

EDI Assessment Recommendations: 2019 efforts

1. *Issue a statement that explicitly recognizes historic racism in Evanston and commits the Library to social justice. (Ongoing)*

- EDI Staff Committee drafted a statement to be considered by EPL Board and in consultation with Dr. Pat Efiom - City of Evanston's Equity and Empowerment Coordinator. Please note: Dr. Efiom and the Equity Commission are drafting a statement on behalf of the City of Evanston to be presented for consideration in October, 2019.
- Racial Equity Task Force was consulted on the draft of this statement.

2. *Invest in cultural competence development for EPL leadership and staff. (Ongoing)*

- December, 2019 launched a mandatory, yearlong training using the *Project Ready* curriculum that began in January, 2020.
- Staff goals reflect a commitment to completing EDI training and reviewing their work through an equity lens.

3. *Develop a talent management plan that identifies goals for hiring, developing, and promoting people of color. (Ongoing)*

- Recruitment efforts expanded to place job notifications with Illinois Library Association, American Library Association Black Caucus and REFORMA (Latinx Caucus) and locally with partners such as Cherry Preschool, Evanston Township High School and Youth Job Center which serve our diverse students and families.
- Diverse staff enrolled in accredited MLIS programs and participated in tuition reimbursement.
- Job descriptions have been rewritten to attract a more diverse pool of applicants.

4. *Create a group focused on equity and race composed of Library staff and community members. (Ongoing)*

- Attracted over 40 residents interested in joining our EDI Task Force, interviewed and met with more than 20 residents before selecting the first cohort.
- Established the Racial Equity Task Force (RETF) comprised of 8 community members, 2 library trustees, and 4 staff persons. The RETF began meeting as often as twice per month in the fall.

5. *Create and use metrics to assess and adjust efforts in support of the Library's EDI values. (Ongoing)*

- Staff are discussing metrics that can be tracked that reflect improvement over time.
- Surveying other public libraries to review their approaches. Pat Efiom and the Equity Commission will be presenting a metrics methodology for consideration in October, 2019.

6. *Create an innovative approach to space and services in Fifth Ward. (Ongoing)*

- Presented library program highlights (Summer Reading Program and Tech Training) to *Evanston Own It* Ministers
- Engaged in conversations about library service in the Fifth ward with residents and business leaders during door to door visits; at Junior WildKits Awards Ceremony; small group conversations at First Slice and with volunteer coaches that support athletes in a number of sports.
- Shared inventory of EPL programs produced in the 5th Ward with Alderman.
- Continued discussions with groups seeking to redefine the future of Family Focus facility.
- Continued to provide an electronic Pop-Up library at Fleetwood Jourdain Community Center.
- EPL has enhanced our presence in the 5th Ward through partnerships with Y.O.U., Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Evanston Own It, Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center, Family Focus, Gibbs-Morrison Cultural Center, Freedom School, Teen Baby Nursery (IWSE), Home Daycare Provider Book Bag Delivery (4 daycare homes), YMCA Headstart, EvanSTEM, and Connections for the Homeless, Jacob Blake Manor, and Ebenezer Primm Tower.
- Provided access to library services via the mobile library at church picnics (Bethel AME, 1st Church of God), block parties, and Jr. Wildkits practices and home games.
- Successfully piloted Neighborhood Resource Center at Family Focus location. Included kickoff event and 3 subsequent learning sessions on topics of law. Additional sessions scheduled through summer 2020 at Family Focus, with 2nd location in 9th Ward in planning phase.
- Began weekly after school programming with Family Focus middle school students. Activities include book discussions and arts projects.
- Planned to launch digital music workshops after school with middle school students at Family Focus to begin in March 2020.
- Produced middle school arcade design STEM camp session at Foster building in partnership with Family Focus and MetaMedia @ Foster.

7. *Expand book collections that reflect the needs and interests of the Black and Latinx communities. (Ongoing)*

- In 2018 began to track book purchases of Black authors and subject matter. The total number of purchased titles (not number of copies) was 447. This did not include Urban and Romance titles. In **2019** we expanded to include those genres as well.
- The 101 Great Books for Kids 2019 list (<https://www.epl.org/the-101-great-books-for-kids-2019-edition-is-here/>) was released in November of 2019. This list exemplifies the wide diversity and variety of children's literature published that year.
- To better meet the needs of our Spanish-speaking populations, two staff members will be placed in charge of our Spanish language collections. Mariana Priscilla Bojorquez, our Latino Outreach Librarian, will be purchasing Adult materials. She has already made a trip to the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico to find materials.
- Betsy served on the library's inaugural EDI Committee and will continue to do so in the future.
- Betsy wrote a blog post about solving the problem of finding books by people with lived experience (a.k.a. #ownvoices). You may view the post here: <http://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/2019/01/02/the-real-way-to-get-ownvoices-books-into-the-hands-of-readers-but-its-not-sexy/>
- Opening Day collection of materials from Robert Crown branch will include both English and Spanish languages and culturally inclusive books and materials.
- All displays are made with an eye on being equitable. After making a display on Indigenous #ownvoices, a patron wrote to us saying, "I am writing to extend appreciation, gratitude and delight about my experience today. As I entered the library and headed toward the kids section, I stopped in my tracks because the carousel "Decolonize your bookshelf" caught my attention. . . . To see this collection, front and center, in a month other than November (Native Heritage month) warms my heart and spirit and I know will delight other Native and Indigenous people who may see their reflection, inspire future writers and readers, and feel welcomed in this space. Personally, and on behalf of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research, thank you for helping create visibility and making space for Native and Indigenous writers. It means so much."

8. *Continue supporting culture-specific engagement specialists. (Ongoing)*

- Hired new Latino Engagement Librarian.
- Submitted grant proposal to fund additional support for culture-specific engagement work.
- Recruited and hired bi-lingual Supervising Librarian to lead team at Robert Crown Branch Library. (Additional Spanish speaking support staff offer letters are forthcoming.)

9. *Shift the focus of communications from the multitude of programs and services to engagement. (Ongoing)*

- In small group discussions, partner meetings and one-on-one conversations throughout Evanston, residents and partners were invited to co-create library services in the 5th ward, at Robert Crown and at all library locations.
- Worked with Racial Equity Task Force, and sought new ways to communicate with Black and LatinX residents.
- Began recording of episodes of The Checkout podcast, featuring the diverse spectrum of Evanston people living and/or working in Evanston and thereby giving voice to the community.

10. *Embed EDI into the Library's ongoing communication strategy. (Ongoing)*

- Work of the Engagement team, marketing and Library Director focused upon deeper engagement with all Evanston residents especially the Black and Latinx community members.
- Worked with Racial Equity Task Force and sought new ways to communicate with Black and LatinX residents.
- Hosted pop-up library at St. Francis Hospital in an effort to explore equitable access to services in the 8th Ward.