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City's First Human Library Allows Patrons to Check Out Real People, Not Books

FOUR-HOUR PROJECT AIMS TO CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES AND COMBAT PREJUDICE THROUGH ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS

SAN DIEGO – Ever wondered about someone else's story? On Saturday, March 11, the San Diego Public Library will host the city's first Human Library, hoping to educate and inspire the public through positive conversations with actual people.

During the four hour event, members of the public or “borrowers” are welcome to browse the list of “titles” – people representing different groups in our communities. Borrowers can check out their selections for 20-minute conversations.

Titles include a suicide-attempt survivor, a transgender woman, a triple amputee, a Muslim, an online journalist, a domestic violence victim, an anarchist, a person who is blind, and more.

“Libraries are a place for learning, whether it’s from words on a page or through a person sharing their experience,” said Library Director Misty Jones. “We strive to foster a safe and engaging environment for open dialogue. This project fits perfectly with our mission of inspiring lifelong learning through connections to knowledge and each other.”

All of the titles participating in the Human Library are volunteering their time and are willing to share their stories. Organizers hope the city’s program will foster mutual respect and understanding among residents and visitors of San Diego.

“Diversity and inclusion are part of the fabric of San Diego’s identity, and this project is a reminder of that,” said Dr. Joel Day, Executive Director of the City of San Diego’s Human Relations Commission. “Everybody has a story to tell, and just like a book, we shouldn’t judge somebody by their ‘cover’ – we must get to know them, empathize and understand their point of view. This is the key to a city that is socially cohesive and resilient to hate.”

The Human Library will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 11, on the ninth floor of the Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common, 330 Park Blvd. in downtown's East Village. A library card is not required. For more information, visit www.sandiego.gov/blog/human-library.

Human Library is an international movement aimed at challenging stereotypes and prejudices in cities across the world. The project started created in Denmark in 2000 as part of an anti-violence movement.

About the San Diego Public Library

With a vision of being the place for opportunity, discovery and inspiration, the San Diego Public Library is a hub for knowledge and lifelong learning. As the largest library system in the region, it serves a population of more than 1.3 million people. Learn about events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to programs and resources or search for materials in the online catalog at www.sandiegolibrary.org.

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