

Sara Brown  
Public Relations Manager  
[SBrown@aph.org](mailto:SBrown@aph.org)  
(502) 608-3271  
**For Immediate Release**

**The Dot Experience at APH**

**Officially Breaks Ground**

Louisville, KY (May 22, 2023) – American Printing House for the Blind (APH) marked the official groundbreaking for The Dot Experience. APH President, Dr. Craig Meador, along with APH’s national Board of Directors, were joined by Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg, First Lady Britainy Beshear, Kentucky Senator Gerald Neal, State Representative Josie Raymond, Councilman Andrew Owen, and other civic and community leaders to break ground on this 21st century destination that will serve as a global model museum with the most comprehensive levels of accessibility accommodations at the forefront of its design.

“Today is the day all of the planning and research comes together,” said Meador. “We know The Dot Experience will be a leader when it comes to accessibility for all. It will be an amazing opportunity to highlight the history of blindness and low vision with a focus on the trailblazers of the past, present, and our hope is that it will inspire the future.”

The Dot Experience name pays homage to APH’s history and commitment to braille, a series of six dots that in combination, form letters, numbers, music, and words, and serve as the code for communication and lifelong literacy. The Dot Experience brings to life APH stories and more on a world stage.

"Blind people play an important role in the American society, yet our contributions are rarely known, and our capacity is underestimated. The development of The Dot Experience is an important effort towards creating greater awareness in society and elevating the value of blind people in our local communities,” said Mark A. Riccobono, President, National Federation of the Blind.

Museums have traditionally been structured in a way that limits the experience and enjoyment of visitors with disabilities, and while much work has been done to open doors many of these efforts are selective or pocketed to one audience or one area of a museum. The Dot Experience will focus on inclusion, accessibility, and innovation embracing the expression “nothing about us without us” in a comprehensive way – through first-person stories of blind and low vision individuals, and through intentional involvement of the blindness community at every level of the project.

The Dot Experience will work to change perspectives about blindness and lead to a more open-minded society that seamlessly includes people with disabilities in the workforce, schools, and communities.

“Today’s groundbreaking is a nod to the vision of the Board of Trustees to create the most inclusive museum in the world. Amplifying the excellent role that the American Printing House has played for 165 years, in educating students who are blind or have low vision and thus changing the world,” said Phoebe Wood, APH Board Chair. “We hope to welcome thousands of visitors annually to The Dot Experience, and the factory tour, and become a model for accessibility. We welcome everyone to The Dot!”

“Like pinpoints on a living timeline, The Dot Experience will illuminate iconic visionaries without vision like Louis Braille and Helen Keller whose personal experiences of exclusion inspired an ingenuity that gave birth to innovations that perpetuate inclusion for millions of people with vision loss to this day,” said Russell Shaffer, Executive Vice President – Strategy & Programs, Disability:IN, and APH board member. “It also will trace a contemporary arc across the stories of our neighbors, friends and colleagues living life without sight with help from modern takes on those classic innovations, and inspire us to aspire for a truly accessible and inclusive future brimming with possibility and potential.”

Every aspect of The Dot Experience was planned with accessibility in mind. To help bring the vision to life, APH worked with Solid Light, a nationally recognized design-build firm, located in Louisville.

“We are honored to partner with the American Printing House for the Blind with the joint goal of designing the world’s most accessible museum,” says Cynthia Torp, Owner and CEO of Solid Light. “From the galleries to the re-imagined manufacturing tour, this new, inclusive visitor experience will elevate the standard for access in the museum industry and beyond.”

Prime Access Consulting (PAC), inclusive design consultants, have been instrumental in the design process, working closely with Solid Light and APH to support accessibility decision-making that leans toward full inclusivity.

“Museums traditionally have been structured and designed so that disabled visitors like me are not only excluded, but even when accessibility accommodations exist, the result is basic access, not inclusion,” said Sina Bahram, President of PAC. “Corey Timpson, the team, and I, are deeply excited to collaborate with APH and the other partners in designing and building an inclusive museum experience that meaningfully welcomes the widest possible audience.”

Collaborating with PAC is one of the many ways The Dot Experience is committed to centering the comfort and needs of all visitors. This deep commitment to inclusivity further positions The Dot Experience as a best-in-class model for the galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) sector. By concentrating on inclusion, not just accessibility, The Dot Experience demonstrates how designing for inclusion up front yields a shared delightful and equitable experience for everyone.

In addition to the brand-new Dot Experience, APH’s building is getting a renovation as well. This includes general office enhancements such as upgraded electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and the creation of additional office space from existing floor plans.

The Dot Experience will open in 2025.

For additional information, renderings, and more, [download our Groundbreaking Media Kit at APH.org.](https://www.aph.org/contact-us/newsroom/)

**Comprehensive Campus Improvement Project:**

* The total project is $55 million.
* The Dot Experience construction is $22 million, which includes exhibits.
* The Dot Experience Museum will be 28,000 square feet. This is nearly five times the size of the existing Museum. This will create a new “front door and attraction” for APH.
* APH office and production-related renovations are $33 million.
* APH is working to raise $15 million in contributed funds from corporate, individual, and philanthropic sources toward the museum.
* All additional funds for this expansion will come from APH’s endowment and investments.
* Sixteen distinct building additions of varying sizes and configurations – literally surrounding the original building - have been completed since the original building was occupied in 1883.

**About the American Printing House for the Blind**

The American Printing House is a nonprofit organization whose mission is empowering people who are blind or low vision by providing accessible and innovative products, materials, and services for lifelong success. The American Printing House is located at 1839 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY. For additional information, please visit [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org). Follow on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanPrintingHouse) at and on Twitter.

**Program Speaker Information  
(In Order of Appearance)**

**Craig Meador, APH President.** Dr. Craig Meador has been President of the American Printing House for the Blind since 2015. Dr. Meador is a former teacher and educational leader for children who are blind and visually impaired. Before assuming the presidency, Dr. Meador served as APH’s Vice President of Educational Services and Product Development.

**Phoebe Wood, APH Board Chair.** Phoebe A. Wood, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Wood has been a member of the Board since 2010. She retired as Chief Financial Officer of Brown-Forman Corp. and is now a director on four large publicly traded company boards and an angel investor. She is a Trustee of the Gheens Foundation and the co-founder of Women of Color and White Women Against Racism.

**First Lady Britainy Beshear.** First Lady Britainy Beshear is a long-time community volunteer and advocate for some of Kentucky’s most vulnerable children. While always a mother to Will and Lila first, she chooses to use her additional time to help Kentucky’s families and children, enthusiastically working to improve the lives of children across the Commonwealth. She served on the board of directors for Maryhurst from 2013 to 2019, which provides help and hope for abused and neglected young women and girls. She is an active volunteer with the Family Scholar House and works closely with the staff and clients to end the cycle of poverty and to empower single parents.

**Mayor Craig Greenberg.** Craig Greenberg was sworn in as Louisville’s 51st Mayor on January 2nd, 2023. Mayor Greenberg is a proud Louisvillian, husband, father, entrepreneur, and community leader who believes in thinking big, working hard, and making things happen. As Mayor, Mr. Greenberg created the city’s first ever Office of Philanthropy and Office of Immigrant Affairs. He also announced Louisville’s first Community Care Campus for people experiencing homelessness, which will provide medical care and transitional housing for hundreds of people who currently live on Louisville’s streets. Mayor Greenberg has been married to his wife, Rachel, for 23 years and they have two sons, Daniel and Benjamin.

**Senator Gerald Neal.** Senator Gerald Neal is a graduate of Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Ky., with a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) in History and Political Science and was later bestowed an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from that institution. He earned a Juris Doctor of Law degree (JD) from the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law. He pursued graduate studies in Political Science, at the University of Michigan, and later returned to Kentucky, beginning his legal career. Senator Neal was elected to represent District 33 (Louisville), being the second African American to serve in the Kentucky State Senate. First elected in 1989, he holds the title as Dean of the Kentucky Senate, as the longest serving member of the body. In 2022, Sen. Neal was elected by his democratic colleagues to serve as Leader of the Kentucky Senate Democratic Caucus. He is a strong voice for senior citizens, youth, the disadvantaged and minorities and a staunch supporter of education, economic development, healthcare and criminal justice reform.

**Emily Louden, State Office Manager for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell**. Emily Louden is the State Office Manager for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell. She has spent most of her professional career in public service. After 5 years in our nation’s capital working for Senator McConnell in his Washington, D.C. office, she returned to Kentucky to begin her current role. As the State Office Manager, Emily assists in the management and coordination of personnel, operations, and constituent services for the Senator’s six Kentucky offices located throughout the Commonwealth. She is a graduate of Asbury University where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications. Emily currently resides, here, in Louisville, and is loving being back in the Bluegrass!

**Councilman Andrew Owen.** Andrew Owen was elected to Metro Council to serve a four-year term in 2022. In 2023, he serves as a member of the Budget & Appropriations Committee, Equity, Community Affairs, Housing, Health & Education Committee, and Public Safety Committee. Andrew is a Louisville native and a product of the Jefferson County Public School system. He has an undergraduate degree in history and urban planning from the University of Virginia and studied real estate and finance at Johns Hopkins University. He began his career working in affordable housing and community development in Washington, DC. Upon returning to Louisville in 2004, Mr. Owen co-founded Preston Thomas Properties, a small, family-owned, commercial real estate investment, management, and brokerage company, where he serves as its President and Principal Broker. Mr. Owen is married to Nancy, has two children, 3 gray cats, and one Bernese Mountain Dog.

**Terrance Sullivan, District Director for Congressman Morgan McGarvey.** Terrance Sullivan is an experienced Policy Director with a demonstrated history of working in the education management industry. Skilled in Appeals, Criminal Law, Hearings, Legal Compliance, and Arbitration. He is a strong community and social services professional with a Doctor of Law (JD) focused in Law from Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville. Terrance previously served as the Executive Director for the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. He is currently the District Director for Kentucky Congressman Morgan McGarvey.

**Deena Lambert, Inclusive Innovation Lead at NASA's Early Stage Innovations & Partnerships.** In her 20 years working at NASA, Denna Lambert has been instrumental in transforming the Goddard Space Flight Center into an inclusive and accessible place, ultimately increasing the representation of employees with disabilities in all skill groups.

**Joe Strechay, Entertainment Accessibility and Inclusion Expert.** Joe Strechay has been the lead for accessibility and inclusion for one of the largest productions in the world. He assesses accommodations for actors and background performers of all disabilities to assure access. He is currently a producer on Apple TV+ futuristic series See, a show that depicts civilization centuries after the population has lost its ability to see.

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