

Peel libraries partner to offer Pride Book Club

Virtual book club meets once per month

By Zachary Roman

The Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga Public Libraries have teamed up to host a virtual Pride Book Club each month.

The club welcomes 2 Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (2SLGBTQ+) readers and allies to talk about books that spark meaningful conversations.

Natalie Spaan, Youth Services Coordinator at the Caledon Public Library (CPL), said the CPL started its own Pride Book Club in 2019, but then the pandemic hit.

Then, a few months ago, the Brampton Public Library reached out about starting their own Pride Book Club, so the two libraries decided to partner with the Mississauga library to create the club that runs online now.

“Some people in the community actually prefer doing it virtually because maybe they're not out to their family or friends,” said Spaan. “This way they're able to just attend in their home and feel comfortable.”

Registration for the book club conversations each month is done on the online platform Eventbrite. Information about upcoming book discussions, and registration links, are available online at caledon.library.on.ca/pride.

Spaan explained since registration is online, even people from outside of Peel Region have been joining the book club. She said some people from the United States have attended, as in some states there there's been pushes to remove 2SLGBTQ+ books from libraries and those books are now hard for those people to access.

It is important for the library to be a community space where everyone feels welcome, said Spaan, and that's one of the reasons why she said the Pride Book Club is so important.

“We welcome everyone and offer a comfortable space for people to come together and celebrate the great LGBTQ books there are? just offer that safe space for discussion,” said Spaan.

Response to the book club has been great, said Spaan, as the libraries have received emails after the book club discussions thanking the library for hosting them. There are some regulars who attend the book club, and new people that come each time too.

Two librarians from each of the Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga libraries got together to make a giant list of possible books for the Pride Book Club to read, then narrowed them down.

People who attend the book club can also recommend books for the club to read.

The next running of the Pride Book Club is July 14, when Carmen Maria Machado's memoir *In the Dream House* will be discussed.

The discussion will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and registration is already open for it. Copies of the book can be taken out from the Caledon Public Library.