

# Cultivating Your Hidden Patron



## **RECOGNIZE AND SERVE YOUR “SPECIAL” POPULATIONS**

Cecilia Ann Marlow  
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# What's "Special?"



## What we say as humans...

- “not like us”
- “they...”
- “not from around here”
- “just don’t use the library”
- “can’t afford to be accessible”

## What we look for as librarians...

- Who’s missing?
- Why not here?
- Where?
- How do we communicate?
- More than open doors



Obese, too tall, too short,  
too thin

Left-handed

Native American

Gifted

Non-English native  
speaker

Culturally unacceptable to  
assert yourself, give eye  
contact, engage in  
conversation with  
opposite gender

Increasing visual  
difficulties

Increasing hearing  
difficulties

Mobility challenges



**Could you know someone who is  
“special” but not in your library?**

# Yes, you could



## **DEMOGRAPHICS FOR MICHIGAN**

**U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy reported to Congress in December 2007:**

**In every Congressional District in Michigan, there are recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) who are blind and who are disabled—from 49 to 232 blind recipients per district and from 6,670 to 33,036 disabled. These are only the low-income and while persons with physical challenges are often the most disadvantaged, there are many who are neither low-income, nor see themselves as disadvantaged at all.**

# How can we serve?



## **Pick one group.**

- Blind/visually impaired
- Deaf/hearing impaired
- Mobility challenged
- Non-English speaking
- Autistic/Spectrum disorder
- Mentally ill
- Developmentally disabled
- “Invisible” (fatigue) challenge
- Non-majority culture

## **Pick two responses. Compare outcomes.**

- Highlight uniqueness (Displays? Programming?)
- Increase collection
- Change the challenges
- Programs specific to group only for group
- Leave the library
- Communicate to everyone in community or only group
- Library models inclusion (Trustees? Staff?)
- Library becomes clearinghouse of services
- Web site serves every one



## Your mission...

Name one hidden patron in **your** library.

Write the name at the top of your paper.

On the right side (reverse this is you're a lefty), list your barriers—What prevents you from serving this patron?

On the left side (left if you're a lefty), list what you can do to get rid of those barriers.

At the bottom, write your cultivation plan for when you return to your library.

## Hidden patron:

I will cultivate this hidden patron by

# Some resources to consider for more learning:



ALA's Association for Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies: Tip sheets for serving persons with developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental illness, vision and hearing impairments. Check them out!

Web Accessibility Initiative <http://www.w3.org/WAI/> Making your web site easy to read and use is not impossible.

Providing Excellent Customer Service in a Multi-cultural Environment: a self-paced online course offered by LE@D , [www.leadonline.info](http://www.leadonline.info)

Web Junction, Populations Served, has many resources for multi-cultural services and services to persons with disabilities. [www.webjunction.org](http://www.webjunction.org).

Your own Library of Michigan—Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and, in particular, the Adaptive Technology Center.