Howard County Library System Launches New Equity Resource Center and Undesign the Redline Exhibit

ELLICOTT CITY, MD—Howard County Library System (HCLS) launches a new Equity Resource Center and Undesign the Redline exhibit with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Monday, September 27 at 2 pm.

What: Equity Resource Center and Undesign the Redline exhibit ribbon cutting
Who: HCLS President & CEO Tonya Aikens, County Executive Calvin Ball, HCLS Racial Equity Alliance members, community partners
When: Monday, September 27 at 2 pm
Where: HCLS Central Branch, 2nd floor (10375 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia)

Following musical selections by local artists and remarks by Tonya Aikens, Dr. Ball, and members of the HCLS Racial Equity Alliance, guests will be invited to tour the new space and exhibit. Members of the Library’s Brave Voices, Brave Choices story squad will be available to guide guests through submitting their stories witnessing or experiencing instances of hate, bias, or discrimination.

Background:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted people of color, and following the murder of George Floyd, the community began calling for spaces where they could come together to learn more about people different than themselves (e.g., race, culture, belief, gender identity) as well as more about their own cultures and histories. They wanted a place to share ideas and formulate solutions. The new Equity Resource Center is in response to those needs. It provides space for ideation and for people to talk about how to build a better Howard County.

- The Center also includes space for exhibits. Since HCLS hosted the Undesign the Redline exhibit in 2018-19, the community has repeatedly asked for its return. The interactive display outlines the Federal government’s role in enacting housing discrimination along racial and ethnic lines into law – and the continuing impacts today, nationally and locally.
  - Customers may tour the exhibit on their own, as part of a public tour, or with a group in a private tour. Public tours are available Wednesdays at 11 am and Saturdays at 2 pm. Guided tours for students, community organizations, and other groups may be arranged by emailing redline@hclibrary.org.
  - The exhibit runs through February 2022.

(more)
Photos of the Undesign the Redline exhibit can be found on Howard County Library System’s Flickr page in two albums:

- [https://www.flickr.com/photos/hocolibrary/albums/72157704270230034](https://www.flickr.com/photos/hocolibrary/albums/72157704270230034)
- [https://www.flickr.com/photos/hocolibrary/albums/72157698654205871](https://www.flickr.com/photos/hocolibrary/albums/72157698654205871)

- The Center houses a **new equity collection** of more than 9,000 fiction and nonfiction titles for all ages across a wide array of topics and formats. Titles were suggested by members of the HCLS Racial Equity Alliance and HCLS’ team of selectors. The collection’s scope is broad and inclusive. Key themes include:
  - The history of race and racism in the US and Maryland
  - The impact of racial discrimination on housing, education, health care, etc.
  - Policing and the criminal justice system
  - Immigration and emancipation
  - Gender/gender identity
  - Literary or media perspectives from or about African Americans, Asian Americans, Indigenous people/Native Americans, Latinx, Jewish Americans, Italian Americans, LGBTQIA+, ableism, and more.

- In addition, the Center will showcase stories received through the Brave Voices Brave Choices initiative, and include space for facilitated and unfacilitated conversation in conjunction with HCLS and community led. When there is not a formal HCLS program in the space or class or event, the community is welcome to use the space informally.

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