

https://www.eastoregonian.com/townnews/sociology/libraries-provide-countywide-your-library-a-place-for-everyone/article_b25b33e2-b26a-11ea-beb9-5bf7f2ec0777.html

Libraries Provide – Countywide! | Your library – a place for everyone

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Libraries have long endeavored to be open places of welcome to all who seek information, knowledge, learning, literacy and enrichment for themselves and their families. Librarians are guardians of the right to uncensored information, a necessary element of a democratic society. Further, a library has a social responsibility to contribute to solutions for “The critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem.”

With the current state of our country, the work of libraries is more important than ever. We, the libraries in Umatilla County, strive to fulfill a set of core values of the library profession. These values are based on the fact that all visitors to the library are treated with respect and dignity. Our libraries are open to all without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. At heart, libraries are founded on these ideals and we undertake to provide a space for all.

The State Library of Oregon continues to be a shining example of using these values with a recently updated vision, mission and values. Our state librarian, Jennifer Patterson, shared that “Libraries are uniquely positioned to fight social inequity and racism through free and open access to resources, programs, and services for all. The State Library commends the work of libraries across the state to reach marginalized communities, create welcoming and inclusive environments, and respond to community needs.”

The Library Bill of Rights is a foundational document for libraries:

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

For the full statement, please see

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/LBOR%20%26%20FTR%20Statement.pdf>.

The Umatilla County Special Library District works in partnership with our libraries to advance and make available excellent library services, programs and continuing education opportunities for all. For further information, see <https://ucslid.org>.

Erin McCusker is the district director of the Umatilla County Special Library District.