



LBW Ministry Memo

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

PO Box 5000 Yucaipa, CA 92399 800-925-6092 www.LBWloveworks.org

"We live by *faith*, not by sight" - 2 Corinthians 5:7

July 2020

DIRECTLY TO YOU FROM OUR RECIPIENTS

You've given me hope...

This is the greatest gift I could have ever received...

See, God loves you...

Now I know, when I get to heaven, Jesus is the first face I will see...

You've brought happiness into my world...

When we sing the hymns, everybody joins in...

You brought a smile to her face for the first time in months...

They are at peace for a few moments when they have the Bible read to them...

This is the best thing I've ever gotten in my life...

I share the Gospel with dozens of people every week because of your materials...

I know Jesus' love...

These are all portions of letters and phone calls we've received from recipients around the world. Ultimately, every single one of these letters finishes with an emphatic:
"THANK YOU Lutheran Braille Workers!"

And when our recipients are thanking LBW, they are actually thanking you, our volunteers. Your efforts in producing the Bible and other Christian materials in Braille, Large Print, and Audio, means the world to our recipients who are living in darkness during these difficult times.

We wish we could capture and share the energy, love, and joy received in each of these letters, e-mails, and phone calls with each of you. While that isn't possible, we do want to honor and thank our volunteers, and to reflect this, have created a Wall of Appreciation in our volunteer room at our headquarters.

In addition we are assembling a poster with many of these thank-you notes which will be sent to you before the end of the year. We hope you will proudly display this poster for your volunteers, members of your church, and community to see. We want everybody to know how much you are appreciated, loved, and thanked for the hard-work and tremendous support you provide for this ministry.

As you eventually come back together and resume normal production, be encouraged knowing God is blessing your efforts, and the love of Christ is being shared throughout the world through the work of your hands. You are sharing the Gospel, and it is welcomed!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Six months ago I never could have imagined this country, and our ministry, would be in this current situation. The idea of our offices being closed and Ministry Production Centers being empty seemed unfathomable, but this is our reality. Yet, in spite of all the difficulties around us, God continues to grace us with His blessings and love.

Our staff have mostly been working from home (with the occasional pop-in to the office) and keeping the ministry propelling forward. A few of our centers have reopened and items from our warehouse continue to make their way into the hands of our recipients. We continue to maintain a presence within the LWML districts through grant requests, at the National Federation of the Blind national convention through presentations, and in other avenues. We are even working with churches in different parts of the country who are exploring the opening of new centers when normalcy returns! Our donors continue to generously support this ministry and we have even added some new donors in the past few months!



As I have repeatedly stated, the health of our staff, volunteers, and recipients is our greatest priority. Efforts to reopen are only occurring if there is a belief these efforts are done safely. There is no idea when travel will resume, but I look forward to getting back on the road to meet with more of you, hear your stories, and thank you in person for your incredible efforts.

Ultimately, we continue to use this time to update, modernize, and plan for the future of Lutheran Braille Workers. We are adding new equipment, building out our library of titles available in all formats, and advancing our technology and systems to be modern in the decades to come.

I believe we must maintain faith in God's ultimate plan, and trust He will use these periods of down-time for a greater purpose. As long as we stay rooted in Christ as our rock, I believe we will come through this period of time stronger than before and ready to spread the Gospel to even more people who are Blind or Visually Impaired.

As always, know we appreciate your prayers, support, and hard-work. Thank you for all you do as volunteers and know the staff is working diligently to keep LBW headed in a positive direction moving forward.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Zemke'.

Jay Zemke
President

THIS PANDEMIC HAS NOT STOPPED THE WORD OF GOD

Hello Volunteers!

Wow, what a crazy quarter this has been. Who would have ever thought we would go through a Pandemic in our lifetime? I didn't! Having to shut down Ministry Centers from producing, and closing the doors to the Home Office was a new and somewhat scary situation. But this situation didn't stop the Bible, Devotionals, and Magazines from going out!

Our Lord and Savior knew this was going to happen. He prepared us (staff & volunteers) as we had three months of magazines already produced and our shelves were full with volumes of the Bible and Devotionals, produced by you, before the shutdown.

Yes, we had to send The Team home. Did you know that one of our team members lives less than a block away? She would come in the early morning to process the mail, donations, and pay the bills that continued to come in. Another team member lives in a home on the property. He would go into the office in the evening to pull, pack, and ship Braille and Large Print, while also working on the landscaping. Our President and his wife not only worked from home, they would come in on the weekend to work on mailings and promotional items.

Others team members continued to format Large Print and produce Audio which they mailed directly from their homes. Some team members trained, through webinars and Zoom, on new programs to improve and streamline processes. A couple of team members snuck into the office to paint the volunteer room and prepare Bay 9 for our new tenant. See more about this in the pages ahead.

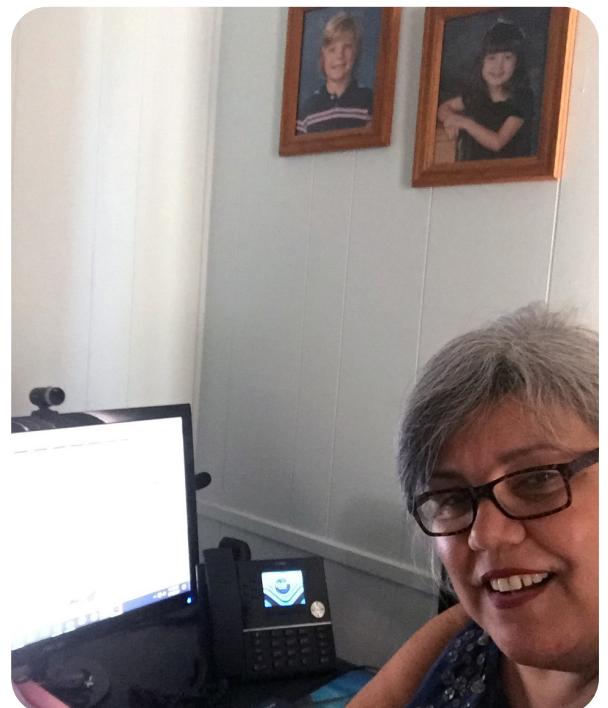
The rest of the staff at home were just as busy. You can read more about what they've been up to in the pages ahead. We worked on obtaining a Personal Payroll Protection Loan. We were blessed that prayers were answered and the Lord stepped in and allowed a bank to provide a loan during the second round. This loan will turn into a grant once we complete the process.

This pandemic didn't stop the phone from ringing. Our readers have been isolating for most, if not, all of their lives. They continued to call in and send emails to place their orders for books and audio, but also left incredibly encouraging messages for our team and the volunteers. Team members responded and continue to respond to emails and phone calls received.

We hoped to reopen the home office after Independence Day, however, with the increase of COVID-19 cases, we are now holding off to make a decision until August. The Team is still available for you and our recipients. Reach out to us if you need anything or if you would just like to check in and chat.

May the Lord keep you safe and healthy!

Rose Jaimes, Vice President of Ministry Operations



AUDIO AT HOME

Working from home has been bitter sweet. One nice part is I have 3 young children who I am able to see all day long while attending to their needs. They get to see the important work I do as LBW's Audio Coordinator in serving others. Working from home while managing my family allows me the flexibility to adjust my hours to cover all of my responsibilities.

My listeners are important to me since I know the DTBs bring them joy, and my #1 goal is ensuring the books reach their hands and ears in a timely manner. Finally, my narrators have been wonderfully supportive and have kept reading every month!

While working from home I have been training to assist other departments, such as Purchasing, Braille, and Large Print, when needed now and in the future. One day a week I come into headquarters to help clean and sanitize the office.

I wear many hats at LBW and love every part of it. Working here has been rewarding and is truly a blessing. The team has been more than coworkers and volunteers; this is a family.



Anjanette Jordan, Audio Coordinator

GREETINGS FROM SUNNY CALIFORNIA!

I've been in California for 10 months now and I must say, I can definitely get used to this weather! When Jay and I decided to take this leap of faith to move here and serve the Lord in this way we had no idea what we were in for. If you would've told me we'd face a pandemic in our first year I wouldn't have believed you.

I can tell you, we are blessed, each and every day by the kind words of our recipients and the amazing dedication of you, our volunteers. God is good!

Back in March when this all hit, our daughter was still attending Concordia University in St. Paul and just beginning her Freshman season as a softball player. Although she had always intended to move out here for the summer, we suddenly had a new house guest a couple months early. Yikes! Don't worry! We've put her to work helping with mailings and whatever else needs to be done at the office. In reality, it's been a blessing having this extra time with her.

I've been busy updating the rosters you sent back to us so we can better utilize our current contact management system to communicate with you and provide a better experience for our volunteers and Ministry Centers. We are currently updating our system to be able to provide directories and easily accessible rosters to you electronically as well as on paper. Exciting times as we move forward!

I've also been busy working on our appeals and summer newsletter, Illuminations, which have continued to be produced and mailed on schedule. These are important pieces of communication for our volunteers, donors and recipients to ensure we continue to move this ministry forward and keep our eye on sharing the Gospel. God has blessed us with the technology to continue this work even from our homes.

I pray God's richest blessings to you and your loved ones, Blessings!

Julie Zemke, Marketing and Outreach

JOANNA'S BRAILLE CORNER FROM HOME

Working from home has been a vivid reminder to me that many of our recipients live a "Stay at Home Order" type of isolation as a normal part of their life. I feel very blessed that I have had the privilege of continuing to receive their phone calls, which in many cases make their day and make mine as well. How many people have a job where you have phone calls all over the country with someone you either spoke with for the first time, or have known only by phone for many years, which ends with "I am praying for you"? We have one recipient that has called a few times just to sing us all an encouraging song-- what a blessing!

I have been able to continue to receive and respond to all emails that come into the LBW website as well as receive and process all the Braille and Large Print orders.

Our Braille transcribers have all continued to work through this Pandemic so we would have files ready for production when our office reopened. We have not missed many issues which is a blessing to our recipients.

Much of my time has been spent learning and perfecting the new system for monthly labels. We have sent labels out to a few centers over the past two months and so far I have not heard of any issues; hopefully this means the labels are working out well.

I also spend many hours cleaning up records so when we convert to our new system, everything will be ready.

At this time the post office still has suspended mail to many foreign countries but this will not slow down our production. We will continue to fulfill these labels and if you cannot ship, or do not have space to store, please send them back to our warehouse for us to hold and ship in the future. You can check the post office site to see which countries are on hold or if you try to do a customs form it will not allow you if that country is on hold.

If you need to reach me for any questions you can call 800-925-6092 and it will be transferred to me and I will return your call or you can use my normal email joanna@LBWinc.org.

LOVE WORKS MASKS ARE AVAILABLE



Your safety is our number one priority as we slowly begin to reopen. As promised we will provide masks for your volunteers if you request them. Several of our staff members have received numerous comments while wearing their Love Works masks out in public as people are drawn to the phrase "Love Works". Love truly does work! We are so appreciative of your kind hearts and the love you show our recipients each time you step into your center. We couldn't do this without you!

you would like masks for the volunteers in your center please contact Michelle at michelle@LBWinc.org, or 800-925-6092 with the amount of masks needed. We are happy to provide one for each volunteer. Our Love Works masks are washable and can be reused!

LARGE PRINT CORNER

Hi everybody!

It has been wonderful talking with some of you over the past few weeks. I know many of you are not open or operating at full capacity yet. Please know that is totally okay, and I just want all of you to remain safe and healthy!

When you decide to reopen, or if you need to adjust the number of labels you are receiving, please contact me before the 10th of each month so we can ensure everything is correct for the following month.

In addition, I am working hard from home at formatting the Primary Bible Stories and a number of other books, pamphlets, and materials in English and Spanish. I've also been learning a new formatting program, so this has been an interesting experience as well!

Thank you for all of your support. You remain in my prayers as we all get through this crazy time together!

Laura Jenkins, Large Print Coordinator

LBW- STILL ADVANCING THE MINISTRY



Despite the office being closed, and the restrictions on travel, we are making strides to keep this ministry operating and funded. Our donors continue to generously support the ministry in the belief people who are Visually Impaired deserve the Gospel message now as much as ever before. We continue to apply for grants with foundations around the United States, and this summer have already been approved for a number of grants from the wonderful, generous ladies of multiple LWML Districts.

We are still raising money to match a very generous award from the James L. Stamps Foundation (based in Southern California) in order to purchase a brand new forklift for use in our warehouse. Our existing forklift is over 40 years old and finally ready to retire. This machine is invaluable in transporting the 800lb rolls of paper in addition to the thousands of tons of books, cardboard, and pallets, every single year. This forklift will be purchased by the fall as we continue to move our ministry forward.

Finally, we have extended the Buy-A-Dot campaign due to COVID-19. We are hoping to wrap the campaign in the fall once most, if not all, of our centers have returned so we can celebrate this success together. We look forward to celebrating the efforts of everybody coming together to purchase this beautiful Plate Embossing Device to create the zinc plates so instrumental to our Braille ministry! Thank you for all of your support so far!

Daniel Jenkins, Vice President of Ministry Advancement

FROM THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT



Covid-19 hasn't interrupted the workflow for me much. The donations have continued to come in; Praise be to God! Many donations have been coming online due to the email blasts and Facebook posts being sent by Daniel. The mail has been picked up from the post office twice a week, opened and posted weekly.

One very exciting opportunity came to us during this time. We have been changing our Accounting software over to a more efficient and less expensive system. This has taken several months but will be nearing completion soon. This will continue to help us modernize and be more effective in the future.

Deanna Bowles, Donor Relations/Accounts Payable

I'M STILL HERE FOR PURCHASING SUPPORT

I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe!!

The first month of COVID-19 I was working from home, checking emails, and both researching and purchasing materials to help keep LBW headquarters disinfected and sanitized for a safe working environment. Since then, we have been implementing a new Purchasing System and I have used the time to train and ensure everything is ready for when we all reopen!

Some of the first changes you will see are new Invoices and Purchase Orders. To clarify the difference, Invoices are for materials sent to your center from headquarters which includes covers, spirals, tape, and roller cleaner. The Purchase Orders will cover supplies shipped from vendors—including cartons, 10 boxes or more of spirals, My Binding strips, and Office Depot Paper. If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to call me.

Know you and your volunteers continue to remain loved and appreciated. Thank you for all you do!

As always, please enjoy your day and stay safe!!

Michelle Jordan, Purchasing Agent



UPDATE-INVOICES AND PURCHASE ORDERS

There is a new purchasing system in place at headquarters which has resulted in new Invoice and Purchase Orders being sent to the Ministry Production Centers and some questions have arisen we would like to briefly address.

Some of you have already asked about the sections-- "Pay Invoice" and "Your Support to Cover the Invoice."

Lutheran Braille Workers has always requested our Ministry Production Centers help at least cover the cost of their expenditures through the financial support of their churches, volunteers, or communities. In fact, this is part of the Memorandum of Understanding signed when a new Ministry Production Center is opened. Additionally, in recent years, there have been a growing number of Ministry Production Centers requesting a clearer picture of what expenses their centers are generating to help them raise the funds to offset these costs. This section of the Invoice is intended to help our leaders track these expenses from the Home Office in an easier manner.

The Purchase Orders are not bills you must pay directly to the vendors. We are asking you to use these to ensure you are receiving everything which is ordered, as well as to help track total expenses being generated at your Ministry Production Center.

The work being done at your center is greatly appreciated, and the amount of volunteer hours given each year is necessary for this ministry to continue. It is not our intention or desire to ever shut down a center simply because the expenses may not be met every year; the volunteer labor produced is worth far more to this ministry. You will continue to receive the supplies you need to function whenever you order them. However, please know, we will continue to ask you to both meet your costs and also raise additional funds to support LBW at the national and international level. This will be reflected in the new paperwork being sent out.

If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact Rose Jaimes, 909-795-8977, at headquarters.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS IN A BIG WAY

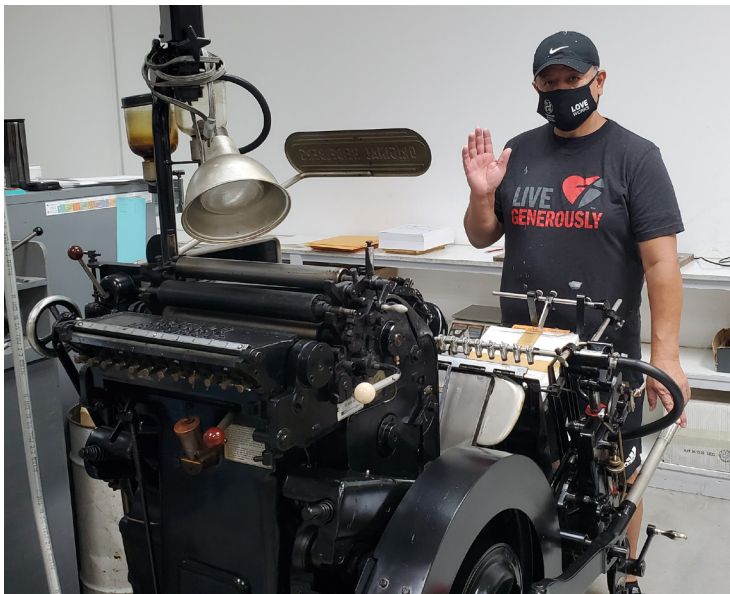
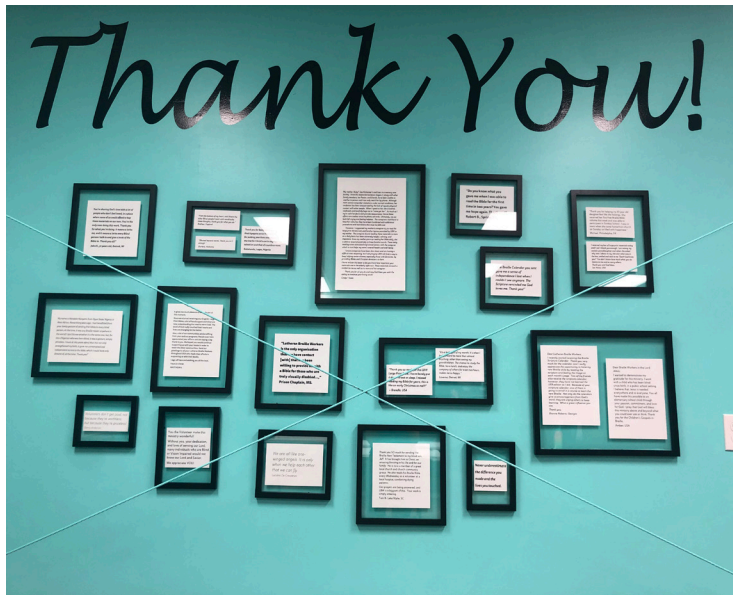
For over a year LBW has been looking into exciting ways to support small local businesses within our community. It came to our attention that a reputable small business owner was looking for a central location to warehouse his goods. Lutheran Braille Workers' corporate headquarters is blessed with significant warehouse space. Our facility has 9 warehouse bays with the 9th bay previously being used for storage.

We have been working with this small business owner for over 6 months to create a mutually beneficial lease and can announce this has been completed! After some minor clean-up and repairs, this business has moved in. Lutheran Braille Workers is blessed that we could support a local small business in such a big way.

MAINTAINING AND MOVING FORWARD

Sky, Carlos, and Dan continue to perform necessary duties to keep the building operational when everything returns to normal. In addition to renovation work, landscaping, maintenance, and repairs, they have been critical to preparing Bay 9 for use by our new tenant, as well as overhauling the Volunteer Assembly Room.

In addition, Sky has successfully repaired our industrial Braille printer and has been working on all of the Braille equipment to be ready to go when things resume! The hard work performed by these three men has been critical to the ongoing functionality of Lutheran Braille Workers!



Please prayerfully consider Lutheran Braille Workers in your Estate Planning.