



## Welcoming author Alex Gino

In early April, the library hosted Alex Gino, award-winning author of progressive middle-grade fiction, for three events at North Portland, Central, and Rockwood libraries. At Central Library, Alex was joined by local author April Daniels for a conversation about writing LGBTQ+ books for young people.

At the North Portland Library event, a Hollywood Library teen council member interviewed Alex and reflected on the experience:

“Getting to interview Alex was a super cool experience!” said one participant. “They were lovely and super cool and it was incredible to be in a room with so many people who were excited about their books, especially the younger kids who were exposed to books with trans characters before they were in middle school. It was also really meaningful to meet a nonbinary author and to hear their experiences and getting to see my own experiences as a nonbinary person reflected in the things that Alex talked about, including their experiences being misgendered and just general struggles around the gender binary.”

A large and enthusiastic crowd attended Alex's event at Rockwood Library, including a father who said during the Q&A that he was concerned about how hard life would be for his child who'd recently come out. Alex responded that his child already knows how hard it will be, and what the child needs to hear is that their parent loves and supports them.



## **Meet Elleona, Black Cultural Library Advocate Library Assistant at Central Library**

"The library is a place where anyone can foster creative ideas," says Elleona, a Black Cultural Library Advocate and Library Assistant at Central Library.

Elleona, who identifies as nonbinary, has been learning various parts of library work — everything from helping regular patrons at St. Johns Library find titles, to leading outreach work in the Black community — for the past three years.

Elleona joined the library as an access services assistant after graduating from Lincoln High School in downtown Portland. As a student, they gravitated toward history and language courses, including learning Spanish, Korean, Mandarin and

Arabic. Elleona's rigorous academic curriculum continues, as they pursue a degree at Portland State University in International Relations and Conflict Resolution, with a minor in Chinese.

"When I first started my job at the library, I hadn't been back in eight years! I had so many fines from my youth and had been worried I wouldn't be able to use anything so I avoided it. I happily learned that the library had waived all youth fines and started a new policy so that no youth would accrue fines going forward."

Today, Elleona, who says they originally loved the idea of working at a library because of a love for books and working with people, now appreciates it because they have an opportunity to help people feel welcome and to connect patrons with library services and resources.

"One experience that was very meaningful for me was connecting with a patron who had recently been incarcerated," said Elleona. "The library was one of her first stops. She wanted help finding career resources, and I was able to listen and talk with her, but also recommend materials in addition to other services the library offers. She told me the experience was so positive and had helped her feel welcome to come back."

Now, as a Black Cultural Library Advocate, Elleona is joining other staff from around the library to identify ways to improve collections and services for the Black community. Sometimes, that means creating library displays featuring poetry by queer and trans people of color. Other times, it means organizing large-scale events to provide opportunities for discussion about topics such as the African diaspora.

"I want to help start conversations. I want everyone to walk into a library and think *'this is a place for me.'*"

Elleona's recommended reading:

[The Book Thief](#) by Markus Zusak

[The Clean Room series](#) by Gail Simone

[My Sister, the Serial Killer](#) by Oyinkan Braithwaite

## Bike to Books 2019

Throughout May, the library is partnering with the Portland Bureau of Transportation for Bike to Books, an annual celebration of National Bike Month, to encourage youth and adults to bike to their local library. Students in PreK - 12th grade can enter the [Bike to Books design contest](#) by re-imagining bike lane art. Three grand prize winners will have their designs added to a Portland street.

*Photo: 2018 Bike to Books winner Cyrus poses next to his winning bike lane art.*



## Library partners with Hollywood Theatre for “Kiki” documentary screening

In honor of the International Transgender Day of Visibility, the library hosted more than 300 people for a screening of the 2016 documentary “Kiki” at Hollywood Theater. The event was hosted in partnership with Multnomah County's LGBTQ+ employee resource group PRISM.

The documentary, described by David Sims in the *Atlantic* as "a beautiful celebration of a subculture that's still struggling to win the full respect it deserves," was followed by an engaging and honest panel discussion among members of Portland's ballroom community: Maarquii, Bouton Volonte, Daniel Giron, and Brandon Harrison. Special thanks goes to Hollywood Theatre's Anthony Hudson for help coordinating the event.

## Patron comments

“Community is what we are. Staying involved with the community makes it what it is. Feeling very welcome at the community library is special. The staff knows me by my first and last name and makes me feel apart. I get to share about the Humanities in Perspective program I’m a part of, and I also volunteer. The Rockwood Library is my second family. . .I feel like I belong at the Rockwood Library. The library represents the languages and ages of this community. Librarians care about privacy and intellectual freedom, empowering people to read and study what they want. I’ve always felt welcomed by everybody at the library but the more time you spend, the more their hearts spoken toward you. They are busy but they acknowledge you.” — Kimberly, Rockwood Library patron (*an excerpt from an essay she wrote for her class and then shared with library staff*)

“Librarian Shanda was helping with my MANY questions and issues regarding the new MCL computer interface. I want to note how kind, patient, friendly and helpful she was. We spent quite a lot of time on this adventure!” — Northwest Library patron

"The Street Roots creative writing - poetry reading event was a real pleasure. To hear voices, that often feel ignored, share such powerful emotions through poetry and the written word... it is inspiring. Thank you to the facilitators - like Karen - for organizing such a special event. A true sign that the Portland library is a special place for the housed and houseless and all of the Portlandian community." — Vince, Central patron

## In the news

[Central Library to Host 'The Immigrant Story' Exhibits Beginning May 11](#) (The Skanner, May 6)

[Multnomah County Library Helps Publish Local Author](#) (The Skanner, April 20)

[Celebrate kids and books](#) (Gresham Outlook, April 10)

## Upcoming events

Note: *Programming is limited at some locations in May due to library staff training*

[Talk Time: For Non-Native Speakers to Practice English](#)

Saturday, May 18 at 3:30 pm  
Midland Library

[Teen Mental Health Fair](#)

Sunday, May 19 at 1pm  
Gresham Library

[Children's Folk Songs from the Rural South](#)

Saturday, June 1 at 11am  
Central Library

[Portland Opera Preview: The Barber of Seville](#)

Sunday, June 2 at 2 pm  
Collins Gallery at Central Library

[Healthy Soups and Salads: Cooking Class for Teens](#)

Tuesday, June 4 at 5 pm  
Troutdale Library

[Community Benefit Workshop: Ready to Own a Home?](#)

Tuesday, June 4 at 6 pm  
Albina Library

[Vanport's Step-Sibling Guild's Lake Courts](#)

Saturday, June 8 at 3 pm  
Kenton Library

[Декоративное мыло своими руками / Decorative Soap Making](#) (program

conducted in Russian)  
Sunday, June 9 at 2 pm  
Gresham Library