

November 13, 2008

To: Darlene Staffeldt, State Librarian
Montana State Library Commission (MSLC)

Fr: Christie Briggs, Supervisor
Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL)

RE: Proposed request from the Montana State Library Trust Fund
for \$10,000.00 to the Summer Orientation Program of the Montana Association for the Blind.

This request will provide scholarships of \$1,000.00 each to ten Montanans with low vision or blindness who are first time attendees to the Summer Orientation Program in Helena.

The Montana Association for the Blind offers an annual Summer Orientation Program for newly blind or low vision Montanans. It is held on the Carroll College campus for four weeks each summer. Classes help students between the ages of 18 and 90 learn new skills in order to adapt to a world without eyesight.

One of the services provided at the orientation program is a full day of library classes, provided by the staff of the Montana Talking Book Library. These classes build confidence and encouragement for Montanans new to blindness and low vision through training in book and magazine formats, including online searches. Hands on instruction are given on playback equipment operation and using adaptive devices to support library needs. This class is a forum to educate newly blind and low vision "readers" of new library technologies adaptive specifically for their needs.

This request reflects the best use of the donations to the Trust Fund from library patrons, friends and family who have contributed to the Montana Talking Book Library. It will provide our participating patrons with an experience of a lifetime that will change how they view themselves and how they function in the world around them.