

One City, One Book falls on campus

OREGON CITY LIBRARY PARTNERS WITH COLLEGE TO GET PEOPLE READING

STORY BY ANDREW GRIFFIN

STAFF WRITER

Today, it seems as if reading books is a dying pastime. Rarely anyone seems to be able to say that they have picked up and read a book from start to finish outside of a classroom setting. Fortunately, there's a new plan to get more people into reading right here in Oregon City: the One City, One Book project. The goal of the project is to get people across Oregon City reading a particular book they have chosen throughout the month of February. It was started through a connection between library staff here at Clackamas Community College and the Oregon City Public Library.

"It was a collaboration," said CCC counselor Lupe Martinez. "The way that it started is that Oregon City Public Library approached our library staff about helping select their One City, One Book novel.

Photo courtesy of Heidi Durrow



Durrow

Because some of the librarians at the time were part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion subcommittee that dealt with library resources, they brought it to the subcommittee and said "What do you guys think, should we help with this project?" And so the resources and library subcommittee was very interested in partnering with Oregon City Public Library. We decided that this was the book that we were most attracted to and that we thought would be a greater appeal to our audience here at [the] college."

Which book did they choose? It would only be fitting that a project based around connecting a small community through reading would use a local author; this month's book is "The Girl Who Fell From the Sky" by Heidi Durrow. The book tells the story of Rachel, a biracial woman who, just like the author, was born from a Danish mother and an African American father. We see her growing up through the 1980s struggling to deal with her racial identity. At the same time this story is being told, a present day mystery is unfolding, revealing — without spoiling anything — a tragic accident. The story mainly deals with timely themes of race, identity and belonging, which is one of the main reasons it was chosen for the project.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion is the name of the game at CCC," said Martinez. "When this came up as an opportunity, and [with] the content of the novel speaking specifically to issues of diversity and race in the Portland area, it seemed like a very natural fit and a perfect opportunity to have discussions on that."

CCC English instructor Amanda Coffey also thinks the book is a good choice because of its relatability.

"I think the book really talks about so many things that touch reader's own experiences," said Coffey. "There's a lot of trauma in there. Many readers have already been through their teenage years and so my students are talking about how well the book conveys the confusion and challenges and the excitement [of] those years."

Durrow herself is a graduate of Portland's Jefferson High School and is a podcaster and a recipient of the 2008 Bellwether Prize for Fiction. Durrow has had

numerous careers throughout her lifetime as a writer, including as a journalist and a life skills trainer for both the NBA and NFL.

Heidi Durrow will speak at CCC
Thursday, Feb. 27 @ 7 p.m.
in McLoughlin Hall as part of
One City, One Book.

More events listed at the Oregon City Library website.

"A breathless telling of a tale we've never heard before.
Haunting and lovely, pitch-perfect, this book could not be more timely."

— BARBARA KINGSOLVER

THE
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A NOVEL

HEIDI W. DURROW



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ON THE COVER: The Black Student Union held its first event on campus in more than a decade. Cover design by Rebekah Thompson and Jonathan Villagomez.

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