

CLD&J's Sister Library

Originally published in the 2023 May/June CLD&J Newsletter

No Ordinary Book Club



Take a moment... Imagine a group of Syracuse children, gathered on Saturday afternoon from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, staring up at big screen for a Zoom meeting; they're smiling, curious, and eager to read. Now, imagine another group of children joining in on the same Zoom call on Saturdays from 5:00pm-7:00pm at the library in Worawora, Ghana; they're excited and listening so attentively as they stare on the screen.



What happens next?

It's 12:00pm in Tennessee, and a storyteller and children's author sits in front of her screen with a big smile, as she flips page after page of children's books with beautiful illustrations. She engages with the children, both on the East Coast of the United States and across the ocean on the West Coast of Africa.

What you are imagining is the Virtual Book Club started in February 2023 at the Community Library of DeWitt & Jamesville and the Okyeame Dankwa Memorial Community Library in Worawora, Ghana through a partnership between PACE-Ghana (PG), Poised Gifted and Ready (PGR), and the CLD&J. There were several aspects to consider when initiating a cross/cultural book club such as time zones, books appropriate for understanding by both cultures, and Internet connectivity to name a few. While there were a few challenges like snowstorms in Syracuse and power outages in Ghana, the children and the leaders adapted and learned patience, flexibility, creativity, kindness, and gratitude.



The children read and discussed 5 books under the leadership of Jacquelyn Grace (Storyteller, Author). At each book club the girls and boys recited a pledge to always do their best, actively participate by answering and asking questions and declaring "I Love Books! I Love to Read".

There were lots of discussions about the books, journaling, craft projects, Ghanaian songs, quilting, and the making of a Peace Chain. The Virtual Book Club concluded with treats, certificates and, of course, lots of singing! Most of all, they had a good time learning about each other.

Article & Photos submitted by:
Mary Kelly,
PACE-Ghana