



PRESS RELEASE

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Hartford Public Library to Celebrate Julia Alvarez’s Novel “In the Time of the Butterflies” in March for the NEA Big Read program

HARTFORD, February 4, 2021 – Hartford Public Library’s 2021 NEA Big Read celebrates Julia Alvarez’s book *In the Time of the Butterflies* from February 28th through March 30th, 2021.

In addition to Alvarez’s adult novel, the NEA Big Read will focus on her youth selection *How Tia Lola Came to (Visit) Stay*.

“These are very challenging and difficult times. Many of us are feeling desolate, isolated and alone. It’s why the Big Read program is even more important now. We join with others to share a story and we therefore feel less alone,” Alvarez said to the Hartford Public Library community at its annual Beyond Words celebration in December.

Free English and Spanish copies of Big Read book selections will be available via contact-free pick up starting on February 28th while supplies last: bit.ly/HPLBigReadBooks

To see the full slate of events, all taking place virtually, click here: bit.ly/HPLBigRead21

An afternoon drive on a beautiful day turns deadly when the three Mirabal sisters, known as *Las Mariposas* (the Butterflies), are found at the bottom of a cliff. Officially, it was an accident. But everyone knows that when you cross the dictator Trujillo – no matter how right you are - bad things happen. “In the Time of the Butterflies” tells the sisters’ stirring story of their fight for freedom and justice even at the cost of their lives.

“HPL has the opportunity to honor and explore an important piece of history through Julia Alvarez’s stunning prose, while also talking about how the themes of Dominican pride, free-thinking, resilience, and women’s rights take root right here in Hartford. We believe this will be not only a great educational experience, but a lot of fun as well,” said Bridget Quinn-Carey, HPL’s president and CEO.

Throughout March there will be a slate of exciting programming around Dominican art, literature, and performance, as well as educational and celebratory programs on revolutionary Hartford Latinas. The month long celebration will culminate in Julia Alvarez’s keynote address, taking place virtually March 25.

“The history and legacy of the Mirabal sisters is felt deeply by the Hartford Dominican community and is well known to Hartford’s Latin American diaspora. These heroines, who Julia Alvarez portrays in her book have inspired generations around the world and in Hartford since their assassinations in 1960,” said Liz Castle, HPL’s programming and events manager.

The events will serve to illustrate and amplify Alvarez’s story, showing the contemporary parallels with life in Hartford. “*In the Time of the Butterflies* inspires us to ‘stand in your power.’ Whether through art, storytelling, or relationship building, the NEA Big Read encourages us to practice courage in our own lives,” Castle said.

“I don’t have to tell you that now more than ever is a time for butterflies. For bold and unabashed love, for our freedom and liberty. A time for leadership and inspiration so that together we can create the more beloved community that they Mirabal sisters fought and died for,” Alvarez said.

The NEA Big Read, a partnership with Arts Midwest, broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Showcasing a diverse range of themes, voices, and perspectives, the NEA Big Read aims to inspire conversation and discovery.

Previous Hartford Public Library NEA Big Read participants include [Advice from the Lights](#) by Stephanie Burt, and [Citizen: An American Lyric](#) by Claudia Rankine. Hartford Public Library has been the beneficiary four times of funding from the The National Endowment for the Arts to support the Big Read. For more information about Hartford Public Library, visit hplct.org.

2021 NEA BIG READ EVENT SCHEDULE

***In the Time of the Butterflies* and Beyond: HPL’s NEA Big Read Kickoff!**

Sunday, February 28th: 3:00-4:00PM

Facebook Live and YouTube Live

Help us kick off HPL’s 2021 NEA Big Read around Julia Alvarez’s *In The Time of the Butterflies* with music, poetry, dance, and more! Featuring live latin jazz from Ray Gonzalez, poetry readings from local poet Diana Aldrete, dance performance from Baila Con Gusto CT, and readings from *In the Time of the Butterflies*.

YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Pre-recorded programs shared on our Social Media platforms

Monday March 1st:

Karina’s Tia Lola House's Craft program en Espanol

Discover Tia Lola's love for bright and tropical colors. Join Miss Karina and learn how to create your own "casita de la niñez"(childhood house). Paint and decorate your own wooden house Tia Lola’s style!!

Tuesday March 2nd:

If Dominican Were a Color Storytime with Ms. Linda

Tuesday March 9th:

Si Quisqueya fuera un color con Ms. Nancy (En Espanol)

Wednesday March 17th:

Ages 6-18

Learn a little about Idelisa Bonnelly aka the “mother of marine conservation in the Caribbean” and learn about oil spills and why conservation efforts are important with an activity pack you can pick up at the library.

Live Virtual programs via Zoom and Google Meet

Register for all children’s live virtual programs here: bit.ly/hplchildren

If You were a Color Palette

Wednesday March 3rd: 3:30pm

Ages 6-12

Let’s share *If Dominican were a Color* by Sili Recio and see if you can describe yourself using a color palette.

Virtual Read Aloud Adventure with Ms. Lina: Destination, Dominican Republic

Thursdays March 4, 11, 18, 25: 3:30pm

Ages 8-12

Let's celebrate Dominican culture, identity, and family with a fun weekly read-aloud of *How Tia Lola Came to Visit Stay* by Julia Alvarez.

One of a Kind, Me!

Wednesdays March 3rd & March 17th: 2:00pm

School program only

Enjoy listening to a read aloud *If Dominican Were a Color*, by Sili Recio then get creative in decorating a flag to celebrate yourself or heritage. Will be discussing writing a poem about yourself and sharing examples. Copy of the book will be given to each participant. In the second session share a poem about you and receive an incentive.

Book Talk: *How Tia Lola Came to Stay* by Julia Alvarez.

Wednesday March 17: 3:30pm

Ages 6-12

Play a family themed game to win prizes.

If Dominican Were a Color: Music and Art with Miss Nancy

Wednesday March 24: 10:00am

For students from Sanchez and Burns Schools

Join Miss Nancy for a celebration of Dominican culture with a virtual live musical performance and Dominican Flag art activity.

Tía Lola’s Lucky Scarf/Buena Suerte with Vickie

Friday March 26th: 4:00pm

Ages 6-12

Make your very own lucky scarf, or buena suerte, inspired by the book *How Tía Lola Came to Stay* by Julia Alvarez

Big Read Art Club with Miss Katherine: *If Dominican Were a Color*

Tuesday March 30th: 4:00pm

All ages

Join us for music and painting as we celebrate our Big Read book, *If Dominican Were a Color* by Sili Recio

Julia Alvarez visits Hartford as Tia Lola!

Date TBD

School program only

Julia Alvarez, the author herself, will pay us a visit as her character Tia Lola! Ms. Alvarez will read from her book *How Tia Lola Came to Visit Stay*.

Public Event:

Big Read Musical Journeys (public event)

Tuesday, March 9th: 4:00-4:45pm

All ages

Join us for a reading of *If Dominican Were a Color* and a virtual live musical performance from Sirius Coyote of music from Latin America!

TEEN SERVICES

“Digital Graffiti” Workshop

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in March

Discord

Create digital manifestos in 3D paint and animated digital art, and use different Hartford buildings and landmarks as your canvas! Learn how to bring digital graffiti to life through augmented reality, led by Hartford graffiti artist Lindaluz Carrillo and YOUmedia mentor Marc Pettersen. Inspired by the bold and revolutionary Mirabal sisters in *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez.

Register here: linktr.ee/youmediahpl

ADULT PROGRAMS

Virtual Film Screening: “In the Time of the Butterflies”

Wednesday March 3rd: 6:00pm

Starring Salma Hayek and Marc Anthony, enjoy the film version of Julia Alvarez’s novel, inspired by the true story of the three Mirabal sisters who led an underground plot to overthrow the dictatorship of General Trujillo in the Dominican Republic.

Registration details to come

La Cocina Dominicana

Fridays, March 5, 12, 19, 26: 3:00pm

Virtual series posted to social media

Join the chefs from Caribe, Hartford’s own loved Dominican restaurant on Park Street, as they teach us how to make traditional Dominican dishes.

D.I.Y. Puzzle Necklace and Book Discussion

Wednesday, March 17th: 11:00-12:30pm

Downtown Library - Center for Contemporary Culture

Learn how to make a puzzle piece necklace, symbolizing the bond and interconnection of friendship, sisterhood, and womanhood. The craft activity is in celebration of Women's History Month and a major theme in *In the Time of the Butterflies*. All participants will receive a free copy of Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Please call Irene at 860-695-7401 or email iblean@hplct.org to register.

Butterfly Origami and Book Discussion

Tuesday, March 2nd: 2:00pm

Zoom

Learn how to create paper butterflies using the Japanese art of origami, in honor of the inspiring Mirabal Sisters, the main characters and historical figures in *In the Time of Butterflies*, by Julia Alvarez. All participants will receive a free copy of *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Register here:

<http://bit.ly/HPLorigami>

Sisterhood Card Making

Tuesday, March 2, 2021 2:00pm

Zoom

Join us as we create and design our very own card. Once you have created your card you can write an encouraging message to someone who is in your sisterhood circle who inspires you!

Registration/Participation is required to get your take and make bag. Registration is limited. Register here: bit.ly/HPLcards

Celebrating Dominican Culture with the Park Branch

Join the Park Branch virtually every Wednesday in March to engage all five of your senses in an exploration of Dominican culture and the book *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. Participants can register for specific sessions, but are encouraged to register for the whole series. Register here: bit.ly/HPLBigReadPark

The Story of the Mirabal Sisters

Wednesday, March 3rd: 3:00 pm

Zoom

Join us for a bilingual overview of *In the Time of the Butterflies*, learn more about renown Dominican author Julia Alvarez, and the incredible story of the Mirabal sisters. We will also review all the programs available throughout the month of March as a part of HPL's Big Read.

Painting Butterflies

Wednesday, March 10th

Prerecorded video

Join us for an art workshop on butterfly painting on canvas, a symbol of the Mirabal sisters. Participants need to reserve and pick up painting kits, and send pictures of the final project.

Dominican Cuisine

Wednesday, March 17th

Pre-recorded video

Join us for a Dominican culinary workshop, where participants will learn to make a traditional Dominican dish.

Final Book Discussion

Wednesday, March 24th: 3:00pm

Zoom

Participants will share their take on the book, the day before Julia Alvarez's virtual visit to Hartford!

Women's Empowerment Group

Thursdays March 4, 11, 18, 25: 4:30pm

Zoom

The Women's Empowerment Group at the Park Branch, in collaboration with the Hispanic Health council, is recruiting new participants, and forming committees for year 2021. Some of the committees are art, education and childcare, projects, and recruitment. Learn how to be civically engaged, and connected to others in your community. Anyone interested should send an email to grivera@hplct.org

HARTFORD HISTORY CENTER

Revolutionary Latinas in Hartford: Past, Present, and Future

A series presented by the Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library:

Led by Revolutionary Latinas: The History of Bilingual Education in Hartford

A conversation with Edna Negron & Glaisma Perez-Silva

Thursday, March 11, 6:30-8pm

Facebook Live

The fight for bilingual education in Hartford was led by Puerto Rican women, particularly Maria Sanchez, who fiercely stepped into a public community leadership role and inspired other community leaders, politicians, professors, and the Hartford Public Schools' Board of Education to manifest her vision. With more Puerto Rican migrants staying in Hartford over the course of the 1960s, the need for a language program that saw the use of multiple languages as an asset and not a burden, became critical. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, a program to intentionally develop a robust bilingual education program across the system emerged, becoming not only a model for the State of Connecticut, but the nation as a whole.

Learn more about this history and its development from Edna Negron, who was the first Hartford Puerto Rican to become part of the first Hartford bilingual teacher core program in 1969 and Glaisma Perez-Silva, who was a recruited teacher from Puerto Rico in 1988. Both of these women became revolutionary Latinas in Hartford's history and follow the legacy of those who are no longer with us. Negron and Perez Silva's oral histories will also be part of the digital archive of the Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library.

Honoring Revolutionary Latinas in Hartford: A Virtual Performance

Thurs, March 18, 6:30-7:30pm

Facebook Live & YouTube Live

Join us for a virtual performance showcase featuring an intergenerational group of Hartford-based or Hartford-connected Latina poets, musicians, and choreographers celebrating revolutionary figures in Hartford's history and visions for Hartford's future. Featuring poetry by Glaisma Perez-Silva and movement by Addys Castillo, monologue by Cin Martinez and drums by I-SHEA, poetry by Zulynette and movement by Luzy Rivera, and Closing Reflections & Call to Action by Jocelyn Cerda and Jeniffer Perez Caraballo.

Revolutionary Latinas in Hartford: A Community Art Project and Exhibit

Submit artwork by Friday, March 19, 2021 / Submit here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3oluz7t>

Who can submit? Anyone at any age that lives in Hartford
Online exhibit launch: Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Submit a digital photograph of artwork you've created to celebrate someone in Hartford that you believe represents the qualities of a revolutionary Latina. It could be your abuela (grandmother), titi (aunt), mami (mom), prima (cousin), hermana (sister), nieta (granddaughter), sobrina (niece), maestra (teacher), amiga (friend), o alguien por quien te inspiras en tu comunidad (someone who inspires you in your community).

Along with your artwork submission, please share with us why you believe they are revolutionary (definition: causing a complete or dramatic change / engaged in or promoting political revolution). How have they made an impact on your life? How have they made a change in the lives of your family, your neighborhood, other community members, or the city or state or home country at large? Consider interviewing them to learn more about their story and sharing a little bit about that story in your submission.

Submissions will become part of an online exhibit put together by the Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library and will become part of the digital archive. These submissions will be presented alongside commissioned portraits of Hartford historical changemakers who have passed: Olga Mele, Maria Sanchez, and Mildred Torres.

Portraits will be created by Hartford-based artists Mina Echevarria, Lindaluz Carrillo, and Constanza Segovia.

An Evening with Julia Alvarez

Thursday, March 25th - 6:00pm

Zoom, Facebook Live & YouTube Live

Join us for our keynote event, an evening with Julia Alvarez in conversation with Connecticut writer and poet Sarahí Almonte. Featuring Dominican music from Connecticut's own Rey Kellys Band. This event will not be available for re-watch, so please join us live! Register here: bit.ly/HPLJuliaAlvarez

Born in New York City in 1950, Julia Alvarez's parents returned to their native country, Dominican Republic, shortly after her birth. Ten years later, the family was forced to flee to the United States because of her father's involvement in a plot to overthrow the dictator, Trujillo.

Alvarez has written novels (How the García Girls Lost Their Accents, In the Time of the Butterflies, ¡Yo!, In the Name of Salomé, Saving the World, Afterlife), collections of poems (Homecoming, The Other Side/ El Otro Lado, The Woman I Kept to Myself), nonfiction (Something to Declare, Once Upon A Quinceañera, and A Wedding in Haiti), and numerous books for young readers (including the Tía Lola Stories series, Before We Were Free, finding miracles, Return to Sender and Where Do They Go?).

Alvarez's awards include the Pura Belpré and Américas Awards for her books for young readers, the Hispanic Heritage Award, and the F. Scott Fitzgerald Award. In 2013, she received the National Medal of Arts from President Obama.

About Hartford Public Library

Now celebrating its 127th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. www.hplct.org.