



DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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June 10, 2021

A message from the Board of Library Trustees and Director Julie Milavec:

To the Downers Grove community:

As conflict across the globe in Israel and Gaza persists, the Jewish and Muslim communities have suffered increased threats and attacks to their community members and houses of worship. The recent surge in anti-Semitic and Islamophobic hate crimes across our nation and the world is horrific. The library vehemently condemns anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and any form of hate and violence. We stand by our pledge to be a safe and welcoming space for everyone.

Physical and verbal attacks have been documented at alarming rates ([Anti-Defamation League](#)). In the two weeks following the conflict in Israel and Gaza, anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. increased by 75% compared to the preceding two weeks ([Anti-Defamation League](#)). Physical violence against Jewish people has been observed across the nation in areas such as Los Angeles, South Florida, New York City, and greater Chicago ([Daily Herald](#)). The Anti-Defamation League reported “17,000 tweets between May 7 and May 14 ... with a variation of the words ‘Hitler was right’” ([Anti-Defamation League](#)).

Islamophobia in the United States has remained persistent with a high level of hate incidents ([Institute for Social Policy and Understanding](#)). Internationally, hate crimes have increased as the conflict in Israel and Gaza continues. In the United Kingdom, reported Islamophobic attacks have increased by over 430% ([The Independent](#)). Most recently, a family in Canada was brutally murdered in a targeted attack against their Muslim identity ([CNN](#)). The library expresses its deepest condolences to the Salman family. DGPL rejects hateful mindsets which can lead to hateful actions, such as this premeditated act.

History has already proven the immense and devastating damage that is done when actions like these have gone unchecked and dismissed. The continued discrimination and harm inflicted upon the Jewish and Muslim communities is unacceptable and underreported. To our Jewish and Muslim staff members and community members: we see you. We support you. We value you.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine in the Gaza Strip is longstanding and the library is not taking a side on the issue. We are speaking out against violence and violations of human rights. We condemn all forms of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. The library reiterates its message to the community: DGPL denounces hate of any kind. We stand in solidarity with our historically and intentionally marginalized community members.

DGPL invites you to learn more about allyship through the following resources:

- [Hollaback! Bystander Intervention Training](#)
- Booklists on the Jewish Experience
 - [Adults](#)
 - [Teens](#)
 - [Chapter Books](#)
 - [Picture Books](#)
- Booklists on the Muslim Experience
 - [Adults](#)
 - [Teens](#)
 - [Chapter Books](#)
 - [Picture Books](#)