

A message from the Executive Director of the James V. Brown Library-video presentation

Hi, I'm Barbara Sarno McGary, Executive Director of the James V. Brown Library. I am here to share an important message with the community regarding the recent objection to the Pride Month display in the children's area.

Two of the Lycoming County Commissioners have verbally expressed their objection to the Pride Month display in the children's area. Up to that point, they have been very supportive of the library's mission, and recently sent a letter to state elected officials advocating for an increase in the public library subsidy because of the good work we do.

There is a formal process to challenge materials at the library. As part of that process, patrons receive a copy of our policy and a statement of concern form or request for reconsideration for so that they can articulate on their own why they do not want these items in the library. I spoke to one of the commissioners about this process on Tuesday morning before the commissioners' meeting and gave him the forms. To this date, we have not received any formal statements from them. I planned on discussing this in executive session with the James V. Brown Library Board of Trustees during the next board meeting.

Our perspective is that libraries are for everyone. It is really important that every single human has equal access to all information, no matter who they are or what they believe in.

Equal and inclusive access for everyone, regardless of age, demonstrates that the people in our community are respected, valued and welcomed at the Library. We believe that equal and inclusive access is a fundamental right. Feeling welcome at the Library means that community members of all ages see themselves in the award winning books that we offer and this is the reason for the Pride Display in the Children's Library.

Questions about equity and inclusion are important issues. As community leaders, we need to sit down and talk about issues in respectful discourse on issues that are important to our community and to help find solutions together.

So many families with children that identify as LGBTQIA+ told me they value these books and resources and are grateful they are welcome in their public library. I want to make it very clear that every person should feel welcome, valued and honored at the public library.

That is the mission of the public library – to provide equal and inclusive access to all. I encourage you to stop by the library and see all the materials and books we have on display. The public library is here for YOU.

Thank you.