During Covid-19 some libraries have created a volunteer program that allows volunteers to record themselves reading a story or poem, which can then be made available to people in the community who call in to hear them. Most efforts are based on the Denver Public Library’s LitLine: <https://www.denverlibrary.org/blog/books/amy/lit-line-puts-good-writing-your-fingertips>

Stephanie Truax, Volunteer Coordinator at the Austin (TX) Public Library is developing such a program and shared her communications with interested volunteers:

Thank you for your interest in the Lit Line! This is very much something I am making up as I go along (with some guidance from other library systems) so thank you for being willing to try this out with me! I'm still waiting on some support from our tech team before we can get it up and running, but here is what I had in mind:

1. The most important thing is that the stories or poems we choose should be in the public domain so that we don't infringe on any copyright laws. Project Gutenberg is a reliable source and can be found here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/about/>. Feel free to look around and find something that catches your interest. I will double check everything I receive just to cover our bases!
2. Stories or poems should be very short, our outgoing message box is limited to 90 seconds. I know that sounds extremely limiting, but I think it would be ok if we just chose passages or maybe had stories that carried over from one week to the next.
3. You can record the story on any technology you have at home and are comfortable with, if you have a voice notes app on your phone that could be a simple solution! You can just email me the recording with a note telling me the name of the work and the author. I have a work around idea we can try if you don't have any way to record at home.
4. We will have two phone lines to start- one for English and one for Spanish, if you speak both of these languages please consider reading in either or both! If there is interest in more languages we can certainly ask to expand the program in the future.
5. With your help, I will build up a bank of recordings that will be switched out once a week. Feel free to read as many or as few stories as you would like entirely on your own schedule, if we run low on new work I will let you know!
6. If you really enjoy this project and want to help with the administrative side of things, I'm open to that as well! Please feel free to reach out.

Ideally, this project will help us reach customers who might be uncomfortable with technology or just want to connect with the Library in another way. I think our primary audience would be adult listeners, although we can certainly shift or expand based on feedback from the public. Thanks for being willing to make this happen! I'm really excited about this project, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

And here is the info I sent the volunteers who want to help administer the program:

 Here is a little more info on how I think the administrative side of the project will work: I expect that the administrative side of this program will be fairly easy, it will mostly be receiving the stories as people send them in, listening to make sure the recording is understandable and appropriate, double checking that the work is in the public domain, and logging the stories/poems/articles by type so we can switch it up from week to week and keep track of what has already been played. The City has been relying heavily on Microsoft Teams for remote work, if you'd like I can create a Team and add you as a guest so we can collaborate. I can make an Excel sheet to log all the recordings as they come in and I can create a tab to house the recordings in a sort of library. Once we have a log of the recordings, we just call in each week to switch out the outgoing message on a voicemail! I have one other volunteer who has expressed interest in helping with administrative work, so I think it should be very manageable.