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One Book, One Northbrook Kicks Off Inaugural Community-Wide Initiative With Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*

NORTHBROOK, IL (June 4, 2019)—The Northbrook Public Library and community groups and members have selected *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah for the village's inaugural One Book, One Northbrook summer campaign.

One Book, One Northbrook is a community-wide initiative to read the same book together and take part in a specially curated series of programs. The library has more than 10 programs lined up that will explore the book's themes and promote discussions. Learn more about One Book, One Northbrook programs at www.northbrook.info/one-book

In September 2018, library staff met with members of the Village's Community Relations Commission and community members who were interested in the project and to make the book selection. Other community groups involved with One Book, One Northbrook include Racial Awareness in the Northshore (RAIN), The Book Bin, and Glenbrook North and South high schools.

The group began with 76 suggested titles. The criteria in selecting the book included its appeal potential to adults and teenagers, a diverse perspective, and general interest to the rest of the Northbrook community based on the staff's experiences working with readers.

Debbie De Palma, a longtime Northbrook resident who has sat on the Community Relations Commission and is a member of RAIN, is one of the community members who helped organize One Book, One Northbrook.

She said she's been frustrated to see other communities but her own run community-wide reading campaigns.

"I'm so glad the library is doing this," she said. "The only way this would happen is if the library would do it. It's a way for people who ordinarily wouldn't cross paths to cross paths. The idea of a whole community coming together to do this is very appealing."

A collaborative effort was made to pick a book that tackled the tough but important issues of race, identity and diversity, said De Palma.

"Our goal was to pick something that focused on characters who grew up in different cultures and circumstances," she said.

Born a Crime is a comedic autobiographical work chronicling Trevor Noah's 1980s childhood growing up under apartheid in South Africa. Noah's memoir discusses the idea of people being segregated, either forcibly, and by the government, or of their own volition. Noah's use of humor is an entry point for many to learn about difficult issues of identity and apartheid. Apartheid officially ended halfway through Noah's childhood, but its detrimental effects lasted much longer which he discusses in the book.

De Palma hopes One Book, One Northbrook will become an annual or biennial event.

"It's a great opportunity to bring people together around topics people don't really talk about in public spaces," she said "And it gives us more insight about what happens in other places and about other people's histories."

Carol Konvalinka, another community member who was involved with the One Book planning, said creating a community takes an "intentional effort to know and engage our neighbors so that Northbrook becomes a more inclusive, diverse, and respectful place.

"The idea that we, as a village, are making the effort to doing something important together is exciting to me," she said.

The library kicks off One Book, One Northbrook on Sunday, June 30, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm with refreshments and a drop-in craft activity. Also on June 30, from 3:00pm to 4:00pm, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) Quartet will perform a South African-themed concert, featuring a mix of rock, jazz, and blues, in the auditorium. [Reserve a spot.](#)

To learn more about One Book, One Northbrook, visit www.northbrook.info/one-book.

About Born a Crime

Born a Crime is a comedic autobiographical work chronicling Trevor Noah's childhood growing up in South Africa in the 1980s. Because Noah's mom is black, while his dad is white; under apartheid in South Africa, he was literally "born a crime." For much of Noah's memoir, he focuses on this idea of people being segregated, either forcibly, and by the government, or of their own volition.

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About Trevor Noah

Born on February 20, 1984 in Soweto, South Africa to a black South African mother and a white European father, Trevor Noah has hosted numerous television shows there, including the South Africa Film and Television Awards and two seasons of his own late-night talk show *Tonight with Trevor Noah*.

In November 2016, Trevor released his first book, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, and it became an instant New York Times best seller. The book received the

Thurber Prize for American Humor and two NAACP Image Awards – one for Outstanding Literary Work by a Debut Author and another for Outstanding Literary Work in the Biography/Autobiography category.

About Racial Awareness in the Northshore (RAIN)

RAIN stands for Racial Awareness in the Northshore. This group, made up of Northshore area residents, aims to educate people about issues relating to race, and systemic racism.