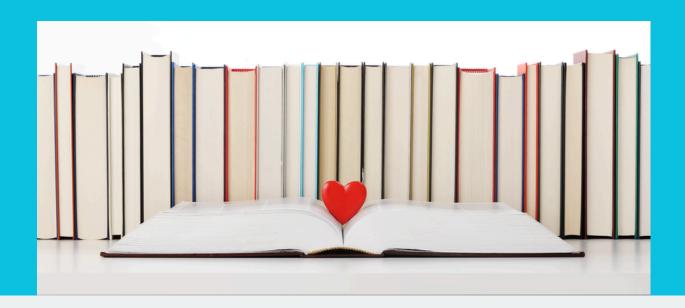
Unlock Minds, Embrace Voices: Celebrating Challenged Books



PROGRAM HANDBOOK

A free event for public libraries, celebrating the freedom to read

By: David Liebowitz

Book Challenges

The Trend

According to the American Library Association (ALA), in 2024, the number of titles challenged increased by 798% compared to 2020. The data reveals attempts to censor 2,452 distinct book titles across schools and libraries The ALA's Office Intellectual Freedom documented 821 requests to censor library books, materials, and resources in 2024. Furthermore, research shows that elected officials, board members, administrators, and advocacy groups were responsible for 72% of book censorship demands in school and public libraries.

Who Should Determine What Students Read?

The Library Bill of Rights (ALA's basic policy concerning access to information) states that, "Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents – and only parents – have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children – and only their children – to library resources."** While parents can make decisions for their children, they are not qualified to make decisions for an entire student body or library system.

The Effects of Book Banning

Limiting students' access to literature that some may find inappropriate prevents them from encountering significant works, including works by authors like Hermann Hesse, Aldous Huxley, John Milton, Toni Morrison, and Ayn Rand. Students would be deprived of the chance to develop essential skills such as critical thinking, writing, and media literacy, skills that are valuable for their future. Protecting students difficult and potentially controversial content in high school could leave them less prepared for college and adulthood.



^{*} https://www.ala.org/bbooks/book-ban-data

^{**} https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors

Event Overview



Summary

Unlock Minds, Embrace Voices coincides with Banned Books Week (held in October), celebrates the freedom to read and is designed to have fun, build community, educate, and showcase libraries' commitment to diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles. What books are challenged? What happens when individuals challenge books? What can students do to support the freedom to read? The event includes activities focused on methodology for tweens, teens, and their families to respond to the practice of challenged books proactively.

Marketing

Libraries should use resources to promote this event, including newsletters, social media, paper flyers, and listings in library and community events outlets. The program is drop-in, and no advanced registration is required.

Advanced Planning

Planning for this event should start approximately two months ahead of time to market the event and purchase the supplies needed.

Event Space

The large community room in the library is the ideal space to hold this event.

01

Dear Favorite Author

Write a heartfelt note to your favorite author, sharing what you love about their books, characters, or unique writing style. Tell them how their stories have inspired, entertained, or impacted you. Pick a postcard and express why their work holds a special place in your life. Let your favorite author know just how much their words matter!

02

Challenged Because

Test your knowledge of controversial books and the reasons behind their challenges. Each notecard features the title of a well-known book on the front, and inside, you'll find a list of possible reasons why it was challenged or banned. Your task is to guess which reason (or reasons) apply to each book. Was it due to violence, language, or themes considered inappropriate? See how many you can correctly identify and learn more about the books that have sparked debate over the years.





Page Turners and Troublemakers: Challenged Books Trivia

Play a fun trivia game that dives into the world of challenged and banned books. Test your knowledge of iconic, controversial, and frequently challenged literature. Discover why certain books have been labeled too daring or provocative, learn about the history of censorship, and explore the enduring power of literature.



What Books Mean to Me

Take a moment to reflect on what books bring to your life and why they matter to you. Express what you love about books and what they mean to you. Share a personal story, draw a picture, write a short blurb, or get creative in any way you like! Let us see how books have impacted your life, whether it's the escape, the adventure, or the inspiration. (Libraries may share these posts on their bulletin boards.)

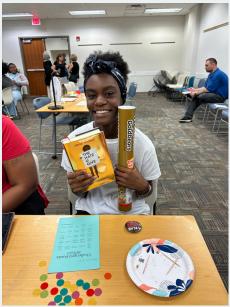


05

Challenged Books Bingo

Delve into the unknown of which books are challenged. Engage in a fun game of Challenged Books Bingo. Before the game, the names of the challenged books should be written on strips of paper. The caller should pull the strips of paper and call out the name of the challenged book. It is recommended to purchase the bingo chips so that the bingo cards may be reused.









06

Mark It!

Design and create your own personalized bookmarks! Tap into your creativity using various art supplies like markers and stickers to craft a unique bookmark that reflects your style and love for reading. Whether you want to make a gift for a family member or a friend or keep it for yourself, this is a perfect opportunity to make something that is both practical and artistic.





07

Busted!

Are you guilty of reading banned or challenged books? Come show it off! In this fun photo opp, patrons can pose in front of a "Wanted by Police" banner, holding a sign that states their "Crime" of reading controversial content. Grab your favorite challenged book, strike a pose, and snap a photo to document your literary rebellion.









08

Free Book Giveaway

In celebration of the freedom to read, we're giving away FREE copies of challenged books to the first 25 patrons! Children and teens can pick up a copy of a book that has sparked conversation, debate, or controversy, and join the movement to support intellectual freedom. From classics to contemporary titles, these books have been challenged for various reasons, and now they're yours to explore.











Sample Challenged Books

Adventures of Captain Underpants, Dav Pilkey

All Boys Aren't Blue, George M. Johnson

Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation, Anne Frank

Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, Judy Blume

Beloved, Toni Morrison

The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Mark Haddon

Drama, Raina Telgemeier

Dreaming in Cuban, Cristian Garcia

The 57 Bus, Dashka Slater

Forever, Judy Blume

Front Desk, Kelly Yang

Gender Queer: A Memoir by Maia Kobabe

The Giver, Lois Lowry

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls

The Handmaid's Tale (graphic novel adaption), Margaret Atwood

The Hate U Give, Angie Thomas

Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

Maus: A Survivor's Tale, Art Spiegelman

Miseducation of Cameron Post, Emily Danforth

The New Kid, Jerry Craft

1984, George Orwell

The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Stephen Chbosky

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Sample Challenged Books

Books for Younger Readers

A Light in the Attic, Shel Silverstein

And Tango Makes Three, Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson

Ban This Book, Alan Gratz

Everywhere Babies, Susan Meyers

The Family Book, Todd Parr

Hair Love, Matthew Cherry

Harry Potter (series), J.K. Rowling

Hop on Pop, Dr. Seuss

I Am Billie Jean King, Brad Meltzer

I Am Enough, Grace Byers

I Am Jazz, Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings

I Am Rosa Parks, Brad Meltzer

In the Night Kitchen, Maurice Sendak

It's a Book, Lane Smith

Milo Imagines the World, Matt de la Peña

The Name Jar, Yangsook Choi

No, David!, David Shannon

Not Norman, Kelly Bennett

Red: A Crayon's Story, Michael Hall

Sofia Valdez, Future Prez, Andrea Beaty

Worm Loves Worm, J. J. Austrian

Sample Room Set-Up

Bingo Caller

Bingo

Bingo

Bingo

Activity

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Book Giveaways

Room Entrance Selfie Station

Sample Trivia Questions

1. What is Banned Books Week about?

- A) Celebrating books that nobody reads
- B) Highlighting the importance of the freedom to read
- C) Making sure all books are banned
- D) Choosing which books to ban next year

2. What is the difference between a "challenged" book and a "banned" book?

- A) A challenged book is about sports, while a banned book is about history
- B) A challenged book has been questioned but not necessarily removed, while a banned book has been removed
- C) A challenged book is shorter than a banned book
- D) A challenged book is banned in some countries

3. What can children do to support the freedom to read?

- A) Write a letter to a favorite author
- B) Tell others about banned books
- C) Ask their parents or teachers to help
- D) All of the above

4. What is the primary reason people might challenge a book?

- A) They don't like the color of the cover
- B) They think the book has ideas that are inappropriate for certain ages
- C) The book is too short
- D) The book has too many illustrations

5. Who usually decides if a book should be banned or challenged?

- A) The government
- B) Librarians
- C) A small group of parents, teachers, or community members
- D) Bookstores

6. Which of these is a famous banned book?

- A) Green Eggs and Ham
- B) Hop on Pop
- C) The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
- D) The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Sample Trivia Questions

7. What can children do if they want to read a book that is challenged or banned?

- A) Talk to their parents or teachers about why the book is important to them
- B) Hide the book in their backpack
- C) Read only the first chapter
- D) Wait until the ban is over

8. Why is it important to read books with different perspectives, even if we don't agree with them?

- A) So we can prove them wrong
- B) To understand how others think and feel
- C) To make reading more difficult
- D) To write our own banned books

9. How do most people feel when they find out one of their favorite books is banned?

- A) Happy
- B) Curious
- C) Confused or upset
- D) Excited

10. Which famous book about a young boy and a wizard was challenged and banned in some places?

- A) The Hobbit
- B) Harry Potter
- C) Percy Jackson
- D) Alice in Wonderland

11. Who should have the final say on what books children read?

- A) Parents and guardians
- B) Authors
- C) Schools
- D) Friends

12. What can happen if a book is successfully challenged?

- A) It gets a new cover
- B) It is removed from schools or libraries
- C) It is made into a movie
- D) It gets printed in more copies

Sample Trivia Questions

13. Why are many books that talk about history or real events sometimes challenged?

- A) They are too long
- B) People may not agree with how the events are described
- C) They are difficult to understand
- D) They are too expensive

14. Can a book be banned for being too sad or scary?

- A) Yes, if people think it will upset others
- B) No, only happy books are banned
- C) Only if it makes people laugh too much
- D) Only if it has no pictures

15. Which of these famous authors wrote a book that was banned?

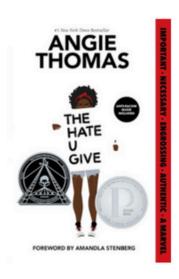
- A) Dr. Seuss
- B) J.K. Rowling
- C) Mark Twain
- D) All of the above

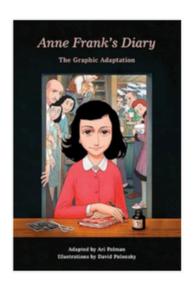
Answer Key

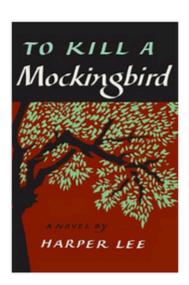
- 1. Answer: B) Highlighting the importance of the freedom to read
- 2. Answer: B) A challenged book has been questioned but not necessarily removed, while a banned book has been removed
- 3. Answer: D) All of the above
- 4. Answer: B) They think the book has ideas that are inappropriate for certain ages
- 5. Answer: C) A small group of parents, teachers, or community members
- 6. Answer: B) Hop on Pop
- 7. Answer: A) Talk to their parents or teachers about why the book is important to them
- 8. Answer: B) To understand how others think and feel
- 9. Answer: C) Confused or upset
- 10. Answer: B) Harry Potter
- 11. Answer: A) Parents and guardians
- 12. Answer: B) It is removed from schools or libraries
- 13. Answer: B) People may not agree with how the events are described
- 14. Answer: A) Yes, if people think it will upset others
- 15. Answer: D) All of the above

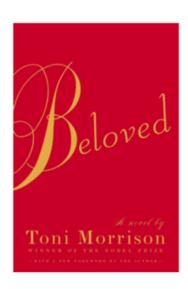
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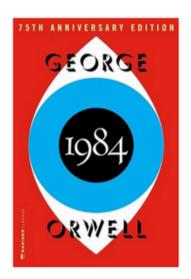
Sample Book Covers

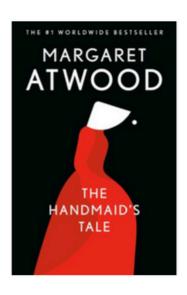




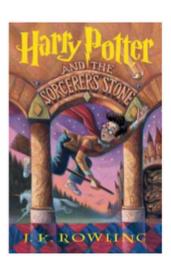






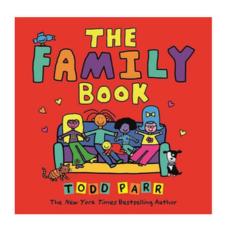


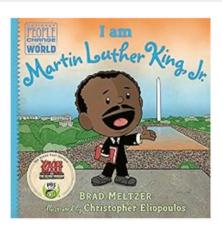




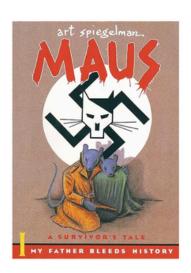
Challenged Because

Sample Book Covers

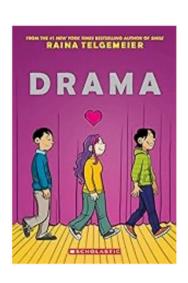












Challenged Because Sample Reasons

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood

Reasons: profanity and "vulgarity and sexual overtones"

The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Stephen Chbosky

Reasons: homosexuality, offensive language, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group

The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins

Reasons: sexually explicit, violence, unsuited to age group

Dreaming in Cuban, Cristina Garcia

Reasons: political viewpoint, sexually explicit

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Mark Haddon

Reasons: offensive language, religious viewpoint, unsuited for age group, "Profanity and atheism"

All Boys Aren't Blue, George M. Johnson

Reasons: LGBTQIA+ content, sexually explicit

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini

Reasons: sexual violence, religious viewpoint, and was thought to "lead to terrorism" and "promote Islam"

Maus: A Survivor's Tale, Art Spiegelman

Reasons: culturally insensitive, political viewpoint, "rough, objectionable language," and a drawing of a nude woman

The Hate U Give, Angie Thomas

Reasons: profanity, anti-police messaging, drug use, and sexual references

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls

Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit





#FREEDOMTOREAD

BingoSample Bingo Caller's Card

Bingo Caller's Card

Use your Bingo Caller's Card to call the bingo and keep track of which words you have already called.

Print two copies of the caller's card. Cut one copy up, fold the squares in half, and put them in a hat. To call the bingo, pull a square out of the hat, unfold it and read it out.

When you have called a word/number, tick it off on the second copy of the caller's card. You can use the second copy of the caller's card to check if a player has a winning card during a game.

The Hate U Give	The Kite Runner	The Handmaid's Tale	To Kill a Mockingbird	Ready Player One	Drama	Eleanor & Park
Beloved	The Glass Castle	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	And Tango Makes Three	Forever	Maus	Water for Elephants
A Court of Mist and Fury	The Bluest Eye	Watchmen	Vampire Academy	Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaption	I Am Billie Jean King	The 57 Bus
Dreaming in Cuban	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Where the Crawdads Sing	The Adventures of Captain Underpants	Walter the Farting Dog	I Am Jazz	The Family Book
Tiger Eyes	The Maze Runner	Dear Evan Hansen	For Whom the Bell Tolls	Twilight	Ghost Boys	Shopgirl
Ban This Book	The Storyteller	All Boys Aren't Blue	Catch- 22	The Notebook	Divergent	The Fountainhead

BingoSample Bingo Cards

Challenged Books

Bingo Card ID 002

Bingo Card ID 001

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l Am Jazz	Vampire Academy	Tiger Eyes	The Bluest Eye	The Perks of Being a Walflower
The Fountainhead	Dreaming in Cuban	Catch- 22	Shopgirl	Water for Elephants
Forever	Divergent	FREE	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	The Glass Castle
Where the Crawdads Sing	Maus	Walter the Farting Dog	The	The Kite Runner
Ready Player One	The Notebook	The Handmaid's Take	Beloved	Watchmen

The Kite Runner

I Am Jazz

FREE

Ready Player One

Ghost Boys

Ban This Book

Walter the Farting Dog

Dreaming in Cuban

I Am Billie Jean King

For Whom the Bell Tolls

The Maze Runner

And Tango Makes Three

The Glass Castle

Maus

All Boys Aren't Blue The Bluest Eye The Hate U Divergent Give

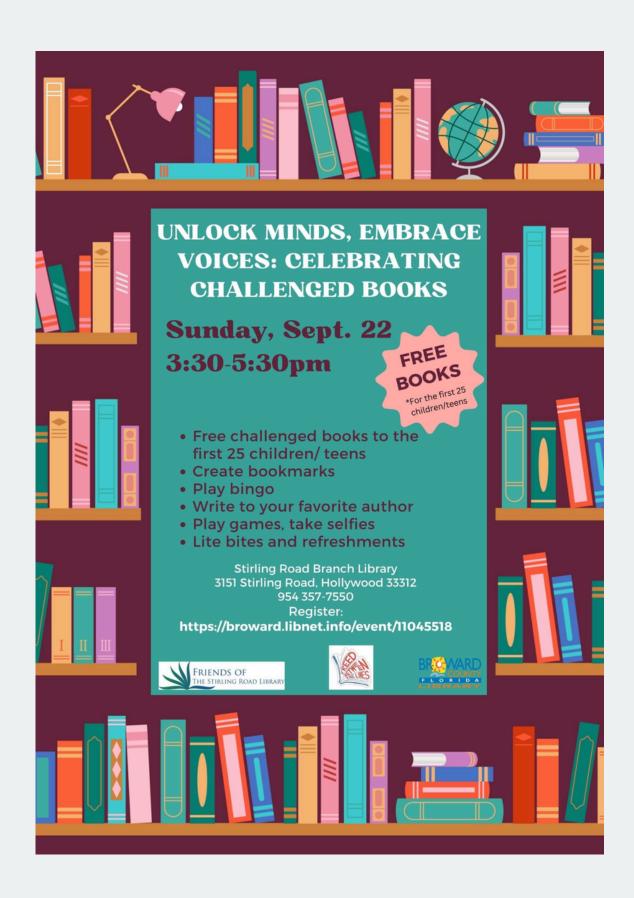
Catch-22

The Adventures of Captain Underpants

Challenged Books BINGO	
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Sample Event Flyer



Sample Event Flyer

FREEDOM TO READ FEST:

CELEBRATING CHALLENGED BOOKS

Saturday, October 4 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Join in fun activities:

- Bookmark making
- Challenged books bingo
- Trivia
- Write to your favorite author
- Various games
- · Win prizes!

Miami Beach Regional Library 227 22nd Street, Miami Beach 305 535-4219









CHALLENGED BECAUSE

cards to reveal reasons why a book was challenged Why are certain books challenged? Flip open the in libraries and schools across the country



MARK IT:

library book or favorite book at home. Make one for Create your own bookmarks to put in your favorite yourself, for a family member, or a friend.



CHALLENGED BOOKS TRIVIA

Test your knowledge with Challenged Books Trivia and win prizes! Discover surprising facts about iconic works and celebrate the freedom to read



BOOKS FOR ALL

you? Share a story, draw a picture, tell us why you Why do you love books? What do books mean to love to read!



DEAR FAVORITE AUTHOR

favorite author. Tell them what you love Write and send a postcard to your about their book or books!



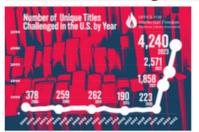
RIGHTS IN THE RINGS

Matters, and Everyone's Story Counts—reminding us why Freedom of Expression, Critical Thinking, Representation Test your aim in the Rights in the Rings Ring Toss. Each peg represents a core value—Diversity of Voices, challenged books are worth celebrating.

Sample Info for Distribution

Book Bans and Book Challenges Information Sheet Provided by the Friends of the Stirling Road Branch Library

The Trend of Challenged Books



According to the American Library Association (ALA), in 2023, the number of titles challenged experienced a 65% increase compared to 2022. The data reveals attempts to **censor 4,240 distinct book titles across schools and libraries**, surpassing the previous high recorded in 2022, when 2,571 unique titles were targeted. The ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom documented 1,247 requests to censor library books, materials, and resources in 2023. **Censorship efforts at public libraries surged by 92%** compared

to the previous year, while school libraries saw an 11% increase in targeted titles.1

What is a Challenge and What is a Ban?

According to the ALA, a challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. A banning is the removal of those materials. In Florida counties, once a book is challenged, the book has to be pulled from shelves until the school district resolves the complaint. Books that are removed temporarily may not make it back to shelves for months. As a result, students may not be allowed to read a book for the school year while the book is under review. Between July 2021-December 2023, **Florida led the nation with the highest number of book challenges**, 3,135 challenges across 11 school districts. ²

Who Should Determine What Students Read?

The Library Bill of Rights (ALA's basic policy concerning access to information) states that, "Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents – and only parents – have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children – and only their children – to library resources." While parents are capable of making decisions for their own children, they are not qualified to make decisions for an entire student body or library system.

Censorship by librarians, government officials, or other members of society of constitutionally protected speech, whether for protection or for any other reason, **violates the First Amendment**. Students have a constitutional right to read widely, which cannot be restricted to accommodate specific views or beliefs.

In classrooms, teachers are educated to make choices of which books to read based on their professional discernment, as well as the perspectives and guidance of other educators. Their expertise deserves respect unless there is a strong reason to do otherwise. Schools should defer to the judgment of professional educators when making decisions.

What Are the Effects of Banning Books?

If students are prevented from reading literature that some may find inappropriate, they will miss out on encountering significant works, including works by authors including Hermann Hesse, Aldous Huxley, John Milton, Toni Morrison, and Ayn Rand. Students would be deprived of the chance to develop essential skills such as critical thinking, writing, and media literacy, skills that are valuable for their future. Protecting students from difficult and potentially controversial content in high school could leave them less prepared for college and adulthood.

https://www.ala.org/bbooks/book-ban-data

https://pen.org/report/narrating-the-crisis/

³ https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors

Budget

UNLOCK MINDS, EMBRACE VOICES:	CELEBRA	TING CHAL	LENGED B	OOKS BUDGET
Item	Price	Quantity	Total	Link
Bookmarks (96)	\$ 9.63	1	\$ 9.63	https://tinyurl.com/2sv66rr8
Stickers for bookmarks (100)	\$ 5.89	1		https://tinyurl.com/yckz5wpw
Customized bingo cards (100)	\$ 10.00	1		https://tinyurl.com/5n6mbhz4
Bingo chips (1000)	\$ 8.99	1		https://tinyurl.com/3fnaav4b
Bingo prizes - Big Candy Tubes (5)	\$ 5.00	5	\$ 25.00	https://tinyurl.com/y5j6etuw
Spin and Win Wheel	\$ 25.99	1	\$ 25.99	https://tinyurl.com/3wckwet6
Trivia prizes - Book pens (96)	\$ 19.99	1	\$ 19.99	https://tinyurl.com/24dd3xkk
Trivia prizes - Bookmarks (12)	\$ 4.95	1	\$ 4.95	https://tinyurl.com/mwucy48y
Caution tape	\$ 5.55	1	\$ 5.55	https://tinyurl.com/yn5452ju
Folded notecards (50)	\$ 9.99	1		https://tinyurl.com/35byj7z5
Mugshot banner	\$ 19.98	1	\$ 19.98	https://tinyurl.com/nhcuwesn
Ring Toss Game	\$ 20.99	1		https://tinyurl.com/4d444753
Acrylic sign holder (3)	\$ 5.99	2	\$ 11.98	https://tinyurl.com/2mkrca2c
Bibliophile postcards (50)	\$ 15.00	1		https://tinyurl.com/mr7as2r9
Adventures of Captain Underpants	\$ 12.16	1		https://tinyurl.com/yfwshx48
All Boys Aren't Blue	\$ 11.47	1		https://tinyurl.com/mv9yvp3x
Ann Frank's Diary Graphic Adaption	\$ 10.96	1		https://tinyurl.com/fdztv3av
The Bluest Eye	\$ 11.23	1		https://tinyurl.com/42upy2t8
Brave New World	\$ 10.34	1	\$ 10.34	https://tinyurl.com/53ktkru5
The Curious Incident of the Dogin the				
Night-Time	\$ 8.39	1	\$ 8.39	https://tinyurl.com/ycsyuhxw
Drama	\$ 8.35	1		https://tinyurl.com/3uttxite
Dreaming in Cuban	\$ 10.98	1		https://tinyurl.com/muvwwh9n
The 57 Bus	\$ 10.79	1		https://tinyurl.com/2m3ebm6v
Forever	\$ 9.99	1		https://tinyurl.com/4n24xvz8
Front Desk	\$ 7.19	1	\$ 7.19	https://tinyurl.com/ycy8e67d
The Giver	\$ 7.69	1	\$ 7.69	https://tinyurl.com/ybjrxaat
The Glass Castle	\$ 9.68	1	\$ 9.68	https://tinyurl.com/5w6dm7bb
The Handmaid's Tale	\$ 9.53	1	\$ 9.53	https://tinyurl.com/2a64ytja
The Hate U Give	\$ 10.19	1		https://tinyurl.com/y8ezen5w
Hunger Games	\$ 8.09	1	\$ 8.09	https://tinyurl.com/yheswkfb
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	\$ 7.50	1	\$ 7.50	https://tinyurl.com/4aktz5ix
The Kite Runner	\$ 10.61	1	\$ 10.61	https://tinyurl.com/5n8d475t
Lord of the Flies	\$ 6.60	1		https://tinyurl.com/d4s496s6
Maus: A Survivor's Tale	\$ 6.23	1		https://tinyurl.com/spprf6n4
Miseducation of Cameron Post	\$ 10.73	1		https://tinyurl.com/mrxv3yt2
The New Kid	\$ 8.25			https://tinyurl.com/yd8fa556
1984	\$ 7.24	1		https://tinyurl.com/5n8pyx82
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	\$ 9.56	1		https://tinyurl.com/4vjvu586
To Kill a Mockingbird	\$ 8.89	1	\$ 8.89	https://tinyurl.com/3bkz4r4h
Cookie tray	\$ 29.99	1	\$ 18.99	https://tinyurl.com/z2m69cv5
Fruit tray	\$ 39.99	1		https://tinyurl.com/msx77tw3
TOTAL	\$ 55.00		\$ 485.55	

About the Event

Unlock Minds Embrace Voices: Celebrating Challenged Books was created by David Liebowitz, a teen coordinator of the Marta-Beth Friedman Stirling Road Branch Library Teen Advisory Board and a member of the Friends of the Stirling Road Branch Library in Hollywood, FL. The event was generously funded in part by grants from the Friends of the Broward County Library and funds from the Friends of the Stirling Road Branch Library. For more information about this event, contact David at davidliebowitz1@icloud.com.