

# An Exciting Announcement from Seedlings!



News



From



Seedlings!

## A message from our founder and director, Debra Bonde...

Dear Seedlings' Readers,  
Supporters, and Friends...

This month, we are celebrating Seedlings' 40th Anniversary AND we have another big announcement!

It is with mixed emotions that I have decided to retire after 40 wonderful years of service. This was a difficult decision because I love what we do here at Seedlings, and I feel so fortunate having been a part of this amazing organization from the very beginning.



Seedlings got its start in my basement 40 years ago after I heard that braille books were scarce and expensive. My own young daughters had dozens of books so it didn't seem right that children with vision loss lacked the same opportunities to learn and grow through reading. Our goal was to make more braille books available while keeping the prices low. With just 12 titles in our catalog and a small braille printer that my father made, we were able to send out 200 low-cost braille books that first year. And then the word began to spread!

Fast forward to the present: we now offer over 1,100 low-cost braille titles. In the past year, we distributed over 48,000 books, two-thirds of which were made available for free, and we reached a grand total of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a million books placed in children's hands worldwide since 1984!

None of this would have been possible without all of the generous and dedicated people who have supported Seedlings' mission throughout the years. Thank you so much! As I transition into retirement, I am confident that Seedlings is in good hands for the next chapter: Seedlings 2.0!

I am thrilled to announce that our current Assistant Director, Amanda Hercula, will become our Executive Director by the end of the year. She has shown exceptional dedication and leadership during her four years here at Seedlings. She is a quick learner and has moved rapidly through several roles here. The more we worked together, the more I realized that she possessed the exact things we were looking for in our next Director: the experience and education, and most of all, the heart and passion for this work.



I assure you, this decision was not made lightly. Seedlings' Board of Directors developed a multi-year plan leading us up to this point for the smoothest possible transition. Stay tuned for more information on Amanda in the coming months!

We hope you will continue to support Seedlings, especially during this time of change. I look forward to spending more time with my family and to my new role as a super Seedlings supporter! I know that Seedlings will do great things in the future and will be giving many more children the life-changing gift of literacy!

Thank you again, from the bottom of our hearts, for all of your help and support!

With deep gratitude,  
Debra J. Bonde

*Debra J. Bonde*

Executive Director  
Seedlings Braille Books for Children

**P.S...You're cordially invited to Seedlings'  
40th anniversary celebration!**

October 2nd,  
2024



VistaTech Center,  
Livonia, MI

Join us in the fall for our first in-person event in over four years! We will be hosting a celebration for our 40th anniversary as well as Debra Bonde's legacy here at Seedlings! This event will take place at the VistaTech Center at Schoolcraft College in Livonia (18600 Haggerty Rd, Livonia, MI 48152). A light dinner and refreshments will be provided, along with some entertainment and remarks from Seedlings' staff and supporters. We hope to see you there!

More details to be announced soon!  
Tickets will be available at a later date.

## Follow our event Facebook page for updated info!

[40th Anniversary Event Page](#)



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