



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Buchanan District Library awarded an American Library Association *Libraries Transforming Communities* grant**

BUCHANAN, Michigan — The American Library Association (ALA) has announced the recipients of their *Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries* initiative, and Buchanan District Library was among 11 Michigan libraries to be awarded this national grant. Funding from this initiative will enable libraries to lead community engagement efforts on a topic of their choosing.

“We are thrilled to be part of this nation-wide initiative to help small and rural libraries like ours play an active role in community engagement,” said Meg Paulette, Library Director. “Libraries are ideal organizations to bring together people from different backgrounds to learn with, and from, each other.”

As part of the grant, Buchanan District Library will receive online staff training in how to lead conversations, a skill vital to 21st-century librarianship, and \$3,000 to support their proposed community engagement work.

“Our project is a community-wide read called One Book, One Buchanan: Essential Reading for the Nicest Place in America,” said Sarah Gault, Community Outreach Coordinator. “This will be the first in a new, annual event for the library and for Buchanan.”

The book the library has chosen for the community-wide read is *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson. This book was selected after discussion with library patrons, staff, and key members of other local organizations, most notably One Buchanan, which started as an independent nonprofit in 2016 and became an official city board in January of this year. One Buchanan’s mission is to advance Buchanan as a city that welcomes and cares for all people irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Ruth Writer, a member of One Buchanan and retired local teacher, was especially active in helping connect library staff with a diverse group of people to come to a decision on the topic of racial justice.

“One Buchanan was instrumental in helping us choose the topic and book for our community-wide read, and we are really excited to partner with them,” said Paulette.

The library's goal is to have 200 participants read the book. A town-hall style discussion will also take place, and will include library staff and members of local organizations, including One Buchanan, the City of Buchanan, Buchanan Community Schools, The Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce, The Buchanan Art Center, and The Buchanan Area Senior Center. The discussion will either take place outside at The Common, a venue located behind the library in the center of town, or via Zoom, depending on regulations and recommendations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The community-wide read will take place July through September of 2021, with the community discussion happening in mid-to-late September.

The project will also include a recommended reading list of other books on the subject, both fiction and nonfiction, for all age groups. Local teachers will be encouraged to read books from this list to their students and engage in a discussion. Library funds will be used to purchase books from this list for the purpose of loaning to teachers. The Buchanan Art Center will host a corresponding art show, and a display of the art submissions will be hosted at the Buchanan Art Center, the Buchanan District Library, and the Buchanan Area Senior Center.

More information and updates related to this event will be made available at [www.buchananlibrary.org](http://www.buchananlibrary.org) in the coming weeks. Questions can be sent to the Director of the Buchanan District Library, Meg Paulette, at [m.paulette@buchananlibrary.com](mailto:m.paulette@buchananlibrary.com).

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