

# Rochester Public Library



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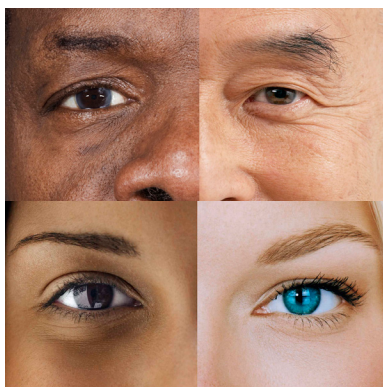
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## May Newsletter

### Libraries Change Lives



**Race: Are we so Different?**  
*Published in the Winter 2010 issue of Mayo Today*

We expect people to look different. And why not? Like a snowflake, each person is unique and represent a one-of-a-kind...

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**Reminder: Summer Hours start soon!**

**We will be closed on Monday, May 31 in observance of Memorial Day.**

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Phone: 507-328-2300 • Fax: 507-328-2384 • [www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org](http://www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org)

We expect people to look different. And why not? Like a snowflake, each person is unique and represent a one-of-a-kind combination of their parents,' grandparents' and family's ancestry. And every person experiences life somewhat differently than others.

Differences are a cause for joy and sorrow. We celebrate differences in personal identity, family background, country and language. And at the same time, difference among people have been the basis for discrimination and oppression.

Yet, are we so different? Recent science tells us we share a common ancestry and the differences among people we see are natural variations, results of migration, marriage, and adaptation to different environments. How does this fit with the idea of race?

RACE: Are we so different? is an interactive museum exhibit that explores these questions, along with many others. Looking through the eyes of history, science and lived experience, the exhibit explains differences among people and reveals the reality -- and unreality -- of race.

RACE will be presented at the Rochester Public Library from May 17 through September 4, 2010. Developed by the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, and with financial support from the Best Buy Children's Foundation, RACE is the first nationally traveling exhibition to tell stories of race from the biological, cultural and historical points of view. RACE premiered in St. Paul, Minn., during 2007, and has since traveled to some of the nations' premier museums. Bringing the exhibit to Rochester.

After visiting the exhibit in St. Paul, Craig Smoldt, chair of the Rochester Allied Health Diversity Committee, set the wheels in motion to bring the exhibit to Rochester.

"I was completely overwhelmed by the message RACE brought to those viewing it," Scmold says. "So many young people from the Twin Cities schools were there, and they were completely engrossed."

Smoldt says the exhibit supports Mayo's efforts to educate staff, the community and our patients about the importance of diversity to Mayo Clinic. And to make the exhibit accessible, Mayo is co-sponsoring RACE with the Rochester Public Library, Funding through Incented Investment in Mayo Funds (IMF) allows the exhibit to be offered to the public free of charge.

"As with any community our size, with a growing complement of diverse citizens, there are contentions that arise around the issue of race and diversity," Smoldt says. "Knowing the facts may help people in our community better understand the many similarities that we all share with each other. I'm not so idealistic to believe that we'll change the attitude of some adults in our community but perhaps we'll be able to help younger people avoid a mind set of exclusion of others."

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Mayo and the Rochester Public Library have convened a Community Advisory Committee to help extend the impact of the exhibit in the community and the region, focusing on the programs and events that will accompany the exhibition. Within Mayo, participation will be promoted to staff and their families in Rochester and in Mayo Health System, and the diversity networking groups are helping ensure the exhibition reaches a wider audience.

“Mayo Clinic recognizes that its staff should be a diverse community in thought as well as in ethnicity, gender and race,” says John Noseworthy, M.D., Mayo Clinic president and CEO. “By emphasizing the importance of diversity, by building into every level of the organization, we’ll be better, and better able to welcome and serve a diverse community of people and patients.

“The RACE exhibit will provide a unique learning opportunity for Mayo Clinic staff and our community. It will deepen our understanding of some of the issues, and it will provoke the kind of thought and discussion that helps us grow.”

RACE brings together the everyday experience of living with race, its history as an idea, the role of science in that history and the findings of contemporary science that are challenging its foundations. Interactive exhibit components, historical artifacts, iconic objects photographs, multimedia presentations and graphical displays offer visitors and eye-opening look at its important subject matter. Related events will allow participants to enhance their understanding through lectures, drama, art and other programming.

Smoldt believes the exhibit will have a deep impact on all who view it, but he says he hopes that it especially resonates with young people. “I sincerely hope our regions’s youth will develop a sense that we’re all on this earth to share it and that we are all alike in so many ways,” Smoldt says. “Yet we each have our own unique characteristics that make living on this earth interesting.”

You can find more information on RACE by visiting [mayoweb.mayo.edu/diversity-rst](http://mayoweb.mayo.edu/diversity-rst) or [mayoclinic.org/race](http://mayoclinic.org/race).

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- we have MP3 digital audio players available to check out? You can use our MP3 players, or your own, to download free audio books from the library's collection and listen to them while you're on the go.
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- from the library's website you can access an online auto repair reference center? This site contains information on every major manufacturer of domestic and imported vehicles.

If you have any questions on these library factoids, stop by any of our service desks and ask, or call 328-2300.