



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# San Diego Public Library Celebrates Iconic History of Action and Advocacy

NEW PROGRAM SERIES HIGHLIGHTS ACTIVISM OF FORMER HEAD LIBRARIAN CLARA BREED ON BEHALF OF JAPANESE AMERICAN CHILDREN DURING WORLD WAR II

SAN DIEGO – Honoring its legacy of public service and advocacy, the San Diego Public Library (SDPL) this month kicks off a series of programs centered around the life and legacy of Clara E. Breed. “The Rebellious Miss Breed: San Diego Public Library & the Japanese American Incarceration” includes exhibits, films, performances, book discussions and author talks.

Clara Breed is best known for advocating on behalf of the hundreds of Japanese American families incarcerated during World War II. While working as a children’s librarian, she exchanged letters with dozens of young Japanese Americans, sending them books and messages of encouragement. During her 25 years as head librarian, she expanded the City’s library system, promoted youth services and encouraged libraries to build multicultural collections.

**“Clara Breed was dedicated to the library and the San Diego community during her lifetime,” said San Diego Public Library Director Misty Jones. “‘The Rebellious Miss Breed’ brings Clara’s devotion of public service to life and reflects on how her advocacy for an equitable and inclusionary future still informs the mission of the San Diego Public Library today.”**

From Sept. 18, 2021 to Jan. 30, 2022, the San Diego Central Library Gallery will host the exhibition “Call to Serve: Clara Breed & the Japanese American Incarceration.” It is a collection of photos and artifacts that examine Breed’s advocacy and the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II. The exhibit includes a replica of a World War II barrack to show living conditions at detention sites.

Other programs include:

- **Writing is Rebellious Postcard Exchange**

All City libraries

In partnership with the Fresno County Public Library, children can pick up a postcard at any SDPL location and write an encouraging note to children in Fresno. Each library will create displays of children's supportive words for each other.

- **Lecture: Japanese Americans in San Diego**  
Sept. 21, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.  
Shiley Special Events Suite, Central Library  
San Diego City College Professor Susan Hasegawa discusses how Japanese Americans have contributed to the history and growth of the San Diego region.
- **Author Talk: "Write to Me: Letters from Japanese American Children to the Librarian They Left Behind"**  
Oct. 23, 2021  
Virtual event  
Author Cynthia Grady will share her picture book about Clara Breed. Families are encouraged to read the book together and ask questions during the talk.
- **The Clara Breed Civil Liberties Memorial Lecture**  
Nov. 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.  
Shiley Special Events Suite, Central Library  
Independent filmmaker and UCLA distinguished professor Renee Tajima-Peña delivers the inaugural Clara Breed Civil Liberties Memorial Lecture.

For a full list of events and programs, visit the library's "Rebellious Miss Breed" [web page](#). This project was made possible with support from California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit [calhum.org](http://calhum.org).

### **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 1.4 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](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org).

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