

ALA American Library Association

October 2020

A Programming Guide for Libraries



Resilient Communities

LIBRARIES RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE



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About Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change

Libraries and Resilience

A Letter from the Resilient Communities Advisors



As we put the finishing touches on this guide, it is clear that 2020 will rank among the hottest in recorded history, with a 36 percent chance of breaking the all-time record set in 2016. July alone saw more than [\\$3 billion of extreme weather damage](#) to the Earth; by September the western United States was raging with some of the worst wildfires in over 100 years. The climate is in chaos: floods, hurricanes, wildfires raging, ocean warming, polar ice caps melting. Mass species extinction is a reality. Ecological collapse is no longer a doomsday prophecy; the future of life on Earth is actually at stake.

We see times of great distress on the horizon. What can we do now, as people and as library professionals?

The answer: We must build the world we want to live in. “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are,” to quote Theodore Roosevelt.

As respected community and resource centers, libraries are well positioned to mobilize citizens to learn about climate change and take action—at home, in our towns and cities and around the world. Together we can future-proof and adapt. At this unique turning point in history, we are the generation to rescue our collective future by dismantling systemic oppressions, reversing overconsumption, creating protective and forward-thinking policies, and enabling practices that put people and planet first and prioritize a just energy transition.

**“Do what you can,
with what you have,
where you are.”**

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

In the face of dire climate change events, **Resilient Communities: Libraries Responding to Climate Change** showcases the ever-flexible and nimble role of library workers. And there is so much to showcase! Across the country, libraries and other institutions are finding their allies, banding together, and making ripples of change. In the face of chaos and uncertainty, they are teaching climate science, self-regulation practices, dialogue and deliberation skills, kindness for one another and the Earth. In this guide, we share just a sliver of the exciting work that is already in motion.

We invite you and your library to join us as change-makers in this work. Because the fact is, we cannot return to business as usual. A new story is unfolding, a shift in narrative from hierarchy to complexity, interdependence and interbeing. In this time of intersecting crises—the climate change emergency, systemic racism, COVID-19—we must pivot, transform, stretch, reflect, listen, demand, act. We need to act as if our lives depend on it, because they do.

—Madeleine Charney, April Griffith, Juan Rubio, & Beth Filar Williams

Film Programs



Film discussions can bring communities together to engage in meaningful conversations about climate change and resilience. The film can help people examine local concerns related to the environment; seeing other communities' experiences depicted in the films can spark reflections on how to be resilient when facing a crisis. As we all deal with COVID-19, libraries can continue community engagement by hosting virtual film screenings. Libraries serve as community connectors, and the availability of online platforms to bring people together around a common cause helps with a continuation of that role. During a film discussion online, participants can watch a movie on their own time and then join a Discord server, for example, to discuss the film. A moderator can help the group explore the film's message and its importance as it relates to climate change and resilient communities.

ALA worked with rights holders to ensure that the 25 Resilient Communities pilot libraries have public performance rights (PPR) for virtual and/or in-person screenings of the works below.

FILMS FOR LIBRARY PROGRAMS

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind [↗](#)

2019 • TV-PG • 113 minutes • Spanish audio and subtitles available • Netflix subscription needed

William Kamkwamba is a 13-year-old living with his family in rural Malawi. As growing industrialization of the land and then famine threaten to destroy his family and his community, William is thrown out of the school he loves when his parents can no longer afford the fees. William sets his exceptional mind to come up with a solution, and sneaking back into the school library, he finds a way. First, though, he must convince his father Trywell to allow him to use the bones of his bicycle to build a windmill to irrigate the land.

William succeeds with his invention and saves his village, whilst also assuring his own bright future. The film highlights an urgent truth: while talent is evenly distributed across the globe, opportunity and investment are not. It also reminds us that youth are a powerful force in tackling both local and global challenges and reminds us to believe in and invest in their capacity to change their communities, countries, and the world for the better.



RELATED RESOURCES

- [Screening toolkit](#)
- [Curriculum \(Common Core compliant\) and discussion guides](#)
- [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope](#) by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer, HarperCollins, 2009
- [Picture book \(Grades 1–3\)](#), Dial, 2012
- [Young readers edition \(Grades 5–8\)](#), Dial, 2014

Chasing Ice

2012 • PG-13 • 75 minutes • Kanopy

In the spring of 2005, acclaimed environmental photographer James Balog headed to the Arctic on a tricky assignment for *National Geographic*: to capture images to help tell the story of the Earth’s changing climate. Even with a scientific upbringing, Balog had been a skeptic about climate change. But that first trip north opened his eyes to the biggest story in human history and sparked a challenge within him that would put his career and his very well-being at risk. *Chasing Ice* is the story of one man’s mission to change the tide of history by gathering undeniable evidence of our changing planet.



RELATED RESOURCES

- [Discussion guide](#)
- Curriculum/discussion guides
 - [Middle school students](#)
 - [High school students](#)
 - [University students](#)
 - [Getting the Picture: A Climate Education Resource](#) (online multimedia supplement)

Decoding the Weather Machine

2018 • TV-PG • 113 minutes • Spanish subtitles available • PBS Nova • Kanopy

Disastrous hurricanes. Widespread droughts and wildfires. Withering heat. Extreme rainfall. It is hard not to conclude that something’s up with the weather, and many scientists agree. It’s the result of the weather machine itself—our climate—changing, becoming hotter and more erratic.



In this two-hour documentary, NOVA cuts through the confusion around climate change. Why do scientists overwhelmingly agree that our climate is changing, and that human activity is causing it? How and when will it affect us through the weather we experience? And what will it take to

bend the trajectory of planetary warming toward more benign outcomes? Join scientists around the world on a quest to better understand the workings of the weather and climate machine we call Earth and discover how we can be resilient—even thrive—in the face of enormous change.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Community screening guide \(download\) and curriculum standards](#)

“Documentary film as a medium is uniquely suited for presenting a story with divergent perspectives, allowing a range of viewpoints to be placed side by side for audiences to consider and interpret.”



—Renee Hobbs, Liz Deslauriers, Pam Steager, “The Library Screen Scene: Film and Media Literacy in Schools, Colleges, and Communities”

How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change [↗](#)

2016 • TV-14 • 127 minutes • Spanish subtitles available • Josh Fox Films

Pay to watch on HBO and iTunes

In *How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change*, Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox (*Gasland*) continues in his deeply personal style, investigating climate change—the greatest threat our world has ever known. Traveling to 12 countries on 6 continents, the film acknowledges that it may be too late to stop some of the worst consequences and asks, what is it that climate change can't destroy? What is so deep within us that no calamity can take it away?



RELATED RESOURCES

- [Community screening and discussion guide](#)
- [Press kit](#)

Fire and Flood: Queer Resilience in the Era of Climate Change [↗](#)

In production • This film is not yet rated. Contains some heavy themes and occasional mature language • 102 minutes • Bilingual (Spanish/English) subtitles • The Queer Ecojustice Project



Fire and Flood: Queer Resilience in the Era of Climate Change tells the story of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and the fires in Santa Rosa, California, two near-simultaneous climate-related disasters in the fall of 2017, through the voices of LGBTQ people who lived through them and were part of the community response. The film explores the vulnerability of LGBTQ communities to climate disasters and lifts up queer and trans strategies for resilience, transition, and survival.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Discussion and curriculum guide](#)



DON'T GO IT ALONE: 10 IDEAS FOR PROGRAM PARTNERS

1. Environmental clubs (K–12)
2. Nonprofit organizations
3. Teen activist groups (e.g., [Sunrise Movement](#), [SustainUS](#), Extinction Rebellion)
4. Science teachers, professors, and communications folks
5. PTA/Home Schooling groups
6. Elder groups (e.g., [Elders Climate Action](#))
7. Social media/Meetup groups
8. Rotary Club
9. Garden clubs, master gardeners, community gardens
10. Nature centers

PLATFORMS FOR YOUR FILM DISCUSSIONS

For film discussions, we recommend the online platform [Discord](#). Here are a few things we like about it.

1. There's no cost to install and use Discord.
2. Discord offers many features to have interactive discussions: voice, chat, video integration.
3. It is familiar to teens as it is used for gaming streaming.
4. There's more control over how to interact with your audience: enable comments, moderate comments, who has access to the channels, etc.

Here is how to set up a Discord server for the virtual discussion.

1. Create an account at [discord.com](#).
2. Create a voice channel where you will lead the discussion using video. (For an example of how to create your Discord Channel, tips and technical tutorials, visit [discord.gg/gedEBcD](#).)
3. Consider additional technology platforms to have synchronous or asynchronous discussions, such as [Flipgrid](#) or [GroupMe](#).

Of course, there are plenty of other options. Here are a few of our runners-up.

1. [Zoom](#) is ubiquitous at the moment, and the interface is easy to use. It might not offer the interactivity features others can have, but it is a good choice for an asynchronous discussion. Zoom's security has been improved since the early "Zoom-bombings," but it is still a good practice to add extra security, such as password-protected access or enabling a waiting room. For longer sessions, a paid account is required.
2. [Google Meet](#) is a Google application, free of charge, that requires you to log in with a Gmail account. Easy to use, but does not offer the interactivity of some platforms such as Discord.
3. [Netflix Party](#) offers an interactive way to watch a film on Netflix. Each participant must have a Netflix account, and there's a limit of 50 people per party. It lets you watch a film and interact with those watching by chatting and sharing emojis and screenshots.
4. [Slack](#) offers interesting possibilities to have online conversations via chat, sharing images, links, and files in real time. It now offers a video-call option, which could be used for an engaging discussion. Video calls are only available on the desktop application and have a limit of 15 participants.



PRO TIP It's a fact of life: Wi-Fi connections fail. It is important to have a contingency plan in case that happens. Be prepared to reschedule the event and have a different form of communication besides the Discord server (or whatever platform you are using) to inform participants about the change of plans. You should share announcements everywhere that you promoted the event (e.g., Facebook event page, Twitter account, etc.). The more active you were in communicating via these channels while promoting the event, the easier it will be to reach people when you need to make an urgent announcement.

LEADING A VIRTUAL FILM DISCUSSION IN 7 STEPS

1. **Prepare:** Get familiar with the film. Watch it in advance and identify themes that will help you lead a meaningful discussion. Also consider tech: Allow plenty of time prior to the scheduled discussion and make sure your platform is working and everyone knows how to use it.
2. **Do an icebreaker.** Once your participants are logged in, offer an easy introductory activity. Depending on the size of the group, it can take the form of a question. One of our favorites: What film would you take with you to a desert island? If the group is very large, ask a few volunteers to respond and continue with the next portion of the activity.
3. **Ask who has watched the film.** Have an informal poll to see how many people have watched the film already. Ask them to type a yes or no or give a thumbs-up on the screen.
4. **Ask for a recap.** Begin by asking someone to summarize in two or three minutes the film watched. You can present this exercise by explaining how any media text can be summarized with a famous example: “Dorothy takes flight during a tornado with her dog, Toto, and enters a magical world. She learns about human characteristics such as courage, intelligence, and love. She battles evil and later discovers that it was all an illusion.”
5. **Start the discussion.** Begin with general questions such as: What stood out to you in the film? Is there anything that surprised you? Did you learn anything new by watching the film? If so, what was it?
6. **Continue with more specific questions:** What was the message of the film? Was there more than one message? What were some of the creative choices the filmmaker used to deliver the message?
7. **Conclude:** The end of a film discussion is a great opportunity to talk about moving to action. Ask: Is there anything you might do or say differently as a result of viewing this film? Are there any specific actions you’re planning to implement? End the discussion with suggestions on how to get involved to promote climate change awareness and sustainability. Present a list of organizations doing work in your area where the participants can learn more, get involved, or advocate with elected officials.

WHAT ABOUT A SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SCREENING?

Asking people to watch a film on their own time before a discussion is one way to format a program. While it’s a bit trickier logistically, you may prefer to host a live viewing party. Netflix Party is one possible platform, although participants must have their own Netflix accounts and interactions are limited to a chat box. YouTube Premiere allows for viewing parties of content available on YouTube. It is also possible to host a screening via Zoom or other video platform by sharing your sound (under Advanced Settings)—but make sure you have the proper public screening permissions before you do.



Book Club Programs



After decades of attracting the attention of scientists and environmentally minded people, sustainability and climate change are moving to the forefront of public consciousness. Over 70 percent of the upcoming college-age generation care about global warming and climate injustices. A resilient and climate justice approach is growing.

One way to grow this in your community is through book reads and discussions. There are numerous new reads that can be read as a group to achieve different goals: to spark consciousness, build climate change knowledge, reflect and think, share lived experiences, grow community resiliency, create action, or uncover untold stories.

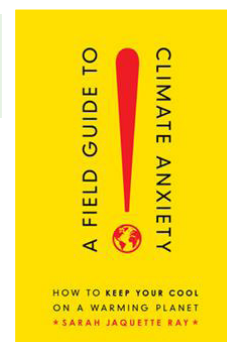
Picking the right book, facilitator, platform, questions, and activities can be challenging, and the logistics of hosting a book club program is complicated by the pandemic. But we encourage you to persist. A book club that brings together folks in the community to listen and learn can lead to change—in attitudes, understanding, or action. We hope these recommended titles and discussion questions, along with suggested processes and platforms, will resonate with your readers in a virtual setting.

BOOKS FOR LIBRARY DISCUSSIONS

A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet [↗](#)

by Sarah Jaquette Ray · University of California Press · 2020

Ray, a professor of environmental studies at Humboldt State University, offers concepts to help us combat climate change while grappling with feelings of powerlessness and despair. Ray offers strategies for climate justice activists to avoid burnout, pulling together works of adrienne marie brown's emergent strategy, Per Epsen Stoknes's Five Ds, Bob Doppelt's transformational resilience, Rebecca Solnit's justice work, and Glenn Albrecht's solastalgia, just to name a few. In summary: find pleasure in the work, slow down/be mindful, remember this is not a new crisis, find what you can do well and do that part, it takes a community, and you need to be able to dream of desires/envision a possible future. Written for Ray's college students, this "existential toolkit for action" is also great for adults or who want to do something about the climate crisis but struggle with anxiety when faced with the dire predictions of climate scientists.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- How do you experience or observe the role of emotions in climate justice work?
- The heart, the hand, and the head are all needed for sustained engagement. What are the effective implications of the content you are daily exposed to?

- Write your own manifesto. Why do you care about the planet, the suffering, and what are you skilled or passionate about that you can do? This can be an activity for reflection/writing/sharing.
- Check out bullet points in each chapter for additional reflection questions.

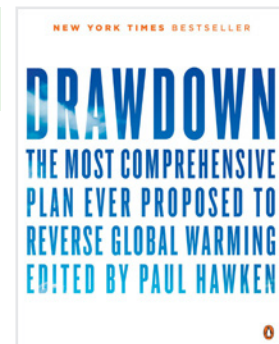
RELATED RESOURCES

- [Teaching Climate Change: Two Insights](#) by Sarah Jaquette Ray
- [Interview with author](#) by UC Press

Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming [↗](#)

edited by Paul Hawken · Penguin Books · 2017

This book offers 100 most impactful solutions for slowing down climate change. The [website](#) offers even more updates, ideas, and solutions. A great read for adults, teens, or a mix, each short chapter offers a short- or long-term focus on a specific sector.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

From *New York Reads: Drawdown*; see the [full list at nyla.org](#):

- What obstacles stand in the way of achieving renewable energy alternatives to the status quo? How will a shift to renewable resources affect the country?
- Can you see a change where you live? Do you notice anything different about your local environment?
- Before reading the book, did you think of global warming as more of a problem for future generations rather than your own generation?
- Can you imagine a world where economic growth isn't sought? What do you think would have to happen for that to be feasible?
- Can you imagine altering your diet to eat locally? Have you already?

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Table of solutions](#)
- [Lesson plan](#)

OTHER PLACES TO FIND A GREAT BOOK CLUB READ

- [ALA SustainRT's Sustainability Book Reviews and discussion questions](#)
- [NOAA Planet Stewards Book Club](#)
- [5 Novels about Climate Change to Read Now](#)
- [Book Club: Five Must-Read Books about the Climate Crisis](#)
- [Annie Proulx on the Best Books to Understand Climate Change](#)
- [Book Club Five: How to Talk about Climate Change in a Way that Makes a Difference](#)
- [Climate Change Book Club Books](#)

Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town [↗](#)

by Melissa Checker · NYU Press · 2005

This book is a case study on the ways race and the environment are tied. It offers in-depth, yearlong, observational research by the author in a neighborhood in Augusta, Georgia, that is besieged by numerous toxic threats. Checker includes personal historical accounts of inequity experienced by the community, adding to our understanding of identity politics and grassroots organizing in the environmental justice movement.

Checker's book is suitable for adults or young adults, especially as a community read on an academic campus. Scholars and students in many disciplines—including social movements, race and ethnic studies, qualitative research methods, human geography, and environmental justice—may find this book of interest.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- This book offers a look into the multiple ways in which race and the environment are connected. Can we think of examples of this in our own community?
- Checker says that many still fight for climate justice even after moving away, due to cultural, religious, or family ties to the area. Can anyone speak to this personally?
- From scholarly research to activism and change, how can we take this read and make a step toward local climate justice action?

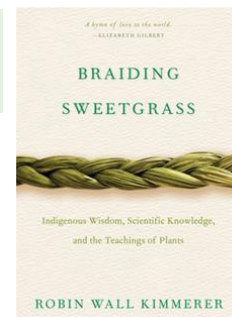
RELATED RESOURCES

- [Hyde Park Film: A Community's Unrelenting Pursuit for Environmental Justice](#)
- [Book review](#)

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants [↗](#)

by Robin Wall Kimmerer · Milkweed Editions · 2013

This book presents braided stories “meant to heal our relationship with the world” by weaving together the three strands of “indigenous ways of knowing, scientific knowledge, and the story of an Anishinabekwe scientist trying to bring them together in service to what matters most.” Its helps us reflect on our relationships to nature, the gifts from the Earth, and our responsibilities for these gifts. As a teen or adult read, this book allows readers to both reflect on their own personal connections to the earth as well as grow as a community.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

(from the [Longwood Gardens Library and Archives](#)):

- In the story “Skywoman Falling,” the indigenous Creation story (pp. 3–10), you learn that Skywoman lived as if her children's futures mattered. If you truly focus on the Earth that will be left for your grandchildren, how would you live differently?

- Does the concept of trees having a community relationship, and the scientific explanations of their possible means of communication change how you view our relationship with forests? If so, how?
- Do you see the Earth as property or as a gift? How does this perspective change the way in which you view the value of what you take from the Earth?

RELATED RESOURCES

- [“What Plants Can Teach Us: A Talk and Conversation with Robin Kimmerer & Elizabeth Gilbert”](#)
- [“Lessons in the Plants: ‘Braiding Sweetgrass,’ with Robin Wall Kimmerer”](#)

Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds

by adrienne maree brown · AK Press · 2017

Emergent Strategy is a radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help book designed to help us shape the futures we want to live. Knowing that change is constant, the world is in a continual state of flux, ever-mutating, emergent patterns. The author reflects on Octavia Butler and helps us map, assess, influence, and learn what we can change or accept in a non-linear, uplifting, Afrocentrist incantation to transform us all.



Brown’s book is a nonlinear read with lots to discuss for teens or adults.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- brown asks, “How do we turn our collective full-bodied intelligence towards collaboration, if that is the way we will survive?” For example, ants work together, birds in a flock. What are examples of deep and radical collaboration we, as humans, can do in the climate justice movement?
- brown writes, “Change is definitely going to happen, no matter what we plan or expect or hope for or set in place. We will adapt to that change, or we will become irrelevant.” How can we, as humans, resist the barreling through and against all change and instead learn and apply the natural operating systems of the universe in our own lives?
- In reading this book several principles of emergent strategy arise, such as “never a failure, always a lesson;” and “small is good, small is all.” What principles will you take with you? How do you see that applying to climate crisis and justice work?



PRO TIP If you don’t have the capacity or technology to host a virtual book club in real time, consider offering an asynchronous book club using a platform like Goodreads or Facebook. While it lacks the face-to-face interaction of a synchronous club, it allows participants to comment on the book on their own time by posting to a group message board (and takes less time and effort to host).

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Must-watch short author talk](#)
- [Author’s blog](#)
- [Community Reads guide from UW Bothell and Cascadia College](#)

Inconspicuous Consumption: The Environmental Impact You Don't Know You Have

by Tatiana Schlossberg · Grand Central Publishing · 2019

With a lighter, conversational tone, Schlossberg tackles the challenges of consumption and its impact on the environment. The book examines the unseen and unconscious environmental impacts in four areas: the internet and technology, food, fashion, and fuel. Most of the research and hard data is included as footnotes at the end of the book, allowing readers to quickly understand how the infrastructures behind different industries got us to where we are today.

tatiana
schlossberg
inconspicuous
consumption
the environmental
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you have

For teens or adults, this book will empower the reader to make simple daily choices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- Do you think that Schlossberg's friendly writing style works well for communicating the serious topic of climate change and society's harmful consumption habits?
- Unlike many books on climate change, *Inconspicuous Consumption* focuses more on demand, rather the supply as the problem driving climate change. Do you think it's probable that society in general, and North Americans in particular, can be convinced to electively change their behaviors and lifestyles in ways that are less taxing on the environment? What would that take?
- What inconspicuous consumption habit did you identify with or were most surprised by?
- Do you feel as though understanding the systems behind respective industries and systems provides insight into how consumers can create change beyond their individual habits?
- What role do you think the government should play in regulating the negative externalities of consumption such as requiring corporate responsibility for emissions?

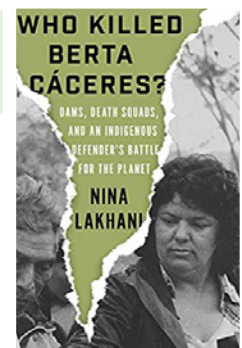
RELATED RESOURCES

- [Interview with author](#) by Maine Public Radio

Who Killed Berta Cáceres?: Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender's Battle for the Planet

by Nina Lakhani · Verso · 2020

Nina Lakhani's excellent journalism investigates the root causes of the killing of Berta Cáceres in 2016. Cáceres was an indigenous environmentalist who stopped the building of a multinational dam project to protect the land of the Lenca people in Honduras. Examining the political landscape in Honduras and linking corruption, political unrest, and US foreign policy, she is able to present a clear picture of how environmental activists like Berta Cáceres are targeted, and ultimately pay a price for protecting indigenous rights and their fight to preserve their land. Lakhani presents Cáceres' strong stance against patriarchy, racism, and capitalism and her clear vision of protecting the environment.



Cáceres is an inspiration for everyone, but especially for young adults as they take on global environmental issues.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- What connections can you make between the struggle of communities fighting to preserve their land rights and local concerns?
- What roles do political institutions play in the protection of the environment?
- In what ways is the environmental struggle diametrically opposed to capitalist expansion, government corruption, and patriarchy?
- How can land rights for indigenous populations help us understand the need to protect the environment?

RELATED RESOURCES

- [“The Many Murders of Berta Cáceres: A New Book Explores the Story behind the Murder”](#)

Selected Library Initiatives Working Right Now to Fight the Climate Crisis



Sustainability Round Table: Libraries Fostering Resilient Communities

An ALA Round Table that offers resources, webinars, programming, mentorship, and other professional development opportunities that support a more equitable, healthy, and economically just society.

Borrowed Time

A growing list of libraries working to combat climate change through a blog, recommended documentary films and readings, community conversations, and actionable activities.

Blue Marble Librarians

A Massachusetts coalition that supports the efforts of Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) with state-wide library participation around Climate Preparedness Week and Climate Resilience Hubs.

New York Library Association Sustainability Initiative

Provides New York’s library leaders with time and resources to articulate how libraries adapt to our changing world while, as co-creators, shape strategies that ensure libraries remain vital, rebound from disruption, and provide ongoing value to the communities they serve.

Academic Library Association of Ohio—Sustainability Interest Group

This community of academic librarians and library staff in Ohio share a concern for the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of their communities, exchanging ideas, opportunities, resources, and best practices.

New To Virtual Book Clubs? *Start Here!*

Hosting book clubs is a natural fit for libraries. Reading groups bring people together to expand their knowledge and grow, provide a way to connect folks with experts and authors, and can lead to actions or activities.

Pre-COVID-19, many of you likely hosted book clubs in-person; with the health crisis still under way, many libraries in 2020 and 2021 are taking their clubs online. These book clubs can be held live/synchronously (e.g., on a platform with audio and video to model an in-person discussion) or asynchronously (e.g., with questions on a message board for readers to comment on their own time). Many libraries offer downloadable ebooks or digital audio books that can be used if physical library books are not available to be picked up or mailed.



Regardless of the methods, virtual book clubs provide a community connection: the chance to discuss critical topics, share thoughts and ideas, and learn from others' opinions or lived experiences. They can enable a community to grow its resilience together.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE STARTING A VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

- **What type of book club will you offer?** The possibilities are endless. You could read one book spread over a few months, one book per meetup, a one-time meetup to share favorite climate crisis-related books, or a book club for local people and folks across the global.
- **Do you have a dedicated facilitator** with experience leading conversations online?
- **Who manages your technology?** Will they be able to help set up in advance and/or sit in on the call to help handle any technical issues?
- **Do you have community partners** willing to help in these areas if your library does not have skills, capacity, or technology you need?
- **How often will you meet?** Once a week, twice a month, or monthly all can work, depending on the amount of reading you cover.
- **Which platform is the best** fit for your community? Will the free version of this chosen platform meet your needs?
- **What is your budget?** Consider platform, books/ebooks, staff time and honoraria for guest speakers.
- **Will you need to limit the number of participants?** We recommend a group of 10 or fewer for the best conversation. If you exceed this number, consider offering two cohorts or dividing the group into breakout rooms if possible through your platform.

Community Dialogues

Opportunities to share our love for the world—and to deeply listen to one another—are rare. Community dialogues create a space specifically for connecting with our neighbors and learning from one another.



PROGRAM DEEP DIVE

The Work that Reconnects: A Spiral Journey [↗](#)

Based in the [teachings of Joanna Macy](#), this 1.5-hour program unfolds as a spiral journey through four stages: Coming from Gratitude, Honoring our Pain for the World, Seeing with New/Ancient Eyes, and Going Forth. Each of these stages leads naturally to the next. The journey helps us experience firsthand that we are larger, stronger, more creative—and more deeply interconnected—than we knew.

The Work That Reconnects is available to everyone as “open source.” While you needn’t be an expert in The Work that Reconnects, can you invest time before the program to learn about Joanna Macy’s three stories: [“Business as Usual”](#), [“The Great Unraveling”](#), and [“The Great Turning”](#)? This foundation will bring important authenticity and meaning to your facilitation. For more in-depth preparation, consult the [Facilitator Competency Framework](#).

Because this program may arouse vulnerability, it is important to show and review Group Guidelines (a.k.a. Shared Agreements) before commencing. These may include:

- One person speaks at a time
- Be lean of speech; stick to the agreed length of sharing
- Take the lessons, leave the stories (confidentiality)
- Practice active listening; focus on the speaker, refrain from interrupting
- Be respectful of one another
- Value the process as much as, if not more than, you value the outcomes

Assign three or four people per breakout room. Allow 10 minutes per breakout and explain that each person has two minutes to share their response. Remind them to introduce themselves before they begin. Explain that anyone can leave a breakout at any time and return to the main room by clicking “Leave Room” on the bottom right of the screen. Participants can also ask for assistance by clicking “Ask For Help.” If you have any concerns about a particular breakout room, you can visit a room to check in (see the breakout room pop up window, right side column “visit”).



PRO TIP At the start of your program, quickly assess the number of participants and decide whether they’ll communicate only through the chat or if you will unmic them (recommended for 10 or fewer).

This practice—as with other forms of Macy’s work—is based on “open sentences.” The [slide deck](#) provides an open sentence for each stage of the journey. However, you can select different “open sentences” (see links below for examples) or compose your own!

*Slide 1: **Introductions***

*Slide 2: **Background on Joanna Macy***

Next, read each of the following slides aloud before showing the corresponding question and moving the participants into breakout rooms. After returning from each breakout round, invite a few people to share a response to the open questions by using their microphones or in chat. (We recommend using the mic for groups of 10 or smaller.)



Download these slides at bit.ly/reconnect-slides

*Slide 3: **Coming from Gratitude***

Say: “This stage quiets the frantic mind and brings us back to source, stimulating our empathy and confidence. It helps us to be more fully present and opens space for acknowledging the pain we carry for our world.” (Examples of open sentences for Coming from Gratitude can be found [here](#).)

*Slide 4: **Honoring Our Pain for the World***

Say: “This stage dares us to experience the true meaning of compassion: to “suffer with.” We begin to know the immensity of our heart-mind. What had isolated us in private anguish now opens outward and delivers us into the wider reaches of our inter-existence.” (Examples of open sentences for Honoring Our Pain for the World can be found [here](#).)

*Slide 5: **Seeing with New/Ancient Eyes***

Say: “This stage asks us to sense how intimately and inextricably we are related to all that is. We can taste our own power to change, and feel the texture of our living connections with past and future generations, and with our brother/sister species.” (Examples of open sentences for Seeing with New/Ancient Eyes can be found [here](#).)



*Slide 6: **Going Forth***

Say: “This stage calls each of us, according to our situation, gifts, and limitations. With others whenever and wherever possible, we set a target, lay a plan, step out. We don’t wait for a blueprint or fail-proof scheme. Each stage will be our teacher, bringing new perspectives and opportunities. Even when we don’t succeed in a given venture, we can be grateful for the chance we took and the lessons we learned.” (Examples of open sentences for Going Forth can be found [here](#).)

PRO TIP Slow down and deepen participants’ experience by inviting them to free-write for one or two minutes before sharing their responses. You could play [relaxing instrumental music](#) during the writing period (use Advanced Share in Zoom)

OTHER DIALOGUE APPROACHES



World Café [↗](#)

World Café fosters a living network of conversation around questions that matter. A Café is a creative process for leading collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge, and creating possibilities for action in groups of all sizes. Learn about hosting a virtual World Café at [Climate Change World Café “In a Box.”](#)

Empathy Circles [↗](#)

Empathy Circles are a simple structured dialogue process—a different kind of conversation that offers firsthand experiences of deep sharing, listening, and witnessing. An Empathy Circle can be crafted as a standalone climate change program (e.g. a community response to a local climate change disaster), integrated into a climate change program (e.g. after a public screening of a climate change film), or as a follow-up to a program at later date to further process emotions, thoughts, and ideas. There are three roles: Speaker, Active Listener/Reflector and Witness(es). The Listener must reflect back to the Speaker’s satisfaction what the Speaker has said. When the Speaker is satisfied it becomes the Listener’s turn to speak and be reflected back. The fact that you must reflect what you have heard requires that you turn off your internal dialogue and listen. View [instructions](#) for virtual Empathy Circles.

Libraries Transforming Communities [↗](#)

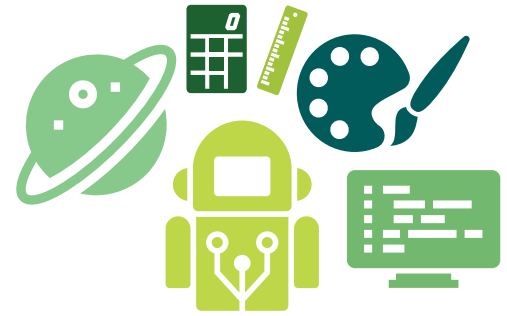
Libraries Transforming Communities is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA). As trusted, safe spaces, libraries are ideal institutions to lead dialogue and deliberation efforts regarding climate change in their communities. ALA and the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) compiled this collection of resources to help libraries with their community engagement efforts: Conversation Café, Essential Partners, Everyday Democracy, Future Search, Turning Outward, National Issues Forum, and World Café. Explore at [ala.org/LTC](#).

From Dialogue To Action, 3 Ways



1. **Host a workshop for residents to create an emergency plan** for their neighborhood so they can better rely on one another when first responders are unable to reach them. For examples, see the [City of Knoxville](#) and [Florida Department of Health](#).
2. **Help residents create a mutual aid network**, which allows residents to offer and request support such as grocery shopping, rides, companionship, pet care, and yard maintenance. For more information, see recommendations from [Shareable](#) and the [American Friends Service Committee](#).
3. **Form a library-based community of practice to learn participatory democracy**. These self-governance techniques are useful for process and decision making in the workplace, municipalities, and families. Be prepared for more uncertain and volatile times with systems in place for peacemaking, deep listening and honoring multiple perspectives. For examples, see [Sociocracy for All](#) and [Citizen University](#).

Hands-On STEAM Programs



Hands-on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) programming is a great way to introduce patrons of all ages to the sustainable solutions already being implemented in settings ranging from energy production and manufacturing to households and homesteads.

In practice, these programs usher participants toward a greater understanding of the principles behind the science and technology critical to building a resilient infrastructure, and they teach mindful practices that reconnect people to their own practical abilities as makers.

Hands-on educational workshops, whether virtual or in person, are also an opportunity to spark creative minds and empower individuals to begin their personal journey toward building a more sustainable future.

PROGRAM DEEP DIVE

Build a Solar Rover [↗](#)

When this program was implemented at the Eureka Springs Carnegie Public Library, the goal was to show participants about how solar panels work and to introduce them to the engineering process; how to troubleshoot an issue, step back, and make changes to improve upon a design.

Training for this program was delivered to our librarians by Asia Ward of RECharge labs (now KidWind), who developed the program curriculum. View [instructions for building Solar Rovers](#) and many other renewable energy project-based programs, as well as teaching strategies for various age groups.

Planning for this program began two months in advance to provide plenty of time for various supplies to be shipped and to 3D-print the axles. We discovered that some of the small motors we used were faulty, so be sure to test all the electronic components prior to implementing and distributing the materials for the program to make sure everything is functional, and to consider ordering a few extra spare parts, if possible.

We delivered this program twice: once with tweens/teenagers, and again the following week with families and elementary school-aged kids, both during our summer reading program. We sent teens postcards to promote the event, and for families we included the program in the summer reading program calendar as one of our weekly hands-on STEM programs.



PRO TIP Do not assume participants are familiar with videoconferencing. Give a quick orientation to the mechanics of your platform, being sure to cover features like muting and gallery/speaker view.

Each kit costs around \$20 to assemble:

- 2 pairs dual-ended alligator clips (\$1)
- dagu motor (\$2)
- supercapacitor (\$5)
- cork tile cut into rectangle (\$2)
- solar panel (\$8.50)
- additional assembly materials at a negligible cost

You can save money if you have access to a 3D printer by printing the axle adaptors (the free file is available on Thingiverse, courtesy of RECharge Labs) and cutting rover wheels out of cardboard.

When we implemented this program, two staff members facilitated the program for teens and one staff member facilitated the program for families. We set up tables for participants to work at, as well as another separate table with lamps that had incandescent bulbs in them to help charge the solar panels in case it was too cloudy outside. Having lamps to stand in as your “sun” to charge the panels is critical if there is inclement weather!

If you deliver this activity as a virtual program, you may need to decide on having a “rain date” to make sure participants are doing this on a sunny day, or else include in your discussion the challenge of cloudy days and make sure participants understand that incandescent bulbs can be substituted for the sunshine in this activity. (Note that most modern energy-efficient LED and CFL bulbs will not work to charge the solar panels.)

Our teen group participants required more encouragement and one-on-one assistance than the children who were working with their families. We achieved our goals of teaching participants how the sun creates energy that can be captured with solar panels, having participants build functioning solar-powered rovers and sharing the engineering process. In the background we featured a livestream of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory engineers working on the next Mars Rover. We pointed out to participants when engineers walked away from the project to underline the fact that it helps take a quick break when you get frustrated so you can come back to the project with a fresh perspective.



PRO TIP Hands-on programs that involve protracted or otherwise time-consuming steps are best delivered by a

pre-filmed demonstration video that has been edited with longer sections sped up, paired with take-and-make kits delivered curbside. These asynchronous programs should include programmer contact info prominently displayed in case participant needs feedback or advice.

OTHER PROGRAM IDEAS

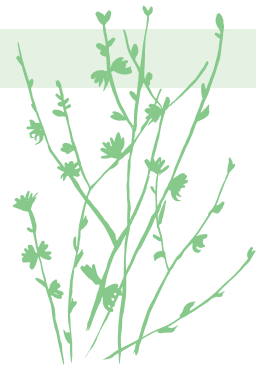
Plastic Bag Fusion

Recycling and plastic bag bans were once both seen as prime solutions toward the problem of plastic, but research shows these both have greater environmental implications. Plastic bag fusion is a way to introduce “upcycling” while educating participants about polymers, and the end product (plastic fabric) can be applied to a variety of projects. [Hedberg Public Library](#) in Janesville, Wis., made pouches from plastic bag fusion in a Facebook Live program.



Native Wildflower Seed Bombs [↗](#)

This program is fun for all ages and pairs well with a variety of picture books about the magic of seed germination. The materials needed are inexpensive, and the program can also be a way to broach the importance of native plants, pollinators and the delicate balance of your area's specific ecosystem. For inspiration check out the seed bomb craft programs at [Royal Oak \(Mich.\) Public Library](#) and [Boulder \(Colo.\) Public Library](#).



DIY Compost Bins [↗](#)



Home gardening has been booming in recent years with a boost from the slow food movement. Diverting organic waste from landfills to make “black gold” for the garden may seem like a no-brainer, but beginners will benefit from a simple tutorial in how to build a model right for their space (outdoor/ indoor vermicomposting) that minimizes the smell and teaches them the basic carbon-to-nitrogen balance needed to create their own food scrap fertilizer. The [city of Corona, Calif.](#), held a range of composting classes, including a make-your-own worm bin activity at the library.

Sewing & Slow Stitch Programs [↗](#)

With home economics cut from more high school course offerings, young people might benefit from basic sewing lessons. Pair this with simple and timely projects such as making reusable cloth masks, t-shirt tote bags, or repairs like replacing a button or patching a pair of blue jeans to help combat fast fashion. On the other end of the spectrum, a virtual or socially distanced stitch club is a good excuse to bring together crafters of all abilities to share knowledge and build community during these times of isolation. You can invite a local shop owner to lead the presentation, as [Rochester \(Minn.\) Public Library](#) did.



Vegetarian Cooking Programs [↗](#)



Research shows that a significant way to reduce environmental impact is by incorporating more plant-based meals into one's diet, but many people lack the cooking skills and nutritional knowledge for preparing quick & easy tasty vegetarian dishes. Try your hand at hosting a virtual cooking show with ingredients that can be found at local stores. Bonus points if you can collaborate with your town's farmer's market to emphasize the importance of locally grown food! [San Diego \(Calif.\) Public Library](#) held an all-ages Vegan Cooking 101 program; for more ideas, check out these [top vegetarian blogs](#) or this [guide for vegetarian teenagers](#).

Repair Café

- Planned obsolescence is out; fixing and mending is in! So many of the broken items in our home need just a small fix: a fuse replaced, a wire soldered, or even just the right type of glue. As a librarian, you are not expected to know how to repair furniture or clothes. People in your community, perhaps among your volunteers and regular patrons, might be willing to help educate and empower others to keep things out of the landfill! [Saratoga Springs \(New York\) Public Library](#) offers tips for offering this program at your library as well as finding Repair Coaches. Until the time when library programs are being held physically at your library again, you can encourage patrons to tune into [Repair Café TV](#) and build excitement for your community's first official meeting.



TO PRE-RECORD OR NOT TO PRE-RECORD? THAT IS THE QUESTION



Doing a virtual hands-on program? One of the first things you'll need to decide is whether to offer it live (synchronously) or to pre-record it (asynchronously). Which is a better fit for you? Start by considering these pros and cons.

PRE-RECORDED	IN REAL TIME
<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Filming ahead of time allows for a cleaner look with mistakes edited out, and you can speed up slower processes to improve the flow. ↑ Less bandwidth is needed to stream a pre-recorded program versus joining in via video-conference. This means the program is more accessible to people with slower internet connections. 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Allows program participants to interact and connect with one another. ↑ Allows for immediate feedback and encouragement of people's work.
<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ The facilitation process is hampered when you can't respond to questions or offer encouragement in real time; people may abandon the activity at home without that support. ↓ No engagement in real time means that you might not see interactions and program outcomes firsthand. 	<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Participants can be shy at first! As the host, in addition to facilitating the activity you will need to introduce the group to each other and make people feel comfortable. ↓ Drawn-out processes can lead to dead air time. Have discussion questions prepared to keep conversations going while everyone is working. ↓ Program participants must all meet at the same time and have access to high-speed internet at home.

Mindfulness Programs



Communities are increasingly seeking to build resilience through mindfulness practices, as witnessed by the blossoming of such programs in libraries around the U.S.

According to [John Kabbat Zinn](#), “Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.” In light of the COVID crisis, emphasis of this program is on strengthening our collective immune system and our responsibility (response + ability) to sharpen self-regulation skills in service to the greater good. As we learn to slow down our reactions, we can listen to others (and ourselves) with greater compassion. [Improved decision making](#) (yet another outcome of practicing mindfulness) is a critical societal tool, much needed in these times of multiple crises. There is also evidence that [eco-anxiety can be addressed](#) using mindfulness skills.

PROGRAM DEEP DIVE

Introduction to Mindfulness: Nourishing Ourselves in These Times [↗](#)

This one-hour virtual program blends learning, interacting, and five brief practices: straw breathing, gentle stretches, guided meditation, silent sit, and gratitude. Sharing activities with prompts can be done via chat, or you can offer the option for individuals to un-mic if there are fewer than 10 participants (encouraging everyone to be lean on speech). It is helpful to have a second staff person to monitor chat and assist with participants’ technical issues.

Using this [free and downloadable slide deck](#), the group can explore important questions about how they are impacted personally by crises (e.g., COVID-19, climate change) and how to take care of themselves so they can remain engaged and grounded in these times of great change.

Asking people to share “popcorn style” (taking random turns) can use a lot of program time. You might choose instead to do “rounds,” calling on each person. Emphasize that it’s fine to say “pass.” You can circle back to those who passed later and ask if they’d like to share. Invite participants to take part in a few basic practices. (Note: Each practice takes about five minutes, including directions.)

- **Straw breathing:** *Show Slide 12.* Invite participants to sit straight yet relaxed, draw air through the nose (with belly expanding) and release silently through pursed lips. See: elementalhealthandnutrition.com.au/straw-breathing-anxiety
- **Gentle stretches:** *Show Slide 13.* Demonstrate one of the movements. Invite participants to practice one of the movements for a few minutes. Explain how these are easy to teach to others, including children. See: niroga.org/education/curriculum/pdf/15_min-tls_protocol_english.pdf



Download these slides at bit.ly/mind-slides

- **Guided meditation:** Show Slide 14. Read [Meditation for Grounding Yourself](#) to guide participants.
- **Silent sit:** Continue with Slide 14. Recommend three minutes.
- **Gratitude:** Show Slide 15. Invite participants to share something for which they are grateful, either in the chat or unmicing if the group is 10 or fewer.

To wrap up, ask if participants would like to share any insights, favorite practice and why, challenges they encountered or questions. You might offer to “linger” in the video-conference room after the program is officially over (perhaps specify for how long).

MEDITATIONS

The following meditations and grounding activities can be paired with other programs or used at the beginning of a program to transition to the space together.

- [4 Meditation Exercises for Connecting to Mother Earth](#)
- [12 Meditations for the Earth](#)
- [Earth Meditations](#)
- [A Guided Meditation for Earth Day](#)
- [How to Do Gatha Practice](#)
- [Work That Reconnects](#) (scroll down to Meditations)

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

- Are you prepared to briefly note the cultural background of some meditation practices (e.g. gathas, metta)?
- Do you (or someone on your staff) have experience leading mindfulness practices? If not, think partners!
- Do you want them to use chat as a back and forth side conversation? Or ask them to refrain? Depending on the platform you choose, you may be able to disable this feature.

11 MORE IDEAS FOR PROGRAM PARTNERS

1. Parks and recreation department
2. Interfaith groups (e.g., [Corvallis Interfaith Climate Justice Committee](#))
3. Local sustainability groups
4. Local artists
5. Boy Scout & Girl Scout Troops
6. Boys & Girls Club
7. Department of Environmental Conservation
8. Food banks
9. Seed libraries
10. Citizen Advisory Council
11. Public radio stations

Resources



COMMUNITY BUILDING, EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE, MINDFULNESS, AND LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

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Take-Home Action Items



Consider switching to renewable energy at home! Many utility companies offer the option to choose green power from renewables like wind and solar under special programs. Check with your local utility company to see if this is an option for your patrons and include information for distribution either with a link in a follow-up email or with a leaflet included in the check out.

Find the contact information for your local congresspeople and distribute this information towards the end of a program (by card or in the text chat at the end of a virtual program). Encourage them to contact their representatives to voice their support for initiatives and bills that support the development of renewable energy infrastructure. The Federal Solar Tax credit, for instance, is set to expire for residential installations as of 2022—consider urging your representative to stand behind extending this credit so that more individuals can make the switch to solar.

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WEBPAGES

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- Center for Transformational Presence, transformationalpresence.org
- The Circle Way, thecircleway.net
- Good Grief Network, goodgriefnetwork.org
- “Professions’ Network.” Deep Adaptation Forum, deepadaptation.ning.com
- “Safe Circle.” Living Resilience. <https://livingresilience.net/safecircle>
- “The World Café: Community Table.” The World Café Community Foundation, theworldcafe.com

CLIMATE CRISIS, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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About Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change

Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change, an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA), is designed to help libraries engage their communities in programs and conversations that address the climate crisis.

A pilot phase of the project was created in 2020 with funding from [Carol and Andy Phelps](#) to fund film screenings, community dialogues, and related events based on local interest in [25 public and academic libraries](#). The project also funded the creation of a suite of free programming resources, including this guide, that is available to all libraries.

Project advising was provided by Madeleine Charney, April Griffith, Juan Rubio, and Beth Filar Williams, members of ALA's Sustainability Round Table, a professional forum for ALA members to exchange ideas and opportunities regarding sustainability in order to move toward a more equitable, healthy, and economically just society.

To learn more about **Resilient Communities**, visit ala.org/resilientcommunities.