Calibre Audio celebrates the contribution of its volunteers

Friday 23 September, 2022

Calibre Audio, the national charity providing free audiobooks for the print disabled, has marked the valuable contribution of its many volunteers with a thank you Garden Party at its office near Aylesbury in Bucks on Thursday 22nd
September.

Nearly 100 volunteer audiobook narrators, checkers and library staff from Bucks and across the country gathered together, with many receiving awards for long service ranging from 5 to more than 25 years. As well as a buffet lunch, the volunteers heard an inspiring speech from renowned children's Author, Bali Rai, who spoke of his passion for working with children who are reluctant to read and the importance of making books accessible for all. Karen Napier MBE, Chief Executive of The Reading Agency then outlined how audiobooks are uniquely accessible and are crucial to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits that research shows are provided by reading.

The event also gave the charity the opportunity to recognise the particular contributions of some volunteers who were retiring, including Grace from Prestwood who was presented with a special lifetime award.

Grace is reluctantly hanging up her microphone at the age of 88 after volunteering as an audiobook narrator for 40 years. During this time, she recorded over 270 audiobooks which have been enjoyed by thousands of Calibre members with visual impairment, dyslexia and a range of other physical and neurological conditions.

Talking of her many years of volunteering, Grace said:

"I have found my volunteering role to be hugely rewarding. All the staff at Calibre are always helpful, patient and a pleasure to deal with. I have genuinely loved everything about being a volunteer narrator and would certainly encourage other people with good vocal skills to consider putting themselves forward. Bringing a book to life for someone who can't do it for themselves really gives you a very special glow!"

Calibre Audio is a national charity with a rapidly growing collection of over 14,000 audiobooks available free of charge to anyone who finds it difficult to read print. This might be because of a visual impairment, a physical or neurological condition, long COVID, or a learning difficulty such as dyslexia. Calibre members can access the books via download or streaming or they can be posted to members' homes on USB.

Anthony Kemp, Chief Executive at Calibre Audio said:

"We are delighted to say a massive thank you to our volunteers. It is only through their skills and generosity that we've been able to continue to grow our collection of audiobooks so rapidly. We are passionate about being able to offer our free audiobooks to everyone who needs them and this would not be possible without our volunteers."

The charity is currently looking for more volunteers to join its team. Ranging from narrators with voice skills, to those who love books and would like to run a book group for members and even people to help in the garden, there are a variety of different roles. Go to **www.calibreaudio.org/support/volunteering** to find out more.

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