

CLOSED CIRCUIT

Spring 2024

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HAROLD RIEHM – PAGES 4-5



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AUDIO-READER
Sharing the Gift of Sight Through Sound

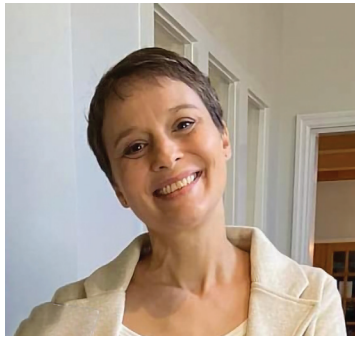
For Volunteers and Supporters of Audio-Reader

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Feloniz Lovato-Winston

Director

Audio-Reader &
Kansas Public Radio



Happy Summer, Audio-Reader Volunteers!

I had a wonderful time at the volunteer banquet last month. Some of you may know that I worked for Audio-Reader several years ago before moving to Kansas Public Radio, and the banquet was one of my favorite events. It's important to celebrate all of you for your hard work and dedication, and the evening was made even more special thanks to the generosity of longtime volunteers Harold and Donna Riehm, who helped cover the cost of the event in honor of their 40th anniversary as volunteers.

One thing that struck me this time around was how seriously all of you take your reading assignments. I sat with a group of volunteers and their guests during dinner, and the conversation was centered around their volunteer work, how they chose their material, if they read fiction, and how the news readers prepared for their shift. It's this care and consideration that make such a difference for the people who rely on Audio-Reader. They can hear it in your voice and your delivery, whether it's a classic short story or the weekly grocery ads.

The impact you make as an Audio-Reader volunteer is also reflected in the enduring popularity of our service. At the banquet I was able to share that over the past 12 months, we've gained 1,300 new Alexa listeners, have had over 4,500 visits to our website, received over 10,000 calls to our Telephone Reader service and distributed 76 new radios. **We owe these impressive numbers to your efforts!**

Several days after the banquet, I had the chance to visit with an Audio-Reader listener who told me that she listens every day, but is most appreciative around the holiday season. Her family isn't able to gather during that time year, so she depends on our programming to help provide companionship and a chance to celebrate during the holidays.

It takes a tremendous amount of commitment to provide a 24/7 reading service, not to mention special requests and audio description. We wouldn't be able to provide any of it without you. Thank you for all you do...I'm so happy to be working alongside you again!



COVER PHOTO: Taken by Meredith Johanning during the 2024 Volunteer Banquet at Maceli's on Tuesday, April 16, 2024. Feloniz Lovato-Winston is pictured with Harold and Donna Riehm as they hold a flag marking their 40 years as Audio-Reader volunteers.

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Closed Circuit Spring 2024

Closed Circuit is a newsletter published for volunteers and supporters of Audio-Reader.

Written and Edited by

**Trish Dowd Kelne
& Martha Kehr**

Audio-Reader's Mission

Audio-Reader 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/news/newsletters

Printed and E-newsletter

Audio-Reader Staff

Feloniz Lovato-Winston	Director
Steve Kincaid	Chief Engineer
Danny Mantyla	Web Developer
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	Business Coordinator

Questions or comments?

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On April 16, 2024, over 150 volunteers, staff and guests shared the evening at Maceli's. Audio-Reader's Director, Feloniz Lovato-Winston, updated the joyful crowd with the accomplishments of the year (noted in By the Numbers on page 9).

She also acknowledged the staff's significant support of our volunteers. Volunteers joined her in making some noise for each of the team members.

The evening continued with our listener speaker, Shirley Fudge, who spoke to the many benefits of A-R for persons who are blind like herself.

She shared that her daily listening on the Lions Telephone Reader allows her to learn about local events and news. She especially enjoys the description of pictures and the special request readers too. Volunteers such as Carl Graves, Camille Olcese, and Maureen Guth have read books for Shirley that were not available elsewhere. The world expands with a unique book, local news, and community events. She thanked all the volunteers and staff and was eager to plan her visit to the sensory garden in May (see page 8). Shirley also hopes to experience live audio description this year.



Maryellen McBride and Deb Kirmer



Marilyn Bradt, Jane Tedder with Rozanne and Dave Stringer



Tracy Harrison and Vic Peterson, Jeanne Stanley and Ron Chinn



Christie Allie, Karen Wuenstel with Connie Rodriguez

After enjoying the scrumptious meal and desserts, Development Director Beth McKenzie presented awards (see page 6). The evening came to a conclusion with Nick Carswell, Program Manager, sharing selected Listener Comments. Listener voices filled the room with words of gratitude and appreciation for the efforts and care that each volunteer provides to make Audio-Reader services possible.

Visit Audio-Reader's YouTube page to hear this year's listener comments.



Kate Dinneen, Mary Howe, Thomas Howe, and Robin Ward



Debbie and Ben Stanton



David and Maureen Guth

CELEBRATING DONNA &

THE FIRST, AND ONLY, COUPLE TO ACHIEVE FORTY YEARS VOLUNTEERING TOGETHER



Donna and Harold Riehm (2006)

In 1984, when their children took flight and were off to college, Harold and Donna Riehm had a bit more free time. After Harold read about a reading service, they came to audition for Audio-Reader. "So many clubs were for women only, we wanted to volunteer together," Donna remembered.

At Audio-Reader, they could share their many gifts as a couple. In those early 80's, Audio-Reader was located in a very small house trailer. Rain hammering on the roof required a pause in recording, and bathroom breaks meant going to another building. Despite the challenges, Harold recalled, "We became pretty fond of that little trailer." His first assignment was sports, and Donna's was novels, but neither would hold their attention for long.

Harold, a believer in the benefits of laughter and especially belly laughs, asked about starting a humor show. The Volunteer Coordinator at the time, Diana Frederick, agreed but said he needed to come up with a catchy title. And so "On The Lighter Side" began.

While Donna's journey began with reading novels,



Alison Beloin Dean, Harold Riehm, Donna Riehm, Steven Meyer, and Nick Carswell (2021)

she quickly found that the questionable language was not for her. "I kept trying to think of other words to say, and that's not what we do... I was told to read the words without making changes," recalls Donna. Instead of trying to get creative with other words, she suggested using her love of reading for children as a way to connect with younger listeners, their families, and adults too.

Donna, a former teacher, championed not just learning to read but loving to read. Her students gained both skills and an admiration for reading. For our listeners, Donna established "The Children's Hour" to share this love of reading.

In their shows, Donna and Harold include the listeners, talking with them, asking questions and having a conversation over the airwaves.



Donna and Harold Riehm with Sidney Roedel (2009)



Harold and Donna Riehm, Billie Archer, Sidney, Harlan and Jillian Roedel, and Jodi Riehm Meyer (2018)

HAROLD RIEHM

For forty years, Donna and Harold served our listeners, the first couple to achieve this milestone together. Donna shared that her favorite memory is the listener that said she so enjoyed the show because Donna read "just like my grandmother used to read."

Harold's favorite listener connection was in response to a letter. A listener wrote Audio-Reader with comments for Jane Tedder and Harold. This listener lived in Topeka and by chance, Harold was passing by the gentleman's retirement home. Harold stopped to ask about visiting him,



Harold Riehm (2010)

and the staff sent Harold up to the right apartment. As Harold knocked on the door, he was ready to apologize for popping in unannounced. When the gentleman opened the door, Harold got three words

out, "I'm sorry to..." and the gentleman interrupted saying, "You're Harold Rhiem, host of On The Lighter Side... come on in!" They talked for over an hour. It turned out that, every day at four o'clock, this listener and several others got together down in the lobby to listen to Harold's show!



Frank Day with Donna and Harold Riehm (2009)



Donna Riehm with cookies (2023)

Connecting with listeners and knowing how excited they were to hear their shows each day and week motivated Donna and Harold to continue



Donna and Harold Riehm with Alison Belion Dean (2021)

During the Banquet, all in attendance stood to cheer for Donna and Harold's impact to the community. On behalf of the listeners, volunteers and staff, we applaud Donna and Harold's forty years of service to Audio-Reader and the community!

*Thank you,
Donna and Harold!*

"I'm certainly enjoying the Audio-Reader service. I'm using it with Alexa which is wonderful with the magazines and the books. I appreciate your reading the newspaper also. Thank you so much. You are so greatly appreciated. God bless!" -Marilyn P.

VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

Celebrating Years of Service

5 years

Brady Brite
Marchelle Brown
Sara Carlsen
Janie Jones
Clair Keizer
Jim Moore
Anne Roberts
Connie Rodriguez
Ben Stanton

10 years

Brenda Berg-Dyck
Erin Bolton
Chad Johanning
Kim Kubel
Clark Lafever
Lori Lange
Ann Place
Mark Praeger
Michelle Suter
Melissa Warren
Joel Wells

15 years

Cindy Baker
Jayne Boggs-Varney
Jenny O'Driscoll
Nathan Poell

20 years

Helen Martin
Joe Sweet
Karen Wuenstel

25 years

Shelley Sandberg
Elinor Schroeder
Beverly Wilson

40 years

Donna & Harold
Riehm



Five Years (pictured)
Janie Jones, Sandy Praeger,
Connie Rodriguez, Ben Stanton



Ten Years (pictured)
Mark Praeger, Michelle
Suter, Erin Bolton



Fifteen Years (pictured)
Nate Poell, Jayne Boggs-Varney



Twenty Years (pictured)
Joe Sweet, Karen Wuenstel



Twenty Five Years
Beverly Wilson with
Feloniz Lovato-Winston



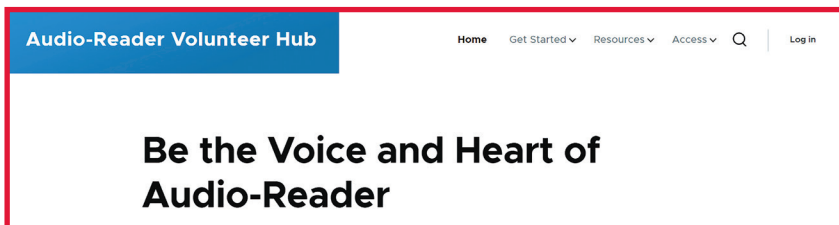
Forty Years
Harold & Donna Riehm
with Feloniz Lovato-Winston

"When I first was diagnosed with my eye problem, I was in a very dark place. And the Audio-Reader was my help and guidance through all that. I wish your company great success. I just thank you so very much for all the volunteers. Have a blessed day!"
- Daily Listener

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

READER.KU.EDU has been our primary link for volunteer resources, and if you haven't stopped by in a while, you can find links to the Volunteer Handbook, Telephone Reader Program instructions and details, tips for Home Recording, links to the many newspapers we read under Studio Publications Menu, and the Lawrence Studio Schedule. As we began to add more resources under the Additional Resources tab, like links to pronunciation guides and past trainings, we realized the need for a dedicated site. This led to the beginning of **VOLUNTEERS.AUDIOREADER.NET**.

It is a work in progress, but once active, **VOLUNTEERS.AUDIOREADER.NET** will be where to find all of the great resources mentioned above plus active login details for specific newspapers, detailed Zinio instructions, and that is just the start. We are open to your suggestions, so let Trish, Nick, Colin, or Martha know what you would like to see added to the site (screenshot of new site below).



LOVE FOR SUBS



When you are sick or have a family emergency, life gets hectic fast, and the last thing you want to worry about is your weekly Audio-Reader assignment. That is why we want to show some love for our many substitutes who swoop in and save the day!

With over 250 volunteers, and about as many programs, we have lots of pieces to juggle to ensure the listeners can depend on information and connection to be there when they need it. If you will be away for a planned trip or other event, a couple of weeks notice makes for easier shuffling of those puzzle pieces.

It is such a gift to our volunteer community when readers pick up subs before or after a time away. By taking care of each other, filling in when you can—we have enough subs to keep our listeners in the know. The TEAMUP link is an easy way to sign-up and there is even an app so you can see what assignments are open on your phone. Check it out, and again THANK YOU!

"I am quite pleased with the current programs and the time they are presented in. I feel that all of the volunteers are doing as well as can be and I'm quite happy with the way they present themselves. Thanks again for offering such a helpful program and hats off to those who take time to volunteer their services so that we can have some normalcy in this changing world." -Lisa E.

Link & instructions for TeamUp are on the Volunteer Resource page.

The Virtual Coffee Bar has provided connection for volunteers each month via zoom on the

third Wednesday of the month at 2pm. However, since this online format was in response to the pandemic, we continue to investigate in-person or hybrid offerings.

To that end and by request from volunteers, we now offer Reader Gatherings every other month (even months) for small group interactions. This format brings readers of similar assignments together to share best practices and think solutions to challenges. These will complement our Virtual Coffee Bar (odd months) which are around topics that are pertinent to all volunteer readers.



A DAY IN THE SENSORY GARDEN!

The Sensory Garden on the grounds of the Baehr Audio-Reader Center waits to welcome guests with its flowers, herbs, and accessories designed to delight the senses. Plants with intriguing textures such as Lamb's Ear can be felt with your hands and are intermingled with the delightfully fragrant leaves of mint and lavender. Wind chimes ring in the breeze and join with the chirping of birds as they visit the many feeders along the tree-covered path.

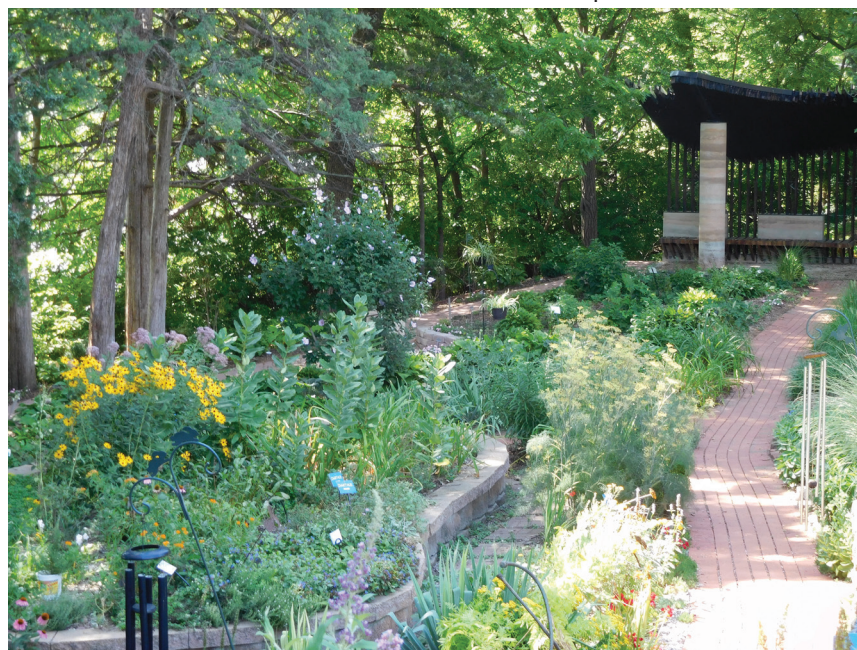
It is always a joy when we can host listeners for a tour through our Sensory Garden. We did just that when Topeka listeners Shirley Fudge and Kalene West came to experience the garden in May. We had the opportunity to showcase the many scented plants, flowers and herbs, the various wind chimes, the Sensory Pavilion and several sculptures throughout the garden. Shirley found the newest sculpture dedicated to Frank Male, Sr. to be of particular

interest, and Kalene loved the peonies!

The garden was built, and is maintained, by volunteers and staff. The current crew leader is Danny Mantyla, KPR/AR web developer. Communing with nature and spreading mulch is not always found in a web developer's job description, but Danny enjoys getting outside and utilizing his gardening skills. If you, like Danny, have a green thumb, or just a few hours of time, you can help too. Interested parties can reach out to our Volunteer Coordinator Trish at tdk@ku.edu.



Reading angel sculpture



View of the garden when walking to the pavillion from entrance



Melissa Warren and
Danny Mantyla



Nhan Nguyen and
Gabe Downey



Camille Olcese and
Shirley Fudge



Theresa Girdler, Shirley Fudge, and Nelda
Mayse touch the tactile plant offerings (2024)

YOUR IMPACT AS A VOLUNTEER

Quotes from real Audio-Reader listeners are scattered throughout this newsletter in blue and red boxes to give readers a glimpse into the impact each volunteer has when they read for Audio-Reader. Listeners across the region and beyond rely on our content each and every day so they can live independently and thrive. Here is another great example from long time listener Duyahn W.

"Audio-Reader has impacted my life for many years, since 1993 when I met Lori Miller and Art Hadley. I also met other folks as well. I started listening to Audio-Reader on the radio back then of course because we didn't have the Amazon devices like we do now. My favorite programs are the mystery hour and the smart computer show. I always try to keep up with technology. A couple of years ago before Lori left, I spoke at an Audio-Reader volunteer event. This was when everything was going on with covid. I really

thought that Audio-Reader was going to leave us all. I would've put up money to try to keep Audio-Reader on the air. I said that I really believe that Audio-Reader makes a difference in all of our lives. I still believe that to this day.

I also take advantage of the telephone reader system as well. It's great to hear human's reading the newspaper sometimes instead of a speech synthesizer. It's also great to have an archive of programs in case you miss readings of books or magazine's. Audio-Reader has meant the world to me when it even comes to the Kansas city star. Even sports. This way I don't have to fiddle with my iPhone or Alexa to grab information. Please, Audio-Reader, keep making a difference in our lives and keep on shining brightly."



ARE PEOPLE LISTENING?... YES!

A question Audio-Reader staff often receive is "Is anybody listening to my show?" While the answer for each program varies, we are confident in reporting that somebody is out there listening to each of our shows every week. The numbers below demonstrate a summary of listeners by method of access during 2023. The online options continue to be the top choice of methods for new listeners, and the growing website traffic drove our decision to create a more accessible website. Looking ahead, a dedicated A-R app is on the distant horizon, and we are investigating ways that listeners can subscribe to individual shows. Stay tuned for more details as they develop.

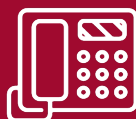
By The Numbers in 2023



Volunteers | 250+ volunteers giving over 14,000 hours of their time



Amazon Alexa | Averaging 100 new skill enables/month with over 3,300 unique users



Lions Telephone Reader | 10,000 calls averaging 28 daily program listeners who access more than 23 minutes/session



Closed-Circuit Radio | 76 new radio listeners



Website | Over 4,500 visits to our website to stream content

AUDIO-READER UPDATES

Home

SCREEN-READER FRIENDLY!

Listen Live

Click the button below to play the Audio-Reader's Radio Reading Service live stream. Broadcasting 24 hours a day, 365 days a year!

Play the live stream

EASY TO LISTEN LIVE OR ON-DEMAND

New! You can now listen to our Kansas City-focused stream. Play Audio Reader's Kansas City stream.

If you're having problems playing the audio, you can download the link to the M3U file for the streaming audio to your computer. Once it's downloaded, you will need to open it. This will launch a program on your computer, such as iTunes or Windows Media Player, that will begin playing the audio.

Font size: A A Site colors: u u u Kerning: H H H

HIGH-CONTRAST & TEXT SIZE OPTIONS

AUDIOREADER.NET is our new **listener-focused** website that was designed with accessibility in mind.

Our low vision listeners can quickly find the options bar on the bottom left side of the page which control font size, page contrast, and kerning options to ensure a customized experience.

For blind listeners who use screen-readers, this website is easy to navigate because there are no images, charts, or tables, and we minimized the breadcrumbs and other behind-the-scene items that trip up screen-reading software.

We want our listeners to get straight to what they want - the amazing, volunteer-read, programming! With no need to download any software or extensions, the Listen Live

option is now the quickest way for new listeners to access Audio-Reader programming as long as they have internet access and a device capable of getting online. Listeners enjoy flexibility in accessing their favorite Audio-Reader shows. By embracing new technology, we are making that happen.

DEVELOPMENT CORNER



June 3 14th Annual Audio-Reader Golf Classic

The Audio-Reader Golf Classic is one of our biggest fundraisers and we can use help from volunteers this year. The tournament is on Monday June 3rd at Eagle Bend Golf Course. Volunteers help at drink stations, games, etc. = No golf experience necessary!

Shifts include:

- Set Up/Registration: 7:00-9:00am
- Games: 8am-2pm
- Clean Up/Tear Down: 2pm-3pm
- Full Day: 7am-3pm

*Shifts can be adjusted to fit your schedule!

Please contact Beth at bethmckenzie@ku.edu or 785.864.5336 to sign up.



Ed Hawkins,
Beth McKenzie,
Feloniz Lovato-
Winston,
Meredith
Johanning, &
Douglas May

Ed Hawkins, Gordon Finch, and Douglas May spend their Thursdays fine-tuning equipment and strategizing about inventory and the next audio sale. Sometimes, and to our delight, they fill Audio-Reader with sweet sounds from a speaker they are testing. With their dedication, and extra help from members of Triangle fraternity, we continue to build on the successes of our recent sales and look forward to coming sale in September with our partners at the Lawrence Public Library.

NEXT AUDIO SALE
SEPT. 13-14

AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



Kauffman Center
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



Free State Festival By Request at area High Schools

Audio-Reader's primary mission is to bring the printed word to sound; however, that is not the only way our volunteers are impacting the lives of listeners. Audio Description aims to bring more meaning and enjoyment to entertainment opportunities and cultural or educational experiences for blind and visually impaired people by providing information that a sighted person would access visually. The key is making imagery accessible. Most Audio-Reader volunteers do some of this when they describe images in the newspaper or a store ad, but that is only the start! It is used to enhance movies, television, media, theater and other live events, museums, national parks, meetings, and educational programming. These visual elements can include action, costumes, settings, facial gestures, facial expressions, and other visually important images. Plus, the describer is in the theater ready to mention off-script activities, audience reactions, and more.

At every performance, we strive to have both a Describer and a Listener Liaison. The Liaison welcomes listeners, supports the describer and the listener by interacting with the venue staff, and represents Audio-Reader to the broader community.

Audio Description offers volunteers the chance to stretch their skills! In April, we held an event at the Lied Center which allowed listeners, volunteers, and donors alike to experience audio description for themselves. We are planning a few training opportunities over the summer to allow more people to get involved. If you are interested in learning more about becoming an Audio Describer, contact Martha or Nick. They have a handful of tickets to each Starlight show for the night we are scheduled to describe. Attending a show and listening along with patrons is a great way to discover if it is right for you.

It is hard to express all A-R does, and Audio Description events provide a chance to tell our story and provide accessibility for theater lovers in our area.



Beth McKenzie, Lynda Anders,
Erik Kaiel, Martha Kehr with
Trish Dowd Kelne

OUT & ABOUT



Martha Kehr at
LAPA Fair (2024)

Martha Kehr, Outreach Coordinator, travels across the region to share information about our services to the people who can benefit from them. Over the last year, she completed over 40 outreach events ranging from presentations to small groups to tabling resource fairs with over 500 attendees. Her strategies have brought many new listeners to the service. By connecting with area agencies on aging, senior resource centers and fairs, and medical professionals like eye doctors and caregivers, Martha is slowly expanding a network of A-R supporters.

If you are interested in being an outreach volunteer, tabling events, or are willing to drop off care packages with local eye doctors, please reach out to Martha at mkehr@ku.edu or call her at 785-864-2900. Also let her know if you know

of any groups who needs a guest speaker or other outreach ideas.



Example of set outreach table

"I am blind, and I love a lot of the things you read. I do the grocery ads, which I appreciate that because it helps me save money in the long run, and I listen to all the cooking shows that you have, the newspaper, different magazines, and all the information that keeps me up to date. I sure appreciate that. I want to give my thanks. Thank you for all that you do." -Mary E.

CLOSED CIRCUIT

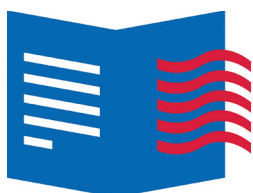
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AUDIO-READER
Sharing the Gift of Sight Through Sound

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 27

MEMORIAL DAY - STUDIOS
CLOSED

JUNE 3

14TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

JUNE 7 & 8

NEWVOLUNTEER
ORIENTATION

JUNE 8

FOUNDATION FIGHTING
BLINDNESS VISION WALK

JUNE TBD

READER GATHERING - SINGLE
PAPER READERS

JUNE 19

JUNETEENTH - STUDIOS
CLOSED

JULY 4

4TH OF JULY - STUDIOS
CLOSED

JULY 17

VIRTUAL COFFEE BAR

AUGUST TBD

READER GATHERING - SINGLE
PAPER READERS

SEPT 2

4TH OF JULY - STUDIOS
CLOSED

SEPT 18

VIRTUAL COFFEE BAR

OCT TBD

READER GATHERING - SINGLE
PAPER READERS

OCT 11

AUDIO-READER'S 53RD
ANNIVERSARY

Nov 20

VIRTUAL COFFEE BAR

DEC TBD

READER GATHERING -
SINGLE PAPER READERS &
VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY PARTY