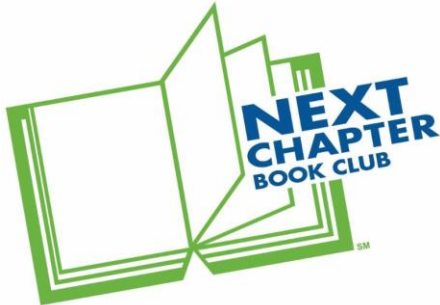


# Winter 2020 Newsletter



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

**Interview with NCBC Facilitator Leah  
Plocharczyk, Winner of "I Love My Librarian"  
Award**



In December 2019, Leah Plocharczyk, the interim director of Florida Atlantic University's John D. MacArthur Library, in Jupiter, Florida, won the annual "I Love My Librarian Award." She was one of only ten librarians across the whole country to win the award; 1,950 librarians were nominated. ([Learn more about the award here.](#)) We're so excited about Leah's award because in addition to all she does at her university library, she also leads Next Chapter Book Clubs there! And she just wrote a book on library service to patrons with intellectual disabilities. We got to ask Leah a few questions about her work.

**Please tell us about how you came to start a Next Chapter Book Club at a college.**

In the spring of 2016, the library was approached by the program coordinator for the newly grant-funded Post Secondary Program (PSE) that began at the Jupiter campus in the College of Education. The PSE is known as the Academy for Community Inclusion (ACI) and offers classes and opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) who want to enroll in college courses and have the college experience. As part of their graduation requirements, the students must complete on-campus internships. Our then library director was asked if we might accept student interns to work at our circulation desk so they could receive job experience. The library staff agreed that this was a good idea. I attended the program orientation to get a feel for the expectations of the program, and to learn more about the students and their needs. I was thinking aloud and said, "wouldn't it be fun if I began a book club for the students enrolled in this program?!" The program coordinator at the time heard me, and said, "Great idea! I'm holding you to it!" And so began the book club.

**Other NCBC groups might be interested to know about the games you play in your meetings, and the game you and your groups invented: one-word.**

In the beginning, our focus was on reading for an hour, which I quickly realized was too taxing for the group. About 30 minutes in, I noticed that attention spans were waning and we were losing focus. That's when my club co-facilitator came up with the idea of playing games. She brought in some board games from home and we began to modify them to fit our needs. Some of the games that we like to play include Pictionary, charades, "Never Have I Ever," Would You Rather?, bingo, crossword puzzles, hangman, telephone, and a variety of trivia/quiz games. I try to keep the games educational, and I try to tailor them to the book we are reading at the time. Pictionary is a huge hit and we often create clues based on holidays, current events, or themes that are related to the storyline. Playing games is great because it gives everyone a chance to participate and socialize regardless of reading ability. Some of

my non-verbal members really come alive when playing games, especially when playing games that involve using the body or drawing as a means to communicate.

"One word" is based off of the old TV game show Password. The facilitators create a clue and write it on a card. The clue is usually an object. The students draw the card and then have to give the audience a one-word description for us to guess what the clue is. For example, if the clue is apple, the student would say fruit, or red, or crunchy, etc. If that is too difficult, the student can resort to acting out the clue or even drawing it. We're pretty flexible with our rules because we want the students to have fun.

**Is there anything else you'd like the members of the NCBC community to know about you and your clubs?**

My advice to anyone who is considering starting a club is to go for it! When I began my club, I had little to no knowledge of what it would be like to lead a book club for adults with ID. I have no special education training, and yet, by trial and error, I've been able to pull off a club that I think is successful and fun for the students. You don't need to be an expert to make it work. I rely a lot on the students to give their input about what they like and dislike. I let them know that this is their club and they take ownership of it. I'd also like to encourage other academic librarians who might have connections to campus PSEs to attempt outreach to this unique population. I was surprised to learn through my research that of 164 PSE programs nationwide, virtually none had a connection with or relationship to an academic library. Running a book club for college students with ID has been one of the most rewarding parts of my job, and I am grateful that I took a chance. It's been an absolute game changer for me both professionally and personally.

[\*\*Scroll to the end of this newsletter to read the rest of our interview with Leah, including more on book choices for the club and her new book on libraries, reading, and adults with ID...\*\*](#)

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## **Home Office Update**

Our Central Office is looking for a volunteer or two to assist with our social media outreach efforts. Please let us know if you might be able to help. As always, many thanks for your consideration!

There has been some interest in putting together a working group that would review and compile information about Hi/Lo fiction that could be made available to our

network and beyond. If you would like to be involved, please contact Tom Fish at [tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org](mailto:tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org).

In March, we will be presenting about NCBC at the Texas Library Association Conference in Houston.

Check out [the wonderful endorsement on our website](#) from Newbery Award-winning author and proud parent of a NCBC member, Meg Medina. We are so appreciative of her support.

If anyone is interested in working with Tom Fish on a “Keep a Book by Your Bed” campaign, please contact him directly at [tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org](mailto:tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org).

We are halfway done with our new book of short stories and plays. This book will focus on six characters who all belong to the same NCBC. Stay tuned!

We had 49 new affiliates last year in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

We are still holding drawings for our free book bag giveaway. Clubs are selected from those registered on the affiliate portal. It only takes a few minutes to register. When you add your location to the map, it helps when folks are looking for a club in their area. This quarter, the giveaway winners were Concord Free Public Library in Concord, MA, Murray Public Library in Murray, KY, and Inclusion Regina in Regina, SK, Canada.

Please consider sending photos of your club and testimonials from members, facilitators, and families. We love hearing from you and sharing with the network. Please send them to [info@nextchapterbookclub.org](mailto:info@nextchapterbookclub.org).

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## Travels with Tom



Happy New Year everyone! In December of 2019, Lyna and I decided to do a spur of the moment trip to Memphis, Tennessee for some sightseeing and even a little gambling across the state line in Mississippi. However, a major highlight of the trip was the opportunity to visit with Lisa Hagen and her book club from the Germantown Community Library. Germantown is a suburb of Memphis and the library is one of the busiest in Tennessee. The book club meets three times a month at the library and the fourth meeting is held somewhere in the community.



The night we visited, the meeting was held at a ice cream shop. I could not have asked for better timing. Because of it being the holiday season, we sang Christmas songs accompanied by co-facilitator Sue and myself on the ukulele. The group also read self-published stories by people with disabilities and of course indulged in some delicious ice cream. Lisa was one of the people who had gone with us to Germany last fall so it was like old home week. Her group is a lively bunch who clearly enjoy one another. While a couple of members were away for the holidays, a joyous time was

had by one and all. Lisa goes to great lengths to ensure her group is exposed to a variety of hands-on experiences related to the books they are reading. For instance, they brought in a magician after reading about Harry Houdini. As you can see by the picture above, my visit was a blast! Many thanks to Lisa and her club for greeting Lyna and me with open arms.

## Group Spotlight: East Lyme Public Library

We caught up with Rebecca Scotka, NCBC facilitator and librarian at East Lyme Public Library in East Lyme, Connecticut.

### **Tell us a little about the East Lyme Public Library group.**

We have one NCBC group and we have been meeting weekly since October 2018. We meet in the Adult Department of the East Lyme Public Library. East Lyme, Connecticut is a seaside town of approximately 18,000 people. The East Lyme Public Library has been in existence since 1897.

### **Which books have the book club members liked best so far? What did they like about them?**

The group's favorite books so far are *Lucky Dogs*, *Lost Hats*, and *Dating Don'ts* and *New Love*, *Spilt Milk*, and *Potbellied Pigs* both by Thomas Fish and Jillian Ober. The discussion questions led to intense conversations about dating, roommates, and other frustrations and joys of everyday life. We also read *Lulu's Mysterious Mission* by Judith Viorst and Kevin Cornell. Currently, we are reading *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate. We are eagerly awaiting Fish and Ober's next book.

### **Have you done anything special to celebrate an event, like finishing a book, a holiday, or a birthday?**

We celebrate birthdays by singing a round of "Happy Birthday." We don't eat cake or snacks because most of the club member's go out to lunch right after our meetings.

### **What do members like best about the book club?**

Reading books and making friends from other agencies.

### **What do you like best about the book club?**

The Next Chapter Book Club is my favorite library program. The members are kind, enthusiastic, and fun.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your group?**



The East Lyme Public Library purchased e-readers for book club members who prefer a tablet to a printed book. The e-readers are especially popular for book club members who like to read books with large print. One of the members told me she got her own e-reader for Christmas and now she is able to read at home, too.

**What would you tell someone who is thinking about starting or joining a Next Chapter Book Club?**

Start a Next Chapter Book Club at your Library. It will become your favorite program, too!

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## Group News

**Nadine Connors, Hewlett-Woodmere Public Library, Hewlett, NY**

We are going strong in Hewlett. We have been our own affiliate since last summer. [An article about our club that was done by Newsday.](#) I did not expect to see such a big article; it was several pages long with a big open spread. We have had several people come and visit us since the article. Our club, the Pagemasters, is the highlight of my week.



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**NCBC Winnipeg**

NCBC Winnipeg sent us a link to this great video!



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### **Rhonda Dindino, RCM of Washington, DC**

A picture from our book club meeting in November. We're still going strong.



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### **Melinda Zambito, Schaumburg, IL**

A picture of one of the Schaumburg book clubs. They had finished their book and decided to have a Holiday Celebration lunch. This year instead of exchanging gifts with each other, they went shopping together to purchase toys and donated them.





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### **Ohio State Nisonger Center, Columbus, OH**

This is one of our Columbus clubs that meets at an ice cream and doughnut shop. They almost always read science fiction novels.



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### **Randi Strutton, Atlanta Public Library, Atlanta, Texas**

This year we gave our members the book bags we were so blessed to receive. They loved them and were so excited!



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## 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).

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## Contact Information

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Leland, NC 28451

Our phone number is:

1.800.674.8390



## **CONTINUED: Interview with NCBC Facilitator Leah Plocharczyk, Winner of "I Love My Librarian" Award**

### **Do you have any recommendations on good books for the clubs?**

Choosing a title that appeals to everyone has been our biggest struggle. We have a mixed group of young and older readers who have varied interests and different reading abilities. Some readers are more advanced, and others are emerging or non-readers. Our youngest reader is 19 and our eldest is in her mid-50s. Some of the more popular titles we've read include:

- o *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen
- o *Teen Beach Movie* published by Disney Press and part of the Disney Junior Novel Series
- o *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* by Chris Grabenstein
- o *Oh, the Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss
- o *Wishmakers* by Tyler Whitesides
- o *Hark a Shark: All About Sharks* by Bonnie Worth, illustrated by Aristides Ruiz and Joe Mathieu
- o *Beauty and the Beast Novelization* (Disney) by Elizabeth Rudnick
- o *Disney, Pixar's Inside Out, The Junior Novelization* adapted by Suzanne Francis
- o *Disney, Pixar's Incredibles 2, The Deluxe Junior Novelization* adapted by Suzanne Francis
- o *Disney's Zootopia, The Junior Novelization* adapted by Suzanne Francis

We are currently reading the Deluxe Novelization of the film *Mary Poppins Returns*. Disney Junior Novelizations have been a great find for us, and they always keep the entire group's interest.

**I read that you have a new book on library service to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Can you tell us a little about it?**

The book is titled, *Libraries and Reading: Intellectual Disability and the Extent of Library Diversity*. It was published by Emerald Publishing and is officially on the shelves, and in Amazon, as of January 23, 2020. This book examines how libraries can extend their mission of diversity to patrons with intellectual disabilities. This question is examined through the history of library outreach, current efforts in public and academic libraries, and relevant developments in special education.

The book assesses the current state of patrons with ID and libraries by surveying library history and policy. The book examines relevant developments for those with ID in the community and in the realms of public and academic libraries, and in special education. These are discussed in relation to an extensive case study of my book club for college students with ID at FAU, which is developed as a model for adoption and suggests a larger potential for libraries to contribute to individuals with ID. The book also examines new work in critical theory and disability studies, relates it to developments in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and develops a framework of concepts and a vocabulary for evaluating the library's potential for serving those with ID.