

READING ALOUD

KEVIN MARTINDALE BRINGS PRINTED WORDS ALIVE FOR THE SIGHT-IMPAIRED

BY GAVL GRAY

EVERY WEDNESDAY at 8 a.m., Kevin Martindale reads the local papers, but he doesn't do this in the comfort of his home. He reads the papers aloud for sight-impaired listeners in a studio at Audio Information Network of Colorado (AINC).

The AINC brings regional news and other unique programming to people who may not get the same information from TV or print sources because of a sight impairment. Executive director David Dawson established the AINC in 1990, and as a result, any listener in this region of the country can tune in for 24-hours of on-air broadcasting every day of the week.

Volunteers regularly visit the AINC headquarters to read assigned subjects such as local news. One of these volunteers is Martindale, a North Dakota transplant, who supplies computing expertise to a Loveland firm in his professional life.

Why volunteer? What's in it for you?

The people here are cheery. From this I deduce that volunteering contributes to satisfaction.

I love sports and occasionally add one to my mix (tennis, running marathons and, more recently, golf because it's such a great social outlet). When I want to expand in other spheres of life, I gravitate towards a new volunteer experience. These activities enhance the non-routine part of life. They put the life into living.

Why did you choose to volunteer at the AINC?

For most of my life so far, I've had close to perfect vision. I enjoyed not having to wear glasses for sports. Looking for a new way to contribute, I thought what it would mean not to have the gift of sight,



Kevin Martindale is a volunteer at Audio Information Network of Colorado.

That's why the AINC seemed like a great fit.

What are your activities here?

I read the Wednesday morning local, county and regional news from the Longmont Times Call and the Daily Camera. The topics we cover are the ones that would be hardest to find on the standard channels that our users can hear. I do this in the studios every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. This fits conveniently with my day's other demands.

How do people most frequently connect to the AINC's programs?

Out of all the ways people tune in, one of the most common is going to PBS on Channel Six and then changing to Secondary Audio Programming mode. At that point they are tuned into the programming of the AINC.

What are some of the entertaining

or surprising shows?

There is children's programming which includes storybooks read by volunteers. At an AINC event, I was seated with a mom and daughter and learned that it was the child who did the reading, participating in the kids' programming.

In the evening there's Mary Anne Stroeve's local cooking show with recipes, and, we announce the food advertising that appears in the news. The visually impaired have no other medium for independently learning what's on sale at the grocery store. What is the AINC's impact?

Between 20 and 25 thousand people in Colorado take advantage of our services.

What stands out in your AINC experience?

The joking and fun as Dave and I moved things from the old offices. Incidentally, this new facility is a

remarkable improvement. We have additional space, and the recording studios are designed for good acoustics. Dave just keeps expanding the programming, too.

I really enjoy the connection with others whom I meet in the halls and offices of this organization. Just the early-morning volunteer receptionist's wry sense of humor is reason enough to be here.

How did your daughter Kellie get started with the AINC?

She came here because she was curious about what I was doing. She ended up contributing in her own personal way. Dave noted her computing abilities and said, "Why don't you do some computer work here?" She started with a database and then went on to create a brochure. She ended up with a paying job at the organization during her college years. Now she's earned a degree in graphic arts.

Are you involved in other community activities?

I can do home repairs, so I've periodically volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. Team leaders there can assist with skills you haven't yet learned.

I serve at the Community Table where I wash dishes and serve dinner to those who can't find a meal. I'm also on the board of the 4-H club. There's an interesting story: as farm life has dwindled, today the 4-H is about mentoring youngsters in whatever project they wish to do, be it bicycling, entomology or sewing. My kids were in it, and that's how I got involved.

How important is it for you to contribute to society?

Without it I might be crazy. It keeps me sane and out of ruts. **WJ**

For more information on the AINC, call 303.784.2772 or visit www.aincradio.org