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Library Takeover Returns: Submit Your Application!

Learn to plan a community event through the Library Takeover Program at Madison Public Library. Funding, mentorship, and free library space help bring your ideas to life.

MADISON, WI -- From September 1 - October 1, 2021, Madison Public Library is accepting applications for the Library Takeover program.

Teams of 3-4 people can apply to participate in the program, which includes a 4-session course on event planning and culminates in a finished and fully-funded program at the library in the spring of 2022. The library will choose three teams to participate for 2021-2022 and will provide \$2,000 for each team to use in planning their event. Each individual team member will also receive a \$400 stipend and a certificate of completion from Madison Public Library. No previous event-planning experience is necessary - all that's needed is a great idea for community engagement!

"We are looking for events and ideas from community members who do not typically have access to resources for big community events, namely, people that are not connected to a non-profit organization or formal institution, people of color, people that are LGBTQ, etc.," said Community Engagement Librarian Kristina Gómez. "We want this to result in a variety of events that speak to different cross sections of our community."

Each team that is selected to create a program will be paired with a mentor from the community. This year's mentors are Sarah Akawa, Rob Dz, and Rachel Werner. Mentors help guide their team through the crash course on event planning, share their local contacts and connections, and lend their expertise to the process.

"Providing event funding, in addition to full support through the planning process, is what makes Madison Public Library's takeover program such an innovative concept. It helps to raise awareness that libraries can be utilized as artistic, wellness and collaborative spaces," said mentor and Madison-based entrepreneur Rachel Werner. "Community gatherings, celebrations, and workshops become much more accessible once financial, physical and other barriers are

removed—all obstacles that make hosting impactful events not feasible for many residents."

Library Takeover began in 2017 as a way to do community programming differently. The goal is to empower individuals who may not have a lot of event-planning experience to bring their ideas for enriching their community to life. Madison Public Library provides the space, time, and resources for community members to host their own events, which sets the stage for future library programming that involves and reflects all of Madison.

Applications are available online and will be accepted throughout the month of September, with a closing date of October 1, 2021. Group workshops will be hosted at the Central Library (201 W Mifflin) on Tuesday nights on November 9, 16, 30 and December 7 from 6-7:30 p.m.

Library Takeover is funded by the Madison Public Library Foundation. Visit madpl.org/library-takeover to learn more or submit an application.

About the Mentors:

Sarah Akawa: Sarah Akawa is an advocate for queer nightlife and inclusive spaces. Akawa is a DJ and producer operating under the name Saint Saunter, and has put extensive effort into booking queer-focused dance parties, live music events, and art shows at venues around town. In 2019, Akawa runs the multi-genre summer festival series Hot Summer Gays and runs Queer IRL, a monthly queer dance party.

Rachel Werner: Rachel Werner is the founder of The Little Book Project WI, a bi-annual community arts and nonprofit printmaking collaboration. Her literary writing and craft essays have been published by Off Menu Press, Digging Through The Fat, and Voyage YA Literary Journal. A selection of Rachel's recipes are also included in *Wisconsin Cocktails* (UW-Press, 2020)—and her poetry in the anthology *Hope is the Thing: Wisconsinites on Perseverance in a Pandemic* (The Wisconsin Historical Society, 2021).

Rob Dz: Rob Dz is a Madison-based Hip Hop artist and activist. He currently works as the Media Projects Bubblarian at the Madison Public Library. He is the creator of the Mad Lit event series on the 100 block of State Street that focuses on creating a more inclusive downtown by bringing in music, art and businesses of color throughout the summer.. One of his songs is the inspiration for the title of American Family Insurance's book, *Let's Talk About It*, which memorializes the mural art downtown following the civil unrest of 2020.

About Madison Public Library

Madison Public Library's tradition of promoting education, literacy and community involvement has enriched the City of Madison for more than 140 years. Visit the library online at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org, [madisonpubliclibrary](https://www.facebook.com/madisonpubliclibrary) on Facebook, [@madisonlibrary](https://twitter.com/madisonlibrary) on Twitter, or [@madisonpubliclibrary](https://www.instagram.com/madisonpubliclibrary) on Instagram.