

Drag Queen Story Hour FAQ

In 2019 over 2,300 story times were delivered across Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries' 15 locations. Of those, the library district presented three Drag Queen Story Hours (DQSH) – two at Vancouver Community Library, and one was offered off-site as part of the annual Vancouver Saturday in the Park Pride event at Esther Short Park. The performers were paid by the Friends of the Vancouver Community Library, not tax-payer dollars. Staff were paid by FVRL or volunteered at the events. No further DQSH programs have been held since.



What is a Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH)?

A person dressed in drag, under the guidance of a children's librarian, reads books on inclusion, equity and acceptance to families who choose to attend the event.

What books were read at the DQSH performance?

- *Teddy's Favorite Toy* by Christian Trimmer
- *Every-Day Dress-Up* by Selina Alko
- *Worm Loves Worm* by JJ Austrian
- *Be Who You Are* by Todd Parr
- *Except When They Don't* by Laura Gehl

Why did FVRLibraries offer the program?

Not all families are alike - some have two moms, two dads, single parents, grandparents, foster parents, etc. All children deserve to see their lives reflected in the library's materials and programs.

We believe it is important for interested families to have the opportunity to meet people in their community that offer different perspectives on self-identity.

The Drag Queen Story Hour was offered outside of our regular programming schedule and promoted as what it was - a drag queen story hour. No one could have attended under a mistaken premise of what was being offered.

When will FVRL offer another DQSH?

FVRL has no additional DQSH programs planned at this time.

Will FVRL agree to never host another DQSH?

Library activities and materials that highlight the LGBTQAI++ community are essential for children who may not otherwise see themselves or their families reflected in the broader culture. Even though we currently have no plans to offer DQSH again, the three programs we did in 2019 were well attended and many have asked when we will offer it again.

What preschool programs are the libraries offering now?

FVRL is back to hosting storytimes for children ages zero to five at all locations, six days a week. We believe it is important to highlight many kinds of diversity and are working toward that goal in our library programming. Our focus is on building equity for all individuals facing barriers to inclusion, as part of our commitment to our current strategic plan.

We respect the rights of all parents and caregivers to choose what is right for their families. FVRL offers a variety of literacy activities each month for readers of all ages, both in person and online. We encourage everyone to seek out library programs that are right for them.

Are FVRLibraries performers background checked?

We take the safety of our patrons very seriously. As a result of conversations with the public about the DQSH performances, starting on January 1, 2020, we required background checks FOR ALL of our volunteers, performers and presenters, regardless of whether they are working with children or adults. At no time are any of our performers left alone with children while they are at the library.

Can I make a comment about DQSH?

Yes. You can email our Board at trustees@fvrl.org with your comments (all comments are shared with the full board). You can also sign up to speak at our monthly Board Meeting, but the opportunity to comment on items not on the agenda may be limited.

Information about upcoming Board of Trustees meetings is on our website at:

<https://www.fvrl.org/board-trustees>