



**Michigan Humanities Council**

*Bridging Communities and Ideas*

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## **\$21,170 AWARDED FOR BOOK SERIES AT WEST CENTRAL MICHIGAN LIBRARIES**

*Humanities Council of West Central Michigan to Launch "One Book: Fifteen Communities READ!"*

(BIG RAPIDS)-----The Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) announces it has awarded a \$21,170 grant to the Humanities Council of West Central Michigan for the book discussion project "One Book: Fifteen Communities READ!" The grant was awarded as part of MHC's *We the People* grant program designed to fund projects that recognize significant events and themes in American history and culture that were grounded in Michigan. *We the People* is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities to support projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation's history and asks that these lessons be shared with all Americans. The initiative intends to strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture.

"This public humanities program provides an important opportunity for residents of West Central Michigan to celebrate reading and discuss contemporary American literature," stated Jan Fedewa, executive director of the Michigan Humanities Council. "The Michigan Humanities Council is pleased to fund this project to encourage community dialogue about our sense of place, rule of law and the foundations of freedom."

"One Book: Fifteen Communities READ!" has selected the book, *The Living Great Lakes*, by Michigan author Jerry Dennis as the theme for each of the libraries involved in the project. Fifteen libraries within the area of West Central Michigan - specifically in the counties of Lake, Mecosta, Montcalm, and Osceola - will collaborate to develop a discussion guide and public events related to the issues in the book. The programs will begin in January 2006 and conclude in June 2006. A full schedule will be announced by late December and will be available on the MHC website, [www.michiganhumanities.org](http://www.michiganhumanities.org). Participating libraries are:

- LAKE COUNTY: Baldwin, Chase, Luther, Idlewild
- MECOSTA COUNTY: Barryton, Big Rapids, Mecosta, Morley and Stanwood, Remus
- MONTCALM COUNTY: Lakeview
- OSCEOLA COUNTY: Evart, LeRoy, Marion, Reed City, Tustin

Jeannette Fleury, Director of the Humanities Council of West Central Michigan, stated: "We are all affected by the place where we live. Jerry Dennis's book, *The Living Great Lakes*, helps us to understand, appreciate, and love this place - The Great Lakes State of Michigan."

"Grants from the Michigan Humanities Council help Michigan communities study and preserve the state's unique culture and heritage," stated United States Senator Debbie Stabenow. "I am pleased to be able to support funding for the council and for these important local community projects."

"It is a great honor to support our local libraries and authors through this Humanities grant," said U.S. Representative Dave Camp. "Without efforts like this one, which relies on federal funds from Washington, we would be hard pressed to preserve our cultural past."

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"My passion for reading began in childhood, when my family took regular excursions to the public library," stated Jerry Dennis, author of *The Living Great Lakes*. "I can think of few greater honors for a book -- or its author -- than to be selected for the *One Book: Fifteen Communities READ!* program."

"With the financial and staffing issues facing most rural libraries today, this One Book reading event would not be possible in our communities without the generous financial support and administrative assistance of both the Michigan Humanities Council and the Humanities Council of West Central Michigan," stated Gaylynn Rorabaugh, Director of the Big Rapids Community Library.

"What a great opportunity it brings for 12 unique libraries to feel a strong sense of a "combined uniqueness" by concentrating on the Great Lakes, which effect us all," stated Ben Huffman, Director of the Barryton Public Library. "We're looking forward to being a part of this year's book discussion."

The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is the state's independent, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For additional information on the Michigan Humanities Council, please visit: [www.michiganhumanities.org](http://www.michiganhumanities.org) or call 517-372-7770.

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