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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilton Library's Human Library is a place for compassion and conversation March 24

Wilton, CT – Spending quality time with a good book that opens up new thinking is always something readers strive for. Being able to have a one-on-one conversation with the author of that book to create a meaningful dialogue is even better. Wilton Library's *Human Library*, on Saturday, March 24, from 1 to 5 p.m. provides just that opportunity. As the program name might imply, the stories available on that day are human "books"; community members who have volunteered to share their stories in order to break down barriers based on age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability, lifestyle choices, or other aspects of their identity. The library is offering twenty "books" ranging in topics from ageism to anorexia, from racism to surviving sexual assault, from being Christian to being Pagan, from defeating addiction to living with Alzheimer's and much more.

The Human Library is an international movement that started in Denmark in 2000 and is now held in more than 70 countries. Wilton Library is the first non-academic library in Connecticut to receive permission from the Human Library Organization to host an event.

Susan Lauricella, Teen Services and Makerspace Manager, said of the program, "I first had a chance to see the Human Library in full swing at Fairfield University and I was overwhelmed by the experience – both by the "books" and the interactions and reactions from the "readers," people who took the time to sit down with each of the human books and engage in conversation."

Melissa Baker, Wilton Library's media and digital services librarian concurred, "We were thrilled when we got the OK from the Human Library organization. We felt that our Wilton Library audiences are naturally inquisitive, and this program would be a perfect fit for the community."

(More)

Susan, Melissa and others have been working diligently over the past few months to discover people who were willing to share their personal stories of their struggles, and thereby enlighten people in the process.

Susan continued, “The tagline for the initiative is ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’ which is very true for our brave volunteers. In these few hours, if we can gain just a modicum of understanding or compassion for what others are going through, whatever challenges or prejudices they face, then we will feel that we accomplished what we wanted for the community.”

Elaine Tai-Lauria, executive director of the library noted, “With intolerance becoming the accepted norm on social media, this project gives people a chance to step back, and have a thoughtful and meaningful conversation in more than 140 characters with someone who might not naturally be part of their circle of influencers. We’re looking to bring new insight to people in an original way.”

For an advance look at the “book jackets,” people can visit the library’s website at www.wiltonlibrary.org and click on the “Human Library” icon where they can see the individual stories listed.

There is no advance registration for the program. People can sign up for 10-minute conversations with the human books when they come to the library on March 24, between 1 and 5 p.m.

The program is made possible with the help of sponsors Catamount Wealth Management and Mountainside Treatment Center of Wilton.

Wilton Library is located at 137 Old Ridgefield Road in the heart of Wilton Center. For information, visit www.wiltonlibrary.org or call 203-762-6343.

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Caption: Wilton Library hosts its first-ever Human Library on Saturday, March 24, from 1 to 5 p.m. People will be able to “check-out” human books for one-on-one conversations with community members who will share their stories in order to break down barriers based on age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability, lifestyle choices, or other aspects of their identity. The program is free and no advance registration is required. The faces pictured are some of the individuals who will be sharing their stories. Visit www.wiltonlibrary.org or call 203-762-6343 for more information. Wilton Library, 137 Old Ridgefield Road, Wilton, CT; www.wiltonlibrary.org; 203-762-3950.