

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. Veronica Agwunobi

Newsletter - No. 4

March 1997

(A Bi-Annual 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

This month our Centre is two years old and we certainly have much to celebrate and many people and organisations to thank for the progress we have managed to make in those two years. We are still very much *toddlers* but we have in place a good base on which to build. The support we have is growing visibly and is most encouraging.

Ulverscroft Foundation Award



(Mr. Eric Hill, the Treasurer of the Ulverscroft Foundation presenting the award to Jean.)

We now have another computer system and another braille printer on the way, thanks initially to Kathy Okpako, an Ibadan Nigerwife who works in the Department of Library Studies at the University of Ibadan. She came across an announcement in a periodical about an Annual International Award funded by the Ulverscroft Foundation in the UK for initiative in providing reading facilities for the disadvantaged. The Foundation is particularly interested in the visually impaired because it is financed from the profits of the Ulverscroft Publishing Company which is a major producer of large-print books for the visually impaired. The application had to be made by an individual

responsible for setting up the facility. Kathy sent me the details and I was able to submit all that they required. We were adjudged the winner of the award for 1996 and I received £5,000 for items for the Centre. This was just enough to purchase a computer system and a braille printer. I happened to be in the UK in December and was able to receive the award from the Trustees of the Foundation personally. We say a big *Thank you* to them for being interested in helping other groups through the Award and look forward to a continued association with their Foundation.

Assistance from Ericsson

We desperately needed a second braille printer. Depending on just one is not sound, as we found out first hand recently when our one and only was out of order. Eventually a faulty part was identified and we then had to find a way of getting it from Sweden where the machine is manufactured. Happily we found a Swedish friend in the person of Mr Vesterlund, the Chief Executive in Nigeria of a Swedish based firm, Ericsson. He was going to Sweden soon after I spoke to him so he ordered the parts for us, brought them back, and also paid for them. A big *thank you* goes to him and we hope he will be there to help us out in the future when we need help in getting parts for the braille printer. Our thanks must also go to Resourcery Ltd. (our maintenance back-up) for fitting the parts on that occasion and for being available when we need their technical skills and advice.

NNPC's continued support

NNPC have again given us a very handsome cash donation. We are continually indebted to NNPC for their hospitality and all the help they give us in so many different ways. We are particularly grateful to them for continuing to give us space and security for our portakabin and for the friendly acceptance shown to us daily by their staff. Thank you NNPC.

More Contributions

We have continued to receive generous donations in cash and kind from many friends. The American Women's Club has donated a scanner which will enable us to set up facilities for volunteers to come in and help scan books. The Lagos Caledonian Society gave us a handsome donation too that has enabled us to purchase some much needed improved software - Omnipage Professional - for the recognition stage of the scanning process. We have been using the software that came with the scanner but the quality of print in many of the books we handle is very poor and this software is not up to the task of coping with such print. Our new software is expected early March and we are looking forward to getting to work with it. The British Women's Group have also given us a handsome donation again. This year their donation will pay the salary of our partially-sighted graduate assistant, Abiodun, who is now learning to work with WordPerfect and is enjoying it.



(Abiodun working on the computer.)

He does our book-binding and checking amongst other things but when he has acquired computer skills he will be able to do much more. Comerint's dollar donation helped us to complete payment for a CD ROM drive which we had arranged to purchase in the States. We still have some dollars in hand for future needs, particularly for spare parts we may need to buy at any time. The Canadian Women's Group have given us a generous donation that will enable us to buy a Tape drive for storing the files of our books more economically, two stabilisers, and some office items that will make the running of the office much more efficient.

Paper Donations

We are very grateful too for donations of paper (company reports) to use for producing the books. We have now started producing copies of books in earnest and we will need a continuous supply of old company reports. We are also grateful to several of our members who collect old newspapers and

magazines from their respective offices. These are sold and the money buys many of the day to day items we need for running the office, as well as some print copies of books we need to scan. I thank all who have helped us, in so many different ways and ask you to please continue helping us. We value greatly your interest and support and will certainly do our best to encourage your continued interest and support. Thank you. Jean Obi

VISITORS TO THE CENTRE

The Centre is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday to Friday. We also have open day on the second Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Our cheerful Administrator, Pearl Ajayi, enjoys receiving visitors. She has welcomed the following to the Centre during the past six months.

1. Cleopatra Warritay, United Nations Women's Guild
2. Prof. A. B. Fafunwa
3. Mrs. Florence Onwualy, Health Matters Inc.
4. Asunwontan Windeire, Sistrum Education Foundation
5. Sonny Okuku, Sir David Osunde Foundation
6. Adebare Olamijulo, Ashland Oil (Nig.)
7. Kathryn Hill, Gindiri Material Resource Centre
8. P. S. Lot, Dept. of Immigration
9. Phoebean Ogundipe, Top Tutors
10. Soye O. Onafuwa
11. Dr. B. Masha, Oshodi Vocational Centre for the Blind
12. Mrs. M A. Bello, Mrs. Titi Adelaja & Mr. J. A. Ogunyale, all of WAEC



(Doris Fafunwa and Jean Obi with the WAEC delegation.)

Pearl is also happy that more and more Nigerwives - and some of their children - pop in to see what is happening at their Centre and some stay for a while and help out, removing staples and all sorts of other odd jobs. One of the children, Titi Ali-Balogun, spent part of her Christmas holidays helping at the Centre.

COMPUTER TRAINING

Part of our programme is to offer training to visually impaired graduates who are offered employment in administrative positions in companies. We would be glad to hear from any company interested in this project. After training, the company will be required to install appropriate software on one of their systems for the person to use. A blind graduate who has won an American visa through the lottery will be coming in for some computer training over the next two months so that she can be computer literate before going to the States later in the year.

Used Computers Required

We still need more computers to extend this part of the programme and would repeat our appeal to any firm that is upgrading its computers to remember us. The programmes we use with the visually impaired are DOS based so a 386 computer is quite adequate. If you are disposing of any 386 or 486 computers to make room for your new Pentiums please remember that we can put lower powered computers to very good use. Please contact us through one of the numbers at the end of this Newsletter.



(Pearl & Abiodun at work.)

NEEDS

Volunteers

By April we should have our Volunteers' Corner in the portakabin set up. We have plenty of scanning and editing to do and need volunteers. For scanning you need not be computer literate but for editing it is necessary. Editors need to be familiar with WordPerfect or Word; editing guidelines are provided. People with their own computer facilities can also be given the materials to do editing on their own equipment. Can YOU help?

Company Reports

We need lots and lots of company reports and similar quality magazines/brochures to convert into sheet paper for our books. What is printed on

them doesn't matter because the blind reader doesn't see it. Do you know a company or Registrar's department that has piles of old copies they would be glad to get rid of? We would love to have them. Can you put us in touch?

Used Computers

As mentioned above, we need some computers for our training programme - fairly used 386 or 486 models are fine. Can you help us get any?

Identification of Blind Students

If you know of any blind secondary school students or of any secondary schools where blind students are enrolled, please do let us know so that we may liaise with the schools and ensure that the students' reading requirements are met.

Sponsors for Books

Students in Nigeria buy their own books. For our braille books we charge the same price as the print copy of the book - thus putting blind students in the same position as their sighted counterparts with respect to books. Where our liaison personnel identify that a student cannot afford to buy some or all of his/her books, we will arrange a sponsor for the books. If you would like to help sponsor a student's books please let us know.

DONATIONS

The following gifts have been gratefully received since our last newsletter:

1. NNPC A second gift of ₦500,000.00
2. Lagos Caledonian Society ₦75,000
3. British Women's Group ₦100,000
4. Canadian Women's Club ₦50,000
5. American Women's Club ₦ 68,000
6. Comerint \$500
7. Pat Ewurdje (in memory of her mother)
\$100
8. Dr. Eddys Amaku £25
9. Mr. Vesterlund (Ericssons) Printer parts
10. Mr. & Mrs. G. Fatona Plastic sealing
machine
11. Resourcery Ltd. Technical support

BOOK PRODUCTION

We have added just two books to our list of titles in the last six months. We are working on new books and more will be completed soon. We have been updating the book masters done earlier with the old braille translation software, to the new software. This is quite a time-consuming process but it will pay dividends in the end. We have also been busy producing copies of the books already available for students. When we get our second braille printer - which we hope will arrive this month - certainly production of copies will go much quicker.

List of books now available

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1. New Practical English
by Ogundipe & Tregidgo | JS2 | ₦300 |
| 2. New Practical English
by Ogundipe & Tregidgo | JS3 | ₦300 |
| 3. New Practical English
by Ogundipe & Tregidgo | SS1 | ₦300 |
| 4. New Practical English
by Ogundipe & Tregidgo | SS2 | ₦300 |
| 5. New Practical English
by Ogundipe & Tregidgo | SS3 | ₦300 |
| 6. New General Maths
by Channon, McLeish, etc. | JS3 | ₦300 |
| 7. New General Maths
by Channon, McLeish, etc. | SS2 | ₦300 |
| 8. The Bottled Leopard by V. C. Ike | SSS | ₦100 |
| 9. Stillborn by Zainab Alkali | SSS | ₦100 |
| 10. The Jero Plays by Wole Soyinka | SSS | ₦100 |
| 11. Government for SSS
by Onibonoje | SSS | ₦350 |
| 12. Agriculture for Nigerian Schools, Book 3 by
Ogbezi, Adesiya | JS3 | ₦200 |
| 13. Handbook on Special Education Univ. | | ₦450 |
| 14. Mastery of English Literature with Poems for
SSCE 1995-1997 | SSCE | ₦100 |
| 15. Mastery of English Literature with Poems for
SSCE 1998-2000 | SSCE | ₦100 |

WORKING WITH OTHER GROUPS

At our equipment presentation ceremony when we started two years ago, we emphasised that although we were the first group to set up a computer braille production centre, we were anxious for others to follow our lead. No one centre can meet the book needs of the blind students in Nigeria. We have been encouraging other groups to purchase the same equipment as we have so as to maximise cooperation and production. These last six months have seen real progress in this direction. It was no accident that we invited Dr. Masha to be the chairman at our presentation ceremony for, as a member of the management committee of the Oshodi Vocational Centre for the Blind, we wanted him to take note of what we were doing so that they could follow suit. They have now acquired the same equipment. Dr. Masha visited our Centre recently to see how it

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Coordinator/Technical	Jean Obi
Public Relations	Maria Bayero & Jean Abili
Finance	Joyce Fatona
Liaison with schools/students	Pat Ewurdje

operates and discuss how we can help with training their staff. ANWAB (Anglo-Nigeria Welfare Association for the Blind) - a UK based charity - has also set up a centre in Lagos with the same equipment. Their computer coordinator, Mr. Esisi, has been training on the equipment at our Centre, for the past 6 months, prior to their equipment arriving. The equipment has now been set up and Mr. Esisi is getting their own centre into production. We wish him well in his endeavours. The Gindiri Resource Centre in Plateau State has also ordered the same equipment. They hope to have it by April. These are all groups we will work very closely with. We can jointly run training programmes and seminars for our staff. Our Centre will act as a clearing house for the production of book masters so that there is no wasteful duplication of effort. Apart from visits by the above groups, we also received a delegation from WAEC. They are interested in purchasing the same equipment for the production of exam papers for blind candidates. They came to see how the system works and what help we can give them. It is indeed heartening that we have been able to encourage all these groups to work together. Blind students will indeed soon be smiling, as these centres go into production.

Unified Braille Code Workshop

Our Centre is a member of the National Braille Council of Nigeria (Nabracon). We are working with Nabracon, Gindiri Resource Centre and the University of Jos Special Education Unit (where one of our members, Joanne Umolu, is the Head of Dept.) to organise a workshop on a proposed Unified Braille Code. The workshop will be held at Gindiri in April.

CONTACT NUMBERS

There is no phone at the Centre but the following Steering Committee Members will be glad to take messages or give any information you may require.

Jean Abili	269-1405
Doris Dada	613-332
Doris Fafunwa	261-5028

Newsletter Doris Dada & Doris Fafunwa
Nigerwives President (Lagos Branch) ..Zoya Jibodu
Administrator/Secretary Pearl Ajayi