

2025 NEA BIG READ
**SITTING
PRETTY**
A MEMOIR BY REBEKAH TAUSSIG

PROGRAMS & EVENTS



NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.





About *Sitting Pretty*

Growing up as a paralyzed girl during the 1990s and early 2000s, Rebekah Taussig only saw disability depicted as something monstrous (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*), inspirational (Helen Keller), or angelic (*Forrest Gump*). None of this felt right, and as she got older, she longed for more stories that allowed disability to be complex and ordinary, uncomfortable and fine, painful and fulfilling.

Writing about the rhythms and textures of what it means to live in a disabled body, Taussig reflects on everything from the complications of kindness and charity, living both independently and dependently, experiencing intimacy, and how the pervasiveness of ableism in the media directly translates to everyday life.

Disability affects all of us, directly or indirectly, at one point or another. By exploring this truth in poignant and lyrical essays, Taussig illustrates the need for more stories and more voices to understand the diversity of humanity. *Sitting Pretty* challenges us as a society to be patient and vigilant, practical and imaginative, kind and relentless, as we get to work writing an entirely different story.

About the NEA Big Read

The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read—a partnership with Arts Midwest—broadens our understanding of our world, our neighbors, and ourselves through the power of a shared reading experience. Showcasing a diverse range of themes, voices, and perspectives, the NEA Big Read aims to inspire meaningful conversations, artistic responses, and new discoveries and connections in each community.

Learn more about the NEA Big Read at www.arts.gov/initiatives/nea-big-read.

Silent Disco: 2025 NEA Big Read Kickoff

Saturday, March 1 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Main Library ▪ Lobby

All Ages: Grab a pair of headphones and get into the groove at the *NEA 2025 Big Read Kickoff*. At a silent disco, you control a personal sensory experience! Noise-canceling headphones and customizable volume settings allow you to shut out background noise—or you can turn up the volume to focus on the vibrations. Select from multiple music channels to show off your best moves. A silent disco is a great way to experience music within a group setting, enjoy conversation without having to talk over the music, and dance the day away without other distractions.

When you step off the dance floor, pick up a copy of the NEA 2025 Big Read selection *Sitting Pretty* by Rebekah Taussig.

The Beauty of Different: The 2025 NEA Big Read Art Exhibition at VCPL

Saturday, March 1 to Wednesday, April 30
Main Library ▪ West Wing

Experience Rebekah Taussig's *Sitting Pretty* from new perspectives at the NEA 2025 Big Read Art Exhibition, where local artists from the Wabash Valley Art Guild and the River City Art Association will present works inspired by themes of inclusivity, resilience, and compassion. After viewing the artwork, cast your vote for the People's Choice Award. Awards will be presented during *The Beauty of Different: The 2025 NEA Big Read Artist Reception at VCPL* in April.

The Beauty of Different: The 2025 NEA Big Read Artist Reception at VCPL

Wednesday, April 23 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Main Library ▪ Lifelong Learning Center

Whether you're an art enthusiast or simply curious, meet the talented artists behind the *The Beauty of Different: The 2025 NEA Big Read Exhibit* at the Artist Reception. Awards for Best in Show and People's Choice will be presented. Refreshments will be served.

The Sinfonietta Pops Orchestra Presents *Sitting Pretty*

Sunday, March 9 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Harvey Auditorium ▪ Conservatory of Music
Saint Mary of the Woods College ▪ Saint
Mary of the Woods, IN 47879

Enjoy an afternoon of orchestral and popular music inspired by the 2025 NEA Big Read selection, Rebekah Taussig's *Sitting Pretty*. Admission is \$10 per adult. Children and teens 18 and under and students with a valid student ID may attend for free.

2025 NEA Big Read Art Submissions & Exhibition at the Brazil Public Library

Submission Dates: Tuesday, April 1 to Friday,
April 4 between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Art Exhibit: Monday, April 7 to Monday, April 28

Pick Up Dates: from Monday, April 28 at
7:00 p.m. to Saturday, May 1 at 5:00 p.m.

**Brazil Public Library ▪ 204 North
Walnut ▪ Brazil, IN 47834**

Are you a local artist inspired by Rebekah Taussig's *Sitting Pretty*? Explore disability, representation resilience, strength, and other themes found in Taussig's memoir in your medium of choice, then submit your work for display at the Brazil Public Library during the month of April! Library customers will be able to cast their vote for the People's Choice Award while the exhibit is open. Awards will be presented at the *2025 NEA Big Read Art Reception at the Brazil Public Library*.

Please turn in your artwork with a completed entry form during business hours or contact Sarah Trover for questions at trovers@brazil.lib.in.us or 812.448.1981 ext 1113. There is no fee for entry. Three-dimensional artwork will be accepted with advance notice.

2025 NEA Big Read Art Reception at the Brazil Public Library

Monday, April 28 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Brazil Public Library ▪ Lower Level Meeting
Rooms ▪ 204 North Walnut ▪ Brazil, IN 47834

Meet the local artists who created the *2025 Big Read Art Exhibit at the Brazil Public Library* and enjoy coffee and conversation at the *2025 NEA Big Read Art Reception at Brazil Public Library*. Awards for Best in Show and People's Choice will be presented during the reception.

Tablescapes 2025

The Vigo County Public Library is thrilled to join Arts Illiana to present *Tablescapes 2025*. We will be participating by creating a table based on the NEA Big Read selection, *Sitting Pretty* by Rebekah Taussig. For more information about *Tablescapes 2025* and the participating community partners or to purchase tickets to any of the events below, please visit artsilliana.com/tablescapes-2025.

Daily Viewings

Friday, March 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sycamore Banquet Center ▪ Hulman Memorial Student Union
550 Chestnut Street ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47809

Celebration of Design Cocktail Party

Friday, March 21 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sycamore Banquet Center ▪ Hulman Memorial Student Union ▪ 550 Chestnut Street ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47809

Dinner on the 'Scapes

Saturday, March 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sycamore Banquet Center ▪ Hulman Memorial Student Union ▪ 550 Chestnut Street ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47809

Book Clubs & Chats

Author Rebekah Taussig reflects on what it was like growing up as a paralyzed girl, what it means to live in a disabled body, and how disability affects us all in her memoir *Sitting Pretty*.

VCPL Facebook Book Club

Saturday, March 1 to Monday, March 31

Join the VCPL Facebook Book Club at bit.ly/vcpl_fbbookclub.

Cunningham Memorial Library Virtual Book Club

Books available to Indiana State University faculty, staff, and students beginning Monday, March 3 at 8:00 a.m.

In-person meet up with Dr. Xavia Burton on Thursday, April 3

Follow facebook.com/Library.ISU for more information, discussion, and prompts.

Sweet Reads Book Club

Thursday, March 13 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Amosami Cheesecake Company
1283 Lafayette Avenue ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47804

Sitting Pretty with Cats

Wednesday, March 19 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 17 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The Catmosphere Cat Cafe & Adoption Lounge
1287 Lafayette Avenue ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47804

Register online at vigolibrary.org/events.

In-Library Book Clubs

Marshall Public Library

Wednesday, March 19 at 10:30 a.m. (CST)
612 Archer Avenue ▪ Marshall, IL 62441

Brazil Public Library

Tuesday, April 8 at 3:30 p.m.
204 North Walnut ▪ Brazil, IN 47834

Parke County Public Library

Wednesday, April 9 at 5:00 p.m.
106 North Market Street ▪ Rockville, IN 47872

Montezuma Public Library

Wednesday, April 9 at 5:00 p.m.
270 Crawford Street ▪ Montezuma, IN 47862

Vigo County Public Library

Monday, April 14 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Main Library ▪ Lifelong Learning Center
680 Poplar Street ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47807

Paris Carnegie Public Library

Friday, April 29 at 5:00 p.m. (CST)
207 South Main Street ▪ Paris, IL 61944

ASL Storytime: *Sign with Suzy*

Saturday, March 8 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Thursday, April 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Main Library ▪ Youth Services Program Room

Ages 2–5: Introduce your little one to American Sign Language (ASL) with help from 2025's Miss Indiana State University Suzy Head. In March, join the pageant queen as she teaches children how to count with her book *Sign with Suzy: Numbers*. In April, *Sign with Suzy* will continue with her most recently released book, *Sign with Suzy: Colors*.

Suzy Head began studying ASL in the eighth grade, continued through high school, and has been using it for eight years. She is passionate about teaching children sign language to raise awareness of the Deaf community, foster empathy for those they might not often meet, and provide basic ASL skills to communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Big Read Book Club: *The Chance to Fly*

Friday, March 28 & Wednesday, April 2
from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Main Library ▪ Youth Services Program Room
Registration begins Friday, February 28 at vigolibrary.org/events. If this event has reached maximum capacity, non-registrants may be turned away on the day of the event.

Ages 8–12: Thirteen-year-old Zoe Washington dreams of the Broadway stage—and when she gets into Broadway Bound, a prestigious theater camp, she's determined to prove herself! Born with cerebral palsy, Zoe struggles to overcome physical barriers, stereotypes, and her own self-doubt as she pursues the lead role in the camp's production of *Wicked* in Ali Stroker's *The Chance to Fly*.

Every Body Has A Story: Disability, Care, and Community in the Wabash Valley

Available at youtube.com/@vigolibrary throughout March and April. Visit vigolibrary.org/every-body-has-a-story for more information.

Gain new insight into the lives of local individuals with disabilities, as well as the caregivers and organizations that make a difference in many of their lives. *Every Body Has A Story* shares heartfelt stories about living with a disability, highlights resources for those seeking support, and encourages listeners to foster empathy, build connections, and celebrate the diverse experiences that shape the Wabash Valley.

Notes on Blindness: A VR Experience

Available during business hours from Saturday, March 1 to Wednesday, April 30
Main Library ▪ Haute Create

Ages 12 & Up: Travel with Professor John Hull as he documents his experience of entirely losing his sight after years of steady deterioration in the award-winning virtual reality film *Notes on Blindness: Into the Darkness*. By incorporating movement tracking, spatialized sound, sparse animation, and controller interactions alongside Professor Hull's audio diary, *Notes on Blindness* immerses VR users in an interactive, non-fictional narrative soundscape that demonstrates the challenges of being blind to sighted individuals.

Notes on Blindness will be available to play in Haute Create throughout March and April as a self-guided experience.

Authors in the Making: An Amazon Publishing Guide

Thursday, March 6 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 16 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Haute Create

Ages 16 & Up: Are you an aspiring author who is looking to publish your first book—or a seasoned pro who wants to learn more about self-publishing your books directly to Amazon? Reach an audience of millions, maintain control of the full rights of your book, and share your story as an ebook, paperback, or hardback using Kindle's Direct Publishing.

How to Talk About Disabilities

Monday, March 10 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Lifelong Learning Center

Ages 12 & Up: Language and words shape the way that people understand, talk about, and represent disabilities and identities. Dr. Courtney Jarret, Director of Disability Services at Ball State University, will discuss how the framing of disability can influence perceptions, enforce negative stereotypes, or encourage inclusivity by highlighting the critical perspectives of authors and activists with disabilities.

Breaking the Silence: Hidden Disabilities

Wednesday, March 12 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Meeting Room B & C

People with hidden disabilities regularly face skepticism, misunderstanding, and stigma because their conditions are not obvious, which can impact their mental health, relationships, and opportunities. Marlene Lu, treasurer of the Arc of the Wabash Valley, will discuss what hidden disabilities are, how they impact individuals and those around them, and what accommodations can foster environments where individuals with hidden disabilities can thrive.

Community Resource Fair

Thursday, March 13 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

West Branch Library ▪ Meeting Rooms A & B

Tuesday, April 8 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

12 Points Library ▪ Garage

Monday, April 21 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Meeting Rooms A, B, C & D

Are you or someone you love struggling with mental health, addiction, childcare, employment, or living conditions? Find help at the *Community Resource Fair!* Over a dozen community organizations will offer free assistance to individuals, veterans, and families in need.

Paws with Purpose: ICAN Service Dogs

Saturday, March 15 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Meeting Rooms B & C

Ages 15 & Up: Service dogs play a critical role in promoting independence, providing support, and ensuring safety for many individuals with disabilities—and the Indiana Canine Assistant Network (ICAN) has been training these dogs for Indiana residents since 2001. Learn more about the various forms of assistance a service dog can provide from an ICAN handler and enjoy a demonstration of service dog cues.

Sitting Pretty Panel Discussion

Monday, March 17 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

West Branch Library ▪ Meeting Room B

Ages 16 & Up: What does it mean to live with a disability in Vigo County? Jess Berryhill, the executive director of the Terre Haute Friendship House, will lead a panel discussion with members of the community who have hidden and visible disabilities. Learn about their lived experiences, the challenges that they face locally, and the role those without disabilities can play in creating more accessible and inclusive spaces.

Sensory Storytime

Tuesdays, March 25, April 8 & April 22

from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

West Branch Library ▪ Meeting Room B

Ages 12 & Up: At *Sensory Storytime*, your young adult or care recipient will enjoy a stimulating experience designed to engage their senses and provide opportunities for movement, exploration, and connection in a supportive environment. While enjoying storytime, attendees can play with fidget toys, cocoon themselves in blankets and weighted bean bags, and interact with tactile materials, rhymes, songs, and movement activities tailored to their sensory needs.

Community Health Fair

Wednesday, March 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

12 Points Library ▪ Kitchen

Access expert care and essential resources at the *Community Health Fair*. The Union Hospital Family Medicine Residency program will provide family physicians, a psychologist, a respiratory therapist, and other specialists offering free medical screening and basic care. Additionally, other local organizations will be on hand to provide immunizations, dental exams and referrals, hygiene kits and seasonal need items, food education, Medicaid enrollment assistance, distribution of Narcan, and more.

Empowering Caregivers: Tools for Compassionate Support

Wednesday, April 2 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Grand Traverse Pie Company ▪ 75 North
3rd Street ▪ Terre Haute, IN 47807

Registration begins Monday, March 3 at vigolibrary.org/events. If this event has reached maximum capacity, non-registrants may be turned away on the day of the event.

Learn about caregiving and future planning from Shelly Amerman of Thrive West Central Indiana while enjoying a treat. All registered attendees receive a Grand Traverse gift card to enjoy a piece of pie or a similarly priced item during the session.

Creative Writing with Leah Singer

Wednesday, April 9 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Lifelong Learning Center

Uncover the power of your own voice with professional writer Leah Singer! Use writing prompts inspired by Rebekah Taussig's *Sitting Pretty* to explore themes of identity, disability, and inclusion, and your thoughts, feelings, and memories to life on the page. Create personal stories that challenge stereotypes, confront societal narratives, and inspire empathy. Write with no pressure to share—just the freedom to reflect and express yourself authentically.

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Ask your local library about availability. The Libby app is available on iOS, Android, and Kindle. Visit idl.overdrive.com to learn more.

Teens & Adults

Creative Writing with Leah Singer for Teens

Thursday, April 10 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

West Branch Library ▪ Meeting Rooms A & B

Ages 13–18: Discover new ways to express yourself with writing prompts that explore identity and challenge stereotypes. Use creative tools like photographs to reflect on your experiences and perspectives while bringing your ideas to life. Write freely and honestly, without the pressure to share, and see how your story unfolds.

Accessible Awareness

Saturday, April 12 at 1:00 p.m.

Jasonville Public Library

611 West Main Street ▪ Jasonville, IN 47438

Learn how to apply for disability assistance.

Empower Your Body: Essential Oils for Personalized Wellness

Tuesday, April 15 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Meeting Rooms B & C

Self-awareness and an understanding of your body can guide better self-care practices and foster a positive, informed relationship with your own well-being. At *Empower Your Body*, you will explore natural self-care methods with certified essential oils expert Kara Chambers. Chambers will provide insight into learning your body's unique needs with a personalized compatibility test that will help identify oils that best suit your individual preferences.

Peace Learning Center

Understanding SEL: Building a Foundation for a Compassionate World

Saturday, March 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Meeting Rooms A, B & C

Registration begins Saturday, February 22 at vigolibrary.org/events. If this event has reached maximum capacity, non-registrants may be turned away on the day of the event.

Uncover the true meaning of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and clear up common misconceptions as you explore why these skills matter in everyday life and how they shape a more fair, caring, and compassionate world—for you, your community, and future generations.

These workshops are presented by the Peace Learning Center. Teachers interested in attending may seek approval from the supervisors to earn PGP points. Librarians may earn Library Education Units for attending these workshops. Please contact programs@vigolibrary.org for details.

Fostering Emotional Intelligence in Youth: The Role of Adult Modeling

Tuesday, April 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Main Library ▪ Meeting Rooms A, B & C

Registration begins on Tuesday, March 25 at vigolibrary.org/events. If this event has reached maximum capacity, non-registrants may be turned away on the day of the event.

Children and teenagers learn empathy, resilience, and self-regulation by watching the adults in their lives. At *Fostering Emotional Intelligence In Youth*, you'll explore how you play a vital role in shaping their future by demonstrating emotional intelligence, responsibility, and respect, which helps them develop key Social-Emotional Learning skills.