

TOWNSHIP OF MAPLEWOOD



RESOLUTION NO. 311-23

**RESOLUTION
COMMENDING AND SUPPORTING THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
MAPLEWOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY FOR ESTABLISHING THE
MAPLEWOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY AS A SANCTUARY FOR READING
AND DECLARING THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLEWOOD
AS A BOOK SANCTUARY MUNICIPALITY**

WHEREAS, Banned Books Week was launched in 1982 to highlight the value of free and open access to information, draw national attention to the harms of censorship, and bring together the entire book community — librarians, educators, authors, publishers, booksellers, and readers of all types — in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Banned Books Week is October 1st through 7th and the theme is “Let Freedom Read!”; and

WHEREAS, books do not require readers to agree with topics or themes but instead allow readers to explore and engage with differing perspectives to form and inform their own views; and

WHEREAS, over the last several years, there has been a significant increase in censorship activities in New Jersey and the United States resulting in books being removed from library shelves and schools, usually targeting books written by and about LGBTQ+ persons and People of Color; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Maplewood Memorial Library has declared their opposition to book bans and has issued the following statement:

The Maplewood Memorial Library celebrates and serves our diverse, dynamic, literate, library card-carrying town. We affirm the following democratic principles, adapted from the American Library Association’s historic Freedom to Read statement (1953):

1. The Maplewood Memorial Library will serve the public interest by making available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those considered irreverent, dangerous and unpopular by the majority.
2. The role of the library is to provide access to ideas and information to foster growth of the mind. These include ideas that may be provocative or controversial. We provide that access without endorsing or agreeing with every idea in circulation.
3. It is contrary to a democratic spirit and the free exchange of ideas to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. Likewise, it is contrary to a democratic spirit and the free exchange of ideas to label, judge, censor, and/or segregate works as subversive or dangerous and inhibit public access to controversial material.

We, the Maplewood Memorial Library Board of Trustees, embrace the freedom to read as a cornerstone of democracy. We affirm a diversity of experiences and perspectives, and recognize the equal humanity and dignity of all persons. As such, our programming and

collections will embrace, include, and celebrate a full spectrum of the human experience. We proudly establish our library as a sanctuary for reading.

1. We reject book bans and will provide full access to any challenged book.
2. We will host book talks, story times and other events that include and/or feature challenged books.
3. We will educate the public about the history of book banning and censorship.

We acknowledge and amplify the leadership of the Hoboken Free Public Library in rejecting a growing national climate of repression, censorship and surveillance that targets, in particular, BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) and LGBTQ+ themes and people. As such, we encourage our community to extend our Book Sanctuary efforts and

1. Host and join in-person or virtual banned book clubs.
2. Read, borrow, share and purchase challenged books.
3. Include challenged books in book clubs, story hours and Little Free Libraries.
4. Share the good news about challenged books on social media with #TheBookSanctuary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Maplewood, County of Essex, State of New Jersey that the Township Committee commends and supports the actions of the Board of Trustees of the Maplewood Memorial Library in declaring the Maplewood Memorial Library as a sanctuary for reading; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Committee declares the Township of Maplewood as a Book Sanctuary Municipality, where no book shall be banned, endangered books shall be protected, and all types of books shall be made accessible to all without regard to their content.

I, Elizabeth J. Fritzen, Township Clerk of the Township of Maplewood, in the County of Essex and State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Maplewood, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, at a regular meeting of said Committee held on October 3, 2023.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Township of Maplewood in the County of Essex and State of New Jersey, on this 3rd day of October, 2023.

ELIZABETH J. FRITZEN, R.M.C.
Township Clerk