



# The Thomas H. Perkins Legacy Society

Fall 2009

## A good story is worth sharing

It was January, 1945, and brothers William and Danti Peduto of Brighton, Massachusetts had heard their country's call to duty. Despite familial ties, World War II had separated the siblings and sent them to fight on different battle fields. Danti's outfit reported to England and his brother traveled to Germany, where he found himself in the thick of battle.

When Danti saw his brother again, William was on a hospital bed in Pennsylvania where he would stay for six months.

The war was over for William, whom doctors said had been permanently blinded. But the challenge to regain his life and start anew – as a man who was blind – had just begun.

His brother rose quickly to the challenge, said Danti. He enrolled at a school for individuals who were blind in Connecticut, where he learned to read braille. With that skill, he was accepted at Tufts University in Medford, Mass., under the GI Bill. He

graduated in 1953 with a degree in sociology.

Danti frequently traveled to Perkins' Watertown campus to fetch books from the Massachusetts Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped – now known as Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library – for his brother. At the time, talking books were available as records, and cassette tapes began circulating in 1969. Today, books from the Braille and Talking Book Library are delivered and returned via the U.S. Mail at no charge to Perkins or its patrons.

"I used to go up to Perkins and bring back the ones he had read," Danti remembered. "I would come to the library to drop them off."

William, who passed away in recent years, never associated with Perkins beyond the library. Yet, Danti decided there was no better place to make a charitable gift in his brother's name. After all, Perkins makes an invaluable difference in the lives of



*Danti Peduto*

individuals every day, starting with the teaching of braille – a basic, vital lesson to many people who are blind or visually impaired.

"I felt that learning braille at a specialty school helped William a lot," Danti said. "I feel that Perkins does the same thing."

Danti has since made several charitable gift annuities in memory of William. Through the annuities, Danti was able to direct his assets to an organization he believes in – as well as provide himself with a dependable, guaranteed income for the rest of his days.

"It's a really good cause," said Danti. "That's one of the reasons I've been giving to Perkins – to help some of these people who become blind later on in life, so they can learn and carry on."

# Talk about making a difference

## Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library uses new technology to make an old pastime accessible

Records lined the shelves of Perkins' library back in the 1950s when Danti Peduto first began making trips to the Watertown campus to pick up accessible reading material for his brother William.

But time and technology have since transformed those shelves, which now contain thousands of small green boxes holding cassette tapes. The Massachusetts Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which was founded in 1835 and renamed Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library in 1990, currently ships hundreds of thousands of those boxes to more than 24,000 people across Massachusetts. As many as 12 talking books at a time make their way to Peggy LaPine, a self-described "voracious" reader who lives in Williamstown, right on the New York border.

LaPine, 82, became legally blind just eight years ago due to macular degeneration. Having followed in the footsteps of her mother – "She walked around the house with a book in one hand and stirred a pot with the other," LaPine laughed – talking books filled what could have become a large void in her life. In addition to losing her vision, LaPine also lost the ability to visit her own public library when her blindness forced her to give up her driver's license.

"When you can't drive, it's wonderful having the post office deliver a box of talking books to you," she said. "And all I have to do is mail them back. My mailman picks them up right at my door. Perkins' library has been a savior for me."

In addition to providing books in cassette and braille formats, the library offers a Braille Loan Program and a Braille Repair Program. It also provides braille awareness kits to schools and



*A mother and daughter enjoy a book together.*

other community groups.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) selected Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library as its 2008 Network Library of the Year, acknowledging the organization and its director, Kim Charlson, for innovative programming and ongoing efforts in braille literacy.

And those shelves at the library are poised to transform once again. The Braille and Talking Book Library has begun its mission to transfer its titles to digital form, with a goal of eventually replacing the cassette tapes with cartridges. Users will be able to simply plug the cartridge into a new, smaller playback machine and start the talking book, skip to specific chapters or return to the beginning by pressing a button. The cartridges and playback machines, with no tape to rewind or untangle, are designed for optimum ease of use.

While the number of digital titles available will be somewhat limited in the first several months of the transition, patrons can be among the first to use the new playback machines by contacting the library and requesting one.

LaPine is looking forward to reading her first digital book.

“I think it sounds wonderful. Everything’s changed so much since 2001” when she lost her vision, she said. “Technology is changing so rapidly.”



*Patrons can receive and return books from the BTBL free of charge through the U.S. Postal Service.*

## From the Chair



Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library has served the reading needs of patrons who are blind or visually impaired since 1835. Each day, thousands of persons who cannot read traditional print rely

on library services to keep them informed and stay connected. For many, the library is their only source of accessible reading materials for work, study, intellectual stimulation or personal enjoyment.

Each year, Perkins is able to carry on its work, including the provision of library services, from the income derived from matured charitable gift annuities that were created many years ago. We are grateful to donors like Mr. Peduto for choosing to support Perkins programs and services through this type of contribution.

The charitable gift annuity can be a safe haven in uncertain times. With fixed rates beginning at 5% for a person aged 60, the charitable gift annuity can prove to be a wise investment when most investments are going down. Rates are based on your age when you create the annuity and can be as much as 9.5%, guaranteed.

If you want to help Perkins continue meeting the needs of those who are blind or deaf-blind with additional disabilities and would like the peace of mind afforded by a guaranteed fixed income please call the Gift Planning Office at 617-972-7680 or email [Alleather.Toure@Perkins.org](mailto:Alleather.Toure@Perkins.org).

Sincerely

*Charles Platt*

Charles Platt, Chair

The Thomas H. Perkins Legacy Society

# Celebrate Perkins

## Taste of Perkins

Tuesday, October 6, 2009  
from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Featuring food, music,  
prizes and special  
blind tastings

## Annual Meeting & Reception

Monday, November 2,  
2009 at 5:30 p.m.

## Holiday Concerts

Thursday, December 10,  
2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 13,  
2009 at 3 p.m.

## 2010 Perkins Possibilities Gala

Thursday, May 6, 2010,  
6 – 9:30 p.m.

All events are at Perkins School for the Blind  
For more information,  
please visit [www.Perkins.org](http://www.Perkins.org),  
or contact Emily Goodman  
by phone at 617-972-7583  
or by e-mail at  
[Emily.Goodman@Perkins.org](mailto:Emily.Goodman@Perkins.org)

## The 4-1-1 on Charitable Gift Annuities

As a philanthropic person, you may discover that there are some very attractive reasons for you to accelerate your giving now, including:

### Guaranteed, fixed stream of income for your lifetime

- Your annuity payment does not fluctuate with the stock market or interest rates.

### Tax-free income

- Since the IRS treats your gift annuity as part gift, part investment, you do not have to pay tax on the portion of your annuity payment that is a return of your investment.

### A sizable income tax deduction

- If you itemize deductions on your federal return, this deduction will produce tax savings proportionate to your tax bracket.

### Increasing your annual cash flow

- The payment from your gift annuity is likely to exceed the interest you are receiving from traditional investments such as CDs, money market funds and bank savings accounts.

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## Do I have the assets to fund a gift annuity?

You have the assets to fund a gift annuity if you have:

- Cash – Just write a check and put that cash into a gift annuity instead of a CD, money market or bank savings account.
- Appreciated Securities or Mutual Fund – Reduce and defer your long-term capital gain.
- Life Insurance Policy – A policy with enough cash value can fund your gift annuity. Make Perkins both the owner and beneficiary of your policy, or simply cash in the policy and donate the cash.
- Required Minimum Withdrawals from IRAs – You must withdraw the money anyway. If you don't need it right away, consider creating a gift annuity.

To request a free personalized illustration, please call 617-972-7680 or email [Alleather.Toure@Perkins.org](mailto:Alleather.Toure@Perkins.org).