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## The Children's Book Bank Urges Support for *A Story Like Mine* on October 19—Multicultural Diversity Day

*Project to Raise Awareness, Funds for Low-Income Children in Multnomah County*

PORTLAND, Ore. - When it comes to cultural diversity, Portland, Oregon isn't usually considered a melting pot. According to most recent [U.S. Census](#) information, the Portland metro area is nine percent Latino, seven percent Asian, and just six percent African American. Yet the [2014 Poverty in Multnomah County Report](#) reveals that communities of color account for 44 percent of people living in poverty in the Portland area, making culturally specific outreach an important part of social services. When it comes to providing books to children, though, [The Children's Book Bank](#), a nonprofit serving low-income children, struggles to provide the multicultural books children really need.

"The reality is, when donors bring us books, less than one percent of them have multicultural content," said Dani Swope, The Children's Book Bank founder and executive director. "When you consider nearly 75 percent of the children we serve in Multnomah County are Latino, African-American, Asian, and Native American, our supply of culturally relevant books doesn't even come close to meeting the need. We are hoping to bridge this gap with our 'A Story Like Mine' project."

### ***A Story Like Mine***

The Children's Book Bank is hoping to raise awareness with new and existing donors about the lack of multicultural books with *A Story Like Mine*—a [dedicated project](#) with a goal of bolstering availability of culturally diverse books, primarily by increasing donor dollars to purchase multicultural books in bulk, at a reduced rate. The need for multicultural books in Multnomah County inspired the [Portland Timbers Community Fund](#), [Advantis Credit Union](#), and [Junior League of Portland](#) to provide generous grants to the project, totaling \$15,500.

**Multicultural  
Diversity Day**  
October 19, 2015  
***A Story Like Mine*  
Event**  
10-11 a.m.  
KairosPDX  
3635 N. Williams  
Portland, OR

"'A Story Like Mine' is a program that truly resonates with the Portland Timbers and Portland Thorns FC," said Kristel Wissel, Portland Timbers and Portland Thorns FC director of community relations. "We are thrilled to help support the Children's Book Bank's Multicultural Diversity Day."



### ***Importance of Multicultural Diverse Books***

The benefits of culturally diverse children's books are difficult to argue. According to [First Book](#), more than 90 percent of children become enthusiastic readers when they see literary characters who look like them

or who share their cultural heritage. Children connect better to books, learn more respect for others, and become more curious about the world when they read culturally diverse books. Unfortunately, two-thirds of low-income families—many of which are in the cultural minority—don't own any books for their children, much less books that reflect their lives and culture. With nearly one in five urban preschoolers living below the federal poverty level, the need for books is huge.

“Supporting childhood literacy efforts is critical to the overall health of our community—and certainly for us in the business sector,” said Wendy Edwards, senior vice president/chief administrative officer of Advantis Credit Union. “We have an opportunity to support Portland’s increasingly diverse population, knowing these are our neighbors and future leaders.”

### ***A Story Like Mine***

*A Story Like Mine* is an ongoing project of The Children’s Book Bank, kicking off this fall. This year the goal is to include five culturally relevant books in each bundle of 10-14 books for 1,000 (of a total 4,000) children of color that they serve and to set the foundation to eventually include culturally diverse books in *all* of the book bundles.

### ***The Children’s Book Bank***

In low-income neighborhoods, the ratio of books to children is one book for every 300 children, far below the ratio of 13 books per child in middle-income neighborhoods. The Children's Book Bank closes this book gap by gathering tens of thousands of new and gently-used books from the community each year and engaging hundreds of volunteers to help clean, sort, and distribute the books to low-income children, free of charge. Since 2008, The Children’s Book Bank has delivered more than 510,000 books to more than 41,000 local children in need, giving these at-risk kids tools to develop the language skills they need to become future readers, learners, and citizens. For more information call 503.616.3981 or visit [childrensbookbank.org](http://childrensbookbank.org).

### ***About Kairos PDX***

KairosPDX is a non-profit organization focused on delivering excellent, equitable education to historically underserved children, their families and their communities. Through innovative pedagogy, community collaboration and family partnership they are closing Portland’s persistent achievement and opportunity gaps in measurable, sustainable ways while cultivating the next generation of confident, creative, compassionate, leaders. KairosPDX has been a champion for diverse children’s books and has curated a culturally specific book list that has been shared with the Multnomah County HUB, Portland Public Schools and other Early Childhood partners. For more information, visit [kairospdx.org](http://kairospdx.org).

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