



Book to Action 2021 Case Study

Library: OC Public Libraries – Irvine Heritage Park Branch

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.

OC Public Libraries has 32 branches throughout Orange County. Located just south of Los Angeles, Orange County is geographically diverse with coastal plains to the northwest, the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains to the southeast, and 40 miles of coastline. In 2020 California suffered another record-setting year of wildfires with the August Complex fire being the first ever “gigafire” (over 1 million acres burned). Orange County was hit by the Blueridge and Silverado fires which burned over 27,000 acres and forced the temporary closure of 3 branches within our system. Add to this another year of nonexistent rainfall and extreme drought conditions, and we felt that a Book to Action program focusing on sustainability was something both urgent and timely to our communities.

We chose *We are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins with Breakfast* by Jonathan Safran Foer as our Book to Action title with eight of our branches leading Book to Action book clubs with it. Its theme of adopting a plant-based diet for breakfast and lunch seemed impactful yet doable in the face of increasing pessimism and hopelessness about climate change. We wanted to do what we could to help OC residents live healthier and more environmentally-friendly lives, all the while fighting climate change through our action of eating more of a plant-based diet.

To this end, we sought out partners who focused on environmental issues within our community. Dr. Hesham El-Askary from Chapman University gave a big picture view of the state of the environment in California, while OC Public Works and UCCE Master Gardeners of Orange County looked at what Orange County residents can do in terms of water conservation and sustainable gardening practices. Since our Book to Action title was focused on a plant-based diet, we also partnered with Orange County’s first vegan Mexican taqueria *Vegan by El Zamorano* whose owner gave us an inspiring talk about their restaurant’s vegan journey. Within our system, we partnered with the Charlie Cart committee to create a weekly series of videos, *Eating Plant-based Around the World*, where a rotating cast of library staff presented a plant-based dish from their cultural/ethnic background. This was capped off with a live Zoom cooking demo led by two library staff. Finally, we were able to assemble and pass out 1,200 seed kits to patrons visiting our 32 branches thanks to donations from the Free Seed Project and two local nurseries, The Plant Depot and Green Thumb. All of these partners helped open up discussions in our communities on what they could do to live more sustainability, helping to plant both literal and figurative seeds.

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.

“It was an enlightening discussion of the impact of industrial meat and animal farming. I will definitely try to be more aware of my diet choices. I discussed the proposed solutions to this dilemma with friends and family. It brought up other ways we can reduce our negative impact on the limited resources on our planet.”

“I learned new things, and made me think what I could do. I also started watching and learning more books, movies, and documentaries that are related to the theme. Thanks!”

“Great event. My daughter is trying to eat and cook more plant based. Great free program to start learn how with live demos”

Impact on Professional Development

Please summarize how participating in the Book to Action 2021 initiative impacted you and your team's professional development. As a result of participating in this program, what skills did you or your team learn? What professional takeaways would you share with others looking to improve community engagement with adults & intergenerational groups?

We learned many things that helped us professionally through working on our Book to Action initiative. We learned how important it is to reach out to our partners and get their feedback and ideas on the programs they are helping us lead. Often our initial ideas of how a program would look changed because our partners were able to lend their insight and help us make adjustments for the better. (They are, after all, experts in the subject area of the program). I learned that frequently touching base with our partners, whether it be through email, or a quick Teams/Zoom meeting, made for a more mutually rewarding partnership and better program. Openness and communication are key.

In this time of COVID we also learned how important it was to engage with our patrons and community however we can. Despite the real danger of "Zoom fatigue," we learned that just making an effort to provide community-focused programs, even if it was just online, was appreciated.

Finally, we learned the importance of not stressing too much about the details of our programs, about making them perfect or controlling how they turn out. Instead, we found it was better to let things work themselves out naturally, letting our partners and participants take them where they will. Wherever we eventually ended up, we had at least opened the door to discussing these oftentimes hard to discuss topics.

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?

Surround yourself with a great team that does great work without tooting their own horn about it. Then sing their praises to the world of course. :)

Total # Programs: 12

Total Attendance at Programs: 143

Book to Action URL(s): <https://ocpl.org/booktoaction>

Book to Action Images:

Please attach 1-2 images (.jpg or .png files only) that best represent your Book to Action 2021 series

Sample File Name: BTA 2021 San Leandro Library Image 1.jpg

Image 1 File Name: BTA Sustainability Events flyer

Image 1 Caption:

Image 2 File Name: Want to Save the Plant?

Image 2 Caption: Here are 3* things author Jonathan Foer wants you to do

Book to Action Program Coordinator Name & Title: Stanley Wang, Librarian

Contact: stanley.wang@occr.ocgov.com

May others contact you with questions? Yes No

California Center for the Book is a program of the [California Library Association](#), supported in whole or in part by the [U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the [State Librarian](#).

Book to Action Sustainability Events



Book to Action: In Conversation with Josh Tickell of Kiss the Ground

Earth Day, Wednesday 4/22 • 6PM - 7PM

Please join us for a very special conversation with Josh Tickell, environmental thought leader and award winning director and author of *Kiss the Ground*. The event will explore ways Californians can come together and make both individual and collective change for a more sustainable future.

Sustainability Panel discussion w/ Dr. Hesham El Askary (Chapman University), Andrew McGuire (OC Watersheds), Kris Bonner (UC Master Gardeners of Orange County)

Saturday, 4/24 • 2PM - 3:30PM

Join us for a multi-panel discussion on climate change-related challenges that California faces, water quality and watersheds in OC, and how you can grow your own food and maintain your landscape while protecting local watersheds.



Eating Plant-based Around the World cooking demo

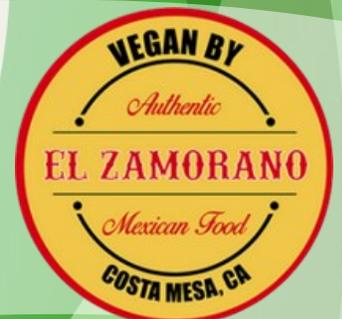
Saturday, 5/15 • 2PM - 3PM

Join us live as two of our own OC Public Libraries staff create mouthwatering plant-based dishes from around the globe. On today's menu: Irish shepherd's pie and French crêpes.

Co-owner of Vegan by El Zamorano

Saturday, 6/19 • 11AM - 12PM

Join us as the co-founders of local vegan restaurant, Vegan by El Zamorano, discuss their inspiring journey to a vegan diet, its many benefits, and the opening of the first vegan taqueria in Orange County!



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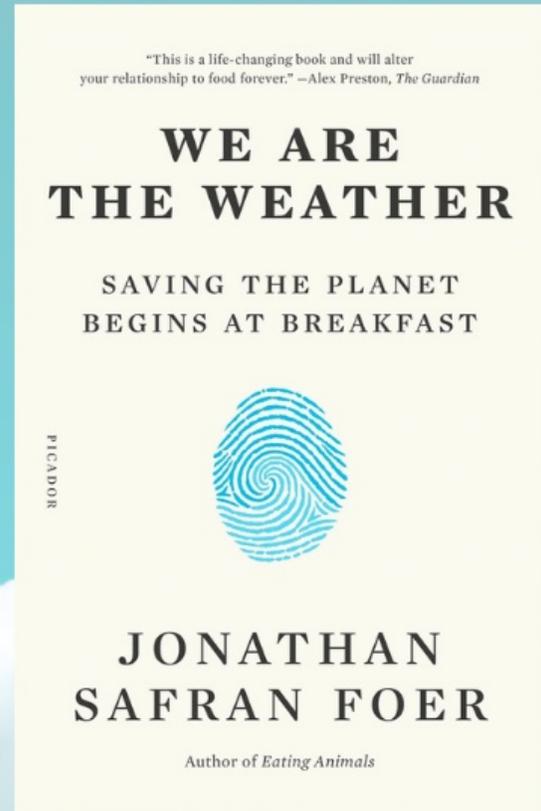
WANT TO SAVE THE PLANET?

Here are 3* things author
Jonathan Foer wants you to do:

1. Fly less
2. Drive less
3. Eat a plant-based diet

The top two are challenging.
The 3rd is totally do-able.

Take a pledge today to eat one, two or
three plant-based meals a day.



*There is a 4th action we can take.
Read the book to find out what it is!

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