

PROGRAMMING POLICY

The Merrimack Public Library will program events and classes designed to build a strong, literate community, inspire lifelong learning, and improve the quality of life in Merrimack. These programs may often be presented in cooperation with other agencies, organizations, and institutions, including the Friends of the Library, as well as other public and private resources. These activities may be held at the library, virtually, or at another location.

The Merrimack Public Library and its Board of Trustees endorse and support the Library Bill of Rights and the American Library Association interpretation resulting in Library Initiated Programs as a Resource, *attached*.

Events will be planned to meet the interests and needs of community members and will represent the wide range of ideas and views contained in our materials collection. They will represent the library's philosophy of free access to information. The ultimate responsibility for selection of library programs rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Board of Trustees.

The library reserves the right to limit the number of registered attendants to any library program. Merrimack library cardholders will be given priority for registrations for library programs.

While most library-sponsored programs will be free and open to the public, there may occasionally be a fee to cover the cost of materials.

No individual or organization who appears at the library for public attendance is allowed to sell their product or services during their presentation or during their time at the library, with the exception of authors, musicians, performers, or other presenters who have arranged with the library staff to sell their books, CDs, or other published works, or to otherwise ask for donations, and to make information about their services available after the presentation. Information about the organization or business affiliation used by the library in the promotion of these events and classes does not constitute endorsement.

All materials to be used by a co-sponsoring body must be approved by the library before the scheduled program.

Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource:

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for information, education, and recreation. Article I of the [Library Bill of Rights](#) states: "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves."

Library-initiated programs take advantage of library staff expertise, collections, services and facilities to increase access to information and information resources. Library-initiated programs introduce users and potential users to the resources of the library and to the library's primary function as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals as part of its own effort to address information needs and to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Library-initiated programs on site and in other locations include, but are not limited to, speeches, community forums, discussion groups, demonstrations, displays, and live or media presentations.

Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those for whom English is a second language. Library-initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce otherwise underserved populations to the resources of the library and provide access to information.

Library-initiated programs "should not be proscribed or removed [or canceled] because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval" of the contents of the program or the views expressed by the participants, as stated in Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights*. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by the participants, any more than the purchase of material for the library collection constitutes an endorsement of the contents of the material or the views of its creator.

Library-initiated programs are a library resource, and, as such, are developed in accordance with written guidelines, as approved and adopted by the library's policy-making body. These guidelines should include an endorsement of the *Library Bill of Rights* and set forth the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

Library staff select topics, speakers and resource materials for library-initiated programs based on the interests and information needs of the community. Topics, speakers and resource materials are not excluded from library-initiated programs because of possible controversy. Concerns, questions or complaints about library-initiated programs are handled according to the same written policy and procedures that govern reconsiderations of other library resources.

Library-initiated programs are offered free of charge and are open to all. Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

The "right to use a library" encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries do not deny or abridge access to library resources, including library-initiated programs, based on an individual's economic background or ability to pay.

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