

From: "Allison Iversen"
To: "Joyce Krom" <jkrom@huntington-woods.lib.mi.us>
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 2:41:43 PM
Subject: Drag Queen Story Time

Joyce,

Hello! I am writing to you as a mother, resident, and friend....not as a commissioner (disclaimer: my views do not in any way represent the views of the city government.) This is an extremely sensitive topic and I want to be certain I am not misunderstood. You know I have tremendous respect and admiration for all you do, but I am very concerned about the upcoming "Drag Queen Story Time". Believe me when I say...this is NOT coming from a *Judgy Mc. Judgy Pants*...I have been to my share of Drag Queen Shows and joined my gay/straight friends for nights out as a young adult in Portland, OR. What concerns me is this....

I know there is a desperate need for people to understand and accept people that are different. I believe using "Drag Queens" as a means to aid in this process is a mistake. Children are innocent little beings, and we, as a society, should be banding together to preserve that innocence for as long as possible. So, when some parents come requesting a DQST we must keep in mind the maturity level of the target audience. A DQST for adults would be hilarious and would make much more sense than DQST for preschool/elementary children.

These children will have a lifetime to figure out complicated issues, why do we as parents - in our effort to show the world (or HW) we are tolerant and accepting of everyone - feel it is wise to expose our young children to such clearly provocative, controversial, "unabashedly queer" demonstrations of diversity? Additionally, the "queer" part also perpetuates a stereotype that is not exactly accurate, which is further evidence of its shock value. It begins a process of labeling and questioning that no child should be burdened with at such a young age.

My 13- and 15-year-old had no idea what a drag queens was, yet they understand a lot about tolerance and acceptance at this more mature age. They love their gay and straight friends and those who identify as a different gender, and they were never read to by a Drag Queen.

When I was growing up, my mother used to take us with her to the local florist. Tom and John's. My mom was a recently divorced, newly hired police officer. She handled a theft or something in the vicinity of their shop and became fast friends with them. They loved my mom and my sister and me - and we loved them! I remember asking my mom (I was 8 or 9) something about them, they seemed a little different in the way they talked about and to each other. She replied very simply, "Tom and John are partners." That was it. No explanation. She treated them with love and respect and as a result, I have grown to do the same.

In closing, young children should not be prematurely exposed to topics their little undeveloped brains are not yet ready to process -- and certainly not in such a sensationalist way. I realize this was something residents requested, but it isn't necessarily something that needs to be provided. We can accomplish the same goals in ways that better honor the innocence of childhood.

I respectfully ask that this program be reconsidered or changed to an adult event. I, also, respectfully ask you to remove the signs advertising this event in the children's area. For those of us with children of reading age...we can opt to not attend the event, but we can't 'opt out' of our children reading the flyers lining the bookshelves. I'd rather not be forced to explain what an "unabashedly queer Drag Queen" is to my younger two children.

Thank you again for listening and considering all I have said. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

-Allison