



NEWS RELEASE

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August 4, 2023

Contact: Meg Paulette Perez, Director

Phone: 269-695-1911

Email: m.paulette@buchananlibrary.org

Buchanan District Library to host nationally-acclaimed author and journalist, Alex Kotlowitz, at 3rd Annual One Book | One Buchanan

BUCHANAN, Michigan — For the past two years, something special has been happening at the end of the summer on the Buchanan Common, located behind Buchanan District Library.

“When it started, we were outside because of the pandemic, but now it just feels like the perfect place for our community to come together,” said Library Director, Meg Paulette Perez.

The event is One Book | One Buchanan, a community-wide reading program that asks participants to read a specially-selected book over the summer and then meet for discussion. The program is a partnership between the Buchanan District Library and One Buchanan, a local group with a mission to advance Buchanan as a city that welcomes and cares for all people irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Free copies of the books are given out each year for participants to keep.

This year, the book is *The Other Side of the River* by Alex Kotlowitz. The book was chosen because it is the 25th anniversary of its publication, and it literally hits close to home with its stories of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, just a short drive away from Buchanan.

“After choosing the book, we learned of the opportunity to have Mr. Kotlowitz involved in our program,” said Paulette Perez. “We are thrilled and honored to host him at One Book | One Buchanan this year.”

For forty years, Alex Kotlowitz has been telling stories from the heart of America, deeply intimate tales of struggle and perseverance. He is the author of four books, including his most recent, *An American Summer: Love and Death in Chicago* which received the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize. His other books include the national bestseller *There Are No Children Here*, which the New York Public Library selected as one of the 150 most important books of the twentieth century. A former staff writer at *The Wall Street Journal*, Alex’s work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine* and on *This American Life*.

The event will take place on Wednesday, August 30 at 6pm on the Buchanan Common at 122 Days Avenue in Buchanan, MI. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the book in small groups and then be part of a conversation with the author, Alex Kotlowitz, led by Buchanan Community Schools Superintendent, Patricia Robinson.

About *The Other Side of the River*: In this gripping and ultimately profound book, Kotlowitz takes us to two towns in southern Michigan, St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, separated by the St. Joseph River. Geographically close, but worlds apart, they are a living metaphor for America's racial divisions. When the body of a black teenaged boy from Benton Harbor is found in the river, unhealed wounds and suspicions between the two towns' populations surface as well. The investigation into the young man's death becomes, inevitably, a screen on which each town projects their resentments and fears. *The Other Side of the River* sensitively portrays the lives and hopes of the towns' citizens as they wrestle with this mystery—and reveals the attitudes and misperceptions that undermine race relations throughout America.

Print and ebook copies of *The Other Side of the River* are still available through the Buchanan District Library. More information, as well as details about the event, can be found at www.buchananlibrary.org. Questions can be emailed to library Director, Meg Paulette Perez, at m.paulette@buchananlibrary.org.

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