

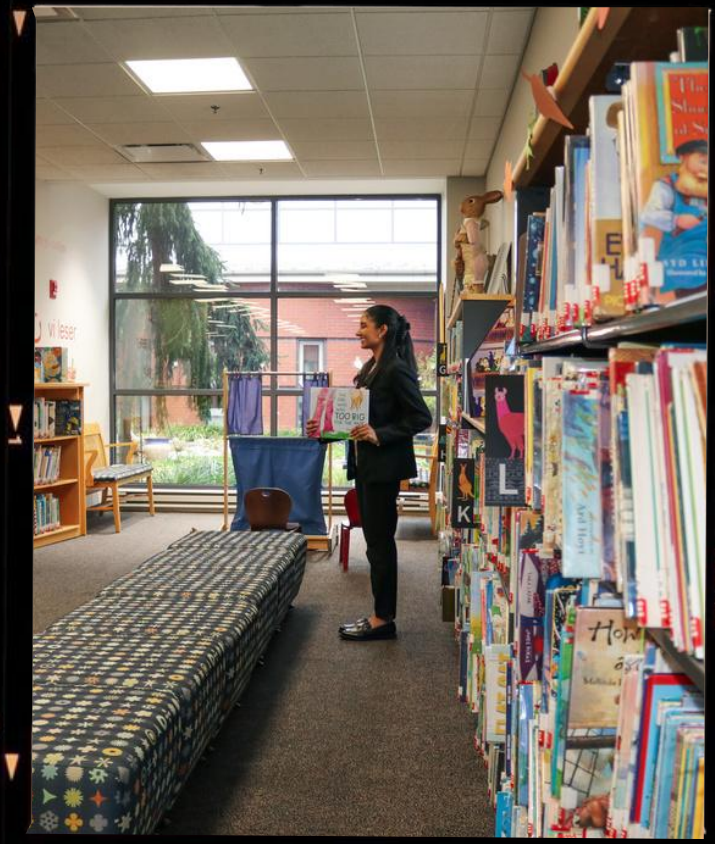
# LOST IN CIRCULATION

A QUEST TO KEEP DIVERSE STORIES IN BOOKSTORES

NAZLI MOHIDEEN

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS; WORK

DECEMBER 3, 2025



(ANUSHKA DHARIWAL)

# IWL STATEMENT

THE LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IS A TWO-YEAR SELECTIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM THAT PREPARES RUTGERS UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN TO BE INFORMED, INNOVATIVE, AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEADERS.

LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS TO EXPAND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AND TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

THIS PROJECT GIVES LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY THE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE GAINED ABOUT LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE WITH THE PRACTICAL AND EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE DEVELOPED ABOUT A PARTICULAR POLICY ISSUE OR PROBLEM THROUGH THE FIELD SITE PLACEMENT. IT ALSO FURTHER DEVELOPS LEADERSHIP SKILLS BY GIVING UNDERGRADUATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE LEADERSHIP THROUGH ACTION.

TO FIND OUT MORE PLEASE VISIT THE INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP'S WEBSITE AT [HTTPS://IWL.RUTGERS.EDU](https://iwl.rutgers.edu).

# Diversity in Children's Books 2015

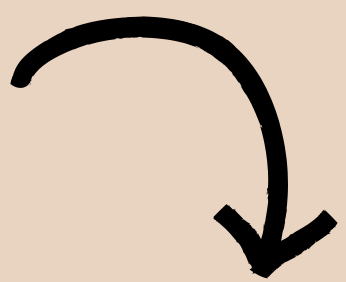
Percentages of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds. Based on the 2015 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. [ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)



0.9%	2.4%	3.3%	7.6%	12.5%*	73.3%**
American Indians/First Nations	Latinx	Asian Pacifics/Asian Pacific Americans	African/African Americans	Animals, Trucks, etc.	White

\* About a quarter of the total children's books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, like animals & trucks.  
\*\* The remainder depict white characters.

# THE PROBLEM



"BLACK PEOPLE, MUSLIMS, MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY, LATINX OR HISPANIC PEOPLE, ASIAN PEOPLE, AND WOMEN" FACE THE MOST DISCRIMINATION ACROSS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (SCHARRER ET AL. 724)



LACK OF MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA



STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYALS WHEN MINORITY GROUPS ARE PRESENT



LITERARY CENSORSHIP DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS CHILDREN'S BOOKS WRITTEN BY MINORITY AUTHORS (TEEL 3)

(DAHLEN ET AL.)

# DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: [ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)



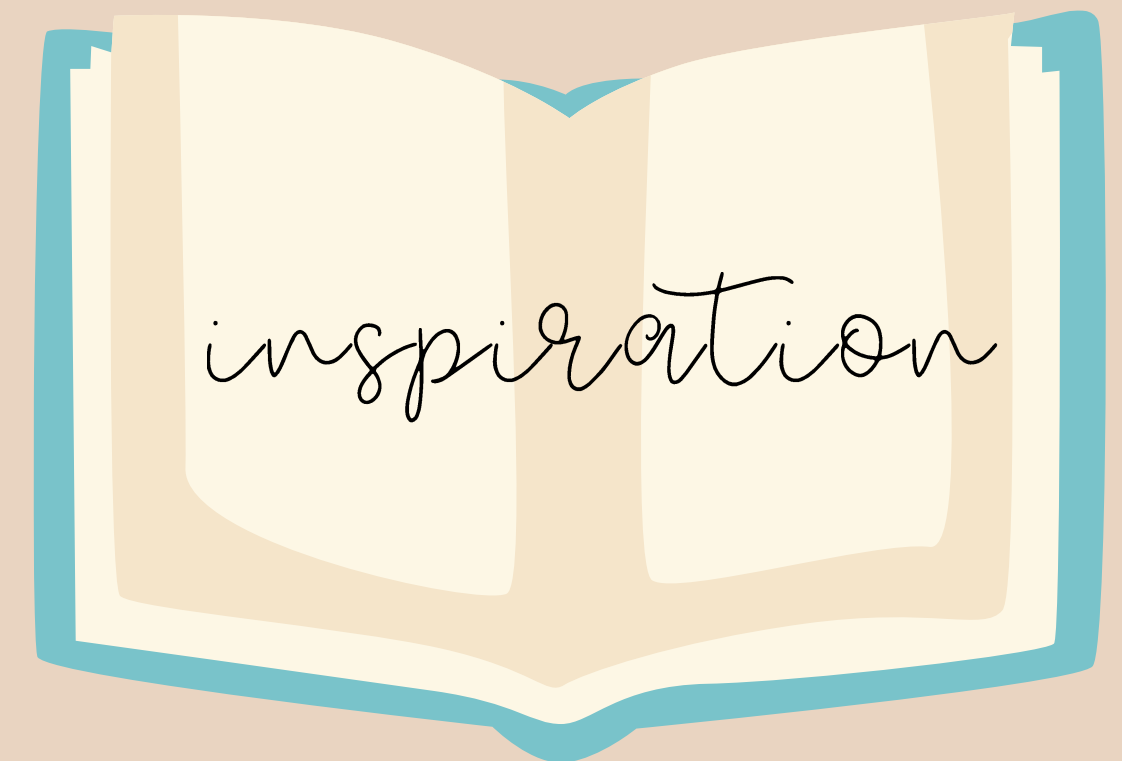
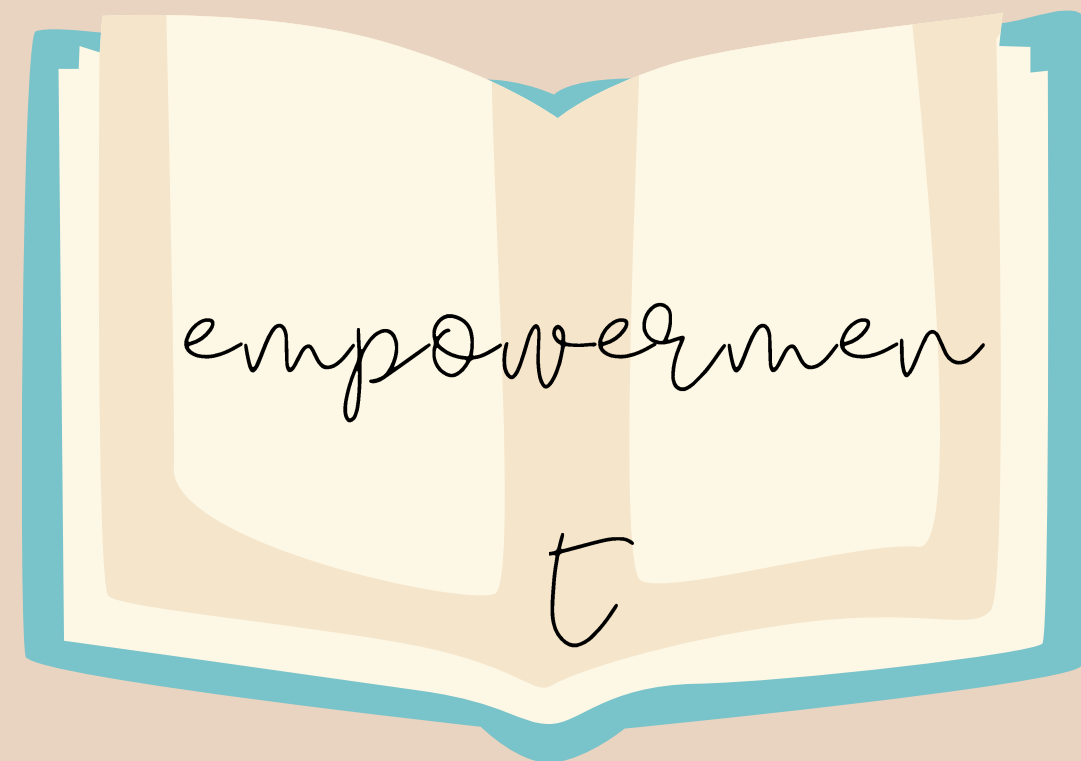
22 BOOKS 1%	170 BOOKS 5%	218 BOOKS 7%	301 BOOKS 10%	864 BOOKS 27%	1558 BOOKS 50%
American Indians/First Nations	Latinx	Asian Pacific Islander/Asian Pacific American	African/African American	Animals/Other	White

The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.

(DAHLEN AND HUYCK)

# GOALS

MY SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT WILL ADDRESS THE GAP IN MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS THOSE WHO IDENTIFY WITH THE AAPI, LGBTQ+ AND BIPOC COMMUNITIES. I WILL CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH THREE WOMAN-OWNED, NEW JERSEY-BASED BOOKSTORES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE LITERATURE AND COMPILE THIS FOOTAGE INTO A SHORT FILM. THE SHORT FILM WILL BE SCREENED AT THE MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY ON NOVEMBER 15, 2025, AND SHARED PUBLICLY ON YOUTUBE. THROUGH THIS PROJECT, I WILL EMPOWER THE BOOKSTORE OWNERS, AMPLIFY THEIR RESPECTIVE MISSIONS AND INSPIRE YOUNG LEADERS WATCHING THE FILM.



# INTELLECTUAL & CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

"THE CONCEPT OF SYMBOLIC ANNIHILATION DESCRIBES WHEN A SOCIAL GROUP IS ALMOST ENTIRELY ABSENT FROM POPULAR MEDIA FORMS"

THE PATHWAY TO CHANGE WAS PAVED OVER THREE YEARS OF ONGOING PRESSURE, SPARKED BY AN EMOTIONAL STORY TOLD IN AN INTIMATE, AUTHENTIC WAY UNIQUE TO DOCUMENTARY STORYTELLING."

"PERIODS OF HEIGHTENED CENSORSHIP CHALLENGES OCCUR WHEN THERE IS POLITICAL TURMOIL OR CHANGE IN THE UNITED STATES"

Content

(SCHARRER ET AL. 725)

Format

(CHATTOO 3)

Timing

(PICKERING 33)

# PROJECT TIMELINE

INTEREST MEETINGS WITH OWNERS  
CONFIRM ADVISORS

February - May

CONFIRM & CONDUCT INTERVIEWS  
RELEASE "SAVE THE DATE"

August

BOOK EVENT PHOTOGRAPHER  
EMAIL AUTHORS FOR BOOK DONATIONS

October

June - July

DRAFT & REVIEW INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  
BOOK EVENT VENUE

September

CONNECT WITH EDITOR  
CREATE CONTACTS LIST FOR EMAIL BLAST

November

EDIT SHORT FILM  
HOST SCREENING EVENT



(ALASKAN PUBLIC MEDIA)



(KANOPY)



(MAGNOLIA PICTURES)



(HBO MAX)



(PALMER)



Cindelle's Bookstore



# PLANNING

EQUIPMENT  
\$87.41

TRAVEL  
\$84.53

SERVICES  
\$114.99

DECORATIONS  
\$53.75

GIFTS  
\$52.48

CONCESSIONS  
\$69.81


FAVORS  
\$24.00





TOTAL: \$486.97  
BALANCE: \$13.03

# PROMOTION

**LOST IN CIRCULATION**  
A QUEST TO KEEP DIVERSE STORIES IN BOOKSTORES

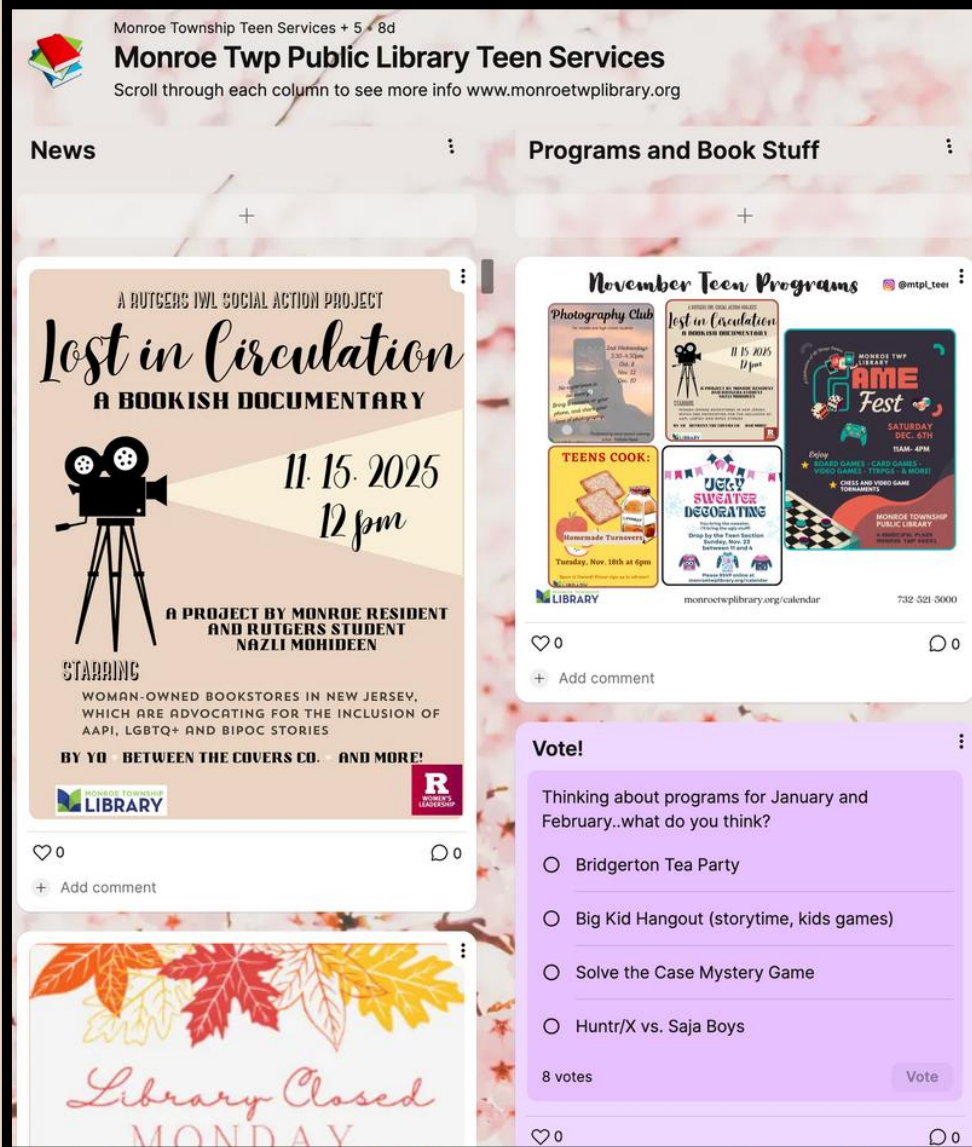

PREMIERE   
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025

THEATER   
MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY  
4 MUNICIPAL PLAZA, MONROE TWP., NJ 08831

SHOWTIME   
12:00-2:00 PM

RESERVE YOUR TICKET! [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/YUJ33MUW](https://tinyurl.com/yUJ33MUW)

FREE ADMISSION &  
CONCESSIONS PROVIDED



Monroe Township Teen Services + 5 · 8d  
**Monroe Twp Public Library Teen Services**  
Scroll through each column to see more info [www.monroetwplibrary.org](http://www.monroetwplibrary.org)

News Programs and Book Stuff

**Lost in Circulation**  
A BOOKISH DOCUMENTARY  
11.15.2025  
12 pm  
A PROJECT BY MONROE RESIDENT AND RUTGERS STUDENT NAZLI MOHIDEEN  
STARRING WOMAN-OWNED BOOKSTORES IN NEW JERSEY, WHICH ARE ADVOCATING FOR THE INCLUSION OF AAPI, LGBTQ+ AND BIPOC STORIES  
BY YO BETWEEN THE COVERS CO. AND MORE!

November Teen Programs

- Photography Club
- TEENS COOK!
- UCCY SUGARCOOKING
- AME Fest

Vote!

Thinking about programs for January and February..what do you think?

- Bridgerton Tea Party
- Big Kid Hangout (storytime, kids games)
- Solve the Case Mystery Game
- Huntr/X vs. Saja Boys

8 votes

Library Closed MONDAY

(MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY TEEN SERVICES)



central\_desi

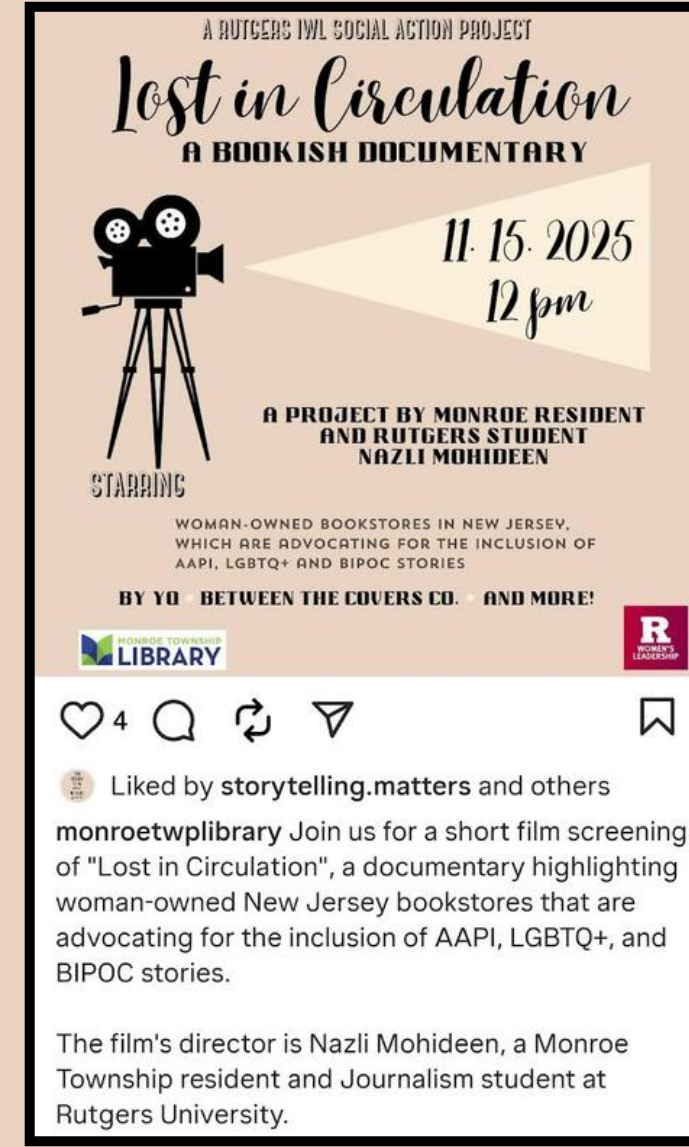
**UPCOMING EVENTS** Nov 12-18

- NOV 15-16  
500 Riverside Drive, New York, NY  
**Indo-American Arts Council's Literary Festival**  
This festival features renowned authors and thinkers exploring South Asia's literary and cultural landscape, discussing themes like myth, mysticism, modern identity, innovation, and global citizenship.
- NOV 15  
12 PM • 4 Municipal Plaza, Monroe Township, NJ  
**Lost in Circulation: A Quest to Keep Diverse Stories in Bookstores**  
Join us for a free screening of "Lost in Circulation," showcasing interviews with New Jersey-based women-owned bookstores on the importance of inclusive literature. There will be a photographer, concessions, and favors for attendees.
- NOV 15  
6 PM • 30 Sportsman Blvd, Hamilton, NJ  
**Family Gathering Meet & Greet**  
An exclusive meet-and-greet organized by Ismat Shaadi Services for parents and eligible individuals to network and explore potential. Tea and refreshments will be served. This is a ticketed event.
- NOV 16  
6 PM • 1002 US-9, Woodbridge, NJ  
**Islamic Relief USA: Our People, Our Pakistan**  
This benefit dinner will support programs for orphans, flood relief, and livelihoods in Pakistan. Featuring actor Imran Abbas and nasheed artist Nabeel Shaukat Ali. Be part of a night of hope, inspiration, and impact for the people of Pakistan.

8 1 2

central\_desi This weekend is filled with incredible events, from a literary festival, to a film screening, community gathering, and a benefit dinner.

(@CENTRAL\_DESI)



A RUTGERS IWL SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT

**Lost in Circulation**  
A BOOKISH DOCUMENTARY  
11.15.2025  
12 pm  
A PROJECT BY MONROE RESIDENT AND RUTGERS STUDENT NAZLI MOHIDEEN  
STARRING WOMAN-OWNED BOOKSTORES IN NEW JERSEY, WHICH ARE ADVOCATING FOR THE INCLUSION OF AAPI, LGBTQ+ AND BIPOC STORIES  
BY YO BETWEEN THE COVERS CO. AND MORE!

LIBRARY

Liked by storytelling.matters and others

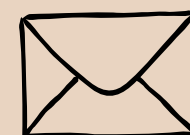
monroetwplibrary Join us for a short film screening of "Lost in Circulation", a documentary highlighting woman-owned New Jersey bookstores that are advocating for the inclusion of AAPI, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC stories.

The film's director is Nazli Mohideen, a Monroe Township resident and Journalism student at Rutgers University.

(@MONROETWPLIBRARY)



@STORYTELLING.MATTERS



50+ TEACHERS



Q&A PANEL WITH THE CAST

**CONCESSIONS MENU**

*snacks*

HOP ON POP  
gluten-free, vegan popcorn

THE GREAT BANNED-BOOKS BAKE SALE  
chocolate chip cookies

JAMIE O'ROUKE AND THE BIG POTATO  
assorted potato chips

**CONCESSIONS MENU**

*drinks*

WE ARE WATER PROTECTORS  
mini water bottle

THE COLOR PURPLE  
grape juice

FRECKLEFACE STRAWBERRY  
berry lemonade

THE GIVING TREE  
apple juice

THE KINDEST RED  
fruit punch

# THE SCREENING

CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN ENGLISH & SPANISH



"GIVING FEMINIST LEADERS THEIR FLOWERS" CEREMONY

# IMPACT & EVALUATION

118

AUTHORS CONTACTED FOR BOOK DONATIONS ACROSS 22 DAYS

97

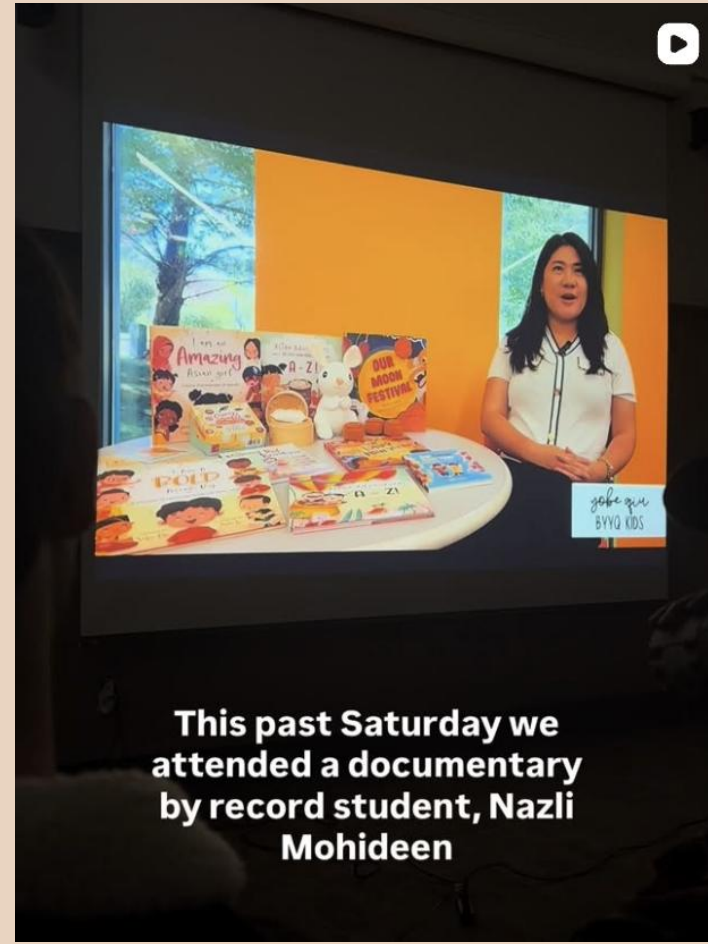
DONATED COPIES OF INCLUSIVE CHILDREN'S BOOKS COLLECTED

60+

PEOPLE ATTENDED ACROSS MONROE TOWNSHIP & RUTGERS UNIVERSITY



(@BETWEENTHECOVERSCO)



(@BYYQKIDS)



(@DAILYTARGUM)

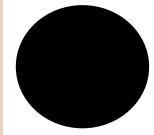


(HLADEK, 0:00-1:27)



(DAVEY, 0:00-2:58)

# IMPACT & EVALUATION CONTINUED



██████████ In today's political climate, I worry for women leaders but activism like this gives me hope.

5d Reply

Nazli, thank you so much for the work that you are doing and finding Cindelle's Bookstore to be fit to help! We are so appreciative of the spotlight and are so proud of you! Keep shining YOUR light!

thank you for doing such meaningful work for our world.

Congratulations— this is such a beautiful and impactful project, as all of your work is! I can't wait to see what you do next

It was beautiful to be in a place that was so clearly connected to the director of the film. It made the film feel all the more important. It was the first time I was in the room with so many diverse voices celebrating women and literacy (and I work in non-profit!) It was great to see the full film and how all the questions tied together. Answering questions from the crowd was fun and I feel like we got a couple of great ones where we could continue to highlight authors we love. Really a job well done!

This is SO impressive!

Bravo!

Congratulations on all your efforts for such a great cause.

You are doing important work.

It looks like you had a wonderful event celebrating all the things we hold dear.

Thanks for taking the time to share this with me! Some students shared they attended your screening event and loved seeing what you put together. Glad to hear you had a successful turnout and appreciate you sharing all these resources!

I love your film "Lost in Circulation." I think you did such a fantastic job and the event looks like it was a great success!

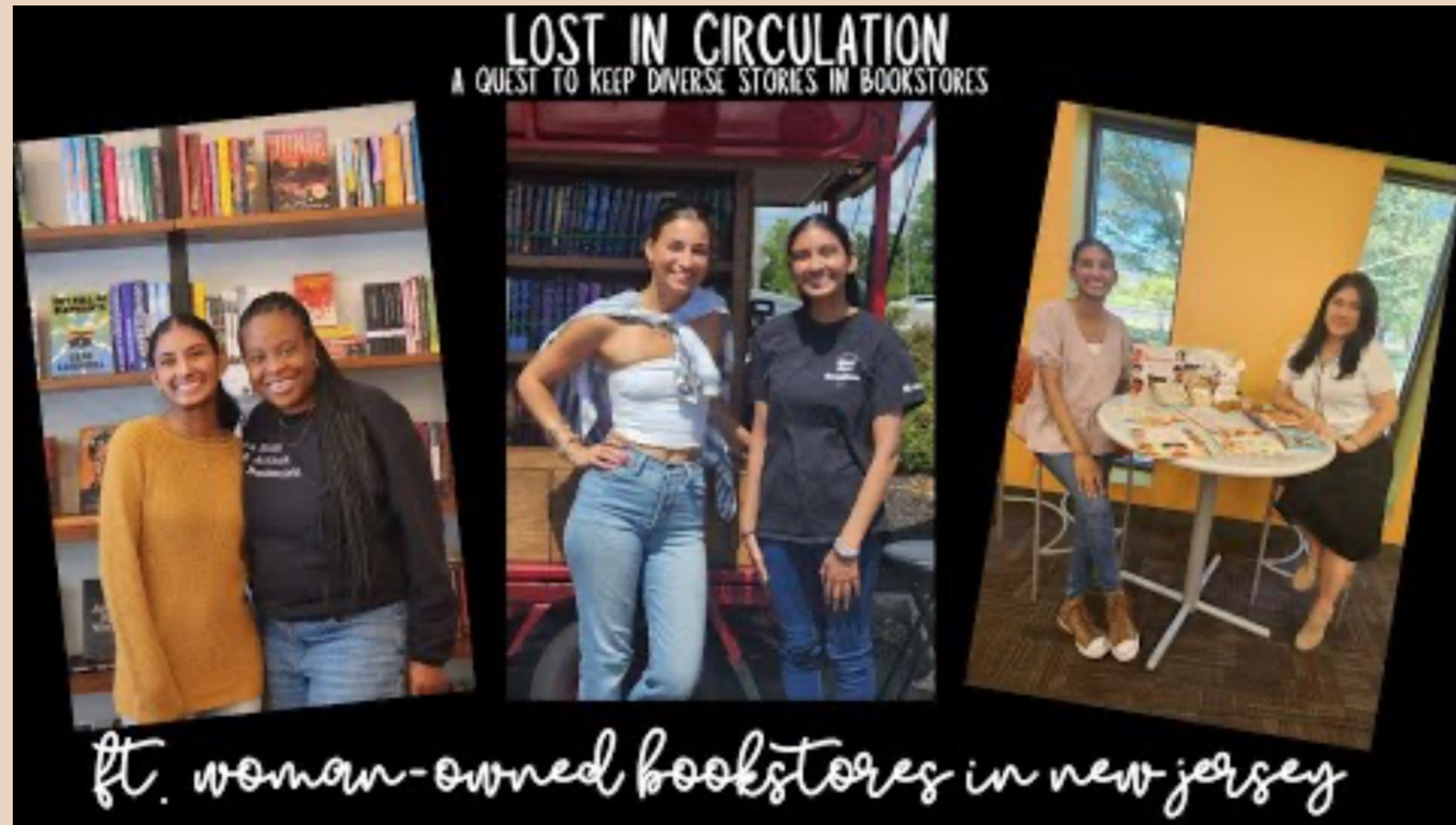
You are an exemplar of women's leadership. The screening event is a wonderful opportunity to share your work with the community.

Thank you so much for sharing this update, and congratulations on such a successful event! I watched your *Lost in Circulation* video with my mother, and we're both so inspired by these interviews. I see how the *Targum* highlighted how much intention, care and community impact you brought into this project. I'm so happy to see everything you've accomplished with this event! It's wonderful to see how much intention you put into creating an inclusive, community-centered experience for everyone.

I loved being part of the panel talking about byYQ and the importance of culture in publications. To be part of work that advocates for literature while literary censorship is more apparent than ever is both a responsibility and a privilege. Amazing work Nazli!

I want to thank Nazli and say how truly honored I am to have been a small part of this project. I look forward to see what more you do, you have a great future ahead of you! The world needs more people like you.

# FEMINIST LEADERSHIP & LESSONS LEARNED



- ★ WOMEN IN FRONT OF & BEHIND THE CAMERA
- ★ "YOUNG WOMEN WANT TO BE CHANGE-MAKERS. AND THAT THEY ARE ADVANCING DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP BASED ON COMMUNITY, COLLABORATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUALITY" (GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE 5)



GIVE PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT WITHIN REASON.



SEND THE EMAIL! THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS WILL ALWAYS SURPRISE YOU.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE ENCOURAGING PEOPLE IN YOUR CORNER, ESPECIALLY AT TIMES WHEN YOU ARE FEELING BURNT OUT OR UNCERTAIN.



STAY IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE. YOU NEVER KNOW WHO WILL BE ABLE TO HELP YOU DOWN THE ROAD.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION (SC&I) AT RUTGERS

GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE

ALYSSA REGAN, YOBE QIU, AMANDA HOFFMAN AND CINDELLE HARRIS-BLACKMON

SASHA TANER, SAM AGATRAP, NISHI SHAH, EMILY HARAN, REBECCA MARK AND LISA HETFIELD

PROFESSOR AMY HIGER

PROFESSOR KARLA JACKSON-BREWER

PROFESSOR TIFFANY MARRA

THERESE BURKE

PROFESSOR NEAL BENNETT

MS. EMILY MAZZONI

NAILAH MOHIDEEN

ANNA LASEK

MEGAN ULOZAS

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