

Braille Challenge Comes to Kenya

A Massive Success in expanding Global Braille Literacy— The First Braille Challenge on the African Continent



This spring Clovernook Center marked a historic milestone for global Braille literacy organizing the first official Kenya Regional Braille Challenge—also the first Braille Challenge to take place in Africa. Through a longstanding partnership with Braille Institute, Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired helped bring the internationally recognized competition to Kenya, expanding opportunities for students who are blind or visually impaired to strengthen their Braille skills and celebrate academic achievement.

In May 2026, the Kenya Braille Challenge welcomed 1,008 learners from three schools for the visually impaired, supported by 164 teachers, government officials, and 16 partner organizations. Beyond Braille reading and writing competitions, students participated in music, drama, sports, and educational activities that fostered confidence, community, and a love of learning.

In Kenya alone, more than 670,000 children live with visual impairments while there are only six schools in the country that are able to serve the BVI community, and only two that offer higher education. By expanding the Braille Challenge to Kenya, Clovernook Center and Braille Institute are helping to increase access to quality Braille instruction while raising awareness of the vital role Braille plays in education and independence.

By bringing the Braille Challenge to Kenya, Clovernook Center lays a foundation for more BVI programming and resources to expand throughout Africa, continuing Clovernook Center's commitment to supporting access to Braille literacy worldwide. This milestone marks the beginning of new opportunities for students, educators, and communities while building a more accessible future for everyone.

“

The Braille Challenge motivated our learners to do their best. They were excited to participate, and the experience has increased their confidence and enthusiasm for Braille.”
- Mr. Musua, TVI at
Thika Primary School for
the Visually Impaired



Stronger Together:

A Guiding Principle for Clovernook Center's Future



The spirit of collaboration was front and center at our annual **Boldly BVI Awards Breakfast on May 8**, where we celebrated community partners whose support reinforces what we know to be true: when we work together, we can accomplish far more than we ever could alone.

Collaboration helped us make history through the **largest Braille Challenge ever held** and the first hosted in a non-affluent country. With the Braille Institute, more than **1,000 students** at three schools in Kenya participated in Braille Challenge events. By partnering with local educators, we helped ensure these opportunities continue well beyond the pilot program.

Closer to home, our partnership with **Cincinnati Children's Hospital** supported **110 pediatric low-vision clinics** last year, serving **420 youth** and providing critical devices and consultations to families and educators.

As we begin the strategic planning process to set our priorities through 2030, Clovernook Center's Board and leadership team are exploring new ways to strengthen braille production, expand employment opportunities, grow youth services, and increase access to innovative technologies.

Inspired by founders **Georgia and Florence Trader**, we remain committed to creating opportunity through collaboration. Their legacy reminds us that meaningful change happens when people unite around a shared purpose. Together, we can build a more inclusive future for people with vision loss.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer DuBois". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jennifer DuBois, President/CEO

The Perspective Newsletter is now Clovernotes

Clovernook Center is merging two of its newsletters into one

This newsletter is an action toward bridging external and internal communications, allowing Clovernook to share important BVI news while also embracing transparency and supporting a unified community. Clovernotes is designed to embody the mission of Clovernook, especially with the implementation of accessible printing standards (notice the embossed braille title on the front of the newsletter and tactile QR code on the back) and pay homage to the organization's history. The name Clovernotes references the choir that Clovernook hosted in the 1960s, in its earlier days as a home for the blind and budding print house. Scan the QR code on the back of the newsletter to hear the voices of Clovernotes! **This is what it sounds like to be stronger together.**

Braille Challenge



Earlier this year, Clovernook Center's Ohio Regional Braille Challenge celebrated its 10th anniversary, "A Decade of Dots: Celebrating 10 Years of Braille Excellence." At this event back in February, three ORBC participants qualified for international finals: Killian Kinner, Belen Lopez-Santos, and Anne Ye. Recently, the International Braille Challenge Finals took place from June 25-27th at the University

of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. Each year, this three-day event brings together young BVI students from all over the world for testing, workshops, student activities, and special programming for families and educators. While Killian, Belen, and Anne didn't place at the International Finals, they enjoyed the competition, support, and community the event offered. Clovernook Center recognizes their efforts and hard work.

Clovernook Center at the Opera



Through Clovernook Center's Arts & Accessibility Initiative, Clovernook Center partnered with Cincinnati Opera to make Lalovavi more accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. Along with producing Braille programs, Clovernook Center created 3D-printed action figures and educational mannequin models that allowed

patrons to explore the characters, costumes, and artistic details through touch before enjoying the live performance.

These tactile resources helped audience members better understand the story and experience the production more independently. By combining Braille production with tactile design and innovative technology, Clovernook Center continues to remove barriers to the arts and create more inclusive cultural experiences. Partnerships like this demonstrate how accessibility can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to fully experience and enjoy live performances.



History Nuggets

In this personal letter to founders Georgia and Florence Trader, W. A. Procter shares warm greetings, updates from his travels, and kind words about the "sweetness" of Clovernook Center. The letter reflects the deep friendships and community spirit that have been at the heart of Clovernook Center for nearly 125 years.

W. A. Procter,

Wadsworth, Ohio, July 21, 1903

My dear Georgia and Florence,
I have your letters of 12 & 15. I like your letters from Clovernook. I think from these they partake of its sweetness but your letters are always fresh and sweet to me. I expect Mr Shipley to be with me a week from today to spend three weeks. You must call on him before he leaves. Mr Paul Matthews arrived here this afternoon. He will only stay until Monday morning as he will take Mrs Matthews and their three children to Harbor Point Mich.

Letter from William Procter to Georgia and Florence Trader dated July 21st, 1903, the year that Clovernook Center opened.



Brennen Kinch



Disability Pride Flag Raising

On July 2, the City of Cincinnati raised the Disability Pride flag in recognition of Disability Pride Month, celebrating the strength, diversity, and contributions of the disability community. Clovernook Center's Access Technology & Tactile Graphics Specialist, Brennen Kinch, attended the ceremony in support of disability awareness and inclusion. The flag's five colored stripes each represent a different disability community: red for physical disabilities, gold for neurodivergence, white for invisible disabilities, blue for mental illnesses, and green for sensory disabilities. The flag serves as a reminder of the importance of accessibility, inclusion, and equal opportunities for all.

Support Amidst a Nationwide Shortage

For students who are blind or visually impaired, the need for highly qualified professionals including teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) and orientation & mobility (O&M) specialists is crucial. TVIs and O&M specialists provide instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum, a set of 9 skill areas that are usually learned through incidental visual observation (e.g., sensory efficiency skills, assistive technology, self-determination, recreation & leisure, etc.).

There is a nationwide shortage of these professionals and therefore, BVI students may not receive the timely, necessary services they need to thrive in their schools and communities, and to lead active, productive, and independent lives when they reach adulthood. Clovernook Center offers many programs that teach and reinforce these skills, and support children who are visually impaired, along with their families and teachers.

Visit the Clovernook Center website to learn more about BVI programming options such as the Pediatric Low Vision Clinic, Adaptive Sports & Leisure Program, Braille Challenge, and the Summer Camp Series.

DOS and DON'TS for BVI Accessibility in the Workplace

Accessibility is about creating an environment where everyone has the tools and support they need to succeed. When in doubt, ask, and listen.

DO

- Ask what accessibility support someone prefers – everyone's needs and preferences are different.
- Introduce yourself when approaching or joining a conversation.
- Read aloud important visual information.
- Offer your arm if someone requests assistance.
- Create accessible digital content by using headings, large text, and screen reader friendly documents.

DON'T

- Assume someone needs help or knows who is speaking.
- Leave obstructions in shared walkways.
- Point or reference something without providing a visual description.
- Rely only on visual information/communication when sharing important information.
- Assume all individuals who are blind or have low vision use the same tools or require the same accommodations.

Best Wishes Katie Brass



Clovernook Center has some bittersweet news to share. Katie Brass has accepted a position as Director of Grants and Development with the Deaconess Foundation.

Katie's impact on Clovernook Center has been extraordinary! She transformed our Development Department, strengthened our culture of philanthropy, and helped position Clovernook Center for continued growth and success. We are deeply grateful for her many contributions and wish her every success in this next chapter.

Congratulations Chris Mundy



On April 8th, Chris Mundy celebrated 40 years of service with Clovernook Center! He began his distinguished career with Clovernook Center as a part-time materials handler at Multi-State Center East in 1986.

Chris has been a significant factor in MSCE's success over the decades. He currently serves in the role of Quality Assurance Specialist ensuring the accuracy and quality of analog and digital masters of books and other publications for NLS. Chris brings such a positive approach to his work, and we are deeply grateful for his support of Clovernook Center's mission over the past 40 years. Thank you, Chris!

Welcome Celeste McMurtry



Clovernook Center is excited to announce that Celeste McMurtry has been hired as a full-time Development Associate, after serving Clovernook Center in the Marketing Internship role since this May.

Celeste will be a senior at Northern Kentucky University this fall, where she is pursuing a bachelor's degree in English.

She is grateful for the opportunity to continue supporting Clovernook Center's mission through fundraising, communications, and community engagement, and looks forward to getting to know everyone and contributing to the incredible work happening here.

Welcome Makerspace Interns

Milo Adams



Milo Adams graduated from NKU in 2025 with a major in Information Technology and a specialization in 3D Digital Design and Visual Effects. This summer, Milo has joined the Clovernook Center team as a

Makerspace Intern, and in June he designed a 3D printed braille sign that was used at the Cincinnati Pride Festival to provide easy access to directions and other important vendor and event information.

Syan Gandhi



Before beginning his Business Administration and Industrial Engineering studies at Northeastern University, Syan Gandhi is lending his skills to the Clovernook Center team as a Makerspace

Intern for the summer. If you find yourself visiting the Philadelphia Zoo anytime soon, you'll see his work in the form of 3D printed braille signage for selected exhibits!

Sadie Kimberlin



This fall, Sadie Kimberlin embarks on her senior year at NKU, where she studies 3D Digital Design and Visual Effects. At the start of her internship with Clovernook Center in May, she had the opportunity

to combine her 3D modeling skills with her passion for endangered animals and conservation to design a tactile flamingo skull for the Philadelphia Zoo!

Thank You to Our Generous Supporters

Clovernook Center's programs and services depend on the contributions from its incredible donors. These gifts allow Clovernook Center to continue to expand its reach and identify new and innovative ways to support individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

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Ways to help the blind and visually impaired in your community:

- Make a tax-deductible contribution by visiting clovernook.org/donate.
- Talk to your financial advisor about including Clovernook Center in your estate plans.
- Ask your employer about a matching gift. • Give a gift of time and volunteer.

For more information, contact Development Associate Celeste McMurtry at 513-728-6227 or cmcmurtry@clovernook.org

OUR MISSION

To empower people who are blind or visually impaired to lead active, productive, and independent lives.



Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired

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Cincinnati, OH 45231

Board of Trustees Updates and Thanks

Clovernook Center extends its sincere appreciation to Barbara Fant, Melanie Beck, and Lindsey Mithoefer for their dedicated service on the Board of Trustees. Their leadership, commitment, and support have made meaningful contributions to Clovernook Center's mission, and their impact on the organization will be felt for years to come.

Clovernook Center is pleased to announce several Board updates. Ted Jaroszewicz has assumed the role of Board Chair, providing continued leadership and strategic guidance as the organization looks toward the future. Liz Stock has transitioned from Vice Chair and will continue serving on the Board as a Trustee, bringing her experience and ongoing commitment to Clovernook Center's mission. Dennis Hahn and Duncan Hiler are also expanding their service to the Board and Clovernook Center's mission as they have both assumed the role of Vice Chair.

Clovernook Center also recognizes and thanks its continuing Board of Trustees for their ongoing leadership and steadfast commitment to advancing the organization's mission.

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