



## Book to Action 2021 Case Study

**Library: Santa Barbara Public Library**

### **Book to Action 2021 Summary & Impact Reflection**

*Please summarize your Book to Action 2021 public programming series. Write for an audience that has never heard of your library, your community, or the Book to Action concept. Start by introducing your library and community. Be sure to show how the Book to Action topic and titles met a specific community need or aspiration. Be sure to highlight your community partners, explain significant, innovative, or new models for public programs, and show how this program impacted your community. Limit 2-3 paragraphs.*

The City of Santa Barbara lies on the Central Coast of California, nestled between the ocean and mountains. With an estimated population in 2019 of 91,364, Santa Barbara is a diverse semi-urban location. While often viewed as a paradise, the Santa Barbara community continues to see disparities in economics, education, housing, and other areas, with those most affected being individuals who identify as BIPOC. Book to Action 2021 provided a needed opportunity to discuss these issues and to call direct action towards their improvement.

The Santa Barbara Public Library read, discussed, and took action related to the themes in Sarah M. Broom's *The Yellow House*. Events and discussions were planned around family histories, housing policies, historical narratives, and the impacts of cultural erasure. Working with local organizations, activists, and genealogists, SBPL looked at our community, its history, and ourselves with these themes in mind.

SBPL engaged Drs. Felice Blake and Stephanie Batiste, both UCSB English professors and Black women, to present a keynote on the book and the importance of telling one's own story. Additional events included a research justice event with community organizer Des Alaniz from which a community zine was made, a poetry workshop with previous City of Santa Barbara poet laureate Sojourner Kincaid Rolle, a housing panel and community asset map creation with Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), and a genealogy panel with the Santa Barbara Genealogical Society consisting of several local Black families talking about their history and local contributions. The diverse programs provided the opportunity to connect with *The Yellow House* and the author's family life and experiences, but on a local level.

While books were available for individuals to pick up when they registered for an event, SBPL partnered with organizations such as El Centro, Gateway Education, SB Young Black Professionals, and the UCSB English Department to provide sets for their own distribution.

Overall, SBPL's Book to Action 2021 spanned ten virtual events, engaging over 400 participants from teens to adults. Attendees expressed deep thanks for holding such thoughtful and educational programs at which they learned about and connected with others in ways that will help them take actions to further improve the greater Santa Barbara community.

### **Community Member Quotes**

*Please enter 1-2 community member quotes from surveys or public comments that may be anonymized and used in future grant applications and program model sharing.*

"Thanks so much for hosting an incredible program in general and meeting tonight. I am beyond excited about what we as a community learn from this mapping process."

"I was just in your community-built asset map event and want to thank you again for creating this awesome resource. I'm excited to share it with my students."

"Nicka did a great job describing the family genealogy search process, with excellent tips on using the clues you have as well as the process of elimination. She relayed so much good information in such a short time. I was fascinated by the historical notes she shared along the way. It made me want to find out more about my family."

"Thank you for this event. It helped me understand the plight of African Americans more. The speaker offered so many pieces of history I didn't know about. I think my jaw was in the dropped position for most of the webinar."

"It increased the vocabulary of what's already in my heart. Now I can discuss more effectively with others."

"A welcome thought-provoking discussion on a topic that I'm personally interested in (i.e. home)."

"The panel was entertaining and I applaud you for undertaking Black History in Santa Barbara." "Your presentation is just amazing. I know what a lot of work it was and wow!! I was so moved...I had profound new insights. They had to navigate a world that could be hostile, unaccepting, even dangerous. But they have done this with such bravery, insight, and power. Wow--what an honor to hear their stories."

#### **Final Words of Advice**

*What brief bit of advice (1-2 sentences) would you give to library staff members interested in coordinating a Book to Action or similar community engagement series for adults and intergenerational groups in their community?*

When looking to build relationships and engage in the community, it is important to look at the work that is already being done and approach with collaboration in mind. Build events and programs with organizations, don't just invite entities in to be a part of something that is already planned and polished. Build together and mutually support the work that is being done by the library and the other organizations.

Moving to an all-virtual platform this year provided an opportunity to broaden the audience to those who may not have been able to attend in person, regardless of the circumstance. There is potential to continue a hybrid implementation of events so as this access might be maintained.

**Total # Programs:** 10

**Total Attendance at Programs:** 410

**Book to Action Program Coordinator Name & Title:** Jen Lemberger, Programming Librarian

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**May others contact you with questions?**  Yes  No