#OwnVoices for All Readers: Incorporating EDI Values into Readers’ Advisory Service
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NO MORE EXCUSES

- Stop being “concerned” and start doing something
- Stop thinking you don’t have the skills
- Admit you are part of the problem
- Show, don’t tell
- Examples, links, and advice to help you show your commitment to serving all patrons and representing all voices
- **Curating and promoting diverse collections is non-negotiable**
Becky’s Journey

- Annabelle Mortensen admits her bias
  - Link to the details and handouts from this 2017 program
- My turn to confront my bias and act
  - Linda Addison and the Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement
- Check yourself-- regularly
  - White privilege can be blinding
Building a Diverse House

- A winding road
  - Read
  - Suggest
  - Invite more staff to the RA table
  - Audit all the time
  - Buy diversely
  - Speak Up
  - But Also Listen

- Tackle problems as they arise

- My blueprints
  - Draw yours
Make an EDI Mission Statement

Also, please note that my programs are all prefaced by this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement:

RA for All’s programs are crafted and delivered to encourage all library staff to use leisure reading as a way to connect with the community, with a particular focus on reaching the underserved, and promoting "own voices" authors. Throughout all of my training sessions we will explore ways in which library staff can provide services, collections, and programming that puts EDI concerns at the forefront. Examples include but are not limited to, delivering the same information in different formats, advice on how to diversify your displays, and ways to include more staff voices in basic RA service [more voices leads to more equitable, diverse, and inclusive offerings]. Libraries that hire RA for All must be interested in allowing all staff [not just professional and/or public service staff] to participate in serving all populations, not just the ones most represented by staff or as identified in a local census.

Becky’s EDI Statement post and explanation
Read Diversely

- Read widely
  - Basic rule of RA service
- Make a plan to consciously add own voices titles
  - Or get help from others
  - Make one for your library
- No time? Reading ABOUT books is just as important as reading the books
  - Longer piece on topic
- Think like a reader, not a library worker
  - Goodreads 5 & 2 star reviews
- Be a role model
Suggest Diversely

- Newsflash: You can suggest books you haven’t read
  - Use the words of others
  - It’s a resource, and using resources is what we do
- Institute an own voices requirement
  - Book Riot’s standard is 30%
  - Why Read Diversely 5 part FAQ
- Remember to audit all the ways we “suggest”
  - Discoverability issues
- When suggesting- focus on appeal NOT diversity
Collect Diversely

- The obvious:
  - Buy books by #ownvoices authors
- But less obvious, add books from:
  - Small presses
  - Self publishing
  - Genre titles from both
- Identify resources:
  - Amazon bestseller lists
    - Find titles of interest and back track for reviews
  - Writers’ Associations
    - The Seer’s Table
  - Patrons/Readers/Fans
- This is an ongoing struggle and more help is needed.
The Readalike Problem

- Inclusive Stephen King Readalikes
- Luis Alberto Urrea Readalikes and a mini-rant
- The Search for Diverse Readalikes for David Baldacci Leads Becky to A Discussion of the Inherent Racism and Sexism in Our Resources
- The Seven of Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna Readalikes
- Commit to NEVER only having straight white male options
Include More Staff Input

- More voices = more organic diversity
- Our support staff is more diverse
- Working together is our most valuable resource
- Everyone on staff uses the library, encourage them to participate in RA
  - A step-by-step guide
  - Make it easier to participate in staff rec shelves
Reminders: Speak Out—With Your Actions

- Make incorporating #Own Voices titles part of your everyday work
- Booktalk diverse books
- Suggest diverse books
- **Improve Discovery!**
  - Lists, displays, stock your shelves
- Lead by example
- Call out microaggressions
- Inspire and teach others to improve
But Also

Don’t Stop Listening

- RA is 60% listening
- Shut up and make room for the marginalized voices
  - Listen first, post second
- Admit when you have misstepped
  - “Multicultural”
  - “Alternative Lifestyles”
  - Not interfiling POC and LGBTQ authors
- Work to do better
  - Becky learns about fonts
- Listening and learning not reacting and feeling attacked
Keep On Keeping On

- It’s a marathon
- Worry about yourself first
- Set the example
  - Your work and collections need to represent the world at large
- Don’t give up or think your work here is done
  - Hint...it is not
- React Appropriately
  - What does #OwnVoice mean?
- Read, Suggest, Promote, Collect with an EDI lens
  - Repeat and Repeat and Repeat and Repeat........
Questions?
Now or Later

- Slides and more on RA for All
- Email
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