

Massachusetts Reading Network

in association with the Talking Information Center Network May 2017

Monthly Impact Report

Director's Corner

The 2017 Western Massachusetts Elder Care Conference was a bustling day long event recently held at Holyoke Community College. It is a day of cutting edge information about Medicare, basic estate planning, caregiving, residential alternatives, and much more. Valley Eye Radio, one of the six affiliates of the Massachusetts Reading Network for the Pioneer Valley, was there. Why were we there? What is the connection? *Continued at* [**DIRECTOR**](#)

TIC Wins National Award

If you are a registered voter in Massachusetts, you have seen ballot questions and you know they are not easy to understand, or even read. In 2016, the Talking Information Network (TIC) created and broadcast a human voice program to share the November ballot questions. The International Association of Audio Information Services (IAAIS) heard this broadcast and has awarded TIC the Consumer Information Program of the Year. *Continued at* [**AWARD**](#)



Dorothy Donovan, center, Lowell Association for the Blind recipient of the Program Staff Award at the 2017 Non-Profit Alliance (NPA) of Greater Lowell's 1st Annual Awards

Felt with the Heart

Nearly 150 nonprofit leaders from the Greater Lowell community were in attendance on April 26, 2017 for the Non-Profit Alliance (NPA) of Greater Lowell's 1st Annual Awards Breakfast at UTEC in Lowell. Attendees represented the diverse sub-sectors of nonprofits that serve Greater Lowell including healthcare, housing/homelessness, community development, social services, youth services, disability services, and hunger/food insecurity. *Continued at* [**HEART**](#)

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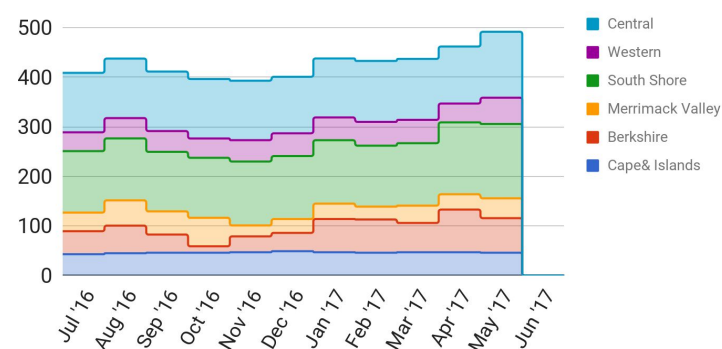
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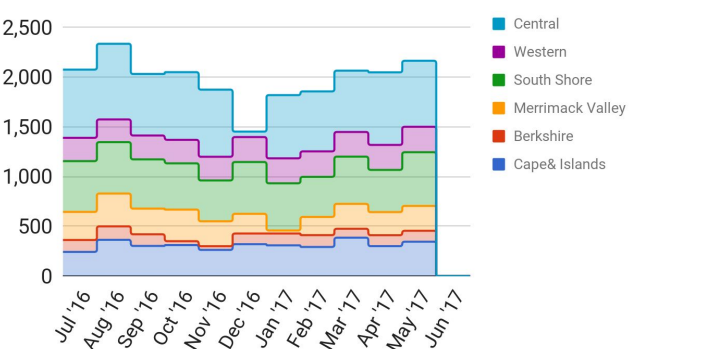
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Volunteers Extend Funding and Mission

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

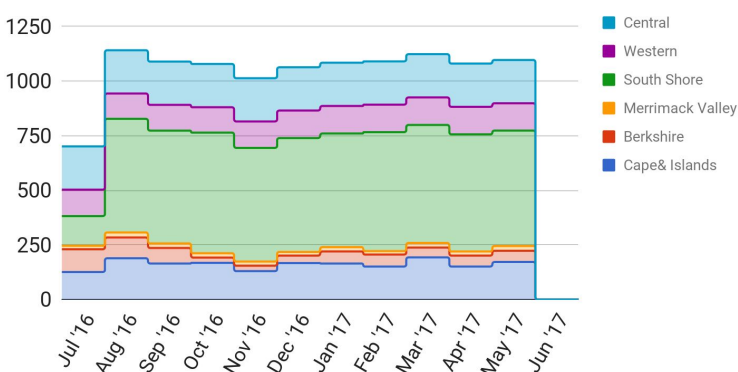


VOLUNTEER HOURS

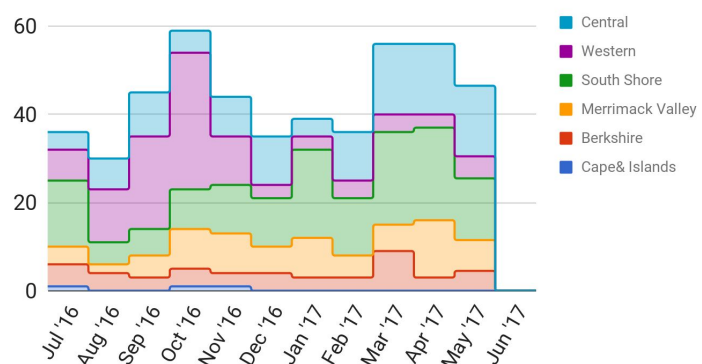


Programming and Outreach Support Independence

LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

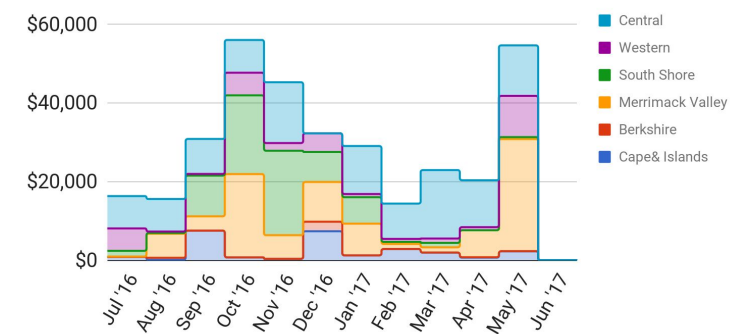


COMMUNITY EVENTS

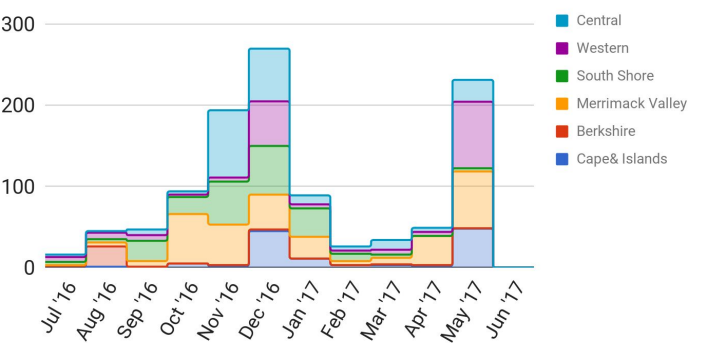


Diversified Development Amplifies Impact

PRIVATE DONATIONS



PRIVATE DONORS



DIRECTOR - [continued from page 1]

We were there because many of our listeners are seniors who rely on us everyday to get them the news and information that they need to be vital and keep their quality of life despite their inability to read independently. One of those ways is to have our volunteers read local daily and weekly newspapers for broadcast—one of the major initiatives for TIC/Massachusetts Reading Network for many years across the state. But now we also get out of our studios and go into our communities. We are not satisfied with only reading newspapers as informative as they are. We are going beyond newspapers with the latest technology in the 21st century to make sure we bring all the news, information, and local connection that our listeners need as well as taking every opportunity to boost our networking and collaborative efforts with others serving our seniors. Getting them all the latest at a time of exploding news and information has become as important to our seniors quality of life as many other services deemed essential. This event is organized by Greater Springfield Senior Services, a nonprofit funded by Executive Office of Elder Affairs, a major funder of the Massachusetts Reading Network.

Why else were we there? Because many caregivers attend this critical conference and they need to know what we do so that they can bring our service to their senior clients. One floor at the conference facility was teeming with tables of those who are serving seniors. It seems like the numbers of tables grow every year. It is essential that we keep networking and informing all of them. It also leads to collaborations and cross-promotions that help with our local fundraising efforts. The more our colleagues and the general public know about us, the more they want to support us. We are the only ones doing what we do across the state. Without us, there would be no way for these seniors and the caregivers who work with them to be able to access the latest news and information to help them keep their quality of lives.

All across the Commonwealth, what has been known for years as “reading services for the blind,” has become a vital, dynamic network of radio broadcasting and live streaming services incorporating local, state and national news that is essential in the 21st century to their lives and for the healthy functioning of those who can no longer read independently. Many will be living longer and needing accessible services just like ours. What we provide cannot be found anywhere else. We specialize and differentiate our broadcasts for our seniors and others who can no longer read for themselves. Every day we are looking out for their interests and what they need specifically to navigate their worlds and meet their needs and growing challenges.

One of the keynote addresses at the Elder Care Conference was about dignity. Maintaining dignity as we age is not always easy. According to the expert speaker from University of Massachusetts School of Nursing, connectedness is critical to keeping one’s dignity. Our services not only inform, they keep our listeners connected to their local communities and events. Her research showed that our interventions with the elderly are critical to helping them to maintain dignity. Together, all of our interventions for the elderly across the Commonwealth—be it housing, Meals on Wheels, quality caregiving, and keeping them abreast with the latest news and information—are contributing to keeping their dignity and connectedness in every aspect of their lives. The bottom line for all of us working together to provide essential services—the health, connectedness, and well-being of our elders. *Barbara Loh, Executive Director, Valley Eye Radio.*

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**HEART** - [continued from page 1]

The NPA is a member organization that builds collaboration that strengthens the influence and impact of community-based organizations through sharing resources and advancing excellence in administration. The awards breakfast recognized the achievements, leadership, and talent at local nonprofit organizations.

Awards categories included the Board Member Award, Unsung Hero Award, Volunteer Award, Program Staff Award, and the Kathy Reticker Executive Leadership Award. Kathy Reticker, former Executive Director of Acre Family Child Care, was a long-time NPA member, local nonprofit leader, and advocate for women and children. The Kathy Reticker Executive Director Award was named in memory of Kathy who passed away this year.

This year’s awardees were Joe Hungler, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell recipient of the Kathy Reticker Executive Leadership Award; Dorothy Donovan, Lowell Association for the Blind recipient of the Program Staff Award; Pamela Miller, Coalition for a Better Acre recipient of the Support Staff Award/Unsung Hero Award; The Tuesday Crew, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell recipients of the Volunteer Award; and Amy Werner, The Community Family recipient of the Board Member Award.



Nominations were judged by a devoted five member panel of community members including Danielle McFadden, President & CEO, Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce; Yolanda Coentro, President & CEO, Institute for Nonprofit Practice; Antonio Mendieta, Commercial Loan Portfolio Manager-AVP, Lowell Five; Susanne Beaton, Board Member, Greater Lowell Community Foundation and Executive Director, The Paul & Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation; and Bopha Malone, Regional Business Advisor-VP, Enterprise Bank.

Dorothy's Nomination was submitted by the LAB Executive Director, Elizabeth M. Cannon. Dorothy has been employed part time at the Lowell Association for the Blind (LAB) as the Braille and Technology Instructor for over 14 years. She is responsible for scheduling, evaluating and training blind and visually impaired students that are interested in learning Braille and Assistive Technology. She evaluates their skills and develops an educational plan. Classes are usually held once a week. Dorothy is completely blind and a wonderful role model for those who think they cannot learn to read Braille or use a computer.

Dorothy is always encouraging blind individuals to come into LAB and take advantage of our services. In one case, she met a Lowell resident, Donna, who was blind on the Road Runner paratransit transportation. She was so welcoming and encouraging Donna finally came in and has been a regular at LAB for several years. She is learning Braille and attends many of LAB programs. Donna now calls LAB her "family".

Dorothy is the LAB go to person to have newly blind clients talk to about a variety of skills. She is an excellent Braille reader and technology user and has first-hand knowledge about what it is like to learn Braille and assistive technology. She understands the impact these skills can have on someone who is blind. She encourages everyone to learn at least the basics of Braille so they can use an elevator or identify the Men's Room from the Ladies Room.

Several students in recent years have worked with Dorothy to study Braille and assistive technology. For these students it has been enough to boost their self confidence that they have returned to college to continue their education.

Dorothy is also the person that is the face of the organization whether it be speaking on behalf of LAB to speak to funding sources or answering question from students at every age level with questions such as "how can a blind person do....?"

Dorothy has never received any awards for her work and will never be able to see the award but as Helen Keller stated "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart." This award will be felt by her heart. *Elizabeth M. Cannon, Executive Director, Lowell Association for the Blind*

## **AWARD** [continued from page 1]



Members of the IAAIS at the annual conference in Jacksonville, FL at the beginning of June.

TIC, the Massachusetts Reading Network's South Shore Affiliate, has won many awards over the past 40 years of broadcasting. We are particularly proud of this, our most recent recognition, because we felt that the visually impaired and reading disabled community should have easy access to our ballot questions and time to think them over before the vote.

Winning this award really shows the power of radio! We received the book in the mail and our Production Director jumped into action, having it on the air less than an hour later later, including music and edits, with plenty of time for our listeners to make it to the polls to cast their vote.



[IAAIS- International Association of Audio Information Services](#) (IAAIS) is a volunteer-driven membership organization of services that turn text into speech for people who cannot see, hold or comprehend the printed word and who may be unable to access information due to a disability or health condition. Since its formation in 1977, IAAIS (formerly the Association of Radio Reading Services) has assisted, represented and set standards of good practice for audio information services worldwide. The organizational name was updated in 1999 to reflect the advent of new technologies for producing and delivering audio and an increased need for reading services throughout the world. IAAIS currently represents 140-some services and developing services. Member services can be found throughout the United States and in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Africa. Many IAAIS members in the United States are associated with public radio stations, colleges, universities or libraries. For a complete listing, visit their [online directory](#).

TIC Producer, John Shea, & Program Director,  
Julie Cockerham

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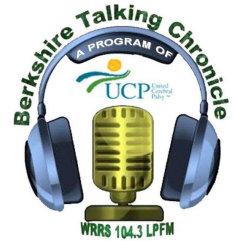




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