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Clovernook Center Launches Expanded Arts & Accessibility Initiative

Generous Gift from the Louise Taft Semple Foundation Allows Center to Expand Partnerships with Organizations Around Region and Nation

Cincinnati, September 10, 2019 – The Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired recently announced it has received a $25,000 grant from the Louise Taft Semple Foundation to allow it to expand its Arts & Accessibility Partnership Initiative with regional and national organizations to produce high-quality Braille, tactile graphic, and other materials for patrons who are blind or visually impaired (BVI).

The funding allows for Clovernook Center to partner with ten nonprofit partners from across the region and beyond, and pays for the production of accessible materials for these organizations. Partners include the Cincinnati Museum Center, Contemporary Arts Center, Western Wildlife Corridor, and the Massillon Museum in Ohio as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Several partners have worked with the Clovernook Center previously to make their facilities and programming more accessible, including an award-winning partnership with the Massillon Museum on “Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception.” This exhibit rendered 2-D abstract art accessible to the blind and visually impaired through the use of Braille, audio, and tactile materials. Other projects included the development of high-quality Braille signage for the Cincinnati Museum Center’s brand new, interactive Dinosaur Hall exhibit and the production of Braille programs for the Manhattan School of Music Centennial Gala Concert at New York’s Carnegie Hall.

“Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired launched an Arts & Accessibility Initiative in 2016 to bring awareness of the need for accessibility as a core consideration for cultural institutions,” said Chris Faust, president and CEO of Clovernook Center. “When it comes to the provision of Braille and other resources for people who are blind and visually impaired, most of the time the materials can be prohibitively expensive. Add to this that signage producers most
often contracted to produce Braille and tactile graphics lack the expertise needed to create a great product – braille is often translated incorrectly and tactile graphics aren’t given the care they need to be useful.”

“We identified this opportunity to apply our knowledge and expertise to raise awareness and develop a program to help museums and cultural institutions develop high-quality materials at a negligible cost because we believe so much in the importance of this mission,” said Samuel Foulkes, Clovernook Center Braille Printing House Manager. “At the heart of what we do is community involvement – all our materials are developed with the assistance of the end-user – people who are blind or visually impaired.”

The 10 partner organizations and their accessibility initiatives include:

- **Carnegie Hall**: Clovernook Center will produce Braille programs for various concerts throughout the next year for the New York City institution.

- **National Veterans Memorial and Museum**: Braille booklets of exhibit elements and visitor information, as well as additional interactive accessible elements to complement various areas of the museum, will be created by Clovernook Center’s team for the museum in Columbus.

- **Cincinnati Art Museum (CAM)**: The partnership will allow Clovernook Center to complete booklets containing pre-developed text transcribed into Braille for a number of key static works within the museum, which will also include a select number of tactile graphics. Clovernook Center will also print a quarterly Braille version of the CAM restaurant menu and Braille versions of CAM brochures.

- **Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC)**: Clovernook Center will create Braille booklets and signs that contain text of exhibit panels for this Cincinnati institution. Clovernook will also produce tactile maps of various spaces within the museum. The two organizations previously worked together to incorporate high-quality Braille into the new Dinosaur Hall in order to make the new exhibit accessible to visitors who are blind and visually impaired.

- **Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden**: Clovernook Center will produce braille and tactile materials to enhance the Cincinnati Zoo experience for visitors who are blind and visually impaired.

- **Contemporary Arts Center (CAC)**: Clovernook Center will create original audio descriptions of artworks to describe the pieces for people who are blind or visually impaired.
impaired, as well as Braille booklets and audio recordings of pre-developed gallery panel text, for the Robert Colescott Exhibition, opening September 20.

- **The Massillon Museum**: Clovernook Center will create Braille labels and booklets for a number of different exhibits and collections throughout the year.

- **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**: Clovernook Center will create Braille brochures, and other Braille printing, as needed throughout the year for the world-renowned art museum in New York City. In addition, Clovernook Center will create tactile graphics of some of the museum’s architectural features.

- **TILT Performance Group**: TILT is a production company that puts on theatrical performances in the Austin, Texas area. The company’s cast is fully integrated with many of the actors having disabilities, and a number of the cast read Braille. Through the grant, Clovernook Center will provide Braille scripts for several shows, as well as Braille playbills for the performances.

- **Western Wildlife Corridor**: The Western Wildlife Corridor is a green space that enhances the quality of life for people in the Greater Cincinnati community. Clovernook Center will create tactile graphic booklets containing representations of a dozen different trees with braille descriptions and embedded audio. Clovernook Center will also develop and record an audio tour to be made available for those who can’t traverse the terrain.

Clovernook is committed to ensuring accessibility in public spaces outside of its ten grant partners, and to help close the visitor experience gap for people who are blind or visually impaired. Other organizations are invited to arts@clovernook.org to learn more about what accessible elements could enhance the experience for patrons with vision loss.

### 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 Center’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.