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Clovernook Center Announces Grants to Upgrade Technology, Provide Services for Customers

Grant awards total more than \$207,000 to improve the lives of blind and visually impaired

CINCINNATI – February 12, 2019 – Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired (Clovernook Center) announced it has received eight grants totaling more than \$207,000 to fund equipment upgrades and new programming to benefit people who are blind and visually impaired (BVI) in the Greater Cincinnati community.

A **\$112,500 grant from the Ettlenger Trust Fund** will partially fund four key positions at Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired. This will allow Clovernook Center to continue to provide high-quality services for this vulnerable population. Positions include:

- **Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT):** Provides integrated mental health support services to each consumer, while also offering community-based support groups throughout Hamilton and Butler Counties. With the addition of a CLVT, Clovernook Center will offer an online peer-support forum, which will be available 365 days a year. Clovernook Center anticipates serving at least 75 individuals through this position.
- **Case Manager:** Provides highly individualized and time intensive services to 40 people who are BVI (most with additional disabilities).
- **Orientation and Mobility Specialist:** Provides instructional services for about 90 children and adults living with low vision to learn how to safely and effectively travel through their environment.
- **Vocational Habilitation Coordinator/Vision Rehabilitation Specialist:** Provides vision services to 375 people (or the families of individuals via support groups) who are blind or visually impaired.

“Clovernook Center is grateful to the Ettlenger Trust Fund for providing critical support to fund these positions,” said Clovernook Center President & CEO Chris Faust. “These positions have a direct and significant impact on the blind and visually impaired that rely on Clovernook Center for everything from mental health to mobility therapy. We know they’ll make a lasting positive impact on the folks we serve.”

Clovernook also received the following grants:

- A **\$30,000 grant from the Patricia Kisker Foundation** will fund capital improvements to enhance Clovernook Center's Braille transcription and printing services, including:
 - **Optical Braille Recognition Scanners (OBR):** This equipment will scan each embossed plate or document, identifying errors or discrepancies between the press plates and the digital files. This is an efficient and safe alternative to manual inspections and is a vital step to guarantee the materials Clovernook Center produces are free of errors.
 - **The Tiger Pro Elite Braille Printer:** This advanced printer will allow Clovernook Center to produce high-quality tactile graphics in a fraction of the time for a fraction of the cost, while maintaining high-quality production. With a single Tiger Pro Elite, the organization will be able to quintuple capacity and reduce project costs by 75 percent. The increased capacity will allow Clovernook Center to take on additional contracts and get more tactile materials into the hands of people who are BVI. Currently Clovernook Center hand-tools the majority of the tactile graphics used in textbooks and other printed materials that are produced. This process is expensive and extremely labor intensive, which severely limits the capacity to provide tactile graphics on a broad scale. It also previously prevented Clovernook Center from accepting large Braille printing contracts, as they could not be completed efficiently or affordably.
 - **Accessible Workstation:** As an industry leader, Clovernook Center has been selected by National Library Service (NLS) division of the Library of Congress to develop the first Braille certification course in advanced materials for Braille professionals. This certification will become the industry-standard course for Braille professionals nationwide and will be an industry standard requirement for production. To develop this course, Clovernook Center will work with a variety of staff members and other Braille professionals, who will serve as beta-testers and provide feedback each step of the way. The development of this certification will require Clovernook to build a workstation replete with state-of-the-art accessible technology. This workstation will serve as an on-site testing location for in-house certification development, but it will also allow Clovernook Center to train up to 50 students each year.
- A grant of **\$24,900 from [the Robert and Christine Steinmann Family Foundation](#)** will purchase a UV LED flatbed printer that will reduce hand tooling and the amount of time that goes into each image for the production of high-quality tactile graphics in Clovernook Center's Braille Printing House. This printer also includes ADA-compliant Braille signage print production capabilities, which expands opportunities for new signage contracts.
- **The Spaulding Foundation grant of \$15,000** will fund peer-led support groups at Clovernook Center. The organization currently offers a peer-led Low Vision Support Group once per month at the Hamilton Avenue location, serving 15 individuals. With

this new funding from The Spaulding Foundation, the program will expand to four locations and serve 75 individuals. It will also allow Clovernook Center to hire a Certified Low Vision Therapist to serve as a liaison between Clovernook Center, local healthcare providers and BVI individuals. This will further reduce barriers like transportation, which have prevented individuals from attending the support group at the Hamilton Avenue location. Finally, in addition to providing in-person support, Clovernook Center will offer an online peer-support forum, available to all participants 365 days a year.

- **A \$10,000 matching grant from The MH Foundation** allows Clovernook Center to purchase Quickpaw Software for its Braille Printing House. Quickpaw is an in-house software tool used to perform quality checks and corrections on Braille publications. The program is specifically designed to be assessable for to Clovernook Center's BVI employees and can be utilized with Braille displays, voiceover and keyboard commands.
- **[The Cincinnati Insurance Companies](#) grant of \$5,000** will allow Clovernook Center to purchase four AED units. Clovernook Center will have five AED units and be able to respond immediately to any heart event victim on-site and significantly increase the chance of survival.
- **Two \$5,000 grants from The Maxwell C. Weaver Foundation** will fund the purchase of an IT asset inventory management system and encryption software to significantly reduce the risk of a network security breach. Most of Clovernook Center's individualized services are done almost exclusively in the field working one-on-one with the blind or visually impaired using a laptop or other mobile device, and to support the organizations mission to empower people who are BVI to be self-sufficient and full participants in their communities.

"Clovernook Center is incredibly grateful to these generations organizations for giving us the tools needed to improve and expand operations at our Braille Printing House, as well as to expand the services we're able to offer to our consumers," said Michael Ehrensberger, chairman of the Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired Board of Trustees. "We're going to be able to improve the lives of blind and visually impaired in so many new ways because of their gifts and faith in our organization."

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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. Adult programs and youth activities, as well as arts and recreation departments provide critical services to those who need it. Clovernook's Braille Printing House is the largest volume producer of braille in the world. It prints books, magazines and other materials for the National Library Services and braille patrons worldwide

while providing employment opportunities for blind and visually impaired individuals. For more information, visit www.clovernook.org.