

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

This report provides an overview to the purpose, implementation and evaluation of the “Say YAAAS to Reading” program held at the Advanced Learning Library on Tuesday, September 25.

Program Background (What was expected to happen?)

Over the past few years, employees from through library participated in updating of the vision, mission, and values for the City of Wichita. The results of that engagement initiative are the following statements:

Vision: The City of Wichita is a leading-edge organization serving a dynamic and inclusive community.

Mission: As an exceptionally well-run city, we will keep Wichita safe, grow our economy, build dependable infrastructure and provide conditions for living well.

Values: To accomplish our mission, we anchor our work in our core values of trust and service.

Trust means:

- Respect – demonstrating courtesy and regard for all
- Empowerment – having freedom to make informed decisions
- Ethics – being above reproach in our actions
- Stewardship – being a guardian of the resources provided by those we serve
- Integrity – honoring our commitments and making our word our bond
- Engagement – having authentic conversations and ensuing all voices are heard
- Family – we are in this together and we care for one another

Service means:

- Professionalism – following standards and best practices
- Innovation – achieving continuous improvement through experimentation and high performance
- Excellence – delivering high quality and effective service
- Equity – providing excellent service to everyone

Since completion of the 2017 Wichita Public Library Branch Review¹, department employees have worked to implement findings from the report as they develop collections, plan programs and refine services. The research has supported changes to the Advanced Learning Library as well as branch facilities. One area of particular attention has been the Civic Technologies identification of 47 unique market segments in the City of Wichita, an usually high number for a city of Wichita’s size and an indication of a significant level of diversity. This has caused staff to become more deliberate in considering the inclusiveness of the department’s programming schedule.

Following a June presentation by James Chung at a Focus Forward event sponsored by the Wichita Community Foundation and held at the Advanced Learning Library on June 11, attendees received packs of

¹ Wichita State University Hugh Wall School of Public Affairs Public Policy and Management Center, 2017

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“Truth and Dare” cards.² The introductory card explained, “There are 25 truth and dares in this stack of cards. Each one offers you the opportunity to tackle a Focus Forward challenge. You can impact the future of Wichita by engaging in this activity and sharing it with others using #IDidTheDareICT.”

One of the cards in the pack referenced Wichita’s Soul of the Community report from the Knight Foundation³. The “truth” on this card reported that the LGBTQ community is perceived as one of the least welcome groups in Wichita. The corresponding “dare” is to engage in a meaningful conversation with a person of a different orientation to better understand their truth. While many of the cards in the “Truth or Dare” packet resonated with library staff members in attendance at the event, this card about the LGBTQ community was of particular attention. In part, this is because the opportunity to take an action to let the LGBTQ community know that they were welcome at the Wichita Public Library is aligned with the City’s values of equity and respect.

Referencing a 2013 report from the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) in describing the purpose and value of libraries, the Branch Review noted “As the new town square, libraries are a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to seek help, connect with others and get access to the information and services they need.”⁴ Just as the Library’s Candid Conversations program was created with a desire to increase connectivity with Wichita’s African American community, Say YAAAS to Reading was developed with the intent of providing an entertainment activity known to be popular with the LGBTQ community in hope of reaffirming that the public library is welcoming to all.

Program Planning and Implementation (What actually occurred?)

Following department procedures for program planning, two Adult Programming Section librarians submitted the proposal for “Say YAAAS to Reading.” Having read about “Drag Queen Story Hours”⁵ presented by several public libraries around the United States, and recognizing that drag performances have grown in popularity in recent years, the idea was to offer a program with drag queens as the featured performers.

The program was not to be a Drag Queen Story Hour, a copyrighted program presented by nationally licensed chapters. Instead, the program was developed with an adult audience in mind, in keeping with the intent of reaching out to the LGBTQ community. The use of picture books was proposed, however, because titles in this format are short, frequently written to be shared through reading or storytelling, and with illustrations that complement the reading. During the planning process, staff discovered that the desired date of the program was during the American Library Association’s Banned Books Week. This resulted in a proposed initial working title “Banned Books are a Drag,” with a plan for the queens to share picture books which have been challenged for the inclusion of LGBTQ characters.

² <https://www.ksn.com/news/local/introducing-wichita-truth-dare-a-twist-on-childhood-game/1285784154>

³ <https://knightfoundation.org/sotc/findings/wichita/>

⁴ Wichita Public Library Branch Review, page 16.

⁵ <https://www.dragqueenstoryhour.org/#about>

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Recognizing that a program of this type could be controversial, it was determined, that feedback should be elicited from the Library Board of Directors before a final decision was made about adding the event into the fall activities calendar. Adult Programming Section Manager Sara Dixon presented the program concept during the July meeting of the Library Board of Directors. Board members shared cautionary and supportive reactions to the idea with more members speaking in favor of the activity than against it. Members offered guidance about ways to ensure that the community had a clear understanding of the program plan such as avoidance of the terms “story hour” or “storytime” in the program title and ensuring that the program was identified as an adult activity in the events calendar.

Following the Board meeting, Director of Libraries Cynthia Berner approved the program contingent upon adoption of the feedback from the Board and an additional requirement to separate the program from Banned Books Week. The intent of this change was to refocus the program away from the negative connotation sometimes associated with banned books and to return it to the original idea of highlighting the library as a welcoming place for all members of the community. The program title was changed to “Say YAAAS to Reading,” using the slang alteration of the word “yes” which is defined as a strong expression of excitement.

While the initial program idea and the evaluation of the proposal was consistent with the Library’s adopted procedures for program submissions, implementation of the program planning was less consistent.

Although Library staff shared information about program during City Communications Team storytelling meetings and in conversations about the upcoming consolidation of leisure services program promotion, the Director of Libraries failed to ensure that the information was passing through the Communications Team to the City Manager and City Council. She also failed to send information directly to the City Manager about the planned event.

Processes for program promotion were not correctly implemented. A question about the program from a Wichita Eagle reporter should have been referred to the department’s communications specialist or department director. Instead, a member of the library staff to whom the question was proposed chose to share information independently and was not as careful as she should have been in communicating the design and intent of the program. This led to repeated references in newspaper and social media reports about the program being similar to the Drag Queen Story Hours. Readers interpreted this to mean that the Wichita program was a children’s or family activity, leading to the majority of complaints received about the program.

A second breakdown in the program implementation came from issues with promotion of the event by other organizations. During an initial meeting between staff members and the entertainers who had agreed to perform at the program, questions were raised about cross promotion of the event by other organizations such as Wichita PRIDE. There were also questions about providing an opportunity for these organizations to host information tables during the program, etc. The staff members in attendance gave authorization for the promotion and preliminary approval for the information tables. Both decisions were outside the scope of authority of the staff members and were contrary to library programming and promotion practices. No written documentation about the conversations was created to ensure a shared understanding of the

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expectations for the event and no information about these approvals was shared with library managers or the communication team until a few days before the program date. The result of this breakdown was the addition of the program to the Wichita PRIDE website under an incorrect title, creating the impression that this was a PRIDE-sponsored event.

Another group, GLSEN Kansas, learned about the program and used the opportunity to promote its own organizational agenda. Quotes from Liz Hamor, co-founder of the local chapter, appeared in the first newspaper story about the program. Her comments about the benefits of gender exploration and having drag queens read to children created further confusion for community members.⁶ Readers of the article perceived that the program was GLSEN Kansas sponsored and intended for youth audiences. On the evening of the program, GLSEN Kansas representatives attempted to distribute materials about their organization to program attendees although they had not received authorization to do so. When a staff member noticed and asked the individuals to stop handing out the flyers, they did not do so. Library managers and security officers were not informed as they should have been so that this could have been addressed as a violation of the library's policy regarding petitioning and the distribution of literature in libraries (REF-008).

At the end of the program, the department's standard evaluation form for entertainment programs was made available for obtaining feedback from attendees. Rather than asking people to share their opinions in an unbiased manner, the staff member hosting the program enthusiastically announced "If you want to see more programs like this, please fill out a form to let us know." It is possible that some audience members who might otherwise have offered negative feedback about the program chose not to do so because of way in which the request for evaluations was presented.

Upon the publication of the first newspaper story about the program, many people began contacting members of the City Council, Library Board members and the Library staff with comments about the event. Library staff members were immediately provided with a fact sheet to help answer questions or to provide clarifications to misunderstandings about the program. With assistance from the City's Communications Team, City Council members were also provided with information to help in their responses to citizens. Some callers to the Library reported that they were encouraged to do so through an announcement distributed by the Family Policy Alliance of Kansas.⁷ Another caller reported that her request to call had come from someone affiliated with the Rossville, Kansas office of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property.

The day before the program, the Wichita Police Department received a notice that representatives from the Westboro Baptist Church intended to conduct a demonstration at the Advanced Learning Library prior to the start of the program. Two officers were assigned to monitor the demonstration. Five people participated by standing on the sidewalk at the northwest corner of the intersection of McLean and Second Street. The demonstration was peaceable and attracted little attention from those driving or walking by.

⁶ <https://www.kansas.com/news/local/article218608960.html>

⁷ <https://familypolicyalliance.com/kansas/issues/2018/09/24/take-action-wichita-library-host-drag-queen-story-time/>

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One additional individual brought signs and initially stood at the east public entrance to the library. The police officers asked her to move from the library plaza to a sidewalk area. Reports from the officers involved were that the individual initially refused to comply with the request to move but eventually did so, only to return to a building entrance as the program was ending and the attendees were starting to leave the building. This individual was issued a ticket for criminal trespass for returning to the plaza area in defiance of the instructions from the police officer not to do so.

The Wichita Public Library Foundation received four comments about the program. An email question asked why the library was allowing transvestites to conduct a program at the library. The inquiry came from a person who is a prominent friend of the Foundation but not a donor. A foundation board member spoke with this person and the board member has indicated that this person is fine after their conversation. In response to the Foundation's newsletter, one couple asked to be removed from the mailing list, citing the program as the reason for unsubscribing. A second couple asked why the event was allowed, and expressed concern about negative exposure to children. One member of the Foundation board also called with concerns about the event that ranged from fear that the LGBTQ community was being allowed to push its agenda down other people's throats, that the LGBTQ movement is a fad and with fear that potential donors would discontinue giving to the Foundation. Tom Borrego reports that in the short term, the decision to offer the program may have a negative impact on giving for some current and prospective donors but he does not expect this will have a significant impact on overall giving. He states "My experience tells me that nonprofits will encounter sensitive issues from time to time which will generate negative opinions. Often times, the reaction of those opposed is to announce a withdrawal of giving as a protest against that particular issue. While an evaluation of that cause/idea supported by the organization is needed, it certainly would not and should not be the position of the foundation to dictate the organization's position unless that position is against the mission of said organization. The mission of the foundation is to support the work of the Wichita Public Library. Programming is a part of the works of the library. It is important to note that the foundation did not support financially this particular program/event nor was asked to support this program/event."

Program Outputs and Outcomes (What went well and why?)

The program attracted a standing room only audience of at least 220 persons. One hundred twenty-seven evaluations about the program were completed. The results of these surveys, including comments about the program, appear as Appendix A to this report.

Social media response to the event also trended to the positive. The City Communications Team reported over 550 positive reactions versus 120 negative reactions to the event.

The intent of reaching out to new library customers appeared to have some positive result. In the hours immediately before and after the program, 19 new library accounts were created at the Advanced Learning Library. This is 25% more than the pace at which accounts were being created during the first month of the new building's opening and as much as a 400% increase over the same period on other Tuesday evenings during September.

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One member of the Library Board present at the program noted that the majority of families who had attended the program did take time to visit the Children's Pavilion before leaving the library. This led to a question about the impact of the event on the circulation of materials. For the evening of the program, there was a slight increase in the overall borrowing of materials as compared to the other Tuesday evenings of September and a more noticeable 33% increase in circulation as compared to the other evenings of that same week.

Process Improvement Recommendations (What can be improved and how?)

The most obvious thing that can improve future programming is to ensure that existing City and Library policies and procedures are consistently followed. More specifically, this would include:

- Ensuring that the Library's Communications Specialist and Community Engagement and Partnerships Manager are included in all meetings with program presenters;
 - The Communications Specialist should retain responsibility for coordinating cross-promotion of library programs and events with other organizations and individuals.
 - The Community Engagement and Partnerships Manager should retain authority for approving the involvement of other organizations in Library sponsored and co-sponsored programming.
- Expanding use of the Performer Agreement form to include programs where outside presenters are participating without fees as a way to document expectations about program content and implementation;
- Making use of run of show schedules as a way identify gaps in program planning and to increase the quality and efficiency of program presentations; and
- Ensuring that the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Communications Team, and Library Board are kept up to date on all programs that may generate citizen calls or media attention.

In addition, the Library's Program Planning Manual should be updated to incorporate changes reflective of the move from the Central Library to the Advanced Learning Library and the elimination of some branch locations.

- All members of the Adult Programming Section, Technology Training Section, Create Young Readers Team and all branch, section and division managers should be scheduled for refresher training related to programming planning, presentation and evaluation.

A third action that could be considered is the creation of a programming policy to guide the scope of offerings presented by or at the Wichita Public Library. If implemented, this policy should parallel the Materials Selection Policy (COL-002) which guides decisions relating to the scope, depth and content of the Library's materials collections. The Library should also make use of its membership in the Urban Libraries Council to research similar policies in place in other libraries in order to take advantage of best practices that have already been identified in relation to such policies.

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APPENDIX A – Program Evaluation Feedback

Question 1. I learned something new that was interesting.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Number of Responses	7	0	3	31	80	6
Percent of Total Responses	6%	0%	2%	24%	63%	5%

Question 2. My perception of the library has changed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Number of Responses	4	0	5	25	90	3
Percent of Total Responses	3%	0%	4%	20%	71%	2%

Question 3. I am more likely to attend future programs at the library.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Number of Responses	6	0	4	39	78	0
Percent of Total Responses	5%	0%	3%	31%	61%	0%

Question 4. I am more aware of programs provided by the library.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Number of Responses	4	1	11	36	75	0
Percent of Total Responses	3%	1%	9%	28%	59%	0%

What did you like most about this program?

- Seeing the community being so supportive
- I was appalled at the indoctrination of the many young minds in the audience. This is not normal - it's confused perverted men and it's sad.
- It was entertaining and uplifting. Please make it a regular offering :)
- So much live news coverage asking opinions of patrons. I did not appreciate men dressed up like women taking pictures with young children. The persuasion is real and I am not apathetic
- I think it is very sad and NOT GOOD that the City Library is indoctrinating children to see a man dressed as a woman. The City of Wichita should NOT AGREE to do this again.
- Everything! It was lovely. Thanks for being inclusive.
- I loved the Red story. And I also love seeing drag queens in this space
- I loved the inspirational stories and empathy our sisters shared for persons in the audience. The message was beautiful! Please! Please have more programs like this!
- Inclusivity. So proud of Wichita and the Library! Born here but just moved back from SF Bay and this is incredible! Thank you for supporting this community.
- The openness of the program
- It was a program that promoted inclusivity while also promoting literacy. Whichever one of my tax dollars helped fund this, it's money well spent

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- The book choices were great! Only way to improve it would be to have the readers up on a platform so they can be seen better
- Fun and everything
- Public accessibility for children's educational experience
- It was wonderfully presented & good choices in books
- Lg screens to see performers. Least liked - children taking seating instead of adults
- Encouraged diversity!
- Very talented presenters, good video and audio
- Great stories and great storytellers!
- The honesty of acceptance
- Liked the way the last reader showed the pictures as they read
- I love that the public library was open-minded enough to host this event. The Queens are wonderful!
- The readers were great and the diversity of the crowd
- Fun
- It unified everyone to be yourself
- Something avant-garde in Wichita. Thank you!
- Inclusive :)
- Supportive of LGBTQ
- LGBTQ Representation/Normalization!
- I loved the content and heartfelt approach
- Acceptance
- The readers attitude was great
- Stories and diversity
- I loved the message of the story Red
- The people reading the books
- Diversity!
- I love the inclusiveness, positivity and love
- New, family friendly, exciting
- Diversity in Kansas!!! (and story choice)
- The diversity!
- The positive message
- I lived that people brought their kids to the event
- It was a program that promoted inclusivity, was family friendly and was very well organized
- The diversity
- That ya'll did it! Yay! Brave!
- Inclusive
- It was fun, very fun, very inclusive - all ages and all people. It made me smile :)
- The community showed up in support of the literacy for ALL!
- The diversity of the crowd
- Very positive and accessible to kids and adults too!
- My 6 year old: Taking pictures/Mom: The timing of the program was perfect
- The books that were read and the people reading them. Especially their makeup
- Great message. So much fun and better diversity
- It was inclusive and filled with love. Please do more of these programs!
- Good presenters who don't fit the library stereotype
- Diversity

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- I loved the books Miss JuJu read
- Positive and open minded
- Well done and inclusive
- I really liked the positive atmosphere
- Great awareness! For all. Please do this more often!
- Diversity!
- The inclusiveness – diversity
- Inclusive
- Everything!
- Diversity and a great crowd!
- I loved the enthusiasm
- The inclusive message that was provided. Family friendly atmosphere
- That it exposes and normalizes a marginalized section of our society
- At 24 years old I found a place to belong
- I loved the books that were chosen. Having family and friends in the LGBT community. I feel it important to support things that help others feel human and loved
- It was a great representation of Wichita LGBTQ
- Love an inclusive program that shows our kids love in the community
- Meeting the Queens
- I love the inclusivity and openness of this program and hope there is much more
- Inclusive :)
- Everything - love the inclusion and book selection!
- The enthusiasm by the performers and the audience. Love Diversity!
- Very family friendly event, GREAT choice of books
- As a member of the LGBT community I was thrilled that Wichita Public Library had this program
- That they presented a touchy subject in a thoughtful, caring, DIPLOMATIC, manner. And I got to hear 3 books I had never heard before.
- The reading - pics with the Queens
- I loved the inclusiveness and story selection
- The size of the group. Great turn out
- Open minded love the diversity
- Drag Queens are amazing, duh! It was nice to hear new beautiful children's books I can read to my daughter
- That a city organization recognizes the LGBT community and despite backlash still went through with the event
- It was beautiful! Made my heart so happy to see LGBT kids and adults have a program that was inclusive
- It was something different that my family enjoyed
- The readers and enthusiasm
- I loved the open mindedness being shown tonight! It was a packed house full of loving people!
- The stories. It brought a lot of issues of acceptance and love in a kid friendly way
- The diversity in the crowd
- I love that it introduces kids to different types of people and teaches inclusiveness
- Diversity
- It was educational and inclusive and sweet
- that we were introducing members of the LGBT community

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- Diversity!!! Support LGBT
- The love, the community feeling, and the happiness!
- All of it. This was my first visit. It was beautiful!
- I love the openness to diversity. What a surprise for Wichita!
- It was fun to see so much community support for a good cause
- Diversity and awareness of different people
- I liked the Queens and the books
- Inclusivity and humor
- EVERYTHING!
- Fun. First program for us and we loved it. The book choices were wonderful. And my nephew loved the makeup!
- Well organized, fun and relaxed
- I love the variety of community members that turned out for it!
- Wonderful inclusivity, positive engagement

Suggestions for Future Programs

- Historically accurate accounts of Native American lives now and in the past 100 yrs. Christian speakers/authors like Jill Briscoe
- I'd like to see more storytimes with more queens and different stories, and I'd like to see much more diversity in programs in general
- This is so sad!!
- Encouraging literature/true to protect the innocence of our future generations. I'm ashamed of our City Council.
- I find this kind of program should be for adults only and not in a public facility that is paid by taxpayers.
- NOT IMMORAL PROGRAMS. Good wholesome programs that promote a wholesome community.
- More LGBTQ
- <3 <3
- More stuff like this
- More like this - inclusiveness – diversity
- Anything and everything
- Not sure. More of these.
- More like this one!
- More of LGBTQ topics and events!
- More LGBTQ, feminism, multicultural
- More like this!
- LGBTQ programs
- Programs that give voices to those without a platform
- More of Yaas to Reading
- Keep the variety going
- More events like Yaas Reading
- All inclusive programs
- Any inclusive programs
- Drawing time/Art
- More events that are fun for parents and kids
- Any?
- Inclusive :)

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- More LGBTQ and inclusion
- Any programs celebrating inclusiveness
- More of these and LGBTQA programs
- More LGBT events. More drag queens! :)
- More programs themed for both adults and children. Maybe a program where adult books are read to adult. (Not everyone likes to read but everyone likes a good story)
- Drag Queens reading to children promoted by the Children's area.
- More LGBT and related things
- More like this
- More of this LGBT acceptance
- More LGBTQ
- More Drag Queens, stuff with/about animals, equality
- More programs with local orgs and businesses/non-profits
- Please bring more LGBT programs!
- More like this one
- Maker space hands on style activities
- Other open-minded events like this!
- More like this!
- The Drag Queens was a great edition
- Ones similar to this!
- More programs with great inclusive messages for families!
- The same kinds of shows
- More like this
- More LGBT plus events
- Diversity programming - this was kid friendly
- MORE OF THESE!
- Any
- More from the Queens, please! Also lots of local history and genealogy. KS Humanity programs
- Art and drawing time
- Anything!
- More LGBTQ+
- Poetry groups
- More LGBTQX for families and kids!
- More to promote tolerance and inclusion
- Anything that pulls a lot of people together
- More programs like this
- Etsy workshops, maker's events, more LGBTQ themed programs

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APPENDIX B – Customer Emails

Question: What's with the drag queens reading to toddlers? Can't find more wholesome activity? Good grief. I was all set to volunteer and advocate for the library, but not now.

Submitted: 9/20/2018 4:04 PM

Subject: Drag Queen controversy

Date: Thu, 20 Sep 2018 16:58:27 -0500

I don't live in Wichita now, but hats off to the library board for recognizing that it takes all kinds to make a world. Open some minds, that's what libraries are meant to do. Thank you.

Subject: Drag Queens

Date: Thu, 20 Sep 2018 18:36:11 -0500

This is beyond disgusting and should not be happening at a PUBLIC library much less our new monument built with my dollars..stop this absurdity and low life behavior bring shoved down those sweet innocent children..where is your decency?????

Date: September 20, 2018 at 7:59:10 PM CDT

Subject: Humanism event at library.

I would like to know why the city is allowing a drag queen reading event at the local library. This event is pushing an idea that is contrary to natural law and pushes and educates a humanist view of the world. Federal courts have ruled that humanism is a religion and against local governments for supporting religion in violation of the 1st amendment. Please help me understand why the city and library system are promoting religion?

Sent: Friday, September 21, 2018 9:52 AM

Subject: Reading

What you are exposing our children and grandchildren to is WRONG!!! You are pushing an agenda! Because of what you are doing - allowing drag queens to read to our children and grandchildren - I'll start ordering books from Amazon and start a weekly reading event in our neighborhood!!! What you are doing is offensive to me - the public library is no longer a safe place for children. There is a place for drag queens - it is not in our public libraries. God help you for what you are doing...

Sent: Friday, September 21, 2018 9:31 AM

Subject: Questions about Say YAAAS to Reading Event

My family and I are big fans of the new library, thank you for your service! I became aware of an event to take place at the Advanced Learning Library through the Wichita Eagle

(<https://www.kansas.com/news/local/article218608960.html>). I have some questions about the event.

- Does the Wichita Government take an official position supporting LGBT issues?
- Am I right in understanding that this event is specifically geared for children (the [facebook](#) event denotes that "story books" will be read)?

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- Is the Advanced Learning Library also open to hosting and advertising a "Pastor's Story Time" where a Christian minister reads stories from the Bible to children and their parents?
-

Subject: bad decision

Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2018 10:42:00 -0400

Dear Library Board,

I'm so sorry you have decided to host the "drag queen" stories for children. Our culture has gone away from God and His "way of things" and by hosting this you have decided to do the same. Jesus tells us to love everyone and yes, that's straight from His Word. He also has an "order of things" which show "right" and "wrong". Not much else to say, except I'm sorry for the children that will be innocently attending.

Comment: The idea of having a drag queen read books to children is absolutely repulsive. This kind of nonsense does not belong in any city owned property. As a tax payer I do not support this in any fashion. I will be contacting my City Councilman in regards to this misuse of city funds.

Submitted: 9/21/2018 10:49 AM

Comment: I am strongly opposed to the Library allowing "Drag Queens" to read to children at any age. I oppose this proposed action and will remove all further support from the Library.

Submitted: 9/21/2018 3:16 PM

Subject: drag queen reading at WPL

Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2018 14:19:55 -0500

To Jennifer Lane and the Wichita Public Library Board of Directors:

I am writing to object to the use of a city government building being used to host the drag queen public reading event next Tuesday. In allowing this to take place in a facility which is paid for with taxpayer dollars, you have alienated a large percentage of patrons who do not support the political agenda of the LGBTQ movement. This decision shows an astounding lack of foresight and sensitivity to the deeply held moral and religious beliefs of thousands in Sedgwick County whom you are supposed to serve without bias.
A concerned citizen

Comment: I am not happy with your promotion of the drag queen lifestyle in the Sept 25 event of saying yes to reading. Then say yes to reading. Leave the "political left" out of it. I know that reading opens up different viewpoints and possibilities, but that doesn't mean you favor it. I believe you are caving in to the "cool" view of a very harmful and destructive lifestyle. It is not cool. The suicide rates are indicative of it. I don't see you bringing in someone who has bulimia to read a book about a totally different subject, but then she talks about bulimia and how great it is and everyone should just accept her and her choices and promote her lifestyle. And why not? Because it is harmful. Just because she doesn't believe that it is harmful doesn't change the fact that it is harmful to her. This event is the same thing. Our society is now glorifying this alternative lifestyle. But that doesn't make it less harmful. Why would you want to contribute to that confusion? Please reconsider. At least stay neutral in this battle of "inclusiveness". Bring in people with real obstacles in life - like the elderly, people with disabilities, people who have been poverty stricken. Let's focus on helping others, not spreading harm.

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Sent: Friday, September 21, 2018 5:47 PM

Subject: Drag Queen event

Recently, several citizens reached out to me after they became aware of the "Say YAAAS to Reading" event scheduled for Tuesday, September 25, at the Wichita Public Library, featuring so-called "drag queens" reading children's story books. These parents are alarmed that their local library is hosting such an adult-oriented, inherently sexual event. From the article in the Wichita Eagle, I understand that the library lists the event as being "for adults" and has asked parents to "use their judgment" when deciding whether to bring children. However, as you know, families often venture to the library unaware of any events that may be happening. Furthermore, while the library may believe an event held at a gathering place for families featuring costumes and children's books being read aloud is for adults, that's clearly not how the organizers view it.

Again, quoting from the Eagle article:

Liz Hamor, co-founder of GLSEN Kansas, said she's glad the Wichita library scheduled the event, and she hopes families and people of all ages will attend the program.

"It's incredibly important that children see the diversity that exists throughout the world," said Hamor.

"Having drag queens read to children is a fabulous way to undo gender norms and validate the gender exploration that is already normal for children."

Clearly, the goal of this event is to expose children to men dressed in drag, and introduce them to controversial, sexually-oriented themes many parents find inappropriate for children. The Wichita Public Library ought not host such an event, and I encourage you to use your authority to cancel it. By canceling sooner rather than later, the event's organizers will have time to find a different, more suitable venue.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Subject: Drag Queens at our new library

Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2018 22:38:20 -0500

If you even care what people in the Wichita community care about- my vote is a big NO on this program. This bringing in Drag Queens to read to children is WRONG- WRONG-WRONG!! Let children be children- why would you even think of doing this!!

Subject: Book Reading

Date: Sat, 22 Sep 2018 00:38:39 +0000 (UTC)

To Whom This May Concern:

I am a concerned resident of Wichita. I am concerned about the book reading by a drag queen. God has made the laws that pertain to human beings, and because of this I can't help but notice that there are a lot of people that are in trouble, including the people that support such an anti-God practice as homosexuality, which he calls sodomy. God calls homosexuality sin; He says that it's wrong. Not only is it wrong, but it is harmful to other people. Whole groups of people have been destroyed in large part because of this sin. Further, as a tax-paying citizen of Wichita and someone concerned for others, including homosexuals, I am in favor of diminishing this practice. Homosexuals are not any happier when they practice this God-forbidden practice, but are more miserable because of it. This is what sin does to all of us. Certainly, there are a lot of other topics that are beneficial to society, rather than detrimental to it. I am asking you to stand for what's right, in

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the name of God, rather than caving in to peer pressure or whatever it is. As taxpayers, we should not be having to support this perversion of God's ways.

Sent: Saturday, September 22, 2018 3:45 AM

Subject: Drag Queen 'reading'

I appreciate the email addresses of those of you serving our ALC in Wichita. I am angry but will try to be a sensible 78 yr old as I write this. I have lived all but 10 years of my life in Wichita. As a child living in College Hill, my mother put us, the "5J's (siblings), on the bus every Saturday and we spent the mornings in the gorgeous original limestone bldg. picking up books, sitting on the spiral staircase, reading and then with pride, using our cards to check out. As a mother of three, once their sports were done, off we went and in the summer, they couldn't wait for Anne and her glorious STORY TIME plus her care with each of them in checking out just the right books while I was in the Arts section doing my own perusing. My 5 grandchildren are avid readers thanks to Mrs. Paulseen at WCS who gave them assignments which took them to the city library. For 2 years I served on the Friends of the Library Board before I needed to work full time as a single mother. And, for the last 3 years, the 'forever volunteer lady' in the research department has diligently found geneology research for me on my grandfather who came from the Middle East in 1896 to Wichita. The day the ALC opened, (I was not happy with the money we spent to build a steel and glass edifice) my Sister and I spent 4 hours touring the facility, amazed at all and pleased to see a Board Room named after my uncle Keeney Stevens and the Children's garden sponsorship by his son, Keith. First in my life is to try and show the work of Jesus in my caring for others. I am by no means the perfect Christian but I do know I am one of God's works in progress. That said, what has possessed ALL of you to hold this READING by DRAG QUEENS??!! I have seen the 'excuses' given in reply to other distressed taxpayers, voters and DIVERSE people.

* I am sure the paper sensationalized the event but truly, did you expect less of a frenzied media in this day and age?

* You say they are IN an AREA far away from children and are reading children's books because they are short for the time allotted.

* What normal adults want to listen to a drag queen read a children's book to them - unless it is for the humorous asides they will no doubt make at the 'out-dated' books they were 'forced' to read as children, 'forced' to live in a different gendered body.

* And you say it cost the library nothing to have them there. Why are they not charged as your billing says for any space over 6-12 people?

* Who pays your electric, heat/air/ security et al while they are being entitled by you?

* Children love dress up and costumes? Please! I have never been to a children's party where a halloween costume looked like those shown on your YAAAS event page - be it a costume on a child or an adult.

My life has been spent in the performing arts. I am VERY tolerant of diverse personalities and taught my own children the same as they would always be around them.

* taught my own children - I do not need a penny of my money spent for a group to decide WHAT should be put in children's heads.

* You run the homeless out and will not let them bring their baggage in the bldg. I agree with that. There are shelters our churches and others provide and we all admit, those who live on the streets are NOT safe around children.

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* I am NOT homophobic but really, if they DO want to read to children as they do in California, should we not fear their thoughts and actions as much as a homeless person?

This event will go on I am sure. But it is sick to turn an eye away from the majority of citizens and give over to about 1% of our population because I am sure you fear the ACLU if you cancel. Thank you if you have read this far. I have said I am going to do a take on Cory Booker and call this NOT my 'Spartacus' moment but my MLK moment. This letter is my peaceful protest and I hope more will follow suit.

Regrettably but sincerely

Sent: Saturday, September 22, 2018 11:57 AM

Subject: Say Yaas to Reading

I have always loved the library. I have learned a world full of helpful information from countless books and audio books I have read and listened to. Thank you for investing in making the library a place for helpful, healthy learning. However, I was beyond disappointed to learn about your library's promotion of gender and sexual confusion to children through your drag queen/cross dressing program. It is a poor use of taxpayer dollars, and a sad thing for a library to encourage kids toward sexually demeaning and gender confusing activities which studies repeatedly show to be an unhealthy lifestyle typically borne out of abuse and great internal strife. Children shouldn't have their minds flooded with sexually charged issues that are masquerading as children's programs. I know you want to maintain support for the library in the community. Please cancel this program and any others like it. It frankly is embarrassing for the library system and those who live in it. Thank you for considering this request.

Subject: Proposed Event Tuesday Sept. 25

Date: Sat, 22 Sep 2018 17:33:57 -0400 (EDT)

I STRONGLY OBJECT to the proposed drag queen event on Tuesday. It is very wrong in many ways. The library board and all involved were very irresponsible, irrational, and self-serving in approving this. Maybe they have forgotten that I and thousands of other tax-paying citizens helped build your library! That a publicly-funded institution has taken these steps is unacceptable. They are pandering to the agenda of less than 1% of our population, but you/they evidently don't care if they greatly offend the MAJORITY of the population. This is shoving a deviant, immoral, reprehensible agenda down the collective throats of your community. It's billed as an adult event, but open to all ages and children's books are to be read. This is nothing but a play on words for INDOCTRINATING young children in an immoral and unnatural mentality. This is child abuse!! The statement cited from the Wichita Eagle article "The popularity of drag queens is on the rise" is ludicrous also; just because something may be supposedly "popular," it DOESN'T make it RIGHT. Contrary to what some people may think, Right and Wrong are still a reality. Someone there needs to get a backbone and SPEAK UP and STAND UP for morality and sanity. Stop pandering to a deviant, offensive agenda that the majority of the population renounces! Thank you for your time.

Subject: Drag Queen Event

Date: Sun, 23 Sep 2018 13:42:34 -0500

Good Afternoon, I am a library card holder and I recently found out that the central library is hosting a "drag queen" storytime event for small children? Are you kidding me? Do you not know that little children are highly impressionable? and who in their right mind would want to subject them to something like this? I ask

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that you reconsider this event and cancel it. I will be contacting the city council, Mayor Longwell's office and possibly Congressman Estes' office as well. Thank you in advance for cancelling the event and saving our children.

Subject: Say Yaas to Reading

Date: Sun, 23 Sep 2018 14:11:47 -0500

Hello! I know this event had gotten some backlash, at least in my homeschooling groups, but I just wanted to thank you for holding it! I will definitely be taking my children to see it. Thank you for being open-minded and progressive and inclusive!

Subject: Drag Queen Event at Advanced Learning Library September 25, 2018

Date: Sun, 23 Sep 2018 14:27:17 -0500

As a patron of the Wichita Public Library, and a resident of the city of Wichita, Kansas, I am requesting that you please cancel the Drag Queen event coming up at the Advanced Learning Library this Tuesday, September 25, 2018. Please do not schedule any future Drag Queen events.

Sent: Sunday, September 23, 2018 6:54 PM

Subject: Say Yaaaas to Reading

I am writing in regard to the planned "Say Yaaaas to Reading" event of later this week. I would like to express my concerns as to the event itself and why I feel the WPL is an inappropriate venue for this type of activity. I realize that this is being advertised as an "adult" event. However, the library has made it clear that children's books are the reading material featured. There seems to be no effort to discourage young attendees, and one comment says "All ages are welcome." We can also assume that the performers will be appearing in costume to the general public, without concern for what ages may see and interact with them, or giving parents an opportunity to avoid this encounter. This is deeply concerning to me, for the following reasons:

- 1) Exposing children to sexually charged images and conversations before they are mature enough to process them is unhealthy and can be permanently damaging. To tacitly allow this would be irresponsible and absolutely irredeemable. To force them into these situations is abuse.
- 2) Sexual experimentation is harmful. Encouraging children to join in such activities is tragically "popular". This does not change the truth. There are multiple places where adults can exercise their freedoms; these are individual choices that I would be happy to discuss in the appropriate circle. Right now the right of adults is not, in my mind, the question. It is the probable exposure of children.

The WPL has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. It has always held the promise of a safe and quiet place to learn and grow, without conflict or intrusion. So many of us parents depend on you for our middle school and high school children to have a good meeting place, where we feel no need to question or be concerned about what they may encounter.

For these reasons, I would like for the "Say Yaaaas to Reading" event be cancelled. If that is not the library's preference, I would like give these two requests as a safeguard to the young people there-

- That the event room be closed, and clearly marked as "No Admittance under age 17."
- That the performers not appear in costume outside of the event room.

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These two things would, I feel, create at least a solid effort on your part to ensure that there be no one that might be confronted unpreparedly. To my mind, if only one child were to be spared an encounter that might be beyond their personal preparedness, it is well worth any inconvenience on the part of us as adults. Thank you for understanding, and for your time and service to our city and area!

Sincerely, concerned mom, past library volunteer, and WPL cardholder of 25 years

Sent: Sunday, September 23, 2018 8:46 PM

Subject: drag queen stories

Dear Wichita Library Administration and Board of Directors,

My heart was sick as I read the article in the September 20th Wichita Eagle online about drag queens reading stories next Tuesday at the Wichita Public Library. I went to the Wichita Library Website, and found minutes of the latest board meeting that was available, July, 2018. Ms Sara Dixon, Adult Programming Section Manager, had attended the meeting and reported the following: Ms. Dixon presented information about drag queen story hours now being offered in many urban libraries. The purpose of the program is to increase awareness and tolerance of, as well as empathy for, the LGBT community. The idea for offering the program in Wichita is based on information from the Knight Foundation Soul of the Community Report as shared during the recent Focus Forward event of the Wichita Community Foundation. This report notes that the LGBTQ community is perceived as one of the least welcome groups in Wichita. Board members were asked for feedback on offering such a program in Wichita. Comments included the importance of clearly describing the event, perhaps not referencing it as a story time, and encouragement to continue to seek ways to ensure that library programs and services are inclusive of the needs and interests of the entire community. It doesn't mention that there was a vote taken at the board of directors meeting. Who made the final decision? Who had input, and was the public informed that this was in the planning stage? I see that it will happen at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, September 25. Will it be held in the Children's section of the library? The newspaper article also stated that drag queen reading at the library was begun in San Francisco in 2015, and that it was spreading across the country. Does Wichita REALLY want to pattern itself after San Francisco? The paper also reported that Jennifer Lane, Wichita Library spokesperson said the Wichita event was discussed with the Library Board of Directors, "who were supportive of the offering." It also quotes Brad Thomison, LGBTQ Coordinator for WSU's Office of Diversity and Inclusion as saying the following, "These conversations can sometimes be scary because we don't know how kids will respond. But time and time again, they prove to be 10 times more open-minded than adults and sometimes more willing to just let people be uniquely themselves." Liz Hamor, do-founder of GLSEN Kansas, said she is glad the Wichita Library scheduled the event, and hopes that people of all ages will come to the event. She was quoted as saying, "It's incredibly important that children see the diversity that exists throughout the world...having drag queens read to children is a fabulous way to undo gender norms and validate the gender exploration that is already normal for children." The LGBTQ community knows that the majority of America disagrees with their lifestyle, but they want the masses to celebrate their perversion, not just tolerate it. They know that getting children to accept a perverse lifestyle as normal is the easiest way to change a culture. Those who act on their gay feelings started by "coming out of the closet," and now it has come to this! It is like inviting a man or woman who is committing adultery come with their mistress or mister, and read a book about tolerance and acceptance! I fear for our country if we continue down this road. Please reconsider this reading by drag queens. If the goal is to have truly healthy children and bring joy and celebration to them,

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please bring REAL HEROS to the Wichita Library to read, such as men and women from the military, business, successful people of all races who are doing great things to build up our community, and those encouraging character education. We need to encourage our children to be proud of this country, state and city. We need strong families to remain a stable society.

Comment: I am very saddened and disappointed that you are putting on a Storytime led by drag queens. Yes, I see that the event is not specifically listed under children's events, however, if I happened to be at the downtown location that particular evening with my elementary age children and passed the room / area where this will be occurring I would be horrified to have them witness men dressing up as women. (We frequent the downtown and Rockwell branches at least once a week if not more). Sexuality themes have no place in a venue where young children are present. Again, I am very saddened and angered by this event being offered in our library system. My hope is that anything of this nature not be presented. Thank you for your time.

Submitted: 9/23/2018 10:00 PM

Comment: I just heard about your drag queen story time. That is so not appropriate for kids. They just don't need to know about that kind of thing. Let them be kids for awhile before they find out about the seedier side of life.

Submitted: 9/23/2018 10:28 PM

Comment: Heard about this drag queen children's story time reading. Not cool Wichita Public Library, not cool at all.

Submitted: 9/23/2018 10:41 PM

Comment: I am very distressed regarding the "drag queen story time" that you will be hosting in recent weeks. The library should be a place where families and children should feel safe and family values promoted. Please reconsider this event.

Submitted: 9/23/2018 10:49 PM

Comment: As a concerned citizen I ask that you do not hold a drag queen story time at this Library.

Submitted: 9/23/2018 10:53 PM

Comment: Read in the paper that you are having a Drag queen reading at the main library. That may fly in California, but it doesn't here. No matter how hard the LGBT crowd pushes their agenda, the God of the Bible calls that lifestyle/behavior an abomination. I am deeply disappointed in you.

Submitted: 9/23/2018 11:14 PM

Comment: I'm very sad to see that the Library is promoting the Drag Queen agenda. Seriously!!! With so many great books, why do we need to go there?

Submitted: 9/24/2018 5:43 AM

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Comment: Please do not continue with that drag queen story hour. This is offensive & an inappropriate location.

Submitted: 9/24/2018 6:51 AM

Comment: My children love the library but we will stop using the Wichita Public libraries if they continue to hold events like drag queens reading to kids. This is disgusting.

Submitted: 9/24/2018 7:04 AM

Comment: Please, do not introduce any type of "Drag Queen Storybook Time" at any of our Wichita Public Libraries. The library should be a safe place for children to explore and enjoy their imaginations and the love of learning without any hidden agenda that even remotely exposes them to unnecessary references to sexuality. I mean... seriously??!!! This is, by in large, a very conservative community in Wichita. Parents of children will not appreciate this political move to normalize and desensitize our young children to what many of us consider a perversion. Let's keep story time to creative imagination, history, science exploration, and encouragement of character types of books and themes. Sexuality, in any capacity, should be completely off the table for "story time". When I heard this was on the schedule for the new library opening, I was just so sad. Unfortunately, our family will not be using any of the Wichita libraries going forward. We'll head to Andover or get/find our research materials on-line from other resources. Hope you are ready for the backlash from so many parents in our community over this little liberal political stunt you are pulling.

Submitted: 9/24/2018 7:29 AM

Subject: Drag Queens reading books to children

Date: Mon, 24 Sep 2018 07:35:12 -0500

Based on your vision statement, your interest should lie in the promotion of books rather than the promotion of lifestyles. You have been given trust over this library by the public and by choosing to promote transsexuals rather than books, you are abusing that trust. The event, "billed for adults but designed for all ages" ...that's why their reading children's picture books? How duplicitous! Your mission is not to "undo gender norms and validate gender exploration."

Comment: Hello, I just wanted to let you know that I am very saddened to hear about the type of books you are reading in your library to children. Books about drag queens are beyond inappropriate. What is your goal here? We will not be going to your library ever again.

Submitted: 9/24/2018 9:12 AM

Comment: What a sad day that you would involve children . I will be praying for all, I will also be sharing this.

Submitted: 9/24/2018 9:15 AM

Comment: I am very disappointed to hear about a Drag queen story time at the new library! We love our Wichita libraries and hope to protect our children and grandchildren from teaching like this. Thanks!

Submitted: 9/24/2018 9:16 AM

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Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018 11:45 AM

Subject: Re: drag queen reading at WPL

Dear Ms. Berner, Thank you for your careful response. I assume since tomorrow's event is not at all "political", that you and the library board will allow speakers from the Family Policy Alliance of Kansas or various churches in Wichita to read Bible stories out loud and discuss the importance of traditional families (with a biological mother and father and their children) as the basis of all thriving societies. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

Comment: Not happy about your decision to have a drag queen read children's story books. I will not come to the library when that is happening.

Submitted: 9/24/2018 11:47 AM

Comment: Hello. First let me say, I love the public libraries, the staff and have been a long time patron of the downtown and Westlink branches. I am an educator and take the education and spirituality, emotional and physical safety of children very seriously. I am an advocate for children staying healthy and I am a parent who has raised my son in Wichita and in the Maize school districts. I have a very deep concern and inquiry. I am a local teacher in Wichita and have been since 2001. I'm a resident here and am from downtown Wichita, I currently live in the Maize district but I attended East High. I am not in agreement with an event which is sounding to me wildly controversial. I heard there will be an event taking place for Children involving the trans. community. I was made aware, last week was told that there will be a Drag Queen Transgender Reading for children event this week on Tuesday evening? Is this a fact? I'm wondering what will be the dynamics and supervision level at this event. Will it in fact be child appropriate? Is this something which could be considered educational or indoctrinating? Is it involving sensuality or sexy drag clothing like the shows they put on on 2nd street? Will Transgender individuals be reading books, teaching children The Transgender culture, or of what nature will be the subject of the readings? What will be the titles of the books read? I hope you can do your best to help to enlighten me and the greater community on the intent of these types of events. I don't find it clever or humorous to expose children unnecessarily to subject matters which are somewhat adult in nature including erotically or sensually motivated subjects or teaching any confusing sexual subjects. If this is a planned event. realize this type of event will be considered by me personally an assault upon the traditional family values of our community and children and I will fully lead people to understand the nature of the intentions of this group and their dealings impressionable children. Thank you. Warm Regards,

Submitted: 9/24/2018 12:08 PM

Comment: I will not ever bring my 9 year old grandson to any storytime read by a dragqueen I don't want their issues of who God says they are to be around my grandson or any one else's children Period

Submitted: 9/24/2018 12:45 PM

Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018, 1:43:22 PM CDT

Subject: Library Event Drag Queens read to Children

Good Morning, Our new library is a site to behold. Wichita can certainly be proud of this move forward. I'm sorry I can't say the same of the upcoming event, Drag Queens read to Children. What was the long range

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goal and purpose for this event? What was the library hoping to accomplish by supporting this event? Is the library adopting a new focus or direction in it's new facility? Has the public been made aware of your new direction? I know that's a lot of questions 'stay at home mother's groups' all over Wichita are adopting a let's #stayaway for a while attitude until they can be certain their children will not be exposed purposely or inadvertently to situations they may not approve. So many people have decided to come back to the library and take advantage of it's new surroundings and offerings. I hope you think carefully about offering this type of children's entertainment again. The library has always been a place we could trust to be a wholesome environment. This event does not seem to enforce that feeling at all. Thank you for listening and I hope we see more positive learning adventures from the library in the future.

Sincerely,

Subject: Say YAAAS to Reading

Date: Mon, 24 Sep 2018 16:11:59 -0500

I am saddened and disappointed to see that the Library Board of Directors has approved drag queens reading children's books at the library. The newspaper story states, "Local officials said the Wichita library had been looking to diversify program offerings and appeal to groups who are not active users of the library." What groups are you hoping to appeal to? The LBGTQ community? Then why are they reading children's books? Children are already active users of a library. As Jennifer Lane was quoted, "The idea . . . is to see if it will help us increase our connection with the LBGTQ community," library spokeswoman Jennifer Lane said in an email." How does this event increase that "connection"? And this event is advertised for an adult audience? Then why are children's books being read? This is a clear attempt to introduce an alternative life style to children. I sincerely hope parents keep their children away from the library Tuesday night! It is a sad day when we have to check the agenda of the library before bringing our children to check out books. I'm glad there was a story in the paper in advance of this spectacle so I can stay away from the library I donated money to build. I would suggest to the Library Board that Wichita is NOT San Francisco, nor do we want to be like them. I live in Wichita for a reason!

Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018 4:43 PM

Subject: RE: Comment from Library Patron CHERYL KNOCKE

Be that as it may, and as "diverse" as your community serves... there is no need for a group time that addresses sexual identity. Give me a break! Do you have Heterosexual Story Time as well? Why does a specific group of people that seem to hang their identity on their sexual orientation need a special day at the public library? Is the library for reading, research and published resources or for making political agenda statements by supporting such labeled groups of people in the community with little get-togethers where they can celebrate who they are and their "identity"? This is definitely a political and ideological statement to our community at large, and I for one, and I am not alone, am disgusted with your decision to buy into the pressure and succumb to this level. I agree that all people should feel safe in your library, but let's not change the function of the library to be a political haven.

Comment: I am very disappointed to see that the Wichita Public Library has CHOSEN to hold the Say YAAAS to Reading event. I cannot imagine how your leadership team came to the conclusion that this is a positive event for our community. I would hope that you change your mind and CHOOSE to cancel it.

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Submitted: 9/24/2018 5:10 PM

Comment: I'm disappointed and concerned with the WPL encouragement of events such as drag queen story time for children. This should be about books instead it's about another agenda. So so not okay

Submitted: 9/24/2018 5:33 PM

Subject: concern

Date: Mon, 24 Sep 2018 20:54:37 +0000 (UTC)

Hello. I wanted to send a quick note to the administration of the Wichita Library.

Your event "Say Yaas to Reading" which features childrens books being read would appeal to children, yet is a topic that should be handled delicately by an adult who knows the individual child, their situation, their readiness for issues like this one. I have friends who are gay and I care about them and respect them so please don't misunderstand my position on this topic. This is not a topic that should be available to children without oversight by a guardian. Your event is completely inappropriate unless you will require children to be accompanied by a legal guardian. I am disappointed in the Wichita Public Library for putting children at risk of being overwhelmed or confused on a topic that is sexual in nature. While there are many official statements from medical organizations on this topic, I will just list one here from the American College of Pediatrics from their website, <https://www.acped.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/gender-ideology-harms-children>. When the public library hosts an event like this where drag queens are reading children's books introducing the audience to transgenderism (a sexual topic), the library is overstepping their role and infringing on parents' and guardians' rights. I have to speak up for those who can't speak up for themselves. Adults can debate this topic and speak for themselves, on both sides of the political aisles, and are far less susceptible to propaganda on either side of the issue. Children are less prepared to decipher political agendas and truth from hype. The library is not a place for indoctrination and should be seeking to protect children from information given in a format that they're not ready to deal with independently. Let me be very clear, I love and respect those friends of mine who are part of the LBGQT community, but that has nothing to do with having an open event where under-aged children could happen into the event.

Sincerely,

Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018 11:00 PM

Subject: RE: Say Yaaaas to Reading

Dear Ms. Berner- I have read your reply and, while I understand all of the ways you have attempted to make this event a "positive" or "healthy" learning experience, all I can do is cry.

Everywhere, everywhere children are losing their ability to avoid images and conversations that are deliberately placed into their lives in order to increase their sexual awareness, and confront them with often confusing and startling questions. This is so harmful. So harmful. How are they to protect themselves? If you are right about your intentions as to the event, you are also quite right that it has been deliberately used to appear child friendly. How much is it on you to prevent this? I can only say that the library is one of the few places where I have always felt comfortable and safe, and I am in absolute dread of losing this confidence. We, as adults, have so many places where we are free to be free. Where do our kids get to be kids now? In a heartfelt request, once again, that you cancel the event, I am most sincerely,

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Comment: I love that you have lots of events & family events. However, one of your upcoming events has me concerned/unhappy - your drag show storytime. As the term story time insinuates children I definitely think that encouraging boys to wear girls clothes and parade about in then is sending the wrong message. I want kids to feel comfortable in their own skin & have fun, but holding a drag show at the library?!? Really?
Submitted: 9/25/2018 7:53 AM

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 8:57 AM

Subject: Re: Reading

Your response is just as disturbing. Your opening up a public place where children and families spend time - for drag queens to read CHILDRENS books to other adults??? This utterly makes no sense to me. Why not transport books to the gay bars and have your reading forum in the environment they choose to congregate/work? And since they are short stories from children's books, I'm sure they would fit nicely in a handbag. What you are doing is forcing a social issue (your diversity comment) onto the community in hopes that it will cause children to question their sexuality and explore - isn't that your agenda? Our world is perverted enough without bringing it in to an area where I once thought children would be protected. Your attitude and lack of concern for the safety of children causes me pause - I want my grandchildren to remain with child-like thoughts and attitudes as long as they can as long as it is appropriate. This is not how I feel the tax payers money should be spent. I'm sure a majority feels the same. I hope you find a healthier pet project to take on...

Regards,

Comment: Dear Library Administration, First, I'm grateful to you all for your efforts in making such a great transition to the wonderful new facility & the preparation & training you've fostered in your staff. I didn't notice any of the hitches or setbacks that may have occurred in the transition. In my experience it was awesome! Finally, I was surprised & disappointed to see that this event, "Say YAAAS to Reading" is being promoted to children, especially as it is being specified separately as an adult event. So which is it, adult or children? The promotion seemed very coordinated to bring young children to ask questions about their sexual identity, that are not necessary, & that hinder their natural progression of development. I struggle to see how it fits with the library's mission to enrich the quality of life in Wichita. I have two boys under 5 years; it's unclear whether the Library will be a safe place for them to learn moving forward. That is sad considering my sharing your vision to be the preferred knowledge resource, as well as inviting & excellent at service. I was looking for somewhere in your vision & mission, where it states that you'll be catering to various agenda's of local interest groups. I trust you will get back to what a Library is supposed to be about, & keep the hindrances out. I know that is your heart, I hope that my children & our city can count on your leadership in keeping to the original mission & vision that's been a part of the Library for so long. Again thank you for all you do to make the Library a wholesome place for learning, free of distractions & hindrances. I trust & pray that the Library will be committed to that for the future. Sincerely,
Submitted: 9/25/2018 8:58 AM

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 9:46 AM

Subject: Drag queen event tonight

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I am writing to let you know of my disappointment in the library's decision to host the drag queen event tonight at the Advanced Learning Library. There is no benefit to the community for this event. I understand this is an adult event but still has no place in our public library. I hope you and your staff reconsider the direction the library has taken in the future.

Sincerely,

Comment: Thank you for all your efforts to create such a beautiful place for our city to enjoy. It's wonderful to have access to so many resources for learning and pursuing knowledge. I was really disappointed though to hear that you had invited a cross-dresser to read to our children. The suggestion to them would seem to be that they need to question their sexual identity at an age when sex is not an issue for them. Please give children the time and space to just be children as long as they can because they will have plenty of time to deal with the adult issues of life.

Submitted: 9/25/2018 10:50 AM

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 10:51 AM

Subject: Re: FW: concern

Thank you so much for your clarifications. This is helpful information and is a better situation than the information given out by the newspaper and other sources. I hope that your administration expressed your dissatisfaction with the misrepresentation of the event. I was at the library recently with my daughter and there were about 10 children there that were not with any adult. The library is certainly aware that often children are present at the library with their guardian and I trust that the library is caring about the well being of each of those children as well. I hope that any children at the library tonight who are not with their legal guardian will not be permitted to come into the event- an event that you did not intend for children (even though they are reading children's books). Here is an official statement from the American College of Pediatrics on the topic of introducing gender and sexual topics to children without knowing the individual child's situation and experiences and mental development, <https://www.acped.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/gender-ideology-harms-children>.

Sincerely,

Comment: I am beyond sickened that you are allowing a "transgendered" individual to read a story to children tonight at your library. What message are you trying to send? Submitted: 9/25/2018 11:06 AM

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 11:48 AM

Subject: Re: Drag Queen event

Dear Ms. Berner, Thank you for your response. I regret your unwillingness to disassociate the public library from this divisive, inappropriate event. Please be advised that the citizens of Wichita whose reasonable concerns you have dismissed in deference to a radical, sexual political agenda will hold you and the elected officials who are ultimately responsible for the use of taxpayer-funded buildings and programs accountable for this decision. The ballot box will determine whether you and your colleagues in city government made the right decision.

Sincerely,

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 12:21 PM

Subject: Re: Comment from Library Patron

Thank you for the clarification...Whether or not you label this Diversity...This is not a civil rights/diversity issue. This is not a culture problem. It is an identity/spiritual/mental problem. However, just because you are not advertising for Story Time, which I thank you for...But I am not satisfied and I'm not trying to be difficult or ugly here...not my motive at all. My one goal and ambition in emailing you is the protection of children before they are able to make informed, adult decisions, which should be after the age of 18, not before. I care for the adults involved also, but they are beyond my scope of interest. It is a crime against humanity to harm young children before they are able to give consent of any kind. People are NOT androgynous, we are very definitive medically speaking at birth and children should not be exposed to confusing identity behaviors. Martin Luther King Jr. would have had plenty to say on this topic and he would not have agreed with it. I certainly appreciate that this event is not "For Children" as a typical story time would be. Sounds sane. You said it all when you said Children's Literature would be read, I knew it. Parents with children will be welcomed there. Under the guise of protection of their "parents". Why are children coming to this event? Why should they be exposed to confused individuals who are while they are impressionable? Do you have answers, who do you get your diversity orders from? You along with the city of Wichita and so many other cities are going to be actively causing harm to children if you are encouraging same sex Children's Literature. Which is also promoted at Barne's and Nobles, I'm not ignorant, I know the score of what people are doing to brain wash new flesh for their seductive playtime. Just another open door for child abuse to take place through the ignorance of a fallen Roman like culture. Trans men and children are very much in danger of future remorse. I want to bring awareness to this critical issue. Once a male has a surgery this cannot be reversed. And gender reassignment is such an abuse of adult authority if done prior to a child being 18. Our children are literally being sacrificed on an alter of fashionable ideas. Please understand I am very well versed in history and on the decline of a society this is the pattern, the loss of identity. It is not a positive for our culture. As you know children are not born of a union of same sex, so why you would allow children at your event is beyond my comprehension. I know that our culture is very much on the decline because of so many men and women not realizing their own image and identities, this is not sane behavior to not operate on the basis of medical science and a birth certificate. The same tactics used to successfully push the gay marriage agenda are now being used to push paedophilia. We cannot open the door to further insanity by normalizing adults sexualizing under age children. Do you see the pattern? Do you see my fears...They are not based in my little pony rainbow lands of fairies jumping around but in truth and fact. Most in the gay and trans community have alcohol and drug use problems and problems with depression, I know. I have relatives who are gay and who are not happy in fact and who are alcoholics. Music is huge to them...but no matter how they try they are not resolving their spiritual decay. Not to say all are addicts, but this is a high risk. Most I know and have known do have some form of confidence issues, anger problems, substance abuse and remorse of some kind playing out. Also, many I've known have tried to get men who are much younger than them into their lifestyle as almost a recruiting thing. I am saddened to say the least that you do not take the innocence of children more seriously. I hope you will reconsider. I will be emailing the leaders of Wichita and the governor as well.

Respectfully,

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

Comment: To Whom it May Concern, I am sending you this note to express deep concern about the Wichita Library hosting the drag queen event on Tuesday. Some things are simply inappropriate for kids, including drag queens, which are strongly associated with adult entertainment. The library claims that the event is "for adults," but how many adults come to hear children's stories read to them? Furthermore, that's clearly not how the event's organizers view it. As they said in the Eagle: "It's incredibly important that children see the diversity that exists throughout the world. Having drag queens read to children is a fabulous way to undo gender norms and validate the gender exploration that is already normal for children." Clearly, the goal of this event is to expose children to men dressed in drag, and introduce them to controversial, sexually-oriented themes that many parents find inappropriate for children. Please, cancel this event. Sincerely,
Submitted: 9/25/2018 2:05 PM

Subject: Say YAAAS to Reading" event

Date: Tue, 25 Sep 2018 14:23:59 -0500

To The Library Board of Directors, This email is sent in order to protest tonight's library event featuring drag queens reading children's books at the public library. PLEASE reread that sentence. Drag queens. Really? It is fully understood that the event is aimed toward adults ...and also laughable. The drag queens are going to read CHILDREN'S BOOKS!!! If this is an adult event (haha) why are they reading children's books?? The answer is obvious. Children's early lives ought to be filled with innocent play, not having complex adult sexual concepts forced into their world, especially when disguised as "all-inclusive" fun, including "costumes" and CHILDREN'S stories! The 45 Goals of the Communist Party's #26 reads as follows: "Present homosexuality, degeneracy and promiscuity as "normal, natural, and healthy"." It is fully understood that there is a cultural climate at present which is pushing normal social boundaries and insisting on its own degenerate way. Using terms such as "inclusion", "diverse community", "equity", "broad range of viewpoints and cultures" and "residents to be able to see themselves reflected in the resources" are offensive to other Wichita residents. PLEASE cancel this event as it supports a depraved worldview that many in Wichita do not support and do not want their money going towards in any way (including using library rooms/supplies, lights, air condition, etc.).
Sincerely,

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 2:35 PM

Subject: Re: drag queen reading at WPL

Dear Ms. Berner, Your recent reply alarms me on several points. First, why is it a concern of a government institution funded by taxpayers that the gay community in Wichita is perceived as "unwelcome"? I beg to differ with you that this is event has no hidden political agenda. The motive of your library staff, board members and sympathetic city councilpersons is all too clear. Second, why are members of the LGBTQ community given public space for free, nay even invited by the library, while citizens who want to hold bible studies must pay to rent rooms? Can this discrepancy in treatment be deemed fair and equal for all in Wichita? Again I ask if a public reading of bible stories would be publicized and promoted and given free venue by the library. Third, the most egregious aspect of this evening's event by far is the choice of reading material: children's stories. I have no idea how many children will actually be present (and I certainly hope there will be none), but the thought that making drag queens and their lifestyle seem normal and even acceptable to vulnerable and impressionable children is totally abhorrent. The next time the Knight

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

Foundation wants to take the pulse of the Wichita community for any purpose, try actually getting out into the streets and learning about what really matters to us.

Comment: We were asked to contact you regarding the "Drag Queen" event at the Library. We are in agreement with those who feel that this event is not appropriate for this tax payer funded facility. Please cancel this event. Thank you.

Submitted: 9/25/2018 3:06 PM

Comment: To whom it may concern: I want to express how DEEPLY concerned I am about the drag queen event being held at the library today. Drag queens are strongly associated with adult entertainment and sexual behavior, both topics which are completely inappropriate for children. The library claims that this event is for adults, which is misleading. What adults are going to come by themselves to have children's books read to them? The event organizers themselves were even quoted in the Eagle saying, "It's incredibly important that children see the diversity that exists throughout the world. Having drag queens read to children is a fabulous way to undo gender norms and validate the gender exploration that is already normal for children." Children, used in that quote THREE times. Obviously, this is an incredibly poor job of trying to mask an inappropriate children's event as an "adult event." Clearly, the goal of this event is to expose children to men dressed in drag, and introduce them to controversial, sexually-oriented themes that many parents find inappropriate for children. And many psychologists would agree with those parents! This is not a topic for the library to be introducing to children. It should be up to the parents, who know their children better than anyone else, when or if it is appropriate to introduce such themes to their children. Please take a stand for age-appropriate content and cancel this event.

Submitted: 9/25/2018 3:26 PM

Comment: Please Stop the Drag Queen Event for Kids at the Library Dear [Decision Maker], I am sending you this note to express deep concern about the Wichita Library hosting the drag queen event on Tuesday. Some things are simply inappropriate for kids, including drag queens, which are strongly associated with adult entertainment. The library claims that the event is "for adults," but how many adults come to hear children's stories read to them? Furthermore, that's clearly not how the event's organizers view it. As they said in the Eagle: "It's incredibly important that children see the diversity that exists throughout the world. Having drag queens read to children is a fabulous way to undo gender norms and validate the gender exploration that is already normal for children." Clearly, the goal of this event is to expose children to men dressed in drag, and introduce them to controversial, sexually-oriented themes that many parents find inappropriate for children. The library board and the city manager report to you, and they have the authority to cancel this event. Please take a stand for age-appropriate content and instruct these officials to cancel the drag queen event at the Wichita library.

Thank you for your service. Sincerely,

Submitted: 9/25/2018 4:13 PM

Comment: I am appalled that you are sponsoring a drag queen reading tonight. Please reconsider. What a disgusting thing.

Submitted: 9/25/2018 4:15 PM

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

Subject: library events

Date: Tue, 25 Sep 2018 17:27:18 -0500

Dear Library Board of Directors: A drag queen story hour? Seriously? For balance, I hope you are also going to offer a story hour featuring books that tell stories about girls growing to appreciate that they have special qualities because they are girls, and boys growing to appreciate that they have special qualities because they are boys. Oh, wait. The LGBTQ lobby would not like that? I'm sure they wouldn't. But most library patrons would probably be more interested in promoting the positive ideas that for girls it is good to be a girl, and for boys it is good to be a boy, than in promoting the LGBTQ efforts to teach children they can change their genders if they want to.

Comment: Having a drag queen event at one of your libraries makes me leary of taking my children to any of your sites. As a public school teacher, I see children already confused and struggling with real life issues. Please don't expose them more to this "adult only" event which may or may not have children attending.

Submitted: 9/25/2018 5:37 PM

Comment: I am disgusted that the library chose to host a "Drag Queens Read" event. Not only is it in poor taste, it fails to communicate truth about masculinity and femininity. To claim that the event is for adults but to have the men reading children's book shows questionable judgement and poor motives.

Submitted: 9/25/2018 5:56 PM

Subject: Drag queen reading

Date: Wed, 26 Sep 2018 02:40:51 +0000 (UTC)

Dear Advance Learning Library Board Members and other library officials,I'm writing to express my opposition to the "Drag Queen" event scheduled tonight. I don't think this is a positive event for this community. I'm hoping children did not come to this. Confusing children about gender is not something of which to be proud. I also took umbrage to the comment that this was successful in Lawrence. Lawrence is not Wichita. Lawrence is probably the most liberal city in Kansas. I'm hoping Wichita does not become that. I do not condone hurting or making fun of someone because they believe differently than I do. But I don't think men dressing up as women is a normal act. I think certain groups should not be encouraged to use the library. If a man dressed this way showed up at the library, that would be one thing, but to encourage and make a big deal about it is another. Thank you,

Comment: Drag Queens in a library? The people who made this vile act happen WILL be fired. Drag Queens are mentally ill, and it looks like the people who run this library are too. I worked in a fine library for years and this would never happen. If you are going to allow these circus freaks around children.....then your library needs to be shut-down for good.

Submitted: 9/26/2018 6:29 AM

Subject: Shame on you

Date: Wed, 26 Sep 2018 08:05:53 -0500

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

You all should be ashamed of yourselves to allow such sickness and perversion to enter the library. My taxes help pay for this crap and I can assure you I will fight any additional money the library might need. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Comment: Due to you embrace of the trans filth. I will no longer allow my children to come to your "library".

Submitted: 9/26/2018 9:17 AM

Comment: Hello, I attended the "Say Yaaass to Reading" event on Tuesday, September 25th at the Advanced Learning Library and I just wanted to say thank you for providing such a wonderful event to the public. It is unfortunately rare to see events like this in this part of the country and to get to experience an evening that promoted being yourself, inclusiveness, diversity, and reading...it was amazing. Despite some of the objections by those that don't agree online and outside in person, I felt very safe and appreciated the library staff that helped provide such a safe space. I hope that there are more events like this in the future. I am confident to say that everyone that left after the meeting also felt the same. Thank you again!

Submitted: 9/26/2018 10:39 AM

Subject: Say Yaaasss to Reading Program

Date: Wed, 26 Sep 2018 11:16:53 -0500

Wichita Public Library Board of Directors, I attended the event last night and thoroughly enjoyed the program. I am not a member of the LGBTQ+ community, but a member of the Wichita community who enjoys taking part in programs that promote diversity and creating a more inclusive city for us all to thrive together. I am also a young professional who wants to live in a community that promotes the cultures of my neighbors, not shy away from it because the majority choose to not accept differences. I am so proud that I live in a community where a public institution was not afraid to host an event in spite of criticism, choosing to be inclusive and celebrate the diverse cultures that we have to offer. I am saddened that so much backlash has been given to this event. I understand some may have beliefs that would prevent them from being interested in this program, but they are not being required to attend. I think some of the outcry shows is because there has not been many, if any, other events of this nature that involved the City of Wichita. People are always afraid of what they don't know. With more frequent partnership and programs, events like this will become part of the norm for our community.

Please don't stop expanding your outreach. Diversity matters. Conceding to hate will not help Wichita grow.

Subject: Say Yaas to Reading

Date: Wed, 26 Sep 2018 17:10:01 +0000

I would like to know who the library officials, as quoted in the Eagle Newspaper, on Sept. 26th are, who scheduled and approved of the 'Say Yaas to Reading' program, in which 'Drag Queens' read various books. Thank you,

Subject: Promoting Perversion

Date: Wed, 26 Sep 2018 18:32:33 -0500

Dear Library Board, I just want to go on record that the majority of families in Kansas do not think it is the

After Action Review Say YAAAS to Reading

responsibility or duty of the library to attempt to Normalize sexual deviancy and perversion. I completely understand you are attempting to prevent discrimination of a very small # of people. However, in doing that you are greatly offending probably over 90% of your patrons. Your library is no longer a Safe space for children. If offending and alienating children and families is your goal, then you have been successful I am also very confident you have offended your Donor base. How many of your donors dress or act this way..... Very likely....None.This is a complete distraction that does absolutely nothing to encourage reading. I encourage you to rethink how this improves the lives of your patrons.

Comment: It is deplorable that you would subject you get children to something like Drag Queens reading stories. This is a concept they can't understand and yet you want to put it in there minds that this is ok. It is not ok. I am so disappointed in the WPL. First a brand new, very expensive library, and now a program using tax payer dollars that is offensive and downright ridiculous. What purpose did this program serve? All programs should have a goal or target in mind. You cannot even begin to claim that this one had any purpose other than confusing children about gender issues. I am so sad, especially for the children involved.
Submitted: 9/26/2018 9:10 PM

How disappointing it was to see that our Wichita Public Library felt it had to include a "Drag Queen Story Hour". Although this event was supposedly targeted for adults, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" is definitely aimed towards children. What possible benefit could there be for children to listen to a story read by an adult male dressed in drag? The point of the "Drag Queen Story Hour" seems to be to create confusion in the minds of children and not to enhance literature or a love of reading. I am a frequent user of the library and appreciate the many fine programs and services that it provides. This program, however, was concerning and sadly disappointing . Submitted: 9/27/2018 3:34 PM

Subject: Transgender Children's Program

Date: Thu, 27 Sep 2018 22:19:00 -0500

We support and utilize resources at the library and believe impressionable children should not be taught that it is normal to partake of the transgender lifestyle. Please do not have these programs in the future.

Comment: I say NO TO ALLOWING DRAG QUEENS TO READ TO KIDS WHY ARE YOU ALLOWING THIS ITS SICK AND NOT RIGHT.

Submitted: 9/29/2018 12:00 AM
