

NSL Board Statement Rebutting Misinformation

In the past weeks, AL State Representative Susan Dubose and others have been speaking publicly about libraries, and specifically the North Shelby Library. Many of their comments are inaccurate, misleading, and false. The NSL Board would like to address some of that misinformation.

One of the frequent comments states that the “community” came to the NSL June board meeting to request the pride display be removed from the Children’s Department. There were many members of the community at the meeting, but there was no “community” consensus on the display. The sentiments of those present were divided regarding the display. In fact, more people signed up to speak in favor of keeping the display than in favor of removing it.

Of the more than 8,600 people who visited the library in June, only about 1% expressed an opinion about the display. The library received 76 supportive written comments and 39 negative written comments. Additionally, the number of visitors to the library in June 2023 increased by more than 3,000 from the previous year and the Summer Reading Program registration and attendance also increased over the previous year.

Addressing the specific motion and actions taken by the NSL Board in June – Comments by Representative Dubose and others stated that the board would not consider or address requests to remove the display in the Children’s Department. This is false! The Board DID consider the motion made to change library policy. This change would have included the requirement for the Board to review every event (program), display, or exhibit that takes place at the library. The board voted to keep the existing library policies.

Representative Dubose described the NSL Children’s Department display as “huge.” The display was a set of bookshelves in the Children’s Department which were approximately 4’ x 6’ with an 8.5” x 11” sign that said “Take Pride in Reading”. She also stated that every book on the shelves contained transgender subject matter, which is also false!

Other recent public statements that accuse librarians of indoctrinating children are simply untrue and unfounded. A statement made by Representative Dubose on a recent radio interview referred to a library in her district where she said she would be “afraid to ask a librarian to help her child find a book” or let her child run loose. The NSL Board agrees with the last portion of her statement because it would be against the NSL Unattended Child policy to let a child “run loose.” Parents and/or legal guardians are always fully responsible for their minor children/charges and are expected to always comply with Library policies.

Considering the misinformation and erroneous comments detailed here, which are not all inclusive, the Board invites all of you to stop by and visit the Children’s Department and meet our Children’s librarians. We do not think you will find the room or our librarians scary. You won’t experience any staff engaging in any kind of “indoctrination” of children, or anyone else. This same invitation applies to our Mt Laurel branch.

Thank you for your time.