



We Stories: Reflections on Race and Diversity in Children's Literature

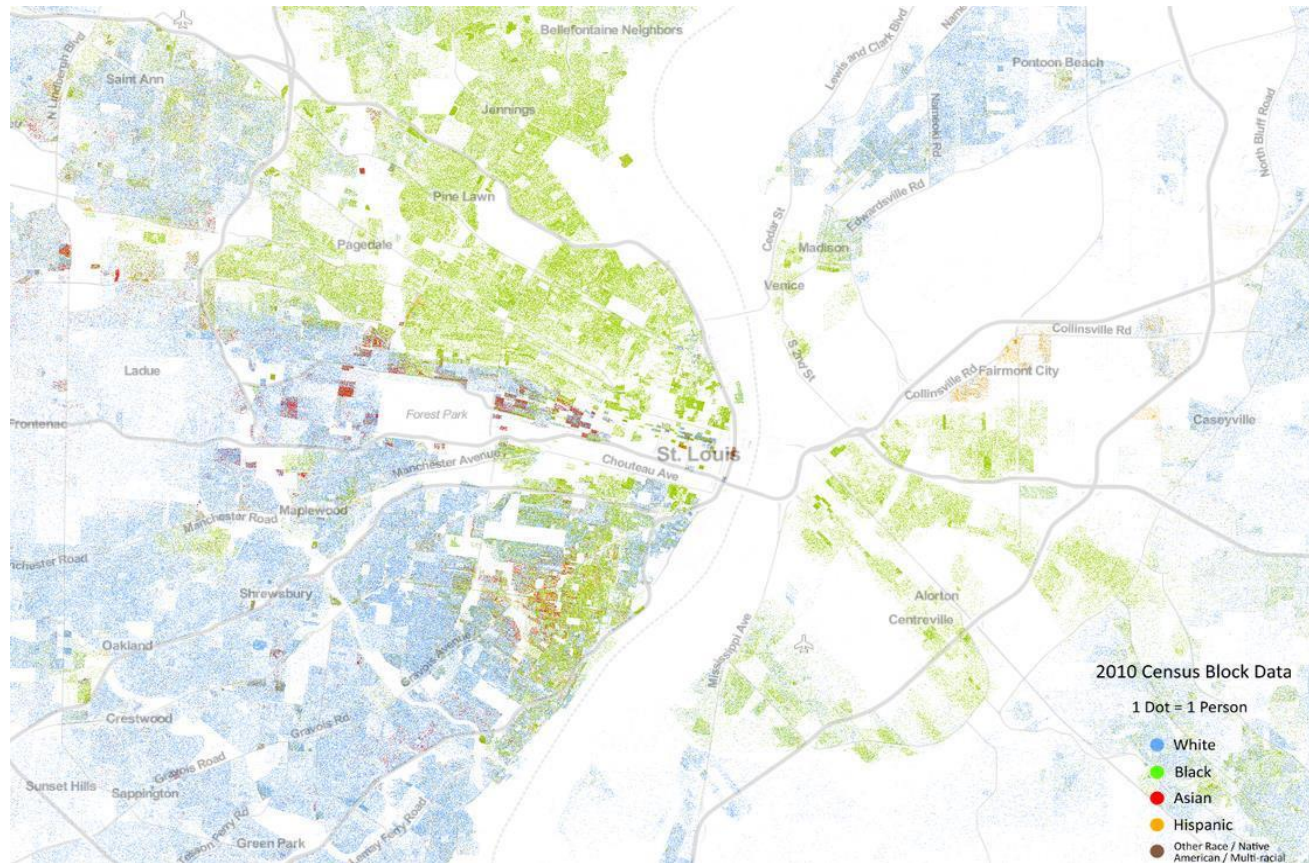


Today, we will...

- Tell you about a unique, and highly replicable, library partnership that gives parents tools to talk to their children about race and racism.
- Suggest resources to increase your library's collection of diverse children's literature.

Starting Points

Why here, why now, why this approach







Why We Stories

- What We Know about the Formation of Bias
 - age 6 mos
 - age 3 years
 - age 5 years
 - age 7 years
- Three Ways to Decrease Bias
 - Explicit conversation
 - History of discrimination and bias
 - And increasing cross-race exposure, even through books.

We Stories started with books... the library was the “incubator”



What is We Stories?

We Stories: Raising Big-Hearted Kids

is a growing organization that uses the power of children's literature to create conversation, change and hope in St. Louis and a stronger, more equitable and inclusive future for all.

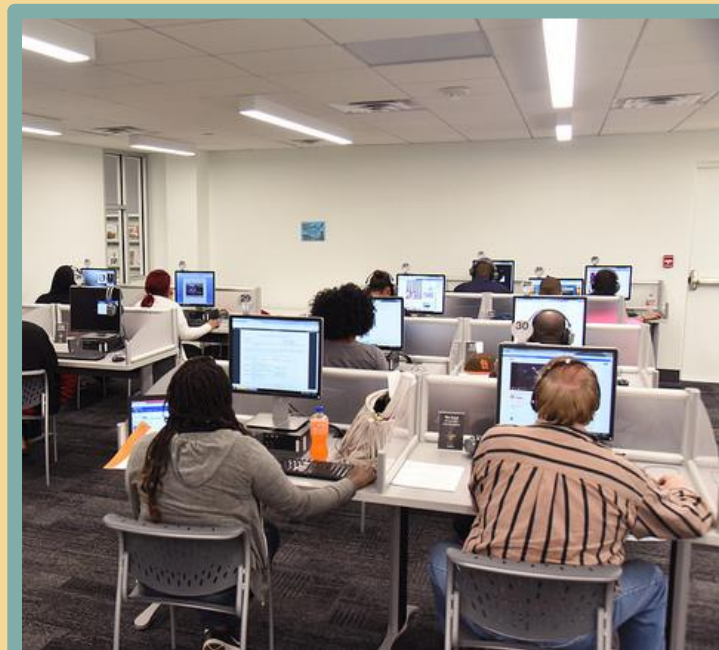
The Family Learning Program provides:

- Books that feature diverse characters
- Resources for parents
- And community building

Collaboration Beginning



St. Louis County Library's Strategic Plan
Diversity initiatives • Collections • Outreach



We Stories at the Library



- Kits
- Collection
- Excitement
- Engagement

We Stories Misconceptions



- Intended for only one audience
- Segregated collections
- Only available in diverse branches

The Strength of Partnership

For St. Louis County Library

- Diversity
- Meeting Strategic Plan goals
- Focus

For We Stories

- Credibility
- Reach
- Accessibility
- Institutional Leadership/Heft

Results and Reach

- St. Louis County Library currently offers 275 We Stories kits to area families
- Shifting how easy it is to find diverse titles and how normal it is to seek them out
- Expanding the library collection (4,000+ books) to reach older children and children of color
- We Stories is exploring schools partnerships and discussing the role the library might play
- Received press from major STL press outlets and The Christian Science Monitor.

“People would be surprised by the impact that simply diversifying your home library can have. The dialogues that can come out of reading books with pictures of people (and places) not like ourselves are incredibly powerful, and my hope is that they have a lasting impact beyond these formative years for my kids.”



Our Vision: A New Story for St. Louis



- Establishing a NEW NORMAL for family life in the St. Louis region that is diverse, inclusive and equitable
- Thousands of families in 5 years affiliated with We Stories, standing together for change.
- Institutions – libraries, schools and other family-serving organizations – leaning in and leading on racial equity.

St. Louis Today



Potential for Your Community



How to Get Started with a Library

- Indicate that diverse books are important for all families
 - Visible displays
 - Kits
 - Author visits
 - *Books N Bros* and *Nerdy Girlz*
- Introduce opportunities for families to learn together...and alongside you.
 - Story times
 - Engagement Opportunities
- Lead by example and don't count people out.
 - Build relationships with local leaders and activists
 - Don't wait to be asked by patrons to expand your collection.

Please contact us to find out more

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St. Louis County Library
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