



October 19, 2016

For decades, neutrality has been considered a virtue among librarians, and it ensures that our own interests and viewpoints will not drive what we do. It creates a space for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

But, neutrality is nuanced in meaning and can inadvertently communicate indifference when our Black, Indigenous, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) community is at risk. Our library's core values of equity, civic engagement, intellectual freedom, and democracy are out of reach for marginalized people.

Amie Sonnie, librarian, social justice fighter, and creator of the Banned Librarian blog, writes, "marginalization in all forms — and racism in particular — disrupts and limits equity, civic participation, and freedom. It deforms democracy. If we are to fulfill our mission and uphold library values then we must be advocates against marginalization and inequity, and for justice and equity."

The American Library Association recognizes that institutionalized inequities based on race are embedded into our society and are reinforced through social institutions and further perpetuated by policies, practices, behaviors, traditions, and structures. And, since libraries are a microcosm of the larger society and play an important and unique role in the communities they serve, they must seek to provide an environment free of racism, where all are treated with respect and dignity.

If librarians are to engage in our social responsibilities, we not only need to be aware and to understand today's social problems and the direction in which they are headed, but we must also develop our capacities to creatively conspire with our communities to change the way we live. —Elaine Harger

Lawrence Public Library has always believed and will always believe that Black lives matter, Indigenous lives matter, LGBTQIA lives matter, and that all marginalized people matter.

Your library is a safe space and we stand in solidarity with you.

Executive Director

LPL Black Lives Matter Reading List | bit.ly/2dPya5p

Black Lives Matter | blacklivesmatter.com

ALA GLBT Round Table | www.ala.org/glbtrt