Issue #5 *Fall 2026*

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



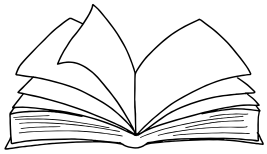
Welcome to the Disability Book Week Fall Newsletter! I'm excited to share the latest updates from Disability Book Week (DBW)! Our sensitivity readers are currently reviewing more books to add to our growing collection of disability-inclusive reads at disabilitybookweek.org.

We have received more than 60 book submissions since May, and we're thrilled to continue expanding our list of stories that celebrate disability representation and diverse experiences.

Beyond book submissions, DBW volunteers have been hard at work spreading the word about Disability Book Week at events around the world. Below you will see some of the tables and events that some DBW volunteers have participated in recently.

We're also developing exciting new projects, including a resource page explaining and featuring accessible books, as well as educational resources to complement young adult literature.

Thank you for being part of the Disability Book Week community! Together, we're championing disability-inclusive literature and building a world where diverse experiences are represented, differences are celebrated, and every reader can find stories they relate to.



Warmly,

Lindsey Larsen, OTD, OTR/L, ASDCS
Disability Book Week Executive Director



BOO BASH IN TEXAS, USA



SPED FAIR IN SOUTH CAROLINA, USA



DBW DISPLAY IN ILLINOIS, USA

AUTHOR INTERVIEWS ON YOUTUBE

Superstar Author Interviews













Watch On Our YouTube Channel: @DisabilityBookWeek

BEYOND THE BOOK: HOW AUTHORS SHARE THE MESSAGE OF DISABILITY BOOK WEEK



AUTHOR CINDY BOUDREAUX

Every author event is an opportunity to do more than talk about books. It's a chance to spark conversations, build connections, and help readers discover stories that reflect their lives and broaden their understanding of others.

As an all-volunteer organization, Disability Book Week (DBW) relies on word-of-mouth recommendations and community connections to help more people discover disability-inclusive literature. Every conversation, book recommendation, and shared resource helps expand our reach. When authors share DBW alongside their own work, they help spread awareness of the broader mission and vision of DBW: to amplify authentic disability representation, connect readers with inclusive stories, and foster a more inclusive world through literature.

We asked three DBW volunteers who are also authors with books featured on disabilitybookweek.org how they use author opportunities to connect readers with DBW and why these conversations matter.

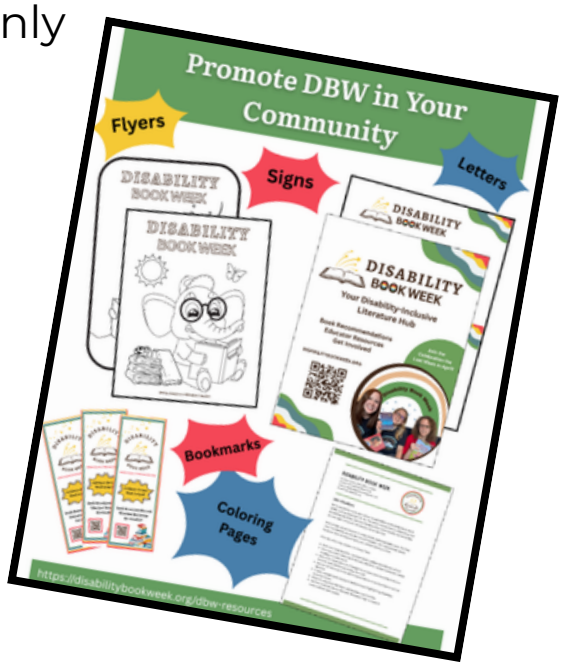
Sharing DBW at Author Events

Authors often attend events such as author visits, book signings, school presentations, and community gatherings. We asked our contributors how they introduce readers to DBW at these events.

Gina shares: “I've had DBW flyers available alongside my books at author events so people can become aware of it. It's a natural fit since a couple of my books feature autistic characters.”

Mike states: “When patrons are interested by the disability aspect of my book, I try to make a point to mention DBW and resources available on the website. When someone buys my book, and I’m present, I always slip in a DBW bookmark.”

Cindy adds: “I am intentional to have DBW materials—like printouts, bookmarks, and coloring sheets—available at any event, big or small.” One such interaction “led to a standing school event that I have been invited to attend each year. This amazing opportunity allows me to not only highlight my work but to also showcase dozens of recognized, published books on DBW.”



From bookmarks and flyers to conversations at school events, these authors have found natural and practical ways to introduce readers to DBW.

Why Representation Matters

We asked our contributors why it is important for them to share about DBW when they have an opportunity to connect with readers?

Cindy explains: “Before becoming a mother to a daughter with severe spastic cerebral palsy, I worked as a pediatric occupational therapy assistant. I really value sharing about DBW because it’s been a cornerstone of my life, emphasizing inclusion and nurturing my lifelong love for reading. These two passions are so intertwined that they just seem to belong together.”

Mike shares: “I’ve met so many readers who connect with my book because of the disability aspect of the story. I take this opportunity to let them know there are so many other disability stories out there and how they can access these stories.”



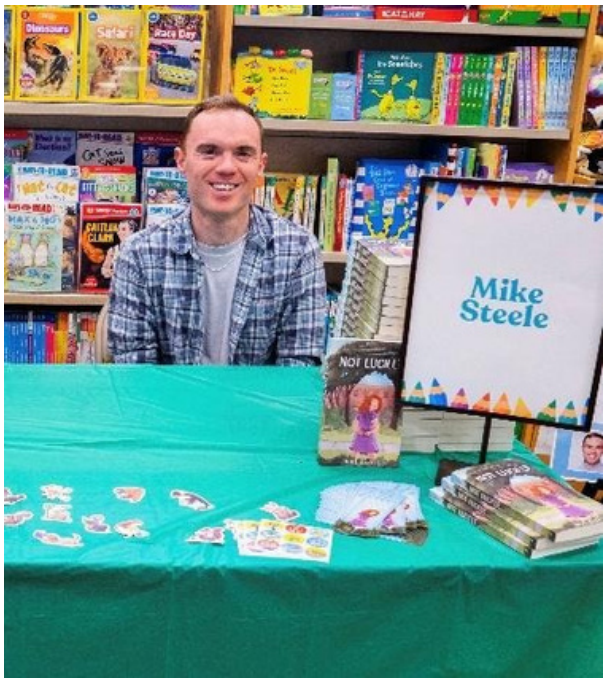
AUTHOR GINA ANDREW

Gina adds: “Both of my kids are autistic, so I love sharing that Disability Book Week exists—and encouraging people to check out books with disabled characters like my kids, who haven't always been in the stories we read.”

For these authors, sharing DBW has become a natural extension of their personal and professional experiences.

Building Connections Through DBW

Sharing about DBW also creates meaningful connections among authors, educators, and readers. We asked our contributors to share a memorable interaction you had with a reader, parent, educator, librarian, or fellow author who found something valuable through DBW?



AUTHOR MIKE STEELE

Mike shares: “I’m a school librarian, and a colleague told me she was going to purchase several of the DBW books for her classroom library. As educators, we work with students through the years who have a variety of disabilities. It’s always meaningful when these students can see themselves reflected in the literature found in their own classrooms.”

Cindy recalls: “At a local book signing, I met a fellow author of disability-inclusive literature. By sharing DBW with him and echoing the encouragement I once received, I was able to help him learn how and where to submit his books for review by our sensitivity readers.”

Gina remembers: “At a small fair last year, I just happened to sit next to a children's book author who wrote a book about a Deaf girl. She'd heard of DBW, but hadn't submitted her book yet. It was great to be able to make that connection, buy her book, and feature it on the DBW website!”

Helping Readers Find Their Stories

A simple conversation about DBW has the potential to lead someone to a book, resource, or perspective they have been searching for. We asked our contributors if they have ever had a conversation about DBW lead someone to a book, resource, or perspective they have been searching for?

> **When authors share DBW alongside their own work, they help spread awareness of the broader mission and vision of DBW**

Cindy reflects: “It’s incredibly heartwarming to see smiles widen and expressions soften when someone realizes they’ve found a book that speaks to them. I like to believe that smile says, ‘I AM seen!’ Sometimes, we discover things we didn’t know existed or that we were truly searching for, but when it finds us, it could be just what they needed all along.”

Mike shares: “When I wrote to the governor of New Jersey about DBW and she proclaimed April 19–25, 2026 as Disability Book Week across the state, there were a few news articles. From that promotion, I received emails from a few strangers thanking me and letting me know how happy they were to see disability represented in literature. One parent told me she was going to buy books showcased on the DBW website that represent her own child’s disability.”

Keep the Conversation Going

Building a more inclusive literary landscape is a shared effort. DBW is grateful to all the DBW volunteers and showcased authors who continue to introduce readers to DBW, our advocacy week (the last full week in April), and the website full of resources to support readers and volunteers in their quest to find and share disability-inclusive literature.

Thank you to our Contributors:

Mike Steele is the author of the middle-grade novel *Not Lucille*.

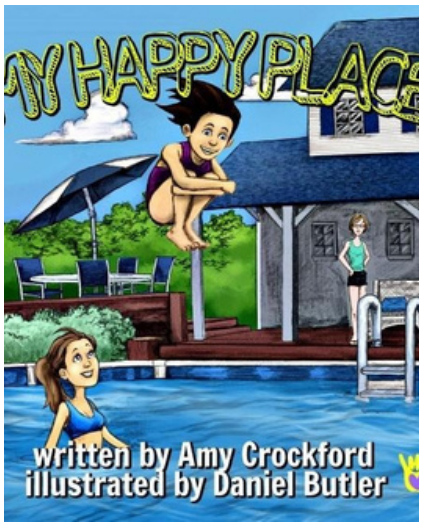
Cindy Boudreaux is the author of the children's picture book *Possibilities*.

Gina Andrew is the author of many adult novels including *Maybe She Will* and *Everything Left Unsaid*.



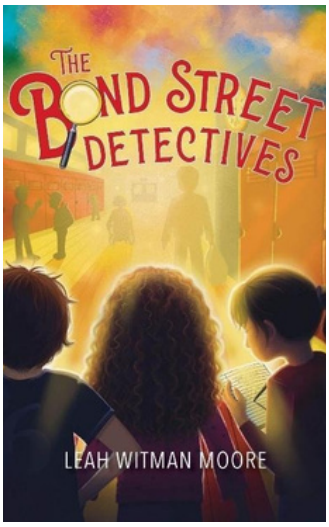
NEW ADDITIONS TO DISABILITYBOOKWEEK.ORG

CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK



What our Sensitivity Reader had to say: "I could relate to everything shared in this book as a deaf person...a great educational way for hearing kids to learn how to modify a game to include everyone who is deaf/hard of hearing."

CHILDREN'S CHAPTER BOOK



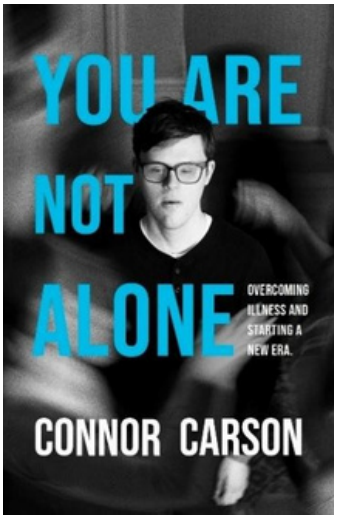
What our Sensitivity Reader had to say: "Great book! I liked how the author portrayed the character with disabilities as well as introducing the reader to information about disabilities in general."

YOUNG ADULT



What our Sensitivity Reader had to say: "I loved how authentically the book portrays disability, anxiety, and the importance of finding people who truly understand and accept you...heartfelt and relatable."

ADULT



What our Sensitivity Reader had to say: "I was very touched by Connor's retelling of the challenges he faced, but what hit my heart was his ability to share about resiliency and overcoming issues that can be applied in anyone's life regardless of circumstances."

WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Kelley M Likes

A mini-stroke survivor, brain tumor host, and lifelong storyteller, Kelley believes books can help children see the world, and themselves, in new ways. When she's not writing, Kelley enjoys encouraging young writers, speaking to students about the publishing process, and helping aspiring authors bring their own stories to life.

Kelley is the host of Disability Book Week Superstar Authors Video Series





VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you are interested in being a sensitivity reader for adult, young adult, or middle-grade novels, please email Lindsey at lindsey.disabilitybookweek@gmail.com

To be a Sensitivity Reader

- Have a disability
- Have a close family member with a disability

OR

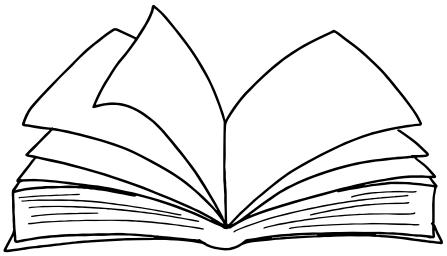
- Regularly work with individuals with disabilities

WANT TO JOIN A BOOK CLUB?

DBW is exploring the possibility of starting a quarterly book club that meets online. Are you interested? Fill out the Google form at https://forms.gle/FoH7HvzQ1e99vBMB8 and/or contact volunteer Gina Andrew at writerggandrew@gmail.com to express your interest.



If we have enough interested participants, we can plan a meeting this winter (after the holidays).



DISABILITY BOOK WEEK IS DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING AND PROMOTING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE LITERATURE THAT AUTHENTICALLY REPRESENTS THE DIVERSE EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DISABILITY BOOK WEEK AMPLIFIES VOICES, CHALLENGES STEREOTYPES, EDUCATES, AND FOSTERS A CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING AND INCLUSION THROUGH THE POWER OF STORYTELLING.

WWW.DISABILITYBOOKWEEK.ORG