

## **Great Lakes Talking Books Center Script for Program on Talking Book Services**

**#1 Program Script** (without PowerPoint) (We can give you Power Point slides if you want them – sometimes Power Point is an unnecessary complication when presenting in an unfamiliar place.)

**On display:** Table top poster, player and talking book, Talking Book Topics catalog, bookmarks & brochures.

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am here today to tell you about **Talking Books**, a free public library service for people of all ages who have some physical limitation that interferes with their ability to read print. The Talking Book program has brought hours of reading enjoyment to people across the country since it was begun in the 1930's.

The program provides free audiobooks and a free player to people who are eligible. Anyone who has a physical condition that interferes with reading print will qualify for the service. For example,

- Anyone who can't read a newspaper even with corrective lenses;
- Anyone who can't hold a book and turn its pages whether because they are too weak, bedridden, or have a physical disability;
- Anyone who has a learning disability with a physical cause, such as dyslexia;
- Anyone waiting for cataract surgery or some other temporary condition that prevents them from reading print.

Talking Books and a free digital player are sent through the U.S. Post Office, **FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND OR HANDICAPPED**. The books are mailed in hard plastic cases [**show book**], with a card addressed to the reader. The card can be flipped over and returned FREE MATTER back to the library. Each time a reader returns a book, another book can be sent from the library.

The reader keeps the free playback equipment as long as he/she chooses to continue getting Talking Books. [**show player**] The recently redesigned player has excellent sound quality and seldom requires maintenance. If there is a problem with the machine, the reader simply returns the player to the library and a replacement player is sent. If a

machine or book is damaged or lost, the reader is asked to notify the library so that the item can be removed from inventory. The reader is not responsible for paying for loss or damage.

Talking Books are recorded on cartridges *[show cartridge]* and an entire book can be played without removing or turning over the cartridge. This feature is particularly helpful for caretakers of people who are bedridden or have limited manual dexterity. The machine can be paused or stopped easily and the next time it is turned on, it 'remembers' where the reader left off playing and picks up 5 seconds before that place in the book.

About 2,000 new Talking Books are recorded annually. A bi-monthly catalog in large print or audio format describes the new books. *[show Talking Book Topics catalog]*

There is the same wide selection of subjects found in any public library. There are books for children, as well as adults. Fiction and non-fiction – all genres and subjects – are recorded by professional narrators. In fact, most of the New York Times bestsellers list is available right now for Talking Book readers. If an eligible reader has a spouse or family member and they want to listen to a book together, the reader can request books of interest to other family members.

Talking Book readers are voracious readers. The average Michigan resident checks 8 books out of their public library each year. The average northern Michigan Talking Book reader reads 30 books a year.

And, if a reader gets tired of waiting for the book to come in the mail, downloadable Talking Books are also available for any reader with an Internet connection. People who don't have fast Internet at home can come to the public library and download books on a flash drive. To ensure copyright compliance, the downloaded books can only be played on the equipment provided by the Talking Books program.

There is a simple application process to enroll. Applications are available from the public library or can be printed from the Talking Book Center's website.

**[GreatLakesTalkingBooks.org]** A professional person signs the application and

verifies the physical limitation. "Professional persons" include doctors, nurses, social workers, physical therapists, teachers, or public library directors. The only exception is a learning disability; and, this disability must be certified by a doctor of medicine or osteopathy. A developmental disability or illiteracy does not qualify because these are not physical disabilities. There has to be a physical cause, such as with dyslexia.

If you know someone who misses the enjoyment of reading because of a visual or physical limitation or a learning disability, please urge them to call the public library for more information. Or call the Great Lakes Talking Books Center at **800-562-8985**.