



Expand Your Horizons

December 18, 2018

Dear fellow community member,

I would like to thank the many of you who have shared your thoughts about our programming over the past week, and particularly those of you who attended our December board meeting last Thursday to share your thoughts in person. In total, we received 215 comments via email, phone calls, social media and in-person about our upcoming "Drag Queen Story Hour" event, with slightly more than half (52 percent) of those supporting it.

I want to assure you that we read or listened to every single comment, and we value your thoughts. Community input is vital to us achieving our mission to "*Cultivate curiosity. Enlighten the mind. Strengthen the community.*"

After careful deliberation, we have chosen to move forward with the event. While "Drag Queen Story Hour" may have a provocative name, it is an important resource to many members of our community, including those who identify as LBGQT and those who seek to eliminate bullying against those who identify in this manner. Suicide is the leading cause of death in Colorado for kids ages 10-14, and bullying has been identified as a significant catalyst in many of them. Our programming seeks to create understanding that can encourage self-acceptance and reduce bullying.

I also wanted to clear up several points that we have heard over the past few days:

- The safety of all library patrons is something we take incredibly seriously with every event we host. We have a long and successful track record of keeping children safe at our library.
- Only children whose parents choose to have them attend will be present, and, like all programs for young children, a parent or caregiver is required to also be in attendance with them. Library staff members will also be on hand at the event.
- This event is being provided free of charge to the library district, and private donors had offered to cover any costs if they were necessary.

As I mentioned, we read or listened to every single comment that was shared with us, and we genuinely value your thoughts. After hearing feedback from the community, we have identified two opportunities for us to improve our processes and programming:

- First, we will recommend to our board that we update our background-check policy at their next board meeting in January. Our recommendation is that either we conduct a background check for all outside visitors or their sponsoring organization provides proof of a background check. Previously, we followed national library industry guidelines that did not require background checks at events where parents and/or library staff members were always present.
- Second, to help achieve our goal that our programming meet the needs of *all* of our community members, we are developing a new year-long series – tentatively titled “Celebrating our Community” – that will focus on both the history of our local community and important contemporary issues. We hope to partner with some of the groups that were vocal in this most-recent issue to develop content.

It is unusual that a single program garners this much attention. Our goal is to serve our entire local community, and we offer a wide variety of programming that accomplishes this goal. Over the next month alone, we have dozens of events focused on infants and new parents, toddlers, teens and adults. The content includes everything from literacy to science and technology to therapy dogs to multicultural issues. We realize that not everyone will be interested in every program, and that is why we offer so many programs – so you can choose to participate in those that reflect your tastes while ensuring that our library meets the needs of all of the various groups who call our library district home.

Again, thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us. As always, you can contact me directly at [director@clearviewlibrary.org](mailto:director@clearviewlibrary.org) if you have further questions.

Ann Kling

Director

Clearview Library District