We Are Audio-Reader:
CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF SERVICE
Listeners and volunteers talk about what the service means to them as Audio-Reader turns 45

For Your EARS Only:
Successful 14th annual sale crushes all previous records

Recognizing those who bring the printed word to life at annual volunteer banquet
45 Years of Audio-Reader

Audio-Reader has had an exciting year! In October, we celebrated our 45th anniversary and honored several volunteers who have been with us since the early years. We said goodbye to old friends and welcomed in new ones. We experienced our most successful golf tournament and For Your EARS Only fundraisers to date. We also received national award recognition for excellence in service, including the IAAIS Program Award in Drama and Dramatic Reading for *An Ornaments Reflection*; the IAAIS Program Award in On Location for *Deck the Halls: Festival of Trees*; and the American Council of the Blind Audio Description Achievement Award in the Museum, Visual Arts and Visitors Center category for “Celebrating Opportunity for People with Disabilities: 70 Years of Dole Leadership”, an audio described exhibit at the Dole Institute of Politics.

Although we’ve celebrated some wonderful achievements, this year has also brought great challenges. In addition to a nearly $25,000 unexpected budget cut last spring, Audio-Reader recently received notice that our budget was cut another $100,000 in this fiscal year due to State of Kansas shortfalls resulting in budget cuts for the University of Kansas. We are making internal cuts and changes to absorb some of this deficit, but we need your help! Now more than ever our listeners and volunteers need you to give the gift of sight through sound!

45 years ago, Petey Cerf had a dream that her visually impaired friend could hear the news and stories which kept her connected to the outside world. Today, Audio-Reader has blossomed into an award-winning audio information service connecting thousands of listeners and volunteers across Kansas, Missouri, and beyond. Thank you to each and every one of you for supporting our growth and mission these past 45 years; it’s thanks to you that we can continue to provide the free, 24/7 service our listeners depend on!
Audio-Reader turns 45!
On October 11, 1971, Petey Cerf’s vision came to life as Audio-Reader began broadcasting newspapers for those who could not read them for themselves. It is amazing to see how far Audio-Reader has come since that October day 45 years ago! From a group of volunteers in a trailer to 400 volunteers in multiple Kansas and Missouri locations, we’ve built an impressive legacy. Thank you to all of our listeners, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and friends for your support these 45 years, we truly could not have done it without you!

We hope to HEA-R from you!
You will be receiving a letter from Audio-Reader’s Executive Director, Dan Skinner, asking you to please consider a tax-deductible gift this holiday season. Our Help Expand Audio-Reader (HEA-R) campaign is our largest annual campaign to help fund programs, outreach, operating expenses, and materials. Your gift will help ensure Audio-Reader continues to provide free 24/7 access to thousands of listeners across Kansas and Missouri. Gifts of all sizes make a BIG difference. Thank you for your support of Audio-Reader!

Audio-Reader Welcomes Kimberly Morrow, PhD, to the Development Committee!
Kimberly Morrow has been a long-time listener and supporter of Audio-Reader. “I absolutely would not be where I am today without the tremendous support Audio Reader has provided throughout the years,” she said. Audio-Reader was instrumental in helping Kimberly with audio recordings through both her Master’s in Germanic Languages and Literature from the University of Kansas, and her Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Leadership from Missouri State University.

Kimberly expressed her enthusiasm to join the Audio-Reader Development Committee, stating, “I consider it a privilege and an honor to have the opportunity to serve in a way that will allow me to give back a mere fraction of all that Audio-Reader has done for me. It means a great deal to be affiliated with an organization that is so dedicated to attaining and preserving the independence and dignity of those who cannot read printed material.”

Welcome Kimberly! We are honored to have your insights and enthusiasm on our Development Committee.

Save the Date!
Audio-Reader’s 8th Annual Golf Classic will be in June 2017 at Eagle Bend Golf Course! The cold winter days ahead are a perfect time to start thinking about putting together a team or a sponsorship for the upcoming tournament. All proceeds from the event support Audio-Reader’s mission to provide access to information and the arts for blind and print impaired individuals.
BIG annual sale brings in BIG funds for Audio-Reader

Meredith Johanning, Assistant Development Director

In many ways Audio-Reader’s 14th annual benefit sale, “For Your EARS Only” (FYEO), was set up the same as in years past: over 7,000 vinyl records, 350 pieces of audio equipment, 8,500 CDs, and several instruments filled Building #21 of the Douglas County Fairgrounds on September 9 & 10. Dozens of volunteers came ready to help with the sale so the doors could open and welcome customers promptly at 6pm on Friday night. Everything was falling into place just as it had for the last 13 years.

Yet, we couldn’t shake the feeling that something was afoot ahead of this year’s sale. It could have been the unprecedented number of customers lined up outside the doors on Friday night. Maybe it was the extra publicity the sale received leading up to the event. Or perhaps it was the fact that everyone involved knew that, in the face of recent budget cuts to Audio-Reader, the funds raised from this event mattered more than ever this year.

As it turns out, something was in fact taking place, as this year’s FYEO turned out to be an historic event. Crushing all previous records, the sale grossed $36,000 – over $7,000 more than last year’s most successful sale! Of course the success of the sale would not happen without the help and support from Audio-Reader’s amazing team of volunteers (nearly 70!) who came together through hard work, sweat, and even some dust to put together this incredible feat. Our two key FYEO volunteers, Dave Dunford and Lori Tesdahl, deserve special recognition, as without their many months of hard work and dedication, the sale would not be the shining success that it is. Dave handles the work on the audio equipment and Lori manages all of the record donations.

We would also like to thank those who donated audio goods ahead of the sale, those who provided food for the sale, and of course, the many local businesses who donated to and sponsored FYEO. This was a sale for the record books!

Thank you to our FYEO donors & volunteers!

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FYEO shoppers look for treasures amongst a packed house on Friday night.
Why I Give

Audio-Reader is fortunate to have many volunteers who are givers of both time and money. We sat down with a few to learn about their commitment and why they give to Audio-Reader.

Carl Graves
Carl is a familiar face around Audio-Reader – he has three regular assignments and frequently substitutes for other readers. His longest streak is coming in to read 13 days in a row! We asked why he was so committed to Audio-Reader and his answer was passionate. “There are two things in particular,” he said. “First, there are 6 million people over 65 who have vision loss and as baby boomers age, those numbers will increase. We provide information that listeners could not get elsewhere. The second is the funding for Audio-Reader. A $100,000 cut, 20% of KU’s share to Audio-Reader. I know first-hand we have Spartan facilities. I have come to appreciate what we can do with a modest amount of resources to help others be productive, informed, and participate fully in their communities.”

When asked why he decided to not only volunteer but also donate to Audio-Reader, Carl told us “I saw on a first-hand basis that we have a dedicated staff that can generate so much help to thousands of people. I thought, “My donation can actually make a big difference.” I think local with my giving and where I can see first-hand results and it felt good when I wrote a check to Audio-Reader.”

Frank Day
Frank has volunteered with Audio-Reader for 32 years. He’s had a variety of assignments over the years and now comes weekly to read Missouri newspapers. “I first came here when it was a rinky-dink trailer. If you had to go to the bathroom you had to go outside and go to the bathroom in the Max Kade house. If it snowed, it would come in and get on your papers!”

Frank “was in cahoots” in the reading room with an emeritus volunteer, Lee Young, when he decided to join the Petey Cerf Legacy Society. “I guess it was a competition thing. He was in it so I wanted to be in it too,” he said. Frank got serious when talking about what Audio-Reader means to him, stating “The reason I’ve stayed so long is kind of a secret that everyone knows - it makes you feel better. You’re doing something for someone else. As cliché as that may be, that’s why I do it.”

Bob Campbell
Bob Campbell, a longtime volunteer and donor, recently submitted a letter to be distributed to fellow Audio-Reader friends, sharing his passion and commitment to the service:

“As we approach the holiday season, do you sense as I do that there is a general sense of urgency in our community and in our nation? The pace of change is heightened. The element of risk in our daily routine is more palpable. Even long-time friendships and relationships seem under greater stress.

Certainly the holiday season brings innumerable messages of urgency in the form of fund raising appeals for many good causes. In my thirty-six years as an Audio-Reader volunteer, I have seen ample evidence of your spirit of generosity, with your time and effort. Now I want to encourage you to consider an additional act of generosity, a year-end financial contribution.

This year brings a special urgency about the financial needs of Audio-Reader, partly because of budgetary cutbacks at the State level. The number I’ve been hearing is a shortfall on our already pared-down budget, to the tune of over $100,000. So, I have decided to increase my giving this year to $450, in honor of Audio-Reader’s 45 years of service, which is needed now more than ever. Like you, I have other charitable interests in areas like education, disaster relief and child protection. All of these causes are urgent but this year I’m going to write my first check to Audio-Reader.

I volunteered to write this letter because of the urgency and also because I so believe in the mission of the organization and the ability of our staff and volunteers to carry out the mission AND because of what Audio-Reader has meant to me over the years. When you receive the fund raising letter in the next few weeks, please consider Audio-Reader.

I hope to see you around Baehr Hall soon. Meanwhile, happy holidays!”

Bob Campbell
When you donate to Audio-Reader, your donation matters! Your gift goes directly toward services, programming, outreach, and other direct operating costs. Your donation provides a “home” for hundreds of volunteers to share their dedication to serving others. Your gift allows us to provide free 24/7 news, community information, books, magazines, theater, and art for thousands of blind and print impaired individuals.

Audio-Reader is beloved by thousands of people across Kansas, Missouri, and beyond. A handful of listeners and volunteers offered their thanks to donors like you for supporting our mission and giving the gift of sight through sound.

Marilyn Shireman
Listener on an Audio-Reader radio

“I can’t think of anything else that brings me more joy!”

Marilyn has been an avid reader for most of her life, and says Audio-Reader “certainly saved my life” by providing her with hours of books and news for her to learn new things and stay interested in the world around her. Her favorite programs are the various book programs, the Kansas City Star, and hearing when her grandson is featured in the local sports articles.

Marilyn lives with macular degeneration and glaucoma, and as her sight worsened she was unable to use her electronic reader. Audio-Reader has given her a renewed enthusiasm for the pastime she’s always loved. “I don’t know what I would do without Audio-Reader, without books I’d be lost,” she says.

Kurt Bailey
Listener on an Audio-Reader radio and special requests

“I love that I’m connected to my community.”

Kurt has been an Audio-Reader listener since the 1980s. “This service is so good because it’s for vision loss, disabilities, slow learners, and others.” He depends on the various news programs to keep him informed, and enjoys history, books, and fun things like the National Enquirer. “All the different books available are great,” he said, “and I like the variety Audio-Reader offers.”

Kurt was born with glaucoma and he sings and plays guitar in his spare time. “I like all the services and readers,” he said, “and all the different books are great!” Kurt was also featured in our “Meet a Listener” column in November’s volunteer newsletter, Closed Circuit.

Maggie Carttar
Volunteer

“It’s wonderful to have a way to contribute.”

Maggie has volunteered with Audio-Reader for 23 years. She reads books and the opinion page from the Kansas City Star. “When you get older and live by yourself, the days are all the same. Audio-Reader gives me purpose,” she said. A retired teacher, Maggie has given to others her entire life. Volunteering for Audio-Reader is a way for her to continue giving back. She also finds it a great way to continue learning, stay active, build friendships, and have fun. “It keeps you young!” she laughed.

Maggie spoke at length about how wonderful it feels to contribute to the happiness of our listeners, stating, “It feels tremendous to be able to
do something for others, to still have a way to contribute.” Maggie is a dedicated volunteer, reading twice a week and attending as many Audio-Reader events as possible. “It makes my life worth something,” she said. “Everyone needs to know how wonderful Audio-Reader is.”

PATTI WILSON

Uses audio description for theater performances

“It really does matter.”

Patti loves live theater and is grateful to Audio-Reader for giving her the ability to go with her husband and family. She told us, “It really does matter when you know what they’re doing on the stage.” Patti lost her sight at age 21 from complications of diabetes. It means so much to her to know the colors and movements, the style of dancing, and the scenery. “I know what’s going on along with the sighted audience, and the person I’m with doesn’t have to interrupt to describe things.”

Patti attends a variety of shows in Lawrence and Kansas City with Audio-Reader services. “It’s so much more enjoyable with audio description,” she said. “It’s really improved my life.”

DUYAHN WALKER

Listens through Telephone Reader, online, and through the app

“Audio-Reader is the best resource in my life!”

DuYahn (pronounced Dee-on) has been using Audio-Reader services for 26 years. “Audio-Reader is family,” he said. He expressed his gratitude that not only is Audio-Reader a resource in itself, but also provides the blind community with information about other resources available to them. He also appreciates the news, books, and grocery ads. “I can be a savvy shopper, and tell my friends about a discount or great deal thanks to Audio-Reader.” DuYahn lost his sight when he was only 3 or 4 years old, and he appreciates that Audio-Reader has incorporated technological changes in a way that’s easy to understand and available for anyone. “Audio-Reader finds a way for everyone to have access: through the radios, the internet, CDs, etc.”

He had a special message for our volunteers and donors. “The volunteers care, they make it like family. Your time and money are not wasted; it keeps people connected and lets us know you care about us. You can only go so far with synthetic technology, the depth and warmth of the human voice is like having a friend in the room with you.”

“The recent budget cuts hurt me as a listener,” he said. “Please become a donor, it’s the best resource of my life and a lot of people will be lost without Audio-Reader services.”

TOM AND MELINDA KEARNEY

Volunteers and Donors

“Audio-Reader is important! We believe strongly in this wonderful cause.”

“Volunteering for Audio-Reader is so much fun; we love the community of it.” Tom and Melinda are both volunteers and donors for Audio-Reader. They both read magazines (Soap Opera Digest for Melinda and Hunting and Field and Stream for Tom), and together they read Playboy articles. “They’re actually really interesting!” they laugh, “And it ups our cool factor with the kids.”

Referred by fellow volunteer Maureen Guth, Tom particularly enjoys all the hunting and fishing tips he picks up from his readings. What makes it really special to them, though, is because they do it together. “It builds our life together, and builds other people’s lives by keeping us all connected in the community.”

Audio-Reader recently helped Melinda surprise Tom with a celebratory brick in our Sensory Garden for their wedding anniversary. “We always look at our bricks when we come in to the building,” she says, enjoying the reminder of their devotion to each other and to the Audio-Reader listeners. When asked what motivated them to both volunteer and donate regularly, they asked, “Doesn’t everyone? Who wouldn’t want to support such a wonderful organization?”
Audio-Reader celebrates 45th birthday, volunteerism, at annual appreciation event

Audio-Reader volunteers and staff gathered on October 2, 2016 at Maceli’s Banquet Hall and Catering to mark the organization’s 45th anniversary and recognize the 400 volunteers who make it all possible. The event, which is usually a dinner, had to be modified due to a $100,000 cut to Audio-Reader’s state funds. Yet no one seemed to mind the plastic plates or the simple, buffet-style brunch, made possible thanks to sponsorship from McDaniel Knutson Financial Partners.

During the event, Audio-Reader listener Mary Chappell shared her story of vision loss and thanked volunteers for their time, which is valued at over $1.5 million annually. “When I lost my sight, I knew I was going to have to do some things differently,” said Chappell. “It wasn’t that I couldn’t do them, it’s that I needed to do them differently. Audio-Reader was probably that first bridge for me.”

Dr. Neeli Bendapudi, KU Provost and Executive Vice-Chancellor, also spoke, calling Audio-Reader and its volunteers community champions for the University of Kansas. In addition, 59 volunteers received awards for years of service ranging from five to 45. The group included Audio-Reader’s first volunteer, Eleanor Symons.

5 Year

10 Year

15 Year
Nancy Colyer, Mary Ann Saunders, Molly Mulloy, Lynne Ellis, Jo Anne Kready, Jane Tedder, and Cindy Penzler. Not pictured: Susan Hoefer, Cindy Koester, and Jane Pennington.

20 Year

25 Year
Randy Austin, Rob Tabor, Carol Jones, Kris Shields, Thelma Taylor, and Jim Taylor. Not pictured: Susan Tabor.

35 Year
Harold Asner

45 Year
Eleanor Symons
Our gratitude is extended to the following donors whose contributions have supported the work of the Kansas Audio-Reader Network. Please note that Audio-Reader publishes two separate donor lists each year.

This list reflects only those donations received between April 1 – September 30, 2016.

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- Fairlawn Plaza Shopping Center
- Fry Eye Associates, P.A.
- KU Alumni Association
- Kansas City Society of Ophthalmology
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Are you celebrating a birthday or an anniversary? A graduation or memorial? Do you need a gift for that ‘hard to shop for’ person in your life? Our Sensory Garden bricks are a wonderful way to honor a loved one or beloved pet, to express gratitude, to commemorate an event, or to share support for this beautiful space. Bricks can be personalized with three lines of text, up to 12 characters on each line, and placed in a location of your choice along our Sensory Garden pathway, including our newly completed east pathway around the statue and picnic area. Now through the end of the year, the cost of each brick is $100. Prices will be raised in 2017 so order your tax deductible gift today!
Thank you for 45 Years!
Together, we strive to provide

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Lawrence, KS 66044

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☐ I would like information on remembering Audio-Reader in my will or other planned giving.

☐ I have already designated Audio-Reader in my will (Petey Cerf Legacy Society member).

☐ I would like information about donating a brick for the Audio-Reader Sensory Garden.

☐ I am interested in having a program about Audio-Reader at my club/church/organization.

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