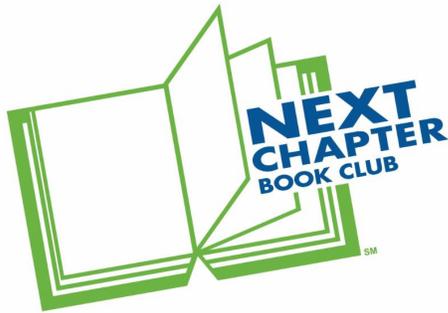


Summer 2019 Newsletter



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

Home Office Update

We hope you are all enjoying the summer. We've been busy here at the home office. Here are some highlights of what has been going on:

- There are 26 new clubs so far this year!
- We have inquiries from Kenya and Nigeria about starting NCBC clubs.
- An affiliate from Washington, DC is moving to Norway and hopes to start a club there.
- We've been working on our social media presence! We are updating our Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. If you have something you'd like us to post, please email us at info@nextchapterbookclub.org. We have also been working on updating our website. Take a look some time!
- Tom held a webinar about NCBC for the National Down Syndrome Association.
- Meg Medina, a noted author of teen and young adult books and a Newberry Award Winner, reached out to us about ways she could help our organization. Her daughter is a NCBC member in Virginia!

We know that clubs can sometimes have a hard time affording books. Here are a few suggestions for places to ask for help:

- Your local Down Syndrome Association
- Your local Literacy Associations/Councils

- Your County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Approach your local Friends of the Library group or local organizations like the Rotary Club
- If you have several clubs, start a lending library so groups can share books.
- Ask your local library to add a few Hi-Lo books that the community and book club participants can use. Or see if your local library can secure books through interlibrary loan.

Lyna has put together a proposal for book funding that clubs might find helpful in applying for grants. The letter is included at the end of this newsletter.

Biannual Report, Summer 2019

A big thank you to all of our members who have completed this Summer's Biannual report. For those of you who have not yet completed the report, please take the time to do so. It only takes about 5 minutes and the data you provide really helps us, especially when we and our NCBC groups request funding. If you can't fill out the survey, please take a moment to send us an email with the number of clubs you have. You can reach us at info@nextchapterbookclub.org. We really appreciate it!

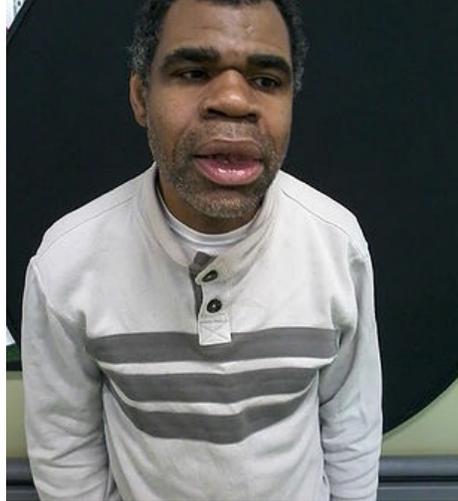
Travels with Tom



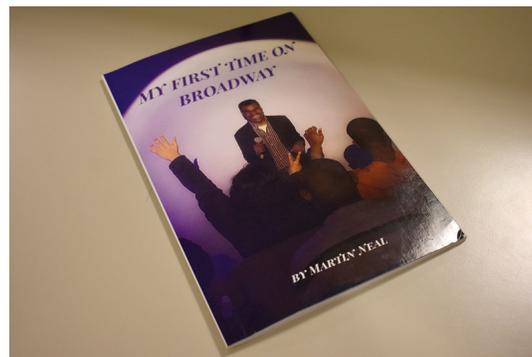
I'm happy to report that a group of 10 travelers will be going on our exchange trip to Germany from September 28th to October 6th. We will spend four nights in Berlin and three nights in Cologne. Our group consists of book club members, parents, coordinators, and facilitators. We will have an opportunity to visit clubs, exchange ideas and experiences with our counterparts, and do some sightseeing as well. I can't wait to share pictures on our return!

ADA Opens Doors for Actor, Now Author, Pursuing His Dreams

We're so happy to share this amazing story from our friends at the AHRC NYC.



Dreams are becoming reality for 55-year-old Martin Neal. Two years ago, he made his debut on the Great White Way with AHRC New York City's On Broadway theater group, formed with the support of veteran stage actor Dale Hensley. Then, with the assistance of AHRC NYC staff, Neal became a podcast co-host presenting WKRTM, playing classic songs and conducting interviews with a variety of guests. Now, Neal has written a book, *My First Time on Broadway*, chronicling his journey to the stage.



As the Americans with Disabilities Act turns 29 this week, Neal, a Brooklyn resident, personifies the law, which was designed to level the playing field for people with disabilities. With a visual impairment and slight hearing loss, Neal receives support from AHRC NYC, a 70-year-old organization serving people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities and their families. He does not let any challenges stop him from pursuing his dreams.

"Your dreams and hopes will keep you alive," he writes in his book. Neal was celebrated recently at a meet-and-greet the author for nearly 75 members of AHRC NYC's Next Chapter Book Clubs at Berkley College in midtown Manhattan. He was interviewed and audience members read selections from his book.

Journey to Broadway

Neal traced his goal of performing back to his youth. "I was thinking about all of the TV shows I watched as a child. All the shows gave me a dream," he said. "I listened to music and everybody singing on those TV shows. I would dream to be on those shows and now my dream has come true."

The words carry a message to readers. "...stay strong when following your dreams," he writes. "Believe in yourself that you can do whatever it is that you want to do. Never doubt yourself and don't let anyone put doubts in you or put you down. You must let them know that you can do it and you will prove it to yourself not to them."

Asked what it's like to perform under the lights, Neal said, "I feel great being on the stage." He credits Hensley, who initially volunteered with AHRC NYC and is now an Art Consultant, for "encouraging me to go even further."

Hensley calls Neal the "wise sage" of AHRC NYC On Broadway. "Every single performer looks up to him for soulful thoughts, his bright ideas, and his never-ending professional approach to everything we do. And, I must say, he encourages me to go further."

Leading the Life He Chooses

"Martin is leading the life he chooses and the ADA has created opportunities where few existed before," said Marco Damiani, CEO of AHRC New York City. "After all, it took until 2019 for the first actress in a wheelchair to win a Tony Award (Ali Stroker in Oklahoma.)"

Neal also shares original poems throughout the book. He was inspired by the poetry of others at his AHRC NYC day program.

Neal spent a little more than a year writing his book. "Even though I have a visual impairment, I can write in other ways, without using paper and pens or machines and all that," Martin told the group. "I wrote a book in a way called dictating, which means I tell someone what I want to say and they write it down."

"Use Your Mind and Your Talents"

After the interview, group members read passages from the book aloud. AHRC NYC has 16 Next Chapter Book Clubs throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

Neal urged his fellow book club members to pursue their dreams, especially if they would like to become an author. "... you have to use your mind and talents to write whatever it is you want to write about because I want you to help inspire other people," he said. "Never let anybody tell you that you don't have any talent, because you do."

"Keep on following your dreams and see where your dreams are going to take you."

Learn more about Martin Neal on his website: <https://martinneal176.wixsite.com/fall2017>.

Group News

We love hearing from groups about what they're up to! Here's some news from across the NCBC family...

Germantown Community Library, Germantown, TN

From Lisa Hagen





Glen Ellyn Public Library, Glen Ellyn, IL

From Nicole Murray

My name is Nicole Murray and I am currently a volunteer book club facilitator for the Next Chapter Book Club at the Glen Ellyn Public Library in Illinois. I wanted to reach out to you and share with you how much I am enjoying being a part of Next Chapter Book Club. Myself and the other facilitator for Glen Ellyn, Kathryn, started together in January and it has been a wonderful experience for me.

The mission of NCBC immediately resonated with me when I first saw the volunteer opportunity posting. I think the idea of bringing people together over the love of books and reading is wonderful. The feeling of community and friendship was immediate when we started facilitating this club. I am continually taken aback by how the members support and encourage each other and the relationships both they and their families have formed by engaging in community based programs like NCBC.

I look forward to club meetings every other week more than any of my other commitments. I am grateful for the friendships I've made there and I thoroughly enjoy reading and discussing great books with all of our members. We start each session with an activity or game, celebrate each other's birthdays, and I learn something new about our members each time. We are really enjoying our current book, *Finding Audrey* by Sophie Kinsella. My experiences here have opened my eyes to how much I enjoy working in the service of others.

Scarborough Library, City of Stirling, Australia

From Havva Teede

Our first monthly meeting was held in February 2019 and to date [as of June 14] we have had 4 sessions! The program from the onset has been a huge success; we now have eight regular members. Many library customers have stopped to observe, ask questions, and leave positive comments with staff. Our members have been very

creative and painted their very own Next Chapter Book Club sign, which takes pride of place nearby during our session.

We finished our first book *Freda the Free-Range Chook* by David Metzthen in our very first session! We've attempted something with a bit more suspense and are now half way through a James Patterson novella that is keeping us at the edge of our seats! Often we are the loudest in the library, laughing at a turn of events in the story, or discussing what the author is trying to convey. The increase in enjoyment of reading and capability to follow a story is surprising and heartening, making the program a very worthwhile one! This quote highlights one of the main goals of our session: "Learning to love to read rather than learning to read!"

Coast BUDS Book Club at Brunswick Forest

Our outdoor club by a community pool in Leland, NC



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 next 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 reviews and news to tfish@nextchapterbookclub.org.

An Excerpt from Our New Book

As a lot of you already know, we published a new book this year: *New Love, Spilt Milk, and Potbellied Pigs*. A few of you even put up reviews on Amazon! Thank you for that. If you have read the book, we'd love to see your reviews on Amazon, too. If you haven't read it yet, here's an excerpt from one of the stories:

"Spilt Milk"

It happened fast. One moment, I was walking fast around the park. The next moment, I was on the ground, looking up at the sky.

I was also in pain. I tried to get up on my own, but I felt shooting pain in my lower back and other places in my body. I decided to lie still. I worried about what would happen if no one walked by. "Help!" I yelled. No one heard me. I think I lay on the ground for about five minutes, but it felt like an hour.

Finally, I heard a voice say, "Are you okay?" It sounded like an older woman.

I felt like saying, "Does it look like I am okay?" but that would not have been polite. I also needed this person's help. So I said, "No, I don't think so."

"Just try to relax, dear," the woman said. "I need to walk to my car to get my phone and call 911. Lie still. I'll be right back."

Who was this person? How long would it take her to walk to her car? What did I do to my back? I had a lot of questions going through my mind. I tried to breathe deeply and relax. I looked at some birds on a nearby tree. They looked so happy and pain-free. I wished I was one of those birds.

After a few minutes, the woman came back. "I called the ambulance. They will be here soon. Where does it hurt?" she asked.

"My lower back and backside. My head and arm, too," I said. "Thank you for helping me."

"You're quite welcome," the woman said. "I'm going to put my sweatshirt on top of you." She took off her sweatshirt and laid it over my chest and arms.

"What is your name, dear?" she asked.

"Mary Poppins," I said.

The woman laughed and said, "Okay Mary, that's fine. You don't have to tell me your name. My name is Edith. You poor thing. It looks like you slipped in this muddy patch next to the path..."

Edith kept talking, but all I could think was, I can't believe I fell again. Leave it to me to find the one slippery spot on a paved walking path. I tend to have accidents when I'm not paying attention.

Sample Funding Request Letter

As mentioned above, Lyna put together this sample letter to use when requesting funds for books. We hope you find success with it!

Request for Funding: \$750 to add books to local library inventory specifically for people with intellectual disabilities.

Background

The Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) was founded in 2002 by Dr. Tom Fish and his colleagues at The Ohio State University. The purpose of NCBC is to provide adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities a chance to engage in literacy, socialize, and hang out in a community setting. Each member is given a turn to read, regardless of their reading level. We read a page or two and then stop to discuss what is going on in the book.

The clubs are all about supportive friendships and having fun. The books allow our members to feel respected and included in their communities. For many years, society thought people with intellectual disabilities were not interested in or capable of learning as adults. Our experience is that this notion is simply not true. When book club members are with friends and reading is not presented as a chore, they enjoy the experience immensely.

What does participation in Next Chapter Book Clubs bring to our members and our community?

Next Chapter discourages isolation and encourages member engagement in the everyday life of the community. Next Chapter Book Club meetings offer an opportunity to go out and have fun and conversation with friends in a welcoming and familiar environment.

NCBC does not teach reading, but it does share the enjoyment of books. Parents report that members who avoided reading before now pick up books and newspapers at home and relish discussing what they are reading. We see notable improvement in reading fluency and comfort levels in most of our participants.

Many members socialize outside of book club with friends they have made there, and a supportive network of friends and families emerges from library engagement with Next Chapter Book Club.

[For Libraries to Include] Serving the community is at the heart of library practice. With 4.5% of the US population ages 18-64 reported to have intellectual disabilities, Next Chapter Book Clubs helps libraries fulfill their mission to serve diverse populations.

To learn more about NCBC, please see website at www.nextchapterbookclub.org or contact info@nextchapterbookclub.org.

We think the program is a novel idea and hope you will as well. Happy reading for all.

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