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## Readers for Life

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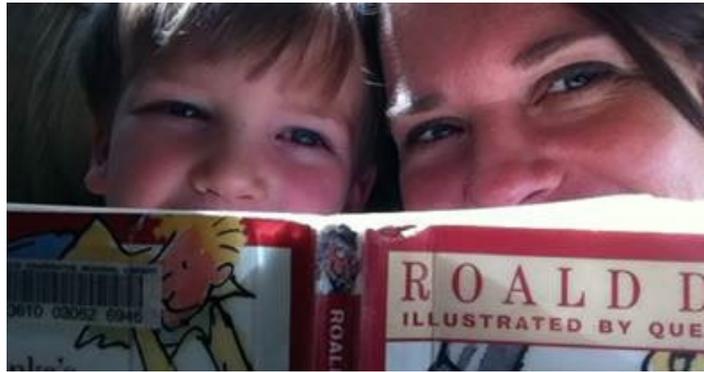
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# Readers For Life

by Korie Buerkle



Korie Buerkle is a Children’s Librarian and Assistant Director at the Newberg Public Library. She currently serves as OLA’s Children’s Services Division Chair where she loves connecting with children’s services staff from across the state. If you are interested in volunteering for CSD, or chatting about book clubs, you can email her at [korie.buerkle@newbergoregon.gov](mailto:korie.buerkle@newbergoregon.gov).

I clearly remember the moment I said to the Children’s Librarian, “A parent suggested today that we do book club. We should do that.” My boss said, “That is a good idea. *You* should do that.” Ten years later, our library staff offers three book clubs for kids, one for adults, and one for senior citizens.

I am inspired by what a book club can do for a community. To me, it’s a way for the library to connect readers to each other, to stories, and to a bigger world. I don’t ask questions that would tell me if the reader can regurgitate the timeline of events, or remember names; I want to know how the reader related to the story. I want to know how it made them feel, what they liked or didn’t like. I want to know how the experience of reading widened their perspective. I ask open-ended questions, many of which are the same or similar for each book.

Facilitating those connections each month is a joy—almost always. I admit sometimes I get a little burned out. But I find I mostly feel that way when I lose sight of creating connections and get focused on how things are not going according to my “plan.” Like the time I did book club in a tent, inside the library, with nine 3rd grade boys and flashlights. You will not be surprised to learn there was really no book discussion. But some of those boys had never been inside a tent before, and we created a connection to our book character, *Ellie McDoodle*, that wasn’t there before. Next time I would definitely choose to relate to the book in another way, but there was still value in the experience.

I started interning at the public library because I was a college kid in love with books. But I chose to be a public librarian because I love people. I love what we do. I love that book club is yet another way we bring the right book to the right person at the right moment—we are a part of the seemingly serendipitous magic that creates a reader for life. And when I remember that, I look forward to book club again. 🐉

