



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ryan Adams • (940) 349-8565 • Ryan.Adams@cityofdenton.com

Statement Regarding the Nov. 20 Rainbow StoryTime Event

The Denton Public Library is cancelling the Nov. 20 Rainbow StoryTime event due to safety concerns for staff and patrons. Since this event was announced, inaccurate information about the event's purpose and content has been spread within and beyond our community. We have received a number of disrespectful and hostile complaints based on this inaccurate information and, unfortunately, a number of these have caused us to have concern for the safety of event participants as well as City staff. Because we, above all else, must provide a safe environment for our programs, we made the difficult decision to cancel the event.

Inclusion is a core value for the City of Denton and we strive to maintain programs and services for ALL of our community members. The City will work to reschedule the event at a later time so that families who would benefit from the program can have access to its positive and inclusive message of friendship and self-expression.

Additionally, due to the amount of misinformation being spread about this program, we have provided correct information about what this StoryTime event is and its purpose below.

What is the event?

Contrary to inaccurate information being spread, this event is not focused on teaching children about gender identity or anything relating to sex or sexual orientation. It is certainly not, as some have claimed, "indoctrinating" children into a transgender way of life.

The StoryTime features books about families, friendship, and being yourself. Its intent is to provide an inviting atmosphere for families to hear stories together featuring books focused on self-acceptance, learning, and friendship. This StoryTime occurs three times per year and is scheduled to coincide with days focused on "different" or marginalized groups, such as Transgender Day of Remembrance in November. Due to this, an incorrect program title, using the word "transgender", was mistakenly used in a recent program printing which now has been corrected.

What is being read?

The three titles being read during the StoryTime are:

- "Red: A Crayon's Story" by Michael Hall
- "I'm a Girl" by Yasmeen Ismail
- "What Riley Wore" by Elana K. Arnold

In none of these books is the word "transgender" used and, there are no references related to the book characters being born one way and changing into another. Sex or sexual orientation are also not mentioned. Book descriptions and reviews from literary review publications are available when viewing each title's record in the library online catalog: <https://library.cityofdenton.com>. We encourage you to read them if you have not read the books.

OUR CORE VALUES

Integrity • Fiscal Responsibility • Inclusion • Transparency • Outstanding Customer Service

Who is presenting or reading?

Rainbow Family StoryTime is presented by a Librarian and a Library Assistant II. No outside volunteer or paid performers are presenting.

Who is this intended for?

The event is open to all families, but the Library understands that some will not be interested in attending. The Library has made every effort to be transparent in the program’s description to make sure that parents are able to decide whether their family will attend or not. Special StoryTimes focusing on holidays or observances are often scheduled separately from regular weekly early literacy programs to give parents a chance to determine if they wish their family to attend.

Why is the listed age range for young children?

All our StoryTime events are for children ages 2-8 regardless of content. Children older than 8 years prefer to read on their own and children younger than 2 years generally do not follow a story throughout. Children in this age range are learning about differences between them and others and building capacity for understanding of others and self-acceptance is critical.

Why is the City holding the event?

Denton Public Library hosts over 300 Library programs per season and, since we exist to serve all community members, we try to include programming that speaks to families who may feel different. It’s important to our community that every adult and child feels accepted in Denton. This event was also approved by our Library Board – made up of Denton community members.

We can all agree that there are families whose children are or feel different. Maybe they are on the spectrum, maybe they have a disability, or maybe they look different. While everyone is welcome at this program, it is specially designed for any children and families who may feel different from those around them.

How can I formally file a complaint if I do not agree with a Library program?

If you are still concerned, please feel free to complete our Statement of Concern Form (pages 5 and 6 of our [Library Policy](#)).