

## NEWS RELEASE

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### GRANT-FUNDED GREAT STORIES BOOK CLUB KICKS OFF AT TURLINGTON WOODS SCHOOL

SUFFOLK, VA (October 10, 2018) Suffolk Public Library has been selected as one of 100 libraries nationwide to take part in the Great Stories Club, a reading and discussion program for underserved teens. This competitive grant is offered by the American Library Association (ALA) with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Staff from Suffolk Public Library will work with teens at Turlington Woods School to read and discuss stories that explore the concept of empathy.

“I’m excited for this project and the opportunity for partnering with the Turlington Woods School in building stronger relationships with underserved youth,” says Asa L. Heyward, Teen Services Senior Librarian at Suffolk Public Library. “We chose the Empathy Theme for the Great Stories Book Club because the books and discussions allows students to explore conflicts through a variety of perspectives.”

The first session at Turlington Woods School will kick off with high school students October 16, 2018 featuring *Stuck in Neutral* by Terry Trueman, and the next session on October 17<sup>th</sup> will be for middle school students featuring *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely. Sessions will continue throughout the school year

featuring different books relating to the theme. The titles were selected in consultation with humanities scholars and librarians to inspire teens — especially those facing difficult circumstances or challenges — to consider "big questions" about the world around them and their place in it, ultimately affecting how they view themselves as thinkers and creators.

"I'm excited about my students having an opportunity to look at important current issues from multiple perspectives," says Rebecca Davidson, Middle School Teacher at Turlington Woods. "This kind of reading and discussion will hopefully help to heal some of the cultural divide my students experience every day and feel helpless to improve."

As part of the grant, Suffolk Public Library received 11 copies of each of the selected books, which will be gifted to the book club participants. The Library also received resources and training, including travel and accommodations for an orientation workshop in Chicago. The workshops included dialogue facilitation training led by consultants to Everyday Democracy and program modeling led by national project scholars Maria Sachiko Cecire (Bard College) and Anna Mae Duane (University of Connecticut).

"I look forward to the impact and future possibilities this project may bring as we continue to build relationships in the community," says Heyward.

To learn more about the Suffolk Public Library, visit [www.suffolkpubliclibrary.com](http://www.suffolkpubliclibrary.com). Follow the library on Twitter @SufPubLib and check for updates on Facebook at [Facebook.com/SuffolkPublicLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkPublicLibrary).

### **About the American Library Association**

The American Library Association (ALA) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their

communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit [ala.org](http://ala.org).

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