

Homer Pride

Welcoming all Alaskan LGBTQIA+ & allies from the Kenai Peninsula & beyond!

FB: Homer Pride or @pride99603 | IG: @homerpride99603

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Web: <https://www.homerakpride.com/>

Homer Pride formally recognizes we are on unceded Dena'ina and Sugpiaq Lands.



January 16, 2023

City of Homer Public Library

500 Hazel Avenue, Homer AK 99603

RE: LGBTQIA2S+ books in our public library

Director Dave Berry and the Homer Library Advisory Board,

The Homer Pride Committee is writing to acknowledge that LGBTQIA2S+ books in our public library are vital to our youth. Recent actions taken by a group of citizens, filled with bigotry and ignorance, have attempted to remove books representing this crucial outreach in education. Their resistance to diversity, equity, and inclusion is often a lack of clarity or knowledge of what is not understood.

A public library is a crucial resource for the LGBTQIA2S+ folks in our community. We stand behind the library's mission statement, especially highlighting "The Homer Public Library serves the diverse needs of our community members by providing access to information, promoting literacy, and facilitating lifelong learning. We foster education, personal well-being, cultural creativity, community engagement, and economic development." ¹

Banning books harms all people and puts our community in a preventative state of learning and growth. Author George M. Johnson of *All Boys Are Not Blue*² has stated, "Removing books from [libraries] doesn't stop [people] from having those same experiences. It just stops them from being able to know what to do when those experiences happen to them."³

Our youth, meaning anyone from a newborn to a high school senior, can be part of the LGBTQ+ community in a variety of ways, such as growing up with same-gender parents or identifying their own gender or sexuality as queer. Despite the growing amount of popular media with positive LGBTQ+ stories, young people often face challenges when sharing their gender or sexuality with

¹ <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/library-mission-statement>

² <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/44280883-all-boys-aren-t-blue>

³ <https://www.richlandlibrary.com/blog/2022-03-09/why-banning-lgbtq-books-hurts-all-kids#:~:text=Despite%20that%20one%20legal%20victory,those%20experiences%20happen%20to%20them.%E2%80%9D>

people around them. Studies⁴ have shown individuals who identify as “queer”⁵ have a need for adequate resources, people, and places that provide accurate and supportive information in order to make their sexuality-related experiences easier and less painful, both at a personal level and at the level of social acceptance.

“Although many public and academic libraries are engaged in developing their collections, compiling pathfinders and guides, and offering other types of services, LGBTQ users are still vastly underserved and library collections vastly underdeveloped”⁶ Libraries must realize the reality of such marginalizing experiences and have the opportunity to become a more meaningful role in the lives of queer youth and why **we urge the Homer Public Library to continue the circulation of LGBTQIA2S+ books for our community.**

We also want to express to our community members and allies who are affected by these recent events, we hear you, we love you and we stand with you today and always.

Signed,
Homer Pride
Homer Pride Planning Committee
Lora Wilke 99603
Brie Drummond 99603
Mia Barrett 99603
Hal Smith MD, 99603
Susan McLane 99603
Janet Fink 99603
Karen Christopher 99603
Bridget Maryott 99603
Irene Saxton, 99603
Holly Brennan 99603
Anna Wolfson 99603
Susan Mclane

⁴<https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/10356/152619/2/A%20%e2%80%9cqueer%e2%80%9d%20manifesto%20of%20interventions%20for%20libraries%20to%20%e2%80%9ccome%20out%e2%80%9d%20f%20the%20closet%21%20A%20study%20of%20%e2%80%9cqueer%e2%80%9d%20youth%20experiences%20during%20the%20coming%20out%20process.pdf>

⁵ “Queer” is used in this letter to includeLGBTQIA2S+ |stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Two-Spirit. We recognize the word “queer” to be most inclusive to represent sexual minorities since it covers all individuals who do not identify with or are not recognized as part of a heterosexual majority. Following the work of Foucault (1980), this letter follows the contemporary use of the abusive word “queer” by advocate groups as a mark of ownership, empowerment, and appropriation that ironically self-consciously historicizes and marks the repressive character of social discourses surrounding sexuality (Blasius, 2001; Garber, 1995) Quotation marks (“”) are used with the word “queer” in this note interchangeably to recognize the history of abuse, ridicule, discrimination, and violence projected against “queer” people and to point to the need to reexamine the past and to turn the situation around via building a more progressive and accepting cultural environment.

⁶ Greenblatt, G. (2001). Barriers to GLBT library service in the electronic age. Information for Social Change, Number 12. Retrieved July 15, 2005, from <http://www.libr.org/ISC/articles/12-Greenblatt.html>

Sarah 99603
Carrie Oats
Sea Sparrow Counseling & Wellness
Lynn Murphy 99502
Jen Hernaez 99615

Submission information

Form: [Submit Written Testimony for Commission and Board Meetings](#) [1]
Submitted by Visitor (not verified)
Tue, 01/17/2023 - 1:02pm
146.71.68.43

First Name Florence
Last Name Larson
Email putts5646@yahoo.com
Phone Number (907)399/5560
Are You A City or Non-City Resident? City Resident

Which commission/board meeting do you want to attend? Library Advisory Board
What is the type of meeting you want to participate in? Regular Meeting
Date of Meeting you want to participate in? Tue, 01/17
What type of comments will you be giving?
Comments of the Audience - Citizens may comment on any topic.

Written Testimony

Unable to attend tonight's meeting, please convey this message of support for library employees to choose, as they are trained, to respond to the broad needs of this community.
The City allocates jurisdiction for employees to choose books and run the library. If people object to books, they need not check them out. Chaos and distrust do not serve Homer and does not encourage library usage.
This beautiful library is the heart of Homer and hopefully remains for years to come.

Electronic Signature

Florence Larson

I understand that checking this box constitutes a legal signature confirming that I acknowledge and agree that I am the person identified above and that I acknowledge and agree to the above Terms of Acceptance.

Source URL:<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/node/60481/submission/50254>

Links

[1] <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/submit-written-testimony-commission-and-board-meetings>