

Human Library continues to make impact in Canada

The event in which people take out and read human books continues to inspire many

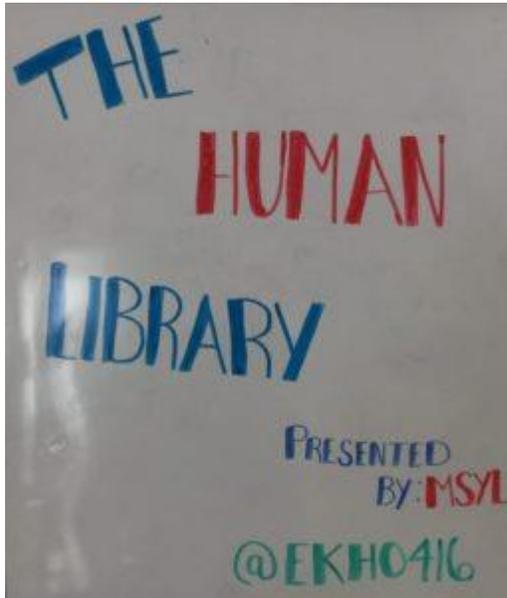


These are "Human Books," the human equivalent of library books: you borrow them, you can't damage them, you can't interrupt them, and they have a story to tell once they're opened (approached). *MATTHEW MCCARTHY/TORONTO OBSERVER*
BY **MATTHEW MCCARTHY**
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One human book was molested, beaten and abused, managing to overcome these obstacles and share her tale at the Human Library.

A human book is someone that is borrowed in the Human Library for people to hear their story, with the same rules as library books.

The Human Library is a community event, **unlike normal library events**, that provides a safe-space for guests to hear stories that tackle difficult problems. Topics include explaining a family member's death to a child, bullying, molestation and abuse.



A whiteboard placed at The Hub lobby area on April 6 for the Human Library. (*MATTHEW MCCARTHY/TORONTO OBSERVER*)

The event was held at **The Hub in Mid-Scarborough** and presented by the Mid-Scarborough Youth Leadership on April 6.

“It’s about curiosity and we have these stories to tell,” Jack Langedijk, one of the human books and an acclaimed actor, producer and director, said at the closing remarks. “For someone to be curious enough to hear us, really gives us our word.”

“Today was a real gift to all of the faces that I did meet and I was able to sing to,” Langedijk continued.

There were seven people for people to hear the stories of, with a variety of stories and backgrounds. Some stories had a big impact for guests and volunteers alike.



Posts pinned at The Hub on April 6 about the third and fourth human book of the Human Library: Neha Jayaram and Stephanie Fearon respectively. (MATTHEW MCCARTHY/TORONTO OBSERVER)

“Stephanie’s story ... that story impacted me,” said Thishana Gnanachelvan, who was part of the decoration team for the event. “Listening to Stephanie’s story kind of really made me think why my parents didn’t really tell me about what really happened.”

Gnanachelvan had to figure out that a family member’s cause of death on her own.

The goal of the event is to break stereotypes and prejudices associated with certain people and to inspire others.

The people involved came to the organization to participate with a multitude of reasons: to inspire others, to discuss topics, to break stereotypes and to tell their stories.

The Human Library was created in February 2000 by Ronni Abergel.

Abergel got the idea to loan unpopular groups in the community to find a common ground. His friend referred to the idea as “like an open book” and Albergel explained that the people were open books that people could borrow.

“I feel bloody amazing and marvellous each day,” Abergel wrote in an email. “I feel humbled and like this is some kind of dream. Today this is my job.”