

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Clovernook Center Hosts 2017 Regional Braille Challenge for Students Who Are Blind & Visually Impaired

Cincinnati – March 8, 2017 – Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in collaboration with the Braille Institute of America, hosted the First Regional Braille Challenge for the State of Ohio on Friday, March 3, 2017. Twenty-four students, from across Ohio, competed to test their braille skills in five categories: Reading, comprehension, braille spelling, chart and graph reading, proofreading and braille speed and accuracy.

The day started with an energetic opening ceremony. Ohio Army National Guard presented a color guard ceremony, Miss Ohio 2016 Alice Magoto sang the National Anthem and Cincinnati City Councilman, P.G. Sittenfeld present a proclamation from the city. Students then began testing and did not conclude until early afternoon.

After the competition, students and parents were invited to enjoy art activities, refreshments, and musical performances. Parents and teachers could also attend workshops focused on accessibility and literacy for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The day ended with an awards ceremony, where all students were awarded medals and gift cards. The top three competitors in each of the five age groups also received cash prizes.

The Ohio State Regional Competition is the first step to the national finals Braille Challenge competition held at the Los Angeles headquarters of the Braille Institute. At

the finals, 50 students with the highest scores from around North America embark on another daylong competition to test their braille skills alongside their peers. Here were the winners of each level of the 2017 Ohio Regional Braille Challenge:

Apprentice: 1st: Elliott Harris of Warren County, Ohio 2nd: Taylor Marcum of Butler County, Ohio 3rd: Damion Nowlin of Butler County, Ohio

Freshman: 1st: Philip Sotak of Franklin County, Ohio 2nd: MaKenzie Love of Pikaway County, Ohio 3rd: Andrew Gillespie of Hamilton County, Ohio

Sophomore: 1st: Jana Alo of Franklin County, Ohio 2nd: Aujanee Bland of Mahoning County, Ohio

Junior Varsity: 1st: Camryn Gattuso of Stark County, Ohio 2nd: Caiden Hooks of Delaward, Ohio 3rd: Autum Radcliff of Marion County, Ohio

Varsity: 1st: Brennen Kinch of Butler County, Ohio 2nd: Brandon Khounesombat of Butler County, Ohio 3rd: Elaysha Collins of Butler County, Ohio

About Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Since 1903, Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been providing life-enriching opportunities and empowering people who are blind or visually impaired to be self-sufficient and full participants in their communities. Program Services annually assists more than 1,200 individuals, helping them to adapt and overcome the challenges of vision impairment. Employment Services provides job opportunities and coaching for consumers who want to work in their local community, or in Clovernook Center's own Social Enterprises which provide a variety of employment opportunities for more than 55 people with vision loss. Clovernook's Arts and Recreation department provides a powerful outlet for individuals to express themselves artistically, share personal insights, and join together with others who face similar challenges. Youth Services include six-weeks of summer day camps. As well as year-round activities for youth ages 4 to 22 who are blind or visually impaired. Additionally, our Braille Printing House prints books, magazines and other materials for the National Library Services and braille patrons worldwide. More information can be accessed at www.clovernook.org.

About Braille Institute of America

Braille Institute of America is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate barriers to a fulfilling life caused by blindness and severe sight loss. It serves tens of thousands of people of all ages each year through an array of integrated educational, social and recreational programs and services designed

to help people with vision loss lead enriched and fulfilling lives. Funded entirely by private donations, all services are completely free-of-charge. Braille Institute's Los Angeles headquarters are located at 741 N Vermont Ave, Los Angeles. For additional information, please visit www.braillechallenge.org. or www.brailleinstitute.org. Follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/brailleinstitute> and on twitter @BrailleInst

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