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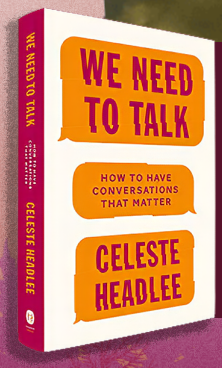
THE ONE BOOK PROJECT

FOUNDED 2002

The One Book Project is an annual countywide of reading that facilitates the exploration of ideas and community connections.

This year's book title selection is *We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations That Matter* by Celeste Headlee.





The One Book Project 2026

EVENTS BROCHURE

Events are FREE and open to the public.

Throughout October and November, Kern County libraries and our community partners will bring the pages of a book to life with programming designed to connect, create, teach, and engage. From family programs to adult activities and workshops, there are countless ways to start a conversation, discover a new perspective, enjoy meaningful experiences, and build community connections

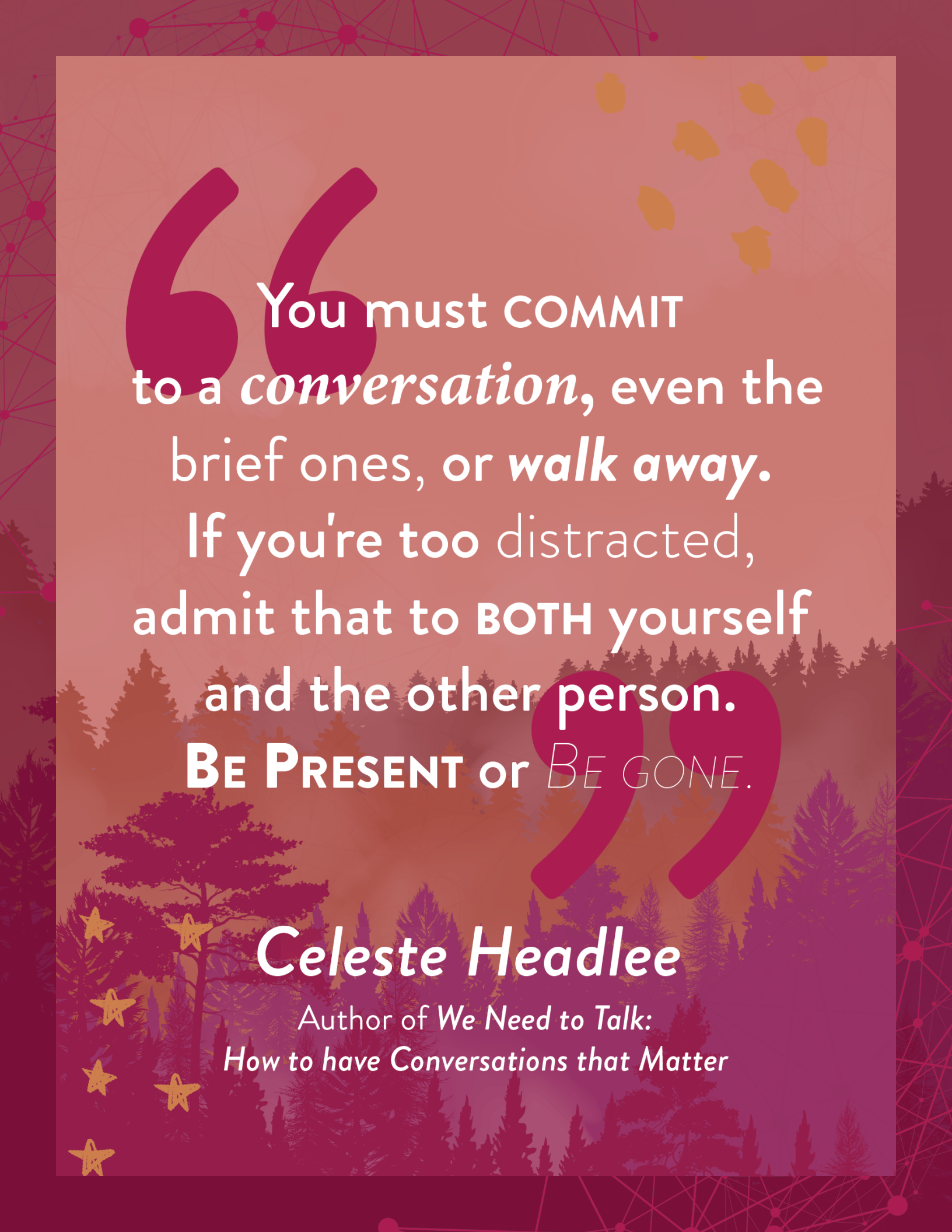
For event listings & resources visit KCLonebook.org

KERN COUNTY LIBRARY

ONE BOOK • ONE DISCUSSION • ONE COMMUNITY

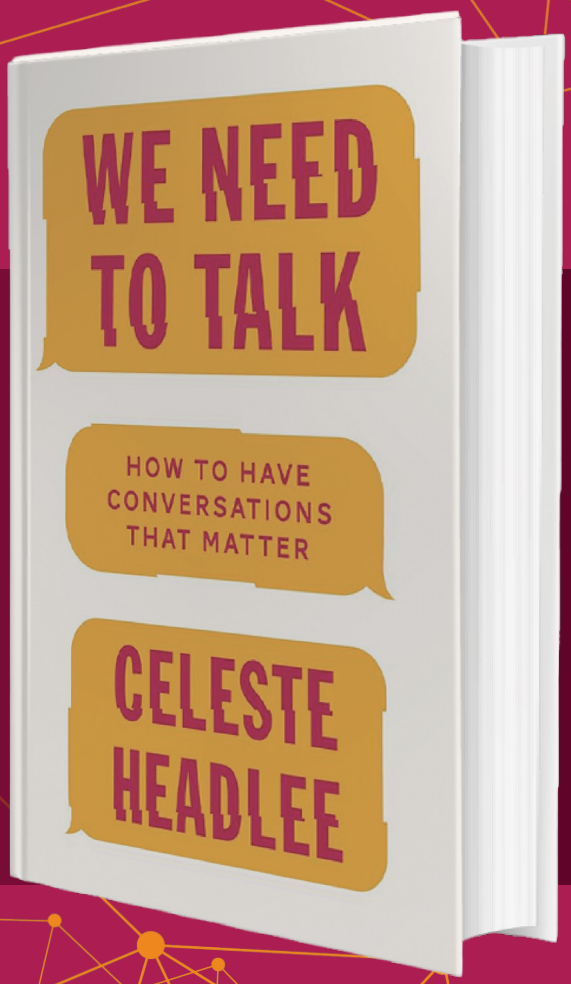
The One Book Project is presented by Kern County Library and California State University, Bakersfield, Office of the Provost.

701 Truxtun Ave • Bakersfield, CA 93301 • 661.868.0701


You must COMMIT
to a *conversation*, even the
brief ones, or ***walk away.***
If you're too distracted,
admit that to BOTH yourself
and the other person.
BE PRESENT or BE GONE.
Celeste Headlee
Author of *We Need to Talk:*
How to have Conversations that Matter

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KERN COUNTY LIBRARY

Grounded *in* Literacy

In this issue you'll discover the many ways your library can inspire connection, learning, and meaningful connections. From reading featured books and participating in our Beanstack Reading Challenge to attending a event or program, there are plenty of ways to get involved!

Use the Table of Contents to find the stories, activities, and events that interest you and discover how you can take part in conversations beyond these pages. Your local libraries are more than places to find books. They're a space to discover, learn, explore, build, create, and connect through free programming and shared experiences. Our libraries create opportunities for people of all ages to feel connected to their community!

We Need to Talk: How to have Converstations that Matter **& One Book companion titles are available for checkout in print, eBook, eAudiobook, & book on CD from the Kern County Library.**
Also available for purchase from Russo's Books and Barnes and Noble.

Welcome!

ABOUT THE ONE BOOK PROJECT

Since 2002, the One Book Project has brought people throughout Kern County together through a shared experience of reading, discovery and conversation. Led by the Kern County Library and California State University, Bakersfield, the project invites our community members to read and enjoy new perspectives, ideas, and experiences grounded in One Book.

Children, teens, and adults can participate by reading the main title or exploring the picture books, fiction, nonfiction, and graphic novels curated in our One Book Companion Title list. The Kern County community is also invited to connect by attending programs at KCL library branches or off-site partner locations to include storytimes and craft activities, as well as special educational presentations, discussions, workshops and performances. Whether you're looking to start a conversation, discover a new perspective, or simply find your next great read, there's something for everyone!





JOIN THE READING CHALLENGE

Ready to read, explore, and earn a few bragging rights along the way? Join the One Book Project Reading Challenge on Beanstack! Track your reading, complete fun activities, earn digital badges, and make your way through the challenge at your own pace.

Everyone can participate! Whether you're reading on your own or participating as a family, Beanstack makes it easy to record reading sessions, track progress, and manage multiple readers and family accounts, all in one place. Stay motivated, discover new books, and celebrate your reading together throughout October and November.

THE AUTHOR CELESTE HEADLEE



Celeste Headlee is an award-winning journalist, bestselling author, and sought-after speaker known for her work on communication, connection, and connections. A longtime public radio host and correspondent, she has spent decades talking with people from all walks of life and exploring what helps us truly listen and understand one another.

Through her writing and speaking, Headlee challenges us to rethink how we communicate in a world where conversations can be increasingly difficult. Her approach is practical, relatable, and often surprising, reminding us that better conversations aren't about saying the perfect thing; they're about being curious, listening well, and holding space for one another.

We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations That Matter offers practical tools for having better conversations, listening with intention, and to build stronger connections, one conversation at a time.

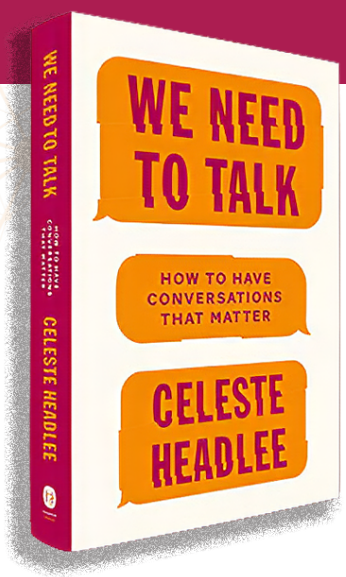
An Evening with Celeste Headlee

Thursday, October 29 • 7:00 PM | Students & Community

CSUB Icardo Center
9001 Stockdale Highway, Bakersfield, CA 93311

Join acclaimed writer and award-winning journalist Celeste Headlee, author of *We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations That Matter*, for an inspiring evening exploring the art of communication. Headlee shares practical insights into becoming a better listener, communicating with intention, and building stronger connections through differences of opinion. Discover how small shifts in the way we talk and listen can lead to more meaningful conversations at home, at work, and out in community.

Presented in partnership with California State University, Bakersfield Office of the Provost, English Department, Walter Stiern Library, General Education Program, and Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society.



ABOUT THE BOOK TITLE SELECTION

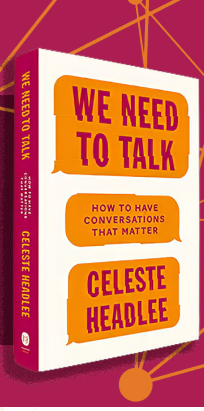
In *We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations That Matter*, Celeste Headlee takes a closer look at one of the most basic, and most powerful, things we do every day: talk to one another. Drawing on her years as a journalist and interviewer.

Headlee examines the habits that can get in the way of meaningful conversation, from preparing our response while someone else is still talking to making assumptions about what others mean. Headlee offers practical, sometimes unexpected strategies for becoming a better conversationalist, including how to ask better questions, stay curious, navigate disagreement, and recognize when we're not really listening.

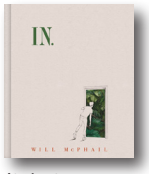
At its heart, We Need to Talk is an invitation to slow down and be more present with the people around us. Whether it's a conversation with a family member, coworker, neighbor, friend, or someone we've just met, the book reminds us that meaningful connection often begins with something simple: being willing to truly talk, and truly listen.

COMPANION TITLES

More Stories, More Perspectives



Our companion titles offer more ways to explore the themes of communication, connection, and belonging through a variety of books, genres, and perspectives. From picture books for young readers to fiction and nonfiction for teens and adults, these selections invite everyone to discover stories and ideas that inspire understanding, spark curiosity, and bring us closer together.



ADULT GRAPHIC NOVEL

In: A Graphic Novel

by Will McPhail

Nick is a young illustrator who longs for meaningful human connection but struggles to move beyond awkward small talk and surface-level interactions.

When he begins opening up and speaking honestly, he discovers a deeper way of connecting with the people around him. As a new relationship brings unexpected joy and heartbreak, Nick learns that genuine connection requires vulnerability, empathy, and a willingness to let others in.

Blending humor with emotional depth, this beautifully illustrated graphic novel explores the challenges of modern relationships and the courage it takes to truly see and understand one another.



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Tweet Cute

By Emma Lord

Pepper and Jack have plenty to say to each other, especially when their families' businesses become rivals in a viral social media feud. But behind the witty tweets and online battles, the two teens are also connecting anonymously through a chat app, discovering a different side of each other.

As their online rivalry grows and their real-life feelings become more complicated, Pepper and Jack must navigate family expectations, misunderstandings, and the challenges of being themselves.

This fun, contemporary romance explores how communication can bring people together in unexpected ways, even when a relationship begins with a little friendly, or not-so-friendly, competition.



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

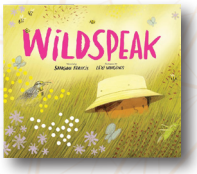
RUOK?: A Horror Story in Texts

by Andy Futuro

Told entirely through text messages, RUOK? delivers a suspenseful horror story about friendship, secrets, and the dangers hidden behind a screen.

When Rori's father dies under suspicious circumstances, she begins searching for answers that lead to encrypted messages, shadowy corporations, and an abandoned laboratory. Far away, her best friend James tries to support her through their messages, even as he faces challenges of his own. But as increasingly disturbing texts arrive from unexpected sources, Rori must decide whom she can trust.

This chilling, fast-paced novel explores how technology shapes our connections and how messages can offer both comfort and fear.



CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK

Wildspeak

by Sangma Francis

What if the world around us had its own language? Wildspeak invites young readers to explore the natural world through observation, imagination, and the magic of words.

From sparkling streams to glowing sunsets, this beautifully illustrated picture book blends real nature vocabulary with imaginative new words, inspiring children to notice the details around them and find creative ways to describe what they see.

A celebration of language, curiosity, and our connection to nature, Wildspeak reminds us that there is always something new to discover when we take the time to look and listen.



CHILDRENS BOOK

More than Words: So Many Ways to Say What We Mean

by Roy MaClean

Everyone communicates in their own way.

At school, Nathan notices how his classmates express themselves through speaking, signing, singing, smiling, and many other forms of communication. As he learns to recognize and appreciate these differences, he discovers that everyone has something to share and that listening and understanding one another can build meaningful friendships.

This beautifully illustrated picture book celebrates communication in all its forms and reminds readers that connection begins when we make an effort to understand one another.



MIDDLE GRADE FICTION

Olivetti

by Allie Millington

Olivetti is a forgotten typewriter who remembers every word ever typed on him.

When his beloved owner, Beatrice Brindle, mysteriously disappears, Olivetti breaks the rules and shares her memories with her quiet, book-loving son, Ernest. Together, they follow a trail of clues through San Francisco, uncovering family secrets and confronting the pain they've struggled to express.

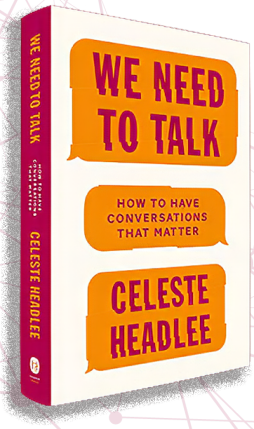
This imaginative and heartfelt story explores the power of words, the importance of listening, and how communication can help families reconnect and find their way back to one another.

FEATURED EVENTS

Special speakers, workshops, performances, and community experiences connected to this year's One Book Project.

Phone Down, Connections Up: The One Book Project Kickoff

Thursday, October 8 • 11:00 AM | College Students & Adults



Bakersfield College, Campus Center 231
1801 Panorama Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93305
661.395.4011

Put down your phones and make new connections! Join us for the 2026 Kern County One Book Project Kickoff event and step into a welcoming, low-pressure environment designed to spark meaningful conversations with people you may not know. Conversation cards will help participants move beyond small talk to facilitate active listening, communicating, and understanding, as well as what it means to truly connect with each other.

Presented in partnership with Bakersfield College and the Bakersfield College Office of Student Life.

Poetic Sanctuary Poetry & Writing Workshop with Diana Ramirez

Saturday, October 10 • 1:00 PM | Adults



Beale Memorial Library Auditorium
701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
661.868.0701

Discover your poetic voice through poetry, writing, and guided mindfulness practices. Reflect on shared human experiences and explore the emotions that connect us through guided writing exercises in a supportive environment. Each workshop concludes with an opportunity to share your work, only if you feel moved to do so. Come as you are, ready to listen, reflect, and uncover the stories within you.

Diana Ramirez is a recipient of the 2024 California Arts Council Emerging Artist Fellowship and a 2026 KDA Individual Artists Fellow. She brings mindfulness, poetry, and writing into justice systems and recovery spaces, helping others reclaim their voices and discover presence.

Presented in partnership with Diana Ramirez.

Disagreement & Donuts

Tuesday, October 13 • 11:30 AM | College Students & Community



CSUB Student Union Patio
9001 Stockdale Hwy, Bakersfield, CA 93311
661.654.2496

Student Fellows from the Kegley Institute of Ethics' Intercollegiate Civil Disagreement Partnership will lead small-group conversations on current topics and questions that invite different perspectives. Students and community members are welcome to stop by and grab a donut, join a conversation, and practice listening across differences in a welcoming setting.

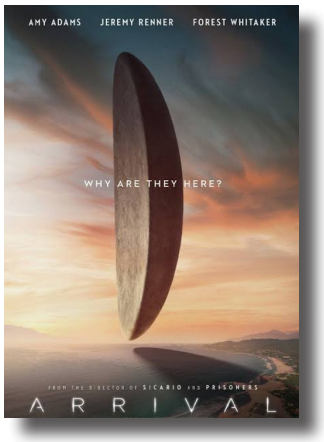
Presented in partnership with the Kegley Institute of Ethics at California State University, Bakersfield.

FEATURED EVENTS

Special speakers, workshops, performances, and community experiences connected to this year's One Book Project.

Film Screening: Arrival

Wednesday, October 14 • 1:00 PM | Adults Rasmussen Senior Center



North of the River Recreation & Park District
115 E. Roberts Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93308
661.392.2030

Explore the power of language and the ways communication can shape how we understand one another. In Arrival, linguist Louise Banks is recruited to communicate with mysterious visitors from another world, forcing her to reconsider language, time, and what it means to truly understand. This thought-provoking film explores connection, communication, and the joy we find in life, even when we know it may end in loss.

Presented in partnership with North of the River Recreation & Park District's Rasmussen Center.

Breathe With the Trees with Robin Carpenter

Saturday, October 17 • 10:00 AM | Adults
Saturday, November 14 • 10:00 AM | Adults



Hart Memorial Park – Nature Center
8000 River Road, Bakersfield, CA 93308
661.872.3179

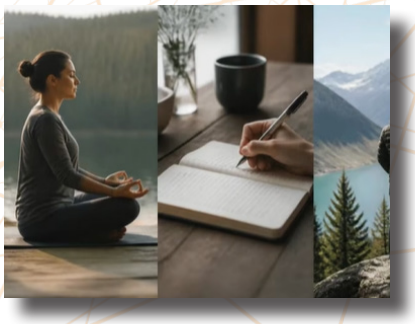
Discover how your breath can connect you more deeply with nature ~ and with yourself. Through guided breathing and mindful practices, you will explore the natural surroundings while creating space for greater clarity, presence, and connection. Located along the south bank of the lower Kern River, the Nature Center (the Old Peacock House) offers a refreshing and welcoming setting to breathe, listen, and reconnect with the natural world.

Presented in partnership with the Kern River Parkway Foundation's Nature Center at Hart Park .

Mindful Journaling With Nature

Thursday, October 29 • 7:00 PM | Students & Community

Beale Memorial Library-Auditorium
701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield CA 93301
661.868.0701



Explore heart-centered practices that encourage empathy, self-understanding, vulnerability, and healthier relationships. Learn the basics of communicating with your heart and discover how nature journaling can support self-expression, reflection, and connection with others. All materials provided. Facilitated by Robin Carpenter, a certified heart energy healer, teacher, and retreat guide, and Claire Lahorgue, a nature enthusiast, journaling educator, and Kern Audubon Society secretary.

Presented in partnership with the Kern River Parkway Foundation's Nature Center at Hart Park.

FEATURED EVENTS

Special speakers, workshops, performances, and community experiences connected to this year's One Book Project.





Communicate to Connect: Crafting Stories & Messages

Beale Memorial Library, Tejon Room, 2nd Floor
701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
661.868.0701

WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, October 21 • 11:30 AM | Adults
Wednesday, October 28 • 11:30 AM | Adults

Bring your personal stories of the ways in which communication has played a role in your life and its power to help you connect with yourself, other people, and the world around you. We will help you write your unique story or message into an audience-worthy speech in two workshops scheduled for two dates.

PRESENTATIONS

Saturday, November 7 • 1:00 PM | Adults

Ready to share your story? Participants will have the opportunity to take the stage at Beale Library and tell their story or deliver their message in front of a live audience. Join us on this journey of discovery, self-expression, and deeper connection as we explore the power of sharing our stories and being heard.

Presented in partnership with Bakersfield Toastmasters Clubs.

Poetry Connects with Kern County's First Poet Laureate Don Thompson

Saturday, November 17 • 1:00 PM | All Ages

Beale Memorial Library Local History Room
701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
661.868.0701

Join Kern County's first Poet Laureate, Don Thompson, for a discussion on poetry as a form of communication and its connection to the Central Valley, followed by a reading of his poem *Local Color*, which explores the region's history, people, and places. Born in Bakersfield, Thompson has published more than a dozen books and chapbooks and was named Kern County's first Poet Laureate in 2016. He lives with his wife, Chris, on her family's farm near Buttonwillow.

Presented in partnership with Laureate Don Thompson.



22nd Annual Kegley Institute of Ethics Fall Lecture Series
Calling In: How to Start Making Change With Those You'd Rather Cancel

Thursday, November 19 • 5:30 PM | Students & Community

Walter W. Stiern Library, Dezember Reading Room
9001 Stockdale Highway, Bakersfield, CA 93311
661.654.3172



Educator, activist, and scholar Loretta J. Ross introduces the powerful practice of "calling in" -- a compassionate alternative to "canceling" that emphasizes accountability, empathy, and connection. Through engaging storytelling and real-world insights, explore how to navigate difficult conversations, foster deeper understanding across differences, and create more inclusive and resilient communities. Learn how to meet people where they are while staying rooted in justice and our shared humanity.

Presented in partnership with the Kegley Institute of Ethics at California State University, Bakersfield.

FASHION SHOW

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR

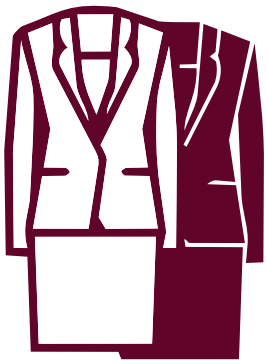
Threads of Empowerment
FASHION SHOW

Discover how style can become a powerful form of self-expression and a thread connecting confidence, opportunity, and achievement. Threads of Empowerment takes you through the many moments when what we wear can help us feel prepared, confident, and ready to communicate who we are and where we're going.
This fashion show will feature five workplace categories:

- The Interview: Make a confident first impression.
- The First Day: Step into your new role with confidence.
- Everyday Confidence: Fashion-forward styles for your work life.
- Leadership: Bold and empowering attire.
- Celebrate Your Success: Evening networking looks that reflect professional achievement.

Models will showcase professional and personal styles curated by Dress for Success, with hair and makeup artistry provided by students from Lyles College of Beauty.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026 | 1PM - 3PM



AUDITORIUM

BEALE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
701 TRUXTUN AVE., BAKERSFIELD, CA

KERN COUNTY LIBRARY

For more information,
visit ***KCLonebook.org***
Call **661.868.0701**
Email **info@kernlibrary.org**

Presented in partnership with Dress for Success Bakersfield and Lyle's College of Beauty.

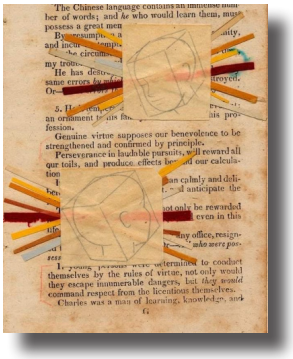
COMMUNITY EVENTS

Programs and activities presented by community partners as part of the One Book Project.

Sharing Perspective: Art That Illustrates Conversation

ART EXHIBIT October 12 - December 15

CSUB Walter Stiern Library,
9001 Stockdale Hwy, Bakersfield, CA 93311
661.654.3172



In support of this year's One Book Project selection, the Walter W. Stiern Library invites students and community members to the 2026 annual art exhibit. The work in the exhibit is all student-submitted and illustrate a difficult conversation in some way—active listening, being vulnerable, sharing important (or exciting or hard) news, responding honestly, advocating for ourselves and others.

Presented in partnership with the Kegley Institute of Ethics at California State University, Bakersfield.

Mindful and Reflective Messaging for Clearer Communication Programs

Art & Spirituality Center at Dignity Health

Art & Spirituality Center at Dignity Health
2215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301.
661-632-5747

Art for Healing programs provide a variety of creative experiences free of charge. From artmaking to meditation to music and writing, participants will become practiced in the skills of letting go, living in the moment, artful reflection, and relaxation. All programs are led by experienced facilitators and are intended for persons 18 and older who are seeking clarity and connection or respite from life challenges.



Writing and Poetry Programs

- Let's Have a Word Together: Registration required.
- Poetic Sanctuary w/Diana Ramirez: Registration required.

Contemplative & Reflective Programs

- Meditation & Healing Breath: Registration required.
- Music & Meditation: No registration required.
- Creative Meditation & Sound Bath: Registration required.
- Art Journaling: A Bonding Experience for Family & Friends: Registration required for each person.

Dress Jackets, Shoes & Purse Drive

Southwest, Rathbun, and Northeast Library Locations

701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
661.868.0701



Southwest, Rathbun, and Northeast Library Locations will be collecting donations of coats, purses, and shoes (New clothes will also be accepted!) during the months of October and November to benefit Dress for Success Bakersfield.

ABOUT DRESS FOR SUCCESS
Dress for Success Worldwide is the leading resource for advancing women in the workplace globally. Its purpose is to empower women to achieve economic mobility by providing a network of support, workplace attire, and development tools for success.

Presented in partnership with Dress for Success, Bakersfield.

Library Programs
BAKERSFIELD BRANCHES

PROGRAM INFORMATION : Library workshops, performances, and events are FREE and open to the public. At times, programs may be rescheduled or cancelled without advance notice.

BAKER BRANCH LIBRARY

Community Conversation: Question of the Day | All October • During Library Hours | All Ages
What do you think? Share your thoughts, answer the question of the day, and see what others in your community have to say.

Family Storytime & Craft | Friday, November 6 • 4:00 PM | Adults
Explore the theme of communication through stories and conversation about how we talk to ourselves and others. Then create a "Petals of Encouragement" flower by writing kind and encouraging words about yourself on colorful petals.

In Our Own Voice | Friday, November 13 • 4:00 PM | Adults
Hear personal stories from individuals living with mental health conditions as they share their experiences to build understanding, reduce stigma, and encourage meaningful conversations about mental health and recovery.

Baby Bounce | Tuesday, November 17 • 1:00 PM | Babies & Caregivers
Enjoy stories, songs, and playtime designed for babies and their caregivers. Reading and singing together helps develop early communication skills while creating opportunities to connect and interact.

Dear Me | Tuesday, November 24 • 5:00 PM | Teens
Explore the ways we communicate with ourselves by writing three letters, to your past self, present self, and future self. Reflect on your feelings and practice honest self-expression while considering how understanding ourselves can help us communicate more meaningfully with others.

BEALE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Family Storytime with the Nature Center | Saturday, October 17 • 1:00 PM | Families
Explore the ways we communicate with the world around us through stories, drawing, writing, and observation. Families will enjoy stories about nature journaling, then create their own nature journals to record and reflect on the natural world.

Teen Craft Club | Monday, October 26 • 4:00 PM | Teens
Get creative with DIY cellphone inserts, then join us for a book talk about We Need to Talk by Celeste Headlee. Explore ideas about communication and conversation while connecting with other teens.

Crafting Literacy Club | Wednesday, November 18 • 4:00 PM | Age 6–11
Read a book together and create a craft inspired by the story while exploring themes of empathy, self-expression, and communication. This program supports literacy and social-emotional learning through stories, creativity, and conversation.

Ladies' Night @ Beale: One on Oneness | Thursday, November 19 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Explore communication through mindfulness, personal reflection, and creative expression. Create a lotus flower lantern while learning about simple meditation practices inspired by the symbolism of the lotus and the search for one's inner light.

HOLLOWAY-GONZALES BRANCH LIBRARY

Music-Guided Art | Saturday, October 10 • 1:00 PM | Teens
Let music guide your creativity! Listen to a variety of music and let the sounds and emotions inspire you as you create your own work of art.

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, October 15 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Celebrate reading, feelings, and connection through fun stories and songs. Little ones will have opportunities to listen, learn, and express themselves.

Breathwork with Awakened Collaborative | Friday, November 20 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Slow down and reconnect with yourself through guided breathwork. Explore mindful breathing and the practice of listening to yourself as a way to support greater self-awareness and connection.

Kids Crafternoon: Emotion Wheel | Wednesday, November 25 • 4:00 PM | Age 6–11
Get creative while exploring feelings. Make an emotion wheel to help identify and express different emotions.

NORTHEAST BRANCH LIBRARY

Many Voices, One Community | Wednesday, November 4 • 4:00 PM | Adults
Create a community banner celebrating the people, interests, and ideas that make our community unique. Add your own creative touch and see how all of our voices come together. Presented in partnership with Ciara from Clementine Creations.

Preschool Storytime: Talking on the Phone | Thursday, November 12 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Hello! Little ones can create their own pretend cellphone and practice saying hello, listening, and having simple conversations while exploring how we connect with others.

Family Storytime: My Home | Saturday, November 14 • 12:00 PM | Families
What makes a home feel like home? Create an origami house and fill it with the people, pets, favorite things, and special interests that make your family unique. Then share and discover what makes other families special, too.

Young Writers Club: Letter Writing Workshop | Thursday, November 19 • 5:00 PM | Teens
Forget the text, write a letter! Get creative with fun stationery, personal touches, and your own words to create a message someone will love receiving.

RATHBUN BRANCH LIBRARY

Variety Day: Active Listening | Wednesday, November 18 • 3:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Put your listening skills to the test. Listen carefully as an item is described, then see if you can draw what you hear. A fun, creative way to explore the power of active listening.

Teen Time: Junk Journaling | Wednesday, November 18 • 4:00 PM | Teens
Create a one-of-a-kind junk journal for your thoughts, dreams, memories, doodles, and everything in between. Create a journal that's uniquely yours. Materials provided.

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, November 19 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Celebrate the joy of reading with stories, songs, rhymes, and a fun craft that little ones can enjoy together.

Toddler Time | Friday, November 20 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Play, sing, rhyme, and read together while building early literacy skills and creating opportunities for little ones to connect.

Adult Art Club | Saturday, November 21 • 12:00 PM | Adults
Relax, get creative, and connect during a special One Book-inspired Adult Art Club. Enjoy a hands-on craft, chat about our featured books, and sip a cup of tea. Materials provided.

SOUTHWEST BRANCH LIBRARY

Family Storytime | Saturday, October 3 • 10:30 AM | Families
Gather the family for stories, songs, finger plays, and a fun craft that encourage communication, connection, and the joy of sharing stories together.

Poetry Writing Workshop with Portia Choi | Saturday, October 10 • 2:00 PM | Adults
Join Kern County Poet Laureate Portia Choi for a special poetry workshop inspired by We Need to Talk by Celeste Headlee. Explore how compassion and empathy shape the way we connect with one another, then put your thoughts into words through writing and sharing.

Tin Can Telephone: Craft for Kids | Monday, October 12 • 4:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Build an old-school tin-can telephone and discover how sound travels through different materials. Make your own take-home telephone and put it to the test.

Teen Conversation Club | Saturday, November 21 • 2:00 PM | Teens
Meet new people and enjoy a series of short, one-on-one conversations where you choose the topics and practice sharing, listening, and keeping the conversation going.

WILSON BRANCH LIBRARY

Family Storytime & Craft | Friday, October 16 • 4:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Enjoy engaging stories, rhymes, music, and movement, followed by a fun craft. Listen, share, and connect through stories and hands-on creativity.

Junk Journaling | Saturday, October 24 • 12:00 PM | Teens
Create a journal that's uniquely yours. Personalize it with colorful papers, stickers, doodles, and creative touches for writing, sketching, goal-setting, or whatever inspires you. Supplies provided.

Philosophy for Kids | Thursday, October 29 • 4:00 PM | Ages 6–11
What makes a good friend? Is something always fair? Explore big questions through stories and fun thought experiments with CSUB philosophy professor Dr. Saner and student Jessica Killmer.

Collage Club | Thursday, November 19 • 4:00 PM | Teens
What can you say without using words? Explore visual expression through creating a collage that communicates your ideas, feelings, or perspective. No art experience needed.

Library Programs
COUNTYWIDE BRANCHES

PROGRAM INFORMATION : Library workshops, performances, and events are FREE and open to the public. At times, programs may be rescheduled or cancelled without advance notice.

ARVIN BRANCH LIBRARY

Family Storytime | Saturday, October 3 • 10:30 AM | Families
Gather the family for stories, songs, finger plays, and a fun craft that encourage communication, connection, and the joy of sharing stories together.

Poetry Writing Workshop with Portia Choi | Saturday, October 10 • 2:00 PM | Adults
Join Kern County Poet Laureate Portia Choi for a special poetry workshop inspired by We Need to Talk by Celeste Headlee. Explore how compassion and empathy shape the way we connect with one another, then put your thoughts into words through writing and sharing.

Tin Can Telephone: Craft for Kids | Monday, October 12 • 4:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Build an old-school tin-can telephone and discover how sound travels through different materials. Make your own take-home telephone and put it to the test.

Teen Conversation Club | Saturday, November 21 • 2:00 PM | Teens
Meet new people and enjoy a series of short, one-on-one conversations where you choose the topics and practice sharing, listening, and keeping the conversation going.

BOOKMOBILE

Kern River Parkway Nature Center | Saturday, October 17 • 11:15 AM | Families
Join the Bookmobile at the Kern River Parkway Nature Center for a special storytime celebrating nature, imagination, and outdoor discovery. Enjoy stories about wildlife and the natural world, then create a fun squirrel hat craft to take home.

Ghost Breathing Buddy | Saturdays in October • During Park Stops | Age 6-11
Stop by the Bookmobile's Saturday park stops to create a fun, spooky breathing buddy which encourages children to explore simple ways to pause, breathe, and check in with themselves.

Kern River Parkway Nature Center | Saturday, November 14 • 11:15 AM | Families
Join the Bookmobile at the Kern River Parkway Nature Center for a storytime celebrating nature, language, and wildlife. Enjoy stories inspired by the outdoors, then create a colorful peacock handprint craft.

BORON BRANCH LIBRARY

Cranium Game Night | Friday, October 2 • 4:00 PM | Teens
Put your creativity, knowledge, and communication skills to the test with a fun round of Cranium! Work together, think creatively, and enjoy an evening of games and conversation.

Family Storytime | Friday, October 9 • 3:00 PM | Families
Bring the whole family for stories, songs, and a fun craft! Enjoy time together while listening, creating, and connecting through stories and shared activities.

Local Author Talk: Jeanette Huffman | Thursday, October 8 • 5:30 PM | Adults
Meet local author Jeanette Huffman and enjoy a reading from her new supernatural horror thriller, RACHEL. Hear from the author about her work and the stories behind her writing.

Hobby Club: Junk Journaling | Thursday, October 29 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Express your thoughts, feelings, and ideas through junk journaling while connecting with others. Bring your creativity and enjoy an opportunity to make something personal while making new friends.

Peter Fletcher: Classical Guitarist Concert | Friday, November 6 • 4:00 PM | Families
Experience the expressive power of music with renowned classical guitarist Peter Fletcher. Hear music from his Bach album, including Bach's Lute Suite No. 3, and learn how music can communicate emotions and ideas without words.

Adult Paint Night | Thursday, November 19 • 4:00 PM | Adults
Relax, get creative, and connect with others during an evening of painting at the library. No experience is necessary, and all supplies are provided.

BUTTONWILLOW BRANCH LIBRARY

Kids Get Crafty: Active Listening | Monday, October 5 • 4:00 PM | Age 6–11
Make your own sound shaker while learning about active listening. Create, shake, and explore different sounds through a fun hands-on craft.

Teens Get Crafty: Friendship Bracelet Bar | Wednesday, October 7 • 4:00 PM | Teens
Get creative while exploring friendship, empathy, and understanding. Make a friendship bracelet to share with someone special or keep for yourself.

Toddler Time: Little Listeners | Thursday, October 8 • 11:00 AM | Toddlers
Enjoy stories, songs, and a fun craft designed to help little ones explore the importance of listening and connecting with others.

Let's Talk About It: Conversation Starters | All Oct & Nov • During Library Hours | All Ages
Stop by throughout the month to choose a question, spark a conversation, and discover new ways to connect with others.

CHP Storytime with Officer Samantha Rivera | Tuesday, November 17 • 4:00 PM | Families
Join CHP Officer Samantha Rivera for a special storytime and conversation about communication, community, and staying safe.

CALIFORNIA CITY BRANCH LIBRARY

Breathe In, Breathe Out: A Breathing Workshop | Friday, November 6 • 5:00 PM | All Ages
Explore simple breathing strategies like Mountain Breath, Rainbow Breath, and Balloon Breath to reduce stress, calm the nervous system, and stay present.

Family Storytime: Active Listening | Saturday, November 14 • 12:30 PM | Families
Enjoy songs and short stories while practicing the important skill of active listening. Stories count toward the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program.

Kids Crafternoon: Fortune Teller | Saturday, November 14 • 1:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Get crafty while exploring fun ways to handle disagreements, solve problems, and communicate with others.

Preschool Storytime: Active Listening | Saturday, November 14 • 12:30 PM | Early Learners
Enjoy books, songs, and rhymes while little ones practice listening, language, and early communication skills.

We Are All Connected Wall Puzzle | Oct & Nov • During Library Hours | All Ages
Add a piece to our community puzzle and see how every piece helps create something bigger. Connect, contribute, and celebrate what we can create together.

DELANO BRANCH LIBRARY

Let's Get Talking: One Book Project Kickoff | Thursday, October 8 • 3:30 PM | All Ages
Join us as we kick off this year's One Book Project! Celebrate the joy of reading and explore the power of communication, conversation, and connection.

Family Storytime & Craft | Thursday, November 5 • 11:00 AM | Families
Enjoy stories, songs, and a creative activity that encourage listening, self-expression, and connection.

Kids Crafttime: Create & Connect | Thursday, November 5 • 3:30 PM | Ages 6–11
Get creative with a fun, hands-on craft while exploring communication, self-expression, and connection.

Teen Talk & Create | Friday, November 13 • 3:30 PM | Teens
Connect, create, and have fun with other teens during a hands-on activity exploring communication and self-expression.

One Book Project Book Discussion | Thursday, November 12 • 3:30 PM | Adults
Join us for a thoughtful discussion of We Need to Talk by Celeste Headlee. Share your ideas, listen to different perspectives, and explore ways to have more meaningful conversations.

Delano Discussed: Family Conversation Café | Thursday, November 19 • 3:30 PM | Families
Put down the screens and let's talk! Enjoy fun conversation challenges, silly questions, nonverbal communication games, and listening activities designed to get the whole family talking and connecting. Presented in partnership with the Delano City School District.

FRAZIER PARK BRANCH LIBRARY

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, November 5 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Enjoy a story inspired by this year's One Book theme, followed by a fun activity and time to play, listen, and connect.

Silent Communication Matching Craft | Tuesday, November 10 • 4:00 PM | Age 6–11
Explore the many ways we communicate without words. Match facial expressions and body language to different emotions while discovering how we can express how we feel through nonverbal communication.

Detox from Technology | Tuesday, November 17 • 5:30 PM | All Ages
Take a break from technology and reconnect with the people around you. Learn simple ways to unplug and strengthen communication with friends and family.

Communication Game Challenge | Thursday, November 19 • 4:00 PM | Teens
Put your communication skills to the test with Telephone, Pictionary, and Charades. Work with your teammates to get the message across without technology, and see what happens when communication gets a little challenging.

KERN RIVER VALLEY BRANCH LIBRARY

Teen Tabletop Gaming | Wednesday, October 7 • 4:00 PM | Teens
Draw, guess, and laugh together as you explore the power of words, communication, and imagination with a fun game of Telestrations.

More Than Words, More Than Art | Saturday, October 10 • 2:00 PM | Age 6–11
Enjoy a shared reading of More Than Words by Roz MacLean, followed by a creative thumbprint leaf boat craft.

Dress for Success: Communicate Your Professionalism | Tuesday, October 27 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Learn how your appearance can communicate confidence and professionalism, with practical tips for interviews and the workplace. Presented in partnership with America's Job Center.

Wildspeak | Friday, November 6 • 4:30 PM | Age 6–11
Enjoy a special reading of Wildspeak by Sangma Francis, followed by a fun craft inspired by the book. Celebrate nature, curiosity, and creativity through stories and hands-on fun.

LAMONT BRANCH LIBRARY

Paper Cup Telephone | Thursday, October 8 • 3:30 PM | Age 6–11
Make a telephone using paper cups, string, and paper clips while exploring how sound travels and how we communicate.

Storytime & Craft: Listening | Friday, October 9 • 3:30 PM | Families
Enjoy a story and craft focused on listening, learning, and connecting with others.

Flower Language Greeting Card | Tuesday, November 3 • 3:30 PM | Age 6–11
Learn about the language of flowers and create a one-of-a-kind greeting card to share with someone special.

Play Interviews | Saturday, November 14 • 12:00 PM | Age 6–11
Get to know other kids in your community. Ask fun questions, share your answers, and discover something new about each other.

Paper Fortune Cookies | Tuesday, November 17 • 4:30 PM | Age 6–11
What's your fortune? Create a paper fortune cookie and tuck a silly, surprising, or encouraging message inside to share with someone.

Diary Decorating Workshop | Wednesday, November 18 • 4:30 PM | Teens
Make it yours. Personalize your own diary with gems, ribbons, stickers, and more. Add your style, your thoughts, and a little creativity. Limited supplies available.

Let's Talk About It: Book Discussion | Tuesday, November 24 • 4:30 PM | All Ages
What did you think? Come share your thoughts, ideas, or questions from this year's One Book selection and companion titles. Listen, chat, and hear what others have to say.

Community Writing Journal | November • During Library Hours | All Ages
Write a poem, draw a picture, or share a story in our community journal. Add your voice to the conversation.

MCFARLAND BRANCH LIBRARY

Talk It Out: The Art of Conversation | Thursday, October 1 • 4:00 PM | Teens
How quickly can a message get mixed up? Play Telestrations and watch a simple idea transform as it travels around the group.

Family Storytime | Saturday, Oct 3, Nov 7, Nov 14, Nov 21 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Enjoy stories, finger plays, rhymes, and more while building early listening and communication skills together.

NAMI In Our Own Voice | Tuesday, October 27 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Hear personal stories from trained speakers with lived experience as they share their recovery journeys and help build understanding through conversation. Presented in partnership with National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Crafternoon | Tuesday, November 10 • 3:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Get creative, make something fun, and connect with other kids during an afternoon of crafting at the library.

MOJAVE BRANCH LIBRARY

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, October 15 • 11:30 AM | Early Learners
Enjoy stories, songs, and movement activities that build early literacy skills, grow vocabulary, and help young children discover the joy of connecting through books.

RIDGECREST BRANCH LIBRARY

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, October 1 • 10:30 AM | Early Learners
Listen, learn, and connect through stories, songs, and playful activities designed to build early literacy and communication skills while sparking a love of reading.

How Active Listening Enhances Speaking | Saturday, October 10 • 12:30 PM | Adults
Discover practical ways to become a better listener and strengthen your communication skills at home, at work, and in everyday conversations.

Crafternoon: Talking Sticks | Thursday, October 15 • 3:30 PM | Ages 6–11
Create your own talking stick and discover how this special tool can help encourage sharing, listening, and taking turns in conversation.

Teens Paint with Music | Tuesday, October 27 • 3:30 PM | Teens
Let the music guide your creativity. Paint, express yourself, and see where the sounds take you.

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, November 5 • 10:30 AM | Early Learners
Listen, learn, and connect through stories, songs, and playful activities designed to build early literacy and communication skills while sparking a love of reading.

Conversation Detectives: Hear the Clues, Share Your Views | Saturday, November 14 • 12:00 PM | Adults
Become a Conversation Detective by working together to uncover conversational clues by listening carefully, asking thoughtful questions, noticing details, and discovering something new about one another.

Lotus Flower Lantern-Making | Saturday, November 14 • 2:00 PM | Ages 12–18
Learn about the significance of the lotus flower while creating a beautiful lantern. Take part in guided mindfulness and personal reflection as you explore the idea of finding clarity and inner light.

RC Booklovers | Thursday, November 19 • 12:30 PM | Adults
Join RC Booklovers for a discussion of Olivetti by Allie Millington, a heartfelt middle-grade mystery told from the perspectives of a 12-year-old boy and a very unusual typewriter. When Ernest's mother disappears, Olivetti breaks the rules and begins communicating with him, revealing memories that may help solve the mystery. Come discuss this imaginative story about family, memory, belonging, and finding the courage to communicate.

ROSAMOND BRANCH LIBRARY

Sound Bath | Thursday, October 15 • 6:00 PM | Adults
Slow down and reconnect through the calming sounds and vibrations of a guided sound bath. Relax, quiet the mind, and give yourself space to rest and recharge.

Junk Journaling: Crafting with KC | Wednesdays, October 21 & November 14 • 1:00 PM | Adults
Create a one-of-a-kind junk journal to capture memories, ideas, thoughts, and creative inspiration. Welcome all skill levels.

Yoga For Every Body | Wednesdays, October 21 & November 18 • 5:30 PM | Adults
Unwind with gentle, meditative yoga focused on movement, breathing, and proper alignment. Every skill level welcome, including beginners and seniors. Yoga mats available.

Thank-A-Vet: One Book Project Edition | October 27–November 6 • During Library Hours | Families
Create a heartfelt card, drawing, or letter for a local veteran. Make one at the library or at home and drop it off by November 6. In partnership with Rosamond VFW Post 9657, your messages will be shared with local veterans. Supplies provided.

Card Making: Crafting with KC | Wednesday, November 4 • 1:00 PM | Adults
Make a heartfelt card for a local veteran or for someone special.

Family Storytime | Tuesday, November 10 • 4:00pm | Saturday, November 14 • 10:30 AM | Early Learners
Enjoy stories, finger plays, rhymes, and more while building early listening and communication skills together.

TAFT BRANCH LIBRARY

Can We Talk? Conversation Station | November • During Library Hours | All Ages
Stop by our One Book display and join the conversation. Share your thoughts, respond to discussion prompts, and discover new ways to connect with others.

Our Community Speaks: Community Wall | October • During Library Hours | All Ages
What makes our community special? Add a word, drawing, or idea that celebrates Taft and the people who make it unique.

Kick-Off & Chat | Monday, October 5 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Let's get talking. Kick off our One Book journey with a lively book chat and community conversation about We Need to Talk and the ideas it inspires.

Conversation Comic Strips | Monday, October 19 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Turn conversation into art. Create a comic strip that captures a conversation, connection, or moment of understanding.

Talk, Sing, & Sign Storytime | Monday, November 2 • 10:30 AM | Early Learners
Preschoolers will practice talking, singing, signing, and connecting with others.

Wildspeak: Invent-A-Word Nature Art | Monday, November 9 • 4:00 PM | Ages 6–11
What would you call the sound of leaves dancing in the wind or sunlight shining through the trees? Invent your own nature-inspired words and bring them to life through colorful art.

RUOK? The Mystery Message Challenge | Monday, November 16 • 4:30 PM | Teens
Can you crack the code? Solve clues, decode hidden messages, and work together to uncover a mystery. Put your communication and problem-solving skills to the test.

Taft Talks: Family Conversation Café | Wednesday, November 18 • 4:00 PM | All Ages
Bring the family together for conversation, connection, and fun. Enjoy discussion prompts and activities designed to get everyone talking, sharing, and listening.

We Need to Talk: One Book Finale | Monday, November 30 • 5:00 PM | Adults
Join us for the final conversation of our One Book journey. Revisit the ideas and insights from We Need to Talk, share your perspective, and discover how a good conversation can change the way we listen, communicate, and connect **with one another**

TEHACHAPI BRANCH LIBRARY

Teen Pictionary | Friday, October 9 • 4:00 PM | Teens
How well can you communicate without saying a word? Put your drawing and guessing skills to the test in a fun game of Pictionary..

Preschool Storytime | Thursday, October 22 • 11:00 AM | Early Learners
Explore the many ways we communicate through stories, songs, and playful activities that encourage little ones to listen, express themselves, and connect with others.

Crafternoon | Wednesday, November 4 • 2:00 PM | Ages 6–11
Get creative during an afternoon of hands-on crafting fun. Make something new, share your ideas, and enjoy time creating together.

Meet Wolfgard Braun | Friday, November 6 • 4:00 PM | Adults
Step into the future with science-fiction author Wolfgard Braun. Learn about his writing, the ideas that inspire his stories, and his perspective on how emerging technology could shape humanity's future. Come curious and bring your questions.

WASCO BRANCH LIBRARY

One Book Kickoff: Let's Get Talking | Monday, October 5 • 3:00 PM | All Ages
Kick off our One Book celebration with stories, activities, and opportunities to connect. Come discover what we have planned and get the conversation started.

Family Storytime: Craft | Tuesday, November 3 • 11:00 AM | Families
Explore the many ways we communicate through stories, songs, and playful activities that encourage little ones to listen, express themselves, and connect with others.

Say It with Art: Kids Craft Time | Tuesday, November 3 • 11:00 AM | Ages 6–11
Get creative and explore how pictures, colors, and art can help us share ideas and express ourselves.

Talk, Listen & Connect For Teens | Monday, November 9 • 3:30 PM | Teens
Join us for a fun activity that puts communication and connection at the center. Come ready to share, listen, and have a good time.

One Book Book Club | Tuesday, November 17 • 3:30 PM | Adults
Join fellow reders for a discussion of We Need to Talk or one of the One Book companion titles. Share your thoughts, hear different perspectives, and explore the ideas the book has sparked.

One Book Family Special Event | Monday, November 23 • 3:30 PM | All Ages
Bring the whole family for a special One Book celebration filled with activities, conversation and opportunities to connect. There's something for everyone!

SUPPORTING LITERACY AND LEARNING IN KERN COUNTY



COURSE LEARNING MODULE

The 2026 course module developed by Kern Learn is built around Celeste Headlee's We Need to Talk providing educators with flexible lesson plans, activities, discussions, and writing opportunities that help their students build stronger communication, critical-thinking, reading and writing skills.

Over 1,000 students from 14 Kern High School District schools, and hundreds from CSUB and BC campuses participate.

2026-27 International Book Club





INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB

California State Bakersfield's International Book Club was founded with the vision of fostering intercultural understanding, collaboration, and personal transformation through action-oriented reading. The IBC community spans many continents and cultures and this year includes Poland, Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina, and the United States. Readers are invited on an enriching journey of exploration, connection, and positive impact as they read and discuss the 2026-2027 One Book Project main title selection, We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations That Matter by Celeste Headlee.

2026 PROGRAM PARTNERS

- ***Art & Spirituality Center at Dignity Health***
  2215 Truxtun Avenue
  Bakersfield, CA 93301
  PH 661.632.5747

- ***Bakersfield Toastmasters Clubs***
  Kern County Beale Memorial Library
  701 Truxtun Avenue
  Bakersfield, CA 93301
  PH 661.868-0701

- ***Dress for Success-Bakersfield Boutique***
  Haberfelde Building, 1416 17th Street
  Bakersfield, CA 93301
  PH 661.748.1809

- ***Lyles College of Beauty Bakersfield***
  2935 F Street
  Bakersfield, CA 93301
  PH 661.327.9784

- ***Nature Center at Hart Memorial Park***
  8000 River Rd
  Bakersfield, CA 93308
  Email: kernnaturecenter@gmail.com
  Kern River Parkway Foundation
  Email: KernRiverParkwayFoundation@gmail.com

- ***Kegley Institute of Ethics at CSUB***
  12 AE, 9001 Stockdale Hwy,
  Bakersfield, CA 93311
  PH 661.654.6263

Interested in becoming a partner for next year's One Book Project?

Visit *KCLonebook.org* to learn more about the program, email *info@kernlibrary.org* to get involved.

Thank you to our program partners!

To view a full list of libraries and learn more about activities, visit: **kerncountylibrary.org.**