

Fall 2023

Airwaves

For Friends and Supporters of Audio-Reader

WELCOMING NEW DIRECTOR
FELONIZ LOVATO-WINSTON



A SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF
FUNDRAISING

DONOR GRATITUDE & WHY
YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



AUDIO-READER

Sharing the Gift of Sight Through Sound

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Feloniz Lovato-Winston

Director

Audio-Reader &
Kansas Public Radio



I'm so glad to be back at Audio-Reader! For those of you who don't know me, I was an Audio-Reader staff member several years ago before moving down the hall to Kansas Public Radio. Audio-Reader holds a special place in my heart, and I've enjoyed reconnecting with volunteers and attending events. My time here so far has brought back memories, but I'm also excited by how innovative and efficient the staff and volunteers have become in response to changes in technology, funding and our listeners' needs.

This is a group that's quick to respond – whether it's by offering streaming devices to listeners, if that makes more sense than a closed-circuit radio, or by launching programs like The Newsroom Hour which features coverage from several local nonprofit newsrooms. I'm also the director of Kansas Public Radio, and the epidemic of shrinking local papers has been a concern in the public media world for some time. The nonprofit model is the future of local news, and I'm impressed and relieved that we are offering access to this crucial source of information.

I recently showed a friend with Parkinson's how to listen to Audio-Reader programs using a streaming device. It was so easy – all he had to do was say "Alexa, play Audio-Reader," and he had access to a wealth of books and articles. It doesn't get easier, or more impactful, than that. My friend has always been an avid reader, and he's very independent, but reading was becoming more difficult for him. Your financial support makes everything we do possible, and it makes such a big difference to so many people. I hope you will continue your support for this vital service and that I get the chance to thank you in person someday!



Airwaves

Fall 2023

Airwaves is a newsletter published for supporters of Audio-Reader.

Beth McKenzie
Meredith Johanning
Editors

Martha Kehr
Newsletter Design/Layout

Audio-Reader's Misson

The Audio-Reader Network fosters independence by providing access to information and the arts for people who have difficulty reading standard print due to vision loss, physical or learning disability, mobility challenges, and age.

Together, we strive to provide
Access
Empowerment
Self-Sufficiency

*Audio version available on
reader.ku.edu
Printed and e-newsletter

Audio-Reader Staff

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Feloniz Lovato-Winston | Director |
| Steve Kincaid | Chief Engineer |
| Danny Mantyla | Web Developer |
| Nicole Banman | Business Manager |
| Beth McKenzie | Development Director |
| Meredith Johanning | Assistant Dev. Director |
| Nick Carswell | Program Manager |
| Martha Kehr | Communications & Outreach Coordinator |
| Trish Dowd-Kelne | Volunteer Coordinator |
| Colin Halliburton | Operations Coordinator |
| Vickie Roush | Administrative Assistant |

Questions or comments?

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Cover Photo: The Audio-Reader Team is comprised of 3 full-time & 3 part-time staff along with 4 staff shared with Kansas Public Radio. Top row (left to right) Nick Carswell, Beth McKenzie, Danny Mantyla, Steve Kincaid, Trish Dowd-Kelne, and Martha Kehr. Front row (left to right) Meredith Johanning, Feloniz Lovato-Winston, and Vickie Roush Photo Credit: Joanna Fewins

DEVELOPMENT CORNER



New director Feloniz didn't skip a beat as she transitioned into her new role! She is pictured above helping Beth and Meredith with the September 16 Audio Sale.

As most of you know, Audio-Reader is now entirely funded through individual donations and small foundation grants. Although we remain part of the greater KU community and receive in-kind support (such as our beautiful building), we haven't received financial contributions from the University since FY21. We were honored to receive a generous bequest from the son of our founder, which helped secure our future, but we're still very much reliant on you, our donors, to ensure our 24/7 services remain available for the thousands of listeners who rely upon us every day. We can't thank you enough for your ongoing support and dedication to our listeners. You truly make a difference!

The Petey Cerf Legacy Society: Ensuring the Future of Audio-Reader

Local philanthropist Petey Cerf founded Audio-Reader 52 years ago after spending many hours reading to a friend in a nursing home. She thought "there has to be a better way." As the story goes, when she was told it wasn't possible, she shared some colorful language with the naysayers, searched nationwide to find a solution, and Audio-Reader was born.



Founding Volunteer
Petey Cerf

When Petey passed away in 1996, she remembered Audio-Reader in her will. When her son, local philanthropist William Dann, passed in 2020, he followed her example and hoped others would do the same. The Petey Cerf Legacy Society gives supporters an opportunity to make a planned gift to Audio-Reader, ensuring that this important service continues to assist others for generations to come. When you designate a planned gift to Audio-Reader, you will become a member of the Petey Cerf Legacy Society and a member of the KU Elizabeth M. Watkins Society – a double honor that acknowledges the importance of your legacy.

There are many options available for a planned gift to Audio-Reader including a bequest in a will or living trust, a retirement plan death benefit, and much more. To learn more about becoming a member of the Petey Cerf Legacy Society, contact Beth McKenzie at (785) 864-5336 or bethmckenzie@ku.edu.

Welcome to our New Director!

As a fun welcome to our new director Feloniz "Felly" Lovato-Winston, we wanted to share a fond memory of her first Audio-Reader Advisory Board meeting when she was hired as the Development Assistant many years ago: Her contacts were dry and bothering her right before the meeting, so she put them in a little cup of water to clean and put back in later. She then got a little nervous, and took a quick sip of water before presenting for the first time, and you guessed it, she drank her contacts! Certainly we've all had similar first-day jitters and can truly empathize. (And yes, we got Felly's permission to share this story before printing it!)

\$15

**T-shirts
On Sale Now!**

If you like the red and blue shirts the staff are wearing on the cover, purchase one for yourself for the low price of \$15. Inquire at the front desk or contact Beth or Meredith.

"On behalf of those of us who benefit from this service, I want to thank you for your continued support of Audio-Reader."

-Terry-Ann S.

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GOLF CLASSIC



Founding Tournament Committee (left to right) Pete Knutson, Brenda Berg-Dyck, and Randy Austin at the first Golf Classic in 2010



2023 Winning Team - Volunteer Jane Woods (left) and her brother-in-law Mark Woods (right) pictured with Coach Lance Leipold (center)

Audio-Reader 13th Annual Golf Classic a Smashing Success

From its inaugural event 13 years ago, the Audio-Reader Golf Classic has continued to grow each year thanks to the support from friends like you. Your commitment has helped it evolve from raising \$4,000 with just a handful of teams to grossing over \$39,000 with a cap on teams!

The evolution of the tournament has included our first event chair, former All-Pro quarterback and Lawrence legend John Hadl, to former KU Women's Golf Head Coach Erin O'Neill, to our second year with KU Head Football Coach Lance Leipold. Over the year,s it moved from what was then Alvarado Country Club to Eagle Bend Golf Course, and we had to cancel during the first year of the pandemic and pivot to a TopGolf event during the second year. The tournament is now known for fun challenges like the Boat Hole (it has to stay in the boat to win!), lunch from Bigg's Barbeque, getting to meet KU coaches and players, and, most importantly, hearing from Audio-Reader listeners.

This year's golfers heard from listener Teresa Bates who said, "Blindness threw me into the dark ages; I used to have such an active life and I didn't know how to stay in touch with the world, how to continue to be a part, how to give back. Finding Audio-Reader was an amazing gift; it's life-giving to me!"

We frequently hear from people that they love the event, that it's one of their favorite charity tournaments, and we couldn't do it without you. Thank you for making the Golf Classic such a wonderful success!



AUDIO-READER GOLF CLASSIC
2023



AUDIO-READER GOLF CLASSIC
2023



AUDIO-READER GOLF CLASSIC
2023

PRESENTED BY:



BEVERAGE, BREAKFAST AND PROGRAM SPONSORS:



TO AND THROUGH RETIREMENT



Mark Rezac





ALL TOGETHER...BETTER

Thank you for sharing the gift of sight through sound!

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:





















































Thank you for sharing the gift of sight through sound!

4 | AIR WAVES

AUDIO SALES



People lining up for the Sept 16, 2023 sale

There is quite a bit of history behind Audio-Reader's benefit sales of audio equipment, vinyl records, and more. The sale was nearing its 18th year when the Covid pandemic hit and everything shut down. Because of the support from you, our donors, for those 18 years, the audio benefit sale grew tremendously at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, drawing hundreds of audio fans each year. During the pandemic, the event transitioned to a series of online Facebook Live and Zoom sales, serving as a 'home-shopping network' to an eager audience. After returning to the office, the idea of inviting customers into the 'home' of Audio-Reader to shop audio goods was born and took off from there.

Since then, Audio-Reader has hosted four different sales at Audio-Reader as well as a weekend audio sale at the Lawrence Public Library in conjunction with the Friends of the LPL. With your support, Audio-Reader was able to raise over \$32,000 during the first year of this new format! This amount is comparable to the annual event held at the Fairgrounds but with significantly less costs and labor. More importantly, this new format has allowed Audio-Reader to collaborate with community partners, engage with other campus groups to utilize volunteer help for the preparation of events, and, above all else, connect sale customers to the true purpose of their purchase, sharing the gift of sight through sound. Thank you for making this new event such a great success!



A large crowd during the 2016 sale at the fairgrounds



Pandemic Sale with (left to right) Nick Carswell, Ed Hawkins, Dave Dunford, J. Schafer, and Meredith Johanning



Ed Hawkins (left) and Mary Chapman (right)

Audio-Reader would like to give a special thanks to the sale volunteers who donate endless hours checking, cleaning, repairing, and pricing equipment and vinyl records: Dave Dunford, Ed Hawkins, Wake Mitchell, Gordon Fitch and Douglas May.

The audio sales would not be what they are without the support of great friends like you!

"Audio-Reader is a pillar in the lives of so many listeners."
- Kim M.


GrooveWasher
THE ULTIMATE CLEAN SOUND SOLUTION
A Special Thank You to Our Sale
Sponsor - Groove Washer!

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Karen's Story

More often than not, when people think of Audio-Reader, they immediately think of reading newspapers. While that is a core and crucial part of Audio-Reader's services, there is so much more. Thanks to the generous support of friends like you, Audio-Reader is able to provide a wide reach of services, from reading hundreds of local and regional newspapers, to making any kind of written materials a listener might need accessible to them.

Years ago, Karen C. started utilizing Audio-Reader's services occasionally to listen to newspapers and books through the closed-circuit radio. It wasn't until she went back to school in 2021 to pursue her Masters in Counseling Psychology at St. Mary's that Karen began to see the need for regular services. When her courses began, Karen got by for a year having a friend read her textbooks to her over the phone. After that first year of courses though, Karen's friend was unable to read due to the time required and declining health issues. Moreover, these particular textbooks were not available in text-to-speech format, causing great difficulty in Karen's life. "I was in a desperate place," she said, "that's when I reached out to Audio-Reader."

It may surprise you to know Karen isn't blind or visually impaired; rather, she's dyslexic. "Growing up, we didn't know I had dyslexia. I fell through the cracks in school, and it wasn't until college when I was finally diagnosed."

At the age of 39, she received her first degree in Psychology, then her second degree in Speech, Language, and Hearing by utilizing KU's student services. But as she moved further up in her studies, the textbooks became more specialized and less help was available. That's where Audio-Reader came in. "Text-to-speech is so difficult to listen to, especially with these textbooks. The human voice makes such a difference," Karen explained.

Karen's goal is to eventually work for a community health center, helping to give back and provide services for others just as she has received. "Audio-Reader is such a terrific service. It has been so helpful to me and has made such an impact on me."



Listener Karen C.

Your support makes a tremendous impact in the lives of listeners just like Karen. Because of you, listeners are able to pursue their dreams and create full and independent lives. Thank you for making this possible for the thousands of listeners who depend on Audio-Reader each and every day.

**"Audio-Reader is so essential. I just don't know what I would do without it."
- Lynda C.**

**"This is a great service doing great things that many people with sight don't even consider."
- Aaron O.**

Longtime Audio-Reader volunteer Carl Graves was assigned to Karen's special request. Always willing to take on extra assignments, Carl didn't hesitate when asked to read these textbooks.



Carl Graves holding the Psychopharmacology textbook he read for Karen

About this assignment, he said, "This was the most difficult, challenging reading I have done in my 26 years, but I kept going, thinking 'my struggles to pronounce these technical words are nothing compared to the daily challenges our listeners endure.'"

By The Numbers

These numbers reflect usage between January 1, 2023 - October 1, 2023



250+ Volunteers

As a group, they read over 14,000 hours of content for our listeners



Amazon Alexa devices

938 new set ups & 13 Echo Dots sent to new listeners



Lions Telephone Reader

28 average daily program listeners who access more than 23 minutes each session



Closed-Circuit Radio

35 new radio listeners



Accessibility Apps

44 new app downloads with an average of 52 daily listeners

DONOR GIFTS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Many listeners have come to us for special requests due to materials being unavailable in audio or text-to-speech formats or because it's highly specialized. Other resources, such as family and friends, don't have the time required to read or might not be able to accurately pronounce or understand the material. Here are a handful of recent completed Special Request projects:

Dear Prudence (a book about the Beatles song) - *City of Lawrence T Lift Manual* - *Marvel Graphic Novels* - *Civil Air Patrol Aerospace Curriculum* - *Soap Opera Digest* - *Kansas Fishing and Hunting Regulations* - *Self-Published Novels* - *Church Newsletters* - *Downtown Lawrence Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition* - *Physical Therapy Instructions* - *Textbooks for High School, Undergraduate, and Graduate Courses* - *Dairy Goat Journal Magazine* - *Massage Therapist Certification Materials* - *Audio-Description of Live Theatre, Local Parades and Festivals, and Visual Art Exhibits*

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Thank you to all donors whose contributions have supported the work and mission of Audio-Reader! This list reflects donations received between **January 1, 2022 to July 31, 2023.**

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Sharing the Gift of Sight Through Sound

Thank You, Frank!



Head Garden Volunteer Retires After 14 Years

After serving as Audio-Reader's head Sensory Garden volunteer for 14 years, Frank Male Sr. has decided to retire. Frank's dedication, expertise, and commitment in the garden has helped it grow into the much-loved destination that it is today. From working with garden volunteers to conducting garden tours to seeking out the plants, flowers, and elements that enhance the sensorial experience, he's done it all. We are grateful for everything Frank has done for the Audio-Reader Sensory Garden and he will be missed!

We are looking for a new head garden volunteer. If you enjoy gardening and serving the mission of making the Sensory Garden accessible to all, this position is for you! Email Trish Dowd-Kelne at tdk@ku.edu to inquire further.