

Abbie Tarvin
INFO 287: The Hyperlinked Library
Inspiration Report
Summer 2026

Listen, Read, Connect Program



Introduction: The Power of Stories

"Here's who I am, this is what we have in common, and here's what we're going to do about it" (Commons Library).

Essentially, there is a challenge or phenomenon at hand, storytelling can allow the community to find common ground and cause the "self" to take action.

Introduction: The Power of Stories

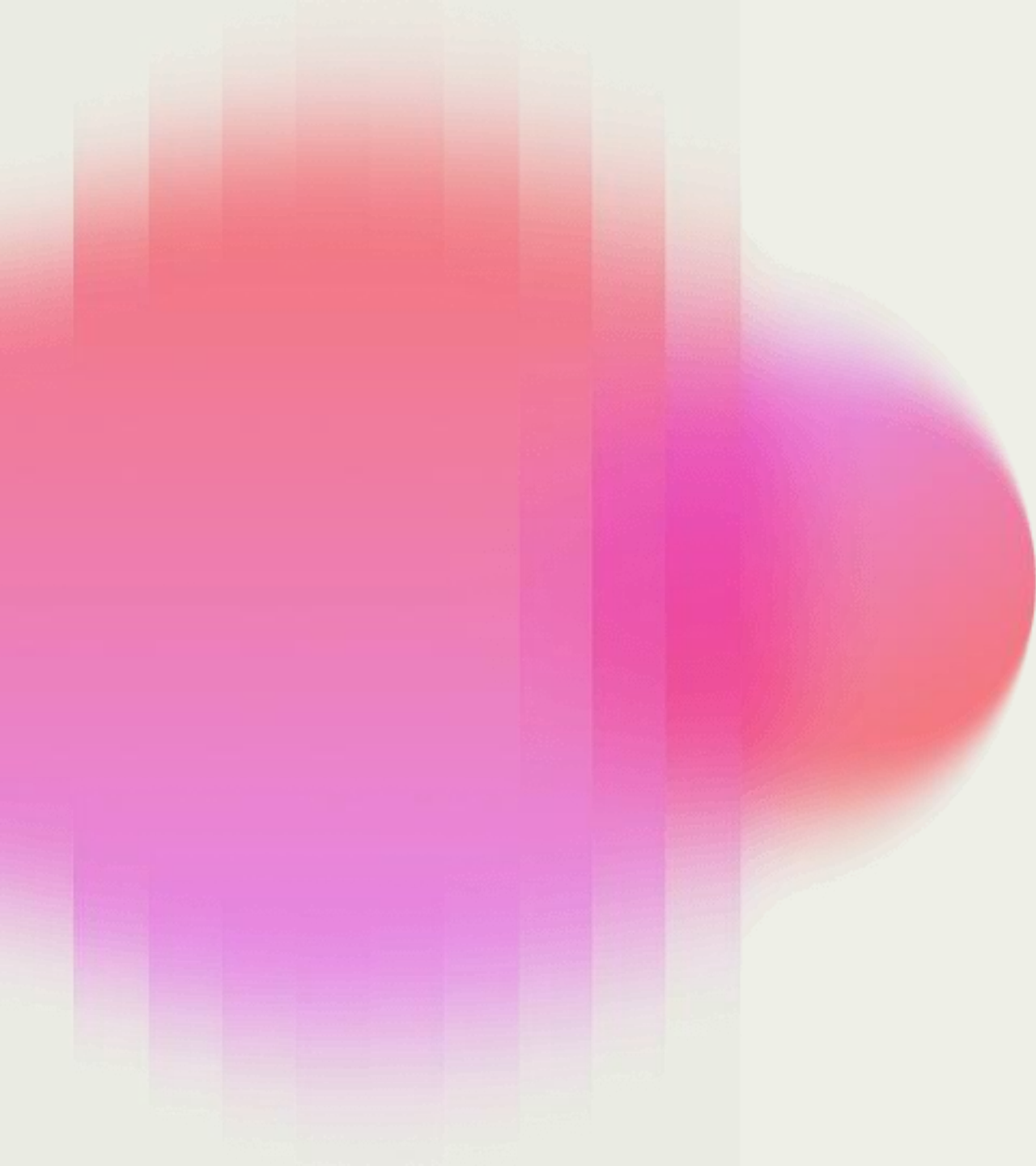
Stories have the power to connect people and transform lives. Libraries have always been part of storytelling; the role has just expanded over time. Instead of only housing stories for patrons to consume, libraries have taken a more active position by allowing for patrons to share their stories too.

The public library's primary goal in 2026 is to ensure that everyone is welcome. It has been difficult to change the narrative of how the library functions today for the public, funders, and administrations (Paxaman, 2019).

Executive Summary



The Listen, Read, Connect (LRC) program is a program held monthly at the Guntersville Public Library (GPL). The program combines a silent book club with a human library event. LRC's goal is to cultivate a safe space for individuals to listen, read, and connect with others at their desired pace.



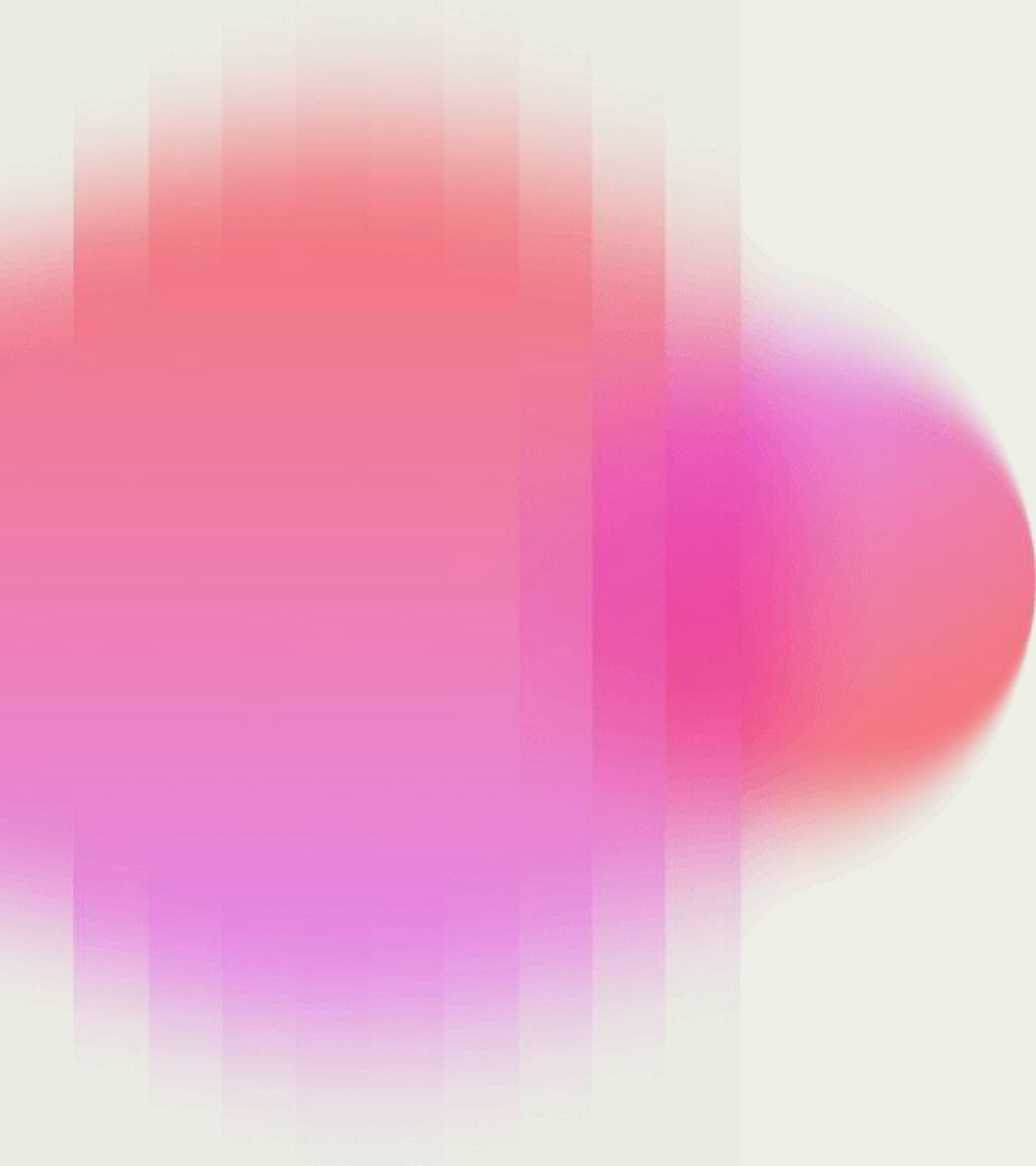
Inspiration

A major inspiration for this program comes from an event held in Huntsville, Alabama, which is a neighboring city to Guntersville (about an hour drive away). This event is called Silent Book Club Huntsville, and it is marketed as a book club for introverts. There is no required reading, it is just a group of people reading their own personal individual materials—be that an audiobook, physical book, magazine, ebook, etc. There is no pressure to interact with anyone else.

<https://www.instagram.com/sbchsv/?hl=en>

Human Libraries

Another major inspiration for this program is the human library concept. This was first founded in Denmark in 2000 and has spread globally (Wentz, 2013). Essentially, there will be people assigned as "book" and they will have their own preface to help patrons choose which person to "check out." After being "checked out," the patron and human book have a set amount of time to interact. The conversation is meant to be organic, so they may not even talk about what was included in the human book's preface. This practice helps people understand diversity, equity, and inclusion on a deeper level (Arne-Skidmore, 2021). Human libraries work perfectly for public libraries as they model the same intentions (Wentz, 2013).



Implementation

Location: GPL library lab / community center

Time: Every first Thursday from 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM

5:30-7:30 PM: Silent Book Club—Patrons can bring their own reading materials to read silently in the lab together. Staying quiet will be encouraged so that others will not be disturbed.

Human Library—During the Silent Book Club, there will be another option to participate in the human library in the community center. Patrons can stay in one spot or move back and forth between the lab and community center during the allotted 2 hours.

Refreshments will be provided.

7:30-8:00 PM: The two groups will adjourn to the lab inside the library. Patrons are invited to mingle or head home for the night.

Concerns

- People may be intimidated to attend the human library, leaving no attendance for this part of the program.
 - The human library is a 21st century experiential event that is most likely a foreign concept to patrons. The goal is to provide a space for introverts while also encouraging smaller amounts of human interaction. The space will be cozy and stocked with snacks to create a comfortable, home-like environment. Hopefully, this open-ended process will negate anxieties some patrons may have to attend the human library.
 - Attendance will be tracked to ensure the program is helping the community. Evaluations will be done by the staff member in charge every few months to see if more marketing needs to be done, or if this program just is not working for GPL. This is also necessary for the international organization requirements.

Conclusion

LRC is a completely new program for the GPL community and is designed to bring patrons together to connect in a setting that is more controlled by the patrons themselves. This program combines listening, reading, and creating that allows patrons to view the library as a more fluid and inviting space.

References

Aarne-Skidmore, E. (2021). *New Study on the Impact of the Human Library*. Human Library Organization.

<https://humanlibrary.org/new-study-on-the-impact-of-the-human-library/>

Commons Library. (n.d.). *The power of story: The story of self, us, and now*. <https://commonslibrary.org/the-power-of-story-the-story-of-self-us-and-now/>

Paxaman, M. (2019). *Challenged but not dying, the public libraries are more relevant than ever*. Jutland Station.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/dd3t7to32e7ky5mqduns6/Challenged-but-not-dying-the-public-libraries-are-more-relevant-than-ever-Jutland-Station.pdf?rlkey=6bppru4ffp80pakifb0mh2wo2&e=1&dl=0>

Wentz, E. (2013). *The Human Library: Sharing the Community with Itself*.

https://publiclibrariesonline.org/2013/04/human_librar/