

At the age of 10 I lost my father. Reading became a way for me to escape from my thoughts, but it also became a type of therapy for me. I delved into books about both traditional families and families without a father. When I read about families like mine had suddenly become, I could connect with stories that mirrored my life. When I read books about families that didn't look like mine, I learned about other types of families as if seeing them through a window. This taught me to respect that every family looks different, and that it's important to value them all.

Our local school libraries offer vicarious learning experiences through large and multi-faceted collections that feature many viewpoints. This may mean that some books challenge families and other books affirm them. For our children to be seen, to grow, to better understand others and to gain empathy for others, they must have a library that describes, considers and represents the full range of human experiences.

School Library Month is in April. I encourage you and your family to visit the school library and find books that can offer a window into different life experiences. Consider how these books can help create empathic community members who are able to treat others with respect.