Braille Literacy Canada 2024 Symposium Transcript: Introductory Remarks

**Daphne Hitchcock**

Well, hello everyone, and welcome to Braille Literacy Canada's fourth annual Braille - Virtual Braille symposium. We are so pleased you're here.

The theme this year is Touch the Future. And indeed, we are going to be doing that, looking ahead to many more years of exciting Braille advancements. The theme this year, Touch the Future celebrates the past 200 years of Braille that have taken us so far; these wonderful six dots continue to evolve. And we can look forward to exciting programs, resources, technology, and just accessing Braille. You'll hear so much about what is in store for us ahead, this afternoon.

My name is Daphne Hitchcock, I am president of Braille literacy Canada. And as you are entering the room today, you'll notice that you are muted. We have done this to cut down on any background noise. However, if you have the opportunity, you will have the opportunity to ask questions during the q&a after each talk.

But before I go any further, we would like to begin by acknowledging the indigenous peoples of all the lands we're on today. While we meet today on this virtual platform, let's take a moment to acknowledge the importance of these lands, which we each call home. We do this to affirm our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships between nations to improve our own understanding of local indigenous peoples and their cultures. From coast to coast to coast. We acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Metis and First Nations people who call this land home. Please join us for a moment of reflection to acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past. And to consider how we are and can each in our own way, try to move forward in a spirit of reconciliation, and collaboration. Thank you.

So welcome to those of you who are new to our organization and to this Braille symposium. And for those who are returning welcome back. Braille Literacy Canada is the Canadian Braille Authority. Our members consist of Braille users, teachers, transcribers, proofreaders and anyone who has an interest in Braille literacy, you're in the right place. You can learn more about us by following us on social media or visiting our website.

Today, we're going to take you around North America and do a visit down under to Australia. You'll be hearing from a number of remarkable speakers, champions in their fields. Each speaker will begin at the top of the hour. With a 30 minute presentation, there'll be a 15 minute q&a, followed by a 15 minute transition.

This event would not be possible, but without the immense support that we have received. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our speakers, our volunteers, my fellow board members, and you, of course, our participants who are joining us here today. Throughout this afternoon, we will be distributing some door prizes. Thanks to generous support from our sponsors. I would especially like to thank Canadian Assistive Technology, Humanware, Crawford Technologies, and Beyond Print-CNIB. Our sincere thanks goes out to each of these sponsors for their support.

And now we're going to go into a few housekeeping things. Finally, everyone is muted. And as with all online conferences, please follow good etiquette by keeping yourself on mute. At the end of the presentation, if you have a question, you can raise your hand by pressing Alt plus Y on a PC or option y on a Mac. And on a phone, double tap on your name in the participants. I'm sorry, I just lost my place there. Double tap on your on your name in the more area. We will then unmute you to ask questions and the chat room is also available if you'd like to ask questions there. This event is being recorded.Captioning is turned on, and a written transcript will be available in the near future. Okay, I am ready to pass things along to a Natalie Martiniello, our past BLC past president to introduce our first speaker. Thank you, Natalie.