

YWCA of Alton to Host Diverstory Times - Reading for Equity

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ALTON - YWCA of Alton is a recipient of a Healing Illinois grant from the Illinois DHS. YWCA recognizes the community need for dialogue & education about racism and has developed several programs to generate deeper healing & transformative interactions among races. Children often learn prejudice and racism from the grownups in their life. Even well intended adults can pass along bias by not having deliberate conversations about diversity and race. Diverstory: Reading for Equity is a program designed to empower families so they feel better prepared to talk about race and racism with children.

Diverstory is a series of three virtual live sessions where children and their grownups come together to listen to a children's story about diversity and engage in guided conversations about diversity, inclusion, and race. Each session will include an interactive learning activity where families practice race-conscious conversations and ask questions of facilitators in a safe, respectful space. Diverstory aims to equip children and adults with the resources and support they need to join in the work of bringing change and equity to our community. The books read and materials needed for each activity will be delivered to all participating families prior to the event.

The first Diverstory virtual session addresses the question, "Who are we?" and will take place on Zoom on Saturday December 12, 2020 at 10:00 am. Becky Cowart and Georgia Bratton will be leading the session which includes the reading of two books: *Shades of People* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila Kelly, and *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler. Two additional Diverstory Times are planned for January 16 and January 30, 2021 at 10:00 am.

Becky Cowart, YWCA Racial Justice Committee member, created the concept of Diverstory-Reading for Equity. Becky has a BA in Sociology and Anthropology, a Graduate degree in Early Childhood Education, and multiple years teaching experience. She is committed to advocating for the respect and appreciation of contributions made by black, brown, indigenous, and people of color and is a member of the YWCA Racial Justice Committee. Georgia Bratton, former YWCA of Alton Board Member and YWCA Woman of Distinction, regularly volunteers in the Alton School District ROAR program at Eunice Smith School, and loves reading to children. Georgia will be co-facilitating the first Diverstory on December 12 with Becky Cowart.

YWCA Diverstory facilitators look forward to connecting with local families through Diverstory: Reading for Equity. To register for this free event, go to <https://cutt.ly/yhx2lWy>. For more information, please contact YWCA at 618.465.7774 or email info@altonywca.com.

Established in 1918, YWCA of Alton tailors programs to meet the unique needs of our communities, as aligned with three key national platforms: racial justice and civil rights, empowerment and economic advancement of women and girls, and health and safety of women and girls.

YWCA of Alton is proudly sponsored by Alton Memorial Hospital, Meridian-Centene Health Care, Morrissey Contracting Company, Inc., and Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery.