

Book Club Study: Nuts and Bolts

Led by Jennifer Asimakopoulos

Start Time: 3:15pm

Notes by Margita Lidaka

Topic: Supporting Outside Book Groups

Book in a Bag presented by Elizabeth Hopkins

- Lisle Public Library provides circulating book club in a bag
- Tote bag comes with 10 copies and has 6 week checkout period
- recycles old copies of book club copies
- Includes author bio, readalikes, study guide, book group tips, handouts, 6 week checkout
- Have been providing book club in a bag for about 18 months
- First 10 checkouts got sparkling beverage (non-alcoholic!) as part of launch
- Brought handouts to share, also available to browse on the website
- Book bags have become talking point since kept behind reference desk
- Biggest challenge is that you cannot split up the books within the bag

Discussion of Book Club in a Bag

- LaGrange Public Library had issues with breaking up bag, so can checkout bag or just check out individual copies of the book
- Someone mentioned that they have a book club shelf, can be checked out individually by anyone but only reservable for residents
- Brookfield Library had book club card and could check out multiple on that card as long as one member was cardholder
- Someone just discontinued their book club bag, bags themselves were popular and sometimes stolen
- Some libraries sell the bags
- Mentioned that difficulty for book club groups as eventually they have gone through all the titles. But can you become invaluable to them as the source for getting new suggestions

Jennifer Asimakopoulos on Indian Prairie's Book Club Request Form

- Do not have enough space to house lots of book club titles
- Instead have book club request form, but also starting asking if they wanted to also get book discussion questions and author bio information on the form
- From including those extra perks, up to 340 requests now. Can email link to author info and questions etc. or can print resources for them
- Do offer to help picking out book club titles as well
- Can do form online, but usually fill out in person
- Keep list of request info, so if repeat can send out info again easily

- ILL the books and patrons get them from behind circ desk, quick turnaround for getting request processed
- Patrons at library have to stop at reference desk to fill out form and so get option for interaction

Question: How do you handle requests for hard to get/popular titles

- Elizabeth mentioned that initial collection were books already had by the library for book clubs, Lisle offers ILL for books that they don't already have. If book club is super popular, can suggest book club bag

General discussion/feedback

- Someone was told to avoid hardcovers due to weight
- Becky mentioned that we often forget about what we can offer beyond being able to get the physical books, services we can offer. Have a newsletter f.x.
- Jennifer mentioned that every summer they have a book club party, send personal letter to email list and have chance to meet other book club members in person. Have done small group discussions, and have sometimes made groups of different groups to talk to new people. Get to share tips and hear the problems they have faced etc. Show them resources such as Novelist if too busy. Trying to create sense of community among book groups.
- Mentioned that Hinsdale keeps lists of groups in town, not just at library, who are willing to take on new members and offer it to patrons. Can do matchmaking for them.
- Elizabeth mentioned that personalized readers services are key, can help someone pick titles especially if they take turns
- Indian Prairie has offered to guest lead a book discussion, although hasn't been taken up too much so far. Can do it at house or at the library, depending on library needs
- Library in New Zealand that led book club for those experiencing homelessness. Donating extra copies of Lucky Day collection and donating to Housing Forward organization
- Library partnered with the jails to donate hot picks and discarded books, although trickier due to strict rules set by centers
- Partnering with local nursing home to lead discussion
- Used to do discussions for Wheaton library, and audiobooks were very much welcomed. Large print also enjoyed
- Can get them involved in other ways at the library, such as getting them involved with Friends of the Library, or learning that they can volunteer
- Have had more book club members who have been attending board meeting meetings or publicly attending meetings and invested in library.

Any challenges working with outside book groups?

- Challenge with legacy group that always met inside of library, but did not want any of the staff members to be involved. Someone had previously been working at the library and part of the club, but did not welcome staff at all. Had to remove group from official marketing and had been giving stipend but had to stop that as well. Legacy group to attend board meeting, and will now have staff member guest lead one of the discussions. Going to try to rebrand with a library led book club
- Can be great but can also cause lots of drama
- Did not always have sympathetic circulation staff for the extra work involved in getting materials for book club books, the processes etc. Can be hard to avoid resentment and resistance to process
- Pet peeve about people complaining about having work to do
- Hard to change a mindset, trying to make library invaluable and use that as selling point message for staff
- Spin ideas as a positive thing to offer this service at the library

Any issues you are having in your book groups, any questions

- Someone has a “gigolo” attending their group recently, and he monopolizes group and hits on the other members
- Ideas for resolving issue:
 - Try pulling aside and speaking to the person, mention the level of discomfort
 - Maybe something in patron code of conduct
 - If big issue, can talk to other members of group and mention the issue and ask for anonymous comments of discomfort. Can have director present during talk, and can give verbal warning about the inappropriate behavior
 - Someone had to give 3 month ban due to constant inappropriate behavior from book club member

Possible topics for future leadership training

- Sci-fi club in Itasca, not getting lots of return customers. Troubleshooting how to roll it out and get more traction for group
 - Becky suggested adding event on Meetup or Facebook or get author to do skype with group
- Sunsetting a book club program
- Share under the radar titles