

## **Fox Cities Reads and Books Build Community**

We are excited to offer two powerful youth books to the community for reflection, discussion, and community engagement this year.

**Fox Cities Reads** has selected *George* by Alex Gino for 2021's community read. *George* is a candid and heartwarming story about a middle school transgender girl, Melissa. APL staff participate in the Reads committee, host programs, and are partnering with community organizations, Diverse and Resilient, HeartBrain, and 1,000 Islands Environmental Center. HeartBrain hosted a poetry workshop for participants to write their own authentic poem. There was an authentic poem contest for kids, teens, and adults. The winners read their poetry at the virtual launch announcing the selection. Author Alex Gino will offer virtual presentations geared towards middle and high school students on Thursday, April 15 at 9:45 a.m. and 2 p.m. They will also offer a virtual presentation to the general public at 6:30 p.m., on Thursday, April 15. There will be supplemental programs including intergenerational book discussions, a Trans 101 presentation, a youth book club, Story Book Walk, and storytime. Since the launch we have received many thanks from community leaders, individuals, and organizations about choosing a great book to help educate the community on transgender experiences.

**Books Build Community** selections are chosen by community members and partners to foster shared experiences and dialogue around community initiatives. This year's title, *The Voting Booth*, by Brandy Colbert, was selected by teens in the Fox Valley focused on the central themes of race, racism, and anti-racism. This young adult novel weaves themes of voter suppression, race relations, mental health, and other topics in a stunning and thought-provoking novel. The Books Build Community program is presented by Appleton Public Library with support from the Friends of Appleton Public Library. Supporting partners include representatives from Appleton Area School District (AASD), AASD Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office (DEI), and Boys and Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley STAR Program. This year's reimagined Books Build Community program will be available through Zoom and will stream live on Tuesday, March 9 at 2:30pm through Appleton Public Library's Facebook page.