



**Braille Children's Book Production Project 2018 Impact Report
Submitted to Adler & Lipkus Foundation
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Program Overview

In early 2018 the CNIB literacy department initiated a new print braille project thanks to your generous funding. This project meant new titles were sent throughout the summer and fall to the CNIB Early Intervention Specialist (EIS) who work primarily with pre-school age children. The project has been a great success and revealed early on, that these additional children's braille resources were badly needed. While children's braille books are currently available via public libraries through the newly created partnership between CNIB and the public library system- CELA- (Centre for Equitable Library Access), often the wait times are long, and the range of braille titles is quite limited. Parents reported to our staff that they could wait up to 3 months for a selected braille book to arrive at their local library for pick-up.

The Adler & Lipkus braille project set out to supply new titles as a permanent addition to the collection at several local CNIB offices. Over time as word of the program has spread, project manager Linda Min is receiving requests from more ELS across the country who are also anxious to receive new titles.

With Adler & Lipkus agreement the funds were stretched to the maximum by producing from a wish list of requested titles, primarily written by Canadian authors and also acquiring high quality braille books through DK books (Royal National Institute for the Blind UK) and National Braille Press (USA). Both organizations receive funder support and employ volunteers to assemble the books therefore their price per book was excellent.

Project Achievements

CNIB produced 27 original masters, each representing a title that was not available through CELA or the other print braille or blind organizations. In most cases five copies of each book were produced. Eleven (11) additional titles were purchased as noted above.

Due the high labour component required for each original title, the project has taken over seven months to complete with shipments of books sent in three batches.

Note: Additional copies of each master title can be created for years to come. The cost per copy can be quite modest when volunteers handle the time-consuming assembly work.

We are pleased to report that the number of books produced and purchased has far exceeded our estimate in the funding proposal thanks to the dedicated work of staff and volunteers, the former meeting after work hours to assemble the braille overlay pages.



Early Intervention Specialist Reports

Below: Lead manager of GTA children's literacy with one of her young students. Rhonda has been an avid braille user from childhood. She now enjoys reading to her 2 young daughters.





Following is feedback from our regional EIS who were universally thrilled with the new resources.

The books were distributed from coast to coast, based on greatest assessed needs to include Newfoundland, Ontario, Saskatchewan and B.C.

The children who benefited from the new braille books were primarily aged 0-5 with some children 6-10. The CNIB EIS work primarily with pre-school age children. However, after-school programs and special parent child programs accommodate older children. The books are occasionally lent to parents so the child can spend more time with a favourite book at home. With proper care, each book can last 3-8 years so CNIB is looking forward to building this library of resources over time.

In B.C. the braille program is supporting approximately 30 children; Vancouver, Victoria and some in Nanaimo.

Aryana has both sight and hearing loss. Her mother explains how much she enjoys the shape and number books.

“This books are well loved. Aryana for the first time will take books to her room and keep them from her older 6-year-old sister. For the first time, she is actually looking and interested in books. Aryana will lie on her side and manipulate the pages, exploring the cut out shapes. The books are just right for her tiny hands and the shiny features and bold colours give her some visual experience. Thank you so much for allowing an extended loan of these two books.”

Saskatchewan has 22 children enrolled in the braille literacy program, benefiting a wider range of ages. Their most intensive work is with children aged 3 and 4. "Our team has loved putting these books into the children's hands and seeing their smiles and eagerness to start reading a new book." Books are also lent to blind the parents so they can read to their sighted child.

Braille books are in particularly short supply in the province with a long wait list through the public library. The new Adler & Lipkus resources providing popular titles, have been a true blessing. One mother with 2 boys with vision loss said 'her boys just love the new books'.

The Ontario/GTA program takes a family approach by orienting all family members to the importance of braille; parents and siblings of the blind child are shown braille basics and learn the vital role of braille to true literacy. CNIB Toronto office has recently partnered with Centenary Daycare where 60% of their students have sight loss. Currently 15 families are enrolled in the literacy program.



The Public library system doesn't typically stock braille books, therefore the opportunity to use braille books during CNIB structured lessons or during literacy or play group programs presents a unique and valuable opportunity.

This child from Saskatoon had shown no interest in reading, but this book caught his attention and he explored the pages for over 10 minutes- a breakthrough for this child.

Newfoundland: Five children province wide are registered with CNIB to receive braille books by mail. They are aged 4,5 and one child is 10. Due to the dispersed population books are mailed out to each child with their name on the label to make the package special. Each month new books are sent and they return the previous set. Many of the book produced with the Adler & Lipkus funding were produced in sufficient quantity to provide two copies to each region. In NL, they always retain one copy of each title in the St. John's office for local children who are learning braille.

Larry's Mum said "He is over the moon excited! Thank you so much. We began reading at the kitchen table the moment the book arrived."

Jay's Mum said "He loved the books, especially the Animal Kisses. He read it about 10 times last night and has gotten pretty good with it."

The new braille books are universally loved and widely used.

Thank you on behalf of the entire CNIB team.

We respectfully ask for your consideration to renew support for continuation of your braille project in 2019. The wish list of titles grows and the number of EIS who are clamouring to receive books has also grown. Thank you.

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