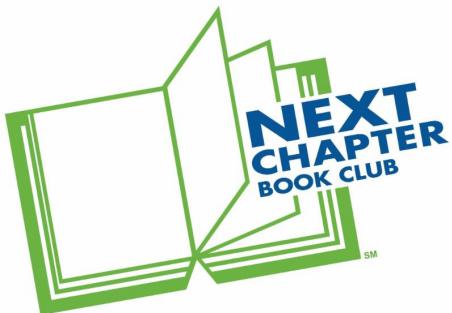


# Fall 2019 Newsletter



## Featured in This Issue:

- Exchange Trip to Germany
- NCBC Video from Author Meg Medina
- Home Office Update
- Travels with Tom
- Group News



Helping people with disabilities enjoy books, friends and their community.

## Exchange Trip to Germany

by Tom Fish

If "out of this world" was one word, then that would be the word I would choose to describe our October trip to Germany. Our travel group consisted of two book club members, two facilitators, a service program administrator, two librarians, and Lyna and me; four members of our group are parents of adults with disabilities.

We all got along famously. We were treated to many amazing experiences, including visiting two book clubs, exchanging ideas and experiences with our German counterparts at the University of Cologne, touring the magnificent cathedral "The Dom," Checkpoint Charlie, the Reunification Festival, the Eastern Wall, a trip on the River Rhine, and traveling by train to Berlin.

About 30 people came together one night for a unique, international, and diverse reading event. We all read together and shared about ourselves. There was a lot of laughter initially about the language barrier and need for interpretation. However, after a while we all just became wrapped up in the experience of reading. The German book club members read from their current book and then we all read the laundry poem from our book *New Love, Spilt Milk and Potbellied Pigs*. Their club meets after hours in a large, multi-service center for senior citizens. They supplied drinks and dessert treats and we passed out water bottles and shirts we had brought. The interactions were warm, lively, and full of fun.

Another highlight of the trip was the exchange with Doreen Kuttner of the association Lebenshilfe Berlin. We shared our thoughts on topics such as Simplified Language and current developments in the American and German book clubs. The last meeting of the trip took place in the Helene-Nathan-Library in Berlin. Together with Franzsika Vorwerk-Laabs, the library coordinator for their book club, we discussed issues like the accessibility of public libraries in both countries.

As a conclusion, the exchange between the NCBC and LEA Leseclubs® has shown ways of rising above linguistic as well as cultural borders by sharing a love for books and the community that comes with it. It was so special to be able to share our thoughts and experiences with our colleagues and friends throughout the course of our seven days together.

We want to send a special thanks to our hosts, Dr. Anke Gross-Kunkle, Founder of NCBC in Germany, her husband Soneka, who is a professor in Berlin, and their wonderful children, for personalizing our trip so we could learn about the German book clubs as well as the German culture. I think I can speak on behalf of our entire group by saying this trip had a profound impact from each of us. Pictures usually speak louder than words, so enjoy the photos below.





## NCBC Video from Author Meg Medina

Check out this great new video about NCBC from Meg Medina! Meg is the winner of the 2019 Newbery Medal for her book *Merci Suárez Changes Gears*. The John Newbery Medal is a literary award given by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children." Meg's daughter is a member of NCBC in Virginia.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_dQXTWAJY0iwmgWrm8W39Vm7MppZibGI/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_dQXTWAJY0iwmgWrm8W39Vm7MppZibGI/view?usp=sharing)

## Home Office Update

We've been busy as usual! Here are some highlights we want to share with all of you.

### Ohio:

Our Ohio DD Council grant on increasing leadership and advocacy through the book clubs is gaining traction. The grant provides funding for training at no cost for new or existing clubs in Ohio. The project has three objectives:

- Add 30 clubs in Ohio, with an emphasis on rural counties.
- Develop and disseminate materials/strategies on leadership and advocacy. We will share the details with you when they are completed. Look out for them over email and on the affiliate portal.
- Have people with IDD serve as co-facilitators in their book club.

### **Texas:**

NCBC is going to the Lone Star State! We will be presenting about our clubs in March 2020 at the Texas Library Association Conference, the largest state library conference in the United States. Also, Texas Advocates for people with disabilities has contracted with Chapters Ahead to train their self-advocates about starting NCBC clubs throughout the state.

### **Affiliates:**

We currently have 190 affiliates internationally (including the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Africa), which is 48 more than we started with in January. We will again have a short survey/report at the end of the year to update the number of clubs. We hope you will take a moment to complete it. As an incentive, we will do a drawing from all those affiliates that complete the surveys on the first request. Winners will pick one of their clubs to receive free NCBC T-shirts!

### **New Book Coming:**

Coming next Fall, we will be publishing a new book of short stores and short plays. Stay tuned for more details!

### **Amazon Smile:**

Chapters Ahead, the umbrella organization for the Next Chapter Book Clubs, is a verified charitable organization by AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon.com that has the same products, prices, and features as Amazon.com, but when you shop on AmazonSmile, they will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. When you buy through the site, you can support the book clubs when you shop with no extra cost. You can learn more at <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

### **Facebook Likes and Amazon Reviews:**

Many thanks to those who have liked our NCBC Facebook page. We would love to see even more likes! For those of you who have enjoyed our *New Love* book, we would really appreciate a brief review of it on Amazon. To those of you who have already reviewed it, thank you!

### **Thank You:**

Many words of thanks to Rachel Leff, a librarian in Connecticut, for volunteering to publish our quarterly newsletter. She does a phenomenal job.

## **Travels with Tom**



In late September, I had the pleasure of visiting Literacy Nassau, an NCBC affiliate in Long Island, NY. They have been assisting individuals with low literacy skills for the past 50 years. What an amazing agency! In addition to running over 30 NCBC book clubs, Literacy Nassau recruits and trains volunteers for a wide range of tutoring services for their community. They also assist with citizenship preparation, adult English, and Orton-Gillingham programs for children with dyslexia. Most of the services are provided in libraries throughout Nassau County.

Kim Nau coordinates NCBC for Literacy Nassau and her enthusiasm is contagious. I toured their administrative offices in a converted church, which is a beautiful space. Then Kim and I visited one of their clubs in the West Hempstead Public Library. I was greeted with such warmth and respect by the book club members and the facilitators, Eileen and Suzanne. Once they found out that I was the developer of NCBC, the entire club thanked me profusely. It was abundantly clear how much these folks love their book club and care about each other. Interestingly, the two facilitators had not known one another prior to the book club. They made a point of telling me how special their relationship has become. The book club members love meeting in the library and they have established strong relationships with several staff members.

On my train ride back to NYC on the Long Island Railroad, I could not stop smiling. It made me extremely happy to see how much people enjoy being part of NCBC. Congratulations to Kim and all the wonderful NCBC folks at Literacy Nassau!



---

## Group News

## Rwanda

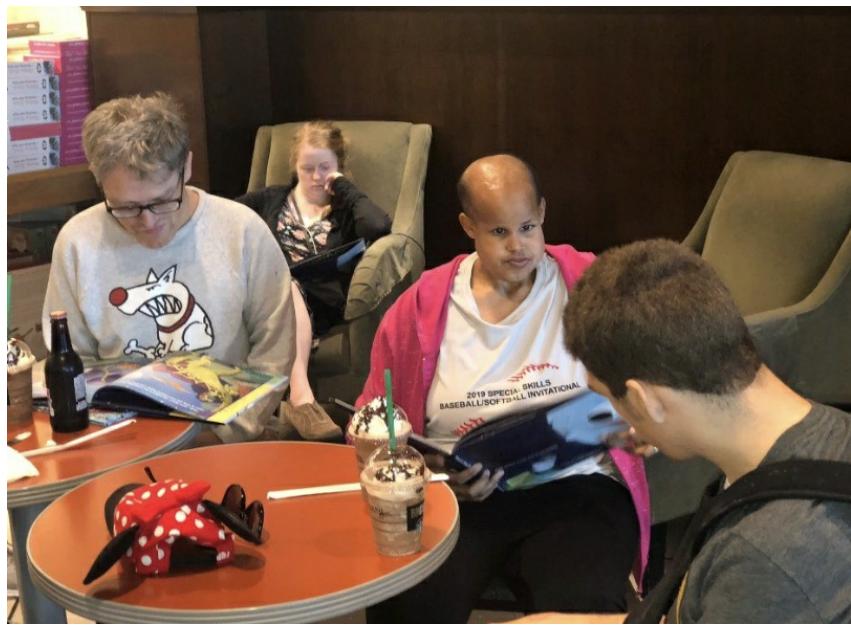
We are excited to share that we now have a second book club up and running in Rwanda. Members of the club attend the Ubumwe Center in Gisenyi, a large rehab center for people with disabilities. This Center is sponsored in part by the Columbus Zoo in Ohio. Frederick, Director at the Center, and his wife, Godelive, are coordinating our book club efforts in Rwanda. They are actively seeking additional clubs over the next few months.

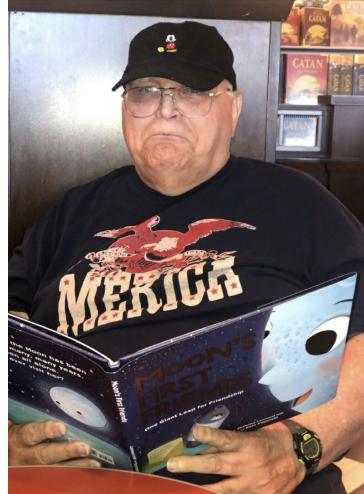
Currently, they are working with Antoinette, coordinator of Ineza Kabaya, a special school for children and youth with disabilities in Rwanda's Western Province. They are assisting with training and giving guidance to get things started there. We have also had active interest about starting clubs in Kenya and Nigeria.



## Learning Never Ends, Columbus, OH

Thanks to our friends at Learning Never Ends for sending in these great pictures! They wrote: "Some of our individuals enjoying a book together, reading, discussing, and having a little snack!"





---

## We Want to Hear From You!

### Celebrations

Did you do something fun to celebrate finishing a book? Tell us about it. We want to feature some of these celebrations in our newsletter.

### Book Reviews

We would love to share some book reviews from our groups. Tell us what you read, whether you liked it, and why. We may include your review in our newsletter!

### Group News

Did your group have an anniversary or reach a milestone? Let us know! Have you done anything cool to raise money for books? Our groups would love to know about it!

Send your news and reviews to [tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org](mailto:tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org).

---

## Contact Information

Our mailing address is:

**Chapters Ahead, Inc.**

PO Box 411

1123 Village Rd NE

Leland, NC 28451

Our phone number is:

1.800.674.8390

