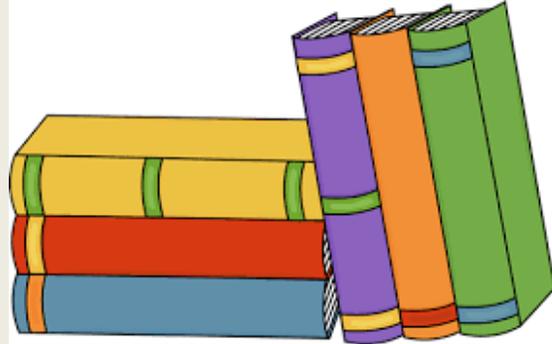


Summer Reading Extends Beyond the Season

Summer isn't the only time individuals enjoy reading. Fortunately, there are great programs that promote reading among individuals with disabilities throughout the year. One example is book clubs. For those who aren't familiar with Next Chapter Book Clubs, they were started by Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities in 2009 to give adolescents and adults with disabilities an opportunity to read and socialize in an inclusive setting. Eight years later they have evolved into their own based on the interests and needs of members in their community. We reached out to club coordinators to find out what's happening in their groups and to hear from some of their members. Here's what they had to share.



By: Tanya Chavez, Down Syndrome Association of Middle Tennessee

Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) is a weekly book club meeting for people with Down syndrome or other intellectual disabilities. It is an inclusive program that provides people the opportunity to read and learn to read, talk about books, and make friends in a fun, community setting. The Next Chapter Book Club meets on Tuesdays at the Target Cafe on White Bridge Road from 7:00-8:00. The group meets to read aloud and to discuss a book chosen by the group. NCBC is led by Beth who is also a sibling of an individual with Down syndrome.



A visit was made to NCBC to see what it is all about. There are 7 people in attendance, Patricia, Will, Natalie, Jeanie, Lauren, Morgan, and Beth. All the members of this particular book club are in their 20's and 30's and say they are all really good friends. They text each other often and if someone has to miss will catch each other up on the book. The group says any adult can come join them, but it is best to start at the beginning of a book. The attendees described the group as extremely fun, NOT boring like you would think a reading club might be, funny, and a no-judgement zone. The group is currently reading *Beauty and the Beast*, and had a huge array of reading skills from one member who read adding a

French accent to some of the characters, to another who did "echo reading" on parts of sentences that were difficult. This is where one person will read the unknown words and the other will repeat. The members state they are able to get help if they need it and will sometimes stop to Google words they do not know. Every member says they have improved their reading and understanding of books since starting the Book Club. There was a lot of laughter throughout the evening, you could see the support the members had for each other and the great friendships made within the club. NCBC was very team oriented, they respected the other members, and everyone's opinion counted, even if they did not always agree.

NCBC has completed a total of 19 books since it started, some of the favorites are *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Chronicles of Narnia* (although a couple people did not like the White Witch character), *Charlotte's Web*, and *the Princess Bride*. The members talked of reading *B.F.G.*, then went to see the movie in the theater when it came out. Also, after reading *the Wizard of Oz*, they saw *Wicked* at T-PAC thanks to a book

club member having a job there. Once a book is complete they will have a pizza party and vote on the next book they would like to read.

The Next Chapter Book Club is supported by the Down Syndrome Association of Middle TN, and books for this group are supplied by the Arc of Williamson County. Book Clubs meet across the state with group make-up varying across ages and abilities. If you would like to participate in this particular Book Club contact Beth at bethlfetzer@gmail.com, advance registration is requested.

By: Lorrie Willbergh Crockett, East Tennessee Technology Access Center

The East Tennessee Technology Access Center, located at 116 Childress Street Knoxville TN, serves 24 counties (see the map here <http://www.ettac.org/aboutus.html>). We have a variety of programs focusing on education, literacy, vocational rehabilitation, communication, and social activities. Services are for any age, infants to seniors with any disability. ETTAC has low vision services, durable medical equipment, and community center activities like drum circle and martial arts.

- **ETTAC Reading Lab** is for any struggling reader. You can access this service in our lab or anywhere you have Wi-Fi (home, library, school). Assessment, leveled readers, and virtual tutor lessons are available where you can work on comprehension, fluency, grammar, phonics, and writing your own stories. We can also loan software to work on a variety of skills or help with things like word prediction, looking up words in a dictionary, or listening to text.

Do you have a smartphone or tablet? We can help you find apps too! We ask for a \$35 donation for the intake meeting and this provides you access to the lab, and the ability to borrow equipment for one year.

Our vision specialist Paula Jones has technology to loan people who are blind or have low vision. The use of our handheld video magnifiers can enlarge text up to 12X. We have several types of optical character recognition software with a document camera to snap a picture of the page and have it read out loud to you. If you find a book that is not available in large print, with approval from the book publisher, we can enlarge the text. Also with approval from the publisher we have a braille to emboss the book so that a person who reads braille may participate.

- Laura Payne and Joel Simmons are heading up a new afternoon program that will begin this fall for people ages 14-44. **SPARK** stands for Starting People Along the Road of Knowledge. At the very heart of the road in education and employment, is being able to read. ETTAC has a reading lab and many resources that people will be able to access four nights a week from 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. as they pursue their education and employment goals. Being able to read can spark and increase involvement in many interests. It only takes a spark to get a person onto a path that can change his or her life and contribute to the lives of other people and our community.
- In several counties, we host book clubs for people with any disability, and at any level of reading. **Anybody's Book Club** is open to everyone! ETTAC has a large library of high interest classic books chosen by our clubs. We have a cool piece of technology called the Anybook reader that allows someone who can't speak or read to take a turn reading aloud – thanks to fantastic volunteers who record our books! We have another piece of technology for individuals who are shy or speak very quietly. It's called a voice amplifier but we call it "Anybody's Book Club Karaoke" and it is amazing to see people being heard, and starting to ham it up behind the microphone! Do you like current events? We have a subscription to News 2 You, a symbol based newspaper that anyone can read (with a text version for those that read fluently). Some groups choose to use this for book club (individuals can use it for reading lab too.)

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder asked ETTAC for testimonials and here is what we received:

Brittany Norrod, Blount County:

Best part of book club: *"Being able to read with my friends! That it's the best place to go to read."*

Favorite Book: *"Oliver Twist because Oliver made the world a better place."*

Mariah Hess, Sevier County:

Best part of book club: *"I like reading the book. It helps me read better."*

Favorite Book: *“Winn Dixie was my favorite book. I liked the people in the book and the dog!”*

Contact us about joining an existing club or starting a new one. We can start new clubs in any of our 24 county service region with either a partner agency or a facilitator and at least four to eight club members. If you are interested give us a call and we can help find others to join you if we don't have a club near you!

- We will also be doing literacy as part of our summer camp experience. We pair augmentative communication devices with books to allow everyone to participate. Summer Camp will be held June 12th-16th for kids up to Age 13 and June 19th -23rd for ages 13 and up. Everyone is welcome - people with disabilities, siblings, and friends! Cost is \$100. Check out <http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Summer-Camp-at-ETTAC.html?soid=1102653126604&aid=n4GiiGXbxHY> for a list of our special guests!
- Check out new **Sensory Art Classes** on Tuesdays for Kids! with Sarah Cole. Sarah and Lorrie will be working on emergent literacy skills, socialization and art. Sarah also has other weekly art classes for people with special needs and caregivers. Check out <http://www.yellowkeyartcenter.org/calendar-classes-events> to register or for more information.

Please contact LorrieC@ettac.org or (865) 219-0130 and I will get your information to the correct staff member or check out www.ettac.org. Sign up for our newsletter to hear about new programs and activities and check us out on www.facebook.com/ettac.org