The Next Chapter Book Club

A Book Club Model for Lifelong Learning and Community Inclusion

www.nextchapterbookclub.org

A program of
The Ohio State University
Nisonger Center
Dedication

This presentation is dedicated to our beloved friend and colleague

Steven R. Cooley
1959 – 2005

Our thanks to Steve for “keeping us real”
Why start a book club for people with developmental disabilities?

Barriers to Lifelong Learning

Prevailing social attitudes are that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are *not*:

- Interested in, or capable of, learning after high school
- Interested in reading or books

Barriers to Community Inclusion

While people with IDD are increasingly living in the community, their participation is often marked by:

- Limited opportunities for social interaction
- Segregated social activities
A Book Club
What A Novel Idea

The Next Chapter Book Club integrates lifelong learning and social activity in a community setting.
Next Chapter Book Club Model

- Social Connectedness
- Community Inclusion
- Literacy Learning

Next Chapter Book Club
Next Chapter Book Club

Locations

The NCBC has grown from 2 book clubs in Columbus, Ohio to over 225 throughout the U.S., Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany
In the Beginning (2002)

Assumptions

- Members would want or need to listen to books on tape
- Clubs would meet once or twice a month
- Professionals would facilitate clubs

Our first book clubs taught us

- Members want to carry, read, and look at books
- Weekly meetings encourage attendance and retention
- Volunteers enrich the program
Next Chapter Book Club
Library

Sample of reading material in NCBC Library

Adapted Classics
- Black Beauty
- Moby Dick
- The Secret Garden
- The Call of the Wild
- Little Women
- The Wind in the Willows
- Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Popular Fiction
- Because of Winn-Dixie
- Where the Red Fern Grows
- Charlotte’s Web
- Harry Potter series
- Books by Beverly Cleary

Other
- Newspaper/sports page
- Non-fiction (Count Us In, Chicken Soup series)
Member Characteristics

• 700+ members across North America and Europe

• Typically 5 to 8 members in each group

• Ages 17 to 80+
Next Chapter Book Clubs

Each book club has its own personality!
Decision-making Opportunities

Members decide…

● Which book they want to read

● How they read the book (How do we decide who reads next?)

● How they want to organize meetings (How much time do we want to spend socializing?)

● How much they want to read, talk, and share
Facilitator Characteristics

- Typically 2 volunteers per club
- Ages 16 to 80+
- They are students, retirees, people with disabilities, and parents, among others
Facilitator Comments

“Our time together is a strong reminder of the incredible diversity and talent within people, just waiting for an opportunity to be heard. We have all become real friends and to a great extent, have positively changed each other's lives.”

– NCBC facilitators Suzzanne, Mike, and Mikey
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