All About Lake Oswego Reads

Read what our authors have to say about the program, how it all comes together and more about the programs from the last six years...

Our Authors

“When I saw the lineup of programs for Lake Oswego Reads, I wept. The honor, care, attention, and depth of connection to the spirit of Running the Rift overwhelmed me. When I got to Lake Oswego and saw the beautiful blue banners for Lake Oswego Reads hanging all over town, I smiled. I kept smiling for my entire visit. It was like being in a dream I never wanted to wake from. I felt wrapped in a bubble of care, buoyed on the wings of the town’s impressions of my book. What a truly amazing month of events! I can’t begin to explain how honored I feel, not just that Running the Rift was selected, but that an entire community traveled through its words to the small East African country of Rwanda and returned with its beauty, its food, its indescribable spirit. I am going to invent a machine, a sort of circular time machine that lets me replay February 2013 over and over and over again. Either that or hurry up and finish my next novel and pray that it gets selected for Lake Oswego Reads. THANK YOU!!”
--**Naomi Benaron, author of** Running the Rift

“Other than the fistfights, and the broken glass, and the Town Tattoo Day idea which went completely awry – no one should have a tattoo of Ken Kesey on his or her neck, no one – I was awed by the incredible welter of LO Reads events. To draw in and stimulate and engage and absorb and interest and excite citizens of every age and stage, to make it a celebration not of the author or even the book but of storytelling, storycatching, community, and creativity at play in so many ways – that was the deft genius of the program, the essence of its remarkable accomplishment. It’s different every year, but it grows more and more inclusive and stimulating. That’s amazing, and to be absolutely honest, that is a treasure."
--Brian Doyle, author of Mink River

"This was an absolutely fantastic visit, a dream from an author’s point of view. Having this extremely well-read, literate and engaged community pick my book, *Cutting for Stone*, and then discuss it and aspects of it in a month long celebration culminating with my visit—what more can one ask? Combine that with a lovely setting, terrific hosts and a program that works like a Swiss clock, and you have one of the best experiences an author can have."
--Abraham Verghese, author of Cutting for Stone

“Your Lake Oswego community has surpassed any other community that we have been involved in. What you are doing is inspiring communities all across the country.”
--Greg Mortenson, author of Three Cups of Tea

“It had to be one of the most amazing reader programs I’ve ever seen, and I’ve done a lot of them.”

--David Oliver Relin, author of Three Cups of Tea

"My narrator ... would have fully known the value of a community read such as Lake Oswego's spirited one, all the way from its linguistic beginnings. "Communitas," the root of our usage of "community"—these several meanings are given: sharing, partnership, social ties, fellowship, togetherness. What better rewards than these could readers and writer alike ask for, by way of the blessed common ground of reading?
--Ivan Doig, author of The Whistling Season

When a city comes together to read and discuss the same book, they create the sorts of bonds that make a true community. This is the goal behind the Lake Oswego Reads program, and the Lake Oswego Public Library would like to invite you to join us next January.

About Lake Oswego Reads

What is the purpose of this program?
To provide an enjoyable common reading experience for the entire city of Lake Oswego and promote the public library as an educational and cultural hub for the community. This program is designed to bring the community together by inviting participants to read a novel and enjoy a series of events which expand on the cultural, social and political themes that tie that novel together.

Who can participate?
Anyone high school aged or older.

What would I be required to do?
Read the book, discuss it and/or attend events. These events are conveniently located and free of charge.

What are the book selection criteria for Lake Oswego Reads?
The selected book must:
• Be for high school aged readers and older.
• Appeal to a wide range of readers.
• Strengthen civic pride, foster discussion among residents, and bring the community together through the common bond of reading.
• Offer opportunities for additional citywide special events.
• Be affordable and available in paperback, audiobook, eBook and large print formats.
• Author available to speak.

Who selects the book?
The Steering Committee for Lake Oswego Reads, consisting of librarians, community leaders, high school English teachers and high school students. The book is selected from many different suggestions from the public and the committee.

Previous Lake Oswego Reads Titles

2007 — The Shadow of the Wind **by Carlos Ruiz Zafón**
In honor of Zafón's tale of mystery and intrigue in Barcelona, we held events celebrating Spanish culture, history and cuisine. Frequent discussion groups on the novel complemented a special art exhibit by local artists and students, a lecture by the author, a concert of Spanish music by the Lake Oswego Millennium Concert Band, Sangria Saturdays at Graham's Book & Stationery, a special night of Spanish cuisine at Tucci and more.

2008 — Three Cups of Tea **by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin**
Greg Mortenson's story of building schools for girls in Pakistan after an attempt to climb K2 inspired the community to learn more about rural Pakistan and its culture. Events included a special tea-infused dinner at FiveSpice Bistro, a Pakistani Market, a Himalayan tea tasting, a harrowing lecture by a Pakistani immigrant, cooking classes focused on Pakistani cuisine, lectures by the authors, and charity drives.

2009 — Stubborn Twig **by Lauren Kessler**
Kessler's account of one Japanese family's struggles with racism in Oregon during World War II drove us to study all aspects of Japan and Japanese immigrants. Featuring a personal account of the Japanese internment camps, a

speech by Lauren Kessler, a demonstration of traditional brush calligraphy, a concert by renowned koto master Mitsuki Dazai, mah jong and origami lessons, and a re-enactment of the trial of Minoru Yasui, the Lake Oswego community embraced all aspects of the story.

2010 — The Whistling Season **by Ivan Doig**
To complement Ivan Doig's old-fashioned story of education and intrigue on the prairie, we hosted events that evoked the time-period and themes central to the plot. From an old-fashioned hoe down and horse show to a police captain's talk about people living secret lives in Lake Oswego and even a spelling bee, we brought the novel to life in our community.

2011 — Cutting for Stone **by Abraham Verghese**
The story of twin brothers born to a doctor and a nun and orphaned at birth, the book spans decades and generations, moving through history and hospitals in India, Ethiopia and America. The community explored the novel through art exhibits by local artists and students, Ethiopian coffee and cuisine, Indian dance demonstrations, guest talks about Ethiopian culture and history, discussions of contemporary health issues, and a presentation by the author.

2012 — Mink River **by Brian Doyle**
The story of the small Oregon coast town of Neawanaka and its people was the perfect book to do a community read and celebrate a book that was written by one of our own Lake Oswego residents, Brian Doyle. There were a total of 31 programs at 20 venues and a whopping 10,000 participants. Of the 31 events, 28 were free, including a barbecue dinner that tied into the book attended by 600 people. During February there was an opportunity to learn Gaelic, have a "cow" barbecue, listen to opera, learn about crows, see 25 artists' paintings inspired by the book, ride a bicycle with the mayor, see a photo exhibition inspired by the book, and visit the Public Works Department and operate a piece of heavy equipment. There was such a sense of happiness and friendliness during the entire month.

2013 — Running the Rift **by Naomi Benaron**

The book tells the story of Jean Patrick Nkuba, a gifted Rwandan boy, from the day he knows that running will be his life to the moment he must run to save his life, a ten-year span in which his country is undone by the Hutu-Tutsi tensions. While Running the Rift was the centerpiece of Lake Oswego Reads, the 28 events in 28 days offered lectures, Rwandan music & food, book discussions, art and photo shows and fun activities including an 8K fun run. Nineteen local artists and many high school art students displayed original artwork based on their reading of Running the Rift. Three Lewis & Clark College Rwandan exchange students shared their experiences. Thanks to the Friends of the Library, Naomi Benaron spoke at the Lake Oswego High School auditorium to 600 people. The nationally recognized, award winning Lake Oswego Reads program brought our community together for the seventh time during February with over 12,000 people in Lake Oswego reading and/or participating in the community reading program.

More information: 503.675.2538

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