



**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Henderson District Public Libraries**  
**Board of Trustees**

**Date:** August 22, 2019

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

**Place:** Paseo Verde Library, 280 S. Green Valley Pkwy., Henderson, Nevada

*Notice is given that items on the agenda may be taken out of order. Two or more agenda items may be combined for consideration; items may be removed from the agenda or discussion delayed relating to an item on the agenda at any time.*

**Call to Order**

Chair Mark McGinty called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

**Roll Call**

*Board present:* Angela Brommel, Jim Frey, Mark McGinty, Kip Noschese, David Ortlipp, Bette Silverman,

*Board absent:* Dan Doherty

*Staff present:* Rachelle Basso, Robbie DeBuff, Debbie Englund, Dana Friesen, Viveca Grinstead, Joy Gunn, Sean Hill, Gayle Hornaday, George Greicar, Quanjai Greicar, Candace Kingsley, Maia Malone, Michelle Mazzanti, Jo Morrison, Heela Naqshband, Haris Patel, Jeff Salinas-Jenni, Marcie Smedley, Leona Vittum-Jones

*Others present:* Ian Agers, Bill Bainbridge, Julie Bainbridge, Christina Bell, Debbie Bentley, Jim Bentley, Jose Bettencourt, Jessi Bridges, Jaime Brousse, Evya Bunahi, Lyn Burbidge, Hannah Burns, Cynthia Cook, Ronald Cook, Jennifer D’Incecco, Linzy Donofrio, Melba Duarte, Matt Durski, Asai Eaupin, Audrey Farnham, Lizzy Ganssle, Gina Garner-Ball, Cecelia Gonzalez, Gloria Gunn, Jennifer Hall, Rebecca Paul Hill, Honora Hoo, Mindy Jacobson, Clint Jensen, Mary Jensen, Terri Jupin, Joseph Kirsch, Savannah Kirsch, Shawna Kirsch, Rachel Kirsch, Jon LaBonte, Dawn Lozier, Ray Macfarlane, Karen McLain, Nicol McNee, Claudia Menendez, Joe Morgan, Linda Morgan, Moriya Olsen, Rosa Orozco, Lynda Parker, Rae Ann Pinecle, Julie Plummer, Holly Reese, Ana Rosy, Sara Sobek, Jamie Lee Sprague-Balleu, Jeanna Stefanelli, Carrie Stewart, Shea Villamor, Andre Wade, John J. Ward, Mary Ann Ward, Chris Yamas  
 [Note: several signatures on the sign-in sheet were illegible.]

**Approval of Agenda**

Mark McGinty said there is one revision. All public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per person. David Ortlipp made a motion to approve the agenda with the revision noted. Angela Brommel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**Public Comment**

*Note: Comment will be taken on each agenda item as it is heard. Pursuant to Nevada’s Open Meeting Law, action may not be taken on matters presented during this period until included on an agenda as an action item.*

Mark McGinty said there is only one agenda item. Public comment will now be taken in the order which attendees signed in. After that, anyone wishing to speak will have an opportunity.

Karen McLain said she’s been taking children and grandchildren to Henderson Libraries since 1983, when it was just a storefront on Sunset. This isn’t about diversity or inclusion. This is 100% based on purposeful, orchestrated and strategic indoctrination and she is adamantly opposed to the program. Karen McLain said she brings her grandchildren here and this would stop that. Ms. McClain said she is opposed to this on every level.

Gloria Gunn said she feels the same way and comes from a Christian background; this is against Christian beliefs and would introduce into small children a way of thinking that is absolutely not biblical. Ms. Gunn said she feels herself, as a teacher, held accountable for what she teaches young children. Ms. Gunn sees this as a slipping point and she is concerned about what would come next. Lila’s a liar and it’s okay because Lila lies so she is okay as she is. Ms. Gunn

see lying as a sin that needs to be corrected. Or Charlotte cheats on her test, but that's okay because Charlotte cheats and it's okay because Charlotte is just that way. No, Charlotte is not that way, she needs to be corrected. Gloria Gunn said she has a kindergartner and preschooler and they will no longer visit the library if this storytime takes place. She said it's her understanding that these books (books purchased for Drag Queen Storytime) will be kept separate from the other children's books. Marcie Smedley replied books have not been purchased for the Diversity Diva storytime. There is a rainbow collection of books for all ages that address issues surrounding the LGBTQ community. Books written by and for the LGBTQ community. Those books are throughout the library, as they have always been, but are now searchable by the rainbow collection. Ms. Gunn said she would address this as she would any other sin. If one has a proclivity toward something and God says not to do it, it's a sin, and she stands against it.

Jennifer Hall stated she is not against any lifestyle. A couple of years ago Ms. Hall inquired about using a library meeting space to use hold a living waters class and was told she couldn't because it would be proselytizing. When Ms. Hall saw the Diversity Diva storytime scheduled, she thought the rules must have changed. Upon inquiring if she could read Noah's Ark (accounted for in the in Quran, Bible, Torah, and not specifically Christian) she was again told it was proselytizing. Proselytizing is defined as trying to convert from one religion, belief or opinion to another. The library bylaws, appendix B, Library Bill of Rights states "Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use." Ms. Hall said this protects her too. Diversity Divas have on their activity book how to pick your drag name. It teaches children 3 to 8 how to pick their drag name and pronoun. This is proselytizing. If you are going to allow one, you need to allow all. Ms. Hall said she is not asking the board to take Diversity Divas away, she is saying that the library can't tell Diversity Divas yes and then tell her no. Jennifer Hall said she is asking that her children have options too. Everyone deserves options.

Shawna Kirsch thanked the board for having this meeting. Ms. Kirsch said her children have graduated, but many years ago one of her daughters came home from the second week of school, crying, and said nobody liked her at school, everyone is teasing her. After questioning, it came out that it was 2 people. Ms. Kirsch said she had to teach her daughter about perspective. It seems like when 2 people are really, really loud, the perspective is that everyone is doing it when they are not. On that same line, some libraries across the USA are doing this, but when she did her research via the Diva, Shawna Kirsch confirmed 50 libraries have held Drag Queen storytime. She doubled it, just to be conservative, and doubled it again and divided by the number of 116,867 libraries on the ALA website. That is .17 of libraries. That is important. She also looked up children that are dealing with gender dysphoria. This is in psychology today and is something as a culture we don't know how to address. This is happening to maybe 1% of our children. Here's where she challenges Diversity Divas. On their website they say they don't have an agenda. But they do. They promote gender fluidity. It says you can be anything, a boy one day, a girl the next day. Shawna Kirsch says if she pushes back on that and says it's not okay they tell her she is homophobic or transphobic. She says she's not. Ms. Kirsch would walk up to the person who is Polly Porcelain and shake his hand. She is not homophobic. It's not fair to call her out on that because she pushes back on an ideology. Gender fluidity is an ideology. Christianity, Muslim are ideologies. It's to the core of one's belief. They say they are not indoctrinating children, but they are. Shawna Kirsch thanked the Board for having them.

Jessi Bridges expressed gratitude for the board's attention today and for the willingness to hear from concerned parents and citizens. Mrs. Bridges is the mother of 5 young children, grew up in Henderson and is a patron of the Green Valley Library. She and her husband are raising their children here. Mrs. Bridges said she is here in opposition to the Drag Queen Storytime, titled Diversity Divas, and requests the events be cancelled. Mrs. Bridges said she is in full agreement with the other parents here today and many of the others who couldn't be here but have written and called in opposition. This event is highly inappropriate for young children. To have an adult entertainer, a man who is dressed as a woman, often dressed provocatively as a hyper-sexualized caricature of a woman, reading to children under the guise of diversity and tolerance is perverse. It is wrong, and frankly, it is discouraging to have to have this conversation. Jessi Bridges said she does not envy the 7 board members. She understands the immense pressure the board must be under from the LGBTQAI+ lobby to promote their agenda. One that is guised as tolerance, acceptance and love. Consider that whatever decision is made today, the board will be held accountable. Not just to parents, voters, and tax payers who fund these public entities and institutions, but to a righteous and holy and just God. You will stand before him one day and give an account for your decisions, including this one. Mrs. Bridges pleads for these events to be cancelled. The bible says, and this is Jesus speaking, it's better to have a millstone around your neck and be tossed into the sea than to cause a little one to stumble. That would include promoting and intentionally exposing precious little innocent children to this perversion, deviance and wickedness. To call it what it is not is sinful. Drag Queen Storytime

is not good. It is not beautiful. To tolerate sin and celebrate it like this is wicked rebellion against a just God. And the good natural order He has created. Let those of you who have ears, please hear, cancel Drag Queen Storytime. We should never promote or partner with that which violates and perverts God's good design. He made us male and female, distinct and good. That is a good thing. We should in no way confuse children or encourage them to question the way they were designed to be. To do so is rebellion against a holy God. She pleads with the board to repent, turn from the sin, protect the children and cancel Drag Queen Storytime.

Rebecca Paul Hill said she has been a Henderson resident for 13 years and has been bringing her children to the Henderson Libraries for 15 years. Diversity Divas do not have a diabolical agenda. A Drag Queen is a person wearing a costume and reading a story to children. As a library board, you have the responsibility and commitment to our entire community to stand by the libraries as a first amendment institution open to everyone for all topics. Books are side by side on the shelves, without regard for topic, (other than being shelved correctly). Mrs. Hill said it is so important to her that the board not be swayed by passionate, religious people who have an agenda whether they want to see it as that or not. This is a library-sponsored program that helps to uphold the library's access to information for all, regardless of gender or religion. If you don't want to come, don't come. If you don't want your children to come, don't come. It's a public program. You have a choice. You're the parent. You're the grandparent. The library board does not parent your children. The libraries are here to provide information and access to information. Equity. Diversity. Inclusion. Equity, diversity, inclusion for all. Even if you think it's a sin.

Jaime Brousse said her family moved to Green Valley in 1996. She has a 4-year-old and a 1-year-old. Ms. Brousse said they come to the library a lot and love it. Thanks for everything the library does. A library is not church. But it feels holy, right? It's an institution that celebrates books and learning and it gives you an opportunity to use your imagination and have an experience outside of just yourself. That's why we come to the library. To grow our world. To increase the opportunities for her children. To increase their potential for connection with other people that they don't know. To have the ability to walk into a room and to relate to a stranger. That's really important. Ms. Brousse said if she limits that based on something that makes her uncomfortable or a fear she has, or something she's not ready for, then She is not really doing her job. That's why we teach good manners, empathy, kindness and compassion and Ms. Brousse said she is a Christian too. That's where she learned that kind of stuff. Part of that is walking a mile in someone else's shoes. That's why she is excited about this program for that reason. She thinks it's cool. Ms. Brousse can't give that perspective to her kids. She is pretty boring. As was previously said, if you're not into it, you don't have to go. That doesn't mean it can't be incredibly valuable for another family. Ms. Brousse said it reminds her of when she was growing up and Black History Month was becoming more mainstream and people would say, why do we need this? Who does it benefit? Why are we spending money on this? What's the point? The answer is *everyone* benefits. When we bring everybody into the light, everybody wins. When your idea of maintaining the status quo comes with the cost of keeping whole groups of people in the shadows or shamed or ignored, or marginalized, it's not worth it. If you're telling yourself a story that someone volunteering their time on a Saturday to read to a bunch of kids, is wrong because of what they are wearing, Ms. Brousse said she is sorry – but you need to write a new story. She is sorry that someone made you feel that clothes are that important. You can wear whatever you want. You can be whoever you want. Jaime Brousse said thank you very much. She and her family look forward to Saturday. Ms. Brousse said her kids are going to get a lesson in acceptance, authenticity and courage. And, honestly, that's before a drag queen opens a single book.

Jennifer D'Incecco said she has 3 young boys and is extremely grateful and ecstatic to see this program come to Henderson. She and her sons talk about how they are allowed to choose what to wear and how to present themselves, what they believe in. Ms. D'Incecco said they believe in inclusion and how other people's experiences can be different than their own, but that those experiences are valid. Our job is to hold space for other people and to listen to them. We can only tell our own stories. She wants her sons to be able to tell their stories (whatever they may be) and wants to know that they will be accepted for their stories. Jennifer D'Incecco said they can't make it this Saturday, due to a prior engagement, but will attend the one in September or October. Thank you for providing this opportunity.

Holly Reese works for the Gay & Lesbian Center of Southern Nevada, and runs a program for families that does not sit in judgement of people that feel that being LGBTQ is a sin, that helps them to be able to have communication and keep their families together. As a lesbian woman, 56 years old, she raised 4 biological children with another woman. They are all straight. They are all cisgender. None are gender fluid. This is not an agenda. You cannot turn anyone into being gay and you can't change anyone's gender identity any more than you can change someone into being straight. She said she is also a Christian woman and it breaks her heart to know that so many people are terrified of this indoctrination, of what's going to happen, that they are trying to pervert children and are trying to expose them. You

cannot convince someone to be something with their gender identity or sexual orientation that they are not. It just doesn't work like that. Ms. Reese said all of her children came out to let her know they were straight. She is fine with that and loves all of them. They were raised in this community. None of this has affected them. On the other side, Ms. Reese said she is shaking because it hurts so much that 40% of the homeless youth in Las Vegas are LGBTQ. She works at a job where kids come in all the time that have been abused and hurt and kicked out of their families. Suicide rate in the trans community is roughly 50%. 50% of trans kids kill themselves before they reach adulthood because of the fear and hatred going on. No one is trying to change people's perspectives or make them gay or trans. What they are trying to do is to show these youth they can be who they are without living in fear of being beaten, battered, bullied and persecuted because of who they are. Ms. Reese said her Christian views tell her that God made her exactly the way she is and she lives her life every day trying to help other people and trying to be loving and compassionate. And to hear that view doesn't make her angry, it hurts her heart. Ms. Reese thanked the board for listening to everyone and considering this. When there is a world where children can feel valued for being themselves, whatever that is, it's a better place.

Claudia Menendez said she doesn't have anything against anyone. This is focusing on children. If programs are opened up to anyone, then pedophiles and KKK members, anyone with their own agenda, can request storytimes to read to children. This is not fair. Libraries are for books, nothing sexual. Ms. Menendez said if she brings her kid to this it's going to bring questions she shouldn't have to answer for a 3, 4 or 5-year-old kid. She should have a choice for her tax dollars not to pay for this. Just like she can choose not to come, she can choose not to pay for this.

Sara Sobek said her family has lived here for 2 years and loves it. They love Henderson and the libraries. Ms. Sobek's 9-year-old son has dyslexia. The librarians have been wonderful. There is a great selection and they appreciate libraries. Sara Sobek said she has 5 sons. It's very important they treat everyone with respect... and to push against the cultural tide that says you are only as valuable as you are sexually attractive. Ms. Sobek said it bothers her that young women and girls are taught that. The library is a place of refuge from that. There is so much more to one's identity and who you are than your sexual attractiveness. Her objection to Diversity Divas is her concern this is reinforcing that cultural tide that we should push against. What other diversity/inclusion activities are scheduled? Your strategic plan for 2019 mentioned you talked to stakeholders and did interviews across the community. How does that line up with the libraries' strategic plan for 2019 - the initiative evolving our culture? And how do you move forward? A lot more can be done besides argue about Diversity Divas. There is a lot more diversity that can be practiced that is age appropriate. What kind of other age appropriate diversity/inclusion activities is Henderson Libraries bringing for ages 3-8?

Marcie Smedley said there is a variety of diverse programs coming out through various initiatives. The library district has always done *International Festival* where diversity through cultures is spotlighted and the district will continue to explore a variety of other options moving forward. It is important to the libraries to support and celebrate diversity across all the different ways possible.

Hanna Burns said the "hashtag" on the Drag Queen Storytime is libraries are for everyone [#librariesareforeveryone]. But drag is not for everyone. It is not for children. Why is a library the place to do this? The drag queens are not just reading a story. They are confusing children and kids don't need that. This community promotes gender fluidity to children, but children are not mature enough to make lifestyle choices. Transgenderism is promoting surgery on children. This is crazy. Many change their minds when they get older. We don't have to accept drag queens as role models for our kids. We don't have to accept everything and we shouldn't. Some things are wrong. Some things are so wrong they ruin their innocence. Taxpayers should not have to pay for this. Telling children that they are labeled wrong is what we should be opposing. We are made perfectly the way we are. God made us as intended. This is child grooming and it's dangerous. We don't let our children watch rated R movies. We don't let our children go to night clubs. Why are we letting night clubs come to them? Why do they want kids to accept them? Hannah Burns said she is completely opposed to this.

Cecelia Gonzales said she recently moved to Henderson and she supports the program. It's great that the library district is having this event.

Jamie Lee Sprague-Balleu supports the program. What's unfortunate is that we are so divided in this country. It is theological from the bible. As much as you bring scriptures to say it's an abomination, I can show you scriptures where it's not an abomination. You cherry pick the bible to clobber people and use it against them because you dislike someone different from you. Psalms 1:39 – a God that knows us in our mother's womb. A God that knows a gay person,

a lesbian person, a trans person and loves them just the same. The damage you're doing is teaching those kids that it's an abomination to have those feelings. There is no agenda except the lesson of learning to be a good neighbor. Look at the Good Samaritan. He wasn't a priest or a Levite. He walked along and helped someone laying in the street. How many of you would walk by that person in the street because of who they are? You should ask yourself that. Our country is so divided because of hearing messages that this person is an abomination. You should open your mind and ears to hear the word of God. We need to learn how to get together and live together in this world and quit killing each other. That's what's happening. The only thing it's teaching these kids is that there is something different than the hetero normal we have lived under for 2,000 years. We are not living in a patriarchal society any more. Women are getting to be free; learning that they can be behind the pulpit. It's not just one class and one race that dominates this country. We are all free in Jesus Christ.

Jose Antonio "JJ" Bettencourt, Jr. said he is a drag queen. He is not the drag queen featured in Diversity Divas. His drag queen name is Karma Von Savage. He said he is assuming that no one here has met him or seen him in drag before. That's because he doesn't push it onto people and their children. He plans someday to have children of his own and be in a same sex loving relationship. He grew up in CCSD, lived in in North Las Vegas for most of his life, and has recently moved to Henderson. He was homeless for about two weeks because of some of similar mindsets shared today about his identity, who he is as a person, that he can't control. JJ Bettencourt said he has gone through Catholic sessions to try to change his sexuality. Those things can't be changed; he has tried. Besides being Catholic, God removed from the situation, this is information being provided as an opportunity to people who want to accept it. It's not being forced on you or your children. If you want to opt in, it is your choice. If you want to opt out, that is your choice. It is a program that's necessary for people who want to access that information. If he had access to that information when he was younger he may have made healthier, more mindful decisions, critically conscious decisions about his life, that affect him today. He is a college student, 24 years-old. He could have graduated earlier, but because of his life in high school, being suicidal and having severe depression and anxiety, he is not in the same place that he would have been if he was straight. His gender expression through drag is a character, not his identity. He puts on clothes and make up just like any woman in this room. It is not hyper-sexualized. It is a character he puts on for entertainment reasons. He does not try to push his ideas onto other people. They are opportune for people that go the to the venue where they can watch him. He does not parade around the streets of Las Vegas, the strip, or Fremont Street trying to teach people his ways or how to do drag. This opportunity is great. This opportunity provides a lot of information for our youth to make critical, conscious decisions about their own health and education. It doesn't matter how old they are. This is not anything about sexuality or gender. If a person comes in that looks different from your race or religion, to speak to your children it should not be any different than if you or any teacher is teaching your children. This is a library where people can come to access information and that is exactly what we are doing.

Moriya Olsen said she has lived here for 13 years and has 6 kids, they've gone to storytime here. Sometimes they have just shown up not aware of what is going on. Ms. Olsen said she worries about the people that show up unaware of the program and then have to talk to their 3-year-old about it. Ms. Olsen said she is not against anyone either but there is a time and a place. If you are asking tax payers to fund it, they should also be able to bring in their Christian views and other groups. She has seen a lot of articles about drag queens being arrested and having a background no one was aware of. As a parent, she can't go into the school more than 3 times without being fingerprinted to help in your children's classroom. And she had to pay for the fingerprinting. Ms. Olsen said she would like to know if these drag queens are being background checked and fingerprinted. If you are going to allow grown men with masks on around children, please have them fingerprinted. On their website it looks like anyone can apply. It's not responsible and she doesn't want kids to be part of it.

Rosa Orozco said her Christian values teach her that the main goal in life is to love one another. The Drag Queen Diva is sexualizing children. It is teaching them they have to dress up. If it was a gay man sitting up there reading the book she wouldn't necessarily be opposed. She doesn't think someone should be able to come in and teach kids to twerk or do this or do that. That's not what Ms. Orozco wants for her children. Her brother-in-law is gay and she had to talk to her children about that. She tells her children, is that what we believe in this house? No, we don't. But our number one goal is to love one another. It doesn't matter what the other person chooses for himself. Ms. Orozco said this is her concern and what she should be teaching her kids; this is her responsibility to her children. Nobody else's.

Carrie Stewart said sexuality has nothing to do with this drag queen story hour. Nobody is pushing sex except those pushing it here. She doesn't see what sex has to do with this. She doesn't care what people like sexually. She doesn't care what the drag queens like. Take it as is. Entertainment and performance art. We need to be inclusive. To those

people saying they pay taxes – what about the other people? They pay taxes too. I don't have children does that mean I shouldn't pay taxes for schools? No, it's for the public good. This is good for everybody; we need to be inclusive and accept each other and sex has nothing to do with it. Nothing at all.

Delia said she has been a patron here for 14 years. This is a safe place for her. She loves it here and has been bringing her 2 sons for the last 9 years; she appreciates the programs. At her house, they preach open mindedness, honesty and a willingness to understand. Those are the principles she makes sure her children live by. She appreciates this diversity program and looks forward to what programs the library has coming up.

Matthew Durski, said he is the performer doing the story hour. There have been comments/allegations made thus far. He will be happy to discuss this after the meeting about whether this is indoctrinating or sexualizing kids. He would love to have that one-on-one conversation and can guarantee you 100% it is not. A lot of people here have seen things online, or posted them themselves about things you have seen, but what is not on there is his 6 years at St. Thomas More as a Catholic youth leader, his performances to uplift his community and other communities. That's not what's being seen online. Matthew Durski said you don't know him as a person and that's okay. All he is here to do is to educate about other communities to people who may not be able to have that discussion. You ask why us, why not you teaching this to your kids; if you don't know to use the words to talk to your kid about this, that's why. You cannot relate to how he can talk about that. If a 7-year-old comes up to him and has certain thoughts and feelings, it might be easier, now that they see someone like them, to talk to mom and dad. They know they're not alone. They know there is someone else like them. It gives them a gateway for them to be happier. We talk about trans suicide rates and homeless youth and the reason why is because they are afraid and they don't know how to talk to you. The only reason we have a negative connotation about these things is that we are afraid of what we do not know. This is a great opportunity, not only for kids, but for adults, to come in and learn a little about a community that is not your own. At the end of the day, Matthew Durski said, he is here to share something positive in a parental supervised environment about different communities. Your kids have social media and the internet. His 6-year-old cousin hanged himself after school because he saw it on You Tube. Your kids might be exposed to this already. If we have this diversity program it can be an event where kids learn, with their parents supervising. You can see exactly what's happening. You don't have to worry about kids talking about this at school. You don't have to worry about them seeing it online. You can see it for yourself and see exactly what they are learning. Matthew Durski said he understands this goes against certain people's beliefs, but as a Christian himself, this is going to be an amazing gateway. Not just for kids, if you decide to come, maybe for you as well.

Gina Garner-Ball grew up in valley, is a lifelong resident, and raised two girls here. When her mother texted her about this event today, she thought about all the men who've done drag: Tony Curtis, Jack Lemon, Tom Hanks, Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes, Rudy Giuliani. Drag is not sexual as was previously mentioned. School district requirements about fingerprinting is about the possibility they may be alone with children and that's not going to happen here. Ms. Garner-Ball's best and dearest friend she grew up with is gay and has raised two beautiful children with her wife. It breaks her heart that you are afraid to stumble upon them and what are you going to tell your children about these very dear gay friends who are amazing human beings just trying to raise a family like everyone else.

Linzzy Donofrio appreciates all the stories that have been shared and told. Everyone has a very different opinion. Nobody is leaving here with changed minds. One thing everyone agrees on is everyone is allowed to have their own beliefs and experience. If we let this into our library, then we should be allowed to let all the experiences be included. You shouldn't say to one that you are good enough to be included, but hey Christian lady over there – you're out! You're not included but the gay and lesbian community is. No one's minds are being changed here. If you are going to offer inclusion, it gets to be to everybody. She said she would love to sit down with someone who is so opposed to what God has done on this earth and have a real conversation with them. We may not change, but she's going to offer me a side I never heard. But if our children only hear one side they are never going to be the full people they are created to be. This woman here raised 5 kids who both sides love, it's just we have to expose both sides to the love. Everybody speaking is passionately about this. If we don't give an opportunity for our children to see what's available on both sides. Both sides get to be heard. Then everyone gets to decide by what is in their heart. In everyone's heart is nurture and nature for love. Everybody wants to be loved. Nobody's hearts are going to be changed but we have to show both sides.

Joe Morgan said he has heard a lot of talk about God and Christianity. It may not be about sex, it may not be about diversity, or the other accusations floating around in here, but when you take a man and allow him to dress up like a woman and tell a story in front of your children he's got an agenda. The bible says in Deuteronomy 22 that a woman

shall not dress up like a man and a man shall not dress up like a woman. To do so is an abomination. Mr. Morgan said it is not him saying that, it's God. You will not find scripture that will contradict that. This needs to be considered by this board as an issue of the community sending their children out into something that is being flaunted as sin. You are allowing people to come into a place, we pay taxes to support, to present their sin and be proud of it. To me it's an abomination and to God it's an abomination.

Andre Wade said he is an advocate of the LGBTQ community. Some people have said some wonderful things. This is not about indoctrinating kids. We are just here living our everyday lives. Trying to entertain folks in certain ways. You are talking about criminal backgrounds with the LGBTQ community, as if straight people don't have criminal backgrounds. The one thing we are trying to dispel. If you are going to fingerprint people around kids, fingerprint everyone, regardless. If you want to have other kinds of information around Christianity in the library, have that conversation. But to lump the LGBTQ community together and say we are bad people, sinful people, and we should not exist - that is not the conversation we want to have. That's not what this is about. Andre Wade grew up Christian. He still is Christian. His parents told him he was going to go to Hell for who he chose to be. He didn't choose to be this. He is a gay man. He doesn't dress in drag. He doesn't even like drag shows that much. He doesn't go to drag shows. If he doesn't like something, he just doesn't partake. If he is with his nieces and nephews and sees something, he may avoid some things, it has nothing to do with sexuality or gender, you just have to have the conversation. You have the internet, you have tv, you have people talking, saying things you may not agree with. Have a conversation. That's the burden of parenting, that's the burden of being in this community. If you don't like it, don't go. If you are exposed to it inadvertently talk about it. We are not bad people. We are just here to exist. What we try to do as advocates is to let you know there's no agenda except to be seen as regular old folks. You have the choice to not have the children go there. To have the story read to them by someone who's in drag. They are around people in drag all the time. Andre Wade said just don't go.

Jon LaBonte asked what happens next? Mark McGinty said after public comment is closed the Board will debate the subject.

Dr. MacFarlane said she works for the center as the trans program manager. Dr. MacFarland's academic background is in gender studies. People are talking about the support for that is for this small community. These types of activities are useful for the entire community. It's not just gay boys and transwomen that get violence and pushback and the negative impact of strict gender policing. Playing with gender, letting people feel they have options, resources and community also helps straight, cisgender boys. When you look at mental health outcomes, ability to have communication and meaningful relationships, the violence between boys, there is a stifling culture of intense rigid gender policing that is really harmful. It is helping them to feel some healthy space about feeling out who they are. It's valuable for the whole community to see what that comfort looks like. They are going to be okay. People are going to accept them. They are going to be able to read books at the library. That should be enough.

Nora said if everyone wants to be accepted, Christian beliefs should be accepted. If we can't even hold bible classes or Christian storytime, how is that fair for everyone? If you as a Board come together to decide to hold events as such, we should be able to share that with our kids. We should be open minded and free. Nora said she has also requested to hold bible studies at the library and was rejected. It's not fair. Christians are not being included.

Noah said he very much supports Diversity Divas and appreciates what everyone's said.

Julie Plummer said she is a mom, grandma, and teacher. She used to take her kids all the time to storytime. She loved them. It was fun for the kids and fun for her to watch the kids have fun. Julie Plummer said she believes God loves all of us. He sees us as we are. But he also knows we are all sinners; we all have our problems, situations and our choices. Her husband showed her a video of a drag queen storytime where children were taught to twerk. After seeing it, she thought this is a very sexual move that children don't need to see. She later found out it was a Fortnite move, which she is very against as a teacher. A lot of students are addicted to these games. Video games are stealing our kids' (and some adults') brains and lives. Storytime is a parental choice and we need to make that choice wisely because they are our children. She appreciates all the comments. We don't think you're bad. I am a teacher and need to be fingerprinted because I work with kids. Everyone who works with kids needs to be fingerprinted.

A community member who did not state their name identified herself as a transgender man and said she supports program. She wishes there was a program for her when she was younger. It would have made her life a lot less painful.

She had 5 suicide attempts because of Christianity. She has worked through that and has a relationship with God. These are children. They deserve to grow up in a world where they can have support and love and understanding and acceptance. No one is pushing an agenda on anyone. This program is creating safe space for people to have support. No one indoctrinated her to be transgender. That is who she is. She said thank you for space to speak and she supports the program.

Bill Bainbridge, born and raised in Nevada, said he wants everyone to exist. Mr. Bainbridge is a Christian man who had a rough childhood growing up. At one time in his life, he was homeless, lost, confused and depressed. Once he established a relationship with Jesus Christ, it provided confidence and security. He knew who he was. He was so caught up in what everyone else is believing. If you have never dug in to word of God through the bible and scriptures, you should. The bible is the number one book, best seller, and word of truth. If you read it, He'll reveal to you where he wants you to go. During the last few messages in church and devotions, Mr. Bainbridge keeps hearing love God and love others. If you have the mindset that Christians don't love you, he is sorry for that. We are called to love everyone. Mr. Bainbridge said he is not the judge. We will all stand in front of the judgement seat of God. Bill Bainbridge said he wants to encourage everyone to dig into the word of God.

A woman asked if there would be twerking lessons at the storytime on Saturday. Marcie Smedley responded no.

End of public comment 5:20

Mark McGinty said if anyone has comments after this, they can come to the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### **1. Discussion and possible Board action regarding Diversity Divas: A Drag Queen Storytime**

Marcie Smedley made a few comments. Henderson Libraries is not affiliated with the Drag Queen Story Hour. There is no affiliation with that organization nor has there been contact with them. This storytime is not on a normal storytime schedule. It was agreed this is a storytime that parents should make a knowing choice if they plan to bring their children. Our normal storytimes are during the week. This storytime is on Saturday. When we open the library at 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning, there will be passes available, based on availability and the fire code of the room. Tickets will be passed out, one per person for families with children. At 10:00 a.m., everyone will come in. One of our youth services department staff will be leading the program, along with the performer. Together, they will sing *Hello* by Julie Austin, which is the normal hello song sung at storytime. There are two picture books that will be read by the performer. *Just Add Glitter* by Angela DiTerlizzi and *Neither* by Airlie Anderson. Both are picture books, story books. Between the books, they will co-lead the song *Shake My Sillies Out* by Raffi. Once the story portion is done, we will host a dance party. The play list for that is *Can't Wait to Celebrate* by Jim Gill, *Drive My Car* by Laurie Berkner, *Silly Dance Contest* by Jim Gill, *Wally Acha* by Dr. Jean, and *Bop 'till You Drop* by Greg and Steve

When the program concludes there will be a meet and greet session with the performer. That is the outline of the program. The intent of the storytime, as planned, is to have an inclusive storytime for families. The theme relates to expression and how people express themselves however they like and we can still be kind and respectful to people who express themselves differently than we do. A lot of the conversation comes around to sexuality and how it's not appropriate for children. We are not coming at this from a point of teaching lessons around sexuality or promoting any particular sexual orientation, or even talking about that. It comes down to being an inclusive place where we can provide an opportunity for people to come and listen to a story about how to express themselves differently and still respect each other. If parents want to have future discussions with their children, because this storytime opened the door, that's great, but we are leaving it at expression and acceptance. There is some sensationalism around some of the news stories about other drag queen story hours but have a very regimented agenda that will be followed and we are looking forward to that.

Mark McGinty asked if Marcie Smedley could speak to why we don't fingerprint performers. Marcie Smedley said the library district does not background check any of our performers or presenters. Performers or presenters are never alone with children. All of our children's programs are co-led with a staff person. All library staff are fingerprinted if they are over the age of 18, regardless of their position with the library. There is no opportunity where a presenter will have one-on-one contact with a child. The library district would not fingerprint any of our other performers or presenters and we would not for this program either.



David Ortlipp said he knows we are not legally required to do background checks, but the library district has a higher duty of care because of a vulnerable class. David Ortlipp said he doesn't care if the performer dresses up in a woman's frock or in an Easter bunny suit or a Santa Claus suit. David Ortlipp cited an example of a Houston Drag Queen story hour. Houston Library had a policy of doing background checks but did not do one in this case. It came out that the performer is a registered sex offender. What eventually happened was the library reputation was tarnished. The program, that had merit, had to fold because of the blow back on this. David Ortlipp said he would hate to have Henderson Library have this problem. Mark McGinty said that legally this would have to be put on as a future agenda item. Mark McGinty said he thinks it's important for the public to know there are responsibilities we should look at, but that's not for tonight, otherwise the board will break public confidence and open meeting law.

Jim Frey thanked everyone for coming together and sharing their views. The library is a setting where this can take place. He said he has heard here that some people will give up storytime entirely and no longer come to the library if this storytime takes place. He said he hopes that is not the case. Jim Frey said he has 8 grandchildren that come to storytime. Surely the library district is not looking to run a particular program like this program every day. This is a special occasion. He hopes that the people here will not turn away from the library over one particular program they don't like. Jim Frey said he is a member of a community Lutheran church with a strong 3,000 members. Jim Frey was president of the church. Inclusivity and diversity were a theme for 14 years. And no one in that congregation disputed it. It is so important to be able to share concerns and accept differences. Our world is changing. Culturally, difference is going to be more common than sameness and our children need to be ready for that.

Kip Noschese said if anyone questions Henderson Libraries' devotions to children and families, they only have to look to the hundreds of programs and story hours offered to the public. The staff here is a credit to that. Kip Noschese said he also hopes it's not the case that people will stop coming to the library over one program. Also, just in case you didn't know, the library district participates in Safe Place. Someone mentioned earlier about homeless youth. Our staff is trained to take homeless teens in and help them out. On the topic of Drag Queen Storytime, if you were to ask me what the children are going to see, they are going to see someone who is very accepting of who they are, who didn't come upon it easily, and has a joy of life which are qualities everyone would want for their own children. If you don't want those for your children, you are free not to come.

Bette Silverman said now that she's heard the agenda and how tightly organized the program is, maybe some people can be a little more relaxed that library staff is in there. It's a bit of a comfort.

Angela Brommel was unsure if she would be able to make this meeting and said she is glad she was able to attend. When processing information, she is quieter. Ms. Brommel said she has listened and heard what everyone said. Libraries are incredibly important and librarians have an important task in our community to bring in programs and resources that are representative. She said she hopes they don't run out of passes on Saturday as she is planning on coming to see the program to see what has been discussed here.

David Ortlipp stressed he wants to make sure from a due diligence perspective that the district is doing the right thing.

Mark McGinty said there is a policy about religion. There is separation of church and state. If members of the public would like to discuss that with the board, or another topic, a request will be needed another meeting or the board will be in violation of open meeting law. David Ortlipp said there was a couple good points that may warrant some discussion about policy at a future meeting.

Mark McGinty asked for a motion. Jim Frey said he would make the motion to continue with the program. Angela Brommel asked for a point of clarification – is that something the Board is even authorized to decide? Jim Frey recalled his motion and said the board is not here to micromanage programs. If policy is not being changed, then we are micromanaging a program. Mark McGinty said the Board does hire one employee, the director, who is in charge of programming. We do not micromanage our director. Marcie Smedley has done a great job so far. Do we offer a show of support? Kip Noschese made a motion to support Drag Queen Story hour and diversity. Jim Frey seconded the motion. David Ortlipp abstained. The rest of the board voted yes. Mark McGinty thanked everyone for coming. This is a tough topic and it's great to have discussion. Mark McGinty asked for public comment.

A woman said the constitution does not address separation of church and state. She understands this must be brought up at a future meeting. Since the board brought it up, she asks the board to address how to open up programs to other groups – religious and otherwise.

Mark McGinty said this can be brought up at a future meeting. Jennifer Hall said she brought this up at the last meeting and she would like to see this addressed. She was told no to her program request. Ms. Hall would like the board to ask why she is being told no. Mark McGinty said he would put that on as an agenda item.

A comment was made by a man who said he was unaware he could not come to the library to do a bible study. His church takes bible study out into the community, like at a coffee shop, and he expressed surprise he can't come to the library. He asked where the storytime on Saturday would be. Marcie Smedley responded in this program room. He said, so someone couldn't just wander into the storytime. It would be the same thing with a bible study. You would have it in a room. Marcie Smedley the study rooms are available for anyone, and people have held bible studies in the study rooms. The program rooms, such as the one we are in now, are only for library programs. There is no prohibition of any group using the study rooms. How are those reserved? Marcie Smedley responded they can be reserved online or in person.

One person commented they appreciate the board supporting the director in a program she has obviously researched and the efforts at diversity.

Shawna Kirsch said she and Jennifer Hall would like to talk to Mark McGinty after the meeting.

Marcie Smedley thanked the board for the support but said there is a team that has put this together and worked very hard. Mark McGinty acknowledged this and thanked library staff for their hard work.

Andre Wade said thank you.

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **Announcements**

The next Board meeting will be **September 19, 2019** at the Paseo Verde Library, 280 S. Green Valley Parkway, Henderson, Nevada.

#### **Public Comment**

*Note: Pursuant to Nevada's Open Meeting Law, action may not be taken on matters presented during this period until included on a future agenda as an action item.*

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

*Pursuant to NRS 241.020, written notice of the meeting of Henderson District Public Libraries' Board of Trustees was posted by August 15, 2019, at least three (3) business days before the meeting, including in the notice the time, place, location and agenda of the meeting. Details of the agenda may be obtained by calling the administrative offices at 702-207-4298.*

Posted at Green Valley Library, James I. Gibson Library, Paseo Verde Library, City of Henderson-City Clerk's Office, and the Henderson Libraries website.