

I'm Your Neighbor Welcoming Library  
Sample Press Release

YOUR LOCATION is hosting the I'm Your Neighbor Welcoming Library until DATE. The I'm Your Neighbor Welcoming Library (IYNWL) is a collection of acclaimed children's picture books featuring the immigrant, refugee, or "new arrival" experience. YOUR LOCATION is just one stop for this traveling library that is visiting schools and public libraries throughout the state.

Given the national conversation about immigration, the IYNWL seeks to raise awareness and build sensitivity for all ages through children's literature. American poet and author Amit Majmudar said in a *New York Times* essay that the, "true meeting takes place when the book opens, and a stranger reads about — and comprehends — a stranger." This is the mission of the IYNWL, to allow readers to both meet a stranger and see themselves.

Studies have shown that reading builds empathy [<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/novel-finding-reading-literary-fiction-improves-empathy/>] and that cross-racial scenes [<http://www.slj.com/2014/05/diversity/how-cross-racial-scenes-in-picture-books-build-acceptance/#>] in picture books build acceptance. Making this collection of 28 picture books available at no cost to schools and libraries, IYNWL lifts the financial barrier to reading and sharing these important books.

Each book contains a discussion guide affixed to the inside back cover to facilitate engagement in the topics of diversity and welcoming. Whether it is a parent discussing a picture book with a child or a classroom gathered for a read-aloud, these books will foster crucial discussions on what it means to arrive in a new culture, country, or community. Readers who are "new arrivals" themselves may see their cultures reflected in the narratives in this collection.

I'm Your Neighbor [[myourneighborbooks.org](http://myourneighborbooks.org)] is a larger literacy movement founded in Maine to draw attention to immigration children's literature and to its potential to start sometimes difficult conversations about who belongs here, welcoming, assimilation, and how to celebrate all families.

The I'm Your Neighbor Welcoming Library was funded by a grant from the Maine Public Library Fund. The project is managed by the Bowdoinham Public Library and Maine's Curious City, the administrator of I'm Your Neighbor.