



Event Proposal

Event Overview

A Human Library will be held at the library. During this event patrons will be able to “borrow” Human Books to have an informal conversation. The event is an opportunity for individuals to connect with people they would not normally have the occasion to speak to within their community, to better understand the life experiences of others and to challenge their own assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes.

The Human Books participating at the event will be volunteers who have self-identified as a “title” based on their race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, ability/disability, or by a particular life experience (for example, “Living with HIV”). It is important that Human Books be individuals who can communicate clearly and feel comfortable sharing their experiences with strangers.

This event can help to increase the visibility of the library, strengthen library partnerships with other organizations in the community, and help the library become a community leader in addressing diversity issues.

Organizational and promotional support is provided by the Ontario Library Association’s “Check Out a Human Book @ Your Library” online toolkit.

Background Information

The Human Library concept came from Europe where it was known as the Living Library. It was developed by a Danish youth non-governmental organization called Stop the Violence in an effort to counter violence based on discrimination. The success of the concept has led to endorsement by the Nordic Minister Council, the Council of Europe, and the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Human library events have been held in countries in Western and Eastern Europe, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. In Canada, Human Library events have been held at Calgary Public Library, the University of Guelph, and at Moscrop Secondary School in Burnaby, B.C. More information about the origins of the Human Library and its spread around the world is available at www.humanlibrary.org and <http://humanlibraries.org.au/>

Goals & Objectives of Event

Goal # 1: To increase dialogue, reduce prejudices, and encourage understanding of one another among diverse members of our community.

Objective 1.1: To provide an opportunity for members of the community to share their life experiences with strangers in a face-to-face question and answer situation.

Goal #2: To strengthen library relationships with other organizations in the community.

Objective 2.1: To collaborate with organizations that represent or serve different groups in the community in a library event.





Goal #3: To increase the visibility of the library in the community.

Objective 3.1: To draw new patrons into the library.

Objective 3.2: To engage current patrons in a library event.

Objective 3.3: To collaborate with community service organizations

Goal #4: To help the library become a community leader in addressing diversity issues.

Objective 4.1: To engage diverse participants in a library event.

Objective 4.2: To bring together different groups in your community.

Who Attends the Event?

This event would be held for members of the community, both current library patrons and community members who have never been to the library before.

Method of Achieving Goals and Objectives

The method for achieving Goals and Objectives will be:

- Survey current library patrons for Human Book suggestions via our website or a suggestion box at library service desks
- Recruit volunteers to act as Human Books. Ask organizations that represent or serve different groups if they could recommend volunteers to act as Human Books
- Advertise to a wide audience of potential Readers of these Human Books. Ask above organizations if they would help us promote the Human Library event to their members/clients. Encourage staff members to participate as Readers in an effort to know our patrons better
- Host a Human Library event at the Central library during which Human Books and Readers can have an informal conversation in the welcoming, safe library environment
- Survey individuals and organizations that have participated in the above ways for feedback.
- Staff Assisting at Event
- The event will require the following staff:
 - Event coordinator(s): One or two people who can co-ordinate the many aspects of the event according to the method listed earlier. The person / people would need to be available during the event to oversee Human Books, other volunteers and staff
 - Event assistant(s): One or two people who can register participants on the day of the event and handle various duties that may come up at the event on the day. This person could be a volunteer or a paid employee.

Security would also need to be informed about the event though it is unlikely they would be needed.



Needed Resources

Facilities

The location must provide a casual and open environment and potentially engage passers-by. It may be necessary to ask library patrons not participating in the event to use alternative library space.

Equipment/Supplies

Complementary coffee and snack and / or lunch should be provided to Human Books and other volunteers participating in the event. A banner or large poster marketing the concept of Human Libraries or attracting patrons to the specific event would also be needed. Reimbursement of transit costs incurred by Human Books and volunteers could be offered in appreciation of their time and effort.

Budget

Depending on the number of Human Books recruited, a budget will be set to cover expenses outlined above.

Evaluation of Finished Event

Data concerning the event would be collected for review and recommendations. Event coordinators would collect data such as number of attendees or circulation statistics of Human Books. Patrons of the Human Library would be surveyed (paper form or survey) on the day of the event at registration and at departure. These surveys would be collected anonymously in a comment box. Organizations consulted could be surveyed or followed up via telephone or email following the event.

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everyone has a story to share

