Program Update – October 2013
As the population of individuals with severe visual impairment continues to rise due to increased longevity and the prevalence of age-related vision loss, JBI is busier than ever before in its eighty-two-year history. Because your interest and support are essential to all that we do here on a daily basis, we want to take this opportunity to share with you just a few of the exciting things that are happening at JBI.

• **NEW OUTREACH PROGRAM IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA** - Leslie Levit Friedman, JBI’s new Southern California Program Director, comes to JBI with extensive experience in Jewish communal organizations. Her goal is to reintroduce as many visually impaired L.A. area seniors as possible to the pleasures of “reading” through Talking Books and Large Print. Los Angeles is home to the second largest Jewish community in the U.S.—and more than 114,000 Jewish seniors. Ultimately, we hope to establish Talking Book Clubs in Los Angeles similar to those that have been flourishing in Florida.

• **LOW VISION CLINIC IN ISRAEL CELEBRATES 30 YEARS!**
In 1983, JBI established—and has since continued to support—the premier Low Vision Clinic in Israel, located at the Sourasky Medical Center in Tel Aviv. Today, the JBI clinic serves more than 6,500 people annually who are contending with the difficulties of "Low Vision" (defined as vision loss that cannot be corrected, with regular glasses, medicine or surgery). Under the leadership of Dr. Anat Loewenstein, Sourasky’s Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology, optometrists and ophthalmologists work creatively to maximize residual sight for both adult and pediatric patients.

• **DOWNLOADS** - JBI is harnessing technology to increase efficiency and provide easy access to its many publications.
  - Library patrons can now access JBI’s Audio and Braille periodicals 24/7 with just a few clicks of a mouse via our website (www.jbilibrary.org).
  - A digital library of Hebrew Braille texts is available for download, as well as an easy to use Translator capable of converting Hebrew text to Computer Braille, which can then be sent to an embosser or read on a refreshable Braille display.
• **JBI Honors Its Volunteers** - On June 5th, JBI hosted its annual Volunteer Party. Volunteers and trustees joined the JBI staff for an evening of music and refreshments on the terrace at JBI's New York headquarters. Chairman Judy E. Tenney and Recording Studio Manager Jane Blecher expressed their deep appreciation for the diversely talented and dedicated team of readers, directors, and quality control volunteers who make JBI's Talking Books Library possible.

• **Much Needed New Equipment** - Recognizing the significance of JBI's work, the Council of the City of New York awarded JBI a capital grant to fund the acquisition of new equipment for production of Braille and Large Print materials. This new equipment enhances JBI's in-house production capacity and enables JBI to respond to client requests with greater speed and efficiency.

• **Calendars for the New Year** - Every year around Rosh Hashanah JBI distributes Large Print and Braille calendars to our clients. Our *Luach* lists all Jewish Holidays, Candle Lighting Times and Torah Readings in the subscriber's needed format.

• **Saying “Yes” to Every Request** - JBI provides customized educational materials for students of all ages, including older adults interested in continuing their Jewish Education. Recently, one visually impaired client contacted us with an urgent request: she needed to “read” Stuart Eizenstat's *The Future of the Jews* in order to lead her book discussion group. More than 38 of JBI's dedicated volunteers worked nonstop to complete this recording in just 9 days! We are so proud that we were able to fulfill this very special request.

Remember – all of JBI’s services are free of any charge. If you or someone you know could benefit from our services, please contact us at 1-800-433-1531. Our librarians will be happy to help.

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