Another Path to Book Clubs

Presenter:
Beverly Williams, Manager
Atlanta-Metro Library for Accessible Services (AMLAS)
Today’s Agenda

• My experience with Book Clubs at AMLAS

• Introduce you to some of AMLAS Book Club Members

• Suggestions on how your public library can serve underserved patrons through book clubs

• Tips on organizing an inclusive Book Club or Library Program
Why be a part of a Book Club?

- You read more often
- You read books you would not normally select for yourself
- You meet new people
- You experience books in a whole new way
- You sharpen your communication skills
- You overcome shyness
- You have fun
- To socialize
A community that excludes even one of its members is no community at all.

- an excerpt from the Smithsonian National Museum of Disability Rights and American Culture
AMLAS Book Clubs

- Walk-In Book Club
- Phone-In Book Club (Female)
- Phone-In Book Club (Male)
- Make the Connection Book Club (Volunteer Facilitators)
AMLAS Book Club Facilitator
Emphish Thomas

“Every few months or so we gather at AMLAS on a Saturday afternoon for our book discussion. We talk about new authors and book signing around Atlanta and surrounding cities.”
Walk-In Book Club

We meet every 3 months

Meet at AMLAS

Refreshments are served
Service Area
How do we involve more of our patrons in the Book Club Experience?

- We served a 10 county area
- More than 5,000 patrons
Conference Calls

Requires no registration no fees

The telephone is the only technology needed
Rondee
- Service Available 24/7
- Allows up to 50 participants
- No time limit on calls

Free Conference Calling
- Service available 24/7
- Allows up to 1,000 participants
- 6 hrs call limit

FreeConferenceCall.com
- Service available 24/7
- Allows up to 96 participants
- 6 hrs call limit
How Conference Calls Work

• Provide callers with a date and time of your call

• Provide callers with conference call dial-in number and conference code

• The catch? These services do not provide a toll-free conference line
Working out the Kinks…
Setting Ground Rules

- Icebreakers and introductions
- Interruptions
- Monopolizing conversation
- Keeping the Group on the discussion of the book
- Listening Carefully to other participants and disagreeing respectfully
- Allowing everyone a chance to contribute
Make the Connection Book Club

• Four Groups made up of 5-8 members

• Volunteer Facilitators are GLASS patrons

• Book club participants are all GLASS patrons

• Books for Discussions must be a part of GLASS collection
Meet Linda

• Not having to find transportation

• I enjoy the ease of staying at home and having a book discussion over the telephone

• Love the interaction with other patrons and being able to relate to others with the same disability as myself
Meet Vanessa

• The Book Club has allowed me to open more with other people

• Being able to stay home is perfect

• I was introduced to different genres

• The other ladies are very kind and caring
Meet Beatrice

• Enjoys tremendously; looks forward to meetings every month

• Loves being exposed to different genres and new authors

• Made some good friends through the book club
Meet Gerry

- I never knew something like this existed

- I am a member of a book club where I am the only blind member and sometimes it is difficult to get the book we are reading in audio format

- I am so excited to be a part of this and meet other blind people. I have no blind friends so this is great!
Using Book Clubs as a way to connect to Underserved patrons

• People who are blind or have low vision

• Homebound patrons who cannot come into the library

• Organizing book clubs in Nursing Homes /Assisted Living Centers
Next Chapter Book Club was established in 2002 by Tom Fish of the Ohio State University’s Nisonger Center to provide adolescents and adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) the opportunity to be book club members.
• The Scotch Plains Library, in New Jersey has been running two Next Chapter Book Club since 2008.

• The Next Chapter Book Club enables us to serve underserved members of the community in a profoundly rewarding way. We provide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with a way to read and learn together, talk about books and make friends in a relaxed community setting.
Tips for organizing an inclusive Book Club or Library Program

• Know where to find support and information for planning and implementing any inclusive library program

• Get to know people with disability and organizations that serve people with disabilities and involve them in your planning and implementation of programs

• Utilize peer and family connections
Tips Continued...

• Promote disability inclusion in existing book clubs and other programs (make it an organizational value)

• Train staff and volunteers to be sensitive to people with disabilities
Questions?
Patron’s Quote

• I have always wanted to be in a book club but with me being blind and not able to read a printed book or able to drive to a book club meeting I just was unable to do so. Thank you very much for doing this for us. You are blessing.

  – Cynthia, Douglasville, GA