

# BrailleINK<sup>TM</sup>

*A Nonprofit Organization  
Promoting Braille Accessibility  
and Education for Both  
Visually Impaired and  
Sighted Individuals*

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## *Mission Statement*

- ❖ BrailleInk. is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the experience of shared reading by print and braille readers and to promoting braille awareness.



*Eric Ligon, President of BrailleInk., and his son, Ethan, who is blind.*

*Eric designed a new book format incorporating both print and braille to address problems he encountered as he and his family began learning braille and sharing books.*

*BrailleInk. was founded to produce children's books in this format.*

## *Activities*

- ❖ BrailleInk.'s primary focus is publishing existing high-quality children's books in a new, easier-to-share format that adds braille while maintaining the original print and illustration.

## *Audiences*

- ❖ Our books will help alleviate a shortage of books for the following groups:
  - Families with an adult or child who is blind or visually impaired.
  - Teachers and other professionals who work with individuals with visual impairments.
  - Sighted individuals interested in learning or teaching about blindness, braille and disabilities.

## *Leadership*

### ❖ Bruce Curtis, *Executive Director*

- Coordinated the development and production of early literacy books and materials at Perkins School for the Blind.
- Other work experience includes international development in Sri Lanka, Haiti and the U.S.
- Babson MBA (focus in entrepreneurship).
- Member, Denton Hi-Noon Lions Club.

### ❖ Eric Ligon, *President*

- Associate Professor of Communication Design at the University of North Texas.
- Presented braille research in Vancouver, BC; Beijing, China; and Cambridge, UK.
- Father of a boy who is blind.

### ❖ Boards of Directors and Advisors

- Diverse groups of experienced leaders across North America and the United Kingdom.

## *Reading Environments*

### SCHOOL

- ❖ 85 percent of blind and visually impaired children attend regular public school classrooms.
- ❖ Assistance with braille is difficult; almost nobody in public schools reads braille other than itinerant braille teachers who have very limited contact with children.

### HOME

- ❖ There is a well-established connection between shared reading at home and literacy.
- ❖ Most parents of blind or visually impaired children don't know braille.
  - There are no available statistics, but many teachers of the visually impaired say that in 10 – 20 years of experience, only one or two of their students' families has learned braille.

## *Braille Children's Book Formats*

⋮ There are limited options for adaptations of mainstream titles, primarily:

- Braille only
- Braille on clear sheets
  - Adhesive*
  - Separate pages*
- BrailleInk.'s new format

## *Braille-Only Books*

### DESCRIPTION

- ⠠ Braille on blank white paper.

### PROBLEMS

- ⠠ Lack of corresponding print makes it impossible to share with a non-braille reader.
- ⠠ It's difficult to see the braille. As a result, it's virtually impossible even for a sighted person who knows braille to share the book.
- ⠠ Useful only to individuals who are already proficient braille readers.



## *Braille on Clear Sheets*

### DESCRIPTION

- ⠄ Regular print/picture books, with braille on clear sheets that are either affixed to each page or bound in as separate pages.

### PROBLEMS

- ⠄ Since the books were not designed to accommodate braille, the braille labels often have to cover the text and illustrations.
- ⠄ Braille readers' hands block what sighted parents, teachers, siblings and friends are trying to see – making it difficult to share the book.
- ⠄ There is no alignment between the print and the braille, so it's hard to use these books to teach or learn braille.



*Braille on adhesive labels.*



*Braille on a separate, bound-in sheet.*

## *Features of BrailleInk.'s Books*

### DESCRIPTION

- ⠆ BrailleInk.'s books solve the other formats' identified problems and introduce new features.

### ADVANTAGES

- ⠆ Design that facilitates shared reading.
  - Page layout
  - Braille and print letters in one-to-one alignment
- ⠆ Braille instruction relevant to each book.
- ⠆ Improved physical construction.

## *Page Layout*

### DESCRIPTION

- ⠄ Top portion contains the original print and illustration.
- ⠄ Bottom portion contains the braille and its one-to-one print translation.

### ADVANTAGES

- ⠄ Braille readers' hands don't block what sighted readers are trying to see.
- ⠄ It's easy to determine what the braille says.

*The original print and illustration are included so that sighted parents, teachers, siblings, children and friends will also enjoy our books, making it more likely that they will share books with braille readers. Also, there are many individuals with low vision (some of whom read braille) who have some ability to see the illustrations.*



Little Nutbrown Hare,  
 who was going to bed, held  
 on tight to Big Nutbrown Hare's  
 very long ears.

Little Nutbrown Hare,  
 who was going to bed, held  
 on tight to Big Nutbrown  
 Hare's very long ears.

*BrailleInk's page layout*

*GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU™; Text copyright © 1994 by Sam McBratney;  
 Illustrations copyright © 1994 by Anita Jeram. Reproduced by permission of the publisher  
 Candlewick Press Inc., Cambridge, MA, on behalf of Walker Books Ltd. London.*

*Patent pending.*

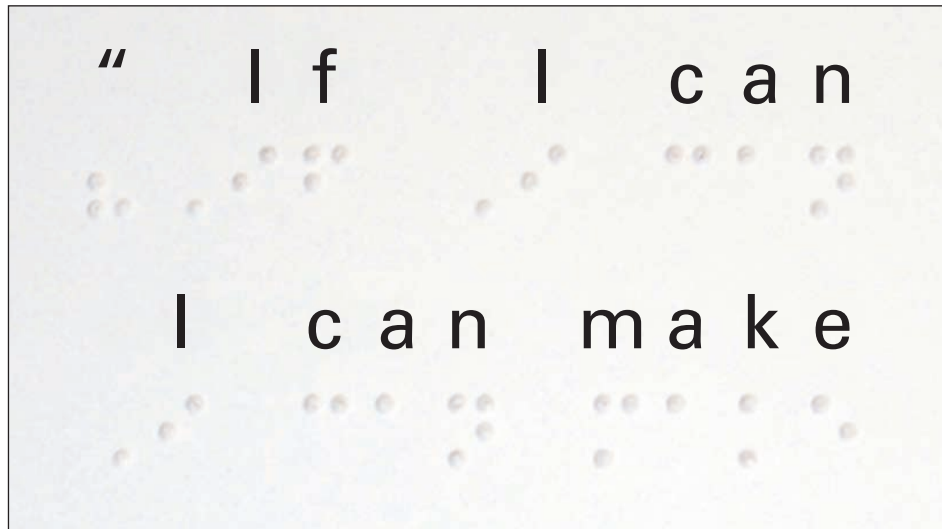
## *Braille and Print Letters in One-to-One Alignment*

### DESCRIPTION

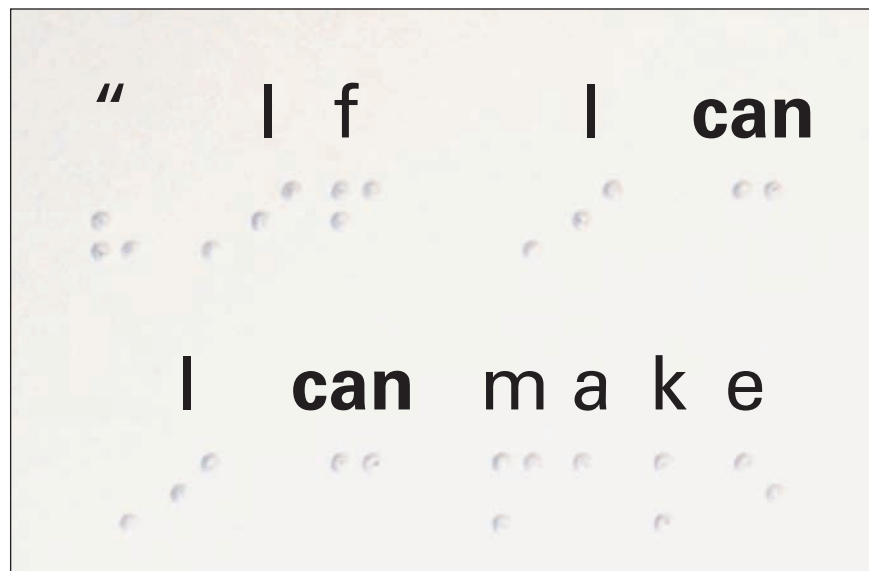
- ⠆ Print translation is placed directly above each of the braille characters.

### ADVANTAGES

- ⠆ People who don't know braille can easily help a braille reader who's having difficulty.
- ⠆ The visual connection makes it easier for sighted people to learn braille.
- ⠆ This format accommodates uncontracted and contracted braille (see next page).
- ⠆ In books with uncontracted braille, the corresponding print letters are large enough for many individuals with low vision to read.



*Detail of uncontracted braille, which translates each letter*



*Detail of contracted braille, which uses contractions for common letter patterns and words*



## *Improved Physical Construction*

### DESCRIPTION

- ⠆ BrailleInk.'s books are board books. The braille is embossed directly on the pages and coated with a double layer of lamination. In addition, each page has an embossed border.

### ADVANTAGES

- ⠆ Thick paper holds the braille embossing well.
- ⠆ The book construction is very sturdy.
- ⠆ The pages are easy to turn.
- ⠆ Double-layer lamination protects the paper and the braille embossing.
- ⠆ An embossed border helps prevent the braille from being flattened.

## *Publishing Plans*

- ⋮ We plan to publish two additional titles in the winter of 2006–2007 and three additional titles in the spring of 2007.
- ⋮ We will continue to add at least 5 new titles per year, including books in Spanish and bilingual English/Spanish.

## *Ways to Help*

- ⌘ Purchase books for yourself or as a gift.
- ⌘ Make a tax-deductible donation.
  - Unrestricted or used to provide books to families, schools, libraries and programs. Each book costs \$19.95 + S&H. The cost per book, if distributed to individual recipients, is \$25.

\$ 250 = 10 – 12 books	\$ 2,000 = 80 – 100 books
\$ 500 = 20 – 25 books	\$ 5,000 = 200 – 250 books
\$1,000 = 40 – 50 books	\$10,000 = 400 – 500 books
  - We are happy to acknowledge donors.
- ⌘ Provide contacts.
  - Funding (*individuals, foundations or corporations*)
  - In-kind donations (*e.g. printing or shipping services, office equipment*)
  - Key constituencies (*e.g. school/library administration, publishers*)
- ⌘ Volunteer.
  - Many tasks can be performed from anywhere, at any time.
- ⌘ Help spread the word.
  - Tell teachers, parents, librarians, potential funders and others about our books.

*Thank you very much!*