



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Public Library

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### **Library's "Stories of Faith" Program to Explore Role of Religion to Understand History and Community** *The Multi-Event Program will Take Place in San Diego Through January*

**SAN DIEGO** – A major, five-month program by the City of San Diego Public Library will explore the role of religion as a pivotal filter through which San Diegans can better understand their history and changes to their communities. "Stories of Faith" will enable San Diego residents to learn more about each other's beliefs and values through a variety of activities that will create bridges of understanding between neighborhoods and the larger San Diego community. The series of more than 40 events will include writing and oral history workshops, documentaries, panel discussions, art exhibits, music and dance concerts, and films.

"The 'Stories of Faith' series will focus on the richly diverse community that is San Diego," said City Library Director Anna Tatár. "The program will both bring people together and showcase the Library as a cultural center in the San Diego region."

The San Diego region is an ethnically and culturally diverse community due to its proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border, its location on the Pacific Rim, and the presence of one of the largest military complexes in the nation. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, San Diego's foreign-born population grew by 70 percent between 1980 and 1990.

"Stories of Faith" will focus on neighborhoods to the south and east of downtown and in the City Heights community. These areas are some of the most diverse in the region and host many of the newly arrived immigrant groups from around the world. The religious beliefs practiced within these neighborhoods include Islam, Catholicism, Buddhism, Judaism, Rastafarianism, various

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Protestant and evangelical denominations, Baha'i, and diverse forms of spiritualism, including Santería and Vodou.

The project's theme was inspired by a successful series of programs by the Library shortly after the Sept. 11 tragedy. The goal was to sensitize people about the cultures and traditions of Arab and Muslim communities. With the "Stories of Faith" project, the Library intends to build on conversations already begun, with hope of deepening the dialogue and extending the discussion to the many ethnic and cultural communities in San Diego.

"Stories of Faith" is part of the California Council for the Humanities' Communities Speak project, the goal of which is to enable participants and the general public to learn more about each other's beliefs and values. The Library's series continues through January with a variety of activities.

More information about "Stories of Faith," including a schedule of events, can be found on the City's Web site by going to <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library>, clicking on "News & Events," and choosing "Stories of Faith."

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