Introducing Audio-Reader’s Newest Development Committee Member,

WILLIAM HAWKINS

Kansas City business owner, member of the Missouri Council of the Blind and Audio-Reader listener for nearly 30 years

Welcoming Audio-Reader’s new Executive Director, Dan Skinner

Behind the Scenes at the 13th annual benefit sale
Audio-Reader Turns 44

Audio-Reader is now in its 44th year! Thanks, in great part, to you and hundreds of other individuals that financially support our efforts each year. On October 13th we took time out to honor another group of people who help to empower Audio-Reader: our volunteers! The Volunteer Appreciation Banquet was held at Maceli’s in downtown Lawrence, KS, and was a great opportunity to meet with new and old friends and share volunteer experiences. We also heard from great speakers like listener and newest member of the Audio-Reader Development Committee, William Hawkins. William is president and CEO of Hawkins Financial Services and shared with the audience how their efforts as volunteer readers help him to be successful in business and life.

A regular part of the evening features telephone messages left for the volunteers by grateful listeners. It is always heartwarming to hear what a difference Audio-Reader has meant in the lives of so many.

As my time as Interim Director comes to a close, I would like to say what an honor it has been to lead such an important and vibrant organization. Audio-Reader has a bright future ahead because of your financial help. In November, we will welcome our new Director, Dan Skinner. Dan is a longtime public radio leader and native Kansan. He comes to Kansas Public Radio and Audio-Reader from the WKSU network, a part of Kent State University in Kent, OH, covering a 22-county area where he was executive director and general manager.

In the coming months, we will also say goodbye to two of our longtime staff members who are set to retire at year’s end. Art Hadley, Producer and Engineer and the voice of Audio-Reader, has served the university and the print-disabled for 38 years. Also retiring is Bruce Mensie, our Broadcast Engineer, with 18 years of service. These two have both contributed so much to Audio-Reader and will be greatly missed.

The end of the year is just around the corner and it’s a great time to think about those last-minute tax deductions. A tax-deductible gift to Audio-Reader is an investment in both Audio-Reader’s future and the future of Audio-Reader’s listeners. Gifts of all sizes will make a big difference. Thank you for helping Audio-Reader “share the gift of sight through sound.”
Save the Date: Audio-Reader Golf Tournament

Mark your calendars, the 7th Annual Audio-Reader Golf Tournament, chaired by KU Women’s Golf Coach Erin O’Neil, will be held on Monday, June 6, 2016 with a shotgun start at 8:30 am. We have a NEW location this year, Eagle Bend Golf Course! This beautiful course is located at 1250 E 902 Rd in Lawrence near Clinton Lake. Enjoy a day on the greens and help raise some green for Audio-Reader!

Audio-Reader Development Director Moves to Kansas Public Radio

After 5 wonderful years at Audio-Reader, I have taken a new job with another amazing organization, Kansas Public Radio! Many of you already know that Audio-Reader and Kansas Public Radio are closely linked. The two organizations share a building, a director, and airwaves (Audio-Reader programs are broadcast on the Kansas Public Radio subcarrier). Audio-Reader is very close to my heart, and I will remain connected to the organization as both a volunteer and a donor.

Have wheels...will travel!
Audio-Reader donors stepped up to the plate, providing funds for a new vehicle.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to Audio-Reader’s Summer Fund Drive campaign, which raised $35,480! These funds will be used to purchase a new vehicle for Audio-Reader. A new, reliable vehicle is crucial as Audio-Reader works to expand services into underserved areas of Kansas and Missouri. Audio-Reader staff is currently researching the best vehicle at the best price. Right now, our sights are set on a smaller, environmentally friendly SUV with good gas mileage. As usual, we would not be able to make this purchase without the support of wonderful donors like all of you!

Many of you donated towards a new Audio-Reader vehicle in honor of former Outreach Coordinator Peg Sampson.

HEA-R YE, HEA-R YE, Help Expand Audio-Reader!

You will be receiving a letter soon from Audio-Reader’s Interim Director, Steve Kincaid, asking you to consider a tax-deductible contribution to Audio-Reader this holiday season. The Help Expand Audio-Reader (or HEA-R) campaign provides the funds needed to pay for the technology, reading materials and outreach costs associated with providing free 24/7 access to the printed word to thousands of listeners in Kansas, Missouri and across the United States. Gifts of all sizes make a big difference. Thank you for supporting Audio-Reader!

Dan Skinner Named Director for Audio-Reader and Kansas Public Radio

Audio-Reader’s new director, Dan Skinner, will start after this issue of “Airwaves” goes to press.

Audio-Reader’s new director, Dan Skinner, will bring over 33 years of experience in broadcast radio, and experience collaborating with reading services similar to Audio-Reader, both with KHCC in Hutchinson, KS and for OWL Radio (affiliated with Texas Public Radio).
The “Dynamic Audio Duo” helps usher in another record-breaking FYEO for its 13th Year

Meredith Johanning, Assistant Director of Development

Her impeccable organizational skills and attention to detail are what make her excel in this role. This year, record sales alone brought in over $5,000!

On the audio-equipment side, audio expert Dave Dunford entered his ninth year of managing all of the equipment donations for the sale. Previous Outreach Coordinator Peg Sampson recruited Dave back in 2006 to help with FYEO and in one year’s time, there was a significant and noticeable difference in revenue.

You may not know about Audio-Reader’s “Dynamic Audio Duo” (as I like to call them), as a majority of their work is behind the scenes. The scene I am talking about is For Your EARS Only (also known as FYEO), Audio-Reader’s annual benefit sale of audio equipment and vinyl records. The Dynamic Audio Duo consists of Audio-Reader volunteers Lori Tesdahl and Dave Dunford. Under the leadership of these two, the 13th annual FYEO took place over the second weekend in September and grossed nearly $29,000 – making it one of Audio-Reader’s most successful sales yet!

This sale was Lori Tesdahl’s third year solely managing the sale’s vinyl records inventory after taking over the role from Janis Hutchison. Beginning as early as May of each year, Lori takes on the challenging task of sorting through the thousands of records we receive in donations. “I get started working on it as soon as possible to stay ahead of it.”

Lori spends her time inspecting each record, checking not only the genre and age of the record but also analyzing the quality. The price of the record depends on each of these characteristics and Lori helps Audio-Reader garner additional revenue by individually sorting through and pricing all of the records.

Where once equipment had been placed in the sale to sell “as is,” now, because of Dave, all audio-equipment is individually tested, fixed and priced accordingly. With over 40 years of experience working in the public safety communications field, Dave draws from his professional background when repairing the equipment donations – which includes items such as turntables, speakers, receivers, DVD players, and even the occasional console! “I do it because I find it rewarding,” Dave said. “I enjoy helping raise funds for Audio-Reader. I enjoy the fellowship of other co-workers and volunteers working together.”

This year’s sale had over 11,000 records, 350 pieces of audio-equipment, 8,500 CDs, dozens of instruments – including an antique sousaphone and an accordion – and hundreds of customers! We can’t thank all of our volunteers enough who helped donate, move and sell these items during the sale as well as those who provided treats for Friday night’s event – it truly takes a village! We are also grateful for the support we received from our corporate sponsors who donated money, food and prizes to the event.

“What I enjoy most about the sale are the people who come, seeing them enjoy themselves and have fun,” Lori told me. “The event is like a celebration of the organization,” Dave said about the sale. They are right: FYEO is a fun “party-like” event where people can enjoy themselves while helping to support Audio-Reader. That IS something to celebrate!
Petey Cerf founded Audio-Reader 44 years ago, after spending many hours reading to a friend in a nursing home.

Audio-Reader is reaching out to our supporters and friends, asking them to ensure the future of Audio-Reader by joining the Petey Cerf Legacy Society and leaving a bequest gift to our organization.

When Audio-Reader’s founder, Petey Cerf, died in 1996, she remembered Audio-Reader in her will and hoped that others would follow her example.

The Petey Cerf Legacy Society gives supporters an opportunity to make a planned gift to Audio-Reader, assuring 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.

Membership in the Petey Cerf Legacy Society includes a certificate of appreciation and acknowledgment in various Audio-Reader and KU publications, with your permission. You may also request anonymity if you prefer.

There are many options available for a planned gift to Audio-Reader.

- A bequest in a will or living trust.
- An income-producing trust.
- A charitable annuity.
- A retained life estate contract.
- A whole life insurance policy.
- A retirement plan death benefit.

To learn more about becoming a member of the Petey Cerf Legacy Society, contact Meredith Johanning at (785) 864-4634.
Introducing Audio-Reader’s newest Development Committee member

Meet business-owner, fund-raiser, fellow Audio-Reader listener, and now Audio-Reader Development Committee member.

by Meredith Johanning, Assistant Director of Development

William Hawkins

When I spoke with new Development Committee member William Hawkins, he had just wrapped up two different interviews with local Kansas City radio stations discussing the Chiefs and the Royals who had both recently played (and lost) that weekend. Both interviewers were people he does business with through his financial services firm and they wanted to get his thoughts on the games. I was his third interview and it was only 10:45 on a Monday morning! A mover and shaker in the Kansas City area, William is ready to bring his fundraising experiences to Audio-Reader and help us raise awareness in Kansas City and expand coverage into central Missouri.

William, how long have you been an Audio-Reader listener?

Since the 1980’s.

And how did you first learn about Audio-Reader and its services?

I found out through my other good friends who were blind. They said you can listen to newspapers and they give you a radio so that’s how I first got involved.

We are honored that you recently agreed to serve as a member on our Development Committee. What made you decide to become involved with Audio-Reader?

Volunteer Coordinator Jen Nigro contacted me back in May about tickets and audio description for the Starlight show, Cinderella. I knew my granddaughter wanted to see that so we accepted the tickets. After the show, I thought this is really not fair to accept these tickets and not give back. They made a special evening for me and my granddaughter. It was an opportunity to give someone who is visually challenged the chance to be a part of something they normally wouldn’t get. I knew if I enjoyed that program I needed to do something to make sure that it stays in place.

And then you immediately got involved with us?

Yes, after that I talked with Jennifer and Feloniz and shared with them all of the volunteer organizations I’m involved with and they invited me to come out and talk about some fundraising opportunities. I came out and visited with them and a couple weeks later Feloniz asked if I would be interested in joining the Audio-Reader Development Committee. Then we talked about other current needs of Audio-Reader and I was able to go to MCB (Missouri Council of the Blind) and garner a donation to help with your goal of expansion into Springfield and Joplin, MO.

That’s fantastic! You’re the Treasurer of the Missouri Council of the Blind (MCB), is that correct?

Yes.

And that’s one of your goals as a Development Committee member is to use your involvement with MCB to help Audio-Reader?

Oh, yes. We’ve already laid the ground work. Outreach Coordinator Lori Kesinger came to the state convention and did a fantastic job of introducing Audio-Reader and letting MCB know about the goal to expand services in the Springfield and Joplin area. The MCB board is really excited and glad to have Audio-Reader on board. It was a very easy transition for me to introduce both organizations. I’m going to be moving off the board of MCB in November so that I can focus more of my efforts locally in the Kansas City metro area and Audio-Reader is a perfect fit for that.*

I’m also President of the Allied Workers for the Blind which is the local affiliate of MCB. We advocate for the blind so when opportunities come up to support your type of program we have dollars that we donate to those. We do a lot of local stuff.

You’re a busy guy! What are some of your other goals as a Development Committee member?

My number one goal is to learn what Audio-Reader’s expectations are and understand how I fit into that. You guys have been doing good things since 1971. As far as I’m concerned, I want to just be a part of it. I’m willing to do whatever it is to help you move this program forward.
I took every course I could take. I went off to UMB. During that time, I worked for UMB Bank. I went on to become an insurance agent. So, I got my insurance license, and this guy, Dave Perry, told me I needed to become an insurance agent. So, I got my insurance license, and I said I hadn't been around blind people and didn’t know what it was like so I went to the Missouri School for the Blind. I graduated valedictorian of my class there. That was my first real opportunity to be around blind people.

Going to a public school and being in a class with 30 other students, you were the only other blind kid there. It was tough. Tough. I went to Southwest High School and I was there during the racial rights riots and the fighting. I went to school on days where I thought I was never going to make it home. But that’s where I had to go to school. It was the best thing that I think ever happened to me because it allowed me to learn how to be around and deal with everybody. But the experience of going to a school for the blind was also important because I didn’t always feel like I was the Lone Ranger.

How do you think Audio-Reader can be beneficial to students?

When you look at it from a student aspect, you can get the books in advance but what do you do about the handouts in class? A lot of times, the universities don’t have the ability to Braille those. From that standpoint, Audio-Reader is fantastic for something like that.

What do you enjoy most about Audio-Reader?

I like the sports page – being able to have the sports page read to me! And I like the non-fiction book reading. I’m a huge reader. I listen to books on tape and I read Braille a lot. Last year I read 853 books; I read like crazy. And with me traveling so much, my wife travels with me and we read a lot of the books together. She drives and I listen. That’s why she likes to drive to all the places when we have to go out of town because she said there is nothing better than driving and reading a book. We enjoy that part of Audio-Reader together.

William, we are honored to have you be a part of Audio-Reader and our Development Committee.

Please understand, you may be honored, but for me, Audio-Reader has helped me with one of my life’s missions, and that is to continue to volunteer and help when I can. So, it goes both ways. And more importantly, there are so many people out there who need our help and they are the true winners.
Audio-Reader celebrates growth, volunteerism

by Jen Nigro Coordinator of Volunteers

It was a packed house when Audio-Reader volunteers and supporters gathered on Tuesday, October 13 to celebrate 44 years of service to the visually-impaired and print-disabled. The theme for this year’s Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was Audio-Reader: A Place to Grow, chosen because of the organization’s past growth and plans for future expansion, advancements in technology, expanded programming and the personal growth volunteering fosters.

William Hawkins, President and CEO of Hawkins Financial Services and a member of Audio-Reader’s Development Committee, gave the keynote address, focusing on the relationships volunteers build with their listeners. “You have no idea the impact you have,” he told the group. “You are there for us, every day.”

In addition, 55 volunteers with a combined 650 years of service between them were recognized for their commitment to Audio-Reader.

5 Year

10 Year
Harlanne Roberts, David Kent, Deb Kirmer. Not pictured: Terry Betzen, Ann Dean, Bonny Fugett, Pam Houston, Fred Miller, Betsy Parker and Haskell Springer.

15 Year

20 Year

25 Year

30 Year
Not pictured: Gayle Matchett and Karen O’Keefe.

35 Year
Bob Campbell. Not pictured: Darcy Schild.
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, 2015 and September 30, 2015.**

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