

# santa monica reads

MAY 1 THRU JUNE 2

**welcome** to Santa Monica Reads 2023. This marks the twenty-first year of this community reading program, one of the longest running of its kind in the United States. Santa Monica Reads provides an opportunity for people to engage, read, and discuss the same book at community-wide programs and discussions.

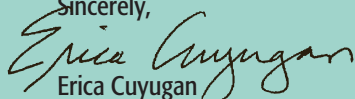
This year we explore *The Sum of Us*, Heather McGhee's 2022 book that challenges racism's zero-sum paradigm and offers the Solidarity Dividend as a path forward to equality and inclusion. Free copies for adults and young readers are available to those planning to participate in Santa Monica Reads programs beginning May 1 while supplies last. Print and electronic copies are also available to borrow from the library.

We are happy to be offering Santa Monica Reads in tandem with Santa Monica College's 2023 Spring Symposium which brings a number of special programs to the community including the keynote speaker event with author Heather McGhee on Thursday, May 18 from 7:30 - 9 pm at John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Center. The keynote speaker event is sponsored by the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica College, and the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District.

Santa Monica Reads is proudly sponsored by the Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library. To become a Friend of the Library, please visit [friendsofsmpl.org](http://friendsofsmpl.org).

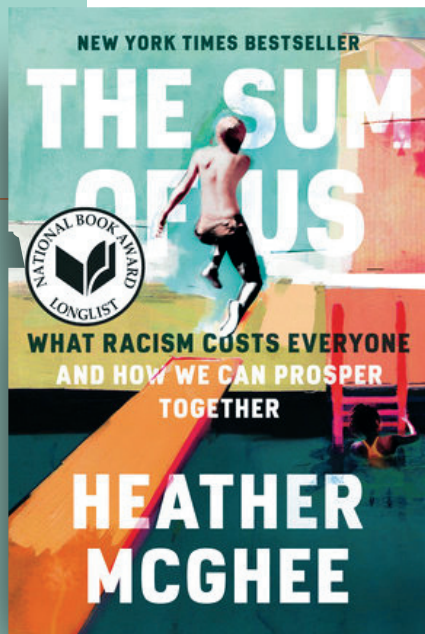
May this book bring us new perspectives, connect our shared experiences, encourage meaningful conversations, and challenge us to move forward together.

Sincerely,

  
Erica Cuyugan  
Director of Library Services

## about the book

Heather McGhee's specialty is the American economy and the mystery of why it so often fails the American public. This is the story of how public goods in this country have become private luxuries; of how unions collapsed, wages stagnated, and inequality increased; and of how this country, unique among the world's advanced economies, has thwarted universal healthcare. But in unlikely places of worship and work, McGhee finds proof of what she calls the Solidarity Dividend: gains that come when people come together across race, to accomplish what we simply can't do on our own.



*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* is a brilliant analysis of how we arrived here: divided and self-destructing, materially rich but spiritually starved and vastly unequal. McGhee marshals economic and sociological research to paint an irrefutable story of racism's costs, but at the heart of the book are the humble stories of people yearning to be part of a better America, including white supremacy's collateral victims: white people themselves. With startling empathy, this heartfelt message from a Black woman to a multiracial America leaves us with a new vision for a future in which we finally realize that life can be more than zero-sum.



## about the author

**"Learning about racist episodes in history isn't racist; it's essential to erasing racism from our future."** – Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us*

Heather McGhee was born in 1980 and raised on the south side of Chicago by her mother, Gail Christopher, a highly regarded social justice and social change agent. At age 11, she was sent to a middle grade boarding school in western Massachusetts and subsequently went on to

attend high school at Milton Academy. Moving from urban to rural, from mostly Black and diverse to completely white, from large class sizes at public schools to small class sizes at private institutions—with incredible amounts of resources—was a life-changing decision. Heather went on to receive a B.A. in American Studies from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law.

Over her career in public policy, she has crafted legislation, testified before Congress, and helped shape presidential campaign platforms. Heather designs and promotes solutions to inequality in America. McGhee is an educator who is currently serving as a Visiting Lecturer in Urban Studies at the City University of New York's School of Labor and Urban Studies. She also chairs the board of Color of Change, the nation's largest online racial justice organization. Her first book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, spent 10 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list and was longlisted for the National Book Award and Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction.

Heather McGhee resides in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and daughter.

## book discussions

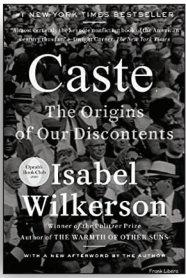
*Santa Monica Reads book discussions are hosted by trained discussion facilitators. Participants are encouraged to share their thoughts about this year's book selection and its themes or are welcome to simply listen and learn more about the book.*

**Community Book Discussion: For Young Readers**  
Thursday, May 25 at 4:30pm | Pico Branch Library, Annex

**Community Book Discussion: For Adults**  
Tuesday, May 30 at 6:00pm | Zoom

Register for the discussion: <https://tinyurl.com/SumOfUsDiscussion>

## recommended reads



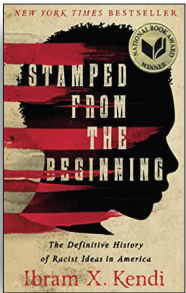
### **Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents**

By Isabel Wilkerson

\*Available in a Young Reader's Edition\*

In this combination of deep research and storytelling, Wilkerson makes the case for a destructive hidden caste system in America that seeks to make sure someone is always at the bottom in order to ensure the success of the people in the middle and the top. Linking the caste systems of India and Nazi Germany with that of America,

Wilkerson examines common underlying pillars, such as bloodlines and stigma, that seek to oppress groups of people to the detriment of their health and society. She then offers ways to move forward past these destructive systems to a more hopeful future.



### **Stamped From the Beginning:**

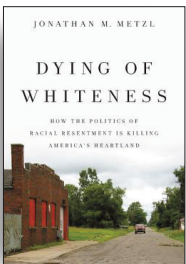
#### **A Definitive History of Race in America**

By Ibram X. Kendi

\*Available in a Young Reader's Edition\*

In a comprehensive history of anti-Black racism, Kendi highlights key historical figures who shaped America's view of race in addition to differentiating between assimilationists, segregationists, racists, and anti-racists. Through thoughtful research and analysis, Kendi illustrates how racist thinking stems not from a place

of ignorance, but from an intentional desire to propel and rationalize discriminatory policies that benefit certain groups of people. Kendi conveys how to deconstruct and debunk these ideas to create a society that is purposefully anti-racist.



### **Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland**

By Jonathan Metzl

Physician Jonathan Metzl takes a cross-country journey through America's heartland to understand how right-wing backlash policies have severe health consequences, even for the white voters they purport to help. These policies promising to make America great actually lower white life expectancies, soar gun suicides, and elevate school

dropout rates. Metzl demonstrates that white America would benefit most from cooperation – not from propaganda and promises about supremacy.

## program locations

**John Adams Middle School** 2425 16th Street, Santa Monica

**Pico Branch Library\*** 2201 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica

**Santa Monica College** 1900 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica

\*City of Santa Monica facilities are wheelchair accessible.

To request disability-related accommodations, call Library Administration 310-458-8600 (TDD 395-8499) at least one week prior to event.

Thank you to the Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library for their ongoing support for Santa Monica Reads.



## resources

### **The Sum of Us Podcast**

In *The Sum of Us*, Heather McGhee laid out the devastating costs of inequality and charted a hopeful path towards a better future. She continued her work with this podcast, produced by Barack and Michelle Obama's production company Higher Ground, in which she traveled America, uncovering stories of everyday people coming together across division to make tangible change in their communities.

### **Color of Change (colorofchange.org)**

The nation's largest online racial justice organization (7 million members), Color of Change helps people respond effectively to injustice by leading campaigns that build real power for Black communities. They challenge injustice, hold corporate and political leaders accountable, commission game-changing research on systems of inequality, and advance solutions for racial justice that can transform our world.

### **Demos (demos.org)**

Dēmos is a racial justice movement-connected think tank that advances a comprehensive agenda to build community power. They work to advance pro-inclusive democracy policies, foster partnerships that increase civic, political, and economic power, and empower Black and brown leaders and communities as decision-makers, beneficiaries, and a key element of collective power.

## special events

*The following programs are being produced by Santa Monica College as part of the Public Policy Institute's 2023 Spring Symposium.*

### **How We Build Power: Linking Race and Class**

**Monday, May 15 at 7:00pm**

**SMC Student Services Center Orientation Hall, SSC 183**

Discussion with Dr. Ian Haney López, UC Berkeley School of Law, author of *Merge Left and Dog Whistle Politics*, about mass incarceration, wealth inequality, and threats to democracy. Moderated by Dr. Paul Klumpe, SMC Philosophy.

### **Putting White Interests on Trial:**

#### **Derrick Bell's *The Space Traders* Thought Experiment**

**Tuesday, May 16 at 7:00pm**

**SMC Student Services Center Orientation Hall, SSC 183**

Join us for a screening of the made-for-television adaptation of Derrick Bell's short story, *The Space Traders*. A discussion and reflection on Derrick Bell's role in shaping the debate on race follows. Moderated by Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein; Dr. Amber Katherine, SMC Philosophy; Professor Tim Conley, SMC Film.

### **Why Can't We Have Nice Things?:**

#### **A Student Panel on Race, Class & Solidarity**

**Wednesday, May 17 at 7:00pm**

**SMC Student Services Center Orientation Hall, SSC 183**

SMC students gather to discuss and reflect upon the ways in which zero-sum racism has led to the systemic degradation of public goods.

### **From Me to We: Building Cross-Racial Solidarity for a Better Democracy**

**Thursday, May 18 at 7:30pm**

**John Adams Middle School (JAMS), Auditorium**

Heather McGhee, author of *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, will be giving a keynote address as part of SMC's Public Policy Institute's annual symposium, which serves as a powerful force for engaging the community in dialogue on some of the most pressing public policy issues of the day.

RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/HeatherMcGheeKeynote>