

# Bright Tomorrows Learning Center Receives Books About Disability Community

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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**GODFREY** - On Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, BraunAbility gifted Bright Tomorrows Learning Center with a children's book series about the disability community.

BraunAbility manufactures wheelchair-accessible vans and wheelchair lifts. Matt Contarino, who works for BraunAbility, presented the books to Bright Tomorrows and read a book about Ralph Braun, the founder of the company, to the pre-k class.

“Teaching the kids about awareness and not being insecure or afraid of other people ,” said Patricia Dooley, the director of Bright Tomorrows. “It doesn’t matter what their disability is. There’s all different kinds. So getting the awareness and making the kids feel more comfortable, it’s very important.”

Dooley noted that many of the kids know people who have physical or developmental disabilities. By reading about the disabilities, she hopes the kids will grow to be more understanding and comfortable around all people, including those in the disability community.

BraunAbility donated the books with the hopes to “diversify” the center’s library and “foster a greater understanding of inclusion and acceptance of people with disabilities,” the company said in a letter. In addition to reading the book about Ralph Braun, Contarino talked to the kids about other disabled celebrities and activists who are featured in the book series, including Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Judy Heumann, Jason Benetti, Alice Wong, Anita Cameron, Leroy Moore and Vilissa Thompson.

Contarino also shared stories about his wife, Cathy, who uses a wheelchair. He explained that talking to young kids about disability addresses their natural curiosity while helping them understand.

“It’s awesome, just because the kids are young enough to absorb everything and to be aware of things,” he said. “They’re inquisitive, and when they see Cathy and I out and about, they can always approach Cathy and I and talk to us because they know us a little bit more.”

For more information about BraunAbility, visit their [official website at BraunAbility.com](https://www.braunability.com).