Dear Community,

Censorship is on the rise in 2022. Libraries and school districts across the country are receiving challenges and bans at an unprecedented rate. A challenge is when an individual or group seeks to get a book removed, while a ban is an institutional decision that prevents people from accessing material. In some cases, schools and libraries are banning titles without reading them. This is unacceptable.

The American Library Association (ALA) reports that books are frequently banned for Black or LGBTQIA+ content. A total of 729 books were banned in 2020, double the number reported the previous year. The majority of these challenges came from the private sector, with 56% of challenges coming from families, individuals, and parents. Libraries are charged with protecting the freedom to read, but they are not always able to do so. We must work together to support libraries in protecting the freedom to read.

We celebrate the Book Ban Awareness Day on September 15. We are encouraging our communities to celebrate the freedom to read and the importance of libraries in protecting that freedom. We are inviting everyone to join us in celebrating this day and in protecting the freedom to read.

We hope you will join us in celebrating this day and in protecting the freedom to read. We are inviting everyone to join us in celebrating this day and in protecting the freedom to read.

Best, San Mateo County Libraries