

# Thrive



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Dr. Richard Kinney

Making  
Technology Accessible

Hadley Community:  
Independent but Not Alone

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**ON THE COVER:** Hadley learner, Rhonda Lee, with her daughter, Michelle Schoenfeld on the Aegean Sea. Hadley's Travel Talk discussion group helped Rhonda travel independently to visit Michelle, who lives in Turkey for part of the year.

## Hadley Centennial

This past October, Hadley marked 100 years with a virtual celebration. Hosted by the Hadley Woman's Board and Board of Trustees, this 30-minute program included highlights of Hadley's past, present and future.

The centennial event raised more than \$250,000. We were thrilled that so many of Hadley's supporters and learners could join us for the occasion and thankful for the incredible generosity.



To learn more about Hadley's Centennial, watch our two-minute Centennial video or view the full program visit <https://donate.hadley.edu/centennial/>





## A Letter from Julie Tye...

Because of this head start in distance education, we have also been able to seamlessly extend our services to those who, without access to libraries, senior centers or community centers because of COVID-19, have needed our help.

We are grateful for the incredible Hadley staff that has never wavered in its dedication, despite the circumstances that surround us. When stay at home orders were put into effect, Hadley learning experts never missed a beat; they continued to provide services and enhanced programming to help people with visual impairments through this challenging time.

At the same time, everyone across the organization kept moving full steam ahead to launch our new learning platform that is allowing us to better serve the growing population of older individuals with vision loss. We are excited about the platform's success to date and about the ways it is already expanding our reach and impact (see page 11).

We are energized by our incredible learners. This includes individuals like Rhonda Lee, profiled on page 6, who are using the information, resources and connections Hadley provides to overcome obstacles, improve their lives and retain their independence. And, we are proud of all the ways Hadley is there to support Rhonda—and thousands of others like her—through the pandemic.

We are especially thankful for **you**. Your generosity makes everything possible. We are heartened by your continued belief in our mission and grateful for your support that allows us to carry it out. Thanks to you, people with vision loss or blindness are thriving—at home, at work and in their communities.

Happiest of holidays to you and yours. Stay safe and healthy.

Julie S. Tye  
President

**I**t's been quite a year. COVID-19 has changed the way we live, making many of us fearful and isolated. Many are enduring overwhelming loss and uncertainty. This year, the holidays will be different, too. Celebrations will be smaller and quieter. Family and friends from afar are likely to stay that way. Still, we are hopeful and thankful.

We are thankful for William Hadley's original vision—to teach adults who are blind and visually impaired at a distance through correspondence courses. We appreciate that this organization continued to build on and evolve this approach throughout the century and each year continues to help thousands of people across the country and around the world.

**our mission** Hadley creates personalized learning opportunities that empower adults with vision loss or blindness to thrive—at home, at work and in their communities.

# A Look Back: Dr. Richard Kinney

Hadley's centennial year is winding down. However, we can't conclude our commemoration without honoring Dr. Richard Kinney. Dr. Kinney was a beloved Hadley teacher and administrator from 1954 until 1975, and Hadley president from 1975 until his passing in 1979. He was also deaf and blind.



Dr. Richard Kinney and Hadley Instructor Geraldine Lawhorn, who were both deafblind, communicate using a Tele-Touch machine.

**B**orn in East Sparta, OH, in 1923, Richard Kinney was the son of a teacher and a hardware store merchant. When he was six, Kinney fell ill with a fever caused by a bacterial infection that left him blind, arthritic and with progressive hearing problems.

Because the local school was not equipped to teach a blind child, Kinney was

homeschooled by his parents when he was young. An extremely bright youth, he later returned to school and went on to graduate as valedictorian of his high school class.

Kinney studied at Ohio's Mount Union College until 1944, when the loss of his remaining hearing forced him to withdraw from school. To continue learning, he enrolled with Hadley.

At the urging of his Hadley instructors who recognized his exceptional promise, and with the support of a Helen Keller Scholarship that provided for a full-time companion student to accompany him, Kinney returned to Mount Union. He graduated top of his class and was the third blind and deaf person to graduate from an American university, among the first two being Helen Keller. He would later explain, "When I



Dr. Richard Kinney

went back to college after losing my hearing, I told myself I couldn't lose because my friends outnumbered my problems. My friends made the difference."

Indeed, Kinney had no shortage of friends. Despite the fact that he had to communicate with the help of a braille writer or an interpreter, he was a witty conversationalist who was described as having "the knack of turning a first acquaintance into a lasting friendship."

After graduating college, Kinney came to Hadley as a teacher and administrator. He was also a sought-after speaker who frequently presented to Hadley friends and supporters. Fundraising and public relations

were officially added to Kinney's responsibilities when he was named assistant director in 1958. He excelled in this role, and the school's endowment fund grew significantly under his leadership.

In 1962, Kinney married Evelyn Davis Warmbrodt, a blind schoolteacher from St. Louis. Their son, Clark, was born in 1963. Tragically, Evelyn died of cancer just two years later.

In 1975, Richard Kinney was named Hadley President. He served in this role for four years until his death in 1979.

Kinney was an accomplished author, poet, traveler, leader, scholar and educator. During his lifetime he was awarded a degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Mount Union, the

Helen Keller Gold Medal for Literary Excellence, the Anne Sullivan Gold Medal, and the Citation for Meritorious Service from President Eisenhower.

As a 1978 Chicago Tribune article described Kinney, "it takes only a brief visit with Kinney to quickly sense the depth of courage and resilience running through him. His spiritual vitality is communicated by his words, but perhaps more by what he is than by what he says."

Dr. Kinney's impact on Hadley was profound. As Nancy Jones, daughter of Hadley co-founder Dr. E.V.L. Brown summarized in 1989, "Richard Kinney was just a force for us and such an inspiration. He gave his life and love to this School, and we are so privileged." ■



Dr. Richard Kinney with translator Jean Ridenour and Indira Ghandi

"The days when a deaf-blind person has to limit his objectives are gone, and now he can shoot for the stars for a full life in every sense. If we shoot for the stars, we may at least touch a rainbow." —Dr. Richard Kinney

# Independent, But Not Alone, Thanks to the Hadley Community

Madison, WI, has been home for Rhonda Lee since she moved there with a toddler in 1972 to pursue her interest in French Canadian studies at the University of Wisconsin. While Rhonda had cataracts since childhood, she was able to read with her left eye using adaptive equipment. She earned a master's degree in French and secondary education from the university and graduated with distinction from the School of Journalism a couple of years later.

Rhonda's vision was further damaged in 1996, when inflammation cut off the blood supply to her retina and steroid treatment thickened the cataract. Now 70 years old,

Rhonda sees very little and travels with a white cane wherever she goes.

Thanks to technologies such as VoiceOver, Rhonda was able to continue in her 35-year career writing federal and state accountability reports—earning top awards in her field along the way. In 2018 she retired as senior editor emerita.

Rhonda's daughter and two grandchildren live across the country and around the globe. However, Madison remains home, and she is determined to maintain her health “so I can continue living independently in the place I love.”

Accomplishing this requires daily care to ease social isolation, which has been more prevalent over the past months due to COVID-19. Through Hadley braille courses and discussion groups, Rhonda has connected with others to gain the independent living skills she needs.

A past orientation and mobility (O&M) instructor told Rhonda she was too old to learn braille, a myth that was quickly dispelled when she attended the 2018

Adult Summer Program at the Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Janesville, WI. Neuropathy prevented her from feeling braille dots so instructors taught her the alphabet with pegs on a board. Eager to learn more, she contacted the WI Council for the Blind, which referred her to Hadley.

At Hadley, Rhonda whizzed through Braille Literacy 1 and started Braille Literacy 2, but a cancer diagnosis and surgery derailed her studies. Once she was able to get back to learning, she completed her final assignments without error.

She credits this to Hadley's Embracing Braille Discussion Group where she learned how to proof her work. This weekly group provides her with valuable tips, such as improving finger sensitivity by taking pain medication at night instead of morning. Today, Embracing Braille is still the highlight of her week—something she knows she can count on. She loves learning from the braille experts, speakers and fellow learners who join in from all over the world.

Hadley discussion groups were a lifeline for Rhonda even before the pandemic triggered stay-at-home restrictions.



Reading braille in the Istanbul airport last October. The Hadley Travel Talk discussion put Rhonda in touch with TSA Cares in Chicago so she could travel by herself from Madison to Istanbul.

While making plans to visit her daughter in Turkey, she shares, “The Travel Talk discussion put me in touch with TSA Cares in Chicago so I could travel alone from Madison to Istanbul.”

“I learn something new each time I attend a discussion group,” Rhonda states. Her favorite tip from Hadley Growers is how to label plants using her Perkins braille. She has picked up safety tips, organization ideas and accessible cooking methods in What’s Cooking. A performance poet, Rhonda is looking forward to returning to Writers’ Circle once her energy returns following her cancer treatment.

Recently Rhonda brought her Ballroom Basics for Balance instructor to Hadley’s Get Up and Go discussion to share the benefits of ballroom dancing. For Rhonda, who has had falls due to poor vision, this has been a fun and engaging way to improve her strength and balance, and she knew it could be helpful to others. Although COVID-19 has closed the library where the dance class was held, that has not deterred her. “You can cha-cha to anything,” she says. “If I hear a good song, I stop whatever I’m doing, get up out of the chair and dance in my kitchen!”

“Hadley has so many valuable resources,” Rhonda declares. She loves connecting with peers and being part of the Hadley community. She was invited, with her Jewish grandchildren, to virtual Shabbat services with Hadley learner Rabbi Leonard Sarko this past October (you may recall reading about Rabbi Lenny’s Braille Torah Project



Rhonda travels through Reagan National Airport, December 2019

in Thrive’s Spring 2020 issue). When joining the gathering in Greensburg, PA, from Madison, “I heard my granddaughter, Alexa, in Boston greet me ‘Shabbat shalom, Grandma!’ Rabbi Lenny said we must change my name in the directory to ‘Grandma.’”

Rhonda was thrilled to meet Hadley Learning Experts Elyse Heinrich and Vileen Shah when they visited Madison for a conference last year. In fact, it was Rhonda’s relationship with Elyse Heinrich that helped her get the O&M refresher training she needed this spring.

When COVID-19 hit and normal activity and traffic stopped, Rhonda’s familiar neighborhood sound cues were missing. Her walking routes were further complicated by construction that blocked her usual travel patterns. Suddenly, she became lost on her regular routes. She recalls, “I contacted the Wisconsin Council of the Blind to get on a waiting list for O&M training, only to learn that they didn’t have a certified O&M instructor on staff at that time.”



Rhonda with her daughter, Michelle, in Turkey

Rhonda had heard an O&M instructor on the Get Up and Go discussion group, so she reached out to Elyse, one of the forum’s moderators. As luck would have it, Elyse had worked with an O&M trainer who lived about an hour away and put the two in touch. He came to Madison and showed Rhonda shorter, safer routes to travel in her neighborhood and tactile ways and auditory cues to assure her security and ability to purchase needed items—like groceries. This increased her independence and self-sufficiency. She explains, “I shifted my thinking from ‘I cannot’ to ‘How can I?’”

Living alone with vision loss is especially challenging during this time of social isolation, anxiety and stress. Rhonda recognizes there are several key things she needs to stay independent: braille skills, O&M training, accessible technology, communication skills, and her health. “These are all things I can get from Hadley. Hadley has improved every part of my life: my interests and hobbies, my safety, health and well-being.” ■



# Making Technology Accessible to Hadley Learners and Staff



Lisa Salinger

Lisa Salinger works from her home in Wilkes-Barre, PA, as an access technology specialist for Hadley. In this role, she is focused on helping both staff and learners navigate technology. With this broad job description, every day is unique for Lisa, an aspect she enjoys. “I never know what to expect from the next call or email. The experiences and projects are always different. I thrive on the variety,” she shares.

Blind since birth, Lisa grew up in Harrisburg, PA, and graduated from Clarks Summit University. She spent time in Africa training to become a missionary. However, extenuating circumstances thwarted

these plans so she changed course and returned to school for her master’s in vision rehabilitation.

Lisa worked for an adaptive technology company developing technology tutorials before coming to Hadley in 2019. Prior to this, she was a rehab teacher for the State of Pennsylvania for twelve years. Lisa has also been a Hadley learner; when she worked in an adjacent field, she found it helpful to see how Hadley teaches computer skills.

Lisa is an invaluable resource to Hadley. She helps solve technical problems for Hadley staff who use screen readers (an assistive technology that converts text, buttons or images on the computer screen into speech or braille) and

evaluates outside software to make sure it is accessible before Hadley implements it.

When Hadley’s new learning platform was being developed, Lisa was involved in testing to ensure all the online content works for screen readers. Since then, she’s been available to help learners navigate the updated platform but has found that, “once they begin, they take right off.”

Lisa describes her work with Hadley learners like that of a “bridge builder.” She identifies and connects them to the right solutions for their technology questions. For example, if a learner is trying to get up to speed on their new smart phone, Lisa directs them to helpful resources. Often, this is a Hadley tutorial.

When helping others learn technology, Lisa breaks down complex solutions into simple steps. Also, she knows that “patience is key.” She recalls how it feels to be new and learning—and keeps that mindset when helping others.

That is why she takes her role of technology cheerleader seriously. “The right attitude is essential to success,” Lisa explains. “Technology can be overwhelming and intimidating. Once we eliminate fear we are not paralyzed, and we can learn and grow.” ■



# Hadley's Supporting Role in Christy Reid's Story

When Christy Reid was in kindergarten, her parents received the news that their daughter was losing her sight and would eventually become legally blind. A few years later, doctors found she was losing her hearing, too.

Despite the challenges Christy faced due to her declining vision and hearing, she never lost her love of learning. This motivated her to go to college and beyond. With some remaining sight and hearing she coped well until her advancing vision loss forced her to withdraw from graduate school.

Her life moved on and she got married and had three sons. Then, Christy learned that her condition is genetic when her middle son inherited it. He is now deafblind, too.

Throughout the years, Christy has turned to Hadley for help managing life with vision loss. At Hadley she has found essential skills, such as kitchen safety, so she could continue cooking and enjoying life despite her extremely limited sight.

With her boys growing older, Christy decided it was time to return to school. First, however, she turned to Hadley to help prepare, explaining, "I enrolled in the basic English workshop at Hadley which helped me refresh my understanding of English grammar."

Christy's determination paid off and she completed her master's degree in Writing for Children and Young Adults. Today, she is a published author of several children's books, including a series called *Emma Every Day* about a young girl who is deaf and uses a cochlear implant.

Today, Christy continues her Hadley learning from her home in Minnesota. She credits Hadley for helping her become a better writer and is currently enrolled in a workshop to prepare for using a new braille writing device. "I appreciate everything Hadley offers, there are so many great options," she says. ■



Christy Reid

"Your support allows Hadley to do amazing things for people who are visually impaired, blind or deafblind."

—Christy Reid

**YOU** MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HADLEY LEARNERS TO THRIVE AT HOME, AT WORK AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

# Hadley Revolutionizes Braille, Again

One hundred years after William Hadley developed a new way to learn braille—through distance learning—Hadley has done it again.

Available on Hadley's new platform, Braille for Sighted Learners makes braille easier and more engaging than ever. These new interactive workshops incorporate current best practices in distance learning—including games, a conversational voice, shorter formats, and scenario-based practice opportunities.

The result is less academic and more fun. Learning that used to span weeks or months can now be completed in a matter of days. Learners can participate in just one workshop if they are interested in specific information or the entire series to learn more. They move through the series at their own pace, stopping and going as they please. To increase understanding, extra practice, handouts and additional resources are available throughout, and corrections and feedback are immediate.

Hadley learning experts are on hand to help and guide learners through the materials. They track progress to identify any issues and reinforce accomplishments.

However, learners have not required as much help as expected. Danette Johnson, who leads Hadley's braille team, explains, "People learning on the platform are not stumped

as much as we thought they might be. Because they get the instant feedback, they are able to try again and figure it out."

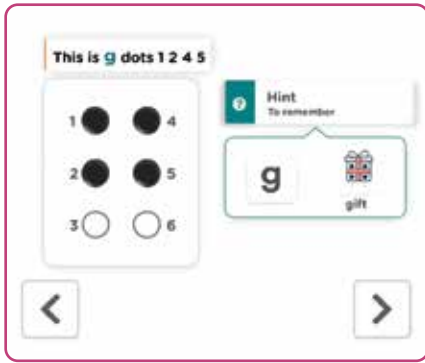
The new Braille for Sighted Learners series continues Hadley's commitment to braille by educating families and addressing the shortage of braille teachers and paraprofessionals in the field. It makes braille widely available to them—and anyone interested in learning—without having to enroll in a college course or pay high fees.

The courses are being very well received by professionals who are using the materials to learn themselves and to help their students—of all ages. As Carol Bogue, principal of the Blind Department at The Florida School for the Deaf and Blind

shares, "It was very clear a lot of thought and expertise has gone into the creation of these courses. The pacing, the presentation, the repetition and reinforcement in the courses was wonderful to see. These types of quality resources are desperately needed in our visually impaired community."

Because 80% of Hadley braille learners do have some residual vision, many are able to tap into this learning as well. In fact, these new braille learning modules are the most popular courses on Hadley's updated learning platform. Of the 1,600+ braille workshops that have been completed to date, 96% of learners replied the workshop was helpful. Their feedback has been instant and positive such as:





Hadley's new braille workshops include hints that make it easy and fun to learn.

- "It made learning so much fun!"
- "What a wonderful improvement. I love this interactive format!"
- "It was easy to access and I got immediate feedback."

Hadley is now building upon this series to develop Braille for Tactile Learners. Danette explains, "Tactile braille lessons will mirror the structure of these online braille courses but, obviously, with differences because tactile learners need to have the physical materials in front of them." These braille learning modules will be available in both large print and braille.

In the meantime, "we want to do whatever we can to get braille out there." Danette states, "It is great to see it all come together and hear the excitement from learners who are enjoying it." ■

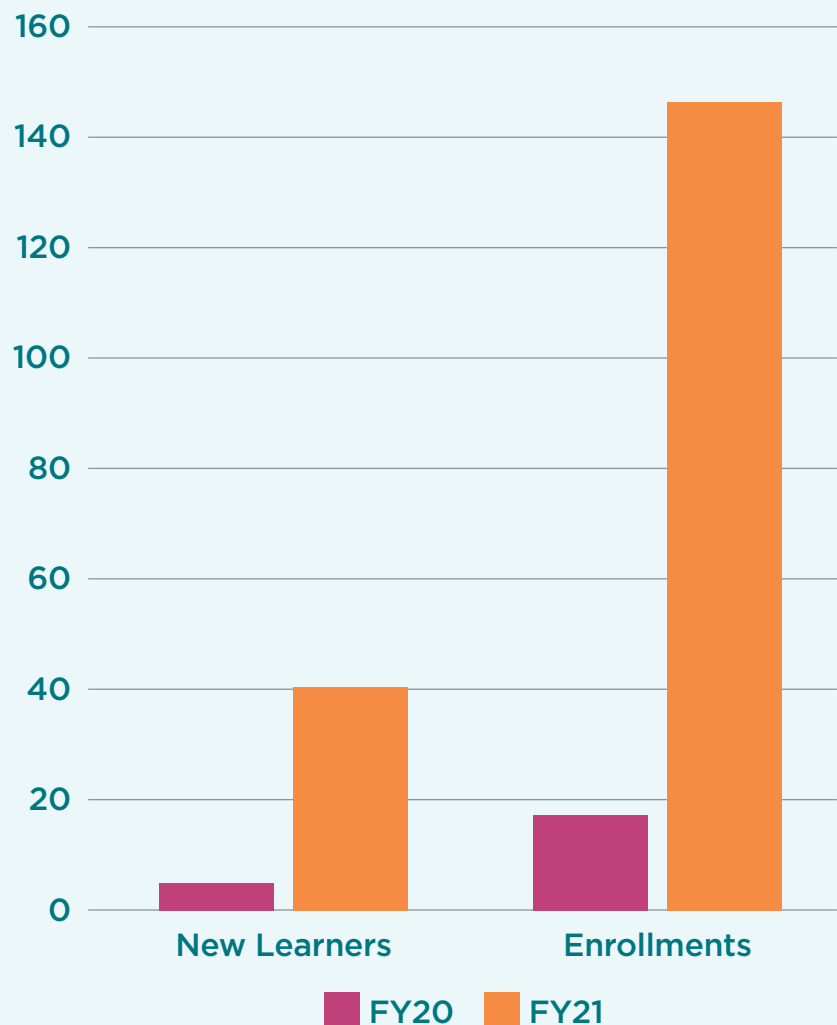
## The First Quarter Report

Hadley's new learning platform is taking off.

As shown below, the average daily number of new learners and workshop enrollments is up significantly over last year.

Plus, we are getting overwhelmingly positive feedback from learners. 96% report that the workshops are helpful. Thanks to our short, relevant and engaging content, learners are also completing the courses at rates that far exceed online training benchmarks.

Average daily new learners and enrollments (July-September)





A century of seeing  
new possibilities

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**YOU** MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HADLEY LEARNERS TO THRIVE  
AT HOME, AT WORK AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

## Great News for Maximizing Your Year-End Gift to Hadley!

**E**ven in today's economy there are smart and timely ways to show your support—and benefit, too.

The CARES Act of 2020 makes a new charitable deduction available to individual taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions. This new benefit allows for a charitable deduction of up to \$300 per individual, or \$600 per couple.

The CARES Act also allows, in 2020 only, a deduction of up to 100% of a taxpayer's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for cash contributions. This applies to taxpayers who itemize. Gifts to Donor-Advised Funds are not included in this new deduction.

The CARES Act did not change the rules around the IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), which allows individuals over the age of 70½ to donate up



to \$100,000 in IRA assets directly to charity annually, without having to pay taxes on the distribution.

Gifts of appreciated assets, held for at least one year, are deductible at the full present value of the asset and escape all capital gains tax on their appreciated value.

Gifts from Donor-Advised Funds remain the poster child for effective charitable giving in 2020, since the funds have already been gifted. All that is required is a recommendation to the Fund's administrator.

And many donors are using this time to review their Estate Plans and including a charitable bequest therein. ■

**For more information on these and other ways to support Hadley, please contact Brooke Voss, Chief Development Officer, at 847.784.2774 or email [brooke@hadley.edu](mailto:brooke@hadley.edu).**

While gifts of appreciated assets, such as stock, are not included in the above, they remain a most effective charitable gift vehicle.