

# How to Start Your Very Own EDI Book Club

Max H. Robinson, MLS  
&  
Hannah Tauriainen





# A Little About Us

Max H. Robinson  
(he/him/his)

Max the person:  
Father, Husband, Musician, Audiobook  
Reader, Animal Lover (especially dogs),  
Baseball Fan, Jewish, Neuroatypical

Professional Title(s):  
Administrative Specialist and  
Recording Studio Coordinator at the  
State Library of Oregon, Talking Books

Hannah Tauriainen  
(she, her, hers)

Hannah the person:

Dog Mom, Reader, Gamer, Sister, Musical  
Theatre girly, Lutheran, Outdoorswoman

Professional Title(s):

Administrative Assistant for Library  
Development at the Washington State  
Library

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# The Idea

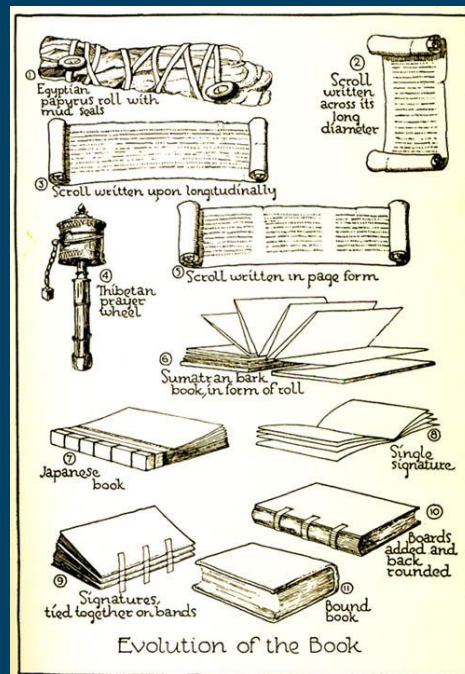
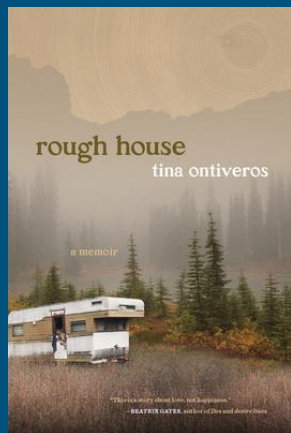
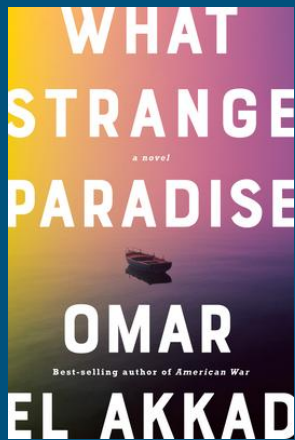


Screenshot from a scene in "A Man Called Otto" (2023)

- Rediscovering Books as an adult
  - Discovering a new career path
  - Expand personal reading selection
  - Joined EDI Workgroup - Spring of 22
  - Idea to start the first EDI Book Club at the State Library of Oregon
  - Pitched Idea, 1st meeting July, 2022
  - State of Oregon DEI Action Plan
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# Our Continued Evolution

- Started with two great Author Talks
- Autumn Discussions
- January, Partnership started with WSL



# WSL Joins SLO

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Washington's State Librarian, Sara Jones, suggests Oregon Book Award Winner *Free: Two Years, Six Lives, and the Long Journey Home* by Lauren Kessler as the book for SLO and WSL's first joint book club meeting

"Why do books help us in our EDI journey?" - Sara Jones, State Librarian of Washington

"With tenderness and empathy, Lauren Kessler speaks to how and where we fail the thousands of individuals coming out of prison every year... Their stories will stay with you."

—ALEX KOTLOWITZ, bestselling author of *There Are No Children Here*

TWO YEARS, SIX LIVES, *and*  
THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

**FREE**

LAUREN KESSLER



# Goals

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Who: You and your coworkers

What: An EDI centered book club

Where/When: At your library NOW!

**Why: Empathy**

How: Templates for Book Selection,  
Question Curation, and Guest Speaker Outreach



# Statement of Purpose

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Stimulating empathy and understanding by walking in the shoes of others through literature; creating an accessible opportunity for library staff and volunteers to be involved in the reflective and iterative practice of equity, diversity, & inclusion (EDI).

# Rules



Rule 1: This is a safe space. While active participation is encouraged, no one is required to speak, and we ask that what is said within this discussion stays within this space.

Rule 2: Please listen respectfully, without interrupting. This is a reflective discussion. Please consider reflective listening as a method of engagement. Reflective listening briefly is the concept that we are listening to hear, not to respond, for example listen, reflect, reply...

Rule 3: Avoid criticizing the views and opinions of other individuals present today. Our analysis is of the material, not other people's opinions

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# Community Agreements

**Confidentiality & Permission**

**Fully Present and Patient**

**Default to Inquiry over Judgement**

**Share the Air**

**Believe People's Narratives**

**Acknowledge the Difference  
Between Intent and Impact**

**Repair Work**

**Self-Compassion**



MLK Jr.

African-American  
History

Alternative Dec. Holidays  
i.e. Hanukkah, Kwanzaa

Women's History

American Indian  
Heritage

Arab Heritage

Disability  
Employment  
Awareness

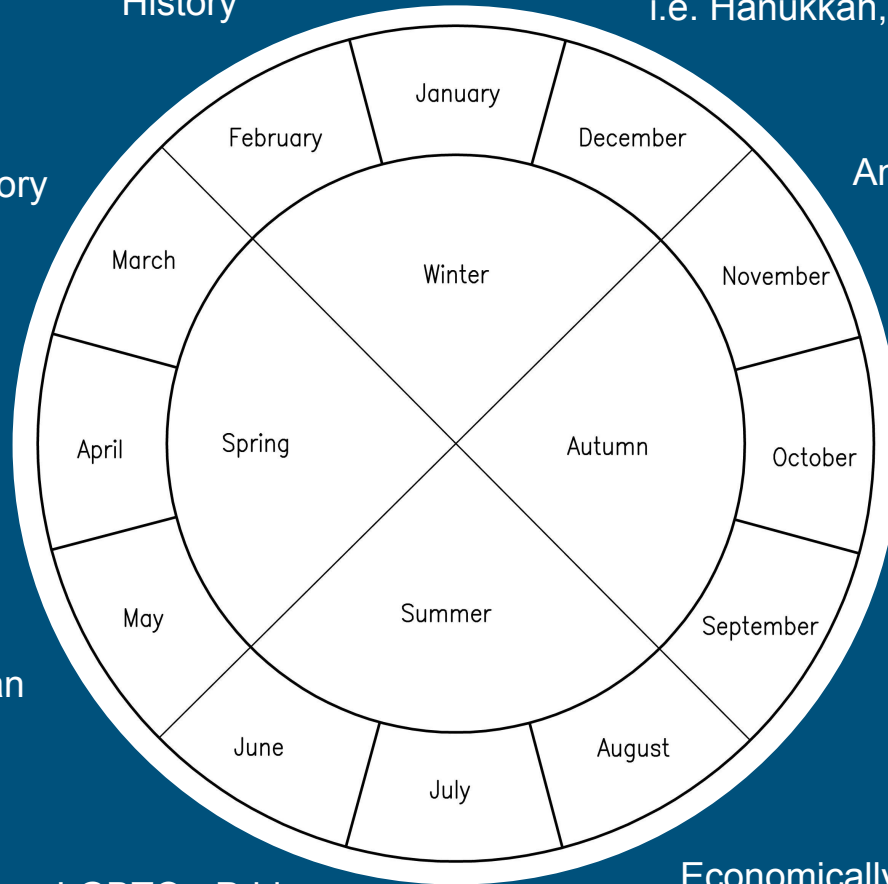
Jewish American  
Heritage

Hispanic-Latino  
Heritage

LGBTQ+ Pride

Undocumented  
/Immigrants

Economically  
Disadvantaged



MLK Jr.

African-American History

Alternative Dec. Holidays  
i.e. Hanukkah, Kwanzaa

Women's History

Arab Heritage

Jewish American Heritage

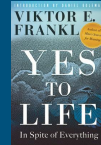
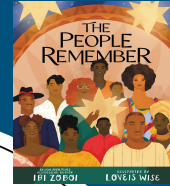
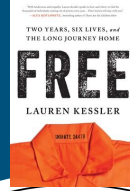
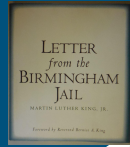
Native American Heritage

Hispanic-Latino Heritage

LGBTQ+ Pride

Immigration Racism

Wild Card Month



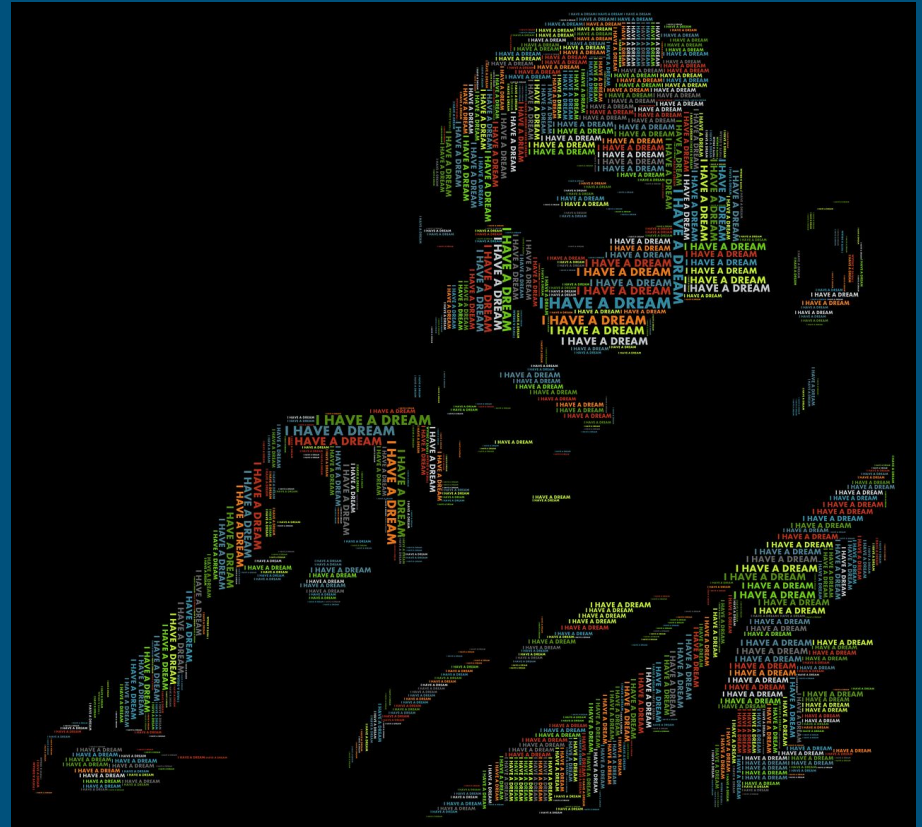
# Discussion Question Examples

What are your initial thoughts upon reading this book?

- Introductory Engagement, Ice Breaker Type Question
- Moderator(s) extra engagement to start

Additional thoughts on your reading?

- Was there a particular standout chapter?
- What do you think was the author's goal or intention for including \_\_\_\_?



# More Discussion Question Examples

Demonstrate vulnerability, dive into deeper questions, ideas, and uncharted terrain...

## Some Deeper Examples

- 
- What parallels and differences do you see between then and now?
  - Who did you find to be the most compelling character and why?
  - How do you think improved access to information can support \_\_\_?
  - How can we as librarians and library staff better serve and support \_\_\_?



## Don't need to reinvent the wheel!

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- Many books already have discussion guides
  - These often come from the publisher
  - Pick and choose and modify to suit today
  - Consider your audience

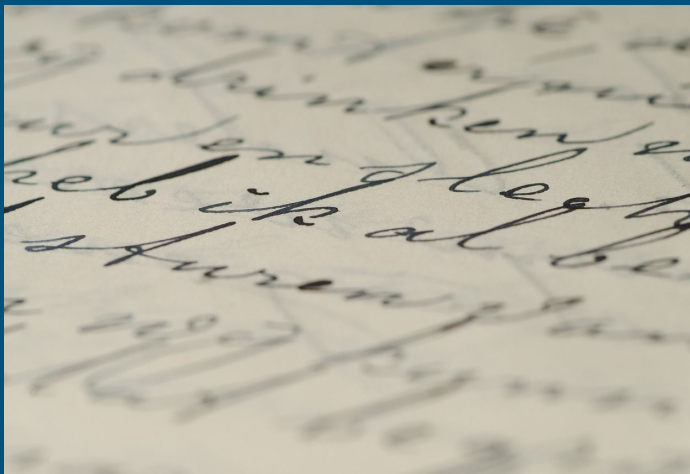
What's the goal of  
this month's EDI  
Book Club  
discussion?



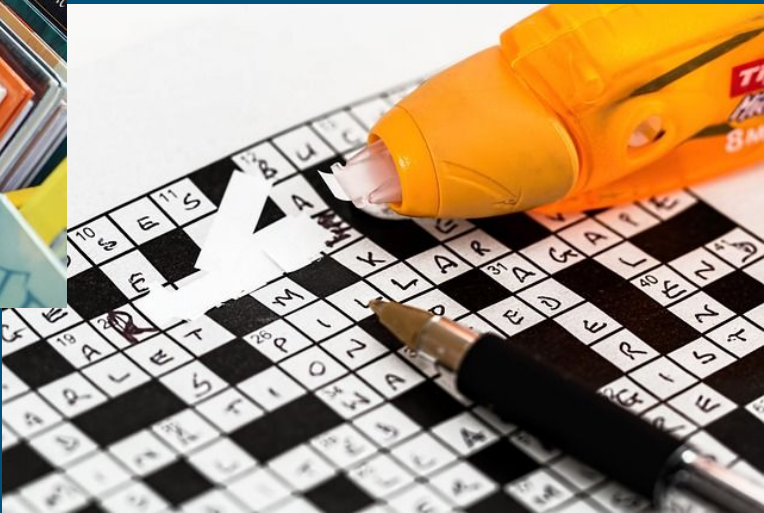
# Book Club as an EDI Training Tool



Collaboration with Participants



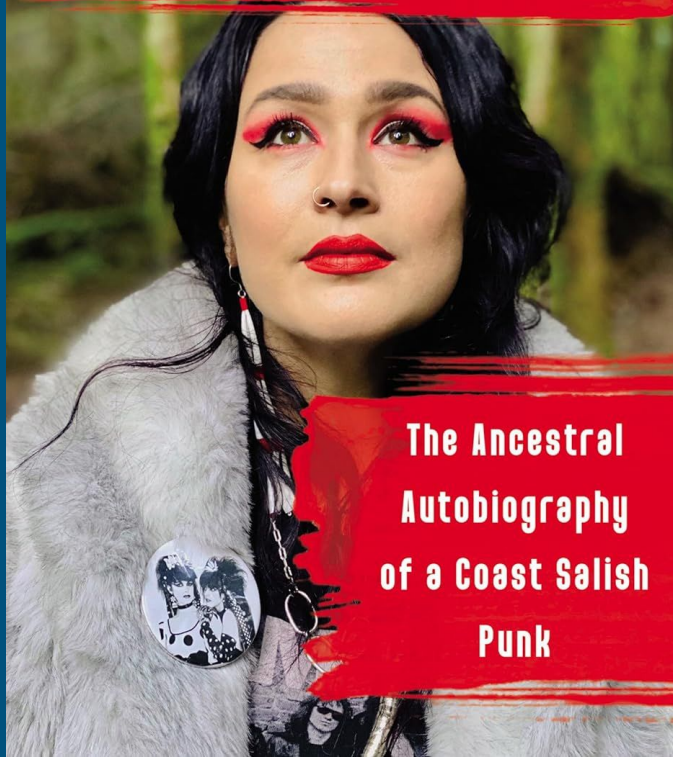
**TED**TALKS





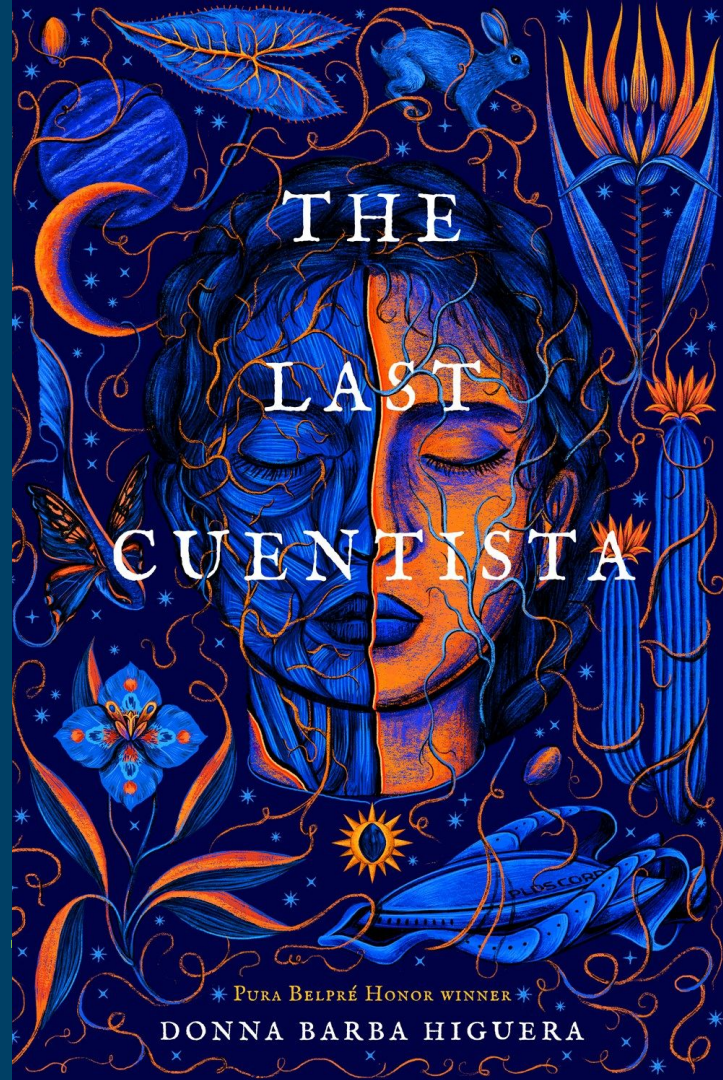
SASHA taq<sup>w</sup>šəblu LAPOINTE

# RED PAINT



The Ancestral  
Autobiography  
of a Coast Salish  
Punk

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# THE LAST CUENTISTA

★ PURA BELPRÉ HONOR WINNER ★  
DONNA BARBA HIGUERA

# Author Talk Questions



Wendy Writer

What got you on the path to writing this book?



Ronny Reader

Can you talk about the research process for writing this book?  
How did you gather information on your family's story?



Abby Author

What were your experiences with libraries as a kid?



Berry Books

What can we do to support (insert marginalized group) here in Oregon and Washington, in general and as librarians and library staff?

Excited about this choice of book!

I am going to miss this book club so much! -  
From a staff member on their last day of  
work at the State Library

I commend you on your work with the EDI Book Club.

Thanks for the reminder about this  
important legacy! - About MLK Jr.

Thank you for  
facilitating! ❤️

Feedback

Great meeting today! I really liked  
the use of a video/TED for this  
month. Choosing your own level of  
engagement was really nice.

Thanks for a  
great discussion!

You're doing awesome things!

# The EDI Book Club's Impact



On Our Lives | On Our Libraries | On Our World

# Contact Us



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