Georgia Public Library Service to provide assistive technology devices to every library system in state

ATLANTA - As a key component of the new model for Georgia’s provision of library services to the blind and others whose physical abilities require the use of books and magazines in audio format or braille, Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) has begun supplying a suite of assistive technology devices to every public library system in the state.

“We are committed to the goal that every library will become a member of the Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) network, and that they will be equipped to make library programs, services and collections accessible to all users,” said State Librarian Julie Walker. “As our model moves from providing service that was delivered only through a few sub-regional locations to one with a more comprehensive and holistic approach, furnishing these essential pieces of assistive technology equipment will reinforce our promise to enhance and expand the state’s services in this area.”

The GLASS network of talking book libraries gives Georgians ready access to materials from the free national library program that is supported and administered by the Library of Congress and the National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (NLS).
Eventually, by using all 400-plus public libraries as community contact points for NLS service and by ensuring that staff at every library in Georgia is trained to make appropriate referrals, Walker said, “GPLS hopes to raise awareness of GLASS to the levels enjoyed by other services, such as GALILEO and the annual Summer Reading Program, that are sponsored and coordinated by the state but that serve readers in every community.”

According to Pat Herndon, director of GLASS, GPLS will issue to each system one desktop MagniLinkS video magnifier, two Mobilux Digital Touch portable magnifying devices and one MagniLink Voice “reading machine.”

The video magnifiers are basically cameras that attach to a computer and convert images of items placed below its lens to a magnified image onto the computer monitor, Herndon explained. “The magnifier can be adjusted for size of magnification and for color contrast. This allows a person with low vision to read books — or their mail and personal correspondence — while on a public-access computer in the library.”

The LVI MagniLink Voice reading machines are text-to-speech devices that use optical-character readers to translate print into audio, thus opening the library’s book collection to patrons with vision impairment. The machines can read pages one by one or, when scanned with audio output saved to a flash drive, can convert and store up to 100 pages of audio that can be listened to as a single stream.

“GPLS was also able to purchase an accessible computer keyboard for every branch library in Georgia,” Herndon said. “These keyboards have large-print, high-contrast, black-on-yellow type designed to give users with low vision an easier and more accurate way to type.”

The equipment was will be distributed to Georgia’s public library systems in November, Herndon said. Walker noted that one of the stated goals of GPLS’s Five Year Plan for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Program is that Georgia’s public libraries will provide accessible equipment and software to make all the resources and programs meet or exceed ADA standards.

“This equipment purchase, completed using federal LSTA funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is a strong step forward in inclusiveness for our patrons with print impairments, not only in selected locations but in every library system in Georgia,” she said.
The Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services along with the Southwest Georgia Regional Library

will host an open house on
Thursday, February 18th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm
to learn about assistive technology.
Exhibitors from BAIN, Georgia Industries for the Blind, Senior Resource Center, SOWEGA Council on Aging and Mons International talk about what services they have available.
Join us at the Southwest Georgia Regional Library
301 South Monroe Street
Bainbridge, GA 39819

Please call the SWGLAS (229) 248-2680, 1-800-795-2680 and let us know if you plan to attend this event.
Southwest Georgia Library
For Accessible Services
Southwest Georgia Regional Library
301 South Monroe Street
Bainbridge, GA 39819

Free Reading Matter
F/T Blind & Handicapped
U. S. Mail
Do Not Cancel

Hours:
Monday 9am to 8pm
Tuesday 9am to 6pm
Wednesday 9am to 6pm
Thursday 9am to 7 pm
Friday 9am to 6 pm
Saturday 9am to 4 pm

Phone: (229) 248-2680
1-800-795-2680
Email: lbph@swgrl.org
Fax: 229-248-2670
Take a tour & checkout training material at The Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services by clicking on
www.swgrl.org/handicap.php

Information presented in this newsletter will be provided in alternative formats upon request.

Online Catalog for ordering library books:  http://webopac.klas.com/glass
Call the library for your log-in and password.

NOTE: Please submit information or news that you would like to share to Kathy Hutchins or Arlene Freeman.