

## From Hardy Boys To Hunger Games: Free Library Service Keeps Blind Children Reading

(NAPSA)—Like many 10-year-olds, Brandon Pickrel loves reading books about dinosaurs. And books about the weather—“tornadoes and stuff,” he says. “And books about science experiments.”

Brandon, who lives in McHenry, Maryland, is one of the thousands of children who enjoy audio and braille books from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), part of the Library of Congress.

Brandon has been blind since birth, but he reads every day. When he was younger, it was the Junie B. Jones stories. Now he’s moved on to “James and the Giant Peach” and the Chronicles of Narnia.

He has plenty of books to choose from. NLS has more than 14,000 children’s book titles—both fiction and nonfiction—in audio and braille formats. There are Newbery Medal winners such as Rebecca Stead’s “When You Reach Me,” about a 12-year-old who gets notes from the future, and Coretta Scott King Award winners such as “We Are the Ship,” a history of baseball’s old Negro Leagues.

The NLS collection also includes books about children who are blind or have other disabilities, such as Brian Selznick’s “Wonderstruck,” and best sellers from the past, such as the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries, and the present, including the Harry Potter and Hunger Games series (which are also being recorded in Spanish).

Popular magazines are available, too—Sports Illustrated for Kids, National Geographic Kids and more. And the NLS Music Section loans scores, textbooks and books about music in large print and braille and advises parents and instructors about resources for teaching music to blind and visually impaired children.



**Thanks to a program of the Library of Congress, young people who are blind and love to read have access to over 14,000 children’s books—including many of the latest titles.**

NLS youth librarian Jill Garcia says the key to choosing books for young readers is “to go back to what it was like to be a kid. Whether they are sighted or blind, children today enjoy the same kinds of books they always have: humor and adventure stories, superhero fiction, animal tales and stories about friends and school—those are always popular.” Though NLS does not provide textbooks, “we have many nonfiction titles, especially biographies and books about animals, that can supplement what children are learning in class,” Garcia says.

Any U.S. resident or citizen living abroad who is blind, has low vision or cannot hold or turn the pages of a book because of illness or disability may receive digital books, playback equipment and braille materials by mail, free of charge, from NLS cooperating libraries. Eligible readers with computers and Internet service have immediate access to thousands of titles online through the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service.

Find out more about NLS services for children and adults at [www.loc.gov/nls](http://www.loc.gov/nls) or call 1-888-NLS-READ.