


Inclusion. Diversity. Equality.

2022 Annual Report



Delta Township District Library
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The Delta Township District Library has been critically examining all aspects of operations and services to ensure we are meeting (or exceeding) standards of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility.

Libraries spaces are, at their core, democratic institutions and should be a reflection of their communities. Beyond that, people of all cultures, races, genders, and abilities should be able to access everything the library has to offer in myriad, equitable ways. While we all experience the world differently, there should not be disparities in what we are able to explore, enrich, and enjoy.

Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA) is both unwavering and fluid. It is a journey, not a destination. We'd like to share with you how we define DEIJA, what we've done so far, and where we are headed.





Diversity

Diversity refers to all aspects of human difference, social identities, and social group differences including but not limited to: race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, language, culture nation origin, religion/spirituality, age, (dis)ability, military/veteran status, political perspective, and associational preferences. (University of Iowa Dept. of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to a community where all members are and feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate and achieve to their potential. While diversity is essential, it is not sufficient. An institution can be both diverse and non-inclusive at the same time, thus a sustained practice of creating an inclusive environment is necessary for success. (University of Iowa Dept. of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Equity

Equity refers to fair and just practices and policies that ensure all community members can thrive. Equity is different than equality in that equality implies treating everyone as if their experiences are exactly the same. Being equitable means acknowledging and addressing structural inequalities – historic and current – that advantage some and disadvantage others. Equal treatment results in equity only if everyone starts with equal access to opportunities. (University of Iowa Dept. of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Justice

Justice is the presence of systems and supports (e.g. policies, practices, norms) that achieve and sustain fair treatment, equitable opportunities, and outcomes for people of all races. Systematic, proactive reinforcement. (The Winters Group, Inc.)

Accessibility

Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings. (American Alliance of Museums)

What we have done so far

Programming & Services

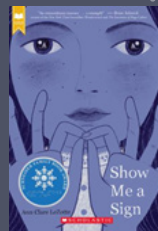
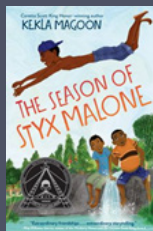
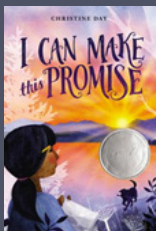
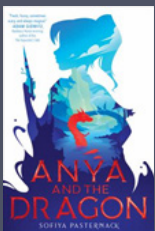
Youth Services has been thoughtfully weaving the concepts of DEIJA into much of their programming. For Battle of the Books, Tween Book Club, and our weekly Storytimes, the Youth Staff worked intentionally to incorporate a wide range of diverse books and authors. By choosing to amplify diverse books and authors, Youth Staff have been able to showcase many perspectives and lived experiences to kids and parents alike.

In 2022, Youth Services staff began a successful partnership with Community Mental Health. Every Thursday, we offer Stress Busters programs for kids ages 3-6 and their caregivers; and kids ages 7-14. Both programs focus critically on the mental health of youth, particularly in a rapidly changing social landscape where lives have been deeply interrupted by the pandemic. The success of Stress Busters led to a third program, RAISE Them Up Parenting Club, for parents/caregivers and their children (ages 4-10). The community response to all of these programs has been overwhelmingly positive.

Also in 2022, the Adult Services Staff introduced several new programs under the DEIJA umbrella. The book club choices represent a diverse range of authors and viewpoints. The Monthly Movie features carefully selected films that offer a diverse range of authorship and casting – films that authentically portray current social issues. We also offer discussion and resource connection when showing these films to help tie these issues to our community and bring awareness.

Our Library Line, where patrons can call us 24/7 to listen to a short story read and recorded by staff. During the story selection process, staff are actively seeking out underrepresented voices and using the platform to encourage reader discovery.

A selection of books from Youth Services



The ESL conversation group was reformatted into an ESL Conversation and Resource Hour. There is now an added component that connects English language learners to quality, accessible services in the community.

One of our largest undertakings has been the creation of our first ever Seed Library which is a seminal aspect of our Cultivating Community initiative. While some patrons may use the seeds in already flourishing home gardens, it also opens up opportunities for self-sustainability to folks who are new to growing their own food. Our hope is to empower people to work outside of systems that are not working for them or meeting their needs. Just like in our other collections, we are always working on diversifying holdings. For this year, an area of focus is increasing seeds from other parts of the world.

Aside from programming, we have also added new services. For example, the goal of Legal Help is to open up the legal system to more self-representation and in turn, increase efficiency in the court systems while also ensuring more people are able to successfully navigate avenues to be heard in court. Additionally, Legal Help services connect people to legal initiatives that seek to further increase equity and justice in the community – like expungement and housing resources.

Collections

We have added thousands of items over the years that reflect diverse themes and amplify marginalized voices, but there is always more work to do. A recent strategic plan goal called for a diversity audit of all of our collections. The Youth Services staff began these efforts to great success beginning with a thorough examination of representation relating to African Americans, Latinx, Mental Health issues, Native American/Indigenous Peoples, People with disabilities, Culture

Cultivating Community through unique opportunities.



& Religion, Asian American/Pacific Islander (various geographic locations), LGBTQIA+, diverse family structures, and neurodiversity.

Similarly, the Adult Services staff has been auditing their collections with the goal of gathering data to analyze the content for authentic, diverse viewpoints that provide windows and mirrors for our community. This data can then be used to correct personal and societal biases that may appear in the way we order, recommend, and display materials. Given the biased nature of the publishing industry, this small step helps to correct the underrepresentation of diverse authors in books, at least for the library users in our community.



Personnel

The hiring philosophy of “healthy cultures incorporate and adapt to new people and ideas” has resonated through the library’s hiring process, as we look to recruit and hire staff with interests beyond the current workplace culture, and also continue educating ourselves on who resides in our community. It is important that people see themselves reflected in all aspects of the library.

Beyond the Collection and Programming

With our displays, social media posts, print materials, and the website, staff tries to maintain a representation of all patrons through several ways. Pictures, language, material choices, and resource guidance all matter when thinking about how it represents all residents. Staff has also been updating the online catalog to remove outdated and insensitive subject headings.

Where we are going in the future

Staff at the library continue to make DEIJA a focus and want our work to reflect that. It is our hope that everyone feel comfortable walking through our doors. Our current plans include working on a comprehensive, step-by-step guide of the library to eliminate spatial and communicative barriers.

Staff will critically evaluate our customer service practices to ensure the library is providing a welcoming environment for diverse populations, practicing inclusivity, equity and justice and being intentional in our work.

As our community continues to face struggles, we will evaluate and expand our efforts to eliminate food disparities. This includes our Cultivating Community campaign. The Seed Library will continue to grow. The Farmstands will be seeded and harvested, and the Grab and Go Meal Kits will still be available to the community. In addition, the library is going to head up community campaigns to acquire donations for the General Store Pantry and the Free Little Pantry.

Adult Services staff will continue assist with the expungement process and to partner with Michigan Legal Help as the Eaton County Legal Self-Help Center and offer support, advocacy, referrals, resources, and education to the community.

Both Youth Services and Adult Services will continue to work with Community Mental Health to provide meaningful programs and resources to the community.



Conclusion

The library strives to be an inclusive place for all in our community. Our staff work tirelessly to enhance our building, collections, programs, and services to be inclusive and diverse.

We hope you, as a valued community member, feel safe and welcome in our building, find joy and representation in our collection, and continue to see the library as a valuable resource.

Statistics

- 367,594 items checked out
- 173,088 items in the collection
- 30,487 visitors to dtld.org
- 32,990 cardholders
- \$50,174 contributed by the Friends of the Library
- 5,184 MeLCat items loaned out to other libraries
- 10,320 MeLCat items borrowed for our patrons
- CreativeBug: 308 classes completed
- Mango: 937 sessions
- Ancestry: 6,473 searches

- Take It & Make It: 2,219
- Grab & Go Meal Kits: 829

Youth Programs

- In person 165 programs / 3,015 attended
- Virtual 39 programs / 469 added
- YouTube views 60,649

Adult Programs

- In person 143 programs / 519 attended

Summer Reading Program

- 530 registrants
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