

Anixtercenter DISABILITY SERVICES

May 2025

Literacy Spotlight

Author in the Making: Learner, Rebecca Kennedy Writes Her First Book!

Groundbreaking news! Rebecca Kennedy, an adult literacy learner with learning challenges, has written and illustrated her very first book, and she's just getting started! Rebecca meets with her tutor, Anne Siwek, every Wednesday afternoon. Since joining Anixter's adult literacy program, Rebecca has already advanced from a 3rd grade to a 4th grade reading level, a milestone that reflects her hard work and the power of personalized support.



Rebecca's first book began as a skit in her drama class, where she acted out a story with her friends Madison and Andrew about a ferret living in the jungle. With encouragement from her literacy tutor, Anne...and her drama teacher, Hailey, Rebecca turned that skit into a storybook. She named the main character "PJ the Ferret" (a nod to her love of peanut butter and jelly and to her brother's pet ferret, whom she enjoys spending time with).

Rebecca illustrated the book herself, using markers to draw three colorful scenes. Hailey then helped laminate and bind the book, giving it the feel of a real published story. PJ's story is a heartfelt one! PJ lives in a jungle full of fairy friends, but struggles with anxiety caused by noisy siblings. PJ dreams of having a quiet treehouse where he can meditate, rest, and recharge.

Writing the book wasn't easy! Rebecca said, "the hardest part was staying focused, but it was worth it". She went on to say, "I feel like a book writer," she proudly said. "Writing the book teaches me that I can write other books." Rebecca said she "worked hard" but the process was "fun". She now plans to write more stories featuring animal characters from her imagination.

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CRS Legacy: Urban Adventures

CRS Legacy participants remained very active during the month of May. They took part in exciting activities on site and continued their adventures in the community. They continued to volunteer at Bernie's Book Bank and Feed My Starving Children. Favorite trips of the month were to the Chicago Field Museum, the Chicago History Museum, Loyola Beach, and the Lincolnwood Mall. They are looking forward to warmer weather in the month of June.



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CRS Choice: Community Connections

May was a busy month for CRS Choice participants as they remained on the move exploring activities within the community. There were trips to shop at a variety of stores and malls, trips downtown Chicago to explore the parks and shop, bowling, the Chicago History Museum, the Field Museum, the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, the Chicago Botanic Garden, and Navy Pier. Two of the highlights of the month were going to downtown Chicago to shop at the Water Tower Place and an outing to the Lincoln Park Zoo on a beautifully sunny May day.

the Lincoln Park Zoo



Water Tower Place

the Lincoln Park Zoo



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ICILA: Staying Connected Fun with Friends

ICILA truly enjoyed May and all the fun it brought from celebrating birthdays, participating in volunteering opportunities, BBQ Picnic in the park and coffee dates with friends and staff. Of course, ICILA is looking forward to June.



Unity CILA: Joe's Birthday

On May 3rd, the residents of Unity CILA helped their friend Joe celebrate his birthday. Staff made sure the occasion was made extra special with custom-made basketball cake for Joe to share with his friends.

