Accessible Game Night – A new take on community outreach

What is an accessible board game? How is a typical board game made accessible for someone with a disability? Can people with mixed abilities play the same accessible board games? On December 28th the Perkins Library and the Cary Memorial Library embarked on a new program to help answer these questions and bring accessible games to the community. Hosted at the Cary Memorial Library in Lexington with games provided by the Perkins Library in Watertown, the first accessible game night aims to provide outreach and information on inclusion and acceptance in a fun and relaxing setting.

High contrast colors, tactility, and braille, are all modifications that can be used to make games accessible for players who may have difficulty due to a visual or physical disability. The way in which these games are modified does not prevent people with varying abilities from playing games together. Community and inclusivity should always be fostered with any population, and games are a fun and easy way to connect interests, individuals, and generations.

The very first couple to walk into the game night had been married for many years and had been playing board games together for even longer. Bob and Jane have always enjoyed playing Monopoly but due to Bob’s vision loss he's become reliant of his wife to help him read the small print on the cards. Because of an accessible Monopoly board, Bob was able to manage his own properties without being so reliant on his wife, “so she can’t cheat anymore”, he jested.

Outreach Coordinator, Erin Fragola, has been amassing accessible board games over the last year and has begun a new lending program at the Perkins Library to provide the borrowing of these games for community events. If you or someone that you know has a game night open to the public and would like to make it a more inclusive event, please call the Perkins Library at (800) 852-3133 to find out more.