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Georgia Library Spotlight: Libraries are for Everyone: Inclusive Programming for the LGBTQ+ Community

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Libraries are for Everyone: Inclusive Programming for the LGBTQ+ Community

Libraries strive to be inclusive and supportive spaces for all members of their communities. That means creating spaces, building collections, and offering programs that meet the needs of diverse groups. Grant Hedrick, library assistant III at Sibley Library in Marietta, Georgia, found that programming for the queer community, an often underserved group, in Cobb Libraries was lacking, and he set out to address it.

month. Participants choose a theme under which they can choose any form of media—from TV and film to podcasts and art—to discuss.

The initial goal of the LGBTQ+ Media Club was to provide a space that was accessible and inviting for queer adults where they could find community and broaden their understanding of the queer experience. It was a way to signal to

LGBTQ+ patrons that the library is a space where they are welcomed and celebrated. Since the club's first meeting in June 2021, it has come to mean a lot more.

The club attracts a steady group of participants, and conversations are meaningful. The camaraderie that has been built has been very rewarding for those involved. The atmosphere the

group creates is open and accepting, where everyone is free to speak without censoring themselves or their identity.

Participants, too, have expressed how great it is to see openly queer library staff members



Staff members Mox, Celt, and Grant at Braves Pride Night

Grant created the LGBTQ+ Media Club: a program designed to create a safe and exploratory atmosphere to analyze and discuss queer media and representation. The club, for adults ages 18 and up who identify in the LGBTQ+ community or as allies, meets once a



Staff member Celt (left) at Braves Pride Night

creating programs like this. It lets the LGBTQ+ community know that they are safe to approach with questions about LGBTQ+ literature and gives them a safe space to express themselves.

Creating spaces within our libraries to encourage self-expression is vital to niche community groups. This is particularly important as conversations around their right to exist take center stage. Libraries have an ability and a duty to serve everyone in their communities, and

simple programming for LGBTQ+ individuals plays a key role.

To learn more about the Cobb County Public Library System, go to <https://www.cobbcounty.org/library>.

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