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## **Washington Irving Branch Receives Library Innovation Lab Grant from California Humanities**

*Library to host a “Connecting Cultures” series in October—on Oct. 12, 19  
and 23—at 3 p.m.*

**Los Angeles** (October 7, 2019) – The Washington Irving Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library, at 4117 W. Washington Blvd., was awarded a 2019 Library Innovation Lab (LIL) grant from California Humanities for its “Connecting Cultures” project, a series of library programs aimed at promoting empathy and understanding of the community’s diverse cultures.

“I thank California Humanities for the award, and for the exciting opportunity to highlight the diversity in our community at Washington Irving through the lens of food, dance and history,” said Krystal Messer, Washington Irving’s Adult Librarian.

The “Connecting Cultures” programs include an author discussion on Mexican American immigration history, an Ethiopian music and dance performance and an Asian cooking demonstration in October (Oct. 12, 19 and 23) at 3 p.m. at the library.

Washington Irving was one of ten public libraries statewide selected for the LIL grant, a nine-month professional development experience and cash grants of up to \$5,000. Participating libraries develop innovative programs in response to the needs and circumstances of today’s immigrants and foster more inclusive communities.

“American public libraries have played an important role in welcoming newcomers throughout our history,” said Julie Fry, President and CEO of California Humanities. “We congratulate the ten grantees whose projects will promote understanding and provide insight into a wide range of topics, issues and experiences.”

**Peter Persic**, Public Relations & Marketing Director

(more)

Library Launches “Connecting Cultures” Series – Page 2

The community is invited to celebrate diversity at the following “Connecting Cultures” events at the Washington Irving Branch:

- **Book Discussion**

Saturday, Oct. 12: Dr. Francisco Balderrama will discuss his book *A Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*. Signed copies will be distributed to attendees.

- **Performance**

Saturday, Oct. 19: An afternoon of Ethiopian music and dance, followed by a traditional coffee ceremony.

- **Food**

Wednesday, Oct. 23: The Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement will demonstrate healthy alternatives to your favorite Asian dishes, and send you home with a produce box to make your own.

All events are free and open to the public. For more information, please contact the Washington Irving Branch Library at (323) 734-6303.

The Washington Irving Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library is one of 32 California libraries that have participated in the Library Innovation Lab program. California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment of the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect us to each other in order to help strengthen California.

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at [lapl.org](http://lapl.org), and more than 25,000 public programs a year provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.

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