



Scotch Plains Public Library

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Michelle Willis
Library Director

August 21, 2015

Cheryl O'Connor
LibraryLinkNJ, The New Jersey Library Cooperative
44 Stelton Road
Suite 330
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Dear Cheryl,

Please find below Scotch Plains Public Library's final report for the NCBC4NJL contract. We are very grateful for the LibraryLinkNJ funding that enabled six libraries throughout New Jersey to establish Next Chapter Book Clubs for their communities' differently-abled residents. I do not know if words can express my appreciation to you personally, for your enthusiastic embrace of this initiative, your encouragement, input, and belief in the worth of this project, and of all of us as librarians with much to share with our public.

The participants in this project intend to stay in touch on a regular basis, to share books from the lending collection that the contract funded, and to be available to speak with, and mentor any libraries with an interest in starting their own book clubs.

Thank you, Cheryl O'Connor, and the LibraryLinkNJ Board for the lifelong learning opportunities you made available to the libraries, and communities of Scotch Plains, Camden County, Cherry Hill, Monmouth County, Middletown, Wayne and Woodbridge.

Sincerely,

Pamela Brooks
Head of Adult Services

Next Chapter Book Club for New Jersey Libraries (NCBC4NJL) was funded by a contract from LibraryLinkNJ to Scotch Plains Public Library, in the amount of \$9,850.00. NCBC4NJL ran from October 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015, with the goal of fostering establishment of Next Chapter Book Clubs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by six New Jersey libraries, to be chosen by application.

Under Meg Kolaya's directorship, beginning with participation in *Welcoming Library Spaces to the Autism Community and their Families*" pilot (2007-8), Scotch Plains Public Library has been active in promoting library education and staff training about autism. Seeing the success of the two Next Chapter Book Clubs our library has run since September 2008, we were enthusiastic about sharing our experience and nurturing new groups. With Cheryl O'Connor's encouragement we submitted a proposal to LibraryLinkNJ in August 2013.

In preparing our application during the summer of 2013, we met with Cheryl O'Connor and gained support and buy-in from Tom Fish, Founder and Program Director, and Jillian Ober, Program Manager of the Next Chapter Book Club program at the Nisonger Center at Ohio State University.

Our application (see attached) aligned with many of the objectives and outcomes of the Statewide Strategic Plan for the Future of Libraries in New Jersey, most notably *The Library as Community Anchor*, and the need that exists for library programming for the state's differently-abled population.

We were thrilled to receive the contract in the fall of 2013, and got right to work! At the outset our team consisted of Meg Kolaya, Library Director; Pamela Brooks, Head of Adult Services; Amy Chervenyak, Library Assistant; and Lauren Kolaya, a volunteer facilitator--the group that facilitated our own library's Next Chapter clubs. We received enthusiastic and expert support from SPPL librarians Maribeth Fisher, Karen Jason, and Clare Hilliard.

Here is an overview of the contract period, October 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015:

October – December 2013

We had a logo designed and created posters, fliers, and elevator speeches. We determined the application process and firmed up a timeline for training and implementation. The November 2013 LibraryLinkNJ E-Update announced the contract award and promoted the opportunity. Pam submitted a promo that was posted on the LibraryLinkNJ site.

On October 26, 2014, Pam, Lauren, and Amy presented a program on NCBC at the NJASL Annual Conference, by invitation. Pam and Meg hosted an information table at LibraryLinkNJ's Fall Membership Meeting in November.

January – April 2014

In January 2014, the NCBC4NJL project page on the LibraryLinkNJ site went public, thanks to Mi-Sun Lyu. Pam, Meg, and Cheryl O'Connor met to discuss promotion. Pam reached out to local residents and experts in the field of IDD. She contacted Mimi Lee, Pat Tumulty, and members of the Diversity & Outreach section of NJLA, in addition to other librarians at libraries with an interest in outreach to underserved populations, as evidenced by their social media posts and library web sites. SPPL librarians finished compiling contact lists for libraries and other organizations and individuals involved with the IDD community, and we used the lists to spur interest in NCBC4NJL.

We set May 7, 2014 as the date for the group training and Next Chapter orientation to be held at Scotch Plains Public Library.

In February 2014, we spoke with Sophie Brookover to plan our social media promotion and ran an additional promotional piece as a LibraryLink e-blast.

Also in February, six libraries submitted strong applications before the March 1, 2014 deadline. We were delighted with what we saw, not the least because the libraries spanned the state geographically from Wayne down to Cherry Hill and Camden County. Each library had the strong Administration-level support and team structure that our guidelines required. (applications attached)

We had decided that each library would make its own decisions whether to solicit staff volunteers or pay their staff facilitators, and whether they would meet in their libraries or in public cafes or bookstores. With our support always available, they would decide their membership makeup, community volunteer arrangements, and how the club would purchase books beyond the initial sets funded by the contract

In March 2014 we sent notification letters to the six libraries:

- Camden County
- Cherry Hill
- Eastern Branch, Monmouth County Library
- Middletown
- Wayne
- Woodbridge

We sent a press release announcing this development to local media outlets. (attached)

In April we prepared for the May 7 meeting.

May 2014 – June 2015

On May 7, 2014, Scotch Plains Public Library hosted an all-day training session. The 33 attendees included representatives from all six libraries, along with interested parties from Brooklyn Public Library; Mimi Lee, NJSL Adult, Urban, and Diversity Specialist; Cheryl O'Connor, Executive Director of LibraryLinkNJ; and a librarian from Virginia who had driven up the previous day to see SPPL's clubs in action at Panera.

The program and surveys from NCBC4NJL and Next Chapter Book Club are attached. In summary, every respondent felt that the training had prepared them for the challenge of starting and growing their own book club. Tom Fish's and Jillian Ober's morning training was enthusiastically received, as were the informal question-and-answer period with Pam, Amy, and Lauren and film prepared by Pam to give a taste of what the book clubs are like.

Over the summer, the libraries began planning their clubs and reaching out to potential members, volunteers, and community contacts.

The clubs launched from July 2014 (Wayne) through January 2015 (Eastern Branch Monmouth and Middletown). Each library overcame initial trepidation and challenges on the road to success. We provided email and phone support as needed and site visits to four of the libraries: Wayne and Eastern Branch, Monmouth County declined the offer. We have provided an overview of each library's involvement at the end of this chronology.

Our first conference call for all participating libraries (and Tom Fish, Jillian Ober, and Cheryl O'Connor) was held on March 3, 2015 (rescheduled from January due to snow).

Pam spoke about NCBC4NJL at the 2nd NCBC and Beyond Conference in Chicago in April 2015.

Our final conference call took place on June 9, 2015 with a wrap-up survey sent in advance (completed surveys are included in this packet).

On June 27, Pam spoke about NCBC4NJL at the ALA Annual Conference, on an ASCLA panel organized by Next Chapter. (slides attached)

The contract period for NCBC4NJL ended on June 30, 2015. We believe we have largely met the Measures of Success detailed in the Strategic Planning Project Table we submitted in August 2013:

- *6 libraries start next Chapter Book Clubs, with 4-8 members each. **DONE, with 34 new members.***
- *Libraries work with SPPL to sustain them during this period, with a commitment to continue them after project end. **DONE, with unanimous commitment to continue communication.***
- *Newly trained libraries will agree to assist with future training for other libraries. **The respondents to our survey and on our wrap-up conference call agree to do this, and had committed to doing so in the letters of intent which accompanied their applications.***
- *Scotch Plains Public Library will maintain a blog or online newsletter with topics of interest to all, book titles, success stories, and updates. **DONE through Facebook Group and email updates, which some of our participants prefer. If there is one aspect of our effort that could have been stronger, we believe this is it. We faced unforeseen illness and pregnancy that effectively reduced team involvement to one person by early 2015.***

We also underestimated the staff time needed before launch by the six libraries, and the administrative, writing and promo time needed by SPPL. However, since we overestimated the support services that the libraries would request from us, the budget worked out well.

Some libraries have expressed concern about obtaining books as they move forward. Thanks to the fact that the cost of the initial book sets for each library came in under budget, we were able to purchase additional book sets for loan amongst the libraries.

THE LIBRARIES

Each library designed a group according to its own preferences and the needs of the community it serves, and we are so pleased with the outcomes you will see detailed below for each library, the challenges they have met and the service they extend:

1. **Camden County Library** launched its club on September 18, 2014, with six members and three facilitators. They still have the same numbers, but different faces. Their members are older teens and adults, all genders. They meet at the library. Members feel that the food court at the mall would be too distracting. Their coordinator is Rosemary Scalese, Head of Adult Services, and facilitators are staff members Shyamoli De and Dorothy Palazzo. Staff are paid for their participation. Library Director Linda Devlin provides Administration-level support. Books are provided from the library budget. Lauren Kolaya paid a site visit to the first meeting.

This club loves poetry and facilitators begin each meeting with a poem. Rosemary wrote, *“Our book club is truly an enjoyable group. We get together to read, socialize, and have some snacks. It’s a time we all look forward to each week.”*

2. **Cherry Hill Public Library** began meeting on September 18, 2014, and has since met at Whole Foods. Librarians Linda Tilden and Deena Caswell facilitate, and Administration-level support is provided by Laverne Mann, Library Director. The club has five members and Linda and Deena are paid for their time. They paid out of pocket for one set of books and have asked for funding from their Friends group for more sets. Pam paid a site visit on the club’s launch.

Deena wrote, *“I love our group—we have a very regular set of members and we all have a great time at our weekly meetings. I’m genuinely excited to go and read with our group every week, and feel so proud and happy when someone has a great reading day, or when we’re all eager to see what happens next in the story...We get a lot of positive feedback from the families in our group. They appreciate having the social opportunity as well as the chance for reading. A few of the parents have remarked that they were surprised how well their child was doing with the book, because it was a stretch for their reading level. I think having the supportive environment of the NCBC and the assistance of the coordinators and their peers helps everyone grow as readers...The staff time needed and the costs involved are both fairly minimal, and it is a great benefit to the community! It shows that libraries are willing and able to provide services for a diverse population of users, particularly an underserved community like adults with developmental disabilities. I think NCBC is an all-around winner—good for the libraries, their communities, and the membership.”*

3. **Eastern Branch, Monmouth County Library** was the last group to begin, with hesitancy and delays attributed to staff changes and cutbacks. They persevered and prevailed with a first club meeting in the library on January 27, 2015. They have five members and the two staff facilitators, Beth Miller and Kim Avagliano, Eastern Branch Director, who also provides Administration-level support, are paid for their time as part of the regular schedule. Their Friends group pays for some books, and they will borrow others. Beth writes, *“Everything is great. My fear was not having formal training with a special needs group. No training needed. I work in a public library and have a lot of experience with all population segments.”* When asked what elements of NCBC she would share to generate buzz among other librarians, Beth answered, *“The absolute simplicity of the concept of including all community members in a library-related program.”*

4. **Middletown Public Library** launched its club on January 15, 2015. It meets at the library with two paid staff members and no community volunteers. The group has five members of all ages and reading levels. Pam paid a site visit to Middletown soon after the club began. Jennifer Salt, Early Literacy Librarian and Stephanie Chadwick, Teen Librarian, facilitate the group during work time, and Megan Wianecki, Head of Circulation, provides Administration-level support. Jennifer shared with us, *“I absolutely love it, I consider myself a facilitator and a member.”*

5. **Wayne Public Library** was the first library to launch, in July 2014, with two members. It now meets weekly at Wendy's with a group of four young adults. Coordinator Doreen Shoba, Head of Adult Services, and community facilitator Barbara Cohen participate on a volunteer basis. Jody Treadway, Director, provides Administration-level support.

They have done extensive outreach to schools, places of worship, organizations, and other libraries to recruit members. They are considering expanding outreach beyond the young adult population to grow their group. Wayne's Friends group has committed to supplying two sets of books per year. Doreen Shoba writes, *"Both the Board of Trustees and the library patrons feel this is one of the best programs of our library...I would like to keep this program going and growing, It is considered [an] essential and noble effort in our library."*

6. **Woodbridge Public Library** was the second library to launch, holding its first club meeting on September 10, 2014. Partnering with the NJ State Developmental Center to provide a club for its adult clients, and paying staff for meeting during library hours, the club launched initially at Target, moving later on to Menlo Park Mall. Successful and well-attended from the start, WPL's team under the direction of Assistant Director Patty Anderson, cleared several bureaucratic hurdles before their start date, including getting exempted from required fingerprinting and background checks. Books are purchased from the Adult Book account. Pam paid a pre-launch visit to Target, at Patty's request, and Amy Chervenjak made a site visit at their first group meeting.

Woodbridge has 8-9 members and 3 facilitators, currently Assistant Director Patty Anderson (Administration support and weekly presence), Librarians Ann Taylor and April Kane. Patty Anderson writes, *"From an administrative perspective, I would encourage other library administrators to support a NCBC initiative. If possible, partner with other organizations within your community. The rewards are immeasurable in terms of community support, good will and the personal benefits to the participants."*

During our June conference call Woodbridge staff remarked that NCBC4NJL is a *"terrific project. [We] can't say enough positive things about it."*

All participating libraries have expressed an interest in continuing communication within this group.

FINAL NJBC4NJL Budget

Proposed	
6 groups - 10 hours of support each @\$35/hour staff time	\$ 2,100.00
6 site visits by SPPL facilitators @ \$100 each	\$ 600.00
NCBC training and supplies	\$ 2,800.00
SPPL staff preparation and development	\$ 1,000.00
Meetings -- food and materials	\$ 500.00
PR, printing, posters for libraries	\$ 1,000.00
Package of materials	\$ 350.00
Stipend for books for volunteers @\$200 per club	\$ 1,200.00
Tom Fish's NCBC book -- one for each team member	\$ 300.00
TOTAL Contract Awarded	\$ 9,850.00

Actual	
6 groups -- support	\$ 577.50
4 site visits	\$ 707.50
NCBC training and supplies (including Tom Fish and Jillian's presentation & travel)	\$ 2,176.97
SPPL staff time, including preparation, development and maintenance	\$ 2,005.00
Meetings-- food and materials	\$ 406.86
PR, printing, logo, posters for libraries, movie	\$ 1,882.34
Package of materials (including 48 copies of Lucky Dogs, hi-lo reader)	\$ 794.03
Book stipend for first book set for groups & lendable sets	\$ 552.12
Tom Fish's NCBC book -- one for each team member	\$ 440.00
Pam's flight	\$ 310.91
TOTAL SPENT	\$ 9,853.23