Howard County Library System
HCLS Joins International Human Library™ Initiative
Where People are the Books and Reading is a Conversation.

ELLIOTT CITY, MD-- Howard County Library System will become the first public library system in Maryland to add a new genre to its catalog next year that gives customers an opportunity to learn about a different culture or community by borrowing a Living Book from The Human Library™. The new initiative embraces the adage "Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover," and works to build a positive framework for open and honest conversations that lead to greater acceptance, tolerance and social cohesion in the community.

As in a traditional library, visitors to the Human Library™ may choose from a range of titles. Real people from a variety of differing backgrounds, experiences and identities will be available to borrow at the library as Living Books. Readers will talk one-on-one with the Books to gain insight into their particular experiences. Typical examples of experiences may include gender identity, religious affiliation, race, economic condition, physical and mental challenges, homelessness, or other circumstances that could have a marginalizing stigma attached.

The Human Library™ is an international, innovative approach to challenging stigma, stereotypes and prejudices through non-confrontational and respectful conversation. It is intended to be a welcoming, inclusive, non-partisan space where difficult questions are expected, appreciated, and answered. There is no political agenda.

HCLS is now accepting applications from individuals who may be interested in sharing their experiences as a Living Book within The Human Library™. Applications are available online or by email request at humanlibrary@hclibrary.org. Applicants will be contacted for an interview. All responses are strictly confidential.

The Human Library™ will be open to the public on Saturday, March 11, 2017 at the HCLS Miller Branch from 1 to 5 pm. The HCLS Human Library™ is part of this year's Choose Civility initiative, Kindness Creates Community. It is presented in partnership with the Howard County Office of Human Rights and #OneHoward.