

Neil

WCLS in Whatcom County presents Library Stories, a podcast to open your eyes to all the ways your local public libraries matter. Join us as we reveal the power of sharing at the library. I'm your host, Neil McKay, Online Experience Coordinator for the Whatcom County Library System. And today... all right. Hi, Mary.

Mary

Is this how we're starting? Just right out of the gate? Trying to change it up a bit. Hey, Neil, it's your boss, Mary.

Neil

Hey, Mary. Good to hear from you and see you.

Mary

Good to see you. I never see you. That's not true. We see each other all the time. Yes. Here we are with another podcast.

Neil

We are.

Mary

Awkwardly starting.

Neil

An awkward podcast.

Mary

About an important topic.

Neil

A very important and exciting topic.

Mary

Yeah, in April 2026, we announced that thanks to the hard work of the co-workers that you are going to be interviewing in today's podcast, that WCLS received a \$10,000 grant to work with deaf and the hard of hearing community here in Whatcom County. And this was a grant that they receive from the, that we receive from the American Library Association. It's an initiative that ALA has been supporting that provides community engagement and

accessibility resources to small and rural libraries like ours to help us better serve people with disabilities. And so this, it was a competitive award and Tasia and Rosie and Joy, who you'll be speaking with, wrote an excellent grant application, received was one of the, we're one of the, one of 300 libraries nationwide to participate in this 4th and final round of this ALA initiative. And the award comes with a \$10,000 grant that will help the Lynden Library. We're specifically working with the Lynden Library in our system on these initiatives, but to connect with the local deaf, hard of hearing community, to develop library-based programs that will serve that community.

Neil

And so, I reached out to the three of our staff that you're going to meet in a minute, Rosie, Tasia and Joy. And we had a nice conversation, very exciting, about how we are going to use these grant funds, how we're already using them to develop resources and create community specifically within the deaf and hard of hearing community. It's a really exciting thing. We've had one community conversation already focused on the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. And we're going to have another one coming up on September 12th. And this podcast is going to be out before then. So hopefully, if you're listening, you can get involved in the community conversation that we'll be having at the Lynden Library.

Mary

Yeah, and that's I think really why we're doing this podcast because the way I understand it, and I can't wait to hear your conversation with them, what we're doing is truly having conversations. We want to hear from the deaf and hard of hearing community about what services they need or resources, how we can best support that community. So, this is really an opportunity to listen and we're opening up new lines of communication, hoping to remove barriers to access, to establish partnerships and to create opportunities beyond what we may have imagined. And to do that, we need to talk with the community. So that's really why we're doing this podcast today. So if you're listening and you know someone in the deaf or hard of hearing community or an organization that you think needs to know about this, we sure hope that you'll let them know. Encourage them to come to the September 12th meeting at the Lynden Library. Or if they miss that or they can't attend, there is an e-mail and they can just e-mail accessibility@wcls.org and that will get to Rosie and Tasia and Joy and they'll be able to connect you with the conversation, the ongoing conversation.

Neil

And let me just point out that you don't need to be a member of the deaf and hard of hearing community to participate in these conversations that went on the 12th or any of our conversations. They're open to everyone as most everything in the library is.

Mary

Yeah, it's just one more great thing that the library system, the people who work here at the library system are doing to serve community. And it's September.

Neil

It is September.

Mary

It's library card signup month. And so let me just weave this into our conversation here, our short little intro. If you know someone who doesn't have a library card, please encourage them to get one during library card signup. It's signup month. It's so easy to do. They can go to any branch. The staff there would be happy to help. Get them a card. They can choose from among our wonderful designs. And the staff will get them started, show them a few things to let them start really fully exploring the library. So, during library card signup month, if you love libraries, please tell someone to get a card if they don't have one. Again, visit any WCLS branch or wcls.org/getacard.

Neil

All one word.

Mary

All one word, says the webmaster.

Neil

Okay, well let's get on with this show and listen to what Rosie and Joy and Tasia have to say.

Mary

Yeah. Okay.

Tasia

My name is Tasia Ross. I'm a public services assistant system-wide sub, so I work at all 10 of our library locations. But my home branch is Lynden, so if you come in, you might see me at the front desk.

Joy

Hello, my name is Joy McGrath. My job is as a public services assistant like Tasia, but my home branch is the Ferndale Library.

Rosie

Hi, my name is Rosie Everson and I am an interlibrary loan and circulation specialist and I work out of our Administrative Services building.

Neil

All right, well, thank you all for being here. I invited you to come and talk on the podcast because there's great news that a grant that you 3 applied for has been given to WCLS.

Rosie

Right, so it's a grant that is offered by the American Library Association in participation with libraries transforming communities, accessible small and rural communities. I guess it's an ALA initiative is a better word for it. So, this grant is designed to better serve small and rural library communities by providing support to libraries to create new programs for people with disabilities. So, we applied for this grant specifically to better serve deaf and hard of hearing patrons in Whatcom County.

Neil

So, when did you apply for the grant?

Rosie

We heard about the grant on really short notice, actually. I think we heard about it like 5 days or a week before it was actually due. And that was back in December. So, we put our grant application together on really short notice very quickly. And we were lucky to be one of 300 libraries selected for this grant.

Neil

So, 300 libraries across the country. Right, so what is this grant for, I guess is the easy question.

Tasia

I would say a core part of this grant is really centered around having community conversations and building what you use grant funds for based on community input, community needs, directly working with your primary audience we identified in the grant.

So, we saw a need to better serve deaf and hard of hearing library patrons. So that is our focus. Which we were awarded \$10,000 to work towards.

Rosie

I was just going to say that part of the grant requirements is that we have at least one community conversation with our audience, which is deaf and hard of hearing patrons. That way it's built around this collaborative approach. So it's not the library coming into these communities and telling people what they need. It's about talking with people, connecting with the community, and building relationships to better understand what the needs actually are. So luckily the grant kind of put us through this facilitator training for the conversations, but also the way the grant is structured really lends itself to like not us telling them what they need, but we talk to them. It's collaborative.

Neil

I want to get back to this idea of a community conversation. I mean, those are words that could be interpreted a lot of ways. So in terms of this grant, what is a community conversation?

Joy

The grant facilitates having a community input gathering session. So, we have already hosted our first community conversation and we hosted it at the Lynden Library and we opened up the session for anyone in the deaf and hard of hearing community and anyone who was interested in giving their input and joining the listening session. We brought some prompts to the conversation and some questions we had for the community that directly impacted how we use the funds that we are given through the grant, starting with some prompts asking what kind of programming they would like to see that directly relates to deaf and hard of hearing accessibility or community focused programming.

Neil

So, you had one community conversation already. How many do you plan on having?

Rosie

Our proposal said that we would have three, which is the plan. We have our second community conversation scheduled for September 12th at the Lynden Library from 3 to 4:30. So that one's on the calendar, but we have not booked our third community conversation yet. We had about 12 people come to the first one. And I think it's interesting to note too how we kind of got the word out about the community conversation.

Neil

Yeah, tell me.

Rosie

That's an important part of it. So, we reached out to a number of organizations in Whatcom County and in Washington State too that serve deaf communities like, let's see, Salish Sea Deaf School, Washington Hands and Voices, Cascadia Deaf Nation are all local-ish orgs that serve deaf and hard of hearing people. So, we sent them all the information about the grant and the first community conversation. Joy, Tasia, and I also attended a Hearing Loss Association meeting in Bellingham prior to the first conversation just to meet people and get the word out. Let's see. Posted on social media, obviously. So, it kind of goes back to the idea that we're connecting to established communities in order to get as many people as possible. So, we also made flyers to hand out at branches, made contacts to people we already know in the community that are deaf or hard of hearing. So, I think 12 was a good turnout. It kind of made it so we were able to have smaller group activities and individual activity where people were able to write down responses. And then we came back together as a whole group to discuss. 12, I think is a good number where you like, it feels maybe slightly more intimate. It's not overly intimidating. And one of I think the best parts of the conversation was at the end where we went around in a circle and I think the prompt was what was one thing that you were excited about or curious about or learned today? And we got some really good feedback from people and excitement about like what we can do moving forward together in the library and creating social clubs and all kinds of programs that we can talk more about.

Neil

Okay, so that was just the first conversation.

Rosie

It was a lot.

Neil

So it was, that sounds like a lot and like you got some very practical, specific ideas out of that. How do you feel about the ideas that you got? Are there things that you feel like you're excited about carrying forward now?

Tasia

Yeah, I would say, I want to break kind of the feedback we got into a couple different categories because a big part of what we also asked for was ideas about technology. We have budgeted about \$3,000 of the grant for technology purchasing. So, we really wanted

to hear if there was brands or types of equipment people were using that they found beneficial. So, something that came out of that was a, I don't want to say product, but it's called Auracast and it's hearing assistance technology based on Bluetooth. So, if we had Auracast transmitter at, like, an event or meeting, anyone with like Bluetooth hearing aids, headphones would be able to connect to the transmitter and be able to hear better what the presenter is saying. So that is one technology component we might be purchasing as part of the grant funds.

Neil

That seems like a huge assistance for people and it's a thing that didn't exist 10 or 15 years ago. If you had issues with hearing an event and you're sitting at the back or it's a noisy room, you just often, you just had to make the best of it. But now we have these tools. This is like an amazing tool that can just really help specific people.

Rosie

Yeah, and Auracast specifically isn't a huge financial burden. It doesn't cost too much to acquire. And that goes too for hearing loop technology, which is something else that we're looking at getting for the Lynden Library and then hopefully all of our branches. But hearing loop, it's basically like a microphone that's set up that will then direct the audio into hearing aids. A lot of hearing aids are already equipped with a T-coil. So as long as you have a hearing made with a T-coil, it'll automatically connect, or you can connect it to a hearing loop. So especially at our service desks, our reference desks, it would be really useful for people who use hearing assistive technology to better hear the library staff.

Neil

So this grant, was it specifically for the Lynden Library?

Tasia

Yes. So because this grant is for small and rural communities, they kind of had strict guidelines of you have to be more than 10 miles away from an urban center, have a population under this amount. So that really ruled out Ferndale because it's just too close to Bellingham. But we chose Lynden for a couple of reasons because we had a staff member who was hard of hearing in the past and really built community based out of the Lynden Library. The Lynden Library also has a video relay service phone in their small study room. So, anyone could reserve that study room and then if they are using American Sign Language, use the video phone to make phone calls. So, we really wanted to highlight these services and relationships that we already have out of Lynden and really just build community more.

Joy

So, the grant is based in Lynden and we're trying to focus our community conversations and technology for the Lynden community, but a lot of the services we are looking to develop and provide will be countywide. So, if we're hosting film screenings of films that were created by deaf and hard of hearing filmmakers, we would probably host them in Lynden, but perhaps Ferndale as well and some other branches around the county.

Rosie

Right. And all county residents are invited to come to the community conversations as well. You don't have to be a Lynden patron by any means.

Neil

Just like all residents are invited to every library. So that's the wonderful thing about this system. But it sounds like, in order to get the grant, we had to focus on a particular library with a particular set of criteria. which we did and it worked and congratulations. I don't know if I said that, but I know getting a grant is a real accomplishment. Getting some funds to help move things forward is always a great thing and we don't always have the funds to do the things we want. So, looking for grants is a huge thing.

Rosie

Yeah, it's very exciting and it's like a very unique and I think timely opportunity to have this chance to explore what type of technology we can get, what types of programs people most want to see at the library. So yeah, I think we've made good use of the time so far. I wanted to say at our community conversations too, we had an ASL interpreter, which is something that's always available for patrons to request American Sign Language interpretation. It's kind of not used very often, for in-person events, but it is available. So for our community conversations, we hired a interpreter and that was really great to see, just to be able to open up those lines of communication and increase inclusion for deaf and hard of hearing patrons who use ASL. So, we're hoping to be able to bring more ASL interpreters to events at WCLS in the future. So, I feel like we're kind of like test running a lot of stuff right now.

Neil

It feels like a pilot program and the things that we develop in Lynden are going to have, we're testing some things and some things, I don't know, maybe this is, I'm hoping that this is kind of the way you guys are thinking, but there's going to be things that seem to work really well and some things that might not work well.

Rosie

Definitely. And we've already identified some of our technology as somewhat dated. At our community conversation, we have some hearing loop technology that staff can request from our IT department to come and bring to any event for people who want to use the hearing loop. But unfortunately, a few of them were quite dated and out of service, I would say. So that's why we're looking at updating that for sure, I think, with our technology budget.

Neil

I guess that's a, I mean, that's going to be an ongoing problem, you know, for forever is that equipment gets outdated and there's always going to be a need to upgrade. So, this grant is a good kind of kickstart to get that going too.

Joy

Yeah, and the grant funds need to be spent by April 2027, but we're really hoping that the progress we make during the grant process continues and we can continue to use this information and provide these services on a regular basis rather than just during the grant timeline.

Tasia

This is like, this is not a one-and-done project. We really want to build these relationships with patrons and local organizations that serve deaf and hard of hearing people. So we really want it to be long lasting relationship building. Part of what we will also be doing is hiring someone to train Lynden Library staff in ASL. So, we really are trying to think of ways to facilitate staff retaining that knowledge. Maybe we'll have weekly prompts to get staff practicing with each other, but we really want to just continue learning and building and maintaining these relationships.

Rosie

Staff use or familiarity with ASL was one of the big things that came out of our first conversation. A number of people who attended said how much of an impact it would make to have just a little bit of ASL used when they come into the library and are greeted by staff. So I feel like having that basis of ASL knowledge goes a long way. Just like knowing a little bit can really make a big difference to make the library really feel like a welcoming place for deaf and hard of hearing patrons who use ASL.

Neil

Absolutely.

Rosie

And it's fun to learn, by the way. We had a staff-sorry to interrupt-we had a staff ASL learning group for a couple months last year. And we use Mango Languages, which is available for free with your library card. They have a whole ASL language course. So I'd recommend checking that out to anybody who's curious about ASL and wants to learn and practice. It's pretty great.

Tasia

Yeah, and Mango's really cool because in addition to its ASL course, it also has ASL for librarian courses.

Neil

What? Specifically for librarians?

Tasia

Yes, so we specifically went through as a staff group looking at, like, the librarian specific signs and it was really fun.

Neil

Wow. That I didn't know. I did know that Mango had an ASL package that we, it was an add-on that we opted in for, but I didn't know there was a specific ASL for the librarians. I suppose any civilians could use that too if they wanted to be able to kind of get on the inside of what librarians talk about.

Rosie

Yeah.

Neil

Is it a lot of acronyms? Because I know that librarians are all about acronyms.

Rosie

Not that I recall.

Tasia

Yeah, not too much.

Joy

It's more about learning how to sign library card and patron.

Neil

Okay. So lingo, terminology.

Tasia

Yeah, there's also like, yeah, computer, printer, like tech help stuff.

Neil

Just kind of focused on that rather than "How are you today?" And the colors of the rainbow. Yeah.

Joy

Yes.

Rosie

Yeah. I mean, I think there are a lot of times that learning ASL can be useful if you're even if you're a hearing person.

Neil

Yeah.

Rosie

Like sometimes if I'm at a concert with my husband. I know very basic sign language and I've taught him a few things, but super loud, you're at a concert, you can sign like, "do you want a drink?" Or like, "need bathroom." And you don't have to use your voice. And I know a lot of people too get tired of speaking and tired of hearing. It's just a really, yeah.

Neil

Well, and also with babies, there's been a huge movement for a long time to teach babies basic ASL signs before they're speaking words so that they can communicate. And it seems to be amazing. My grandson was one, he's four years old now, but he was able to say, you know, I'm hungry or, you know.

Rosie

Milk.

Neil

Milk, yes.

Rosie

Yeah, one of the things that came up in the conversation for our new programming was ASL Storytime. And patrons who came to the conversation kind of emphasized how important it is to have not just an ASL interpreter for this kind of event, but like an ASL storyteller, a fluent ASL speaker who can use that kind of like expertise and expression and storytelling using ASL. And I think that's a good example of something that would appeal to a lot of people outside of the deaf and hard of hearing community. It's, I think, easy to sometimes silo disability-centered programming, but it doesn't have to be that way. I think that's important to remember that like what we're saying with just general use of ASL.

Neil

Sure. I mean, along with that goes closed captions. And one of the things that we made an effort to do several years ago was closed caption all of our videos that we have on our YouTube channel. And that was, it felt really good to deliberately do that. Now these days, there's a lot of auto-generated closed captions, but that doesn't always work.

Tasia

And we ran into that with our first community conversation because we used PowerPoint has a closed caption function. So, we turned that on and used microphone for community conversation and it just was not the best.

Rosie

Something we've also looked into is CART captioning, which is live captioning done by a person either there at the event physically or remotely. It's just a way to get actually good captions for live programs.

Neil

So what else do we need to talk about with this? What's the future look like?

Tasia

Well, our next community conversation on September 12th, the goal for that one is to be more of like a social event, because what we realized with the first community conversation was that like there's a gap in the North Whatcom community where there's not really a place for people to engage with each other. And so whenever we had a break or at the end of the community conversation, people just kept talking to each other. So we really want to have our next conversation be a space where people can interact with each other more. And so it's going to be more social hour focused with focus on programming.

We really want to get into what programs do we want to make with the goal of running them like January through March of next year.

Neil

Okay, so what kind of programs are you, I mean, you must have some broad ideas of what kind of programs.

Joy

Yeah, some of the things that came up in our previous conversation that we want to continue talking about are deaf and hard of hearing book groups where it's done in ASL, the communication for the book group. ASL story times, like Rosie was mentioning, we'd like to have a deaf performer do the story time in ASL while maybe a librarian reads the storybook to make it accessible for deaf and hearing kiddos and letting the hearing children experience ASL and normalize it. And that would be a great way to incorporate a deaf performer in library programming. Some other things are social events, like Tasia was mentioning there's a gap of a social group in Whatcom County, specifically North Whatcom County, for deaf and hard of hearing community. So we would love to have a space where the community can get together and just have social hour, as well as education about deaf and hard of hearing issues. So we got the opportunity to attend a meeting of the Northwest Washington chapter of the Hearing Loss Association and they had a presentation during the meeting that we went to about hearing aids and the cost of hearing aids and insurance. And the presentation was from a local group that...

Tasia

I want to say they were called Whatcom Audiology.

Joy

Yes.

Neil

Oh yeah. I'm familiar with them.

Joy

Local audiology. And that was a really great event that could be brought to our libraries for a free seminar that people can learn about resources that they have for deaf and hard of hearing technology and just education about deaf and hard of hearing issues, making the community aware of what people experience.

Tasia

I found their presentation really interesting because they didn't only talk about just hearing aids, they also talked about kind of the social implications that you can have if you're losing your hearing and not addressing it. Because there's a lot of people who still feel kind of stigma about wearing hearing aids, but if you're unable to hear or can't fully hear, you might start more socially isolating yourself and not participating. And so I would really like to have just a series of programs in the library, just really educating about the importance of taking care of your hearing health. And maybe if we can partner with a local organization like that to provide those programs, it'd be really fun.

Rosie

Something else that maybe we touched on briefly was captioned film nights. Something else that could be really interesting for a lot of people. I always watch everything on TV with captions anyway, so it's hard to find. I mean, you go to the Regal Cinemas, it's not going to be captioned. I think Pickford maybe does a few captioned films every month. I'm not really sure, but being able to have captioned film nights in our libraries with even movies by deaf creators about deaf and hard of hearing people would be excellent and possibly a program that we might offer in the future, hopefully.

Neil

Yeah, and I know that Kanopy, our streaming movie service-time for a pitch-Kanopy offers closed captioning on, I think, almost every film that they show.

Rosie

That's awesome.

Neil

So they're committed to.

Rosie

What a great service. Kanopy. I'd love to see an ASL conversation group also. That's the thing with this grant. We're kind of just, we have so many ideas and there's so much possibility. Like Tasia said, the next conversation will be helpful in narrowing down how we're going to spend the money, but also some things like a film night we can do without grant funds. That doesn't really cost us a whole lot. So.

Neil

And you can do it throughout the library system at all the 10 branches.

Rosie

I think one of the biggest takeaways I had was the social events that just kept coming up over and over again, like increasing connections and networking and having support with your community is huge and something we can definitely nurture. I know that, at our conversation, I don't often meet other 30 somethings that have hearing loss. I'm deaf in one ear. And, you know, it just, I know some people that have hearing loss at my age, but it doesn't come up that often. But at our conversation, I talked to a couple people who had experienced similar things to me, not exactly the same, but it was just a rare thing to have happen and very exciting to be able to make those connections. So I think a social group or a deaf book club or, you know, hoping to attract more of that community to the library and also support those communities that are also already in existence.

Joy

So, this actually all started in 2024 when myself and Tasia attended an ALA webinar on serving deaf patrons in the library, which prompted us to identify a gap in our services for this audience. And because of that, we started a committee serving deaf and hard of hearing patrons in the library. So with this committee and with the grant, we have attended a couple different local events for connecting with the deaf and hard of hearing community. We went to the Northwest Washington chapter of the Hearing Loss Association meeting, as we mentioned before. But we also recently went to the Inclusion Festival in Bellingham. That was the first annual Inclusion Festival. It was a wonderful event. And we also went to family night for deaf and hard of hearing children and families at the Whatcom Center for Early Learning in Ferndale. And both of these events, all three of these events gave us a really great opportunity to create contacts within the community. And it's been great for finding people who would be interested in running programs and finding people who want to come to our community conversations and give that feedback.

Rosie

Yeah, it's kind of like doing specialized pop-ups in a way.

Joy

Yeah.

Rosie

You know, it's similar function to a regular library pop-up at any community event, but with connecting to deaf and hard of hearing patrons and the community in mind.

Neil

Yeah, I imagine being in the right place and where there are people who have similar agendas or organizations that have similar agendas is perfect to help this grow. And speaking of growing, So this grant is specifically for working with the deaf and hard of hearing community, but we are also working to make everything that we do more accessible to everyone throughout. And I know that Rosie, one of the things that you did was create a list of resources on our website. Do you want to talk about that a little?

Rosie

Sure, yeah. this was a year and a half or so ago. It feels like it's been a while, but I think I was kind of coming from my interest in sign language. I was looking for a side project and ended up compiling all of WCLS accessibility resources into one web page.

Neil

Ones that we already have.

Rosie

Yeah, existing WCLS accessibility resources, I would say. Because for our staff and for patrons, there was no real centralized place on our website that showed where all of our resources were. I mean, a lot of staff and patrons didn't even know we had a video phone ASL interpretation service. So hopefully by compiling all those things together, it'll be more clear for patrons and staff.

Neil

Yeah, and it's not just for deaf and hard of hearing folks. What are some examples of the things that you.

Rosie

Let's see. So, in addition to the resources for deaf and hard of hearing patrons, we have some like physical accessibility material like rolling walkers that patrons can come in and use.

Neil

So they're there at the library.

Rosie

Right, yeah, at Ferndale, Lynden and Deming for mobility. We do curbside pickup and the bookmobile and homebound services. For blind and low vision patrons, we have a magnifier at Ferndale that's always there. So if you want to basically make anything large

print, you can grab a book off the shelf, hold it under the magnifier, and there's a large screen that will magnify the print, which would be really useful. It's in-library use only because it's quite large.

Neil

But like reading a newspaper or doing some research and having to read.

Rosie

Discovered that we already had a few hearing loops available when I was putting together the resources. And then certain things like our large print collection. We have a few Braille books in the collection as well. Not a ton, but I believe that We have a link to the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library on that site as well, or on that webpage that provides a lot of Braille and talking book material to people across Washington State. Am I forgetting any? I'm sure I'm forgetting some.

Neil

Probably a lot of things, but they're available on the website.

Tasia

Yeah, and one resource I really want to highlight is that We have subscribed to on-demand ASL interpretation through our computers. So anyone could come up to any of our branches front desk, ask for interpretation, and we'll set that up. We had a patron who attended our first community conversation who wanted to be the guinea pig and try it out with staff. And she did, and we got really good feedback about how it went. But I think she was able to have a 15-minute conversation with a staff member using that service.

Neil

Wow.

Rosie

That's a really good example of how the work we're doing for the grant has already increased accessibility and we've already had an impact, which is great to see.

Tasia

Yeah, and one thing that came out of the conversation was that a lot of people didn't know that was an option. So our public graphics department made little signs that they sent each branch with Velcro so we could stick them to the backs of our computer monitors so anyone coming up to the desk can see the sign and point to it.

Neil

And the sign says.

Joy

It says live ASL online interpretation available. So, we want to make it clear that we don't have a live person interpreter on site, unfortunately, but it's a live interpreter via the computer monitor that we can turn towards the patron. So, it's not auto-generated. There's no AI involved. It's a live person that we video call on the front desk computer that we can communicate with.

Neil

And so, the patron would speak ASL to the person on screen and then he or she would interpret and speak orally to the staff. That's amazing. I mean, it's great that we, that's kind of part of what we do is we're providing whatever the community needs. And this is definitely a need. So final thoughts, anyone, anything, anyone have anything that we didn't say that needs to get out to the public?

Rosie

Can we do some book recommendations or other material recommendations? I will add too that part of what we've done for the grant is try and acquire new material or explore acquiring new material by deaf and hard of hearing creators and authors and filmmakers even. Our, let's see, collection development librarian, Sarah Miller, we tasked her with trying to get some new DVDs in the collection about deaf studies or by deaf creators. There's not actually a ton out there, unfortunately. We even reached out, I believe, to the Seattle, there's a Deaf Film Festival, trying to see if they have any recommendations for DVDs that we can add to our collection. And I also compiled a big list of books, I believe, for adults and children about featuring deaf characters or by deaf authors to add to our collection too. So, hopefully we can use some of our dollars to make more material available.

Neil

That's great.

Rosie

Yeah, but I would like to recommend a couple books.

Neil

Yes, do.

Rosie

There's an author named Sarah Nović. I know Tasia, you've read one of her books, *True Biz*.

Tasia

I haven't actually read it yet, but I know she has a new book that just came out.

Rosie

Right, she has a memoir that was just released called *Mother Tongue*, and it's about, she gradually lost her hearing, I think, as a young person. But the book is more about her experience as a deaf adult and specifically adopting a deaf child and bringing him into her family and also being a mom to a hearing child. So it's kind of like deaf studies, adoption, family dynamics, and memoir. So it's called *Mother Tongue* by Sarah Nović. And she has a novel called *True Biz* that came out probably within the last five years that is excellent, and I highly recommend it. That seems kind of based on her experience of going to a deaf school and learning sign language as a teenager. It's an adult fiction book, but I think it could also be read by teens.

Neil

That's great.

Joy

There's a children's picture book. It's called *Can Bear Ski?* by Raymond Antrobus and it's about a deaf bear cub learning to navigate the hearing world who wears hearing aids. And it's a really cute picture book for young kids that is an example of a difference in ability for that's understandable by young people. And the bear on the cover is wearing hearing aids. It's very cute illustration style as well.

Neil

Good representation.

Joy

Yeah.

Neil

Okay. Well, thank you.

Rosie

We do have an e-mail address if anybody wants to reach out with questions about the grant or the work that we're going to be doing or the community conversation. In the future, we're always looking for input from the community. That's the whole point of this grant. So, accessibility at WCLS.org is our e-mail address if anybody feels so inclined. And we also have an online survey that Joy made for those that couldn't attend in person, an opportunity to provide feedback online.

Neil

So, I can include that in our show notes at wcls.org/podcast.

Joy

Yeah, and I don't know if this episode is going to come out before, but I just want to reiterate that our second community conversation will be held at the Lynden Library on Saturday, September 12th from 3 to 4:30 PM. And whether or not you joined us for our first community conversation, we would love to see you there. It's going to be more relaxed social gathering, but we're going to try and focus on brainstorming for future library programs and creating those community contacts for presenters or people who just want to give their input on programming. It's open to all ages. We love getting feedback from young people too. We would love all ages to attend and there will be ASL interpretation provided as well.

Neil

Okay, great. Well, thank you all three of you for sitting down with me. I appreciate all three of you, Tasia, Joy, Rosie. And for our listeners, check out our resources, check out the community conversations. Lots is happening in the Whatcom County Library System.

Rosie

Thanks for having us, Neil.

Joy

Thank you, Neil.

Tasia

Thank you.

Neil

Okay, that's our show. Thanks to Tasia, Joy, and Rosie for chatting with us and for bringing us this great opportunity to increase and enhance the services we provide to the deaf and

hard of hearing community. Join us at our community conversation on Saturday, September 12th from 3 to 4:30 PM at the Lynden Library. This relaxed social gathering will focus on brainstorming future library programs while giving everyone a chance to meet and connect. Thanks also to my boss, Mary Vermillion, who pointed out that September is library card month. Dear listeners, if you've enjoyed this podcast, if you've laughed and cried with us over the past five years and 62 episodes, we'd like to ask a favor. We'd love it if you talk to your friends and family who don't have a library card and just let them know what you love about the library. You'll be doing them a favor. Until next time, this is Neil McKay with the Whatcom County Library System. Take care, my friends.