



# MINNESOTA STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



## Your Resource Within Reach



**EMPLOYMENT AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND



The mission of State  
Services for the  
Blind is to facilitate  
the achievement  
of vocational and  
personal independence  
by Minnesotans who  
are blind, visually  
impaired or DeafBlind.

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# LETTER FROM CAROL PANKOW, SSB DIRECTOR



Carol Pankow

As much of the world turns to data to evaluate performance, with numbers such as sales revenue or customer satisfaction levels, I think about how to best measure State Services for the Blind's (SSB) success. Currently, individual successes are assessed by whether a customer achieves his or her goal, while agency success is often measured by dollars and efficiency. However, during the last year, as the vocational rehabilitation community shifted toward a more holistic approach of customer success, I considered how this applies to SSB.

This year we expanded the breadth and depth of statistical information in order to give you a more comprehensive overview of our accomplishments in Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (FFY17). To bring that data to life, we share some stories from our customers and volunteers, including impressive customer achievements, as well as the work we

have done to build a lean, customer-focused organization. I hope that these pages demonstrate that SSB strives to build a better Minnesota, providing the resources to empower blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind Minnesotans, who in turn, make a difference in the communities where they live and work. To begin, here are a few highlights from FFY17 that stand out to me.

Once again, this year, we invested more resources in students between the ages of 14 and 21 so that their transition to the world of college, work, and life after high school can be as smooth as possible. Drawing on their passions, interests, and skills, our team helped students find volunteer and paid positions to build their confidence and work experience. We had the privilege of having three student interns working in our St. Paul office. We continued our innovative programming by co-sponsoring "Blind and Socially Savvy," teaching young adults the critical soft skills that give our students an extra edge in a competitive market.

## Good Jobs

By the end of FFY17, there were 94 more blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind Minnesotans working, contributing to every sector of Minnesota's economy, and using their skills and experience in every region of our state. The 34 small business owners in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) employed 48 people, including 13 with disabilities and earned net profits of \$6.3 million.

## **Minnesota's Accessible Reading Source**

Prior to FFY17, our customers had no means to independently search for books produced by our Communication Center. Now, thanks to staff, volunteers, and student workers who dedicated hundreds of hours, our holdings are listed in an interactive online catalog. Also in 2017, we honored Stuart Holland as he retired after more than 30 years of service, and welcomed Scott McKinney to the Radio Talking Book helm. The charts in this report show the impressive number of print pages we transformed into accessible formats, with each page representing knowledge, information, and equality for customers all across our state.

## **Serving More Seniors**

Each year, SSB's Senior Services Unit (SSU) accepts an increasing number of applications from Minnesota seniors, with a 14% increase in FFY17. SSU's innovative Aging Eyes initiative, a nationally recognized collaboration with community partners, allows SSU to reach more seniors in need. Last year, 25% of all SSU's new applications were received through the Aging Eyes initiative, with 84% of them being from customers seeking services for the first time. SSU served a total of 4,203 customers in FFY17, second only to California.

## **Building a Better SSB**

Partnering with the Minnesota's general Vocational Rehabilitation Services agency (VRS), SSB invested in a new case management system in FFY17. The new system was needed in order to meet extensive new federal reporting requirements, but is also more user-friendly and expands SSB's capacity to evaluate its processes and outcomes. The planning and implementation process was a massive undertaking, but a well-executed interagency collaboration.

Responding to customer feedback, we completely revamped our website. Previously, our site was embedded in a larger state website, making it difficult to navigate. Now, our standalone site is simpler and cleaner. We post news, upcoming events and the latest podcasts on the front page.

I'm proud that the work we do makes a difference in the lives of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, DeafBlind, or who have a print related disability; and, I'm even more proud of the difference that these Minnesotans make in our state. As you'll read in these pages, throughout 2017, SSB customers were adding to Minnesota's prosperity, contributing to our communities, and helping to make this a great state in which to live and work.

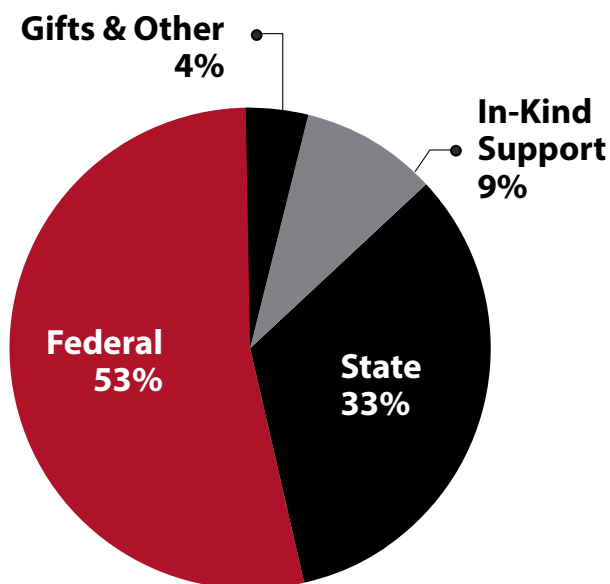


Carol Pankow  
Director, State Services for the Blind

# SSB FINANCIALS

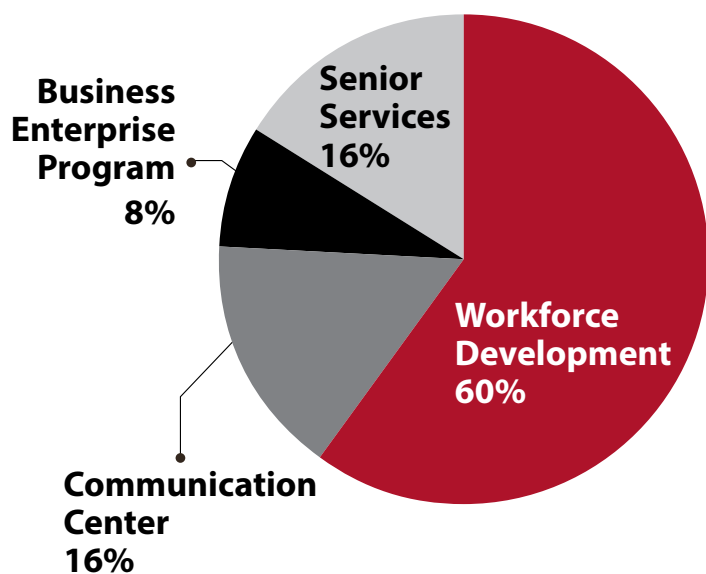
## SSB Funding Streams

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017



## SSB Funding Distribution

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017



## SSB Funding Streams

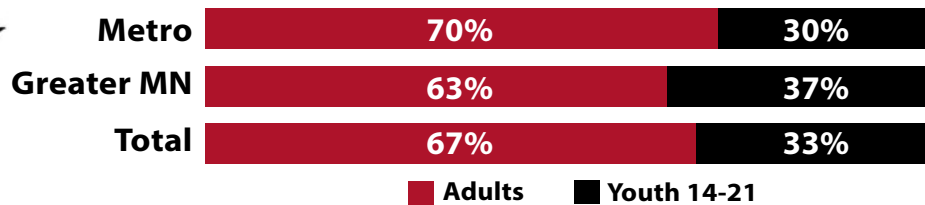
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017

Federal Funds	
Basic VR	\$10,132,000
Supported Employment	\$36,800
Independent Living	\$56,000
IL-Older Blind	\$490,000
Special Education Agreement	\$665,240
<b>Total Federal Funds</b>	<b>\$11,380,040</b>
<b>State Funds</b>	<b>\$7,052,030</b>
Other Funds	
Gifts/Bequests	\$155,000
Access MN	\$99,200
Aging Eyes	\$137,900
Communication Center	\$13,150
Business Enterprises	\$470,000
<b>Total Other Funds</b>	<b>\$875,250</b>
In-Kind Support	
From Volunteers	\$2,000,000
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>\$21,307,320</b>

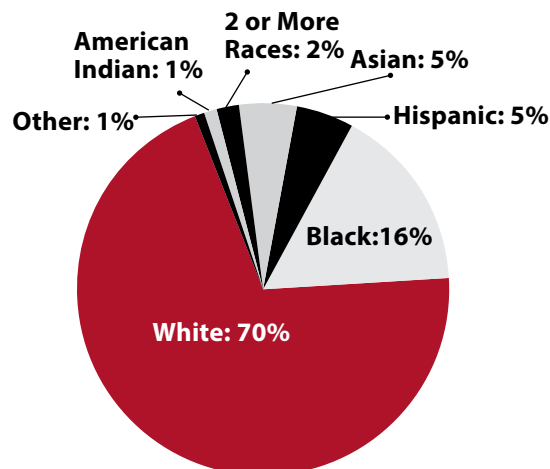
### 1,054 CUSTOMERS SERVED

- 279 New applications submitted
- 172 Customers started services for the first time
- 51 Customers placed on the wait list before receiving services

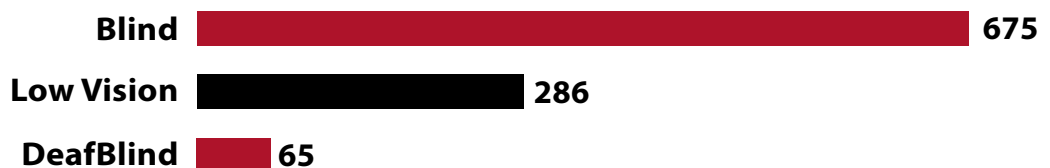
#### Preparing Adults & Youth for Work in all Regions of the State



#### Serving Minnesota's Diverse Population



#### Vision Impairments of Customers Served



Note: These totals do not include customers who exited prior to providing specific demographic information.



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## By the Numbers

### Top 10 Jobs and Earnings for Workforce Development Customers Exiting in FFY 2017

Job Category	Customers	Avg Hrs/ Week	Avg Hrly Wage	Avg Weekly Earnings
Information & Record Clerks	8	34	\$14.11	\$493.90
Other Food Preparation & Serving Related Workers	7	26	11.53	314.76
Computer Occupations	5	25	26.35	752.80
Other Education, Training, & Library Occupations	5	18	27.82	287.56
Other Personal Care & Service Workers	4	34	13.13	450.56
Other Office & Administrative Support Workers	4	20	13.25	362.36
Counselors, Social Workers, & Other Community/Social Svc Spec	4	29	34.38	481.88
Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching, & Distributing Workers	4	20	10.19	206.56
Other Teachers & Instructors	3	16	29.58	314.17
Financial Specialists	3	40	21.79	871.73
Postsecondary Teachers	3	37	34.13	1,313.90
Nursing, Psychiatric, & Home Health Aides	3	24	12.46	310.75

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT Profiles



Linda Jenkins

#### Meet Linda Jenkins

"Is that for me," was the question Linda Jenkins asked herself as she waited for her fiancé to come home from work and read the computer screen to her. Linda was losing her vision, and she didn't know what to do, or where to turn for help. "I moped around and cried every day, while life passed me by," she recalled.

Thinking, "there has to be something out there for blind people," Linda found SSB through a Google search, but her eyes got too tired before she could read any of the details.



Linda had been a hard worker all of her life, but now, facing the loss of her vision, the kinds of jobs she had in production were no longer viable. After reading about SSB with her fiancé, she got an appointment to meet with Brianna Mehr, a job counselor in SSB's Workforce Development section. As she talked with Brianna, Linda found herself weeping again. She had never needed any help from anyone, and she had always been committed to working hard and making her own way in the world.

"You're in the right place," Brianna told her, "We can help you."

The road ahead would be a long one, and it would require determination, but determination was core to Linda's character. She began with intensive training in adjustment to vision loss, at Vision Loss Resources, a training center in the Twin Cities. There, through conversation with a technology instructor, she realized she had an interest in human resources – helping others in their jobs. That realization led to an internship and to a degree program. Intent on finding a job, Linda pushed herself to finish her schooling as quickly as she could. "A staff person at school was concerned about my course load, because of my vision," Linda recalls, "But I knew what I could do, and I just challenged myself to do it."

"Linda has determination and drive, and the internal commitment to always show up and deliver the best," reflects Dave Smith, a Business Relations Specialist at SSB who worked with Linda to get her in front of potential employers, "She's smart, she's focused, and she's shown what she's capable of. I would say that what stands out about our customers is just that sort of willingness to go the extra mile, to demonstrate that they're not only qualified to do the job, but that they'll be the best."

Last fall, having completed her degree, an internship, and adjustment to blindness training, Linda landed a job interview with a federal agency. "It was a two-hour interview," Linda remembers, "and I had never done anything like that in my life. I told myself, 'This is do or die!' and I gave it all I had. I even told a joke." When it was over, she continued, "I called Dave and I said, I don't know if I'll get this job, but I want to thank you for helping me get this opportunity. It has been an incredible journey just to get to the point where I could sit for two hours and answer people's questions about why I am the best for this job."

Linda got that job, and has been working for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services since the spring of 2017.

"Out of the gate, Linda was a phenomenal go-getter," says her supervisor, Melissa Du Chene, "She's taken the initiative to learn everything she can within the staffing system. She's also a great team player, incredibly positive and collaborative."

"I didn't see Linda's vision impairment as a detriment," Melissa added, "She has such a positive attitude about who she is and what she can do."

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Profiles

### Meet Sam Tupy

Sam Tupy, a New Market 10th grader, who has created several sophisticated multiplayer electronic games, says that he likes to learn by doing. "I get interested in something, and then I figure out how it works," he says, "I taught myself how to program, and I use that to build games that are accessible. I especially like creating things that have good sound."

Through SSB, this year, Sam had the opportunity to interview several professional game designers and to attend Glitchcom, a Minneapolis conference that brought together creative people working on innovative projects in the gaming world. "I start with what kids are interested in," says Tou Yang, Work Opportunities Navigator at SSB, "Then I find ways to connect them to the world of work. Our approach is to lay the groundwork so that these kids have a great chance of succeeding. I don't know if Sam will be a fulltime game designer when he finishes school, but I do know that the dedication and interest and the level of skill he has in this area is exactly what will help him succeed in a lot of different fields. I'm here to help him get connected."

The multiplayer games that Sam has developed include a wilderness survival simulation game, and another game where lots of things explode. He attends the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind half-time, and New Prague High School part-time. "I just get interested in things," Sam says, summing up, "and then I just learn everything I can and do it!"



Sam Tupy

### Meet Brian Barnes

Brian Barnes likes challenges. At Tech Camp this summer he was faced with a problem involving integrating audio files in a game that he didn't know how to solve. So, he dove in. He downloaded books, and found how-to videos online. "I even read through manuals," he says. At last, he found a solution that worked. He later realized that there may have been an easier route than the one he had found, but, he says, "It didn't really matter, because I had learned a lot."

The Tech Camp was one of several opportunities that Brian has taken part in through SSB. Now, he's working on writing a strong resume and applying for jobs and internships. "I want to get experience and build my way up," he says.

"We knew he would be able to start working with SSB at 14," his mom says, "And we actually got him signed up on his birthday."

Brian, who has Albinism, came to this country from China when he was adopted by the Barnes family. "I thought America was like a big mall," he remembers. "Now," he says, "sometimes I stand out because of Albinism, but mostly I just like to fit in."

When asked what advice he would offer to younger kids who are blind or have low vision, Brian says, "In life, you should just embrace things that seem difficult. When people say, 'You can't do this because of X or Y,' or, 'You need this really expensive equipment,' you don't need to believe that. Usually, you'll be able to find a way to do what you want to do, and it doesn't always require fancy accommodations."

As an example of his "just do it philosophy", Brian tells about the time that he jumped into Lake Superior. "The water temperature was about 40 degrees, but I just did it. Now I'm known as the guy who jumped into the freezing lake!"



Brian Barnes on the left

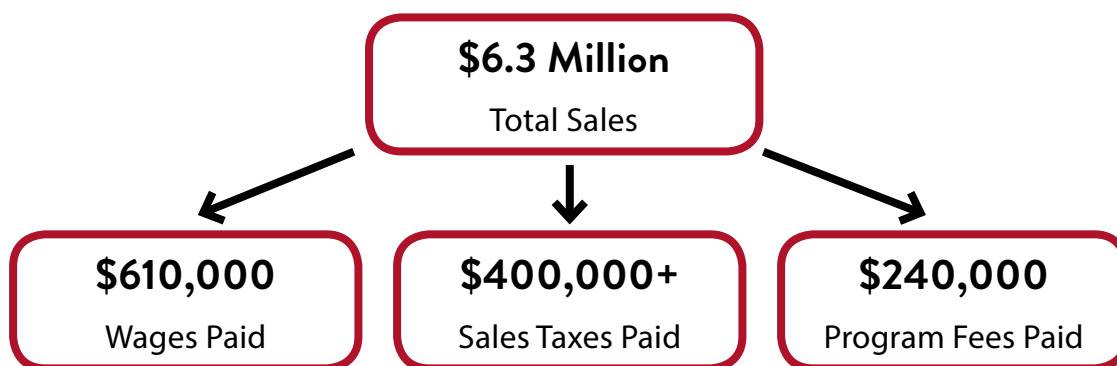
# BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

## By the Numbers \$6.3 Million Total Sales

### 34 BUSINESS OWNERS SERVED

- 48 individuals employed supported by BEP operators
- 185 sites in 48 cities across the state
- 1 BEP student graduated and became a licensed BEP operator

Contributed More than \$1.2 Million to Minnesota's Economy



## BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM Profiles

### Meet Paul Bloomst and Alex Lee

In 2017, several small business owners in the Business Enterprise Program were recognized for their efforts to offer healthier snacks in their vending machines. Paul Bloomst, who operates vending services at City Hall in Minneapolis, and Alex Lee, who manages vending services at the First National Bank building in St. Paul, held events where consumers could sample some of the new healthy products on offer.

Consumer tastes are always shifting. For business owners like Paul and Alex, the trick is to find the sweet spot that brings together the right blend of products at the right price point. "We



Paul Bloomst



have people asking for healthy options,” Alex commented, “But still, our best sellers are the old standbys. Among the healthier products, waters and baked chips sell well. Otherwise, we’ve had to shift away from some products that have too short of a shelf life, or too high of a price point.”

In 2017, Paul worked with a wellness committee for Minneapolis city employees to offer healthier snacks in the vending machines at City Hall and the Public Service Center. Results from a survey the committee conducted with city employees indicated an interest in having healthy options in the vending machines. Through trial and error, Paul has worked to offer the right mix of items.

“People like the baked chips more than I thought they would,” Paul says, “They also like Sun Chips and nuts.” Like Alex, Paul is trying to navigate the line between what customers say they want, and what they actually will buy. “We know that folks want to eat healthy, but then, at their afternoon break, they’ll go for the sugar fix.”

The 34 small business owners who manage nearly 200 locations around the state need to draw on a broad set of skills in order to be successful. Among these is the ability to anticipate customer preferences. “I can sell some of the more expensive health bars in some locations, but, in most places, they aren’t moving,” Alex reflected, “The same thing is true with some of the products with a short shelf life – in most places, the demand isn’t quite there yet.”

“We just keep experimenting,” Paul says, “and sooner or later, you come up with a good mix that makes most people happy.”



Alex Lee

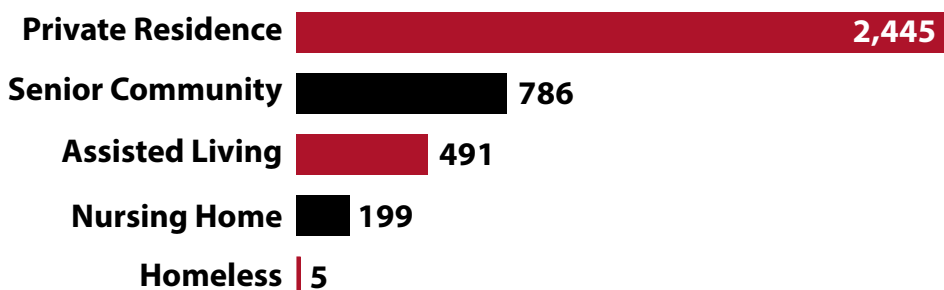
# SENIOR SERVICES

## By the Numbers

### 4,203 CUSTOMERS SERVED

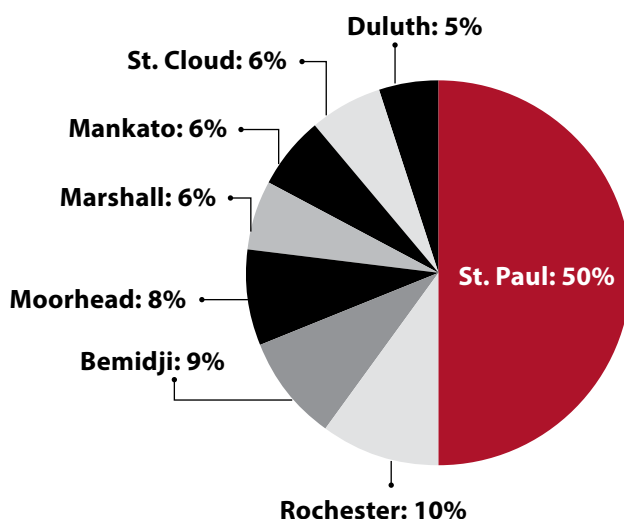
- 2,602 New applications submitted
- 1,802 Customers started services for the first time
- 654 Enrolled through the Aging Eyes Initiative

### Providing Services So That Seniors Can Choose For Themselves Where They Live



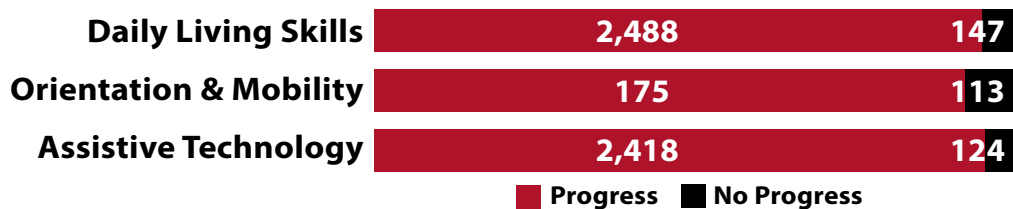
Note: These totals do not include customers who exited prior to providing specific demographic information.

### Serving Seniors at SSB Locations Across the State



### Making Gains in All Aspects of Life

Progress Made by Customers Who Received Training, by Category





### Meet Dan Virata

Dan Virata was nearing the homestretch of a long and successful career. He was busy – maybe even too busy, and active. His work required him to be on the road, sometimes covering 2200 miles in a matter of a few days. He and his wife had four kids – two grown, and two still at home. Then, the unexpected happened – twice. Dan had first one massive stroke and then another.

Dan's stroke left him with significant vision loss. He had contacted the state agency serving people who are blind in the state where he was living, only to hear nothing for months. When he did hear from them, he got a 20-minute appointment. Dan took an Uber to meet with the rehab counselor at the agency office, only to be frustrated by what little they could offer.

At the time, Dan and his family weren't living in Minnesota. As they considered their options, it seemed that the best course for them would be to move back to Minnesota, where Dan's wife had grown up, and where they had extended family.

Dan had heard that things were different in Minnesota – that services were more comprehensive, and more in line with what he needed, which was to regain his independence, his confidence, and his self-respect.

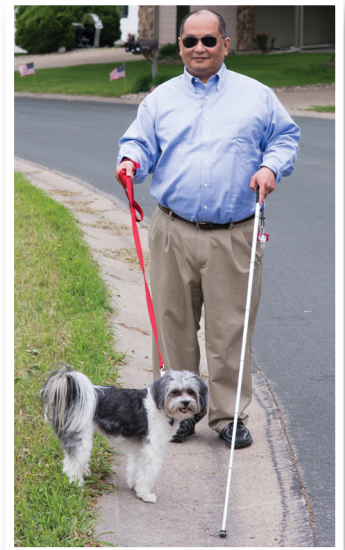
"Imagine having no contact from anyone for months and months. It was like being under house arrest," Dan remembers. "In Minnesota, they have the commitment to really help their citizens to help themselves by making sure they have what they need in order to be independent. Truly it was my good fortune to move here and get connected with State Services for the Blind."

When he contacted SSB, he told us that he wasn't looking for employment services. The strokes had left him with severe fatigue, and returning to work wasn't what he needed. He met instead with Ben Fleissner, a counselor in SSB's Senior Services section.

Ben made it possible for Dan to attend BLIND, Inc., to learn the skills that would give him back his independence and confidence. There, Dan took on the challenge of learning braille, and, using a white cane, learned to navigate the bus system.

"Now," Dan reflects, "I'm able to give back. I've been traveling to senior centers and telling people what's possible, even if you've lost a lot of vision."

"It's still really hard at times," Dan sums up, "But I'm determined that it's not going to beat me!"



Dan Virata

Minnesota's Accessible Reading Source

**13,000+ CUSTOMERS SERVED**

**615 Volunteers Serving**

### Audio Services, Radio Talking Book (RTB), and Engineering



**2,815,072**

Transcribed pages distributed to readers

**457,361**

Accesses to RTB audio stream, Dial-In News, and NFB-NEWSLINE

**412,022**

Print pages originally transcribed into audio, e-text, or large print

**3,180**

Talking book players, radios, & accessories disbursed

**1,955**

Equipment repairs made

**56**

Audio books uploaded to Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD)

### Braille

**1,521** Total Orders Processed

#### **Books in Braille...**

**570** Books provided to MN K-12 and post-secondary students in a variety of subjects:



- STEM
- English Language & Literature
- Social Sciences & History
- Fine Arts
- Foreign Languages
- Physical Education & Health
- Computers & IT
- Communications
- Business
- Health Care Science
- Government
- Study aides

**258** Books originally transcribed by SSB braillists and volunteers

#### **Beyond the Books...**

**942** Custom braille orders for Minnesotans:



- Work materials
- Bills & bank statements
- Government documents
- News & current events
- Instruction manuals & guides
- Religious organizations
- Medical records
- Leisure & entertainment

### Meet Thelma Brooks

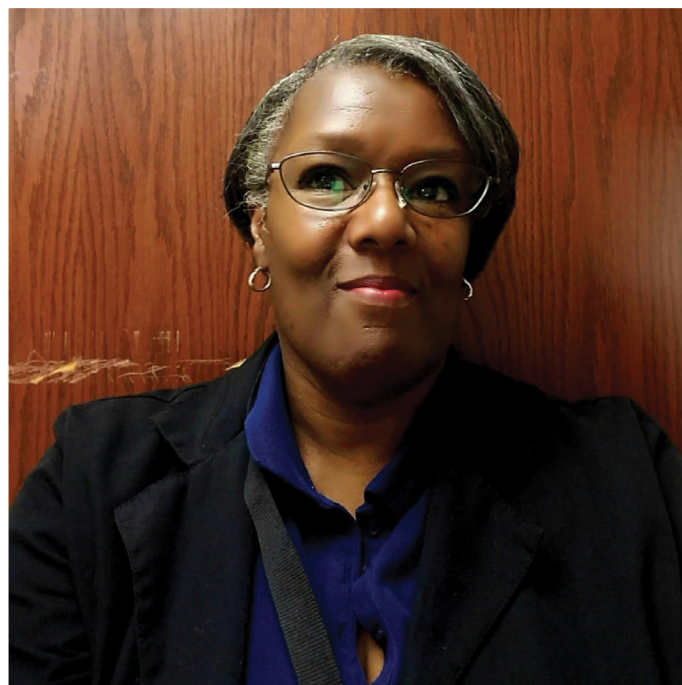
When someone opens a print book, their eyes can skim over the page and get a quick overview of the layout. Book designers put the book together with knowledge of how the eye sees a page. Use of headings, bold text, large fonts, and even blank space on the page create a visual path for the reader.

But ears work differently. Listening to a book doesn't offer the same navigational cues about the layout and structure of a book. This can be especially challenging for students listening to textbooks with lots of section headings, endnotes, and other elements that are marked by a visual change.

The Digital Audio Information System (DAISY) format was created to address this issue. DAISY provides a way of inserting digital markers into digital audio recordings, for instance. With a digital book player or smartphone app that recognizes this format, someone listening to a book can quickly navigate through the structure of a book – jumping, for example, by page, section, or chapter.

At the Communication Center, Thelma Brooks is one of the volunteers who prepares books by adding the DAISY markers. "Thelma is changing the world one marker at a time," says Audio Services Supervisor Annette Toews.

When Thelma arrives at the Communication Center, there will be a shelf of the print edition of books waiting for her, and a sheet of instructions detailing how to structure each of them. She then creates a digital file for each book containing all of the markers, so that listeners can use the DAISY navigation.



Thelma Brooks

"Now," Thelma says, "I come in on a Saturday morning, and it's nice and quiet, which is really nice for focusing."

Because the work requires paying close attention to each book, Thelma says that a side benefit has been that she has discovered a lot of books that have piqued her interest. "I have a list of about fifty books that I came across while structuring books. I'm always discovering something new."

Thelma has always loved books, so much so, that she got a degree in library science. Her career, however, took her in a different direction. She now works for Park Nicollet Clinics as the Nutrition Supervisor, managing the corporate café and coffee shop. In addition to volunteering at SSB, Thelma loves knitting, the movies, and cooking.

### Meet Pat and Libby Muir

"The radio was a lifeline for my mom," says Radio Talking Book volunteer, Pat Muir, "Often, when I would call her, I would hear the familiar 'Goodbye,' as my mom reached to turn off her receiver."

Libby Muir had a long association with SSB's Radio Talking Book Network. Her husband, William, a professor at Carleton, had lost his eyesight at age 40 in 1968. He began listening to the radio not long after that, as the program was still in its infancy.

Libby and her husband approached his sudden blindness with a kind of Minnesotan no-nonsense practicality. Libby became his assistant, reading materials, acting as scribe, and working along side him as he continued his professorship at Carleton. "I would sometimes record books for my dad as a birthday gift," Pat recalled, "Once I remember reading a book called *The Vegetation of Wisconsin*, and I was relieved when my dad said I didn't have to read the long tables."

Together, Bill and Libby built a cabin, led canoe trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, and taught classes in botany.

After Bill's sudden death in 1985, Libby turned to the community, devoting herself to a broad array of volunteer activities. Chief among these was her weekly spot on the RTB. "She took that job incredibly seriously," Pat remembers, "She had a makeshift home studio, which was mainly a card table set up in the upstairs hall, with a reel to reel recorder."

By the time Libby had transitioned from dedicated volunteer to avid listener, her daughter Pat was winding up a long and successful career as a plant ecologist in the botany department at Oregon State at Corvallis.



Libby Muir

"I knew I wanted to do something in retirement that offered a great deal of flexibility," Pat says, "I immediately thought of reading for the radio." With no radio reading service in her area, Pat contacted SSB and learned that if she passed the reading test she could read from her home.

Soon enough she received the equipment, and then a book, and she was on her way.

"This is an organization that has been so valuable to my family," Pat reflected, "the service the RTB and State Services provides is both meaningful and practical."

The staff of SSB were saddened by the news of Libby Muir's death, in December 2017. We celebrate her rich life, and are grateful for her years of service to the Radio Talking Book Network and the Communication Center.



### Meet Liz Spicer

Growing up, Liz Spicer's mom had a close friend who was a braille transcriptionist. In all likelihood, that friend got her training through the Women's Auxiliary of Temple Israel, in Minneapolis, an all-volunteer organization that led the way in braille textbooks in Minnesota for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Liz remembers being fascinated by the braille that this family friend showed her.

Fast forward a few years from those childhood days, and Liz is a young mother looking for something to challenge her mind. Having worked for several years as a math teacher, the idea of learning a new code appeals to her, and so she turned to the Braille Transcriptionist program at Sisterhood of Temple Israel to earn her certification.

As her children grow, she heads back to the workforce, launching her own business. In her career she developed math assessment tools for state school programs. That work necessitated letting go of her volunteer work as a brailist.

But the "braille bug" never quite left her system. When she retired, she called SSB to get reconnected. It had been a 20-year hiatus, and so she needed to do some brushing up and re-take the certification course.

"Braille is such a brilliant system, and I love the challenge," Liz notes. "I've brailled almost everything – including hundreds of textbooks for young readers. I hope the books keep on coming!"



Liz Spicer

In 2016 Liz received a pin honoring her fifteen years as a Communication Center volunteer. "I'm very proud of that pin," Liz says with a smile in her voice, "I look at it every day. I love doing this work, but the most important part of it for me is knowing that it's making a difference for the kids who are learning through reading these books."

Energetic and outgoing, Liz pursues life with enthusiasm. Her varied interests include yoga, tap dancing, drumming, and spending time with her family, including her four grandchildren.

### Meet Peter Froehlich

Some students with a print-related disability listen to books using the synthesized computer speech generated by text to speech programs. Peter Froehlich has found that there are advantages to listening to books recorded by people, like the volunteers at the Communication Center. "It's just a lot easier to understand, because the reader understands the nuances of reading. Also, synthetic speech mispronounces a lot of words, and then you're not really sure what the word is supposed to be, or how it is correctly pronounced."

Before the start of a new semester at Augsburg, where Peter is now a junior, he brings textbooks to SSB's librarian in Audio Services. "They email me the link where I can download the audio file," Peter says, "Either they have the whole book completed, or they send it to me in installments."

Peter is earning a degree in communications to pursue a career in public relations. "I'm interested in focusing on social media and PR. It's the way people connect with each other now."

In addition to his course work, Peter is interning for a small PR startup, doing research and curating articles on various topics. An avid sports fan, Peter has dreams of one day working with the Twins or Timber Wolves.



Peter Froehlich right, with Karl-Anthony Towns, basketball player for the Minnesota Timberwolves



## Our Multi-Talented Volunteers

We appreciate all of our more than 600 volunteers, and highlight, here, those who achieved a milestone in 2017.

### 5-Year Volunteers

- Burke Almquist—RTB
- Melinda Anderson—RTB
- Susan Cochran—RTB
- Susan Cochrane—RTB
- Sharon Emery—RTB
- Donald Gerlach—RTB
- Susan Gilster—RTB
- Gene Gwin—RTB
- Karmella Hagan—RTB
- BethMarie Hansen—RTB
- Steven Hebert—RTB
- Fred Hoff—Audio
- Sister Jovann Irrgang—RTB
- Courtney Joshua—Braille
- Michelle Juntunen—RTB
- Susan Leach—RTB
- Linda Lyon—RTB
- Caroline McGowan—RTB
- Dorothy MacRae—Braille
- Janell Miersch—RTB
- John Miersch—RTB
- Helen Millen—RTB
- Andrew Naber—Braille
- Ann Naber—Braille
- Bernadette Savage—RTB
- Sister Rita Schwalbe—RTB
- Joan Seelen—RTB
- Marlin Spangrud—RTB
- Thomas Speich—RTB
- Cindy Stratioti—RTB
- Jane Whitledge—RTB
- Bruce Williams—RTB

### 10-Year Volunteers

- Linda Anderson—RTB
- Janice Apple—RTB
- Patricia Barry—RTB
- Peter Danbury—RTB
- Paul Eastwold—Audio
- Melanie Freimuth—RTB
- Dan Gergen—Braille
- LuAnn Hansen—RTB
- Bruce Hanson—RTB
- Oliver Houx—RTB
- Denis Hynes—RTB
- Ann Klasen—RTB
- Ken Klingsporn—RTB
- Todd Kosovich—RTB
- Suzanne Livingston—Audio
- Janice Lockwood—RTB
- Thomas Lyon—RTB
- Sue McDonald—RTB
- Kristy Miller—RTB
- Kathy Nelson—Audio
- Jennifer O'Brien—RTB
- Nancy Oleheiser—RTB
- John Olmschied—RTB
- Heather Olson—RTB
- John Scheidel—RTB

### 15-Year Volunteers

- Carol Belfiori—RTB
- Wayne Eichstadt—RTB
- Karen Etzell—RTB
- Joan O'Donnell—Audio
- Jacqueline Thomas—Braille
- Sharon Toll—Braille
- Barbara Wilmesmeier—RTB

### 20-Year Volunteers

- Cindi Laurent—Braille
- Jeffrey Weihe—RTB

### 25-Year Volunteers

- Chip Aspnes—RTB
- F. Dallas Fogg—Engineering
- Ben James—RTB
- Davis Scott—Audio
- Eric Watkins—Audio
- Eileen Zimmerman—Audio

### 30-Year Volunteers

- Timothy Aune—RTB
- Daniel Sadoff—Audio

### 35-Year Volunteers

- Pat Olson—Braille
- Katy Perry—RTB

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

Every Minnesotan who could use our services, should know about our services. Help us spread the word that SSB offers services for reading, for working, and for living safely and independently.

- If there's a senior in your life who has macular degeneration, glaucoma, or is losing vision due to some other cause, let them know that we're here for them.
- When you visit your ophthalmologist or optometrist, ask if they know that SSB has the knowledge, services and resources to make sure that their patients with significant vision loss can live well after diagnosis.
- If you are an employer, talk with our business relations team about finding the candidate who could be your next great hire.
- If you know someone with hiring authority, please let them know that State Services for the Blind has a pool of job seekers with the skills and experience to fill a diverse range of positions.
- If you love the written word, check out the range of volunteer positions by visiting us at [www.MNSSB.org](http://www.MNSSB.org)
- Our Communication Center is funded through a public and private partnering. We could not continue the work we do as Minnesota's Accessible Reading Source without our volunteers and the financial support of our generous donors.

**We now are on GiveMN,  
and you can get to  
that page by visiting  
[mn.gov/deed/ssbdonate](http://mn.gov/deed/ssbdonate)**





## **EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

State Services for the Blind is a program of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

2200 University Ave. W. #240 | St. Paul, MN 55114

651-539-2300 | Toll Free: 800-652-9000

**[mn.gov/deed/ssb](https://mn.gov/deed/ssb)**

An equal opportunity employer and program provider.  
Upon request, this information can be made available  
in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities.