



# SARATOGA SPRINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Date: November 20, 2018

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## Library Announces 2019 SaratogaREADS! Selections

Inspired by the current national conversation about migrants, refugees, and newcomers to the United States, Saratoga Springs Public Library has chosen *Exit West*, by Mohsin Hamid, as the 2019 Saratoga READS! selection. A novel about a young couple in a blossoming relationship who are forced to evacuate a besieged Middle Eastern city, *Exit West* is tinged with magic and grounded in realism. Exploring the themes of love, country, community, and culture, the novel illuminates the inevitable struggles that arise when people with different worldviews come together in troubled times.

*Refugee*, a novel by Alan Gratz featuring interwoven accounts of flight from three separate conflicts, on three continents, in three historical periods, is the 2019 Saratoga READS! Junior Companion selection. The poignant and page-turning stories of Josef, a Jewish boy departing 1930s Nazi Germany; Isabel, fleeing from Cuba in 1994; and Mahmoud, evacuating Syria in 2015, shine a child's-eye view on the plight of those fleeing oppression and seeking safety and opportunity in a new land.

This year's selections continue the Library's focus on sustainability, expanding the conversation from environmentalism to include the related issues of social equity, diversity, and inclusion. "Welcoming newcomers and celebrating their contributions is an American ideal that helps to sustain and enhance the character of our communities," said library director Issac Pulver. "Fear of the unknown, traditions which seem at odds with another, economic disparities, and amplified divisiveness present challenges to that ideal. With these selections, we hope to spark civil and imaginative conversations about these challenges, and to inspire opportunities for identifying and celebrating both our diversity and what unites us," he continued.

The mission of Saratoga READS! is to invite all members of the Saratoga Springs community to participate in a shared reading experience, and to take part in conversations and events inspired by the annual reading selections. Events focus on a single selection and a Junior Companion title for young readers. Selections are based on a number of criteria, but chief among them are discussability, the potential for local interest, and the potential for a particular title to inspire conversations and experiences that go beyond the book.

An extensive slate of programs related to this year's selections will take place at the library and throughout the community this winter. A full schedule of events will be posted on the library's website, [www.sspl.org](http://www.sspl.org) and at [www.saratogareads.org](http://www.saratogareads.org).

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