Visually Impaired Reader Inspires Author

Four years ago, bestselling author Mary Jane Clark spoke at the Friends of the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped’s Fall Festival. There, she met Ottilie Lucas, a former rehabilitation teacher for people with macular degeneration and other disabilities that is visually impaired herself. After the festival, “we continued our correspondence and one thing led to another,” Lucas says of Clark. “She decided to include a character in her next book with macular degeneration.”

And so was born Terri Donovan, introduced in the first book in Clark’s Wedding Cake Mysteries series, 2011’s “To Have and to Kill.” “Mary Jane asked me to give her ways to identify symptoms that a person may be experiencing macular degeneration,” Lucas says. These include blurred vision and difficulty discerning the intensity of colors—symptoms shared by Terri Donovan, who runs a bakery and is the mother of the protagonist of Clark’s series, struggling actress Piper Donovan.

Lucas, who was born with retinitis pigmentosa, became a patron of the New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC) in 1966. TBBC is among more than 100 libraries across the United States affiliated with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), part of the Library of Congress. NLS oversees a free reading program for U.S. residents and citizens living abroad who are blind, have low vision, or cannot hold a book because of a physical disability. NLS patrons may choose from tens of thousands of books and dozens of magazines in audio and braille—including mysteries such as Mary Jane Clark’s. NLS also loans the portable playback equipment needed to read its audiobooks. Patrons may access books online through the NLS Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service.
Lucas has been married 49 years and has been on more than 20 ocean cruises. “Ottilie is such an inspiration,” Clark says. “She helped me so much in the creation of Terri Donovan—a mother who faces macular degeneration head-on, who doesn’t feel sorry for herself and is determined to adapt to the challenges she faces. I wish I were as brave as Terri and Ottilie!”

**Low Income Energy Assistance**

Pending availability of funding, Georgia's regular Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will open at 8:00 a.m. on November 1 for homebound and elderly households (all adults age 65 or over) and households where all adults are disabled. Households with individuals who have life-threatening medical conditions and who are in danger of imminent cut-off of their heating source may also apply. The program provides financial assistance to low-income households to help defray their home heating costs. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or legally admitted aliens. Households participating in the program must meet income criteria and be responsible for the cost of heating their homes. To be eligible, households must have an income equal to or less than 60% of Georgia's state median income guidelines: $21,029 annually for a one-person household; $27,500 for two persons; $33,970 for three persons; $40,441 for four persons; $46,912 for five persons; $53,382 for six persons; $54,595 for seven persons; $55,809 for eight persons; and for each additional person add $1,213.

Interested individuals or those who look after the interest of elderly or homebound individuals must call the Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) in their county of residence to place their name on the applicant list. NSC business hours will be 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for the duration of this program. Clients will be assisted on a first come, first served basis. Do not go to the NSC. It is required that you call and place your name on the list for an appointment time for an application to be completed.

Applicants must provide a valid form of picture identification. Applicants should also provide proof of income for all household members for the last 30 days. This may be a paycheck stub or a letter granting public assistance, Social Security, or unemployment benefits. Applicants must also provide valid Social Security cards for all household members and their most recent utility or fuel bill. Households whose fuel costs are included in their rent are ineligible for assistance.

*If funds are available, the program will open to the general public at 8:00 a.m. on December 2 on a first come, first served basis. Applicants must apply by phone and will not be allowed to apply in person.*
Contacts

Southwest Georgia CAC, Inc. serves the following counties: Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas and Worth. Please call 229-985-3610 for more information.

Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. serves the following counties: Brooks, Echols, Lanier and Lowndes. Please call 229-244-7860 for more information.

Enrichment Services Program, Inc. serves the following counties Clay, Quitman and Randolph. Please call 706-649-1603 for more information.

The Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services will be closed on Thursday, November 28, 2013.
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.