

MEDIA RELEASE

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Share your story at NIC's Living Library

Submit your name or nominate someone you know before May 1, 2017

NIC is accepting nominations for living books and volunteers at its first-ever Living Library event taking place during Elevate the Arts on Saturday, June 3, 2017.

The books are not bound in the traditional format. They are living, breathing volunteers – individuals who have experienced discrimination or are members of a group that has been affected by stereotype, stigma or prejudice, who are willing to take part in 15-minute conversations and share their perspective with others.

“As human beings we all yearn for connection, and yet we often feel hesitant to reach out,” said Cathy Mutis, Associate Director of NIC’s Office of Global Engagement. “It can be hard to start a conversation with someone who is different from us – especially if we have pre-conceived ideas about them. We want to break down those barriers and build community.”

NIC’s Office of Global Engagement is co-hosting the event with the Comox Valley Multicultural & Immigrant Support Society, Elevate the Arts and Vancouver Island Regional Library as well as NIC’s Library and Learning Commons, Elders in Residence and ElderCollege to create dialogue, promote understanding and reduce prejudice.

The Living Library committee hopes to recruit 20 living books plus other volunteers. They are open to all book topics around a theme of diversity. Suggested topics include what it’s like to experience life transgender; Sikh; as a single mother; a wheelchair user; an international student; a senior; an immigrant; a female politician or business leader; a residential school survivor; a person living with mental health challenges – the possibilities are endless.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Benedict Leonard is one of many committed volunteers planning the event.

“There are too many assumptions and judgements separating us from each other,” he said. “I’d like to see people bridge that divide, even if it’s just for 15 minutes.”

The Living Library connects people from diverse gender, cultural and religious backgrounds in a positive, interactive and non-threatening way. There will be a training session prior to the event to teach living books and other volunteers about the Living Library methodology and goals. The framework for this event is based on The Human Library (humanlibrary.org), a movement that began in Copenhagen in 2000 and has since grown to include similar projects in more than 70 countries worldwide.

NIC is committed to fostering an inclusive culture that supports and celebrates diversity and learning. Sign up to volunteer or nominate yourself or someone you know to participate as a living book.

The deadline for applications for living books and other volunteers is Monday, May 1, 2017. Visit libguides.nic.bc.ca/livinglibrary or email cathy.mutis@nic.bc.ca for details on how to apply.

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