

# HUMAN RELATIONS INITIATIVE

---

## SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE: BANNED BOOKS WEEK CREATED BY – THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

**Human Relations Initiative, Inc.** is a non-partisan organization which advocates for cultural social transformation by advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through awareness, education, and dialogue (mission statement).

A component of the portfolio of services is **Social Justice Initiatives**. Therefore, we respectfully share the following information as a resource.

---

**BANNED BOOKS WEEK** (September 27 - October 3, 2020) is an annual event celebrating the freedom to read. Typically held during the last week of September, it spotlights current and historical attempts to censor books in libraries and schools. It brings together the entire book community — librarians, booksellers, publishers, journalists, teachers, and readers of all types — in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular.

**HISTORY:** <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/banned> - Banned Books Week was launched in the 1980s, a time of increased challenges, organized protests, and the *Island Trees School District v. Pico* (1982) Supreme Court case, which ruled that school officials can't ban books in libraries simply because of their content. Banned books were showcased at the 1982 American Booksellers Association (ABA) BookExpo America trade show in Anaheim, California. At the entrance to the convention center towered large, padlocked metal cages, with some 500 challenged books stacked inside and a large overhead sign cautioning that some people considered these books dangerous. Drawing on the success of the exhibit, ABA invited OIF Director Judith Krug to join a new initiative called Banned Books Week, along with the National Association of College Stores. The three organizations scrambled to put something together by the September show date and ended up distributing a news release and a publicity kit, hoping that with their combined membership of 50,000 people, they could continue to spark a conversation about banned books.

**On September 27, 2020**, the ALA released a list of the Top 100 Most Banned and Challenged Books of the Decade: <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/09/ala-releases-list-top-100-most-banned-and-challenged-books-decade>.

**ABOUT THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION:** *American Library Association (ALA)* mission is “to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.” The four strategic directions are: Advocacy, Information Policy, Professional & Leadership Development, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. At their 2018 Fall meeting, the ALA Executive Board voted to affirm that ALA will apply a social justice framework to the ALA strategic directions. <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/>

---

*“Every person has a choice what they read or don't read, there is power in that power. We should celebrate it and thank our lucky stars that Librarians make a big deal of this week, standing up for our freedom to choose.” Katherine V. Dillard, Librarian and Human Relations Initiative, Inc. Board Member.*

**Human Relations Initiative, Inc.** is in full support of the Banned Books Week social justice initiative created by the American Library Association.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Human Relations Initiative, Inc. is a non-partisan organization which advocates for cultural social transformation by advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through awareness, education, and dialogue.