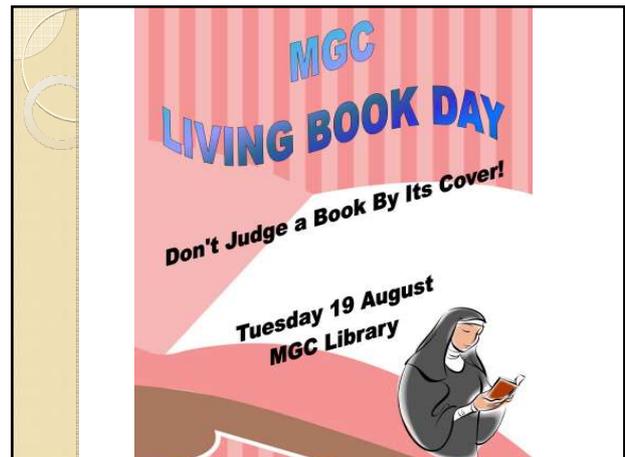


## HOSTING A LIVING LIBRARY



### Philosophy of Living Library

- Readers borrow “books” that are real people
- “Books” from all walks of life, but people you might not meet in your everyday life.
- “Books” may have prejudices against them in society due to handicaps, religion or job
- “Books” may have had interesting life experiences i.e. Immigrants, adventurers.

### Origin of Living Libraries

- First held at music festival in Denmark
- U.K. held their first Living Library in 2008
- Also held in Australia in NSW & Brisbane
- In 2008 LIANZA suggested it as part of Library Promotion Week
- Adopted that year by Wellington Public and MGC Libraries

### Getting school community on board

- Talk to Principal initially
- Inform the Board
- Talk to Faculty heads especially Health, Social Sciences, Media and English
- Talk to Guidance Counsellors
- Publicity to school students
- Publicity to wider community

### Timing is of the Essence

- Choose a non busy week
- Locate near an Assembly day
- Decide timing – 2 periods and lunch or 1 period and lunch
- Choose a time that fits with classes targeted and year 13 study
- Steer clear of a Monday

## Sourcing the Books

- Newspaper articles
- Immigrants Organisations
- Multicultural Organisations
- Disability Groups
- Internet, yellow pages
- Use your contacts. i.e. Staff, public librarians, soup kitchen, health nurses, church

## Books 2008

- Visually impaired woman with her Guide dog
- Old Girl who had been at college during war
- Catholic Nun
- Vietnam Veteran
- Hindu girl
- Muslim woman
- Woman with mental illness (schizophrenia)

## Books 2008 cont.

- Woman with severe dyslexia
- Police Youth Worker
- Eco-warrior (living with Orangutans in Borneo)
- Female Peace keeper (Afghanistan)
- Breast Cancer Survivor
- Canadian immigrant, social worker
- Paraplegic

## Books 2010

- Breast Cancer Survivor
- Ghana Native
- Wahine survivor and Veterinarian
- Barrister and local historian
- Police Officer, CIB, gay
- Local Minister of Parliament
- Whaler now conservationist
- Psychologist, Lesbian, Activist
- Man with his Guide Dog

## Preparation of your Books

- Send out invitation letters. Include an article about Living Libraries, confirmation letter listing chapters of book, and "Useful Hints for Books"
- Follow up with a phone call
- Acknowledge receipt of Book Questionnaire
- Ask if they need transport, letter for employer, reminder phone call.

Marlborough Girls' College  
21 McLauchlan Street  
Blenheim

12 July 2010

Dear

"Don't Judge a Book by its Cover"  
The "Living Book" Project at Marlborough Girls' College

Two years ago the team at the Marlborough Girls' College Library ran a "Living Book" project as part of National Library Promotion Week. The project was very successful and we wish to run the project again this year.

The "Living Book" concept involves bringing into the library people who have had unique life experiences or have careers or lifestyles that often have misconceptions attached to them. These people become our "books" and are "taken out" by registered borrowers (our students). The book and borrower have 30 minutes to talk frankly to each other and the experience for the borrower is rather like reading snippets of a biography. In our present multicultural environment it is healthy for the students to learn of the experiences of others. Students and "books" that took part previously found the experience rewarding with generation and stereotype barriers broken down.

We would like to invite you to take part in our "living book" day to add your story to our collection. We are holding our "Living Library" on Monday August 16<sup>th</sup> and you would be required from 1 p.m. to 3.15 p.m. We will begin with a briefing and hope you can stay after 3.15 p.m. to enjoy afternoon tea with other participants and staff. You may be involved in several discussions with one or two students in 30 minute slots. Attached are helpful hints for books, an article from an Australian paper and a questionnaire that will allow us to put together a "book review" for promotion prior to the event.

We hope you can join us for our "Living Library" and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Colleen Shipley  
Librarian  
Marlborough Girls' College  
[colleen@marlboroughgirls.co.nz](mailto:colleen@marlboroughgirls.co.nz)  
phone: (03)520-8448 ext 831

## Advertising

- Local paper
- School newsletter and website
- Talk at Assembly
- Notices on daily newsletters
- Display of “books” in Library
- Talk to classes visiting library
- Target specific classes
- Talk to student groups at lunch breaks

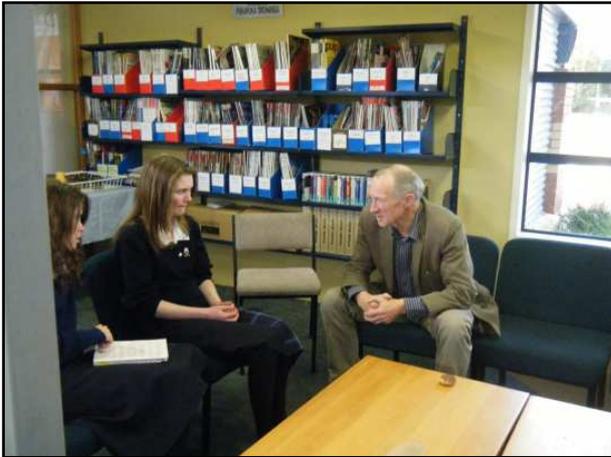
## Checklist for Big Day

- Reminder phone calls to books
- Booking sheets filled up for books
- Food, water, coffee
- Media contact, camera
- Thank you gifts
- Reminder notices to students
- Transport if necessary
- Evaluation sheets

## Further Reading

- <http://humanlibrary.org>
- [www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/dec/03/living-library-communities](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/dec/03/living-library-communities)
- <http://www.lanza.org.nz/resources/promote-libraries/living-library>
- Google “living library” & “human library”





## Books Evaluation Form

- Book name
- How many times were you borrowed
- How did you find the experience
- Would you take part in a similar event again
- Would you recommend it to friends

## Borrowers Evaluation Form

- What year are you in
- Which book did you borrow
- How did you find the experience
- Would you take part in a similar event again
- Would you recommend it to friends
- Reason for taking part – Class took part; own choice; encouraged by others

## Evaluation comments from Books

- Great to have the cross generational connection
- This is a good way to raise what can be “sensitive subjects” in a safe environment
- Rather humbling having to talk about oneself
- It was great to be able to share my experiences with a younger group of people

## Comments from Borrowers

- She gave me a great insight to her world
- I thought it would change my views on matters and it did
- She kind of inspired me
- Great – a lot better than reading a book
- Questions I could ask and finally feel comfortable asking and finding reasonable and truthful answers to

## Living Library

Give it a go – You'll be pleased you did