



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY READ 2021 KICKS OFF WITH COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS ON RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to host events throughout March

Charlotte, NC – March 1, 2021 – Charlotte Mecklenburg Library announces the return of Community Read this month with a focus on creating community dialogue around themes of racism and social justice. Community Read 2021 is the Library's month-long program to have the community read (or listen) to books of current and relevant topics, as well as participate in discussions, book clubs and events hosted by the Library and community partners. Adults and teens are encouraged to read and discuss the main title *I'm Not Dying with You Tonight* by Kimberly Jones and Gilly Segal, and the Library selected companion titles for all ages including: *You Matter* by Christian Robinson (children), *Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks* by Jason Reynolds (teens) and *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson (adults). More information and a full events schedule, along with a pledge to participate is at cmlibrary.org/community-read.

"Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's Community Read program is designed to get our entire community on 'the same page,'" said Meryle Leonard, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library outreach leader and co-program lead for Community Read. "The themes of all the books align with current events in our community and country. This program encourages discussions, which challenges participants to view biases and opinions through a different lens. Community Read gives Charlotte-Mecklenburg a platform to generate a deeper understanding of our neighbors, which will support building a stronger community."

Throughout March the Library will hold readings, book discussions and other programs for participants that bring the books' themes to life, with two signature author events. On Wednesday, March 17, 2021, the Library hosts author Jason Reynolds in a live discussion and Q&A on his book *Look Both Ways*. Jason will discuss details about his writing process and inspiration for the book.

The community is also invited to join together on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 as Kimberly Jones and Gilly Segal, authors of the signature title *I'm Not Dying with You Tonight*, participate in a live discussion of their book and its themes with a Q&A panel to follow. Both events will take place online, and registration for events is available at cmlibrary.org/calendar.

Community Read is presented with support from Wells Fargo, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation and Publix Super Markets Charities.

Look Both Ways is a *New York Times* Best Children's Book of 2019, a Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book and a National Book Award Finalist. *I'm Not Dying with You Tonight* is a *New York Times* Bestseller, an NAACP Image Award nominee and is currently in discussions to be made into a major motion picture.

All books for Community Read 2021 are available through the Library's catalog in print, digital and audio formats. Community Read titles are also being distributed through Community Read partner organizations leading up to the events.

To learn more about Community Read, visit www.cmlibrary.org/communityread.

About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:

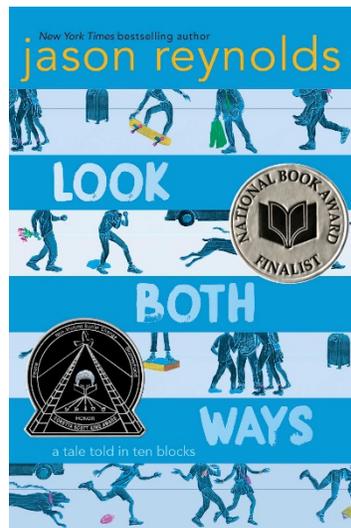
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more

than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online resources, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

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Photo caption 1 and 2: Authors Gilly Segal and Kimberly Jones speak at EpicFest 2019 for their book *I'm Not Dying with You Tonight*.

Photo caption 3 and 4: Author Jason Reynolds and his book *Look Both Ways* for Community Read.



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Media resources:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library newsroom: cmlibrary.org/library-news

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