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Milwaukee Public Library to Host “Coming to America” Reading Group
A partnership with the Yiddish Book Center, with funding from Sharon Karmazin

MILWAUKEE (August 4, 2020) – Milwaukee Public Library today announced a program made possible by a partnership with The Yiddish Book Center, with funding from Sharon Karmazin. The program, “Coming to America” Reading Groups for Public Libraries, is one in which librarians arrange reading groups to discuss three books of Yiddish literature in translation, and one book related to an immigrant community served by their library.

Using Yiddish literature as a portal, the virtual program will feature Yiddish literature in translation that explores questions of identity, assimilation, language, cuisine, and generational change, presenting American identity as an ongoing conversation, a dialogue between insiders and outsiders, and will compare these works written in the early 20th century to works by contemporary immigrant writers.

The goals of the program are: to introduce libraries and the public to Yiddish literature in the context of the broader immigrant experience in coming to America; and to help prompt and inform discussions about American immigration experiences—a topic as relevant today as it was one hundred years ago.

Under the partnership guidelines, MPL was to select one contemporary book with a "Coming to America" story and chose a Hmong family memoir by Kao Kalia Yang called *The Latecomer*. Yang will make a virtual appearance, open to the public, on October 26, 2020.

“We are so excited to offer this opportunity to explore stories of immigrant experiences through works of Yiddish literature,” said Library Director Paula Kiely. “‘Coming to America’” will give participants a chance to experience the immigration journey through the lens of the Eastern European Jewish and Hmong communities and to reflect on Milwaukee’s own history as a city partly comprised of immigrant communities.”

“Coming to America” virtual reading groups begin August 12 and continue through November 18. Patrons will receive a copy of the book while supplies last. For more information, and a complete schedule, visit mpl.org/comingtoAmerica.

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About the Milwaukee Public Library

Milwaukee Public Library is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee. Since 1878, Milwaukee Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for residents of Milwaukee and beyond. With 14 locations, and nearly three million items in circulation, MPL offers free access to a rich collection of materials both physical and digital, access to technology, classes, exhibitions, programming and more. From toddlers to scholars, MPL serves more than one million patrons who come through its doors annually and many more around the globe who use its resources at www.mpl.org. To offer this wide array of free programming, MPL relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support Milwaukee Public Library at mpl.org/support.