

NIGERWIVES BRAILLE BOOK PRODUCTION CENTRE

(A National Project of Nigerwives Nigeria)

P. O. Box 52335, Ikoyi, Lagos

Patron of the Braille Centre:

Professor. V. C. Ike



Nigerwives National President:

Mrs. Caroline Idowu

Newsletter - No. 6

March 2000

(A Newsletter to inform Friends of the Centre of its progress, activities and needs.)

AIM OF THE CENTRE

The main aim of the Centre is to produce brailled books for the visually handicapped in Nigeria, especially students, thereby assisting them towards fulfilling their best potential.

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The Move

These last 12 months have been quite difficult because of the problem with accommodation. We knew we would have to move because of NNPC relocating to Abuja but we did not realise it would be quite so problematic. However I am happy to report that NNPC has kindly agreed to accommodate our original portakabin at their Lagos Zonal Office in Ikoyi but there is insufficient space in the compound for the second. They have suggested an alternative which we are pursuing and we hope to have both portakabins accommodated in the near future so that we can start our computer training programme.

Although we were able to move the portakabin in November 1999, power was not connected until this month (March 2000) so the Centre was not functioning for about 6 months. We were however able to produce some books during this period at the ANWAB Centre—which has the same equipment—and we are grateful to them for allowing us to do so. You will see later in the Newsletter that our visually impaired employee—Mr. Abiodun Sulaimon—is no longer with us. He has been replaced by Mr. Opeolu Akinola.

Support

As you will see from the list of donations, we continue to receive very good support from our friends—both individuals and organisations. The move has set us back somewhat but we hope to recover very quickly so that our friends can continue to have confidence in the work of the Centre. I do thank you all for your interest and support. When we have the second portakabin set up we will inform you so that you can visit us there.

Looking ahead

Whilst visiting the US recently I had the opportunity to pay a 3-day visit to the Canadian Institute for the Blind (CNIB) in Toronto. It was a wonderful experience and I was amazed at the tremendous contribution of volunteers

there. Volunteers train other volunteers to braille and to record books on cassettes and tapes. I hope to start a Volunteer Braille training programme once our accommodation issue is settled. The CNIB Braille training programme takes 8 months and trainees meet once a week. They do regular weekly assignments which are again marked by volunteers. Their standard is very high—only 3 errors are allowed in the final exam for certification. Over the next few months I will be searching for braille writers to enable us start the course. Obviously the CNIB has access to much more equipment than we have but at one time they started in a small way too and we must do the same.

In November 1999, as President of the National Braille Council of Nigeria, I had the privilege of attending the General Assembly of the International Council of English Braille. This was only possible through the generosity of *British Airways* who very kindly sponsored the flights. At the Assembly I presented a paper on the need for the Council to consider braille symbols for phonetics and non-English letters in the indigenous alphabets. Both are of great importance to visually impaired students in third world countries whose second language is English.

This is the beginning of a new millennium and I look forward to the Centre making major strides forwards this year. Thank you for helping us get so far and I pray you will be solidly behind us as we move forwards.

Jean Obi (Co-ordinator)

COMPUTER TRAINING:

We have been eager to start this programme for some time now. Presently the problem is a site for our second portakabin. We are determined to set up our training programme for visually impaired graduates to enable these young people to operate effectively in administrative positions. At the moment we have all the equipment necessary - the computers, JAWS screen reading and synthesiser software. All that is lacking is the space to do the job, and we are optimistic that we shall soon find a place for the second portakabin that will house our training centre.

For companies who will consider employing a visually impaired person with such training, we would be ready to translate into braille any tests or materials required for

the interviewing procedure. Free training will be given to successful applicants but companies are expected to install the appropriate software for the new employee on one of its systems.

Our new Braille Executor

Opeolu Akinola is our new Braille Executor who replaces Abiodun Sulaimon. He is a past student of Pacelli School for the Blind and Federal Government College, Ijaniki. He has a brother and twin sisters who are also blind. One of his sisters featured in our March 98 Newsletter. She is in the US but she came to the Centre for some computer training before she left for the States. Opeolu will run the braille training programme.



Opeolu at work in the Centre

SUPPORT

Company Reports & Most Any Other Paper

We recycle donations of good quality paper for our textbook production (old company reports, good quality magazines, brochures, etc. The printing on the paper does not matter to blind readers; their interest is only in the raised dots which they feel with their fingers.

Bundles of old newspapers, magazines or sheet paper are also much appreciated, since we sell them to generate funds for buying print books for processing.

Donations

Lagos Caledonian Society (March)	N150,000
Lagos Caledonian Society (Dec)	N150,000
NNPC	N500,000
Crushed Rock Industries, PH	N15,000
It's a Small World	N210,000
Nigerwives Branches:	
Abia	N1,000
Enugu	N10,000
Ibadan	N5,000
Lagos	N57,100
Nsukka	N350
Owerri	N5,000

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-ordinator/Technical	Jean Obi MBE
Public Relations	Maria Bayero & Perla Amu

Nordic Women 2 used computers
 Dr. Eddys Amaku, £20

Visitors to the Centre

We are always pleased to receive visitors to the Centre. The following are some we have had the pleasure of receiving during the past 12 months:

Mrs. Carol Robertson, British Women's Group Community Chairperson,
 Mrs. Marion D. Sikuade, Executive Director, Child Life-Line
 Mrs. Lisa Thornton and Mrs. Paige Hassall, Co-chairs, Community Services, American Women's Club
 Mrs. Alison Maitland, Lagos Caledonian Society
 Mrs. Cun Ottochian, music teacher from Holland, teaches the recorder at the Dutch School and Pacelli School. Accompanying her was Miss Annelies Mueller, along with her Seeing Eye Dog, Diablo. Miss Mueller, from Switzerland was on an exchange programme with Pacelli School. She visited the Centre several times afterwards and was impressed with our work.

BOOK PRODUCTION

We now have over 50 completed titles and over 20 at various stages of completion. We must thank our volunteer editors who have done much to help us achieve this. We hope that our group of volunteer editors will grow so that we can achieve much more. We have a computer in the Centre where volunteers can come and work if they wish. There are many other titles waiting to be done. A complete list of books available and those being currently worked on can be obtained from the Centre or by post through our P. O. Box.

WORKING WITH OTHER GROUPS

We continue to co-operate with the following Centres which have the same equipment as ourselves:

- Anglo-Nigeria Welfare Assoc. for the Blind
- Gindiri Resource Centre, Plateau State
- Dept. of Special Education, UniJos.

We will also participate in the workshop and AGM which is being organised by the National Braille Council in Abuja in April. Our Centre is recognised as a leader in braille book production in Nigeria and it is important for us to participate fully in the activities of the National Braille Council. It also enables us to meet many of the contacts for students who need our books.

CONTACT NUMBERS

There is no phone at the Centre but the following will be glad to take messages or give information.

Doris Dada	613-332
Doris Fafunwa	261-5028
Jean Obi (evenings only)	267-2040 & 42
Pearl Ajayi	615-462

Finance	Joyce Fatona
Newsletter	Doris Dada & Doris Fafunwa
NW President (Lagos Branch)	Norma Adebiji
Administrator/Secretary	Pearl Ajayi