

Honoring the Legacy of

Martin Luther King Jr.



Monday we celebrate as a nation the profound and lasting legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Many government offices will be closed. The Library, however, will enthusiastically open its doors to everyone. We can think of no better way to honor MLK's commitment to equity and justice than to provide free access to the world of ideas on this important day.

The public library was founded on the principle that in order for the great American Experiment of democracy to succeed, every citizen should have free and equal access to lifelong education. Make no mistake. The Public Library as an institution has not always lived up to its principles. Segregation in libraries was common in southern states until the 1970s and many activists gave their lives to establish Freedom Libraries to provide excluded African Americans with access to books. Library staff, library boards, and library collections still do not adequately reflect the communities we serve. Barriers to service still exist, however subtle. Much change still needs to happen if we aspire to live up to the principles on which we were founded.

As we begin a new year, Kenosha Public Library commits to improvement in service equity, staff and board diversity, and fostering a more inclusive environment in all our branches. I invite you to help us achieve these goals and become the best public library we can be for every person in every neighborhood of this city. If we truly believe that a strong democracy requires an educated citizenry, we cannot fail.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Bower".

Director, Kenosha Public Library