

Louis Braille and Braille Literacy Month

Louis Braille, the inventor of braille, was born on January 4, 1809. Because of this, January is Braille Literacy Month! This was an invention born of necessity due to Mr. Braille becoming blind after an accident in early childhood. Thanks to braille, those who are vision impaired have access to written information and even music.

Previous to its invention, books for the blind were made with raised printing, but it was difficult to read and to create. While Louis was attending the National Institute for Blind Youth in Paris, he began experimenting with different ways for those with vision impairments to be able to read. It came from a love of reading and the longing to have more books available to him. At age 15, he released his idea for Braille to the Institute.

Despite large technological leaps such as audiobooks, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and desktop low vision digital magnifiers, braille is still a very important aspect for those who are blind or have vision impairments. In the centuries since, there have been other advancements to better the lives of those with disabilities. Braille can now be created at home with a computer and special embosser. The Perkins Braille Machine is similar to a typewriter with six keys that can quickly emboss paper with braille words and letters, allowing the author to efficiently write without having to rely on an electronic computer.

Let's celebrate Braille Literacy Month by appreciating how its invention changed the lives of so many people. It helps to open the world for people and is here to stay despite computers and smart phones!

