

Reading Out of the Box

by Chazda Albright -

<http://chazda.com/reading-out-of-the-box/>

Every fourth week of the month, on the fourth day of the week, a few minutes after 4pm, I go to the local library and read a storybook to children.

Afterward, we do a crafts project together.

This event is called Happy Palmtree, which is all about thinking out of the box... with kids.

Reading out of the box with Fran Drescher.

This February, I decided to read [Being Wendy](#) by Fran Drescher. Yes, I do mean *the* Fran Drescher, the actress. If you didn't already know, she's written two autobiographies, [Cancer Schmancer](#) and [Enter Whining](#).

[Being Wendy](#) is her first illustrated storybook, and it's pretty sweet. It's easy to see that in a very personal and whimsical way, this book is autobiographical too.

Quick Note: Yes, I typically read freshly published books of the year, but we're waiting for our 2016 book delivery to reach the library. ([To read my list of Top 2016 Storybooks, go HERE.](#))

[Being Wendy](#) is about a girl who lives in Boxville, a town where everyone wears labeled boxes. But Wendy doesn't want to fit herself into any specific type of box. There are too many things she likes to do and too many things she hasn't even tried yet. She has to get out of the box to really be happy, and she does.

Wendy's family loves her, and they join her in getting out of their boxes... but this means needing to leave Boxville for Freedomland. So they use their boxes to pack up their belongings and head out together.

As a reader and crafts instructor, the only difficulty for me was in deciding what kind of craft to do. I couldn't do another box-themed crafts project. Not so soon after the last one...

The Box-Themed Project of 2015

3 of us posing with our necklaces.

We had only a few months ago done a box-themed craft.

All the kids made Emotion-Dice, large cubes with different emotions drawn on each side. We made a game where we would ask a question, and they could toss the dice and then give their answer in that kind

of emotional state (happy, sad, scared, nervous, etc.).

All of the prototypes I create for this event are put on display in the library and many of the kids who come are regulars. So it's important to give some variety there. I had to come up with something **completely different**.

After all, this is a Fran Drescher book.

Making Great Necklaces Together

I decided we should make jewelry. I know, it might seem unrelated – but it isn't! We made necklaces with a large hoop and a cool tag. Instead of labeling what we each are with the tag, I suggested the kids put a symbol that they really like.

I had one boy in the group. The rest were girls. I told the boy he could put a secret code on his secret agent badge.

Most of the girls put multi-colored hearts on their tags, some with stars. Some had princess stickers. Each was lovely.

Though blurry, I love this picture. Action reading! Getting kids so excited about a story that they can't sit still.
