

An Alphabet for the Blind

I recently read about one of the most remarkable young men who ever lived. He had been left blind in both eyes by a childhood accident.

In 19th century France, when this young man lived, blind children had little help and few hopes. But a kind priest, Father Jacques Palluy, took an interest in the lad. He was amazed at the boy's intelligence and eagerness to learn. With his parents' permission, Father Palluy enrolled the boy in the Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris.

Thrust into a new and frightening environment, the boy was lonely and depressed. In time, however, he found friendship and encouragement. Unfortunately, he was frustrated by the institute's lack of books in raised print. He also found the symbols in raised print confusing. So he set out, at 12 years of age, to invent his own system.

After three years, he perfected the method, but he encountered indifference and hostility when he tried to convince the world that his system was better. Even with the support of the institute's director, he was told again and again that he was too young to have created a workable alphabet for the blind.



Years passed. This young man grew older, was made a teacher at the institute, and became a fine organist, always hoping that his method would find acceptance.

His health, however, was frail. It was not until he lay in bed, dying of tuberculosis, that he heard that the first steps were being taken to popularize his system. Although he did not live to witness it, Louis Braille's alphabet became the universal method of reading for the blind.

His courage and hunger for knowledge enabled him to triumph over disability and disease and open new worlds to future generations.

Louis Braille became light for those whose physical eyes had failed them.

How wonderful it is when a person sets out to make the world better for those struggling with infirmities of one kind or another, applying their God-given talents with compassion and love – sometimes, even, having to overcome personal setbacks and challenges.

Those people – and I am privileged to know many of them in Life Care and Century Park – represent the best of mankind.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it (Proverbs 3:27 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter