

Independent Perspective #1889 with Marian Hetherly

Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York independent living.

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Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service is a special radio station that broadcasts national and local newspapers, magazines, and best-selling books.

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24 hours, seven days a week for approximately 100,000 people across Western New York and Southern Ontario who are blind or have another reading disability.

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The nonprofit's been on the air for nearly 40 years and became part of the Western New York Independent Living family of agencies in December, 2018.

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Joining us today to tell us more is Marian Hetherly, Community Engagement Specialist for Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service.

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Welcome to the program, Marian.

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Great to talk with you, Ernie.

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Yeah, and I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell.

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First, tell us more about the publications you broadcast.

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Well, you know, even with the internet and today's technology, it's interesting that less than 10% of the world's printed information is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

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This is critical information.

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People need to make their daily decisions, to work, to play, to have conversations with their family and friends and

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and just feel connected to the world around them.

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Everyone deserves equal access to information, and Radio Reading makes information from more than 80 print publications available in audio form.

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So, if people can't read them, they can listen to them instead.

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Everything from the Daily Buffalo News, all the weekly community newspapers, the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, the Toronto Star, Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine, People, Sports Illustrated, even New York Times bestselling books.

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We're trying to be as timely as possible, and cover as many topics of interest to listeners as possible.

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And you're able to do this because of the use of volunteers.

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How does one become a volunteer?

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Well, you know, we currently have a team of more than 160 volunteers recording audio versions of these publications that we can offer

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them to listeners who can't read this information in print.

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And that may sound like a lot of volunteers, but we're always in need of more.

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The more volunteers we have, the more information we can make available.

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And we make the process very simple, too.

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If they're able, we'd love to invite folks for a tour of our Cheektowaga studios to meet us, get to know us.

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But we do ask everyone to complete an information form just to tell us more about themselves, how much time they'd like to volunteer, and what kinds of publications

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they like to read.

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It's all up to the volunteer.

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It's their choice.

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We give them as much or as little training as they need to get started.

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And from there, it's their own program.

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You know, you don't need broadcasting experience to volunteer.

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Our volunteers come from all types of backgrounds.

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Many are retirees.

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The most important thing is just love reading aloud in a very friendly, upbeat voice that listeners are going to enjoy listening to.

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In addition to volunteer readers, I believe you have some other types of volunteers at Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service.

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Yes, we'd love as many volunteers as possible.

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You know, as a nonprofit organization, we're governed by a board of directors which currently has 3 committees.

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One's financial, one helps guide community engagement activities like fundraising events,

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and one that helps make programming decisions, what goes on over the air.

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And so, we're looking to serve on the board, on the committees.

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They meet once a month via Zoom.

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And you can be on a committee without being on the Board.

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You don't need radio experience, although we would love it if you do.

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We're mostly asking that you're just passionate about Radio Reading's Disability Mission, having some unique expertise you'd like to share through community

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service.

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Maybe you have a wide network of friends and colleagues.

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Maybe you have some strategic financial or marketing expertise, or maybe you're just an advocate for the disability community.

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As I mentioned, our fundraising events also, we need some volunteers who would like to work our fundraisers.

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I say work, but we try to make our fundraisers as fun as possible.

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So, all kinds of volunteering opportunities are available at Radio Reading.

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Marian, we're running low on time.

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How can people contact someone to get started?

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Please contact me at 716-821-5555, extension three, or e-mail me at Marian, that's M-A-R-I-A-N @nfradioreading.org

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And there's a lot more information about volunteering and about the organization on our website, nfradioreading.org

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Thanks so much for being with us.

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Thank you, Ernie.

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Our guest today was Marian Hetherly, Community Engagement Specialist for Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service.

00:04:48 Speaker 1

I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell, and thank you for tuning in.