



North Vancouver District
Public Library

Connecting Community. Sharing Knowledge. Inspiring Stories.

Inspiring Stories

October 2017

The Human Library

Growing up we're often told not to "judge a book by its cover". We're told not to form opinions based purely on what can be seen on the surface; by outward appearance. Why? Taking a deeper look and learning more about a person, place, or thing, can lead to resolutions that may be different from what was expected. But how can a person explore their curiosity when it comes to those who are different from them when social convention and public environments don't create a level playing field for someone to learn without sounding naïve, ignorant, or rude? That's where the Human Library comes in!

The Human Library project is a global initiative that promotes using respectful dialogue to better understand people in your community. On Saturday, October 21, North Vancouver District Public Library hosted a Human Library event in collaboration with a community member who was interested in setting up a Human Library on the North Shore. The Library provided a safe, neutral space where a selected group of people with diverse life experiences, or "books", met with other community members to "read", or have one-on-one conversations.

Human Library "Reading List"

- *90 Year Old Marathoner*
- *Skiing with a Brain Injury*
- *From Katya to Katrina: A Journey from Russia*
- *Van Tan Nudist Club*
- *Unstoppable: A Full Life with Huntington's Disease*
- *Tales from the Blindside*
- *We're All Queer*
- *Recovery*
- *Ultramarathoner*
- *BiPolar Bear: A Creative Way to Look at Mental Health*

48 conversations took place throughout the day, giving 48 opportunities for the community to connect on a more personal level. There was no chit chat or skirting around issues. People felt comfortable asking real questions—and "books" were in a comfortable environment to answer honestly. Questions like: "What's it like to be bipolar?", "Is it OK to call a blind person disabled?", "You're not male or female? What are you?"

Feedback about the Human Library

"Fantastic experience!" "Blown away by the whole event."
 "Awesome." "Thrilled to be able to be a 'library book'.
 "Appreciate spaces like this." "When is the next one?"
 "The library is the best institution."

