

NEWS RELEASE

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Dayton Metro Library Hosts Unique Speakers Series To Open Dialogue About Social Justice

The Dayton Metro Library will begin hosting a **Social Justice Speaker Series (SJSS)** in May. An ongoing initiative, SJSS brings some of the world's most promising authors, creatives, activists, and practitioners to the Greater Dayton area.

“At the Library, cultivating spaces for courageous conversations and intergroup dialogue is core to our values of equity, diversity, and inclusion,” said Karlos L. Marshall, DML’s Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

The following **SJSS** events will take place at the Main Library:

Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai

Bassani Theater off 3rd

Thursday, May 12, 7-8 pm

For Adults, Teens, and Tweens

Mai, an award-winning Vietnamese writer, journalist, and finalist of the 2021 Dayton Literary Peace Prize for her debut and first novel in English, *The Mountains Sing*, will provide a virtual presentation focusing on her literary works and books. Mai’s work has won numerous prizes: the BookBrowse Best Debut Award, the Blogger’s Book Prize, the 2021 International Book Awards, the 2021 PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award, and the 2020 Lannan Literary Award Fellowship for "a work of exceptional quality" and for "contribution to peace and reconciliation.”

Andrea Wang

Eichelberger Forum

Saturday, May 28, 1:30-3 pm

For All Ages

Wang will join the audience to provide a virtual reading of her newest books titled *Watercress* and *The Many Meanings of Meilan*. *Watercress* is semi-autobiographical and

Wang's third picture book. It was awarded the Caldecott Medal, a Newbery Honor, and the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature. She is also the author of seven nonfiction titles for the library and school market. Her work explores culture, creative thinking, and identity. *These programs coincide with DML's Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month programming for May.*

Saeed Jones

Great Reading Room, 3rd Floor
Saturday, June 11, 2:30-3:30 pm
For Adults and Teens

Jones is an essential author as well as a powerful voice in the world of literary activism, and his writing often engages the questions and nuances of identity. He has shaped his platform into a tool for social awareness, breakthroughs, and connections with his no-holds-barred personality and unforgettable voice. Jones, the founding editor of BuzzFeed LGBT and who has many other accolades for his work, will discuss his experiences in writing and working in news and exploring all things pop culture.

This program coincides with DML PRIDE Month programming in June.

Local Children's Author's Book Read & Conversation

Eichelberger Forum
Saturday, July 9, 11 am-12:30 pm
For Families and Children up to Grade 4

Three local, first-time authors who seek to inspire children and youth from diverse backgrounds will gather for a moderated author panel and Q&A session led by Te'Jal "TJ" Cartwright. They will also read excerpts from their work. Panelists include: Kiara Berry (*Which Cape Will I Wear Today?*), Henry L. Benton III (*Yes Dad* and *H is for HBCU's*), and Kwaunisha Moore (*Baby Girl, Encourage Yourself*).

This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Dayton Metro Library and coincides with DML's Summer Challenge programming.

Candice Matthews Brackeen

Eichelberger Forum
Saturday, August 6, 2-3:15 pm
For Adults and Teens

Brackeen is a general partner at Lightship Capital, directs programming at Lightship Foundation, expands upon her work driving representation in innovation with her role on the Lunar Surface Innovation Consortium for NASA, and sits on the advisory committee and selection committees for technology for the Ohio State University and Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Medical Center.

This program coincides with Gem City Black Business Month.

Leah Thomas

Eichelberger Forum

Thursday, September 8, 11 am-12:00 pm and 6-7:30 pm

For Adults, Educators, Families, Lifelong Learners, New Adults, Tweens, and Teens

Thomas is a celebrated environmentalist based in Santa Barbara, CA, who coined the term “eco-communicator” to describe her style of environmental activism. She is also the founder of eco-lifestyle blog @greengirlleah. Her book, *The Intersectional Environmentalist*, was published in March. Her writing has also appeared in a variety of publications and numerous podcasts.

Hanif Abdurraqib

Eichelberger Forum

Tuesday, September 20, 10-11:15 am

For Adults, Teens, and Tweens

Abdurraqib is an award-winning poet, essayist, and cultural critic from Columbus, Ohio. *The Crown Ain't Worth Much* was named a finalist for the Eric Hoffer Book Prize and was nominated for a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us* was named a book of the year by many publication outlets. *Go Ahead in the Rain: Notes to A Tribe Called Quest* became a *New York Times* Bestseller, was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize, and was longlisted for the National Book Award. His second collection of poems, *A Fortune for Your Disaster*, won the 2020 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize.

Emiliana Guereca

Thursday, October 13, 11 am-12 pm and 6:30-8 pm

Eichelberger Forum

For Adults, Teens, and Tweens

Guereca is an award-winning activist, feminist, entrepreneur, and CEO of the Women's March Foundation. She devotes much of her time to advocacy programs for women's rights, Latino education, and gender equality and has served as the bridge between community organizations and coalition building that spans national levels. Her recent endeavor includes launching Women's March Action, the 501c4 political arm of the Women's March. Guereca has received many awards over the years for her work.

This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Dayton Metro Library and coincides with DML Latinx and Hispanic Heritage Month programming.

Michael Thomas Ford

Saturday, October 22, 2:30-3:30 pm

Eichelberger Forum

For Adults and Teens

Ohio author Michal Thomas Ford will discuss his many books, which are for both adults and young readers and often focuses on the experience of being part of the LGBTQ community. YA novels include *Suicide Notes* and *Love & Other Curses*. Adult novels include *Lily*, *Full Circle*, and *What We Remember*. He is the recipient of five Lambda Literary Awards and has been a finalist for the Shirley Jackson Award, the Bram Stoker Award, and the Ignyte Award.

DML encourages patrons and community members to mark their calendars for these one-of-a-kind programs. “The Social Justice Speaker Series places an emphasis on supporting diverse groups and change-agents that come from backgrounds that have been systematically marginalized from the literary cannon, publishing industry, and dominant discourse of this nation, and beyond,” Marshall concludes. “The series aspires to be a springboard for a learning community of social justice warriors, advocates, and allies with an eye towards inclusive excellence.”

For detailed information about these programs and the speakers, please visit the Library’s Events Calendar at DaytonMetroLibrary.org/Programs or call the Library’s Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

DML is committed to providing access to all of our events. Please contact the Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665 to request accommodations for sign language interpretation, audio amplification, and/or language translation. Additional accommodations may be available upon request. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

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