***Drawing with Your Perkins Brailler***

A book created by Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library Director Kim Charlson promises to give readers of all abilities a new way to experience braille and art. A work more than two years in the making, Charlson first introduced *Drawing with Your Perkins Brailler* in Parisat the Louis Braille Bicentennial conference in January 2009.

*Drawing with Your Perkins Brailler* contains step-by-step directions for using a Brailler to create three dozen drawings, from basic geometric shapes to holiday designs, cute animals, and transportation themes, including a spaceship! The finished braille pictures are included in both the large print and braille versions of the book for $24.95 from Perkins Publications Online Store via Amazon Marketplace at <https://www.perkins.org/library/products/>.

Inspired in part by the sixth-grade teacher who taught her that braille was her key to independence, Charlson created *Drawing with Your Perkins Brailler* to give children and adults who are blind a means to make art using braille that can be shared with sighted peers, as well as with others who use braille. Charlson is an international leader in advocating for braille literacy, adaptive technology, and universal access to knowledge for people with print disabilities.

The drawing activities in the book are fun, but Charlson also designed them to be educational for those who are blind or visually impaired. Learning to draw pictures with the Perkins Brailler™ strengthens manual dexterity and reinforces several key developmental concepts. It also helps children and adults to gain pride and self-esteem when they create drawings they can share with classmates, family members, and friends.

For Charlson, braille has been the key to independence, literacy, creativity and self-determination. She holds a master’s degree in library science from the University of North Texas and has served as the Perkins Library Director for 20 years. “Creativity comes from within us all, not from our physical traits. I challenge everyone who tries the drawings outlined in my book to create their own drawings as well. I hope the book will empower others to create pictures and share them,” Charlson Says.

According to Miriam Dixon, a braille instructor from North Carolina, the book’s “step-by-step instructions reinforce learning.” Perkins student Samantha L. affirms, “Using this book, I can finally do artwork independently. I’ve learned that art is more than colors on paper.”

To sighted people, reading braille is rather mysterious and inscrutable. Charlson's book can help de-mystify this tactile reading system by converting groups of braille dots, called cells, into graphical illustrations, providing a fun and creative way to communicate and serve as a bridge between print and braille.

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*Frilly Christmas Tree*

One of my favorites, and really fun to touch and draw with its own special rhythm you will pick up on and have a lot of fun with.

Uses an 8-1/2 by 11-inch green construction paper or heavyweight braille paper, in portrait configuration, 17 lines total and the remainder can be used for a holiday greeting. The ar sign = (dots 3-4-5) and gh sign = (dots 1-2-6).

Line 1: Space 14 times, write 1 ar sign, write 1 gh sign.

Line 2: Space 13 times, write 2 ar signs, write 2 gh signs.

Line 3: Space 12 times, write 3 ar signs, write 3 gh signs.

Line 4: Space 11 times, write 4 ar signs, write 4 gh signs.

Line 5: Space 10 times, write 5 ar signs, write 5 gh signs.

Line 6: Space 9 times, write 6 ar signs, write 6 gh signs.

Line 7: Space 8 times, write 7 ar signs, write 7 gh signs.

Line 8: Space 7 times, write 8 ar signs, write 8 gh sign.

Line 9: Space 6 times, write 9 ar signs, write 9 gh signs.

Line 10: Space 5 times, write 10 ar signs, write 10 gh signs.

Line 11: Space 4 times, write 11 ar signs, write 11 gh signs.

Line 12: Space 3 times, write 12 ar signs, write 12 gh signs.

Line 13: Space 2 times, write 13 ar signs, write 13 gh signs.

Line 14: Space 1 time, write 14 ar signs, write 14 gh signs.

Line 15: At the left margin, write 15 ar signs, then write 15 gh signs.

Line 16: Space 8 times, write 6 ar signs, write 1 dots 4-5-6, write 1 l (dots 1-2-3), write 6 gh signs.

Line 17: Space 13 times, write 4 full cell (dots 1-2-3-4-5-6)