**Human books talk climate**

*A series of unique HalifACT events provide an opportunity to chat about climate-related topics with the walking, talking “book” of your choice.*

by Joy Samuel, Climate Story Network

Where can you go to have one-on-one, climate-relevant conversations on topics such as climate proofing your home, caring for your local river, and container gardening, all at the same place? A human library, of course.

Likely not your first guess, this novel take on sharing climate-related solutions and ideas is a creative concept that HalifACT — the municipality’s community plan to act on climate change — along with partner agencies Halifax Public Libraries, the Ecology Action Centre, and Every One Every Day, is holding over three pop-up events in March and April 2024 (as a lead-up to Earth Fest). Earth Fest is an series of climate-focused events taking place between April 18-22.

At the human library pop-ups, the public will be able to “read”’ the experiences and stories of people in the format of a human book. Imagine walking into a room to speak with a “librarian” who will show you around the space and help you check out the “book” of your choice, after which you’ll get to sit down for a conversation with your chosen community climate expert.

The upcoming events, to be held in Tantallon, Sackville, and Musquodoboit, will build on the success of the first HalifACT Human Library, held in November 2023. Megan Fong, a Junior Environmental Professional with HalifACT, and one of the event organizers, was also labeled as a book about finding a green job. She described the experience as a unique and important one that encouraged conversations with people she says she “may never have otherwise come into contact with”.

“Ninety per cent of Canadians believe that climate change is real but the vast majority of them are unsure about what to do and the solutions that it takes — and that’s obviously a huge issue,” Fong says.

The human book concept, featuring climate action champions, could play a unique role in addressing the questions of “Is it too late?” and “Does what I do matter?” Questions that came up during a series of 16 public engagements held in libraries across the municipality in Winter 2023.

Emma Norton, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the ReCover Initiative, joined the first human library event as a book on how to form a neighbourhood climate group. In addition to conversations she had with attendees, she also mentioned how empowering it felt to see a room filled with people working on climate solutions.

“It can be really easy to be siloed in my own space,” she says. “Human connection is really important. Hearing about other people’s passions can help remind me of my own.”

The three upcoming pop-ups will be taking place in communities which recently experienced intense climate change impacts such as flooding and fires. Each event will showcase 5-6 unique books who will speak to one of the following themes: climate resiliency, home energy savings, food security, and community. The Earth Fest Pop-Up Human Libraries are open to all and will be held at:

* Tantallon Public Library, March 26, 5-9 p.m
* Musquodoboit Harbour Library, March 27, 4-8 p.m
* Sackville Public Library, April 2, 2-6 p.m

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*The Climate Story Network is an initiative of Climate Focus, a non-profit organization dedicated to covering stories about community-driven climate solutions.*