



**DOWNERS GROVE
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

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Monday, March 22, 2021

To our Downers Grove Community:

What does equity, diversity, and inclusion have to do with the library? Why is the library making anti-racist statements and working with a consultant on an equity strategic plan?

The Downers Grove Public Library is a place for everyone to discover, grow, play, and learn. That's our purpose statement. But it's not always true. To truly be a place for everyone, where all are welcome, we must broaden our view to see the community of Downers Grove in all of its diverse aspects.

By openly condemning hate and violence, the library demonstrates that it is a safe place for people of color and people who look or think or act differently. By standing up for all people, we push our doors open a little wider to welcome all.

By working with a consultant on equity, diversity, and inclusion, we learn to use a different lens, a different way of seeing to help us find where we are falling short. Some folks just need a bestseller and a tax form. Some need help using a computer. Others want a book for their child with a main character that looks like them. None of those needs are more important than the others. All take a different approach to do well. Viewing our work through a lens of equity helps us to see them all.

The concept of the public library as the "great equalizer," the people's university, the last bastion of democracy may be true in spirit, but historically not in practice. Public libraries, like other institutions, traditionally and intentionally marginalized some people groups. By learning to view our community in all of its glorious diversity, we also learn to address the library needs of all of our community.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and be well.

Julie Milavec
Library Director