



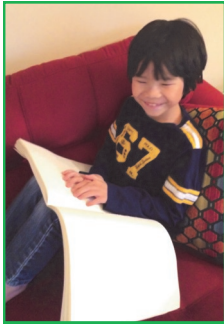
# Seedlings

**BRaille BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**



*32 years . . . 477,000 books  
Thousands of lives changed!*

## 2016 Annual Report



**SEEDLINGS MISSION:** SEEDLINGS BRAILLE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization dedicated to increasing the opportunity for literacy by providing high-quality, low-cost children's literature in braille.

**SEEDLINGS HISTORY:** In 1984 when Debra Bonde founded Seedlings, braille materials were scarce and expensive. Her goals were to increase the availability and lower the cost of braille books for children, thereby promoting their literacy skills and their love of reading. In 1985, the first year of book production, Debra made 221 books in the basement of her house. **During the past year, with the help of a small staff and many loyal volunteers and donors, Seedlings produced a record 32,254 braille books and articles, making a grand total of 477,082 since 1984.**

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(Board Members serve 3-year terms as unpaid volunteers.)

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*Board President Jared Stofflett in front of Seedlings' office. He read Seedlings' books as a child and his mother, Lori, served on the Board of Directors.*

## • VOLUNTEERS •

*"Seedlings' Angels"*

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 Livonia, MI 48151-5924

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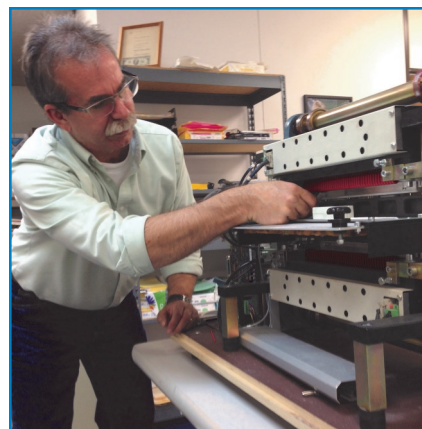
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*On the Cover: Seedlings' Founder/Director Debra Bonde with several of our braille readers!  
 (Photo credit: Bill Bresler)*



**Pictured at left: Todd Fleming repairs one of Seedlings' braille printers. Todd finds volunteering at Seedlings very rewarding. "Seedlings is such an important cause," he said. "I am happy to be involved." The staff is happy too. Without the printers, book production would stop!**





# **2016 was the Best Year Yet!**



- **Record braille book distribution:** 32,254 up 21% over 2015.
- **Record number of books given away:** Almost 16,000 books were distributed for free. See the descriptions of our free book programs on the next two pages.
- **Over 300 titles were converted to the new Braille Code** making Seedlings the place to go for books in the Unified English Braille Code (UEB)!
- **Two awards were received:** Seedlings was voted “Livonia’s Best Non-profit” and “Livonia’s Best Place to Volunteer”!
- **Our Bowling for Braille Books Event was the most successful ever:** Over \$46,000 was raised (see page 19)!
- **Our 1st Annual Online Auction was a big success:** \$12,000 was raised, 20% over our goal (see page 20)!



*Livonia's Mayor, Dennis Wright, presents two awards to Seedlings' Director, Debra Bonde*

## **Goals for 2017**



*Seedlings' braille printers will be extra busy in 2017!*

- Produce and distribute over 30,000 braille books, thereby reaching a grand total of over 500,000 books produced since Seedlings' inception in 1984!
- Give away a record number of books and keep the price of the rest at an average of only \$10 or less.
- Offer over 400 titles in the new braille code by either converting current titles or by transcribing new titles into UEB.
- ☆ Seedlings was on TV in early 2017! To see this touching piece, go to <https://is.gd/TPTYKq>

## **2016 EXPENSES: 90.1% of your gifts went into Braille Book Production!**

**EXPENSES:** We work very hard to keep our overhead low, and we are very proud that 90.1% of our donors' dollars went directly into braille book production:



*Volunteer Ruth binds a braille book*

90%	Braille Book Production	\$552,322
4%	General & Administration	\$21,577
6%	Fund-Raising	\$38,881
100%	TOTAL	\$612,780

*Financial Statements are available upon request.*

Book production goal for 2017: 30,000+ braille books and articles  
Projected expenses for 2017: \$643,000



*Volunteer Mark takes the books to the Post Office*

**In 2016, over 32,000 braille books & articles were printed, assembled, & shipped from our small office in Livonia, MI**



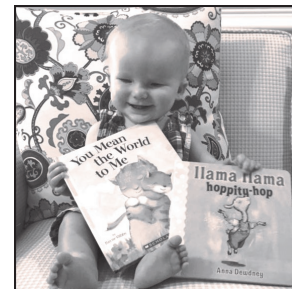
**Approximately half of these materials were purchased by schools, agencies, libraries, and families for an average of only \$10 each (traditionally braille books were VERY expensive!) This was made possible by our dedicated donors, volunteers, and staff.**



**"My son Caleb is almost 10 months old and absorbing all the information he can of the world around him. Books are no exception. My husband and I said, as long as he can read, it will be okay. Knowing that only 10% of the visually impaired community can read Braille was a shock to us. Exposing children as early as possible can change that and Seedlings makes that possible! Thanks Seedlings!"**  
*— Caleb's Mom*



**Approximately half of our braille materials (a record 15,600) were provided at no cost to the children, their families and teachers through various give-away programs! Here are some of these wonderful programs:**



### **BOOK ANGEL PROGRAM: 3 Free Books per Child for use at Home**

**Background:** This program was created in loving memory of Anna K. Bonde, our Director's daughter. The purpose is to enable blind children to receive three free books per year to help promote their reading skills and their love of books.



**"Hi! I'm the mom of a 13-year-old son born blind with LCA. Reading Braille used to be a tedious task for this busy boy. It hasn't been easy but with the help of interesting stories through your Angel Program, he's grown to love reading! Braille has become a way of life that keeps him connected to the world around him & helps him succeed in all aspects of his academic & personal life. I'm truly appreciative of your ongoing advocacy for Braille literacy & making books available free and reasonably priced."** —A Grateful Mom

**Funding:** This program is funded by grants, bequests, and donations.

**Number Distributed:** In 2016, a record 5940 "Angel Books" were made and distributed to children across the US & Canada. More than 38,300 free braille books have been placed into children's hands since this program began in 2002.

If you know someone who could benefit from these programs, see:  
[www.seedlings.org/special.php](http://www.seedlings.org/special.php)



## **THE ROSE PROJECT:** **Free Braille** **Encyclopedia Articles**



**Background:** In 1994 when we realized that blind children did not have access to braille encyclopedias, we launched the Rose Project which allows children to request free encyclopedia articles in braille.

**Funding:** This program was originally funded by a bequest from a woman named Rose (hence the name of the project) and is now funded by gifts from our donors.

**Number Distributed:** In 2016, we transcribed and distributed 182 free braille encyclopedia articles to children. Since the program began, over 10,200 articles have been sent to children to assist them with their studies.



**Thank you for your generous gifts that make these programs possible!**

## **SEEDLINGS' ADOPT-A-READER PROGRAM**

We believe that in order to be life-long readers, children need to be surrounded with books, but sometimes families need help with this. Consequently we started this program in Michigan in 2011. It has since expanded to Ohio and Illinois. In 2016, 506 books were given to the children who were "adopted" by our generous donors. Each donor gave \$100 which allowed "their child" to pick out \$100's worth of free books. Over 2300 free books have been donated to children since the program began.

*One mom said this about the program:*

"Thank you so much to the incredibly generous donor for my daughter, Sadie. She is going to love ALL the new books. She is mesmerized by the texture of braille, and even more enamored if the books have other textures too! Receiving this in the mail was such a pleasant surprise in a time where we felt we 'couldn't catch a break.' We can't thank you enough!"



## **FREE BOOKS FOR TEACHERS**

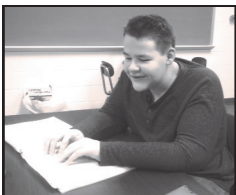
**Background:** Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments dedicate their lives to bringing the gift of literacy to blind children. They often have very few braille materials, so when we receive gifts, grants, and bequests, we try to use some of this money to help the teachers by giving them some free braille books to use with their students.



**Number Distributed:** In 2016, 4225 free braille books were distributed to teachers in CA, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM, AL, OK, AR, LA, MS, MI, and various summer school programs across the country.

*One teacher said this about the program:*

"Thank you for the wonderful braille books! My students were truly excited to receive them and couldn't wait to choose a book to read. Due to your generosity the children will have access to additional braille books at their reading level. Again thank you for providing such a wealth of braille literature to the students. Your generosity is truly appreciated!"



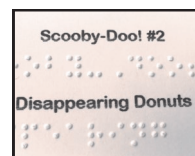
*And another said:*  
"I'm a TVI and Seedlings is one of the best organizations out there. Thank you so much for this opportunity to keep braille in my students' hands!"

## **TOUCHING QUOTES**

"Our daughter Maggie Mae is 8 years old and loves to read. We adopted her from China when she was 23 months old. She has some vision in one eye, 20/2000, therefore reads using braille. We have been ordering books from y'all for 6 years. We would be blessed to receive some books for free because she reads through books in a day! Thank you !"



*"Hi, my name is Jennifer. I am overjoyed because the library where we go just gave my granddaughter, Jazmin, a print-and-braille copy of Scooby Doo #2 from your group Seedlings. It was the first time in 13 years that I have ever gotten to hear my granddaughter read a book to me. She is 13 years old and has been falling through the cracks of the school system. We have been trying hard to get her to learn braille and she now knows her letters and some contractions. She was able to read this book to me and because the print words were there, I*



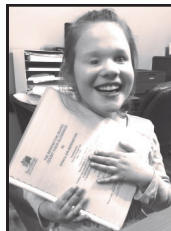
*could help her. I'm calling to thank you and find out where I can get more books like this." (Of course, we sent her more books!)*

# ☆ 2016 DONORS—HELPING BLIND CHILDREN READ! ☆

The following is a list of donors who graciously made financial gifts to Seedlings to help blind children read and succeed. Many of these donations were made in honor of loved ones, and those are noted below. Every \$10 donation we receive subsidizes the cost of one braille book. More than 13,700 books were made possible by these generous donations during 2016. Many, many thanks!



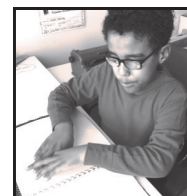
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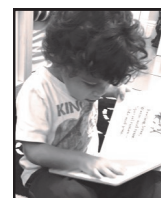


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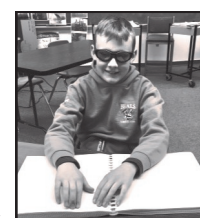
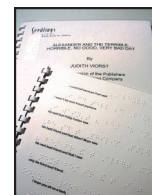
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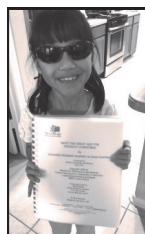
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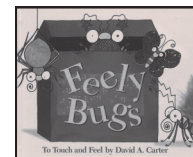


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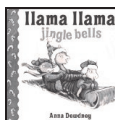
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♥ "I am writing in regards to the books you sent. My teachers & pupils are beyond grateful! The smiles across their faces brought tears to my eyes."

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♥♥ STOCK TRANSFER ♥♥

A very generous stock transfer from one of our donors enabled us to upgrade some of our aging equipment, and fund some of our special give-away programs (see pages 3 & 4) which put thousands of new braille books into the hands of eager children.

If you are interested in donating stock to Seedlings, please call 800-777-8552.

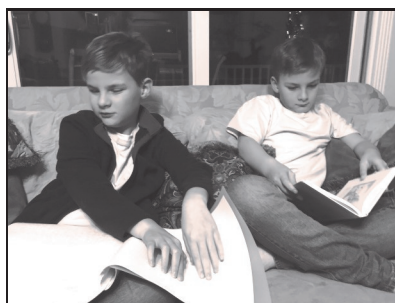


We are so fortunate to have so many generous people who support our mission.

We work very hard to keep accurate records. With a list this size, however, sometimes errors occur. If this has happened, we sincerely apologize. Please let us know if we need to make any changes to our records.

*These gifts are changing lives ... like Tyler's & Joseph's:*

"I am the proud mother of twin 8-year-old boys. Our bookshelves are filled with print books for Joseph and braille books for Tyler. Joseph and Tyler like to read the same things - Joseph can read a print book and I can get the braille version of the same book from Seedlings for Tyler. I feel it is very important for young non-sighted children to have easy access to books to read just like their sighted peers!"







Many people made special donations to Seedlings during 2016 in memory of friends and loved ones. Every \$10 donation subsidized the production of one braille book, and each of these books was marked with a special inscription (in print and in braille) explaining that the book was made possible in part by a donation in memory of the following people:

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**Melvina Kotalik** from Jerry & Denise Kwas

### ♥♥♥ 2016 BEQUESTS ♥♥♥

In 2016, we received generous bequests from the estates of

**Rosalie M. Frantz**  
**Robert & Margaret Isbell**  
**Richard J. Smith**  
**Marilyn Snodgrass**  
**and the Mabel Hopkins Kapp Trust**

These wonderful gifts paid for the production of thousands of books that were given for free to blind children across the U.S. and around the world.



*If you would like more information regarding bequests, please contact Seedlings and your estate planner*



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**Frank Olaszewski** from Vi Hanis, Eleanor Smith  
**Ben Pacheco** from Dorothy Stevenson  
**John & Mary Panton** from Patricia Easton  
**Helen Robbins Paratore** from Gary & Sandy Salyer  
**Victoria Peek** from Kathleen Esper  
**Stanley & Joey Peglowski** from Joan Peglowski  
**Stanley & Mary Peglowski** from Joan Peglowski  
**Paul Perry** from Robert & Virginia Perry  
**Charles Petroskey** from Ann Christenson  
**Richard D. "Rick" Phillips** from Carolyn Shaner  
**Daniel Picker** from Mark & Rochelle Ranta  
**Lucille Picker** from Mark & Rochelle Ranta  
**Marian Williams Pickles** from Gordon & Carol Johnson  
**John Pierce** from Eileen St. John  
**Katherine Pierce** from Eileen St. John  
**Julie Plawecki** from Jacquelynn Stengel  
**Delila Poddig** from Mary Rowe  
**Marian Pokriefka** from Dolores & Richard Callus  
**Gwendolyn Eileen Pollard** from Carol Irvine  
**Harvey Pollard** from Bill & Carol Irvine  
**Mary & Peter Prawdzik** from Carol Prawdzik  
**Susan Prawdzik** from Carol Prawdzik  
**Vincent Prawdzik** from Carol Prawdzik  
**Barbara Prud'homme** from Rick & Erin Swaine  
**Michael Quillin** from Jessica Hall  
**Will Rajala** from Robert & Joan Dague  
**Ben Ratliff** from Jessica Menefee  
**Patricia May Rau** from Pat Cardinal, Vi Hanis  
**Geraldine Raznik** from Sharon Kirchner  
**Virginia Rea** from Michelle Hyatt  
**Shirley Richardson** from Frank & Sandra Guerro  
**Diane Rocher** from Rick & Erin Swaine  
**Faith Ross** from Raymond & Nancy Doute  
**Elsie & Walter Russell** from Betty Farhat  
**Celestine Sabatka** from Bethina Garrett  
**Gerald V. Sadlowski O.D.** from Deanna Sadlowski  
**Charles St. Clair** from Larry & Diane Baird  
**Elizabeth H. Salamon** from Helen Jenkins  
**Edward J. Salamon, Sr.** from Helen Jenkins  
**Carmela Santucci** from Barbara Bates  
**Nicholas Santucci** from Barbara Bates  
**Lil Sarpolis** from Carol Ball  
**Stanley Satovsky** from Nancy & Shel Satovsky  
**Janie Savage** from Bill & Carol Irvine  
**Jacob Schaladensky** from Carolyn Gates  
**Anne Schauer** from Carolyn Gates

♥ "Thank you so much for your contribution in my mother's name. Reading was a favorite pastime of hers. There was no better way to spend the day but 'curled up with a good book.' She made sure to instill this trait in her children and grandchildren. She would be honored to know her name will be in a child's braille book!" ♥



If you or your family would like us to send you some envelopes for tribute donations, please contact Seedlings at 800-777-8552 or [info@seedlings.org](mailto:info@seedlings.org)

**IN MEMORY OF:**

**Norbert Schemansky** from Sharon Moore, Elizabeth Titus  
**Jimmy Joe Schuler** from Ronald & Elizabeth June  
**Blanche Schulz** from Neal Kalish & Sharon Samotis  
**Ursula Schwan** from Donald & Gail Barthauer  
**Seymour Schwartz** from Michael & Margo Siegel  
**Janette C. Schwedt** from Elizabeth Titus  
**Margaret Jane Sekaros** from Joanne Mikosz  
**Jill Sharon Sheridon** from Hezekiah E. Zeiber  
**Melvyn Shewach** from Michael Berman  
**Lori Sholawylo** from Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Ponnors  
**Evelyn V. Shuput** from Judy Fisher  
**Gloria Siegel** from Joe & Mary Majcher  
**John & Juanita Sieruta** from Mary Ellen Krueger  
**Richard Silber** from Jerry Kwas  
**Dennis Singleton** from Mr. & Mrs. Ainar Ayala  
**Helen Sivertson** from Nancy & Al Leszczynski  
**Kristina Sivertson** from Nancy & Al Leszczynski  
**Anna Lumia Skrzycki** from Ray & Nancy Doute  
**Judith Slivinski** from Nancy & Shel Satovsky  
**Alexander Smith** from Larry & Diane Baird  
**Christine E. Smith** from Gamma Alpha of Delta Kappa Gamma  
**Cole Ryan Smith** from Terry & Lynn Smith  
**Jack H. Smith** from Elsie C. Hannigan  
**Marty Smith** from Dee Dee Easton  
**Marie Snyder** from Jerry Kwas  
**Winnie Snyder** from Nancy & Shel Satovsky  
**Elma E. Soter** from Penelope Norton  
**Demetra (June) Spiro** from Erin & Rick Swaine  
**Jean Stack** from Shirley Brown  
**Ervin Stahl** from Julie Stahl & Joe Pasek  
**Joan Stanford** from Gary Salyer & the Detroit Diesel Softball Club  
**Albin Stankus** from Emily Stankus  
**Jeanne M. Stanley** from Karen Weingarden  
**Gordon (Terry) Starick** from Amy McDonald-Lamiman  
**Helen Steinwedel** from Marge Stuebben  
**Dolores Stepaniak** from Eleanor Smith  
**Norma Stewart** from Debra Bonde, Dorothy Stevenson  
**Ray Stewart** from Debra Bonde  
**Josef Stoeger** from Kathleen Esper  
**John Martin Strauss** from Elizabeth Titus  
**Lloyd Strausz** from Marilyn Hersh  
**Mary V. Szetela** from Michelle Milko  
**Jordan Tanasoff** from William & Dorothy Parmentier  
**Anita Tancuay** from Al & Eileen Eardley  
**Delphine Tanski** from Patti & Tom Barbuto

**Joan Taylor** from Frank & Cynthia Rauth  
**Joan Teetzel** from Jacquelynn Stengel  
**Phyllis A. Templin** from Vi Hanis,  
     Eleanor Smith  
**Donald Theisen** from Mr. & Mrs. James  
     Liddle  
**Doreen Thibodeau** from Cindy Hryczyk  
**Barbara Thomas** from Linda Scherdt  
**Dorothy Anne Tilson** from Ron &  
     Barbara Broadley  
**Molly Traeder** from Woodhaven Seniors  
**DJ Trujillo** from Cincy Hryczyk  
**Ralph Vader** from Vi Hanis, Eleanor  
     Smith  
**Karen Valenti** from Julie Stahl & Joe  
     Pasek  
**Virginia Van Assche** from Lee & Kathy  
     Kappler  
**Mary Catherine Vitali** from David & Linda  
     Vitali  
**Carl Vogel** from Bob & Joan Dague  
**Marilyn Ruth Volk Mueller** from Ray &  
     Nancy Doute  
**Eleanor Wagner** from Mary Anne Merucci  
**Kathy Walls** from Dorothy Trent  
**Max Walter** from Julie & Brian Unatin  
**Marti Watson** from Richard & Barbara  
     Hutchison  
**Bernard W. Webb** from Walter E. Barnes,  
     Pamella Christensen, Donald & Judy  
     Deckert  
**Gerald Weichbrodt** from John & Carolyn  
     Clark, Mary Beth Kullen-Weichbrodt,  
     Laurie Silvester, Grant & Jane  
     Weichbrodt  
**Gerry Wendt** from Chuck Wendt  
**Chuckie Wendt, Jr.** from Chuck Wendt  
**Norma L. Weston** from Patricia Green

**Rose Mary Wharton** from Diane & Dave  
*Hosey & Neighbors*  
**Marvin White** from Robert & Joan Dague  
**David P. Williams** from Ron & Barbara  
*Broadley*  
**Reverand Robert Willoughby** from Sharon  
*R. Rose*  
**Karen Wilson** from Elsie Rao  
**Jeff Wojtowicz** from Ed & Phyllis Burns &  
*Family*  
**Sally Wolfe** from Robert & Joan Dague,  
*Lee & Kathy Kappler*  
**Delphine Wolter** from Gordon & Carol  
*Johnson*  
**Andrew Wong** from Raymond & Nancy  
*Doute*  
**Mary Woodley** from Alice Brooks  
**Edward Wozniak** from Penelope Weiss  
**Eugene Wuerz** from Jan Gabier  
**Helen Wurmlinger** from Ronald & Margaret  
*Stuebner*  
**Gilbert Wyers** from Patti & Tom Barbuto  
**Fred Yahrling** from Mr. & Mrs. James  
*Liddle*  
**Virginia Yanowski** from Rita Osada  
**Ned Zane** from Erin Paschke  
**Myrtle Ray Zeiber** from Hezekiah E. Zeiber  
**Elsie Ziska** from Jacquelyn Rice  
**Catherine Zotos** from Ray & Nancy Doute  
**Annabelle Zuchet** from Kay Cozzi  
**Donna Zuzula** from Nancy & Sheldon  
*Satovsky*  
**M.J., Sienna & Natalie** from Patricia (Dee  
*Dee) Easton*  
**Maggie** from Pat Yackel  
**My Yakkie** from Pat Yackel  
**Their parents** from George & Elaine  
*Anderson*

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

***♥ We are often told that memorial gifts to Seedlings carry a special meaning. The thought that books for blind children will be sent with an inscription in memory of a loved one brings comfort and solace to the families and the donors. Here's what one donor wrote:***

*"This donation is in memory of my parents. They were great supporters of education and as an educator myself, I can think of no better way to honor them than getting books into the hands of children who have a more limited access to them than others do."*

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

*These books are changing the lives of children & teens like Alyssa:*



**“I** am a 15-year-old girl and I am blind. I love Seedlings’ books because they help me to escape the world around me. When I am reading your books, I am able to feel a part of the story. I can hear what the characters hear, and feel what they feel. A lot of people say that we don’t need braille books because there are audio-books, but those stories don’t seem real. I love holding a braille book in my hand; it makes me feel like I am like everyone else. Thank you for your amazing books!”

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥



## ☆ 2016 SPECIAL GIFTS

Amazon Smile—Customers designate .5% to Seedlings: \$332  
 J.S. Bellis—Pop can recycling: \$1420  
 The Bob-O Golf Tournament: \$1000  
 Chessiecon—Proceeds from Art Show: \$110  
 Children's Charities of America—Government Employees' Payroll Deductions: \$6046  
 Sophia Cicciarelli (3rd grade)—Can & Bottle Drive: \$34  
 Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Livonia)—Emphasis of the Month: \$1008  
 Employees of Canton Township—Denim Day: \$120  
 Employees of Livonia—Jean's Day: \$381  
 ES3 Staff—Bowling Fundraiser: \$100  
 Logan & Pamela Flack—Youth Makes a Difference: \$725  
 Diane Irvine—Garden Party Art Show: \$400  
 Kroger Community Rewards—Customers designate a % to Seedlings: \$1420  
 Livonia Jaycees—Murder Mystery: \$1000  
 Marley Lee Ann Major (age 8)—Donations in Lieu of Birthday Gifts: \$225  
 Suburban Eye Care—Print & Braille Holiday Cards: \$600  
 Thrivent Financial—Members' Choice Dollars: \$762  
 Weston United Methodist Church—Vacation Bible School: \$276



*Sophia*



*Marley*



**Logan and Pamela Flack of Livonia both love to read, and they think it is unfair that children who are blind and visually impaired have far fewer books than sighted kids. So the siblings chose Seedlings Braille Books for Children for their Youth Making a Difference project at their school, raising \$725 – enough for Seedlings to make at least 70 more braille books.**

## ☆ 2016 CORPORATIONS:

Alpha USA  
 Amazon Smile Foundation  
 Arbor Research Collaborative  
 Awecomm Technologies  
 Cengage Learning  
 Cincinnati Time Recorder Inc.  
 Enhanced Vision in honor of Alan Buckner, Tim Pallaoro, George Dedes, Alfonso Taylor, Leonardo Araujo, Matthew Johnson, George Kremer, Stephanie Prechel, Bricker Buseth, Chris Hedlich, Karolina Smiley, Elizabeth Becker, Ronda: Ferris St. Vision Center, Peter Zaremba, Bernard Miller  
 EPK Design  
 Exelon Foundation  
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 Law Auto Sales, Inc.  
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 Senscomp Inc.  
 Troy Clogg Landscape Assoc.  
 Valspar Corporation  
 Vistage Michigan  
 World Book



*Thank you  
so much!*

## A Beneficial Way to Leave a Legacy:

Congress has now made it possible for U.S. citizens to save tax money and leave a legacy at the same time! If you are 70.5 or older, you can direct your IRA administrator to distribute a gift from your IRA to support the charities of your choice. Any amount you transfer counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD). You must be sure to have the money transferred directly from your IRA, though, in order to avoid having to pay income tax on the distribution.

**For more information, please consult your financial advisor.**

## ☆ 2016 GROUP DONATIONS ☆

We are so thankful to all the groups who have supported Seedlings over the years. We are especially indebted to all who have shared Seedlings' story with their churches, civic groups, and coworkers ... thereby inspiring others to join our efforts to share the gift of reading with blind children!  
*"Together we can do so much!" – Helen Keller*

### ☆ 2016 GROUPS:

Alpha Delta Kappa: Theta Chapter  
 Altrusa International of Grand Rapids  
 American Legion Aux. #392  
 Antioch Lutheran Church  
 Beta Sigma Phi: Preceptor Gamma Mu  
 Beta Sigma Phi: Xi Delta  
 Beverly Hills Lions Club  
 Blue Flame Retirees Club  
 Bob-O Golfers  
 Club General Motors  
 Delta Gamma: Ann Arbor Alumnae *in honor of Lorna Prescott, Darragh Humphrey Weisman*  
 Delta Gamma: Detroit North Suburban Alumnae  
 Delta Gamma: Grosse Pointe Alumnae  
 Delta Gamma: Chicago West Suburban Alumnae  
 Delta Kappa Gamma: Gamma Alpha  
 Detroit Westtown-Hartford Lions  
 Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
 Employees of Canton Township  
 Employees of Farmington  
 Employees of Harlequin  
 Employees of the City of Livonia  
 Galilee Chapter 1078 of JWI  
 GFWC Dearborn  
 Grandville Jenison Lions Club

Grosse Pointe Memorial Church  
 Harper Woods/Grosse Pointe Woods Lions  
 Hillsdale Lions Club  
 Kappa Sigma Friends & Brothers *in honor of Bill Tancill*  
 Kiwanis Club Of Utica-Shelby Township  
 Lake Orion Lioness Club  
 Lathrup Village Lions Club  
 Lewiston Lioness Lions Club  
 Lions Club of Canton  
 Literati Book Club  
 Livonia AM Rotary  
 Livonia Jaycees  
 Livonia Lions Club  
 Livonia Rotary Club  
 Livonia Town Hall  
 Madonna University Lions Club  
 Metroparks Administrative Office  
 Nardin Park Braille Transcribers  
 Northville FOE AERIE #2504  
 Northville Lions Club  
 Novi Lions Club  
 Optimist Club of Downtown Detroit  
 Plymouth Lions Club  
 Rockwood Area Lions Club  
 Rosedale Gardens Presbyterian Church  
 Rotary Club of West Bloomfield  
 Royal Oak Woman's Club



*We celebrated Livonia Lion Al Blanchard's 85th birthday at Seedlings' 2016 Bowling Event*

Saint John Lutheran Men's Bible Study  
 Saint Mary Magdalen Parish  
 SS Simon & Jude Mother Cabrini Guild  
 SS Simon & Jude Ushers' Club  
 Staff of Judge Timothy M. Kenny *in honor of Timothy M. Kenny*  
 Staff of Seedlings Braille Books *in honor of Ray & Rosemary Blaszkiewicz's 50th Wedding Anniversary, All the Seedlings Volunteers*  
 Sterling Heights Lioness Club  
 Stockbridge Lioness Club  
 Stockbridge Lions Club  
 Thanksgiving Science Fiction  
 Trenton Lions Club  
 United Methodist Women  
 University New Gratiot Lions Club  
 Wednesday Afternoon Ladies' Poker Club *in honor of Pat Boljesic, Doris Busuito, Irene Carpenter, Barbara Leonard, Beverly Robertson, Carol Yakey*  
 Wee Friends Child Care & Milford Bunco Group *in honor of Avery Devereux*  
 Western Wayne County USBC  
 Westland Lions Club  
 Weston United Methodist Church  
 Wixom-Walled Lake Lions Club  
 Woodhaven Senior Citizens  
 Wyandotte Lions Club  
 Wyoming Lions Club



*The Optimist Club of Downtown Detroit came to Seedlings for a tour and to deliver a helpful donation!*

♥ ♥ Thank you! ♥ ♥



When we realized that less than 5% of all books are made available in a format that is accessible to the blind, we became determined to work even harder to make more titles available in braille. It is an expensive, time-consuming process to prepare a book for production in braille, so we turned to our loyal supporters for help ... and as always, we were overwhelmed by your response!

### 2016 Book Sponsors and their books:

**The Emily Griffin Foundation:** *Magic Tree House: Stage Fright on a Summer Night*  
**Marge Guezen in honor of Karyn & Don Pokorny's 50th Anniversary:** *The War that Saved My Life*  
**SensComp, Inc. of Livonia:** *Magic Tree House: Tigers at Twilight*  
**Jane Van Dragt:** *A Long Walk to Water*

### 2016 UEB Conversion Sponsors and their books:

**Barbara Bachman:** *James and the Giant Peach*  
**Shirley Brown:** *Ramona Quimby, Age 8;*  
*Hardy Boys: Tower Treasure*  
**Hal Learman & C. A. Pokriefka, Jr.:** *A Dog Called Homeless; Island of the Blue Dolphins;*  
*Chocolate Fever; Disney's Beauty and the Beast*

If you would like to help make more titles available in braille, please contact Seedlings at 800-777-8552. A \$1,000 contribution will enable us to launch a brand new title. A \$500 donation makes it possible for us to convert a title to the new braille code (UEB). Upon receipt of your donation, a list of possible titles will be sent to you so that you may select one.



"Thank you for what you do! Our daughter squeals when she receives a box from Seedlings! She can't wait to see what new things she gets to read!"



### 2016 GRANTS

**Beta Sigma Phi Endowment Fund**  
**Community Foundation for SE Michigan**  
**Delta Gamma Foundation**  
**Delta Gamma Chicago West**  
**Suburban Alumnae:** *Play & Learn Braille Kits for IL Teachers*  
**Eagles for Children:** *Books for the Redford and Livonia Public Libraries*  
**Goodman Family Trusts**  
**Emily Ann Griffin Foundation:**  
*Book Sponsor*  
**Livonia Community Foundation:**  
*Play & Learn Braille Kits for Livonia Students*  
**Oliver Dewey Marcks Foundation**  
**Donald D. Mateer Charitable Foundation**  
**Michigan Braille Transcribing Fund:** *Free Braille Books for Michigan TSVIs*  
**The Pless Foundation**  
**The Trott Foundation**  
**The Wolzinger Family Foundation**



### ♥ Read with Feeling Programs ♥ — Kids helping kids —



In 2016, these schools and scout troops enjoyed presentations about braille given by the Seedlings staff. The students then raised a total of \$1107 to help put more braille books into the hands of children:



*At these events, sighted children learn about the braille alphabet, how our books are made, and how they can help us make more books.*



*They also get to write their names in braille using a slate and stylus!*

**Cub Scout Pack 907:** Livonia, MI  
**Girl Scout Troop 40294 :**  
 Northville, MI  
**Girl Scout Troop 70479:** Novi, MI  
**GSSEM Troops 70423 & 74637:**  
 Livonia, MI  
**Immanuel Lutheran School:**  
 Saginaw, MI  
**Kenbrook Brownie Troop:**  
 Farmington Hills, MI  
**Staff & Students of Kennedy Elementary:** Livonia, MI  
**Wood Creek Elementary School:**  
 Farmington Hills, MI



If you would like to host a program, please contact Seedlings:  
 734-427-8552 or [info@seedlings.org](mailto:info@seedlings.org)



## SEEDLINGS' 29th ANNUAL BOWLING EVENT RAISES A RECORD \$46,000!



Thank you to our bowlers, sponsors, donors, and volunteers who helped raise a record \$46,000 at Seedlings' 2016 Bowling Event, shattering the previous record of \$36,000 in 2015. Thanks to you, we were able to place 4,600 braille books into the hands of eager children who read by touch!

### EVENT SPONSORS

#### Headlining Sponsors

Alpha USA  
Cole, Newton & Duran,  
CPAs  
Livonia Builders  
Plymouth Lions Club  
Valassis

#### Bowling Towel Sponsor

Kopmeyer & Talty P.C.

#### Goody Bag Sponsor

Smith & Associates—Novi

#### Lunch & Program Sponsors

Bill Brown Ford  
Bright House Networks  
Livonia Kids & Families  
The Basilica of St. Mary  
The UPS Foundation  
Women's National Book  
Association—Detroit Chapter

#### T-Shirt Sponsors

Dearborn Heights Lions Club  
Livonia Lions Club  
Livonia Metro Plex  
Lou LaRiche Chevrolet  
St. Mary Mercy Hospital  
State Farm Insurance-Ryan Wagner  
Suburban Eye Care  
Westland Lions Club

#### Lane Sponsors

Aadvise Consulting, LLC  
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Associated Retinal Consultants  
Blackwell Ford, Inc.  
John & Janis Burkhardt  
Consolidated Document Solutions  
Educational Visions Alliance, Inc.  
Embassy Title, Inc.  
Enhanced Vision  
Financial & Portfolio Advisors, Ltd.  
FoleyPLEX LLC  
Foresters Financial Partners  
Jimmy Johns, Livonia & Plymouth

Kennedy Industries, Inc.  
Klisz Law Office, PLLC  
Livonia A.M. Rotary Club  
Livonia Chamber of Commerce  
Livonia Kiwanis Early Risers  
The Looney Baker  
Marston Optometry  
Kathleen McIntyre,  
Livonia City Council President  
Law Office of Leo D. Neville, PLLC  
Parkside Credit Union  
Pipefitters Local 636  
Plymouth Lions Club  
RFT Search Group  
Schoolcraft College  
Cheryl Shewach:  
Memory of Melvyn D. Shewach  
Rick and Erin Swaine  
The UPS Store-5 Mile & Newburgh  
Vibe Credit Union  
Wolverine Orthotics, Inc.

☆ Special Thanks to Dave Rexroth,  
our celebrity bowler from WXYZ TV

### PRIZE CONTRIBUTORS

ABC Warehouse  
Patti Abdalla  
Absopure  
African Safari Wildlife Park  
Gretchen Alaniz  
A.T. Guys—J.J. Meddaugh  
Awrey's Bakery  
Bank's Vacuum  
Bavarian Inn Lodge  
Bee's Knees Pottery  
Belle Tire  
Blazo's Pie Shoppe  
Blue Plate Diner  
Bounce It Up  
Bravo! Cucina Italiana  
Gerald & Linda Bricker  
Buddy's Pizza  
Cardwell Florist  
Debbie Charnley  
Sharon Coll  
Commerical Lawnmower  
Community Financial  
Credit Union  
Corsi's Restaurant  
Courthouse Grille

Daly's Restaurant  
Darling Ingredients Inc.  
Dental Smiles of Livonia  
Detroit Red Wings  
Detroit Tigers  
Detroit Zoological Society  
DFCU Financial  
Dr. Shaw & Dr. Jane  
Orthodontics  
Drs. Jeffrey & Stephanie  
Jaghab & Assoc.  
Edsel & Eleanor Ford House  
Embassy Suites Detroit  
Livonia/Detroit  
Farmington Players  
Todd & Cindy Fleming  
Fleming's Steakhouse &  
Wine Bar  
Mollie Galate  
Genitti's Hole in the Wall  
Golden Gifts Jewelers  
Gordon Food Service  
Judith Guest  
Erin Halloran  
Hunt's ACE Hardware

Jimmy John's of Livonia  
Kellogg Hotel /Conference Ctr.  
King's Island  
Chuck & Lisa Krantz  
Livonia Civic Chorus  
Livonia Community  
Recreation Center  
Livonia Trophy  
Looney Baker  
Lou LaRiche Chevrolet  
Ilene Lubin  
Macomb Center for the  
Performing Arts  
Sharon Marsh  
Meadow Brook Theatre  
Memorable Moments  
Photography  
Michigan Theater Foundation  
Molly Maid  
NWC  
Obregon Family Dentistry  
Olympia Entertainment  
O'Malley's Bar & Grill  
One Under Bar and Grill  
Panera Bread

Papa Vino's Italian Kitchen  
Paris Bakery  
Parkside Credit Union  
Penn Theatre  
Peter's True Value Livonia  
Phoenix Theatres  
Purple Rose Theatre  
Ray Lighting Centers  
Read It Again Books  
River Walk Theater  
Senate Coney Island  
Cheryl Shewach  
Suburban Eye Care  
The Ark  
The Great Escape Room  
The Henry Ford, America's  
Greatest History Attraction  
University Musical Society  
Vibe Credit Union  
Wayne State University  
Theatres  
Weber's Inn  
Westin Detroit Metropolitan  
Airport Hotel  
Wild Swan Theater





## FALL 2016: SEEDLINGS' FIRST-EVER ONLINE AUCTION WAS A WINNER!

-20-

Thank you to our prize donors and auction participants who helped raise \$12,000 during Seedlings' first-ever online auction Nov. 1-14, surpassing the \$10,000 goal by 20 percent! We were able to produce and distribute an additional 1,200 braille books because of you!

☆ Be sure to watch for the 2nd Annual Auction in the fall of 2017! ☆

### THANK YOU TO OUR AUCTION PRIZE DONORS!

Gretchen Alaniz  
Alkevicius Breads  
Alpha USA  
Applebee's  
Bavarian Belle Riverboat  
Beadtopography  
Belle Tire  
Belles & Beaux Chapter 887/  
Children of Confederacy  
Big Bay Point Lighthouse B&B  
Biggby Coffee  
Bill Brown Ford  
Black Rock Bar & Grill  
Jerry & Linda Bricker  
Busch's Fresh Food Market  
California Pizza Kitchen  
B. Kay Campbell, PhD  
Cardwell Florist  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African-American History  
Chateau Chantal  
Cherry Republic  
Chipotle Mexican Grill  
Costco Wholesale  
Creation Museum  
Crossroads Village & Huckleberry RR  
Crystal Mountain  
David & Cheryl Cyrus  
Dave & Buster's  
Detroit Zoo  
Pat Dierks  
Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop  
Kathy Donagrandi  
East Side Mario's  
Eddie Bauer  
Hugh & Carole Edwards  
Financial & Portfolio Advisors, Ltd.  
Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar  
Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center  
Frederik Meijer Gardens  
Larry & Lucy Fritz  
Chuck Gaidica  
Dick Gaskill  
Mark & Kelly Gaskill  
George Matick Chevrolet  
Wes & Patty Graff  
The Grand Hotel

Grand Traverse Pie Co.  
Granite City Food & Brewery  
Great Lakes Loons  
Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical  
Society  
Christine Greig  
Karen Hamelink  
Jan Hankins  
Andrea Harris  
Hearing Consultants of SE Michigan  
Willetta Heising  
Holiday Inn Express Munising  
Holly Hotel  
Marcella Holmes  
Home Depot  
Honey Baked Ham  
Jimmy John's  
Joe's Produce  
Jim Jolly  
Kathy Johnson  
Just Jewelers  
Kid Rock  
Klisz Law Office  
Kroger Co. of Michigan  
John & Jessica Kuskus  
LaBistecca Italian Grille  
Barb Lewis  
Carolyn Higginson Lewis  
Livonia Civic Chorus  
Livonia Family YMCA  
Livonia Fire Department  
Livonia Golf Division  
Livonia Mayor Dennis Wright  
Livonia Police Department  
Livonia Symphony Orchestra  
Pat MacDonald  
Marston Optometry  
Louise McGhie  
John & MaryAnn McGrail  
Kathleen McIntyre  
Meadow Brook Hall  
Meijer  
Michigan Opera Theatre  
Mid-Michigan Children's Museum  
Motown Museum  
New Horizons  
Orin Jewelers

P.F. Chang's  
Painting With A Twist  
Paul's Players Community Theater  
Pictured Rocks Cruises  
Pine Knob Ski Resort  
Jo E. Pinto  
Pro Sports Zone  
Rainforest Café  
Robert's Turkey Farm  
Bob Roussey  
Salon Legato  
Samantha Originals  
Sand Hills Lighthouse Inn  
Katherine Schneider  
Shedd Aquarium  
Mary Ann Sincok  
Sky Zone Trampoline Park  
Splash Universe Water Park Resorts  
SS Badger (Lake Michigan Carferry)  
State Rep. Laura Cox  
Suburban Eye Care, P.C.  
Tanglewood Golf Course  
The Braille and Talking Book Library  
The Henry Ford  
The Inn at St. John's  
The Laundry  
The Looney Baker  
The Stained Pane  
The UPS Store-5 Mile & Newburgh Rd.  
Toledo MudHens  
Toledo Zoo  
U.S. Rep. Dave Trott (R-Birmingham)  
Varsity Ford  
Victory Honda of Plymouth  
Virginia AER  
Visions Spa Salon  
W.S. Badger Co.  
Judy Walsh  
Walt Disney World Co.  
Waterfall Jewelers  
Wayne County Commissioner  
Terry Marecki  
Westland Lions Club  
Wheelhouse Detroit  
Wisconsin White Cane Day Celebration  
Julie Witkowski  
Zingerman's Delicatessen

*Although we are not able to list all of the bidders here, the auction would not have been a success without them! They are truly appreciated! Nearly 200 of Seedlings' supporters from all over the United States bid on the auction items, placing a total of 1,287 bids. An astonishing 50 items went for more than their value! Many children are now reading because of their generous help & support!*



The Big Bay  
Lighthouse B&B  
gift certificate  
received 17 bids!

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Retired educator still serving blind children

**W**hen Kathy Donagrandi was a teenager, she took a volunteer job at a camp for children with special needs.

She came home after the first day and told her mother: "It was awful. It hurt my heart." Her mother said she didn't have to go back.

But the next day, she did. "There was something about those children that I realized," she said. "They were children. They were different, but they were like the children in my neighborhood."

That realization – that children with special needs are children first – has shaped Kathy's life. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in teaching students who are visually and mentally impaired from Eastern Michigan University, and then spent 44 years working in special education at Livonia Public Schools.

She started out transcribing students' assignments into braille so the students could read them, and students' brailled homework into print so the teachers could grade it. She retired in January 2015 as administrator of student services.

About a year later, she became Seedlings' newest volunteer.

As a retiree, Kathy could have volunteered anywhere. "There are so many places that want your time and your money," she said. But she chose Seedlings, she said, not only because of her life's passion but because of founder/director Debra Bonde.

As a member of Seedlings' board from 1988 to 1995, including time as president, Kathy knows Debra runs a well-managed non-profit. Of every \$1 donated, 91 cents goes into book production, not overhead costs. "All the money



**Kathy Donagrandi arrives at Seedlings with books she's brailled at home. She is accompanied by granddaughters Emma and Anna.**

goes where it should go."

Kathy spends five to six hours a week applying braille on clear tape next to the print in baby board books. She takes pleasure in knowing that the blind students she taught, now grown, have books in braille they can read to their children.

Kathy remembers when her blind students didn't have braille books for pleasure reading because they cost too much, or their parents didn't know where to find them.

Seedlings, which Debra started 32 years ago, changed all that by selling books at an average price of only \$10 a book, about half the cost to produce them, and publishing a catalog where parents and grandparents could select books to give as gifts to blind children.

Children who are visually impaired need to have books just like sighted children do, Kathy said. "It's freeing for them not to have to depend on someone reading to them."

Kathy and Debra met during Seedlings' early years when Seedlings' office was in Debra's basement in Detroit. Kathy helped Seedlings find its first Livonia home in the old Bentley High School.

Besides serving on Seedlings' board, Kathy participated in fundraisers and helped spread the word about Seedlings. She often makes a donation to have a book inscribed in someone's name to honor or remember them. Now, some of those people do the same for others.

Kathy always knew she'd come back to Seedlings to volunteer after retiring. "There was no organization I would be more comfortable with," she said.



**Donagrandi trims the brailled tape she will apply to the Print-Braille-&-Picture books.**



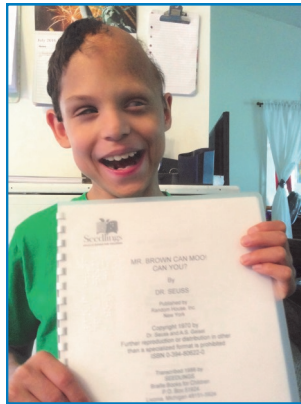
# Your donations are making a difference!

**We** asked parents to send in photos of their children and a paragraph about why they love Seedlings' books, half of which we are able to give away for free because of our generous donors.

Their heart-warming responses affirm the work Seedlings and our supporters are doing together to raise the braille literacy rate worldwide.

Here are some of our favorite responses:

**"I** wish you could see Jack's face light up when he receives his 'bumpy books.' They have given him a joy of reading. I even caught him one night holding a book under his covers, reading. Thank you for the service you provide."



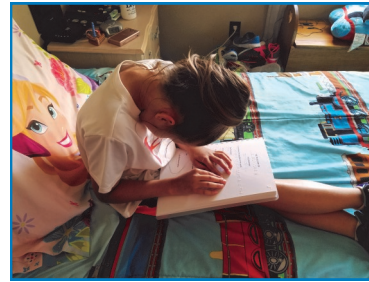
**"Rebekah** was born blind due to a rare genetic disorder. We have six other children who are not blind. Perhaps our favorite thing about Seedlings' books is that the print-braille format allows Rebekah's siblings to enjoy reading books with her."

**"Our** local library doesn't have any braille books



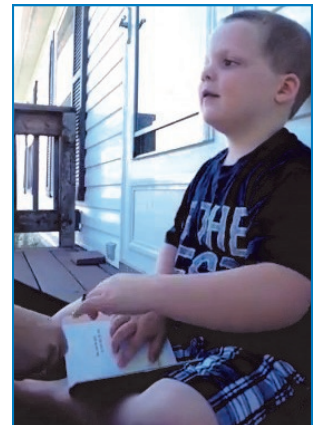
very affordable. We love Seedlings' books!"

our 7-year-old daughter can check out and read, and braille books aren't otherwise easy to find and purchase but thankfully we have Seedlings books to turn to as a resource. The books have always been



loves reading her special books from Seedlings, like *The True Story of Pocahontas*. She is able to read with friends and tell them about braille, a complete turnaround. Seedlings has allowed her to get books that she wants to read, just like her peers do."

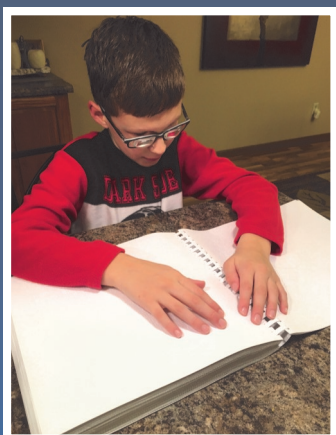
**"My** son Liam, a happy and busy 7-year-old who happens to be deafblind, loves anything and everything braille. We love Seedlings because their books are affordable and they have a variety of books to choose from. Thank you, Seedlings, for offering accessible books for my son and supporting his love for literacy!"



**"T**atum is blind and has autism. She loves Seedlings' braille books. Tatum remembers all the stories we read with her. We believe these wonderful books will help our beautiful Tatum feel more independent."



**"E**lsa was adopted at two years old from an orphanage in China. She has extremely limited vision and will need to be a braille reader. When we first adopted her she was not interested in books at all. We have received a quite a few books from Seedlings and now they are one of her favorite things."



*Thanks to you,  
children are  
reading, learning  
& growing!*



"Mason is in the 5th grade. He has been reading Braille since kindergarten. Before we found Seedlings, it was hard to find brailled materials. Mason loves to pick out books! He is often found in his room reading books by choice. We have been blessed by Seedlings and all their programs that help provide books to kids like Mason. It's truly a fabulous organization!"

"I love to read the Braille books that I receive from Seedlings. I want to be able to read a real book, just like my friends do, instead of only being able to listen to a book. When the box of books is left on the front steps of my house, I am excited to find out what has arrived! I even take them to my school's library so that I can check out books just like the other kids in my school.

Reading Braille is awesome. It helps me learn how to spell, use punctuation and do what my friends do in our classroom. Thank you for giving me these books so that I can continue to learn new things!" —Brooke, Age 10

***Seedlings Braille Books for Children***  
*Sowing the seeds of literacy and  
opening the doors to education & independence  
for blind children around the world since 1984!*