

Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010

Address: 175 North Beacon Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 800-852-3133 or 617-972-7240
Fax: 617-972-7363
TTY: 617-972-7690
Email: library@perkins.org
Web: www.perkinslibrary.org



The Year in Review

Fiscal year 2010 marked a period focused on service delivery with reduced staffing levels, continued outreach, emphasis on the transition to digital talking book equipment and materials, and the ongoing implementation of the 5-year revised strategic plan to guide the Library's programs and services into the future.

The year's activities focused on:

- Implementation of the strategic plan for 2008-2012;
- Continued outreach activities to potentially eligible library users across Massachusetts;
- Enhanced publicity opportunities, media contacts and public awareness for the Perkins Library;
- Increased usage and expanded services from the Newsline program;
- Ongoing provision of a full range of high quality services to existing borrowers;
- Promotion and administration of the Braille & Audio Reading Download (BARD) Program for downloadable digital audio materials in collaboration with the National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (NLS);
- Expanded production of recorded and braille titles for the collection;
- Launch of a conversion project for obsolete legacy VHS audio described videos to be transferred to DVD;
- Implementation of a digital duplication program;
- Conversion of locally produced studio materials to the NLS digital cartridge format.



The Library's *Public Education Plan* for FY2010 included publication of revised application forms and information materials for individuals and institutions focusing on the new digital equipment and materials. Other media initiatives included the

continuation of a very successful billboard outreach campaign and print magazine advertising efforts to expand the understanding and awareness of the Perkins Library's services.

Due to staff reductions in FY2010 of six individuals (3.5 FTE), outreach efforts in FY2010 were only able to support ongoing activities, with no new initiatives being undertaken. Because of the slowdown in outreach efforts combined with high rates of discontinued usage (due primarily to patrons passing away or relocation to another state), the Library saw a 11.2% decrease in borrowers or approximately 2,628 discontinuing Library users in FY2010.

Media Outreach & Publications Initiatives Library Billboard Campaign

Thanks to the continued generosity of the regional division of Clear Channel Corporation, billboards featuring the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library were displayed all across Massachusetts. Approximately fifty billboard locations were made available to Perkins.

The attractive billboards spotlight the Perkins Library service and featured Library borrower Dean Denniston, leaning back, relaxing on an orange couch, with a big smile on his face while enjoying a talking book. The text reads:

Audio Books and Magazines, Newspapers by Phone...
Reading Never Sounded So Good
Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library
www.perkinslibrary.org



National Magazine Ad Initiative

Through a generous donation, a customized advertisement appeared about the services of the Perkins Library in four national magazines (New England regional edition) including the June 7, 2010 issue of *Newsweek*. Other magazines where the ad appeared included: *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *The Week*. This campaign brought tremendous awareness of the services of the Perkins Library to the general public.

Other awareness and outreach activities were directed toward special education programs, parent organizations, and special needs schools throughout the Commonwealth. Elder service organizations and home health care professionals continued to be priorities for developing more effective methods and strategies to inform them specifically that people with physical disabilities which restrict their ability to hold a book or turn pages are also eligible for the wide range of programs and services available through the Library.

Staff continued to speak to groups upon request; exhibited at consumer meetings; and produced two issues of *Dots & Decibels*, *El Narrador* and *PerKIDS* newsletters.



Activity	Description	Total
Presentations	Information sessions with groups	17
Tours	On-site library tours	11
Special Events	Book/author talks, presentations	6
Conferences	Library displays/exhibits	16
Grand Total		50

Patron Services

The Perkins Library continued to manage the program with funding appropriated by the Legislature and administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Strategic Plan Implementation:

The Perkins Library continued its implementation of the Long-Range Plan for 2008 – 2012 during the year. This plan places outreach initiatives, broadening patron engagement, and increasing patron satisfaction as high priorities for the future.

The goals the plan outlines for the next five years are:

- Reach a broader and more diverse audience who can benefit from the Library's services
- Deepen engagement of current and future patrons
- Actively pursue enhanced technology for access to and administration of materials
- Secure the staff, facilities, and other resources required to operate successfully

Each of these goals was broken down, and targeted strategies were developed to insure success on these objectives.

The plan also introduced Perkins Library's revised mission statement which reads, "The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library provides accessible library services and resources that enable all people who are unable to read conventional print due to a disability to experience the joy of reading and lifelong learning."

The Perkins Library's *2008 – 2012 Long Range Plan* and its executive summary are available upon request from the Library in large print, braille, audio format, and via email.

Digital Talking Book and Equipment Transition Continues

The response from borrowers to the new digital equipment and books continues to be extremely positive citing the smaller size, convenience of one book per cartridge, and improved sound quality were all viewed as significant improvements.



As the digital transition continues, patrons have a growing selection of materials in the new digital format to choose from. Efforts were launched to establish a digital duplication program. A system was set up to handle digital duplication, a staff position was revised to assume responsibilities for all media duplication, and design efforts were started on a system to support download of locally produced studio titles.

The Library offered four classes to patrons on how to use the NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) website. The classes were taught in the Perkins technology lab and were open to screen reader and magnification software users. Students learned how to log into the site and search for items using the website's various search features and indices. Students were also able to learn to download the items onto the new NLS digital cartridge to use with the player.

Newsline Program

Newsline, an electronic system that allows users to listen to newspapers and magazines through synthetic voice output via any touch-tone telephone, continued to serve over 2,000 listeners in FY2010. By calling in on a local or toll-free number,

users choose any of the newspapers available in the program and listen to that day, the previous day, or the Sunday edition of a specific paper.

Massachusetts newspapers on the system include: *Associated Press-Massachusetts, The Berkshire Eagle, Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Cape Cod Times, Christian Science Monitor, Fitchburg Sentinel & Enterprise, Lowell Sun, Nashoba Public Spirit, North Adams Transcript, Springfield Republican, United Press International-Massachusetts, the Worcester Telegram and Gazette, and the Watertown Tab & Press*, (the newest paper to be added to the program).



Nearly 300 other major newspapers and twenty-five magazines from throughout the United States and Canada are also available. Four newspapers are provided in Spanish as well.

In addition, distribution of digital DAISY audio files of newspapers can now be delivered to registered users with email capability or through a new service called "Newsline In Your Pocket", that allows a borrower to connect a portable device like a Victor Stream or a cartridge to their computer in the morning, and it automatically downloads their favorite papers in minutes. Web access is now also available for Newsline for users of braille displays or those using screen magnification to read the articles through the program.

Category	FY 10	FY 09	Change
Total Active Users	1,962	1,982	-1.01%
Total Calls	99,110	99,254	-.15%
Total Minutes Used	2,142,129	2,095,481	+2.23%

Total Web Users	80	-	-
Total Web Sessions	1,760	-	-
"In Your Pocket" Users	29	-	-
"In Your Pocket" Downloads	8,872	-	-

Volunteer Contributions

Activities to effectively utilize and recognize the important role volunteers play in the ability of the Perkins Library to serve borrowers were ongoing during the fiscal year.



Twenty-three Telecom Pioneer and G.E. equipment repair volunteers provided 1,906 hours of service repairing cassette machines. This amount is equal to a .92 full-time equivalent (FTE) position. Their efforts were recognized at five special volunteer luncheons held in their local communities to honor their

outstanding dedication to library borrowers. Library staff presented the volunteers with certificates of appreciation and special recognition gifts for their service.

One hundred sixty-one other in-house volunteers who assist with the inspection and repair of returned books, record and edit studio productions, help in producing braille materials, or perform clerical support tasks contributed 10,159.50 hours or 4.88 FTE.

These one hundred eighty-four volunteers generously donated a total of 12,065.50 hours equaling a 5.80 total FTE staffing contribution to the Library during the 2010 fiscal year.



With the launch of the digital player, the Library started to utilize

larger groups of volunteers from schools, universities and corporations to help process the new players. Using an assembly line process, groups open, update, label, put in instructional inserts for borrowers, re-pack, close the boxes and seal them for shipment to patrons.

Annual Volunteer Activity Report July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Library Department	Volunteer Hours	FTE	Estimated Federal Value	Estimated State Value
Machine Lending	1,906	0.92	\$39,740.01	\$50,165.92
Clerical/Office	1,748.5	0.84	36,456.23	46,020.52
Inspection	3,938	1.89	82,107.30	103,648.16
Studio	4,473	2.15	93,262.05	117,729.36
Total	12,065.5	5.80	\$251,565.59	\$317,563.96

Note: Volunteer hourly rates are calculated by Independent Sector and the 2009 estimates for the value of a volunteer hour reached \$20.85. This is the national average; with the 2009 figure for Massachusetts being set at \$26.32 per hour.

Service and Budget Summary

The Board of Library Commissioners continued to work with consumers of the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library and the Talking Book Library in Worcester to advocate for level funding for the Massachusetts Talking Book Program. In addition, Perkins School for the Blind, members of the Consumer Advisory Board and borrowers of the Braille & Talking Book Library advocated actively to preserve funding levels for FY2010. Consumers and Library staff attended several legislative events at the State House to distribute information about the Talking Book Program.

The Library, together with its Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) and administering agencies, continued implementation of a revised 5-year strategic plan. CAB continues to meet its mandate

to help the Library in accomplishing its core mission of effectively helping patrons pursue lifelong learning, knowledge through self-education, and the joy of reading. The Consumer Advisory Board also continued to encourage the activities of the Friends of the Braille & Talking Book Library.

The Friends supported the Library's Summer Reading Program; the museum pass program; purchased described DVD's for the collection; supported the purchase of 30 subscriptions to *Dialogue Magazine* in braille, large print and in audio and email formats; covered repair of CCTVs for the loan program; and sponsored several employee recognition activities.



Staff continued to work hard to provide essential services to Library borrowers, while balancing added workloads and job responsibilities resulting from an early retirement program that six individuals (representing 3.5 FTE) accepted at the end of FY2009. The Library was able to maintain outreach efforts, the Newslines program, and the recording studio and braille production programs, with the FY2010 appropriation being \$2,241,016, the same level appropriated for FY2009.

The Braille & Talking Book Library continued to provide recorded media services to residents of Eastern and Western Massachusetts, as well as to loan braille materials, described videos and DVD's, braille awareness kits, CCTVs, Perkins Braille, downloadable audio books, playback equipment and accessories throughout the state.

Service and Budget Summary

	FY2010	FY2009
Massachusetts Registered Patrons:		
Individuals	19,296	21,960
Institutions	1,511	1,492
Total	20,807	23,452

Massachusetts Book Circulation:

Cassette Materials	353,123	403,986
Digital Books	60,936	844
Braille Materials	12,028	15,471
Described Videos	568	1,301
Described DVDs	1,263	572
Unabridged	2,148	3,288
NLS BARD Download	31,069	10,423
Total	461,135	435,885

Book Circulation/Patron:	22.16	18.59
Equipment Circulation:	9,802	5,559

Collection Holdings:

Titles	120,881	97,274
Volumes	1,008,679	947,517

Budget Summary:

Staffing Costs	\$1,250,903.70	\$1,393,636.14
Direct Costs	\$822,557.85	\$678,434.10
Other Costs	<u>\$167,554.45</u>	<u>\$168,945.76</u>
Total	\$2,241,016.00	\$2,241,016.00

Title Search Statistics (FY2010):

# of Patrons	Title Searches	Found (%)	Not Found (%)
5,696	11,233	10,324 (92%)	909 (8%)

Reference Request Statistics (FY2010):

# of Patrons	Ref. Requests	Found (%)	Forwarded (%)
1,569	1,977	1,928 (98%)	49 (2%)

	FY2010	FY2009
Unabridged Usage Statistics:		
Active Patrons	685	658
Titles Circulated	2,148	3,288
NLS BARD Digital Download Statistics:		
Active Patrons	563	211
Titles Circulated	31,069	10,423

Overview of the Talking Book Program

The Talking Book Program is a free national library program providing braille and audio materials for blind, visually impaired, reading and physically disabled individuals, operated by the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library in collaboration with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a division of the Library of Congress. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides funding for this program through its Board of Library Commissioners.

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library has been providing special library services since 1835. It became a founding member of the Library of Congress / National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped network in 1931. Readership statistics indicate that 60% of the Library's current users are legally blind, 20% are visually impaired, 5% have physical disabilities, 9% are reading disabled, and 6% represent institutions serving eligible borrowers.

Eligibility:

Anyone who is unable to read or use standard printed materials as a result of temporary or permanent visual or physical limitations may receive service. Institutions and agencies serving individuals who meet the eligibility requirements may also receive service.

Services Provided:

Patrons may place orders for specific book and magazine titles as well as receive automatic selections based on their reading interests. The Library provides interlibrary loan services for titles available from other NLS network libraries, from other regional library system members, and additional non-print sources. The Clive W. Lacy Recording Studio, located in the Library, records titles of local and regional interest not available in the national collection, and the Library's Braille Production Program produces braille books, magazines and other materials for collection development and patron use.

Reference services, customized bibliographies, and internet search services are available without cost to the user. The Library also provides an Online Public Access Catalog and internet email to staff from its web page at www.PerkinsLibrary.org.

The program's Machine Lending Agency loans playback equipment and other specialized accessories needed to read talking books. The service includes the free loan, replacement and repair of equipment for patrons for as long as they are active members of the program.

Service orders may be placed by phone, fax, email, or via print or braille correspondence. Orders are generally filled within two business days. Patrons are also welcome to drop in for service during business hours.

Patron services staff are available Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM except holidays to assist individuals, libraries, and agencies. Patrons may also leave messages evenings and weekends at 617-972-7240 or toll-free at 1-800-852-3133. Email orders or inquiries can be directed to library@perkins.org.



Consumer Advisory Board Members

Chair:

Paul Saner
Bay State Council of the Blind

Vice Chair:

Frances Giandalone
At-Large Member

Kobena Bonney
National Federation of the Blind of Massachusetts

Robie MacLaughlin
Blinded Veterans Association
Massachusetts Chapter

Rev. George McDermott
Talking Book Library at Worcester Public Library

Mary Mahon-McCauley
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Elizabeth (Liz) Moltrup
At-Large Member

Paul Parravano
At-Large Member

Representative of People with Physical Disabilities - VACANT

Steven M. Rothstein, President
Perkins School for the Blind

Kevin Patrick Seaver
At-Large Member

The Honorable Steven A. Tolman

Massachusetts Senate

Joe Weisse
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Irving Zangwill
Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Ex Officio

Kim Charlson
Braille & Talking Book Library

James Izatt
Worcester Public Library
Talking Book Library

Maureen Killoran
Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

The Staff

Patricia Ahern, Reader Advisor

Martin Baronas, Shipping/Receiving Clerk

Keith Bocock, Tape Technician

Judi Cannon, Braille Services Specialist

Michael Cataruzolo, Volunteer Coordinator

Kim Charlson, Library Director

John Eaves, Shipping/Receiving Clerk

Vicki Fallis, Magazine Specialist

Harriet Franklin, Administrative Assistant

James Gleason, Deputy Director/Special Services Librarian

Rachel Gould, Children's Resources and Services Librarian

Ron Heaton, Warehouse Operations Manager

Thomas Hyde, Equipment Clerk

Joseph Ronald Lemieux, Assistant Equipment Technician

Stephen Magliozzi, Equipment Technician

Tim McGrath, Lead Shipping Clerk

Eileen Morange, Registration Services Manager

Mark Pennington, Shipping/Receiving Clerk

Robert Pierson, Studio Manager

Linda Rossman, Reference Librarian

Oris Ryan, Shipping/Receiving Clerk

Todd Smith, Digital Recording Specialist

Vicki Vogt, Reader Advisor