



# PROCLAMATION



**April 20 - 26, 2025**

**WHEREAS**, The disability experience is a natural part of life and is valued as a part of our rich diversity, yet the disability community is underrepresented in literary works; and

**WHEREAS**, Disability is a social construct. The issue at hand is not the presence of a medical condition residing within the individual, but that society does not create welcoming, supporting environment for all. Inclusion is essential at all levels within the community; and

**WHEREAS**, while the public is aware of inclusion of race, religion, political persuasion, and other identifiers, there is a limited awareness of disability inclusion in literature, and the burden of awareness has fallen to the shoulders of those impacted by disabilities, either indirectly or directly; and

**WHEREAS**, The most effective way to increase awareness is through everyone's openness to learn and acknowledge that there are systemic barriers that reduce the likelihood of those with disabilities enjoying equitable experiences; and

**WHEREAS**, Equitable experiences and full inclusion is a matter of social justice. Consequently, creating equitable inclusive environments is a shared responsibility of everyone; and

**WHEREAS**, the advocacy effort, Disability Book Week, is dedicated to increasing awareness and inclusion of authors with disabilities and books featuring characters with disabilities, as well as supporting literacy efforts in order to support and benefit individuals with disabilities and provide the opportunity for all to identify with, and see themselves represented in, published literary works; and

**WHEREAS**, Disability Book Week provides an opportunity for schools, libraries, and the public in general to raise awareness of the underrepresented disability population. It is costly to our communities when awareness remains limited because society misses out on the rich talents and experiences those with disabilities have to offer their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Citizens should do all in their power to recognize the value and intersectionality of the disability experience in our lives and the valued role it has in our rich diversity and the barriers presented to those with disabilities, and create ways to include everyone, especially those with developmental disabilities, to be fully included in all aspects of life.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Cohen Barnes, Mayor of the City of DeKalb, Illinois, do hereby declare recognition and celebration of Disability Book Week from April 20 - 26, 2025, in the City of DeKalb.



**IN WITNESS THEREOF**, I have set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of DeKalb to be affixed this 14<sup>th</sup> day of April 2025.

  
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**COHEN BARNES**  
Mayor