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Creating Spaces for Meaningful Dialogue: The Human Library at Three Universities

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CREATING SPACES FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE: THE HUMAN LIBRARY AT THREE UNIVERSITIES

The Human Library® is designed to build a positive framework for conversations that can challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue. 'Human Books' can be students, faculty, staff, alumni, or community members who have volunteered to share their story with "Readers" to break down barriers based on race, religion, sexual orientation, class, gender identity, lifestyle choices, disability or other aspects of their life.

Jesuit values: Cura Personalis, Magis, Reflection, Contemplatives in Action



Additional resources: <http://bit.ly/ajcuhumanlibrary>

DiMenna-Nyselius Library, Fairfield University

- Four years in-person event (drop-in) and one year virtual via Zoom breakout rooms by appointment.
- Committee of nine departments as planning committee, led by the Library

Facilitated Dialogue through:

- Committee engagement: Recruiting books, advising on event logistics, and volunteering at the event.
- Course Engagement: Work with faculty across disciplines to promote event. Students attend for extra credit. Provide list of possible assignments.
- Assessment: Given to all books and readers as an opportunity to reflect on their experience and an opportunity for us to see the impact of the event.
- Inter-Book Dialogue: Providing a space for books to interact with one another during and after event.

Barbara Ghilardi, *Assessment Librarian*
Lisa Thomell, *Student Engagement & Outreach Librarian*

University Libraries, Loyola University Chicago

- A focused defined audience: Arrupe College of LUC (offers a rigorous 2-yr associate's degree education to a diverse population, 1st-generation, & underserved students), LUC Students, Downtown Chicago Library community, local high school students also invited.
- Two LUC librarians worked with the local Human Library chapter to set up the date. Both supplied books.

Facilitated Dialogue through:

- Community Engagement: promotion in classes, local community groups, academic department meetings and internal library meetings, and social events.
- Assessment: Gave readers an end of discussion survey and chance to reflect on their experience. Also had stats provided by reservation software.
- Interpersonal Reflection: Multiple readers were allowed with the book's approval and spaces were provided for books and readers to discuss and reflect on their experiences.

Susan Wardzala & Annette Alvarado *Research and Learning Librarians*

William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

- Hosted 5 in-person Human Library events since 2013, planned by a committee of librarians/staff and often in coordination with other campus units.

Facilitated Dialogue through:

- Community Engagement: Planned and hosted in collaboration with the Office of International Students & Scholars as part of the annual "World Fest" activities. Participants were selected based on "global/local" experiences and stories to tell.
- Assessment: Attendees were asked questions such as "Do you feel like you learned anything from experiencing/listening to another person's global perspective? If so or if not, what?" to determine if prejudices, biases, or stereotypes were critically examined.

John Jackson, *Head of Outreach & Communications*