

## LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE HANDICAPPED A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Library services to the handicapped, while not new, only recently have begun to be seen as a basic part of services to the public. Prior to this the tendency was to provide "special services" where and when needed rather than to provide a continuing library program.

Several recent events have contributed to a change in attitude. There has been a growing awareness on the part of society that the handicapped are not to be shunned and avoided, but rather to be recognized as citizens who have the same basic needs and wants as everyone else. They can, and do, contribute much to our culture and should be treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

This awareness has come about not only from natural evolution in societal thinking but also because of rising aggressiveness on the part of the handicapped population. Many groups which have sprung up are demanding the same basic

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civil liberties accorded to other individuals and groups. And, as has been the case in similar movements, the result has been a growing public awareness and governmental legislation recognizing these needs.

Numerous laws have been passed which guarantee the handicapped their rightful place in society and their right to have access to the programs and benefits provided other members of society. Two of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation, particularly as they apply to libraries, are P.L. 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, which requires that states provide free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for handicapped children and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which mandates that agencies receiving federal funds must provide that the handicapped be allowed to participate in or benefit from the resources, programs and services that they provide.

Libraries, therefore, have been responding to these various factors: societal pressures, consumer demands and legal requirements. And if at times they appear to be moving woefully slow, they are nevertheless becoming aware of the broader population that they can and must serve.

The professional literature, in turn, has reflected this new awareness. Until very recently, periodical articles tended to describe those very few specific individual programs and books within the field. The studies tended to concern themselves with programs and the libraries that provided them rather than works that provided general principles and methods. This is no longer true, and in the past few years several important works have been written by concerned practitioners who offer valuable suggestions and advice to the interested librarian.

This article, while not pretending to discuss all of the works that are currently available, does try to introduce to the reader some of the more significant works that have been published. Because of space limitations, we have not included the numerous periodical articles that have been printed, but we have included a recent bibliography that lists those publications over a ten year period. What does follow are those works we feel will be of primary interest to library practitioners.

SCHAUDER, DONALD E. and MALCOLM D. CRAM. *Libraries for the Blind: An International Study of Policies and Practices*. Stevenage, England: Peter Peregrinus, Ltd., 1977. 152p. (Librarianship and Information Studies, Volume 4). Out-Of-Print.

Originally written by Schauder in 1972 as a thesis, this book has been expanded and updated to 1976. The authors have attempted to provide an international study of library services to the blind and visually impaired through personal visits, correspondence and extensive searching of the literature. A variety of topics are covered including finances and administration, selection, acquisition and production of materials, bibliographic control, personnel, and technological developments. These areas are discussed on a country by country basis, and normally run from one to two paragraphs in length. They do run longer for some of the more advanced nations. An excellent bibliography is provided as well as a listing, by county, of organizations providing library services to the blind and visually impaired.

Its appeal probably will be limited to those librarians who work primarily with the handicapped, but anyone interested in this area of library service and its origin and development on an international basis will find this an invaluable source.

STROM, MARYALLS G., ed. *Library Services to The Blind and Physically Handicapped*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977. 285p. \$12.00.

This is a collection of twenty-eight articles dealing with various library services to the handicapped which appeared in library publications between 1963 and 1976. Although most were written by practicing librarians, a few were contributed by recipients of the services. The editor, acknowledging that some of the pieces are old, notes that "the message . . . they contribute can still be helpful and relevant to today's situation." As might be expected, most of the articles deal with specific programs rather than methods on how to provide services to this segment of the library's clientele.

Divided into four parts, the book begins with information about services to the blind and visually impaired, including the services provided by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) of the Library of Congress. Part two deals with handicapped individuals not served by NLS and includes the multiply handicapped, the deaf and learning impaired and the mentally retarded, with emphasis on how local libraries have met their needs. The third part of the book deals with special considerations that libraries must contemplate when dealing with the handicapped, particularly materials selection and architectural accessibility. The last section is called "Special Services," and discusses outreach programs and library services to the elderly, both at home and in institutions. Three appendices are included which provide (1) sources of reading material for the handicapped, (2) Regional and Sub-regional Libraries in the NLS network and (3) a selected bibliography of works dealing with library services to the handicapped.

While many of the articles tend to fall in the "how-we-did-it" category, this book, nevertheless, provides a single grouping of works telling how certain libraries have met the needs of various segments of their communities. Therefore, librarians who want to find specific principles and methods might not care for this book; but for those interested in how others have handled various situations, this is a thoughtful and often inspiring work.

BRAMLEY, GERALD. *Outreach: Library Services for the Institutionalized, the Elderly, and the Physically Handicapped*. London, Clive Bingley: Linnet Books, 1978. 232p. \$12.50.

This publication, written by a Fellow of the Library Association, compares outreach services in the United States and in his native country England. Although he states in the introduction that it ". . . is designed primarily for students of librarianship and those who are just beginning their professional careers," it also will be beneficial to anyone interested in library services to the handicapped.

The book covers a wide range of services — the institutionalized — both in hospitals and in prisons — the elderly, disabled, blind and partially sighted, mentally impaired and the deaf. After beginning each area with historical development, the author then covers the current provision of services and offers practical illustrations of each category, usually providing a comparison between British and American methods. In addition, he offers recommendations for what he feels will improve the services.

Because he does cover such a wide range of areas, Bramley tends to give fuller treatment to some services. For instance, the institutionalized and blind areas are covered much more extensively than some of the other areas, particularly the deaf.

References are provided at the end of each chapter and a selected reading list is included at the end of the book.

The work, for the most part, gives a good introduction to each area with coverage running from full to adequate on the various topics. Its appeal, however, will be limited to those primarily interested in this field or to those interested in the comparison of services between this country and England.

WHALEN, LUCILLE and JOAN A. MILLER, ed. *Library Services for the Adult Handicapped: An Institute for Training in Librarianship*. New York: Science Associates/International, Inc., 1978. 67p. Vol. 7, No. 2, of *Information Reports and Bibliographies*. \$10.00.

This publication is a collection of nineteen papers presented at an institute sponsored by the School of Library and Information Science, of the State University of New York at Albany, on October 9-14, 1977.

Speakers were chosen who represented various aspects of services to the handicapped, with emphasis on library services. Topics included the psychology of the disabled, a historical perspective of library services to the handicapped and institutionalized, attitudes toward and legislation affecting the handicapped and the legislative basis of federal library support for public library services. As with any collection of papers, some of these might be too specialized for the general reader. Most, however, provide useful and helpful information; their emphasis upon the natural rights of handicapped individuals to expect and receive good library service is particularly good.

Although other handicapped conditions are discussed, there is a strong emphasis on library service to the visually impaired and physically handicapped. The majority of the talks concern public library service rather than academic or school libraries.

As can be expected, there is a lack of cohesiveness to the volume; omissions occur that would have been helpful. References are made to handouts, but these are neither included nor given reference to in bibliographic citations. This publication will primarily be of interest to those already working in this area, but it will prove valuable reading to anyone who wants to know more about how they can better serve their community.

CYLKE, FRANK KURT, ed. *Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: An International Approach*. Munchen, Federal Republic of Germany: K. G. Saur, 1979. 108p. IFLA Publications, No. 16. \$20.50.

This, like the previous work, is a collection of papers presented at a conference for librarians interested in serving the handicapped. These key papers were presented at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Conference at Strbske Pleso, Czechoslovakia in 1978. The editor, Frank Kurt Cylke, is Director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) of the Library of Congress, and has been instrumental in developing an international working relationship between libraries serving the blind and visually impaired. He has expressed his belief that libraries serving the handicapped have the same philosophical base as do their counterparts serving the general population, and that this type of library service should be handled by an organization of librarians, rather than organizations devoted to the welfare of the blind. He also has expressed his belief that there should be common technical and service guidelines among these different libraries to better serve their patrons. This feeling, shared by other librarians, resulted in the establishment within IFLA of the Working Group of Libraries for the Blind which met for the first time as an official entity at this Conference. These papers are the result of this meeting.

Topics covered are "Formats In Non-Print Media For The Blind and Visually Handicapped," "Copyright And Library Services For The Blind," "Postal Regulations And Custom Law," "International Relationships," and "International Standards In Cataloging Materials For The Blind and Handicapped."

As can be gathered by the subjects discussed, this work is of a much more specialized nature than the other works discussed in this article and will be of limited interest to most of the general library population. It does represent a breakthrough on an international level of library service to the blind and, as such, marks a major stepping stone in the improvement of services to this group. It will add to the knowledge of anyone working in the area and wanting to better acquaint themselves with the significant developments that are occurring in it.

VELLEMAN, RUTH A. *Serving Physically Disabled People; An Information Handbook for All Librarians*. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1979. 392p. \$17.50.

This is the best book currently available on library services to the handicapped. The author, Library Director of the Human Resources School in Albertson, New York, has devoted her professional career to work with the disabled. This book reflects her interest and knowledge in this area of library service.

Divided in four parts, the book provides information for public, special, school and academic librarians. Part one, entitled "Introducing Physically Disabled People," gives definitions of disabilities and discusses common attitudes and prejudices that are often held. Recommendations also are presented to help eliminate attitudinal barriers that exist and which prevent common understanding and communication.

The second part of the book deals with the public library's responsibility in providing service to the disabled. It discusses their civil rights as guaranteed by law, barrier-free designs for libraries, and public libraries service for the blind and the deaf in their communities. Also included is a core collection of materials that will assist the library in meeting the information needs of its disabled population.

The next section of the book covers the special rehabilitation library. It discusses the history and philosophy of rehabilitation, the different types of rehabilitation available, and the many organizations and agencies that are active in this area. As with the public library section, a core collection of materials is given for the medical and/or vocational rehabilitation library.

Velleman then deals with school and, to a limited extent, university libraries. She provides a history of special education, teacher preparation, legislation affecting this area and special education librarianship. The implications of mainstreaming are discussed as well as services to students who are blind, deaf, or suffer from a visual or hearing impairment. Information about funding for library media resources is covered and, as with the previous sections, a core special education collection is given.

The appendices in this book are quite useful. They include lists and addresses of professional and volunteer agencies which provide services to the disabled, government offices and agencies, independent living centers, and regional offices of the National Association of Rehabilitation, Research and Training Centers.

This book will be a useful addition to any library collection. Not only will librarians find it beneficial, so will professionals in the fields of education, social services and allied health.

WRIGHT, KIETH C. *Library and Information Services for Handicapped Individuals*. Littleton, Co.: Libraries Unlimited, 1979. 196p. \$15.00.

This is another excellent addition to the literature. Wright provides a very good introduction to services for the blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired, the mentally and emotionally handicapped, the aged, and the physically disabled. He introduces his book by stating that his purpose is "to provide an overview of the major handicapping conditions and identify the kinds of library services needed by handicapped individuals." The first chapter provides a good introduction to why library service for the handicapped needs to be redesigned from merely serving them in special, sometimes isolated ways, to more thoroughly integrated library programs. He explores current myths regarding the disabled and provides a brief introduction to each of the handicapping conditions discussed in the book.

Chapter Two will be of invaluable assistance to librarians wanting to know about the "changing legal situation of handicapped individuals." Wright discusses the legislation (through 1978) concerning accessibility, education and basic rights of the handicapped in lay language, explaining how they pertain to libraries.

The remainder of the book gives information on present and future technological developments which can aid the disabled, as well as suggestions for

services and programs the library can develop. Wright feels very strongly that libraries should gather and disseminate information of and for the handicapped, and that close working relationships should be developed with social and special agencies who provide counseling and rehabilitative services.

A listing of selected organizations providing services to the handicapped and a directory of selected sources for materials and information are given at the end of the book.

As with the Velleman book, this work will be extremely helpful to the library wanting suggestions on how it can meet its obligations to the handicapped community. Although everyone will not agree with some of Wright's suggestions, they cannot help but come away with a much greater awareness of the rights and needs of the disabled.

DAVIS, EMMETT A. and CATHERINE M. DAVIS. *Mainstreaming: Library Service for Disabled People*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1980. 200 p. \$11.00.

This book, written for school and public librarians, sets out to overcome the "labels" that librarians have tended to give special segments of the population. The authors feel that these labels have hindered service staffs from providing the proper kinds of service which the handicapped have a right to expect.

Before they can adequately "design, implement and evaluate their own programs," library service staffs first must communicate with their clientele. The authors have designed this book to help library personnel overcome this form of stereotyping and to remedy the current situation.

Early in the text examples of subject headings used for disabled-related topics are discussed, showing how these are "often contrived, archaic, derogatory, too general, or missing." Examples given include "DEFECTIVES:" as a cross-reference to "Delinquents" and "HANDICAPPED," "IDIOT ASYLUMS" as a cross-reference to "MENTALLY HANDICAPPED — INSTITUTIONAL CARE." The authors feel that terms such as these are harmful not only to our conception of a handicapping condition, but to the labeled individual as well.

As with the other works discussed in this article, the Davises feel that libraries should encourage more active participation of the handicapped in their programming without devising special programs. Instead, they suggest that programs should be developed that allow all individuals to be involved without special notice being directed toward a particular segment.

Other areas discussed are processing and displaying of materials, the importance of subject cataloging, and the influence these areas have upon the attitudes of both the staffs and users of libraries. Recommended changes are given by the authors. At the conclusion of the book, a mediagraphy is given of useful print and film/video resources.

The emphasis of this book upon the communication problems of labeling sets it apart from the other works discussed in this article. Rather than generalizing upon particular services for various handicaps, it recommends specific actions upon the part of the libraries, and explains how these changes can result

in better service to the handicapped. Every librarian serving the public will benefit from reading this work; they may not agree with everything in it, but they will certainly look at things differently.

These are the main works that have thus far come out in this area; however, there are two other publications which we feel will be of interest to those seeking information in this area of library services.

POOL, JANE, comp. *Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: A Bibliography 1968-1978*. Washington: Library of Congress. National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 1979. 73 p. Free.

This bibliography, compiled for NLS, was gathered from standard bibliographic indexes between 1968 and August, 1978. It has tried to be inclusive and to incorporate all entries that have dealt with library services to the blind and physically handicapped. Related areas, such as library services to the institutionalized and elderly, have also been included, as have monographs, periodical articles and pamphlets covering services both in the United States and overseas.

*A Librarian's Guide to 504: A Pocket Guide on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Washington: The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, 1979. [10.] Free.

This is a work that should be on all librarians' reading list. Short and to the point, this booklet tells what Section 504 is, who is covered, gives definitions for "handicapped" and other terms used in the regulation, and offers suggestions on how best to handle the provisions. It is not "an official regulation governing section 504 [but] is a brief summary of those portions of the regulation which impact upon libraries," and as such should be read and studied by all librarians.

This survey of the literature currently available on library services to the handicapped points toward a growing awareness that there is a need to better serve the handicapped not only in the United States but throughout the world. And, although the works may differ in some aspects, there is a consistent theme running throughout all of them: professionals ought to recognize the needs of our handicapped population, to realize that they have been exempt too many years from traditional services, and to realize that they have every right (both legally and morally) to expect good library service, not special treatment. In the future more works will be coming out which will more fully develop the methods and principles for handling this area of library service. But these works have laid the basic groundwork and will be fruitful reading for anyone concerned.