

SALB INSIGHT

Number 9 of 2020

Monthly news clips from the South African Library for the Blind

SALB APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) would like to announce the appointment of Mr Mandla Ntombela as the new Director taking up office from November 2020. Mr Ntombela is presently employed as a City Librarian / Director at Msunduzi Municipality in KZN with many years of working experience in the Library field at Senior Management levels. He holds a Masters Degree in Library and Information Science, a Bachelor of Theology Degree and completed other Diploma courses. Mr Ntombela is a very active member in the Library profession, which includes being current President of AFLIA, serving on the National Council of Libraries and Information Services; LIASA President 2016 to 2018 and many more. Mr Ntombela is proficient in English, IsiZulu, Setswana, Sepedi, IsiXhosa and Afrikaans.

I.T. SERVICES COMMUNIQUE - SALB WEBSITE UPDATE

The newly designed website and VIOPAC feature is now live. The upgraded website was made more user friendly for blind and visually impaired users. It offers features such as online membership registration, updating of details for current members; streaming and/or downloading of audio books by using the newly developed VIOPAC (Visually Impaired Online Public Access Catalogue) application and access to OVERDRIVE content. Other features include reserving and requesting books (Audio or Braille formats). Please visit the new website on: www.salb.org.za. Comments and feedback will be appreciated on how else SALB can try to improve user experiences. Please also visit our Facebook page @SALibraryForTheBlind for more exciting updates on activities happening at the Library.

SALB STAFF

The internships of Xolelwa Mfanyana and Khuselwa Mzangwe were renewed until 31 March 2021. Various other temporary positions were filled during the year to support the need to create employment opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic and Government initiatives in this respect.

LIBRARY SERVICES COMMUNIQUE - CENTENARY GIFTS FOR MEMBERS

The much-awaited Centenary gifts for our members to commemorate the Library's 100th year anniversary were sent out in August/September 2020 after awaiting the South African PostOffice (SAPO) to catch up on their backlog. SALB members should be receiving their gift in their mailboxes soon. Should you have not received your gift please contact Library Services Section to verify your details on 046-6227226 to verify your details and make arrangements to get the gift to you. Members from the mini libraries will be receiving their gifts through their Provincial Co-ordinators. Alternatively members can visit the SALB website at www.salb.org.za to update your contact details.

PRODUCTION SERVICES COMMUNIQUE

The Library has opened their in-house studios to narrators again in this month, although it is not operating 100%. Health and safety protocols are being followed in this regard.

The Library is looking forward to welcoming more narrators back as the lockdown levels are eased.

TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMUNIQUE

Due to budget reductions and National fiscal constraints, please note: - Batteries for the Victor Reader playback devices are no longer available from SALB and readers must use their devices while connected to the power outlets in their homes.

From October/November 2020 the new Envoy Connect playback device will be circulated to new members and existing members who have sent in a Victor Reader for which the spares are unavailable. More feedback on this will be provided in our next edition.

We would like to appeal to readers to insist on a tracking number when returning a playback device by mail. Playback devices are being lost because we are unable to track the devices after they have been sent.

STATS and HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019/2020

1,148 audio and braille titles were added to the catalogue, 663 new members joined the library and 35 new mini libraries were established across South Africa. All these figures are an increase compared to the previous financial year. The total membership of the Library at the end of the reporting period stands at 8,245 which is a growing trend compared to the previous year. The Library achieved a commendable 89% of the 19 objectives set for the year. Two of the 19 targets for the year could not be achieved i.e. to service the target amount of playback devices and to circulate the required number of books to our members. All playback devices received for service were attended to. The target will be reformulated as a qualitative target in the next Strategic Plan of SALB since the Library has no control over the number of devices members send to the library to be serviced. The second indicator that could not be fully achieved, was on the circulation of books. The Library predominantly depends on the Post Office (SAPO) for the delivery of books, i.e. to our members and back to the library. Huge delays on delivery of books were experienced, and it was difficult to determine from SAPO where the bottlenecks were. The Library understood the frustration of our members and apologized on various occasions for the delays caused mainly by SAPO. SALB Management will endeavor to meet with the SAPO executives and also work on alternative strategies on circulation of material.

QUOTE INSPIRATION

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all.” — Helen Keller