

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. Luchelle Nwokogba

Newsletter - No. 8

March 2002

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

AIMS OF THE CENTRE:

To produce brailled books for visually impaired students,
To provide computer training to prepare visually impaired applicants for the world of work.

OUR NEW EXTENSION

Highlights of the Opening of the Computer Training Centre for the Blind and the Volunteer Centre (Kings College Annex, V.I.)

The opening of the Nigerwives Braille Centre extension in December 2001 was a major accomplishment and a proud moment for all those who worked so hard to make it happen.

The day was graced by our patron, Prof. C. Ike, and a national trustee of Nigerwives from Ibadan, Gloriastene Agboola, who was our efficient Chairperson.



Gloriasteene Agboola, Ngozi Omeruah, Jean Obi, Prof. Ike with the Lagos State First Lady, and, in the background, Prof. Fafunwa, Luchelle Nwokogba and Wendy Onuba

The very Special Guest of Honour, the First Lady of Lagos State, Chief (Mrs) Oluremi Tinubu spoke words of encouragement and graciously cut the ribbon to open the Centre.



Chief (Mrs.) Oluremi Tinubu cutting the tape, watched by the Nigerwives National President, Mrs. Luchelle Nwokogba

We were pleased to see several of our major supporters, as well as our own National President Luchelle Nwokogba and AWC President Anna Kate Owens. Many of our members were present, decked out in their beautiful blue and white Nigerwives outfits.

The two new portakabins shone with their fresh coats of sky

blue paint donated by our Lagos sister, Millicent Alintah.

Jean Obi, the Centre Coordinator, welcomed everyone and did the introductions. Credit goes to Jean, a prime mover of the project as well as to our cheerful administrator, Pearl Ajayi, Lagos Branch President Wendy Onuba and all members who in one way or another contributed to make this a memorable event.

Musical entertainment was supplied by Ope Akinola and his band members, all of whom happen to be visually handicapped. Snacks and drinks were served by Lagos Nigerwives.



Ope and his band

The afternoon concluded with a tour of the portakabins, viewing of the computer equipment and photorama of some activities of Nigerwives, as well as of the many varied artistic covers of our Lagos Branch Newsletters beautifully framed.



The President of Lagos Nigerwives, Mrs. Wendy Onuba, welcoming the guests

Donations at the Opening

Below is a list of those who contributed at the ceremony:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. & Mrs. Frank Kessington | Mr. & Mrs. J. Okpala |
| Mrs. Oke & Owasanoye | Betty Akintade |
| May Allotey-Pappoe | Deaconess Ajayi |
| Mr. D. K. Aduamoah | Mr. Abiodun Sulaimon |
| Mr. Adegoke | Mrs. S. Abiola |
| Mr. & Mrs. Aliyu Garba | Mr. & Mrs. O. Ike |
| Mr. A. Nwachukwu | Mr. C. Amu |
| Shomolu NW | Enugu NW |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Kazie | Katie Oruwariye |

Government College Umuahia Old Boys, Lagos Branch

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr. M. A. Osinuga | Chris. Uwaje |
| Mr. & Mrs. S. A. Onyewuanyi | Mr. & Mrs. G. C. Ilukwe |
| Mrs. J. Ohiwerei | Dr. Maria Esin |
| Mrs. O. O. Olowu | Eng. & Mrs. G. E. Otobo |
| Mr. J. C. Obi | Mrs. O. E. Ileka |
| Mrs. Heidi Nnoli | Sonya AIIy |
| Mr. Dayo Babs | Mr. Azubike Nwabuogu |

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

At this time last year we were still looking for a site for our additional two portakabins. I am happy to report that in July last year our search came to an end. We obtained permission to site our two new portakabins in the Kings College Annexe at Victoria Island. They have quite a number of blind students in the college so I believe our presence there will be of mutual benefit to both the college and us. In August we built the base for the portakabins and with the assistance of Brigadier M. Johnson and Mr. Kunnik, vehicles from Julius Berger moved them to the new site. The internal wiring was completed before the opening ceremony in December. The actual connection to NEPA is taking place as I write this and by the time you read this we will have moved in.

There are still items we need for the portakabins, including more computers for both the training programme and the volunteers. The ones for the training programme should be Pentium computers of a standard that the trainees are likely to meet in places of work, but older computers such as 486 machines are adequate for editing and scanning. Other items we now need are a generator, some large bookshelves and some office chairs. Thanks to British Airways' generosity when organising their move from Victoria Island to Ikoyi, the volunteer portakabin is well furnished.

Ope Akinola, a member of our staff who is visually impaired, will be in charge of activities at the extension, including the running of the computer training programme, and he will be happy to answer enquiries about it. During the next few months we will be looking for two additional staff: a) a computer operator/editor and b) an office assistant, increasing our budget for salaries as a result. We have therefore decided to look for friends/companies who will agree to sponsor the staff salaries for a month (approx. N90,000 per month). With 12 such sponsors we can be sure of having the funds to pay the salaries of the staff. Without the staff we cannot supply the services.

Our emphasis this past year has been on the production of copies of books already on our list. We have completed Primary 1 Maths and English and the rest of the series are currently being worked on. We have also started producing a few Easy Readers. I am hoping that our volunteer portakabin will produce a pleasant environment for people to come in and help us with both the scanning and editing of new books and the production of the easy readers.

Ouring the school holidays we will run computer programmes for blind secondary school students.

Our last newsletter reported that the Ibadan branch of Nigerwives had joined hands with the Oyo State Library Board to set up a braille section in the main library. In July, Abeokuta Nigerwives were able to do the same and Ogun State Library Board gave them a very spacious room for the purpose. We congratulate Abeokuta Nigerwives for this achievement!

A continual need is for paper that can be recycled into brailled books. We are grateful to the many people who collected

calendars for us over the New Year. We cut these to size and they make excellent paper for book production. We have three regular suppliers of used paper: the Belgian Embassy through Chris Achimu, the Austrian Embassy through Doris Olayioye and St. John's Anglican Church Falomo. We need any obsolete printed material on fairly heavy paper such as brochures, company reports, etc. Airlines, companies, banks, company registrars, Embassies, printing companies are all potential sources – can **you** help us tap into one? Maybe you know of other possible sources. We consume a vast quantity of paper! Please help us with this.

We continue to have good support from many friends of the Centre, both old and new. Without this support we could not operate so we say a big *Thank You* to you all and hope that you will continue to support us. We are ever grateful for NNPC's magnanimous hospitality and also for the year-round technical support of Resourcery, We hope that neither of them will get tired of supporting us. The four major organisations that continue to support us are *American Women's Club, British Women's Group, Lagos Caledonian Society* and *Small World Project*. We received two new Braille printers during the year, one provided by the *Educational Tax Fund Board* and the other financed through a dinner hosted by the former British Deputy High Commissioner and his wife (Mr. & Mrs. Kershaw) and supported by a group of business people.

We have now taken on new assignments and we need even more support. Thank you for every way you have helped us in the past and we look forward to your continued support in the future.

Jean Obi – Coordinator

Ope Akinola Takes on Job as Professional Trainer

This month Opeola Stephen Akinola takes on the training programme for young visually impaired graduates seeking employment in the business world.

Ope greeting the First Lady of Lagos State,
Chief (Mrs.) Oluremi Tinubu



Ope has been with the Braille Centre for nearly three years as Braille Executor. He was born in Oyo State in 1970. He and his twin sisters who are also blind attended Pacelli School for their primary education. Ope went on to complete his secondary school course at Federal Government College, Ijanikin, after which he entered the University of Lagos and graduated with a BA in History (Second-class Upper) in 1994. For several years before joining us at the Braille Centre, he taught at Pacelli and at Nigerian Farmcrafts Centre for the Blind, Lagos, where he was the Music Instructor.

Ope will be teaching the applicants word processing, using screen readers to make the computers talk. He says the equipment in the Centre is tailored specifically for the workplace. The students will learn to use scanners, read print documents, how to manage files and folders on normal

computers and the application of Microsoft Excel. Under his tutelage, the young people who complete this course, though visually impaired, will be highly motivated and professionally skilled to make a significant contribution in the world of work.

We would be pleased to know of any employers who may be interested in this programme and will gladly provide further details on request.

Besides making use of his professional computer skills, Ope has a range of hobbies, from writing plays, short stories and poems to swimming, playing chess and scrabble, and interest in Igbo, Hausa, Italian and French. After office hours one of his main pursuits is playing in his own seven-piece band, titled "Pain and Pleasure." The band is in demand for weddings and church entertainment, and sometimes may be found playing for their own enjoyment on Badagry Beach.

Pleasant and soft-spoken, Ope takes his recent promotion fully in stride. With his excellent skills and capabilities, there is no doubt in our minds that the programme will be a genuine success.

SUPPORT

Company Reports & Most Any Other Paper Appreciated

We can use practically any kind of paper donation. Although we use the thicker paper (like old annual reports or calendars) for braille, we sell other types, (including newspapers) and use the proceeds for print books. Several cartons of used journals from USIS garnered N14,150, thanks to Funmi Huntar. Chevron collected many old calendars for us and British Council supplied paper, all of which will end up as textbooks for the visually impaired. We make use of enormous amounts of paper, so whatever you may contribute you can be sure it goes for a good cause!

Books

Easy Reader books came from British Women's Group and from American Women's Club

Donations:

We are grateful for the following support this past year:

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>First Lady of Lagos State, Chief Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu</u> | 2 scanners & Book Binder |
| <u>British Women's Group:</u> | N42,000 for a computer |
| <u>American Women's Club</u> | N70,000 plus 2 scanners, African fabric for curtains |
| <u>British Business group</u> | Everest Index Printer |
| <u>Australian High Commission</u> | TGD braille diagram software |
| <u>Education Tax Fund</u> | Everest Index Printer Kombi Book Binder |
| <u>Anonymous</u> | N5,000 (for purchase of polythene bags) |
| <u>Stat Oil (through Nigerwives Lagos)</u> | N100,000 |
| <u>Nigerwives USA (through Doris Dada)</u> | \$200 |

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Co-ordinator/Technical | Jean Obi MBE |
| Public Relations & Personnel | Perla Amu |
| Finance | Chris Achimu & Joyce Fatona |
| Newsletter | Doris Dada & Doris Fafunwa |

| | |
|--|---|
| <u>Mrs. Millicent Alintah</u> | office furniture |
| <u>Mr. A. Stern (GM, British Airways)</u> | office furniture |
| <u>Mrs. Sara Langston</u> | a computer system |
| <u>Mr. Biswas, (Poly Products)</u> | polythene bags for book covers |
| <u>Brig. Johnson (Rtd.) & Mrs. Kunnik</u> | movement of portakabins from NNPC to Kings College Annex (Julius Berger) |
| <u>Mrs Dorothy Orebanjo (Winnipeg, Canada)</u> | Bibles in braille and on cassettes |
| <u>Nigerwives Lagos Branch</u> | water tank |
| <u>Lagos Caledonian Society</u> | N200,000 |
| <u>Alhaji and Mrs. Aliyu Garba</u> | office furniture |

The Volunteer Centre

At long last we now have a special centre where volunteers can come in and offer their services, in a comfortable environment. It is part of the extension to the Centre, situated in the Kings College Annexe on Adeyemo Alakija St. in Victoria Island, (just over Falomo bridge). We are hoping that those who can make time will come to the Centre and volunteer their services.

Here are a few of the many jobs that volunteers can help with: scanning, editing, book binding. Computer skills are an asset but they are not essential.

Scanning can quite quickly be picked up by someone who has no previous computer skills. There is much scanning to do because we have a long list of new titles to produce. We have several new scanners now to cope with the work providing we have the hands to operate them. If they like, volunteers with computer skills and their own facilities can take a book and disk and do editing at home. You can make new friends there too. Come and meet us there.

There are phone numbers at the end of this newsletter that you can call for further information. Nigerwives is also setting up a web site. The domain name is expected to be nigerwivesnigeria.com and it will have a link to the Centre and an e-mail address for the Centre so this will provide an additional contact and a source of information about the Centre.

CONTACT

The Centre's portakabin is situated in the compound of the NNPC Lagos Zonal Office on Kingsway Road, Ikoyi.

Hours: 9 am – 3 pm Mon. – Fri.

There is no phone at the Centre yet, but the following members will gladly take messages or give information.

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

NW President (Lagos Branch)
Administrator/Secretary
Member

Wendy Onuba
Pearl Ajayi
Funmi Huntar