



# Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens

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Edited by Linda B. Alexander and Nahyun Kwon  
for the Young Adult Library Services Association



<http://www.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=2495>



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# Introduction



The face of our nation is continually shifting.

We live in a society that is perpetually becoming more culturally diverse. As librarians and information specialists, it is imperative that we provide materials for furthering knowledge about various cultures that coexist in our society; furthermore, it is essential that we who disseminate information promote diversity for future generations. Healthy youth development involves the provision of a scholastic environment that supports and advances the social, emotional, spiritual, physical, moral, and cognitive development of our youth.<sup>1</sup> As librarians and educators, we are in a position to effectively provide such an environment. Therefore, we need to rise to the occasion and welcome multicultural awareness by becoming more familiar with the multifaceted character of our society. We should respect other cultures and motivate interest in their unique mores and behaviors. *Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* is a survey that can help librarians and media specialists pave the way to greater awareness and interest in the differing cultures, by introducing students to each culture's background, religion, beliefs, ethics, manners, cuisine, and traditions.

Although this book presents an introduction to the inclusion of multiculturalism, it should be noted that student exposure to diversity must be ongoing. School curriculum and public library youth services should begin to consider how they will integrate multicultural education as a long-term project and goal. Research has shown that most schools do indeed set aside special days for cultural events, but not many have ongoing programs promoting multicultural awareness.<sup>2</sup> *Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* is geared to help readers begin the integration process; rather than simply using this source for one event, it is our hope that people use it multiple times for all the cultures inclusively, and continue to incorporate more and more diversity education.

## Teaching Multiculturalism through Literature

Schwallie-Giddis, et al., point out that linguistically and culturally diverse students are continually challenged by problems derived from racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious discrimination, as well as stereotyping; these dilemmas, in the end, lead to the students disengaging from their schools, and sometimes result in drop outs.<sup>3</sup> Thus, teaching about multicultural diversity via literature will be effective for minority youth to develop positive identities of their own, as they live and thrive in this melting pot called America.

Multicultural material is not just for minority children and young adults. Wham, Barnhart, and Cook questioned whether reading multicultural material to white children would affect their beliefs about different cultures.<sup>4</sup> Their results suggest that, without exposure to multicultural material, children's feelings regarding other cultures can become more negative and perhaps more fixed. That finding is frightening. In a society where our culture is becoming more multifaceted, it is imperative that "mainstream" educators and librarians, as well as our youth, be armed with multicultural-mindedness. In short, having access to multicultural materials and programs will guide youth of all backgrounds, and, in the end, help them become more aware and accepting of other cultures.

As librarians and educators, we understand the importance and role of books in teaching youth about different cultures. There are countless teens and tweens whose lives have been enriched by reading the works of Laurence Yep, Ashley Bryan, and Julia Alvarez, to name only a few. So the programs presented in *Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* not only offer awareness through the programs themselves and all of the activities involved, but also give young participants an introduction to the literature. This way, the

learning process need not end when the program is over. Students can simply pick up a book and continue to learn.

## **Designed for Tweens and Teens of All Backgrounds**

*Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* covers various cultural groups with several programs devoted to each group. Each program surveys a specific culture as well as guidelines and ideas formatted for public libraries and school media centers. These programs are designed with youth from those specific cultures in mind, so that they may learn a little bit more about themselves or even bask in the joy of getting the chance to share their heritage with others. For those who would be experiencing the culture for the first time, or have some slight knowledge already, these inclusion programs are built to introduce the culture and also give youth (and sometimes their families) an opportunity to partake in multicultural awareness. Being introduced to new cultures may even spark interest in their own culture. Youth may begin to see how different cultures sometimes do things differently and wonder how it applies to their own.

Additionally, and perhaps most significantly, it is important to instill diversity in the minds of our youth. Being—or not being—from a specific culture may sometimes be a source of discomfort for youth trying to assert themselves and make their way through school and life; these events give educators and librarians the chance to familiarize students with aspects that may seem alien.

## **Community Integration: Get Them into Libraries**

The public library and school media center's role must be multifaceted in order to meet the needs of the multicultural community. By introducing multicultural materials to youth, we may begin to motivate them to take an interest in their local library or media center. Through these inclusion programs, teachers, librarians, and media specialists will be given the chance to display a part of their collection, in turn sparking interest. Additionally, by housing the inclusion programs in the library or media center, students will be given the opportunity to better familiarize themselves with the center. Because to many, the library may seem an intimidating place, this is an opportunity to reinforce the image of the library as a community center and an important resource for information. Therefore in the case of public libraries, these events should be open to the general public, giving potential patrons the opportunity to experience their neighborhood libraries.

Moreover, by holding such events as these, libraries and media centers will be allowed the chance to present themselves as community centers and outreach providers, where gaining knowledge can be enjoyable.

However, it does not just take a larger multicultural collection or more multicultural children's programs. Rather it requires the cooperation of teachers, librarians, and parents to make multiculturalism an integral part of the school's curriculum and the public library's services. Programs may be just the beginning in terms of expanding teens' and tweens' perceptions of other cultures, but they are a good start. Public libraries and school media centers can also work with local organizations to help broaden the library's patron base and bring multiculturalism to the forefront.

### **Our Youth Can Become Lifelong Library Users**

Because many of these inclusion programs involve browsing library materials as well as interaction with electronic sources via library computers, youth can begin to better understand the nature of the library's more traditional functions. By learning how to use the library, youth can then naturally continue to be library users into adulthood. Starting with young patrons, who as they grow up may begin to integrate the idea of library use for information-seeking and pleasure reading into their lives, will simultaneously help them feel a part of their society. As adults, they can continue to use libraries for information-seeking and pleasure reading, as well as for community socialization. The promotion of information literacy will aid and empower youth; they will eventually be better able to find, evaluate, and use information not only for school projects and their future academic goals, but also within all aspects of their lives.<sup>5</sup>

### **How to Use This Book**

In the spirit of scholarship and multicultural community, *Multicultural Programs for Tweens and Teens* is a compilation of library and information science graduate student inclusion and awareness project assignments. The contributors have developed the programs based upon the objectives and requirements of a graduate course in "Multicultural Materials for Young Adults and Children" for prospective librarians and school media specialists, developed by one of the authors. Borrowed from the cultures introduced within the course, the inclusion and awareness programs in this book are the finished product of students' own particular interest in a particular culture studied.

Included in each program is a list of easy-to-reference points that will enable users to either simply find some ideas or fully create an event. Each program is then divided by specific headings providing details about the event created. “Age Level” and “Duration of Library Program” are the first two headings, allowing users to quickly browse through the source in search of what is most applicable to their group and time frame. Subsequently, “Introduction and Background” to the program gives educators, librarians, and media specialists the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the history and culture of the tradition or event. A brief section on “Overall Goal” is also provided to help program leaders understand the motivation behind the inclusion program; this way, with a goal in mind, the readers may then taper or add to the program while still working toward the same ideologies. “Relevance to the Community Served” is followed by details of the “Activities” and “Preparation,” a more in-depth description of what the program entails: what type of activities the event will comprise, how to prepare for such an event, and what the procedures are in the planning and execution of the program. “Cost and Materials” informs of an approximate cost estimated to prepare the program. In addition to the local Friends of the Library group and the library “kitty,” a list of resources the library or media center may draw on is often provided to lend a helping hand.

Although each program includes an approximate cost, these estimates simply give professionals an idea of what the maximum cost could be. However, many libraries and media centers will be able to conduct these events at very little or no cost at all. Through the local institutions themselves, parent financial contributions and active participation, and local community foundations, these programs can be easily planned. Below are just a few examples of foundations existing to help with expenses:

**Bring Me A Book Foundation, [www.bringmeabook.org](http://www.bringmeabook.org).**

Bring Me A Book (BMAB), an award-winning literacy 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is committed to ensuring that all children are exposed to high-quality children’s literature during the first years of their lives. BMAB provides libraries with quality hard-cover children’s books and read-aloud training to more than 400,000 children, parents, and teachers at more than 1,010 sites.

**Council on Foundations, [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org).**

The Council on Foundations’ mission is to provide

the opportunity, leadership, and tools needed by philanthropic organizations to expand, enhance, and sustain their ability to advance the common good. The council's members include more than two thousand grant-making foundations and giving programs worldwide.

**First Book, <http://register.firstbook.org>.**

First Book is a nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. They provide an ongoing supply of new books to children participating in community-based mentoring, tutoring, and family literacy programs.

**Association for Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, [www.ala.org/altaff](http://www.ala.org/altaff).**

The Association for Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF, formerly ALTA and Friends of Libraries USA) provides resources, services, and networking opportunities for Friends, trustees, and foundations across the country to increase and enhance their efforts on behalf of libraries of all types.

Each program includes a bibliography of the materials consulted. These bibliographies not only function to help librarians, media specialists, and educators with the collection development of their event, but can be used as a simple reference tool: some may have students already interested in a specific culture, so in that event, all one needs to do is flip to the specific chapter and browse through the titles. Finally, "Additional Materials" may include ready-to-customize language for fliers, handouts, and other materials necessary to the program.

Now, are you ready to begin your exciting journey of exploring various aspects of other fascinating cultures?

## Notes

1. Patrick Jones, "Connecting Young Adults and Libraries in the 21st Century," *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services* 20, no. 2 (2007): 48–54.

2. Pat Schwallie-Giddis, Kristina Anstrom, Patricio Sánchez, Victoria Sardi, and Laura Granato, "Counseling the Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Student: Meeting School Counselors' Professional Development Needs," *Professional School Counseling* 8, no. 1 (2004): 15–23.
3. Ibid.
4. Mary A. Wham, June Barnhart, and Greg Cook, "Enhancing Multicultural Awareness through the Storybook Reading Experience," *Journal of Research and Development in Education* 30, no. 1 (1996): 1–9.
5. Jones, "Connecting Young Adults and Libraries."

# A Road to India

*By Linda Alexander and Nahyun Kwon*



## **Age Level**

14–18 years

## **Duration of Library Program**

3 hours for each event

## **Introduction and Background**

Watching movies is a favorite pastime of the Indian people. The program on India will consist of watching popular Indian movies on Friday nights. Watching movies is a great way to experience the culture and life of Indians and Indian Americans. The entertainment and educational program can be held as part of the library's wider Asian Pacific Heritage Month in May.

## Overall Goal

This event will encourage teens to enjoy movies in the library's teen space and will aid comprehension about the ways that young people of Indian origin live.

## Relevance to the Community Served

Young adults tend to know very little about actual Indian history, tradition, customs, family and social life, and pop culture. This program of movies and books will serve to broaden the teen's understanding of the culture.

## Activities

The librarian will have pulled popular titles for a display on books on the theme of the Indian culture. (Suggested books for a display can be found in the bibliography.) Teen volunteers from your teen advisory group (TAG) can arrive fifteen to twenty minutes early to prepare microwave popcorn and distribute pizza and soda for all attendants. They can be in charge of getting the movie started.

When the movie is over, the teen librarian or the TAG can lead discussion about the movie. The librarian can distribute the handout of book titles, and participants may check out books as they leave.

## Preparation

The event will be advertised primarily through word-of-mouth by the librarians either at the library or while doing outreach to the local schools. Also, a flier will be created by the programming coordinator to be distributed to patrons within the library, posted on the library's website, and mailed out with event packages to the schools.

A member of the TAG will have volunteered to read and prepare a movie talk for this Friday night event. A movie will be chosen from the list. (See the bibliography.) Microwave popcorn, soda, and pizza can be purchased in advance.

## Cost and Materials

Approximate cost: \$30 for twenty participants

- Fliers to advertise event
- Movie
- Handouts showing book titles
- Food: popcorn, soda, pizza

## Bibliography

### Books

- Aikath-Gyaltsen, Indrani.** *Daughters of the House*. New York: Random House, 1994.  
A complicated story of passion and betrayal among a family of women in rural India.
- Bosse, Malcolm J.** *Tusk and Stone*. Arden, NC: Front Street, 1995.  
Set in India in the seventh century, this is the story of Arjun, a young Brahman who is sold into slavery, becomes a soldier, and finally discovers his true talents as a sculptor.
- Desai Hidier, Tanuja.** *Born Confused*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2002.  
A coming-of-age story about Dimple, who is torn between her Indian heritage and her life in America, not seeming to fit into either.
- Divakaruni, Chitra Banarjee.** *Mistress of Spices*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.  
Novel about Tilo's choice of a life of special powers in spices over an ordinary life in India.
- Divakaruni, Chitra Banarjee.** *Neela, Victory Song*. Girls of Many Lands/American Girls series. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Company, 2002.  
Novel about a twelve-year-old Indian girl in 1939 during India's struggle for freedom against British rule.
- Galbraith, Catherine Atwater, and Rama Mehta.** *India, Now and Through Time*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980.  
Overview of India's history, culture, land, and people.
- Kipling, Rudyard.** *The Jungle Book*. New York: Puffin Classics, 2006.  
Mowgli grows up in the jungles of India with help from the animals, but has not yet faced the ferocious Bengal tiger.
- Lahiri, Jhumpa.** *The Namesake*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.  
The multigenerational story of a family with roots in the east and a life in the west. Well-drawn characters provide insight into the challenges of the immigrant experience, while celebrating the diversity of the sometimes conflicting cultures.
- McDaniel, Jan.** *Indian Immigration*. The Changing Face of North America series. Philadelphia: Mason Crest, 2004.  
Overview of immigration from India to the United States and Canada since the 1960s.
- Murari, Timeri.** *Field of Honor: A Novel*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.  
The story of an American boxer who is stranded in Bangalore, where he lives with the Anglo-Indian community.
- Rana, Indi.** *The Roller Birds of Rampur*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993.  
The story of a teenager raised in England who returns to India to discover her roots.

**Sheth, Kashmira.** *Blue Jasmine*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004.

Fictional tale of twelve-year-old Jasmine, who leaves her native India with her family to settle in Iowa City.

**Sundaresan, Indu.** *The Twentieth Wife: A Novel*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2003.

Fictionalized account of the life of Mehrunnisa, a sixteenth-century empress of India whose love helped shape the course of the Mughal empire in the seventeenth century.

**Whelan, Gloria.** *Homeless Bird*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000.

Bound to a forced marriage, then widowed while still young, Koly sets out to create a life for herself in a strange city.

**Yapp, Malcolm.** *Gandhi*. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 1980.

Overview of historical events of India, Gandhi's life history and his beliefs and values.

**Yolen, Jane.** *Children of the Wolf*. New York: Puffin Books, 1993.

In 1920 in India two children who have been raised by wolves are discovered and brought to an orphanage to be taught human behavior again.

## Movies

***Bend It Like Beckham*. 2003.** With Gurinder Chadha, Deepak Nayar, Guljit Bindra, Paul Mayeda Berges, Parminder Nagra, Keira Knightley, Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, et al.

Jessmindar dreams of becoming a professional football player in England, her idol being David Beckham. But her Punjabi parents push her toward academics so she will end up being financially successful. Who will win the struggle?

***Mississippi Masala*. 2003.** With Michael Nozik, Mira Nair, Sooni Taraporevala, Denzel Washington, Sarita Choudhury, Roshan Seth, Sharmila Tagore, et al.

Romance turns to turmoil when an Indian daughter, who is the maid at her family's motel in Greenwood, Mississippi, falls for a local African American carpet cleaner (Denzel Washington). The two families cannot accept this. Very comical.

***Monsoon Wedding*. 2002.** With Mira Nair, Caroline Baron, Sabrina Dhawan, Naseeruddin Shah, Lillete Dubey, Shefali Shetty, Vijay Raaz, Tilotama Shome, Vasundhara Das, and Kulbhushan Kharbanda.

Aditi does not want to marry the man she hardly knows, but her father has arranged a traditional Punjabi wedding in Delhi. All the relatives will attend; there are many comical romantic problems in the four days covered in the movie.

*Slumdog Millionaire*. 2008. With Christian Colson, Simon Beaufoy, Loveleen Tandan, Danny Boyle, Dev Patel, Anil Kapoor, Saurabh Shukla, et al. Winner of eight Academy Awards, this movie portrays an eighteen-year-old Indian slum kid who plays on the Indian version of the TV show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* He has the chance to win millions of rupees, but there are questions about his honesty. Did he cheat?

## Webliography

Festivals in India. [www.festivalsinindia.net](http://www.festivalsinindia.net).

The Library of Congress. "A Country Study India." <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/intoc.html>.

# **Puerto Rican Heritage Program for *Día de la Abolición de Esclavitud* (Day of the Abolition of Slavery, March 22)**

*By Ryan P. Gray*



## **Age Level**

12–18 years

## **Duration of Library Program**

1 day

## **Introduction and Background**

This inclusion program can be understood through its cross-curricular objectives:

**Geography:** Students will study the location of Puerto Rico, its topography, climate, and its latitude and longitude. Students will also study the wildlife of Puerto Rico.

**Language arts:** Earlier in the week, students will read a section from the book *Growing Up Puerto Rican*. Class discussion will include comparisons between the experience they read about and their own life experience growing

up. During the fiesta, Puerto Rican poetry will be read in both Spanish and English by the high school or middle school Spanish classes.

**Social studies:** This event will be integrated into the high school or middle school social studies classroom. Topics discussed in social studies will include the relationship between the government of Puerto Rico and the United States government. The concept of “citizen” will be discussed, including why residents of Puerto Rico are citizens of the United States, even though they have no voting representative or senator in congress and cannot vote for president.

**History:** Because March 22 is the day that slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico, the history of the slave trade in Puerto Rico and in the Americas more generally will be covered. Other topics of Puerto Rican history will also be discussed.

**Art:** The high school or middle school art class will be able to integrate this event into lesson plans, and at the same time help keep down the overall cost of the event by having students draw or paint images from Puerto Rico or draw Puerto Rican-style art. These finished works of art can help decorate the school media center, school hallways, and other involved parts of the school.

**Music:** The choir and the band will learn to perform traditional Puerto Rican music in weeks leading up to this event.

**Science:** The science class will study the climate and weather patterns of Puerto Rico and the area of the Caribbean in which it is situated. Special emphasis will be placed on the impact the wind patterns have on the prevalence of hurricanes in the region. The flora and fauna of the island will also be studied.

## **Overall Goal**

The overall goal of this program is to educate the target audience about the culture of the people of Puerto Rico and the people of Puerto Rican heritage elsewhere in the United States. An effort will be made to cover the roots of Puerto Rican culture, including Taíno, Spanish, African, and mainland United States and the contributions of this culture to the fabric of American society both within the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States mainland.

## **Relevance to Community Served**

Many Americans do not know about the history of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which the United States acquired as a result of the Spanish Ameri-

can War. This program is relevant to families and children in educating them about the commonwealth, featuring the Day of the Abolition of Slavery, which occurs on March 22 every year.

## Activities

After the cross-curricular activities described above are delivered in the classroom, the media center will throw a Puerto Rican fiesta in celebration of *Día de la Abolición de Esclavitud*. This event will include traditional Puerto Rican music, food, contests, and a reading of Puerto Rican poetry in both Spanish and English by members of the high school Spanish class. The TAG will select music, poetry, and prizes that are to be used for the event.

Music sung by Grammy Award winner and Puerto Rican Ricky Martin (such as “Living La Vida Loca”) will play in the background during the event. Students will read poems by one of the leading twentieth-century poets, Evaristo Ribera Chevremont.

Parents will be asked to donate finger foods, such as *surullitos* (sweet plump cornmeal fingers) and *empanadillas* (crescent-shaped turnovers filled with various ingredients).

For contests, library staff will come up with written questions and answers about Puerto Rico and its history, which may have been covered in the previous curricular activities. Depending on the number of participants, there may be two large teams or four to six teams that can play tournament games, and the winning team will receive prizes. Use numbers drawn at the door to designate teams as students arrive.

## Preparation

In advance of the event, consultation and coordination will be made with teachers and administrators. Instructors whose classes are likely to have a special interest in this event (e.g., Spanish and art) will be consulted on specific aspects that are in their areas of expertise.

Flyers will be created announcing the fiesta and the research contest.

The school library itself will be decorated in a Puerto Rican fiesta theme. Many of these decorations can be produced in-house by high school or middle school art classes. Some decorations, such as colorful streamers, may need to be purchased.

## Cost and Materials

Approximate cost: \$0–\$100

Some books may need to be purchased in preparation for this event, but once this event is over, these materials will become part of the general collection. The cost of these books can therefore be absorbed by the general media center book budget.

Much of the cost of food will be absorbed by participating parents, who will bring in traditional Puerto Rican foods. The remaining costs mostly involve decorations, party favors, and prizes for the contest.

## Bibliography

**Cofer, Judith Ortiz.** *The Meaning of Consuelo*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003.

A young girl tells her tragic story of coming of age in 1950s Puerto Rico. Consuelo struggles to understand her place in the world as her father embraces each technological advance and the promise of wealth it offers, her mother reaches for the past and the natural beauty of the island, her closest friend and cousin begins to reveal his homosexuality, and her younger sister slips quietly into madness.

**De Jesús, Joy, ed.** *Growing Up Puerto Rican: An Anthology*. New York: William Morrow, 1997.

A fine ethnic anthology of Puerto Ricans, published in the same series as *Growing Up Asian American* (1993) and *Growing Up Native American* (1993). A series of short stories, memoirs, and essays present rich and various aspects of Puerto Rican childhood and young adulthood, both in the United States and on the island. Contributing authors include both established and new authors. This book gives an insider's look at what it is like to be a Puerto Rican.

**Chevremont, Evaristo Ribera.** *Antología Poética, 1924–1950*. San Juan: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1957.

One of the leading twentieth-century poets who wrote about both urban and rural life. This poetry collection includes his poems composed between 1924 and 1950.

**Santiago, Esmeralda.** *Almost a Woman*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1998.

This book is a sequel to author and actress Esmeralda Santiago's childhood story, *When I Was a Puerto Rican*. It is an inspiring tale that recalls her life journey as an adolescent and young Puerto Rican woman living Brooklyn, New York, with her mother and ten siblings during the 1960s. This book provides a unique window into a Puerto Rican immigrant family that suffered through periods of poverty while exploring the new culture and opportunities available to them.

## Webliography

**Gonzalez-Espada, Wilson J., and Oliver, J. Steve.** “Making Puerto Rican High School Physics Contextual and Culturally Relevant: A Statistical Analysis of Influencing Factors.” [www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/1a/1e/ee.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1a/1e/ee.pdf).

This resource provides a great deal of information about Puerto Rican culture from the perspective of an educator. This information can be used to assist non-Puerto Rican teachers in helping non-Puerto Rican students better understand Puerto Rican society.

**Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.** “Puerto Rico . . . Its Land, History, Culture, and Literature.” [www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1987/1/87.01.04.x.html](http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1987/1/87.01.04.x.html).

This is an excellent resource for teachers to find quality lesson plans for teaching about Puerto Rico.

**Welcome to Puerto Rico.** <http://welcome.topuertorico.org/index.shtml>.

This is a great web resource presenting everything about Puerto Rico, including people, geography, history, economy, government, culture, and recipes.

# Multicultural Readers Program

By Eleonora Fieitas



## Age Level

12–13 years

## Duration of Library Program

3 months

## Introduction and Background

The goal of the program is to promote reading as well as awareness of other cultures in students ages 12 through 13.

*Chosen cultures:* The program will contain books on African American, Japanese, Native American, Dominican Republican, Hispanic, Jewish, Muslim, Chinese, and Korean cultures. Since the goal of the program is to increase multicultural appreciation, a variety of cultures are included. The program will incorporate literature, traditional costumes, and traditional food from these cultures.

## Overall Goal

The Multicultural Readers program will foster an appreciation of different cultures.

The program will promote students' reading of multicultural literature. Circulation of multicultural materials will increase as a result. Students will also become more familiar with the various cultures presented in the program.

## Relevance to the Community Served

This reading program is relevant for students in the sixth through seventh grades who should broaden their scope and understanding of different cultures in their comprehension of the world in which they live. Through the exposure to a variety of multicultural readings, the participants will gain a better understanding of the world and people around them.

## Activities

Students and teachers will check out books from the list of titles included in the program. Teachers will fill out Certificate of Reading forms for their students or class to indicate which books each student has read. Students will bring these forms to the media center, where the titles read will be checked off on a bulletin board displaying classes and/or students. Each time a student or class reads three books, a small treat such as a pencil, eraser, bookmark, no-homework coupon, or pizza coupon will be given.

Once a student has read all nine books, he will be invited to attend the Voting Party. At the Voting Party, students will be able to vote on their favorite book of the program. Students will also taste foods and dress in costumes from the different cultures portrayed in the program. The winning title will be showcased in the media center and awarded the school Multicultural Book of the Year Award.

## Preparation

Prior to starting the program, there are several tasks that must be completed. First, the media specialist must secure approval to conduct the program from the administration. Next, copies of the titles introduced in the program will be ordered. (Refer to the bibliography for the list of titles.)

Create photocopies of the informational fliers. The media specialist may also request to speak at a faculty meeting to pass out the fliers to teachers and discuss the program with them.

Student informational fliers must be photocopied and distributed. Student treats should be prepared or purchased.

Make copies of the Certificate of Reading forms to distribute to teachers.

Once these steps have been completed, display the titles on a bookshelf by the entrance of the media center to encourage participation. Set up a bulletin board with student treats and Classroom Reading Logs that will showcase students who are participating in the program.

Make arrangements for the multicultural food for the Voting Party with the Parent Teacher Association.

Make copies of the reminder flier, the invitations, and the ballots at the beginning of February.

Fliers will be sent out two weeks prior to the completion of the program to encourage students to finish reading all nine books. Invitations will be sent out to those students who read all nine titles.

## Cost and Materials

Approximate cost: \$0–\$300

- Books (at least thirty copies of each) if library does not already own them. If more copies are needed, these can be purchased with library budget monies or via a small grant (such as Tolerance.org via Southern Poverty Law Center), or from Friends of the Library donations. Costs for the purchase of all books would be estimated at approximately \$2,700. Later, these books can be developed into kits that can be circulated among teachers for their classes.
- Pencils, erasers, bookmarks, and other treats. Also, creation or purchase of no-homework coupons, pizza coupons, etc.

Local restaurants, office supply stores, and the Parent Teacher Association may make donations to assist with funding. Also, school book fair profits may also be used as a source of funding. In addition, on the informational flier sent home with students, there may be a request for parents to make donations of books for the program.

## Bibliography

Alvarez, Julia. *Before We Were Free*. New York: Knopf, 2002.

Author Julia Alvarez tells a story about the adolescence, perseverance, and struggle of Anita de la Torre, a twelve-year-old girl who fled the Dominican Republic with her family for freedom.

**Anaya, Rudolfo A.** *Bless Me, Ultima*. New York: Warner Books, 1994.

This story of a young boy is set in New Mexico in the 1940s. When the visitor Ultima, a *curandera* (a traditional folk healer who cures people with herbs and magic) comes into his life, Antonio's eyes are gradually opened to his bonds with his culture and stories of the past.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul.** *Elijah of Buxton*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2007.

The story of a boy who happened to be the first child born free in a town called Buxton, Canada, a settlement of runaway slaves near the American border, in 1859. Despite his symbolic image, he is a fragile and talkative young boy. Everything changes when a former slave steals money from Elijah's friend and Elijah's dangerous journey begins. He becomes a hero by using his wits and skills and brings justice back to the town.

**Hudson, Jan.** *Sweetgrass*. New York: Philomel Books, 1989.

This historical novel vividly illustrates the culture of the Dakota Indians in the 1830s. Living on the western Canadian prairie, Sweetgrass, a fifteen-year-old Blackfoot Indian girl, wants to marry a young warrior, Eagle-Sun, but her father thinks she is too young. Then, after she saves her family from many difficulties, including natural disasters, a smallpox epidemic, and conflicts with white settlers, Sweetgrass convinces her father of her maturity.

**Kadohata, Cynthia.** *Kira-kira*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Chronicles a friendship between Katie and Lynn, two Japanese American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Lynn teaches her younger sister a special way of seeing the world and the hope for the brighter future. As despair falls upon the family when Lynn becomes fatally ill, Katie reminds them all that there is always something glittering in the future.

**Kent, Rose.** *Kimchi and Calamari*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

This story tells eighth-grader Joseph's self-discoveries about race and family after his social studies teacher assigns an essay on cultural heritage and tracing the past. Joseph was born in Korea, but was adopted by an Italian American family when he was a baby. When Joseph must write an essay on his heritage, he struggles with his desire to locate his birth mother, his concern for his hard-working adoptive parents, and his own need to find himself and his identity.

**Laird, Elizabeth.** *Kiss the Dust*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1992.

A refugee story told through the eyes of a thirteen-year-old Iraqi girl. As the Iraqi secret police look for her father for his involvement with the Kurdish resistance movement, Tara Hawrami and her family leave their home to live in a brutal refugee camp.

**Lowry, Lois.** *Number the Stars*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

This Newbery Medal Book tells a story of a ten-year-old Danish girl and how her bravery and courage are tested when she helps her Jewish best friend, who is threatened by Nazis in Copenhagen in 1943.

**Yep, Laurence.** *Dragonwings*. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

In the early twentieth century, Moon Shadow, an eight-year-old Chinese boy, sails to San Francisco from China to join his father, Windrider, who makes his living doing laundry. Father, with the help of his son, is willing to endure the mockery of the other Chinese and makes his dream come true. Moon Shadow's love and respect for his father grow, and finally he helps his father realize his dream of making a flying machine.

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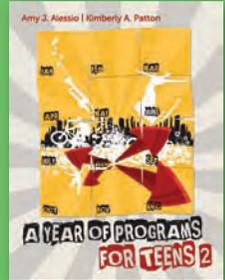
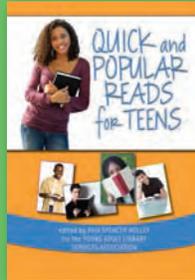
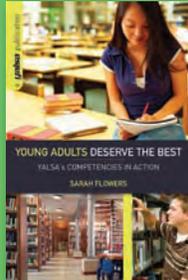
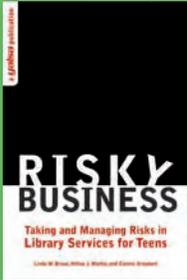
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**M**ulticultural Programs for Tweens and Teens is a one-stop resource that encourages children and young adults to explore different cultures. Dozens of flexible programming ideas allow you to

- Choose a program specific to your scheduling, budget, or age group requirements
- Create an event that reflects a specific culture
- Recommend further resources
- And much more

Following the practical programs laid out here, young adult librarians in public libraries, school librarians, and adult and young adult services staff can easily explore many diverse cultures.

### You may also be interested in



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