



Libraries Change Lives... for special audiences

In 1956, Congress passed the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA). Originally, it was designed to help rural public libraries meet the needs of their patrons. Since then, it has expanded to include all public libraries. Federal funding has enabled many libraries to offer new and innovative services to their patrons that otherwise would have been difficult to provide with local funds alone.

LSCA grants have enabled public libraries of all sizes to improve their services for populations with special needs, such as the disadvantaged, illiterate, handicapped, non-English speaking, and older American populations. Others have used LSCA funds to construct or renovate facilities. Still others have purchased equipment to keep up with rapidly changing information technology.

The LSCA has also served public libraries in ways not always apparent as new computers or new programs. For example, LSCA funds were instrumental in strengthening state library administrative agencies, in promoting interlibrary cooperation and resource-sharing among all types of libraries, and in strengthening major urban resource libraries.

Indiana's share of LSCA is approximately \$2.5 million annually, but the stories we received as a result of LSCA programs seem priceless. Our investment in libraries is an investment in Americans. It is truly one of the greatest democratic bargains going, as you are about to read...

I have a hearing loss...

I started out taking sign language classes for a personal reason. In the past several years, I had frequent voice losses. My two sons and I made gestures to communicate. Last fall, my younger son brought a schedule of adult classes home from school. He encouraged me to take a sign language class offered by the library.

I am a registered nurse who works in surgery. On the day of our last class, I had the pleasure of caring for a deaf person who was awake for her surgery. Since we wear masks on our faces in surgery, she was not able to read my lips. I had taken the sign language class, so I was able to sign to her. It was a wonderful experience for me. I felt I did something good that day.

Elaine G.

“The library is an important resource and a valued friend in our lives.”

Carol Rhudy

Eight-year-old Beth Daily has a severe hearing loss. Sue Daily, her step-mother, wants to communicate better with Beth. Sue has borrowed videos from the library’s special services staff in order to learn sign language. In addition to the sign language videotapes, she also borrowed an Assistive Listening Device from the library for Beth to use in her classroom. They were so pleased with its effectiveness that they purchased one for Beth. Beth, her father, step-brothers, and Sue also regularly attend library children’s programs, which are interpreted by library staff.

In 1990, Beth attended a public school where her parents were pleased with her educational progress. However, due to changes in the state educational guidelines, Beth was re-assigned to a different school. Beth’s father and step-mother were unhappy with the education she was receiving in her new school. Once again, they consulted the library’s special services staff for information on appealing her IEP (Individual Education Plan). The library staff referred Mr. and Mrs. Daily to an advocate who assists parents of special needs children in resolving conflicts with schools. The advocate was able to obtain the services the Daily’s wanted for Beth.

Nancy TenBroeck

I obtained my library card at the old location. Although the building was old and in need of repair, the staff added sunshine with their friendly assistance. A new modern building now contains varied reading material, tapes, and many items for entertainment. Modern technology was added to expedite service to library patrons, and the library staff is still giving courteous service with a smile.

I have a hearing loss, and their assistance to my needs in locating varied reading material is greatly appreciated. I have used the library extensively over the years.

Irene H. Basey

I became visually impaired some years ago...

My husband is legally blind, and one of the librarians told me about services to the blind provided by the Indiana State Library. They asked him what he liked to read, and he now gets westerns and mysteries on tapes, records, and in large-print books. Everything comes through the mail, and all we have to do to mail it back is turn the card around and drop it in the mailbox. That is a big help, and everything is free. We don't even have to pay postage on it.

Mrs. W. P.

“Libraries are a terrific tax investment. They provide an opportunity for personal growth and development.”

State Senator Robert D. Garton

I have been a client of “talking books” ever since I became visually impaired some years ago. While I was able to continue working at my office with the use of closed circuit TV reading machines, my outside pleasure reading had stopped. The talking books program reintroduced me to the pleasure of reading in the evenings. As a 66-year-old senior citizen, this is important to me.

Robert J. Oates

When I was a child, I accompanied my mother, brother, and sister to the local public library, trying to keep my attitude of indifference to myself. In the mid-1970s, a local library was a very boring place to me. I'm totally blind, and all those books and other printed materials were inaccessible to me. I felt as though I were in a strange land where nobody spoke my native language.

But now it's 1994, and thanks to several media formats, the public library no longer seems alien. I'm even privileged to be doing my small part to make the library more accessible to those of us who are blind or visually impaired. On Tuesday mornings, I make Braille labels which identify the titles and authors of the cassette books in the library's collection. The outreach librarian believes in making the library accessible to everyone, and I'm glad that she gave me the opportunity to be part of doing just that.

When a part of the community is made more accessible to a person with a disability, the person's abilities become more evident. Each Tuesday morning when I make the Braille labels for the cassettes, I think back to the time almost 20 years ago, when I felt that a local library would always be a place alien to me. Although I still borrow books in Braille and on cassette from the State Library, having the option of going to the local library to select a book or magazine enables me to participate more fully in the community in which I live. Full participation in the community by people with disabilities is part of what the Americans With Disabilities Act is all about.

Debbie Morgan

Books delivered to our door...

I am 78 years of age and have had many various disabilities for many, many years, preventing me from attending the library and taking advantage of the many things the library has to offer. I love to read, but being handicapped I am not able to go for books myself.

Several years ago, my daughter-in-law talked to the librarian about my problem and learned about a library mailing program free to shut-ins. Since then, the library has mailed me hundreds of books, a large box each time, and enclosed an address label and postage for return mail.

I can't express how much this service has blessed my life. I always have reading material. I am very grateful for how the library has changed my life. Thank you so very much.

Mildred Corteville

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Words cannot tell you how very much I have appreciated the extra work and kindness the library has shown in bringing books to my home. The selections have been wonderful, and since I can no longer get into the library or bookmobile, I am delighted to be able to continue with my passion for reading.

I must add that if it were not for my girls in their bookmobile, I would not have made it through the last two years. Their time and helpfulness has made these years passable. The only enjoyment I had was the wonderful selection of books brought to me. I owe a debt of gratitude to all the people connected with the library.

Carlis Dowdy

“The library has mailed me hundreds of books, a large box each time, and enclosed an address label and postage for return mail.”

Mildred Corteville

Eva Scott proves you're never too old to read. Scott, 96, reads two books a week, subscribes to two daily newspapers, and said she would rather read than watch television any day of the week. She loves to read and reads about everything she can get her hands on.

“I was born a reader,” she says. “We used to read when we were children — we'd take books home from the library at school. As soon as we could say our ABC's, we did our own reading.” In 1912, Scott, then 15 years old, was honored for her reading accomplishments by the State of Indiana.

Up until last year, Scott would go to the library herself and pick out her own books. Now her daughter, Mary Ann Johnson, checks them out for her. Scott is the community's oldest library card holder and still has the original card issued to her January 24, 1925. Even recent cataract surgery on her right eye hasn't deterred Scott from enjoying her favorite pastime. Now she reads large-print books, or uses a magnifying glass to read smaller print.

Scott followed in the footsteps of her father, who she said was an avid newspaper reader. She's even passed the habit on to her own children. Keith Scott said his mother used to read to them a lot when they were children — and now he's an enthusiastic reader himself. Perhaps Scott's love for reading is what keeps her mind alert as she approaches her 97th birthday.

Amanda Mitchell, Writer
Clinton County Times

It's a big change: six months with a 22-inch cast on the left leg. It all began in February when I fell, landing on the left knee and breaking the patella. After the knee was wired and set, I found myself rather inactive! But the library rescued me from boredom and apathy. The bookmobile stopped at my door weekly with a large delivery of books. Indeed, I read a book a day! This service changed my convalescence into a time of renewal and mental expansion. I am very grateful for the services rendered.

Mary Alice Crampton

You're never too old...

I am a retired teacher of 48 years. I have always encouraged my students to make use of the library, both for pleasure and for assignments. Now I am retired and have spent the last five years in a healthcare center. I know I am one of the many citizens who have enjoyed the books delivered to our door from the Mediamobile.

Sr. Margaret Celina O'Boyle

“Having the option of going to the local library to select a book or magazine enables me to participate more fully in the community in which I live.”

Debbie Morgan

The library certainly changed the life of Mary Grosjean and Clarence Williams. Mary was a library clerk who worked in both circulation and technical services processing books. Little did she realize that in the crowded catacombs of the Carnegie among the “Westerns” she would meet the one who was to change her life. She and Clarence were married and throughout their entire lives have remained library supporters and users. Now they are in their 80's and still are reading, large print now after cataract surgery for both. Her favorite books are “racy” suspense and his are still the westerns. The family is still a part of the library, since their daughter is a mainstay in the library's technical services department, cataloging all the children's materials.

Barbara J. Elliott

Utilizing the library for literacy is a natural...

I just knew a little English before I went to the Library Learning Center, since I am a foreigner, but I feel much better now. I can communicate with people in English; and I can read and write. The Library Learning Center is really a good place to study English.

Dingmin Min

“The Library Learning Center is really a good place to study English.”

Dingmin Min

A small, gray-headed lady came into my branch library occasionally to use the copy machine. We always said “hello” but never talked. One day after she’d made her copies, she came to the desk and asked if I could look at one of the forms she’d copied and tell her where to mail it. I helped her, and she thanked me.

To my surprise she began to speak. She said the papers she copied concerned her only son who had been abused as a youth and suffered emotional damage. He lived at home and received out-patient treatment. She never doubted that he was improving and would regain his self-confidence and lead a happy normal life. Then her husband died, and her other child, a married daughter, interfered. She and her husband succeeded in having the young man placed in an institution.

The lady told me how she’d had to carry on alone, trying to help her son and fend off her daughter and son-in-law’s efforts to control her life. She said that she’d never dreamed that her life could become so sad and lonely.

I asked if she ever read for relaxation. Her answer was no. She had learned English well enough to speak it, write it, and read what was necessary but had never really read for pleasure. I suggested that it’s a wonderful way to take your mind off problems.

I made her a library card, and she began with one magazine. Next time, she took three. Then the day came when she selected a book (I think it was a Belva Plain). I was thrilled! But my biggest thrill came later when my new regular patron said to me, “I want to thank you for getting me to read. Now I am not so lonely anymore.”

Marilyn Grambo

In 1989 it was discovered that in addition to our daughter's mild cerebral palsy, the vestibular area of her brain was depressed or only barely functional. This meant she was unable to write and do other necessary skills in kindergarten. It was the decision of the doctors and also her teacher, her father, and I that Heather be withdrawn from school until she was capable of functioning at a higher level. Here's where the library comes in. Heather could take in information but couldn't put it on paper. So the librarians told me of the discs on their computers about alphabet, spelling, numbers, addition, making words, etc.

We worked for one to two hours, Monday through Thursday, at the library from October 1989 through February 1990, and guess what? Due to that availability and the librarian's suggestion, Heather learned to spell her name, count, add, spell, and read and was very much ahead of her 1990 kindergarten class. She also then learned to write. She still does very well, and we're very thankful to the library.

Tracy Evans

"Due to... the librarian's suggestion, Heather learned to spell her name, count, add, spell, and read and was very much ahead of her kindergarten class."

Tracy Evans

Two and a half years ago, using the library literacy program, I began tutoring Andrew Martinez, a retired gentleman who wanted to improve his reading ability and to better express himself. His schooling had been cut short at an early age, and he was anxious and enthusiastic for this long overdue opportunity.

Utilizing our local library for literacy tutoring was a natural. They not only provided a quiet, comfortable spot, but were my constant "back-up." There was immediate access to resource material from encyclopedias to books of poetry — even to getting President Clinton's Washington address. An unexpected plus was the short conversations my student delighted in having with one of the librarians in his native language. It was obvious that made him feel much more at home.

July 28 was a red letter day for my student and for me! Hard to say who was most proud when he graduated from this program. His plans were to continue studying for his GED — and I'm betting he will!

Deloras O'Neal

Another chance...

When I retired I wanted to become involved in tutoring. The library-provided tutor training program put me in touch with a tutoring group and provided me with materials and a place to meet with my student. I have learned much more from my student than I will ever be able to teach her — and I have a new friend.

Anonymous

At age 17, Clayton was confined to a private jail cell. About all he could do was read. That's when he met an outreach librarian, Marcia Pendley. "Meeting Marcia was a turning point in my life," he says. "She got me thinking about how things were and how my life could be. It's because of Marcia I enrolled in the GED program through the jail."

Clayton is now a certified Literacy Volunteer of America. He's also studying psychology and fiction writing. Through reading in prison, he says he literally exchanged one escape for another.

Clayton remembers, "Marcia was so nice to me. She asked if I wanted library books and she remembered what I liked. My interest in psychology was sparked by a textbook she suggested." He reflects, "It was during the time that I knew her that I feel like I got my head on straight and found a new direction."

*Excerpt from Check it Out
Newsletter of the Friends of the
Morrisson Reeves Public Library*

Because of the library, I am able to carry out one of my favorite volunteer activities: using my adult literacy tutoring skills. The library gives me a place to work with the person whom I tutor every week and provides Tutors Talk, a program where tutors share their experiences and techniques and have a chance to get together every few months.

With the help of the Adult Literacy staff and the librarians, the person I tutor and I have used the Intensive Phonics software on a computer given to the tutoring office by a local company. This has been a terrific boon to the adult I work with. He had never touched a computer before. Now the lessons are giving him phonics help and he feels right at home with the computer.

Carolyn Hood

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I quit school at the age of 17. By the time I was ready to continue school, I was too old to go back to school. My library gave me the chance to learn and earn my GED. I'm grateful to the library for giving me the chance to get my GED and a better job. Thank you.

Shawn Weaver

From the adults I have tutored, I will never forget the look of happiness and the happiness in the voice of a 28-year-old woman when she read an unfamiliar word. "I read that word all by myself." This happened after only a couple of sessions with phonics. The ability to read gives freedom. Freedom to try new ideas, to soar and reach unknown heights. The freedom to be yourself and live the good life.

Ann Walsh