

Event Brief: Human Library Project

Organized by Thomas Memorial Library & the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Thomas Memorial Library

October 14, 2023

Background

On the recommendation of the ad-hoc Civil Rights Committee, which was established in response to growing racial unrest and George Floyd's death in 2020, The Cape Elizabeth Town Council formed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee as a standing committee in late 2021. The committee launched in January 2022 with a three-pronged charge:

1. Advise and recommend policies and practices to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (Systems)
2. **Educate the community to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion awareness and anti-racism (Culture)**
3. Elevate community engagement to better understand community views and concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion (Knowledge)

Over time, the committee seeks to engage community members with myriad perspectives to evolve the culture of our town so *all* residents feel welcome, feel they belong, and can thrive.

Enacting cultural change takes years, if not decades. It starts by recognizing harmful cultural norms and practices. One way to do this is by offering a positive framework for conversations that can challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue. The Human Library is a place where real people are on load to readers. A place where difficult questions are expected, appreciated, and answered.

The Human Library experience helps people "un-judge" someone.

Partner(s)

Thomas Memorial Library

Audience(s)

Primary: The residents of Cape Elizabeth

Secondary: The employees of Cape Elizabeth and residents of other towns

Objective

To educate the community to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion awareness and anti-racism so all residents feel they belong, and matter.

Strategy

To organize and host a Human Library® event to create a safe space for dialog where topics are discussed openly between human books and their readers.

Tone

The tone of the event (day of) and communications (leading up to the event) must be welcoming, informative, non-judgmental, transparent, kind, empathetic, appreciative, and authentic.

The "one" thing

If nothing else, the Human Library event signals the town's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by inviting people from varied backgrounds and lived experiences to share their stories with Cape's predominantly white, privileged residents. The event will trigger much needed conversations.

Must-have content/activities

- Landing page on the TML website – DONE
- Information on the town website
- Article in the Cape Courier – DONE
- Promotional materials for readers
- Event promotional materials
- Invitations for human books (email, Google Form)
- Interview questions for human books
- Recruit + confirm >eight human books – **by 5/15/23**
- Send list of book titles to the Human Library
- Training for human books AND key librarians (provided by the Human Library online) – **by 9/30/23**
- Recruit and train >eight librarians (volunteers) – **by 10/7/23**
- Printed materials – **by 10/14/23**
 - Rules for Readers
 - Library Cards
 - Lists of Titles (topics) previously published
 - Large-print materials for visually impaired readers
 - Evaluation forms
- T-shirts for librarians
- Transportation for volunteers, as needed
- Refreshments for human books and volunteers
- Shared meal for human books and volunteers
- Compile evaluation of event – **by 11/15/23**

Budget

The budget falls under the planned operating expenses of the Thomas Memorial Library. Many items are provided through the license with the Human Library®.