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Howard County Library System
HCLS First Public Library in Maryland to Add Living Books to Collection as part of The Human Library™

ELLIOTT CITY, MD-- Howard County Library System (HCLS) will become the first public library system in Maryland to give its customers the opportunity to borrow Living Books. The Human Library™ will be open on Saturday, March 11 from 1 to 5 pm at HCLS Miller Branch located at 9421 Frederick Road in Ellicott City. Framed around the adage "Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover," the new initiative encourages participants to look beyond stereotypes and engage in meaningful dialogue. The goal is to foster a positive framework where open, one-on-one, honest conversations lead to greater understanding and acceptance in the community.

The HCLS Human Library will include Living Books from a variety of backgrounds, experiences and identities. Among the books will be a United States veteran with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide, a transgender man, and a person living with Bipolar Disorder. Readers will sign up on a first-come basis to "borrow" the books at the Miller Branch, for a fifteen minute, one-on-one conversation to gain insight into their particular experiences and the often 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 striving to grow its collection of Living Books and expand the number of opportunities for readers to visit throughout the year.

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.

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