

# Literacy for Every Canadian

CNIB Library Year in Review  
2012-13



# A Year of Achievements

This was a year of outstanding achievements for the CNIB Library – not the least of which was the launch of the National Digital Hub, housed within the CNIB Library, beginning our journey towards establishing a nationwide equitable library service for Canadians with print disabilities to be delivered through Canada’s public libraries.

While we began working within this exciting new framework, which will allow Canadians with print disabilities greater access than ever before to published works in alternative formats, we also undertook a number of other important initiatives to benefit the Canadians we serve – from our children’s literacy programs to our online service enhancements.

Of course, as the CNIB Library is the largest collection of alternative-format materials in Canada and a world leader in accessible libraries, securing the sustainable funds needed to keep this national resource thriving remains a constant focus.

In the past year, the CNIB team has worked extensively to reach out to stakeholders and potential funders of the National Digital Hub, culminating in important supportive resolutions by the Canadian Urban Libraries Council and the Canadian Library Association,

among others. We were thrilled to announce our success in securing a commitment from the Government of Canada for \$3 million for the Hub. Though it is not a long-term solution to our funding needs, this is a much-needed commitment and one that we are strongly encouraged by.

On behalf of the CNIB Library Board of Directors and management, we send a heartfelt “thank you” to our extraordinary library staff and volunteers who, as you will see in the pages that follow, went the extra mile to help us deliver on our priorities this year. We also thank the many generous partners and supporters who help us bring the gift of literacy, each and every day, to thousands of Canadians who are unable to read print.

Thank you for an amazing year!



Betty Nobel  
Chair, CNIB Library Board of Directors



Margaret McGrory  
Vice President and Executive Director,  
CNIB Library

# Fostering Equitable Access

At the CNIB Library, we believe passionately that the 3.4 million Canadians with print disabilities deserve equitable access, like any citizen, to publicly funded library services and published materials in formats they can read – including audio, braille and electronic text.

Home to almost 80,000 alternative-format materials – from books to magazines to newspapers and much more – the CNIB Library is a one-of-a-kind resource available to all Canadians who are blind or partially sighted.

Importantly, the library is also available to people with other print disabilities (such as mobility or learning disabilities) through the innovative CNIB Library Partners Program, which provides access to our collection through over 500 public library systems in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and PEI.

- **Ten per cent** of Canada's population has a print disability. That's 3.4 million Canadians.
- Only **seven per cent** of internationally published material is available in formats people with print disabilities can read.



## What is a print disability?

A print disability is any condition that makes it difficult or impossible for a person to read traditional print. This includes disabilities that affect:

- **Vision** – blindness or partial sight
- **Agility/mobility** – the inability to hold or manipulate a book
- **Learning** – impairments related to comprehension

# Leading the Way

As a global leader among alternative -format libraries, the CNIB Library is the largest accessible public library-type collection in Canada, providing a comprehensive collection and service for thousands of Canadians with print disabilities.

## Our collection includes:

- **Almost 80,000 titles** (braille, e-braille, printbraille, e-text, DAISY, online audio) in English and French.
- **Access to 97,000 online books**, through our Bookshare partnership, in DAISY full text, synthetic speech and braille. With reading material for all ages, Bookshare features the latest "New York Times" bestsellers, award winners and a growing number of books in languages other than English.
- **Popular audio magazines** including "Maclean's", "Chatelaine", "Canadian Business", "Reader's Digest", and "Le Bel Âge".
- **More than 50 local, national and international newspapers.**

\*DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) is an internationally recognized book format intended for people with print disabilities. It allows users to listen to and navigate within a text in a way that is far superior to traditional audio books.

The CNIB Library is unique in offering multiple formats, but our service also adheres to standard library practices in other ways:



## Content

The collection offers variety and depth, and reflects user demographics and reading interests in their format of choice



## Access

Bilingual digital library where users can choose materials to read online, download or have mailed to their homes



## Reader Services

Access to a bilingual helpline, handling toll-free telephone and email inquiries: **1-800-268-8818** and **reader.services@cnib.ca**



# Use and Growth of our Collection

Thanks to support from our generous donors across Canada – as well as the tireless efforts of our volunteers and staff – this past year, more than 2.2 million books, magazines, newspapers and other materials were read by more than 28,000 CNIB Library users nationwide.

Whether it's downloaded to an individual's computer or shipped right to their front door, those materials reach our users in a range of formats to best suit their needs.

## Our collection growth this year:

### Audio

We recorded more than 600 digital DAISY audio books.

### Braille

We created more than 300 braille books. Through braille translation software, our staff and volunteers are able to resolve complex braille formatting issues, prepare books for physical circulation and post them for online reading.



### Electronic

We built almost 48,000 encoded text files that were later transformed into braille and rendered in DAISY format.



# How We're Growing

April 1, 2012, saw the implementation of a complete refresh of the library's entire technology landscape – from the digital repository through to the end-user "discovery layer" – thanks to funding support from the Government of Canada.

New features:

- To better interact with our partner libraries' systems, considerable effort was made to **install and optimize back-end tools** such as the Z39.50 interface (allowing partner libraries to search our catalog) and the OAI/PMH interface (allowing other library systems to "harvest" our catalog data to integrate with their own).
- We developed a special area of the digital library for **kids and teens** to play, learn and interact with each other.
- We undertook a pilot of the **DAISY Online Delivery Protocol** (a distribution channel of delivering books through the Internet) to a group of test users across the country equipped with Internet-enabled DAISY book players. This delivery channel allows our library users across Canada who do not have access or do not use a computer to benefit from online delivery of books to their homes.

- We developed a new "**Discovery Layer**" within the new digital library, which helps clients find their next book, and offers features like books in the news, "community pick", popular series', award winners and more.

## By the numbers

Since the new Discovery Layer was launched in April 2012:

- 56,797 DAISY books have been downloaded.
- We've seen an 80-fold increase in use of the Native peoples of Canada collection as a result of developing a curated collection and reaching out to First Nation libraries.

**"With the new player you only have to wait an hour to get a book, whereas with the (CD system) you had to wait for Canada Post to deliver the book."**

-CNIB Library user

# CNIB Library Partners Program

Since its inception in 2010, the Library Partners Program has grown exponentially to include even more public library systems:

- 525 public library systems in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island offer access to CNIB Library collections and services to their print-disabled community.
- 299 libraries took advantage of deposit collections of DAISY books on CD in the last year, with more than 84,000\* local circulations of these materials.

To help partner libraries participate successfully in our program, the Partners Program staff focused on supporting and complementing public libraries' outreach efforts this year through . . .

- More than 34,000 new promotional materials distributed to partner libraries offering enhanced marketing resources and support.
- A Partners Program Users Group forum which provided an opportunity for partner libraries to exchange ideas and information about how to promote their accessible library services.

- Increased outreach to people with learning disabilities, including webinars and workshops, event displays, conferences, presentations and more.

**Web:** [cnib.ca/librarypartners](http://cnib.ca/librarypartners)

**Email:**  
[partnersprogram@cnib.ca](mailto:partnersprogram@cnib.ca)

**Phone:** 1-800-563-2642,  
ext. 7055



\*Not all partner libraries were able to provide usage statistics.

# Production Highlights

We're proud to report that the CNIB Library grew significantly this year through partnership projects. Here are just a few highlights from an outstanding year of service . . .

## CNIB and AMI's Choice Words

During Vision Health Month 2012, CNIB partnered with Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) to launch a monthly broadcast program highlighting the rich offerings of the CNIB Library. The show, titled "Choice Words", broadcasts four times each month on AMI-audio's television channel, as well as online at [ami.ca](http://ami.ca).

## T'licho literacy project

A partnership between BHP Billiton, a resource company, and CNIB makes audio books in local aboriginal languages available in the DAISY format through the CNIB Library. The objective is to help promote literacy in the Northwest Territories. Three traditional aboriginal stories, as well as Dogrib Genesis and New Testament have already been converted and available for download through the CNIB Library.

## Introduction to Unified English Braille

Over the past year, the library transformed its production processes to ensure that all material produced in-house conforms to the new Unified English Braille (UEB) guidelines. CNIB rehabilitation services are in the process of training independent living skills specialists in UEB. We have supported this endeavor by creating copies of the UEB edition of "Celebrating Braille: A Canadian Approach," published by CNIB. Since last November, all new books assigned to transcribers were to be produced in UEB and all new books added to the collection are now in that format.

## TIGAR project

More than 20 international alternative-format producers, including the CNIB Library, and 45 national and international publishers /licensing organizations are participating in the Trusted Intermediaries Global Accessible Resources (TIGAR) project. This project opens access for Canadians with print disabilities to many thousands of copyrighted books in DAISY and braille from around the world, including books in languages that represent the country's cultural diversity.

# Putting Children First

This year, CNIB Library programs attracted wide interest from children and youth with vision loss from across Canada. We introduced some new children's programs and brought back some perennial favourites.

- We increased **TD Summer Reading Club** registration by seven per cent, meaning more children and youth with vision loss took part in the program than ever before.



- We joined forces with **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library**, to offer preschool children with print disabilities in Canada access to age-appropriate audio books each month, beginning in 2014 (The program was made possible by an agreement with the Dollywood Foundation, Penguin Books and the American Printing House for the Blind.)
- We inspired 50 young writers to develop their braille literacy and writing skills in the annual **Braille Creative Writing Contest**.
- We empowered children with sight loss from kindergarten through Grade 12 to participate in the Ontario Library Association's **Forest of Reading Program** by creating reading materials in braille or audio.



**“My son and I both have learning disabilities. We have asked for years how to get audio things such as textbooks for school and books in general. The public library has some, but not too much, for his age and level of interest. When I heard about the CNIB Library and its services, I was so excited.”**  
-CNIB Library user

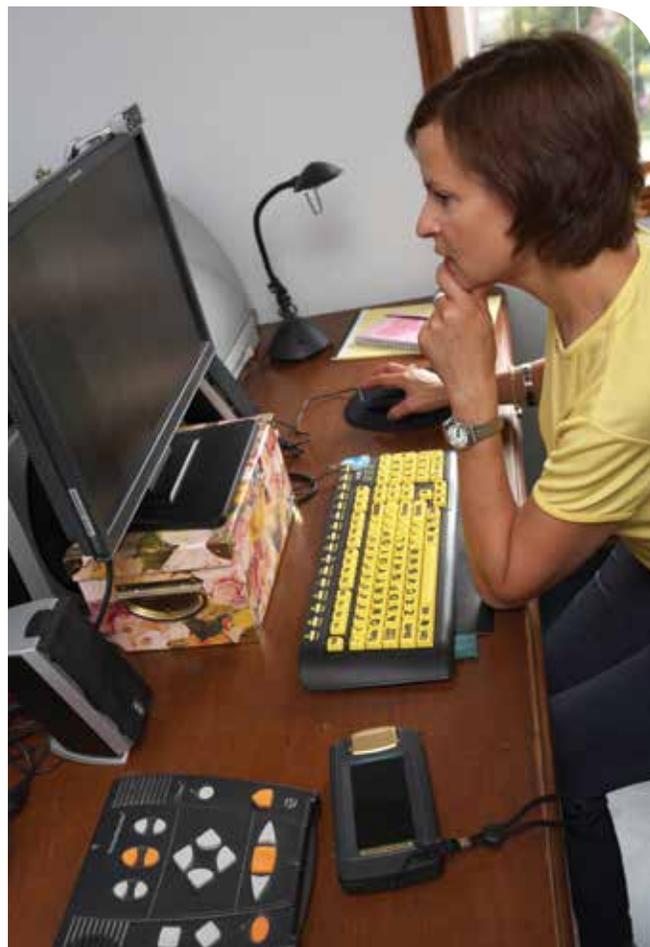
# A Final Word . . .

**The Canadian Library Association's 2005 report, "Opening the Book", proposed to "make good on more than two decades of promises by providing Canadians with print disabilities access to a broader range of information."**

This year was the first of our five-year Reading Re-imagined business plan, which seeks to provide equitable library services for Canadians with print disabilities through a National Digital Hub to support service delivery in Canada's public libraries. This first year saw the National Digital Hub operate within the CNIB Library, marking a significant step forward in that plan.

Through continued collaboration with public library leaders and other stakeholders, we're working to establish the Hub as an entirely separate entity, outside of CNIB, and secure sustainable funding to ensure its viability.

As we go forward into 2013-14, the second year of the five-year business plan for the National Digital Hub, we are optimistic that a number of important partnerships will come to fruition and that all of the "groundwork" that has gone before will finally lead to fulfilling the promise so very long in the making – to create and deliver equitable library services to Canadians with print disabilities through their public libraries.



# About This Review

The large text size used in this review was selected to enhance readability for people with vision loss.

Visit [cnib.ca/clearprint](http://cnib.ca/clearprint) for more information about these standards.





To learn more about the CNIB  
Library, please contact us at:

**1-800-268-8818**

**[cniblibrary.ca](http://cniblibrary.ca)**

Charitable registration #119219459 RR0003

  
**cnib**  
seeing beyond vision loss

  
**inca**  
voir au-delà de la perte  
de vision