

Karyn Jones
Town of Sudbury
Commission on Disability
Phone: 617-909-7019
Email: disability@sudbury.ma.us

Disability Awareness Month Events Coming to Sudbury in October

The Town of Sudbury's Commission on Disability, the Goodnow Library, and the Sudbury Cooperative Preschool's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative kicks off the official launch of their "Understanding Differences: A Look at Disability" series by offering programming throughout the month of October to celebrate Disability Awareness Month and educate how people can be allies for the disability community.

October 1, 2022

Sudbury, Mass. - The Town of Sudbury's Commission on Disability, the Goodnow Library, and the Sudbury Cooperative Preschool's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative, announced the official launch of their "Understanding Differences: A Look at Disability" series, a slate of programs aimed to educate youth, educators, guardians, grandparents, and extended family members on how to be an ally for people with disabilities.

The October launch features a Zoom event, **"Unlearning Ableism: Action Allyship, & How to Talk to Children about Disability," on October 13** with Ashley Harris Whaley of Disability Reframed; and a community event, **"Together We Play - Celebrating Disability Awareness Month," on October 23 from 1:30pm to 4:30pm at the Goodnow Library**, featuring local authors Jake Marrazzo and Lotte Diomedede, Understanding Our Differences, and other local organizations.

"It's important that we provide opportunities for people living in Sudbury and surrounding towns to deepen their learning while connecting to relevant, significant topics, especially those around diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion," said Karyn Jones, Vice Chair of the Town of Sudbury's Commission on Disability. "The 'Understanding Differences: A Look at Disability' series provides such an opportunity and enables our youth, families, caregivers, and educators to better understand what it means to live with a disability, engage with authors, and their communities."

“Disabilities are often overlooked when discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion, even though people with disabilities are one of the most marginalized groups in Western societies,” said Esmé Green, Director of the Goodnow Library. “This partnership allows us to bring disability awareness to the forefront. We are very proud of the programming we developed. It will provide resources, support, and awareness to both people with disabilities and allies of the disabled community.”

The series will build upon The Sudbury Cooperative Preschool’s Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative, which received grant funding through the Sudbury Foundation earlier this year.

“Disability is oftentimes a topic parents don’t know how to approach. It usually is left to disabled children themselves to educate peers and answer questions about why they use medical assistive devices or need to do things in a different way,” said Britta Rieser, Director of the Sudbury Cooperative Preschool. “Our hope is that this series will give parents and caregivers the resources they need to begin having conversations about differences and disabilities with their children, and to give youth the opportunity to ask questions and learn how they can be a better friend and ally to the disabled community.”

In addition to the two featured events, the Goodnow Library will theme their regular programming of story times, book clubs, and craft programs around disability awareness throughout the month of October.

“Children are naturally curious about differences. A good book can provide accurate information and allow youth to feel empathy and compassion towards their favorite book characters as they read through their triumphs and struggles. A book can give a glimpse of a lived experience, whether fictional or not. Ultimately, it is awareness and empathy that can be the difference between acceptance and discrimination,” said Amy Stimac, Head of Children’s Services at Goodnow Library. “We are very excited to collaborate in this series of events in October and throughout the year.”

To learn more or register for these events, please visit the Goodnow Library’s website: goodnowlibrary.org/understandingdifferences

Featured October events include:

- **October 13, 7:30 pm - via zoom:** Ashley Harris Whaley of Disability Reframed will have a Zoom conversation on “Unlearning Ableism: Action, Allyship & How to Talk to Children about Disability.” Ashley is an author, speaker, and disability educator.

Disability Reframed combines self-learning with open dialogue and conversation to create a space where decades-old attitudes towards disability, disabled lives, and disabled people are dismantled, examined, and then thoughtfully rebuilt. Closed captioning and an American Sign Language interpreter will be provided for this virtual event.

- **October 23, 1:30-4:30 pm** - “Together We Play - Celebrating Disability Awareness Month” will take place at the Goodnow Library. It is an event created for children and their families aged 18 months to 12 years old to come together to celebrate and learn about differences, abilities, and how you can be an ally for people with disabilities. Authors **Jake Marrazzo** and **Lotte Diomede** will read their books followed by activities led by **Understanding Our Differences**, a nationally recognized, award-winning program that uses a hands-on curriculum to foster acceptance and inclusion for people of all abilities. **Viking Martial Arts** will also lead a class. In addition, families can participate in a scavenger hunt of activities around the library led by Understanding Our Differences, Boston Ability Center, Child Therapy Boston, Diamond Physical Therapy Associates, New England Therapy Center, SMILE Mass, Sudbury SEPAC, and The Silver Unicorn Bookstore. When a child completes the scavenger hunt, their name will be entered to win a \$100 gift card at Learning Express Toys and Gifts, gift card to New City Microcreamery, and books about equity and inclusion. A social story is available on the Goodnow Library’s website about the event. A sensory/calm space will also be made available to families.

Other upcoming events include and will be announced in more detail at a later date:

- **February** - “My City Speaks” by Darren Lebeuf Story Time and Sound Shaker Craft led by Sudbury Cooperative Preschool
- **February** - Craft Program: Adapting Books for Low Vision and Blindness
- **July 26, 2023** - Celebrating Disability Independence Day - Story Time & Popsicles at the Playground

About the Town of Sudbury’s Commission on Disability: The Commission on Disability was established by the Town of Sudbury, by a 1993 Town Meeting vote, to cause the full integration and participation of people with disabilities in our Town, in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 40, s.8J. For more information: sudbury.ma.us/disability/

About the Goodnow Library: The Goodnow Library opened its doors on April, 4, 1863. Today Goodnow is a central destination for learning, pursuing interests, and meeting friends and neighbors. People come to see one another just as much to learn from a program or enjoy a book. For more information: goodnowlibrary.org/

About the Sudbury Cooperative Preschool: The Sudbury Cooperative Preschool is a unique, family-centered learning environment. It is a community of trusted adults working together for

the education of each child. Every member of The Sudbury Cooperative Preschool community works together to create an environment that inspires children to develop self-assurance and a love of learning. Our child-centered program fosters creativity, independence and self-reliance within a supportive learning community, using a play-based curriculum. Children learn through engaging activities that tap into their natural curiosity and inquisitiveness. For more information: sudburycoop.org/

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Thursday, October 13 from 7:30-8:30pm

THE TOWN OF SUDBURY'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITY,
THE GOODNOW LIBRARY, AND SUDBURY COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL'S
JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE

Invite you to a Zoom event with Ashley Harris Whaley
for a conversation on:

UNLEARNING ABLEISM

ACTION, ALLYSHIP, AND HOW TO TALK
TO CHILDREN ABOUT DISABILITY

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES THROUGH

**Disability
Reframed**

EDUCATION AND CONVERSATION



Ashley is an author, speaker, and disability educator. Disability Reframed combines self-learning with open dialogue and conversation to create a space where decades-old attitudes towards disability, disabled lives, and disabled people are dismantled, examined, and then thoughtfully rebuilt.



Sudbury Cooperative Preschool
Engage Your Child's Development



@disabilityreframed
disabilityreframed.com

Please pre-register at:
goodnowlibrary.org/events



Games

Come together as a community to celebrate and learn about differences, abilities, and how you can be an ally for people with disabilities.

Crafts

Prizes

together we play

Goodnow Library
Sunday, October 23
1:30-4:30 PM

Celebrating Disability Awareness Month



Author Lotte Diomede, "Swinging into an Accessible World"
Author Jake Marrazzo, "One Wants to be a Letter"

Understanding Our Differences
Viking Martial Arts

Boston Ability Center
Child Therapy Boston

Diamond Physical Therapy Associates, PC
New England Therapy Center

SMILE Mass
Sudbury SEPAC

The Silver Unicorn Bookstore

