you will be receiving a Friends ballot for voting on the Friends candidates for the 2024-2025 election. Please mark your

ballot and return it to us by June 1, 2024. We appreciate your participation with this election.

One more thing, National Best Friend Day will be Saturday, June 8, 2024. So, keep that in mind and plan something special with your best friends on that day. I have an idea- maybe share a piece of chocolate!

As always, be a friend, hug a friend, and if you are not a Friends member, join the Friends of the NC Accessible Books and Library Services. Best wishes, and thank you!

Eddie Weaver

President, FNCABLS

“Tar Heel Talk” is a quarterly publication of the State Library of North Carolina **Accessible Books & Library Services** section (SLNC-ABLS) and the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

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Regional Librarian Catherine Rubin

Editor Clint Exum

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Internet Catalog, Ordering Site: ncabls.klas.com

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STAFF FEATURE



**Juma Jones, Cataloging
Technical Assistant**

A new job is often a cause for celebration, but when one of our own rises to new heights within the organization, it's truly a moment of pride. Juma started working with our library in 2013 in the circulation department. Over the years, his consistency in the performance of his duties have made

him an invaluable member of our team. Now, as Cataloging Technical Assistant, Juma's expertise will play a pivotal role in shaping the accessibility and organization of our library's resources.

In his new role, Juma be responsible for the creation and maintenance of title records within our system, enhancing the overall user experience within our collections. Furthermore, Juma will be responsible for verifying the number of copies and volumes received for new braille and large type titles. He will also be regularly coordinating with State Library catalogers to obtain full records for large print titles. Additionally, Juma will play a pivotal role in the dissemi-

nation of local in-house produced braille and digital book items, ensuring their inclusion and visibility within the NLS Catalog. His contributions will greatly provide aid to cataloging duties as he assists the Collection Management Librarian in assigning local subject headings to title records.

Please join us in congratulating Juma Jones on his well-deserved promotion and wishing him continued success in his new role as Cataloger. So, you may get to know Juma beyond his job duties, I asked him a few questions.

Q: What sparked your interest in working in a library, and how did you end up joining our team?

A: I wasn't familiar with the library but my wife works for NCDOT and thought it would

be a good fit.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your current position as a cataloging assistant?

A: I enjoy the solitude, secondly, I enjoy figuring out codes that best match or fit since NLS database is so vast. I'm working on my own personal cheat code that will make the job more seamless. In the words of my favorite sleuth Columbo "I enjoy puzzles!"

Q: In your new role, what do you find most interesting and challenging to work with?

A: As I mentioned before, making limited codes work and understanding all the rules before you think you know it all.

Q: What are you looking forward to most in your new role?

A: To be the best cataloging technical assistant I can be.

Q: What advice would you give to someone applying for your old position?

A: Learn everything you can about your job and how all the pieces fit and lastly work on your speed and proficiency...sometimes that third gear is needed!

Q: What is one book, one movie, and one album you would bring to a deserted island?

A: Favorite book “Black Labor, White Wealth: The Search for Power and Economic Justice” by Dr. Claud Anderson, Fav movie “The Spook Who Sat By The Door” by Sam Greenlee, Fav album “First Minute of a New Day” by Brian Jackson and Gil Scott Heron.

HIGHLIGHTS OF STUDENT AND YOUTH SERVICES

NC Department of Health and Human Services Division of Services for the Blind

- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS)** - The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) partners with students, families, schools and other service providers to give students an early start at career exploration and preparation for life after high school.

- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS)** are available for students with a disability, ages 14-21 - These services can be requested by a student, school, parent, guardian or another service provider.

PRE-ETS Topics

- **Workplace Readiness Training** is designed to help students develop independent living and social skills necessary for success in employment.
- **Job Exploration Counseling** helps students assess their unique skills and interests, learn about in-demand jobs and industries, and make informed decisions about their career pathways.
- **Self-Advocacy Instruction** equips students with information about accommodations, disability rights, peer mentoring and other resources, and helps students develop self-awareness and self-determination skills.
- **Counseling on Post-secondary Options** will teach students about opportunities for education and training after high school and explore post-secondary resources in their community and beyond.
- **Work-Based Learning Experiences** can include information interviews, jobs shadowing, opportunities for paid employment and other activities that connect classroom learning with the realities of work, help students make informed decisions about their options and prepare for a successful future.

DSB offers PRE-ETS at no cost to students. Call 866-222-1546 for a referral to your local office or visit their website ncdhhs.gov/dsb.



NEW USPS POLICIES FOR PACKAGE PICKUP

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has instituted new optional policies for pickup of packages such as braille and digital books due to staff shortages, turnover, and seasonal workers.

USPS requests that patrons who may need this service use the on-line form at slnc.info/USPS-ABLS to schedule pickup of library materials. Patrons who do not have computer or internet access may call USPS at 800-275-8777 or reach out to us for assistance.

We would like to emphasize this action is optional, and not all patrons will be required to schedule their library materials to be picked up. If your library materials have always been picked up by the USPS no action may be required on your part. However, if you have had carriers who have not picked up your library materials, this policy can be a remedy.

DOWNLOAD SOMETHING NOBLE

One of the many services we offer our patrons is access to our version of BARD we call NOBLE (North Carolina BARD Local). NOBLE features digital braille books and digital talking books and magazines which are published in North Carolina and produced by our library. While there is no patron application necessary to use NOBLE, all media downloaded from NOBLE can only be played on a digital book player approved by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. You may visit NOBLE to see if there is anything you would like to download by going to slnc.info/ABLS-NOBLE.

MEDICARE INFORMATION IN ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

Medicare provides free auxiliary aids and services, including information in accessible formats like braille, large print, data or audio files, relay services and TTY communications. If you request information in an accessible format, you won't be disadvantaged by any additional time necessary to provide it. This means you'll get extra time to take any action if there's a delay in fulfilling your request.

To request Medicare or Marketplace information in an accessible format you can:

1. Call us

- For Medicare: **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**
- TTY: **1-877-486-2048**

2. Send us a fax: 1-844-530-3676

3. Send us a letter:

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Offices of Hearings and Inquiries (OHI)
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S1-13-25
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850
Attn: Customer Accessibility Resource Staff**

- Your request should include your name, phone number, type of information you need (if known), and the mailing address where we should send the materials. We may contact you for additional information.
- Note: If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medicare drug plan, contact your plan to request its information in an accessible format.
- For Medicaid, contact your State Medicaid office.



DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE NLS SERVICES?

Did you know that our library is part of the **National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) network**? The NLS Network has at least one library in every state of the United States and in some territories. While each of the network library offers the same core service of providing accessible books, the individual network libraries may provide something in addition the core services. A couple of examples being how our library provides Descriptive DVDs and Washington Talking Books has a Multisensory Storytime.

NLS has unique services they provide that any NLS Network patron may benefit from. These services can supplement the services you receive from our library. In case you didn't know what additional services you may benefit from, we have them listed them for starting on the next page.

Braille Education

Discover the future of braille certification with the National Federation of the Blind! Join our NLS-approved programs led by experts like Jennifer Dunnam for a transformative journey into braille literacy and accessible reading solutions. Contact us now to unlock a world of braille opportunities. Learn more: slnc.info/NLS-BE

Braille on Demand

Love revisiting your favorite books? As an NLS patron and braille reader, explore our Braille-on-Demand program to have up to five books a month in hardcopy braille at your fingertips, indefinitely. Choose from tens of thousands of titles available on BARD and make your requests hassle-free through our easy request form or by reaching out to our dedicated support team. Learn more: slnc.info/NLS-BOD

Patron Announce

Stay in the loop with NLS! Sign up for Patron Announce, our email listserv service, to receive regular updates on upcoming events, projects, and the latest NLS news straight to your inbox. Simply send your name and email address to NLSPES@loc.gov to join, and unsubscribe anytime hassle-free.

The Many Faces of BARD

The Patron Engagement Section offers The Many Faces of BARD online event the second Thursday of every month, at 7:00 p.m. eastern time. Each monthly event covers one aspect of BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download service) and

is open to all. From this page, you can also listen to previous Many Faces of BARD recordings! Learn more: <https://slnc.info/NLS-TMFB>

Quarterly Patron Corner -

Quarterly Patron Corner, presented the second Monday of the third month of the quarter, shares specific information of interest to patrons regarding an announced topic. From this page you can listen to the previous recordings of the Quarterly Patron Corner! Learn more: slnc.info/NLS-PC

International Language Materials

Discover a world of literary treasures with NLS! From audio to braille, they offer a diverse array of titles in languages beyond English, facilitated by the Marrakesh Treaty. Explore their expanding international collections, including Spanish, French, German, and many more, all available through our accessible platforms like BARD. Join us in embracing the richness of global literature today! Learn more: slnc.info/NLS-ILM

Music Service and Materials

Discover the world's largest music collection for the blind and print disabled at NLS! With over 25,000 titles including braille and large-print scores, instructional materials, and music-related magazines available via postage-free mail or digital download, accessing enriching musical experiences has never been easier. Eligible individuals can request this exceptional service directly from NLS headquarters in Washington, DC, ensuring seamless access to a diverse array of musical resources. Learn more: slnc.info/NLS-MSM

Overseas Services

Experience the world of literature without boundaries! NLS's overseas program, designed for American citizens living abroad or eligible non-US citizens dependent on active-duty military or diplomatic personnel, offers free access to a vast collection of books and magazines in audio or braille formats. Whether through mail delivery, electronic access via BARD, or loaned digital talking-book machines, this service ensures that reading knows no borders. Learn more: slinc.info/NLS-OSS

NLS Events

Tech And Culture Workshops through the Andrew Heiskell Library

Join the Andrew Heiskell Library's vibrant community for free, interactive remote workshops covering tech topics for beginners and seasoned users, book discussions, a Braille study group and more. You'll find their offerings for the fall: just use the link within each listing to register. To receive a reminder about each upcoming workshop or find out about additional pop-up offerings, email heiskelltech+subscribe@googlegroups.com or contact their tech team to join their announcement list. Additionally, you may email chanceyfleet@nypl.org if you need help or would like to suggest an additional workshop.

Tactile Art Teach-in

Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1, 10:00 AM - 4:45 PM

Join us to learn the fundamentals of nonvisual drawing using affordable tools. We'll cover concepts like line quality,

overlapping figures, perspective, negative space, and abstraction. No prior experience is necessary. To register, please email chanceyfleet@nypl.org or call (212) 206-5400, extension 3.

Exploring NVDA: A Twelve-Week Workshop

Wednesdays, April 3 through June 19, 5:00 - 7:00 PM EST

If you already know how to type but need experience with the free NVDA screen reader for Windows, this workshop is for you. We'll go over setting up and customizing NVDA, accessing help and documentation, working with the operating system, editing text, managing files, going online and more. Please plan to attend all sessions if possible. This workshop will take place online. Register at: slnc.info/NYPL-NVDA

Voiceover for Mac - A Twelve-week Workshop

Wednesdays, April 3 - June 19, 2:00 - 4:00 PM EST

If you already know how to type but need experience with the Voiceover screen reader for Mac, this workshop is for you. We'll go over setting up and customizing Voiceover, accessing help and documentation, working with the operating system, editing text, managing files, going online and more. Please plan to attend all sessions if possible. This workshop will take place online. Register at: slnc.info/NYPL-VOM

Voiceover for Mac Discussion Group

Saturdays, May 18 and June 29, 2:00 - 3:30 PM EST

This informal group meets monthly to tackle questions about using Voiceover for Mac. This workshop will take place online. Register at: slnc.info/NYPL-VOMDG

Nonvisual Drawing Workshop

Monday, May 13, 2:00 PM EST

For the in person workshops, please rsvp to chanceyfleet@nypl.org. For the online workshop, register at: slnc.info/NYPL-NVD

Building a Tactile Graphics Collection: Finding, testing, and filing images you can reproduce tactilely

Thursday, June 20, 7:00 - 8:30 PM EST

In this workshop we will discuss places where you can find suitable images, how to look for them with key words and phrases, and techniques for filing your images so you can find them more easily when it's time to produce them on paper. We will discuss methods for producing tactile images including strengths of each. This workshop will take place online. This workshop will take place online. Register at: slnc.info/NYPL-BTGC