Library Program Policy – updated 8/29/2024

North Shelby Library District programs are events, displays, or exhibits that promote the use of library materials, services, and/or offers the community informational, entertaining, or cultural experiences. Programs are planned for the interest and enlightenment of the residents of our district as well as to increase and diversify the visibility of the library within the community. Programs are intended to serve groups of people, not individuals. The Library strives to offer a variety of programs that reflect the interests of our growing and diverse population and as such, programs will not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program or the views expressed by the participants or speakers.

Library programs shall generally be voluntary, free, and open to the public. However, nominal materials fees may be charged for certain types of Library initiated programs. The Library's philosophy of open access to information extends to programming. The Library does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or any other characteristics protected by local, state, and federal law. However, some library programs may be restricted by age to ensure the content is age-appropriate and appealing to the intended audience. Please refer to standards and content guidelines in Collection Development Policy for assistance in determining age-appropriateness.

Library programs must be non-commercial in nature. Although a professional expert may present a program, the information should always be generic in nature. Library programs must have a special entertainment, informational, or cultural value to the community. Library programs may address religious themes to educate or inform, not to promote or observe a religion. No individual or organization shall use a library-initiated program at the Library to advertise or recruit members or customers. Programs are not used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or for the solicitation of business.

Programs initiated by the Friends of the Library groups are usually designed for library fund-raising and may include an admission fee or be for members only. Programs put on by paying renters of the library meeting rooms are not considered public or library-initiated programs and are not subject to the library programming policy.

Library programs are primarily funded through the Library's budget. Staff members in charge of programming are designated a budget by the Director of Library Services. Additional program funding may come from the Friends of the Library groups, unsolicited donations, or from sponsorships.

Sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by participants. Sponsorship is defined as the Library working with another agency, presenter, or business to provide a program as defined above for Library patrons. Priority sponsorship is given to local government agencies. Agencies, businesses, or organizations that participate in sponsoring a program receive acknowledgement on the library website, in local publications, and on social media. Staff members in charge of programming reserve the right to accept or deny potential program collaborations based on the needs of the Library.

Program presenters are chosen for their expertise and performance experience. While due diligence is practiced when booking programs, the Library and its employees will not be liable for the content of any program presented by a third party. Professional performers or presenters will be permitted to sell their creative products (CDs, books, etc.) following the completion of their program.

Timely and adequate public announcement shall be made of all programs. Organizations or individuals partnering with the Library must coordinate marketing efforts with the Library. Press releases, public notifications, and marketing publicities must be approved by the staff member in charge of the program.

Registration may be required for planning purposes and when space is limited. When registration is required it must by handled by the library unless other arrangements are made with the staff members in charge of programming. Program participants' personal information is confidential and will not be shared with program presenters who are not library staff members.

Program evaluation forms may be distributed to the participants of select programs so that staff may know what has been successful and receive ideas for new programs from patrons. Recurring programs such as storytimes, book discussions, and regularly scheduled programs with repeat attendees may receive a program evaluation annually.

The Library will endeavor to offer an equitable number of programs throughout the community for a variety of demographics and interests. However, factors such as staffing levels, program space, budget concerns, and other demands upon the staff will influence the number and types of programs able to be offered. Library staff who present programs do so as part of their regular job and are not hired as outside contractors for programming.

Library programs may be held online and require participants to download software to their personal computer or device. The library is not responsible for loss of data or damage to the participant's personal equipment that may result from use of this software. Library staff will make every effort to prevent disruptive intrusions; however, the Library is not responsible for actions of others which are outside of its control.

Library programs are recorded only with the permission of the presenters. Participants will be notified if a program is to be recorded and given the opportunity to opt out of participation. Photos may be taken by staff during programs for promotional use. Individuals in images will not be identified by name or with identifying information without written approval from the subject or their parent or legal guardian.

Responsibility for programming at the Library rests with the Director of Library Services, with some selections subject to review and approval by the Board of Trustees. The Director may delegate the authority for program management to staff members who program for their departments and/or branches. These staff members keep the Director informed of the status of all programs, and the Board of Trustees may review any programs for compliance with library policies.

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from any library patron concerning programming. If a patron questions a library program, they may first address the concern with a Library staff member. Patrons who wish to continue their request for review of Library programs must follow the procedure outlined below.

Displays

The North Shelby Library District will offer displays of library materials and/or resources that appeal to a range of ages, interests, and informational needs of the community. Consideration will be given to the age and intended audience of the display. For example, displays of children's books in the children's department; displays of books for adults in the adult department. Displays will be determined based on the suitability of the subject and style for the intended audience.

Displays of materials and resources in the library are intended to illustrate the width and breadth of available content in the library. The library will not display materials that violate applicable laws or library policies The Board of Trustees holds the final approval for the display of library materials and/or resources, but the Director of Library Services and librarians may choose display topics for the area of the collection they are responsible for. Additionally, employees throughout the library share day-to-day responsibilities of keeping displays filled. Library staff uses the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials, and accompanying resources:

- Community needs and interest or relation to current events
- Availability of display space
- Holidays, celebrations, and nationally recognized days/months of recognition
- Historical, cultural, or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions, or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, and programs
- The North Shelby Library District may partner with other community agencies, organizations, educational institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored displays.
- Content and topics prohibited by the Collection Development policy for safeguarding minors may not be featured in programs in the Children's or Teen's Departments
- Content and topics related to subjects requiring parental discretion in the Collection Development policy for safeguarding minors may not be featured in programs or displays in the Children's or Teen's Departments

Reader's Advisory

Reader's Advisory is the act of a library employee assisting a patron to find materials that they are interested in. This can be done through displays, book lists, or through conversation with a patron. Under the guidance of the Library Director, all staff share responsibility for providing this integral library service by virtue of their employment.

When directly assisting a patron with reader's advisory, the staff member will ask lots of questions to help discern what might be a good recommendation.
Consideration will be given but not limited to:
- Patron's age and status of restricted or unrestricted library card for minors
- Reading level
- Stated interests and/or requested topics
- Type of material
- Stated limitations (no romance books, only nonfiction, large print or audio book only, no graphic violence, etc.)

Library staff will present the patron with options that meet the patron's requests and comply with all policies for adults and minors based on restricted or unrestricted library cards. However, staff cannot have read every book in the library or be able to discern every nuance of a patron's likes and dislikes. It is up to the patron to choose what, if any, materials to check out for themselves or for their minor children. Final selection lies with the patron or the patron's guardian if that patron is a minor.

Items provided to patrons through readers' advisory does not constitute an endorsement by the North Shelby Library District or library staff of the content or views expressed in said items.

Procedures for handling a statement of concern regarding library-initiated programs

1. To receive consideration by the Library, all concerns regarding library-initiated programs must be made by fully completing this form. This includes concerns brought up by members of the Board or staff.
2. The library-initiated program about which a concern has been made will not be canceled, nor be restricted in any way, before final action is taken by the Board of Trustees on the complaint, unless the

Director of Library Services finds substantive justification for the program to be delayed or canceled until further investigation can be completed.

3. Within two (2) business days of the filing of the written statement, the applicable staff member will confer with the Director, then send a written response to the patron, explaining in detail their decision regarding the statement of concern. The patron concern and the Director's response will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees. The response will also inform the patron that they may appeal the decision within ten (10) business days.

4. The Board of Trustees will review the appeal at their next scheduled board meeting and take final action on it. In making its decision regarding the concern, the Board of Trustees will employ all of the Criteria for Selection of Library-Initiated Programs listed above, along with the any other relevant laws or policies.

5. The patron will be notified in writing of the Library Board's decision in the matter.

Statement of Concern for Library-Initiated Programs

North Shelby Library programs are events, displays, or exhibits that promote the use of library materials, services, and/or offers the community informational, entertaining, or cultural experiences. This form allows community members to voice concerns they may have about a program.

1. Title of event, display, or exhibit: _____

2. Location: _____

3. Department: ☐ Children's   ☐ Teen ☐ Adult Services ☐ General

4. Request initiated by (Name): _____

5. Phone: _____

6. Email: _____

7. Address (Street/ZIP): _____

8. What specifically causes you to be concerned about this program or display?

_____

_____

9. Did you attend this event or view the exhibit in its entirety?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

10. What do you think would be the result of a patron viewing this material or attending this program?

_____

_____

11. Is there an age for which you would recommend this program? _____

12. Are there any positive aspects to this program?

_____

_____

13. What would you say the theme or purpose of the program is? Did it meet that purpose in your opinion?

_____

_____

14. Is there a program you would recommend in place of this material?

_____

_____

15. What specific action would you recommend to library leadership?

_____

_____

16. Did the staff or Director of Library Services notify you of this form and offer a copy to you when you presented your concern? Yes _____ No _____

17. Did the staff or Director of Library Services offer you with a written copy of the program policy when you presented your concern? Yes _____ No_____

Signature _____

Date _____