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## South Shore Public Libraries Creates a Book Sanctuary Collection

In a move to protect and celebrate intellectual freedom, South Shore Public Libraries (SSPL) has unveiled its new initiative: the Book Sanctuary Collection to coincide with Freedom to Read Week. This collection serves as a haven for books that have faced challenges, censorship, or removal from libraries and schools across North America. Freedom to Read Week, February 23- March 2, is an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom.

The Book Sanctuary Collection is designed to champion the cause of intellectual freedom and the freedom to read. This selection of 50 books have been challenged or censored at public libraries and schools.

In joining the Book Sanctuary movement SSPL aims to highlight the ongoing issue of book censorship and the importance of diverse perspectives in literature and foster conversations about the themes and topics that these challenged books address. We want to open pathways for understanding and empathy, and ensure that readers have access to a wide range of viewpoints and stories, maintaining the principles of a free and open society.

“Intellectual freedom is a cornerstone of democratic societies, allowing individuals to explore ideas without restriction” says Library CEO Ashley Nunn-Smith. “The Book Sanctuary initiative reinforces the importance of protecting this freedom, ensuring that literature remains a space for exploration, diversity, and the free exchange of ideas”.

By creating the Book Sanctuary Collection, South Shore Public Libraries not only protect these challenged works but also invite the community to join in celebrating the freedom to read and think freely. This initiative is a testament to the enduring power of literature and the role libraries play in safeguarding access to knowledge.

SSPL was inspired by Toronto Public Libraries who joined the movement in February of 2023. The Book Sanctuary movement originated at Chicago Public Library in 2022.

These 50 books can be viewed at the Margaret Hennigar Public Library for the next three weeks. Starting March 10 you can sign out items in the collection which includes adult, teen and children’s books. You’ll be able to search, browse, and place them on hold at southshorepubliclibraries.ca using the keywords SSPL Book Sanctuary.