PAST WINNING LIBRARIES

Clifton Public Library, *Passaic County*
Elizabeth Public Library, *Union County*
Livingston Public Library, *Essex County*
Monmouth County Public Library, *Monmouth County*
Ocean County Public Library, *Ocean County*
Willingboro Public Library, *Burlington County*

THE THIRD ANNUAL NJ STATE LIBRARY

MULTICULTURAL PROGRAM AWARD

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What a wonderful afternoon. The Tibetan program was just wonderful. I sat there with a big smile on my face during the whole thing. Lovely people, the Tibetans. I got to talk briefly to them before we left and found them to be so genuine and charming. You are not only entertaining us but are teaching us about other cultures and introducing us to people who live right in our communities. I thank the Hasbrouck Heights Library so very much for these wonderful programs and you for booking them.

– ELAINE REININGER, LIBRARY PATRON
FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS

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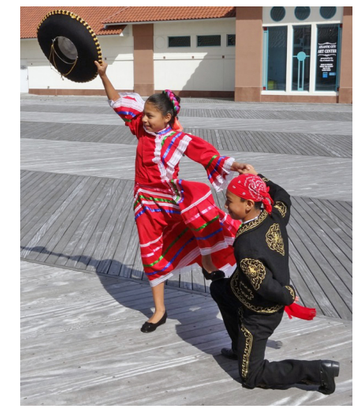
NEW JERSEY IS A MULTICULTURAL STATE

The long-lasting influx of international immigrants has shaped the state's racial and ethnic composition. Every neighborhood has a different mix of nationalities and languages. Today's libraries are constantly challenged by their diverse communities.

The **Multicultural Program Award** was established in 2014 to recognize library programs that increase understanding and promote diversity and multiculturalism in New Jersey's libraries. Libraries are encouraged to develop long-term partnerships with community organizations that result in sustainable cultural programming. The ultimate goal of the program is to share the library's program as a model for inspiration and adaptation by other libraries.



SOUTH BRUNSWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE
CONTINUING CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS

Since 2012, the South Brunswick Public Library (SBPL) has presented a series of irregular presentations with discussion under the title and concept of ***Continuing Cultural Conversations***. The goal is to celebrate and raise awareness, understanding and compassion among the very diverse community members of South Brunswick.

South Brunswick is home to a large Muslim population, mosque and private Islamic school. Due to the frequent fear and misconceptions regarding followers of the Islamic faith, raising awareness and understanding of this religion has been a popular topic.

TOPICS PRESENTED SO FAR:

- ***Dispelling Misconceptions About Islam***, a talk presented by Suzy Ismail, author and visiting professor at DeVry University
- ***The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew - Three Women Search for Understanding***, a book discussion led by a local pastor
- ***Freedom Riders***, a film discussion led by Chris Fisher, associate professor at The College of NJ
- ***Test of Freedom*** a film discussion led by Imam Sultan, the first full-time Muslim Life Coordinator and Chaplain at Princeton University
- ***Who Was the Prophet Muhammad*** a presentation by Imam Sultan of Princeton University

The partnership with so many groups has tremendously raised the visibility of these programs, boosted their attendance and expanded the discussion. The partnerships have enable SBPL to have a seat at the table at many local commissions and committees,

brought government officials into the library and made SBPL the place to go to bring the community together.

Some of the partners include the South Brunswick Human Relations Commission, the Interfaith Clergy Association of Greater South Brunswick, the Community Resource Team and the Friends of the Library, the Muslim community on the Human Relations Council, the Islamic Society of Central Jersey, the South Brunswick Board of Education, the South Brunswick Aging in Place Partnership, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and the Friends of the South Brunswick Library. The event was attended by local council members and assemblymen from District 16, (Ciattarelli and Zwicker) as well as State Senator and Library Champion Linda Greenstein.

"This series has absolutely expanded the visibility and perceived role of the library in the community and helped to develop many allies for the library, an understanding of the reach that we have and creative opportunities for partnership," said Chris Carbone, library director.

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Although New Jersey is best known in the minds of many for its suburban homes, good schools, and high taxes, it also offers a multicultural mix of people from around the world. There has been a huge explosion in immigration since 2000, ranking third among states for per capita foreign-born residents, who total nearly 22 percent of the population. And it ranks first when it comes to diversity. No state has as many different cultures living in proximity.

New Jersey libraries play a critical role in helping their community users make cross-cultural connections and develop skills necessary to function in a culturally pluralistic society. The Multicultural Program Award was created to honor outstanding library programs that increase understanding and promote multiculturalism through creative and sustainable cultural programming.

This year's winning programs - *Atlantic City Experience: La Ciudad Atlantica* by the Atlantic City Free Public Library, *Multicultural Celebration- Focus on Asian Cultures* by the Free Public Library of Hasbrouck Heights and *Continuing Cultural Conversations* by the South Brunswick Public Library - demonstrate that by working with community members and partners and involving their own staff members at the library, libraries become even more central to their neighborhoods and connected to new audiences.

I believe that the impact and the value of these programs are immeasurable. As the diversity of our state continues to grow, the New Jersey State Library continues to support libraries as they fulfill roles as centers of cultural and civic engagement.

Thank you, New Jersey libraries, for your dedication and commitment to providing multilingual and multicultural resources and programs that meet the needs of our diverse community.

Congratulations!

Mary L. Chute

Mary L. Chute
State Librarian of New Jersey

MARY L. CHUTE
State Librarian of New Jersey

2016 MULTICULTURAL PROGRAM AWARD WINNING LIBRARIES

ATLANTIC CITY FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE ATLANTIC CITY EXPERIENCE: LA CIUDAD ATLANTICA

The Atlantic City Experience: La Ciudad Atlántica is a project of ACFPL's ongoing effort to preserve and share Atlantic City's heritage. It is a two-fold project, featuring: 1) a bilingual, community-curated exhibit, 2) oral history interviews. A targeted collection of oral histories and a colorful and interactive community-curated exhibit allowed ACFPL to engage the Hispanic community, which represents 30 percent of city residents and provided a way to learn more about their culture and heritage.

1. COMMUNITY-CURATED EXHIBIT

Members of the Hispanic community provided the items and helped create an exhibit at the Atlantic City Historical Museum, an ACFPL branch. The exhibit highlights Hispanic influences in Atlantic City, pioneers and immigration patterns that brought them to the city. The preservation and evolution of culture, foods, clothing, music and traditions are included using photographs, postcards, maps and menus. Participants and volunteers gathered photographs and objects and created the exhibit. They translated materials for the exhibit into Spanish and English. Exhibited items were loaned or donated by community members and are now part of the ACFPL Atlantic City Heritage Collections. Interactive features engage audiences, using maps and audiovisual components. A grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission paid for the enlarging and printing of photographs for the exhibit and for the exhibit brochure.

2. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Working with leaders of the Hispanic community, ACFPL selected participants for oral histories. It was done in-house, using Audacity open-source software for audio recordings. Staff conducted interviews and volunteers transcribed them. Bilingual ACFPL staff spoke about the project at festivals and the library, asking for oral history interviews, photographs and artifacts. Making sure that the spotlighted community was involved and engaged from the start was important. Oral history participants, community leaders and the public attended the opening ceremony and related programs.

In summary, ACFPL received grant funding for the exhibit, but there are inexpensive ways to create a community-curated exhibit. Exhibiting loaned items in small cases and display windows or using poster frames with a combination of large and small photographs has impact.

Libraries seeking to replicate this type of project will want to make sure bilingual staff or volunteers are involved. In the future, ACFPL would consider creating a traveling component of the exhibit in order to expand participation by the schools and community.

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS FOR THE MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION - FOCUS ON ASIAN CULTURES

The Free Public Library of Hasbrouck Heights is a municipal library servicing a borough with a population just under 12,000. Due to the close proximity to surrounding towns with large Asian populations including Lodi, Wood-Ridge and Hackensack, the interest and need for education in cultural diversity has been dramatically increased. The goal was to celebrate and connect with Asian cultures that existed in the communities. ***Multicultural Celebration – Focus on Asian Cultures*** consisted of the pairing of a lecture and a performing arts event for each of four cultures: China, Korea, Tibet and India.

One month per quarter was selected during 2015, to highlight each Asian country. Displays were located throughout the library, with items provided by cultural organizations. Live events were supported by displays and reading recommendations. Lectures and performances also included samples of various foods from the culture.

THE FOUR THEMES WERE:

1. LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION:

February 15 – *Music Dance Recital* by Qing Yang Dance Studio

February 21 – *Cultures and People of China* by Prof. Ken Olenik of Montclair State University

2. KOREA - SPRING AND THE "BLOOMIMG FLOWERS"

April 11 – *Music and Dance Performance* by Donghwa Cultural Foundation

April 18 – *Lecture on History of Korea* by Dr. Chuck Kim, Vice Principal of the Korean School of New Jersey

3. TIBET – OUR NEIGHBORS

June 13 – *Tibetan-Chinese Relations Lecture* by Dr. Tashi Phuntsok, Dean of Woodhall School

June 20 – Local Tibetan Community provided theater, music and dance

4. INDIA – LAND OF WONDERS AND COLORS

September 26 – *Indian Music* by Kulture Kool, Indian Cultural Center

September 26 – *How to Drape a Saree, Legend of Ganesh Chaturthi*

A grant was received from the New Jersey Council for Humanities which covered about 25 percent of expenses for the series. They reached out to local cultural institutions to provide the program content. The Friends of the Library helped to fund the whole series of events. The mayor was also enthusiastic and attended several functions. The local press was informed and gave good coverage.

This was an ambitious undertaking for the resources available. Getting the timing of all involved (performance, lecturer, display for the month) was a challenge. All agreed that it was worth it and are continuing with more cultural events this year by recognizing cultures which immigrated to the area in years past. The focus will be on the performing arts aspect only.

"We were satisfied with both the participation of the cultural groups and the feedback from attendees. Participants asked that we continue to provide programs of this nature and content. I would not change the content, but I would be more aware that a great deal of time was required to make this happen," said Melissa Singlevich, project manager and head of Reference.