



GUARDIAN *Gala*

**Celebrate our Library, our community, and the freedom to read
at the New Rochelle Public Library Foundation's
2024 Guardian Gala on Thursday, May 9!**

Join us on Thursday, May 9th, as we honor outstanding individuals who value diverse viewpoints and access to information.

This is an event not to be missed! Enjoy cocktails, music, dining and dancing while helping the NRPL Foundation raise funds for our Library. A growing, thriving New Rochelle needs a strong, dynamic library.

The Guardian Award, established in 2019 in honor of the NRPL Foundation's 25th Anniversary, was created to recognize individuals whose careers and lifetime accomplishments exemplify the mission of public libraries: Providing free and open access to information and to a broad variety of ideas and viewpoints.

This year's Guardian Award will be presented to three champions in the fight against book banning, each of whom represents a different role in bringing the written word to the public: Publisher, Writer, and Bookseller.

- **Nancy Paulsen**, President and Publisher of Nancy Paulsen Books, Penguin Inc.
- **Jacqueline Woodson**, author of children's and young adult books
- **Emma Straub**, author and owner of Books Are Magic bookstore in Brooklyn, NY

Also being honored as Community Heroes are **Chris Selin**, president of the NRPL Foundation for nine years as well as a former City Council member, and **Tom Geoffino**, Director of the New Rochelle Public Library for 18 years who will retire this year. **Donna and Bob Young**, who head up **The Young Companies** and the JRY Foundation, are the Foundation's 2024 Business Honorees.

Guardian Award Honorees



Nancy Paulsen, President and Publisher of **Nancy Paulsen Books**, an imprint at Penguin Random House, is an ardent defender of books for all. Paulsen started at Penguin as an assistant at Viking Children's Books, serving as publisher of Puffin Books and G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers. She began her eponymous imprint in 2011 with a mission to publish diverse and empowering works for young and middle grade readers. The imprint publishes about thirty books a year, with a celebrated list of award-winning authors.



Jacqueline Woodson explores themes of identity, race, class, and gender in her prolific writing. Both her picture book, *The Day You Begin* (2018), and her YA memoir in verse, *Brown Girl Dreaming* (2014), which won the National Book Award and Newbury Medal, are among titles banned in Texas and Florida. Woodson recently told *Harper's Bazaar*, "We do what we need to do: we resist, we inform, we amplify, we write." Woodson was selected as the Young People's Poet Laureate in 2015 and the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature for 2018-2019. She is a three-time Coretta Scott King Award recipient and has received both a MacArthur Genius Grant and a Guggenheim Fellowship. For more on her storied career, see jacquelinewoodson.com.



Emma Straub is the New York Times bestselling author of five novels: *This Time Tomorrow*, *All Adults Here*, *The Vacationers*, *Modern Lovers*, *Laura Lamont's Life in Pictures*, the short story collection *Other People We Married*, and co-wrote the picture books *Very Good Hats* and *Gaga Mistake* Day with her mother, Susan Straub. Emma and her husband, graphic designer Michael Fusco-Straub, own **Books Are Magic**, an independent bookstore with two locations in Brooklyn. The store declares itself a welcoming, friendly, and inclusive space for all people. Last year, Straub was uninvited from reading at a Texas elementary school because of her use of, according to school administrators, "inappropriate and foul language on her social media platforms."



Giving Teens a Fun Place to Be Themselves

The Library's Teen Room is a wonderland of games, technology, great books and creative projects – and it's only for kids in grades six through twelve! Teen Librarian **Rio Aucena** and Teen Assistant **Constantine "Dean" Ziogas** are experts in creating fun while making teens feel welcomed and valued. "COVID had a lasting impact on kids' social skills," explains Lisa Itzkowitz, who leads NRPL's communications and community relations efforts. "The Teen Room offers a wonderful opportunity for them to connect with entertaining in-person experiences."

Teens stop by year-round for arts and crafts, trivia contests, and puzzles. Rio pays close attention to their interests and plans simple, fun projects that are often educational, such as African print sachets to celebrate Black History Month. The most popular projects involve food – who can resist a snack while decorating cookies?! Teens draw, paint and play board games outside in summer. Last June, Rio and Dean hosted an exhausting 1,000-balloon water fight!

To help teens prepare for the future, Rio organizes workshops, classes, and coaching on resume writing, babysitting and CPR, financial literacy,

and the college search process. In the Maker Lab, with funding from the NRPL Foundation, teens use cutting-edge technology to design and fabricate custom objects, like vinyl stickers for their water bottles. They can use the Virtual Reality to compete in a solo boxing tournament or explore exotic places. During spring break, March 25-29, the Teen Room will host daily video game tournaments with New Rochelle Police Department officers competing against teens! **For more information, follow @nrplteens on Instagram.**

As part of the Library's ongoing improvements, made possible by NRPL Foundation matching grants, Rio and Dean look forward to the installation of acoustic wall panels later this year. They hope patrons in other parts of the Library will no longer be disturbed by the laughter and whooping coming from the Teen Room!

Your help is needed to support the Teen Room! Become a Sponsor or donate at nrplfoundation.org



Cocktails & Conversation

Thursday, April 4th • 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm • Alvin & Friends Restaurant



Author Eric Klinenberg Decodes a Difficult Year

What can we learn from the cascading crises of 2020? The New Rochelle Public Library Foundation brings influential NYU professor Eric Klinenberg back to discuss his newest book, **2020: One City, Seven People, and the Year Everything Changed** for the next evening of **Cocktails & Conversation** at Alvin & Friends Restaurant, 14 Memorial Highway, New Rochelle from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Tickets cost \$60 and include delicious nibbles and two drinks; proceeds benefit the non-profit NRPL Foundation. For more information visit the website at nrplfoundation.org.



Tickets

Scan the QR code for tickets or mail a check to New Rochelle Public Library Foundation, 1 Library Plaza, New Rochelle, NY 10801.



Please show your support for the New Rochelle Public Library by purchasing tickets to this terrific event and /or becoming a Gala Sponsor. The evening will include cocktails, dinner, dancing, and a silent auction. CBS TV reporter **Tony Aiello** will serve as the evening's emcee. Tickets cost \$185 per person.

Funds raised from the Guardian Gala support continued improvements to the library, technology upgrades, capital purchases and special programs like the Family Museum Pass program.

NRPLFoundation.org

Scan the QR codes for sponsorship options and tickets.



**Sponsorship
Options**



**Tickets and
Journal Ads**



Tom Geoffino, *Library Director*
Yvette Gordon, *Administrative Assistant*
Anne Todd, *Editorial Consultant*
Susan Nagib, *Creative Consultant*

Guardian Gala Honorees, continued



Business Honorees Bob and Donna Young are the founders and principals of **The Young Companies**, a full-service real estate development and management company. The Youngs have grown their business since 1989 by focusing on projects that revitalize communities, especially those in New Rochelle. Bob and Donna Young are third-generation residents of New Rochelle, who were also NRHS sweethearts. In 2007, the Youngs established a foundation to honor their son Jack, who succumbed to meningitis as an infant. Jack Robert Young Memorial Foundation, in partnership with the New Rochelle Parks and Recreation and the Partnership for the Huguenot Children's Library, built "Jack's Friendship Garden," one of the first inclusive, wheelchair-accessible playgrounds in Westchester County.



Community Hero Honoree Chris Selin has put her talents to work for New Rochelle for decades, although she modestly describes herself as a "retired attorney." She served on the New Rochelle City Council for 12 years beginning in 1994, representing District 2 and working with a wide range of people throughout the city. In 2015, Chris was elected President of the NRPL Foundation after serving on the board for nine years. As President, Selin led the Board in bringing in vital dollars to match New York State grants for a top-to-bottom renovation of the Main Library; improvements to the Huguenot Children's Library; and support for community programs. Chris lives in Sutton Manor with her husband, Jeff Endervelt, and feels fortunate to have her son, Brian Demos, daughter-in-law Angela, and her 2 grandkids living here in New Rochelle.



Community Hero Honoree Thomas J. Geoffino is retiring after nearly two decades as Director of the New Rochelle Public Library, where he dramatically expanded the scope of services and enhanced the physical facility and appearance. Tom's ongoing commitment to making the Library a thriving cultural center for New Rochelle included providing a full-time community outreach specialist to assist the city's most vulnerable residents, as well as a stable of Chromebooks and mobile Wi-Fi hubs available for checkout. Under Tom's leadership, the Library secured over \$2 million in state grants for transformative improvements to the Main Library and the Huguenot Children's Library. Tom is a longtime member of the Rotary Club of New Rochelle, currently serving his third term as President.

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Connecting
Community

One Library Plaza
New Rochelle, NY 10801

NRPLFoundation.org



To keep our Library up to date and responsive to the needs of the community, we need your continued support for this vital community resource!

Can we count on you?

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY AND BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

**Our Library
Provides
More Than
Just Books**

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and your support!**

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