

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2022

ImagineIF Receives Intellectual Freedom Award

Missoula, MT – On August 5th, 2022 at the Tri-Conference Awards Ceremony held in Missoula, MT, ImagineIF Libraries will receive the Pat Williams Intellectual Freedom Award from the Montana Library Association. The award recognizes current and former ImagineIF Librarians Sean Anderson, Kat Wilson, Starr White and former interim Director Martha Furman, who led the response to concurrent challenges against two books in the library's collection, *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison and *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe.

The Pat Williams Intellectual Freedom Award is conferred upon an individual or group who has made significant contributions during the past year to the enhancement of First Amendment rights or upon an individual whose body of work over time has made significant contributions to the enhancement of intellectual freedom. The recipient should have demonstrated a clear understanding of the principles, nature and responsibilities and implications of the First Amendment. The recipient should have applied that understanding of the principles in one or more of the following ways:

- In defense of the principles in the face of a serious challenge to it which defense is not necessarily limited to libraries.
- In support of the principles through an active role in:
 - Formulating programs which develop people's ability to deal with a full range of opinion/controversy and with the issues associated with such controversy, or
 - Developing, or materially assisting in the development of, a legal base for the continued enjoyment of freedom of mind, its strengthening, and its defense, or
 - Expanding the philosophical foundations of the principle or contributing to better understanding of it.

ImagineIF Libraries received several nominations from library staff across the state of Montana, praising ImagineIF for upholding the freedom to read. "ImagineIF staff have remained professional and adhered to the precepts that guide our profession," wrote John Finn, Director of Lewis & Clark Library. "They have held up the right to read for all members of the community in an inclusive way. Patrons in Flathead County should feel proud that they live in a community where their freedom of choice to read what they wish is being upheld by professional librarians and a freedom loving staff."

For more information on the Pat Williams Intellectual Freedom Award, visit <https://www.mtlib.org/page-18252> or contact Tracy Cook at (406) 444-9816 or tcook2@mt.gov.

About the Montana State Library

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information, visit <http://msl.mt.gov>.

ImagineIF Libraries' mission is to provide safe and fair access to information for everyone in Flathead County. For more information, visit www.imagineiflibraries.org.

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