NOVEL CONVERSATIONS
SPEAKERS PROGRAM

EVENT AND COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

Sponsored by Indiana Humanities with support from Glick Philanthropies
NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKERS PROGRAM
PREPARATION AND OVERVIEW

Congratulations on being awarded the opportunity to host a Novel Conversations Speakers Program event. This toolkit is designed to help you put together the most successful event possible. From communications tips to event checklists, you’ll find all of the tips and tricks needed to host an exciting author event in your community.

The toolkit includes:
- Event Timeline
- Banner Instructions
- Communications Overview
- Social Media Samples
- Communications Materials
- Event Setup Tips

If you have questions as you use this toolkit to plan your event, contact Bronwen Carlisle at bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org or 317.616.9103.

Thank you for partnering with us on this program. We’re confident that your program will be a big hit in your community!
NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKERS PROGRAM
EVENT TIMELINE

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT
☐ Identify staff members and volunteers needed for the event.
☐ Hold a planning meeting to talk through and confirm the space, setup and timeline of the event.

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE EVENT
☐ If you plan to take RSVPS, use Eventbrite or provide an email address.
☐ Post the event on your own calendar.
☐ Think through contacts at local media (newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, etc.) and send them your customized press release (find the customized template at www.indianahumanities.org/ncspeakersprogram).
☐ Consider creating a customized hashtag for the event (e.g., #BatesTalkIPL).
☐ Begin promotion (local media, partner organizations, emails, social media, personal invitations, etc.):
  • Use the social media templates and images to get you started.
  • Invite local VIPs to attend.
  • Invite partner organizations.
  • Blast an announcement to your audience.
  • Put up flyers around your library and other venues that your audience frequents.
  • Invite organizations around your community including:
    • Local book groups
    • Nearby libraries
    • Senior centers
    • Creative writing groups
    • Middle schools and high schools
☐ Promote, promote, promote! Get the word out through social media, newsletters and in-person communication.

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT
☐ Confirm the room setup and catering (if you are utilizing any).
☐ Create directional signs if your event is taking place in a room that is hard to find.
☐ Confirm the arrival time, location and parking for your speaker and any VIPs.
HOURS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

☐ Set up an event check-in station/registration table. Make sure you have a sign-in sheet soliciting each attendee’s name, address, email address and perhaps how he or she heard about the event.
☐ Set up your room and double-check any multimedia or sound systems.
☐ Ensure that your speaker is ready.

DURING THE EVENT

☐ Keep careful track of your attendance—you’ll need to report this back to Indiana Humanities.
☐ Circulate around the room at the beginning of the event to make sure there are no issues to solve.
☐ Designate an individual to take photos and/or videos of the event.
☐ Designate an individual to post on social media with your customized event hashtag.

AFTER THE EVENT

☐ Send an “event recap” email to Bronwen Carlisle (bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org) within 30 days of the event. Please include the following information:
  • The number of attendees
  • A description of how the event went
  • Two or three pictures of the event (we suggest getting a picture of your audience, speaker, etc.)
  • Any links or clippings of local press coverage about the event
☐ Complete the brief online survey that Bronwen sends you.
☐ Send a follow-up email to your attendees. Content could include:
  • A thank-you for attending the Novel Conversations Speaker Program event
  • A list of other events coming up at your organization
☐ Return your table-top banner to Bronwen following the instructions provided in the toolkit.
NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKERS PROGRAM
TABLE-TOP BANNER INSTRUCTIONS

We’re pleased to lend you a table-top banner for your Novel Conversations Speakers Program event, but please note that we have only a limited number and must share them with multiple sites. That means we will need you to return yours to us right away so we can offer it to other Novel Conversations Speakers Program hosts.

GETTING THE TABLE-TOP BANNER
We will send you your table-top banner via U.S. mail or interlibrary loan one to two weeks prior to your event. We will distribute banners according to your proposed event dates.

RETURNING THE TABLE-TOP BANNER
Please plan to return the table-top banner within a week of your event. You can ship it back to us or return it in person.

To ship your table-top banner back:
• Pack the banner in a box. Make sure the packing materials are sturdy and well fastened. We don’t want things to get lost or damaged en route.
• If you’re a library, you may send the banner back via INfoExpress. Otherwise, please use FedEx, UPS or the U.S. Postal Service; you might want to consider getting insurance for the value of the shipment ($50).
• Send your table-top banner back to
  BRONWEN CARLISLE
  INDIANA HUMANITIES
  1500 N. DELAWARE ST.
  INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46202

To return your table-top banner in person:
• Be aware that our offices are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
• Contact us ahead of time to let us know you’re planning to drop by.

CONTACT
Email Bronwen Carlisle (bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org) with any questions regarding banners.
EXPLAINING THE NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKER PROGRAM

What is the Novel Conversations Speakers Program?
Indiana Humanities awarded 30 nonprofit organizations (libraries, schools, museums, etc.) the opportunity to host a recipient of the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards. This program is made possible through funding from Glick Philanthropies.

What is the Indiana Authors Award?
The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards honor the best books written by Indiana authors. Awarded every two years, they celebrate Indiana writers, shine a light on the Hoosier state’s literary community and deepen connections between Indiana writers and readers. They were established in 2009 as a vision of Eugene and Marilyn Glick and are a new component of Indiana Humanities’ rich and diverse literary programming.

Can you tell me about the authors involved?

EXPLAINING INDIANA HUMANITIES

What is Indiana Humanities?
Indiana Humanities connects people, opens minds and enriches lives by creating and facilitating programs that encourage Hoosiers to think, read and talk.

What do we do?
By developing programs, issuing grants, hosting events, connecting Hoosiers and providing platforms for discussion, Indiana Humanities supports, highlights and initiates programs that facilitate a culture of ideas and learning in Indiana.

How can you connect with us?
You can follow us on Twitter (@INHumanities), Facebook (/INHumanities) and Instagram (@INHumanities). You can also learn more on our website, www.indianahumanities.org.
PITCHING YOUR NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKERS PROGRAM

How do I pitch this to my local media?

Looking to get the word out to the media? We have a few recommendations.

- Send out a press release one month prior to your event (you can find a template at http://indianahumanities.org/ncspeakersonprogram).
- Reach out and build relationships with local media contacts who you think would enjoy attending or covering the event.
- When speaking with the media, think of something that sets your event apart—WHY should they be interested? WHAT makes this event newsworthy? Is the author someone the community admires? Is this part of a bigger community-wide celebration or does it tie to another important community event?

BUILDING THE BUZZ

How do I get people talking before the event?

This event is designed to bring people together, engage the community and get people talking. Here are a few ways to encourage buzz before your event.

- Post it on Eventbrite. This will allow you to have a designated one-stop shop for information, and it will provide you with a list of RSVPs and emails for follow-up afterward.
- Not creating an Eventbrite listing? Be sure to post the event on your own website in order to have a landing page with information.
- Distribute promotional materials to areas your audience traffics, hit up social media and use your communication tools (newsletters, emails, etc.) to encourage attendance.
- Use your community partners. Arm friends of the library with sample tweets or Facebook posts. Give them flyers to distribute. Encourage them to interact with their audiences and widen your reach.
- Submit your event to community calendars, online message boards, newsletters and so on. Include links back to your site.
- If your organization has a blog, post an article about your event.

How do I encourage people to share their experience during the event?

There are plenty of ways to encourage your attendees to share their experience at your event:

- Create an event-specific hashtag. We have seen our partners succeed with this before. For example, you could use something like #LauraBatesIPL. This is a great way to keep track of promotion, identify your event and track if anyone is talking about it online. Make your hashtag easy to find. Post it on flyers, posters and other promotional materials to keep people talking.
- Designate influencers—that is, select individuals to be your “social media gurus,” to post on social media about their experience and to interact with others throughout the event. These individuals could be influential members of your community, board members with an active following or maybe your biggest fans. We recommend talking to your city’s public officials and getting them on board—to help promote the event and of course to attend.
- Interact with us. Tag @INHumanities and we will be sure to retweet and favorite tweets about your event.
How do I keep people talking after the event?
The key to keeping people discussing their experience is all about the follow-up.

- Send an e-blast. Using your Eventbrite list, thank your guests for attending and provide them a link to Flickr with pictures from the event or to other events your library is hosting in the future.
- Write a blog post. Send Indiana Humanities an article that highlights the success of your event, along with a few high-resolution images, and we’ll feature it on our blog. This will give you some more leverage and reach after the date has passed.
- Connect with any VIPs/partners and send them a heartfelt gesture of thanks (an email, thank-you note, etc.).

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Keep your promotions intriguing and positive—this is an event you want people to attend.
- When promoting the event via social media, it’s helpful to use your customized social images and/or a link to more information and your RSVP site.
- Have someone take high-resolution photos so you can document and remember the event.
TWITTER

Twitter is a great way to spread the word about your event in short and sweet messages. Here are a few sample tweets.

- Join us for an exciting conversation with Laura Bates on March 10. RSVP: [link here]
- Hear from author Philip Gulley at our Novel Conversations Speakers Program: [link here]
- Author of “Map to the Stars” will be in Fort Wayne on March 12. Don’t miss out: [link here]
- Setting up for our author event tonight. Don’t miss out! [link to photo]

Always remember to link to your RSVP page or website for followers to read more information. Also, check to see if your author has a social media handle—it would be great to tag him or her. We also encourage you to use your social media graphics when posting about the event.

FACEBOOK

Facebook will allow you to elaborate a bit more on the event. Here you can post longer messages inviting the community to join you. See a sample below:

- Join us to hear Laura Bates, author of “Shakespeare Saved My Life,” on March 10 from 6-7:30 p.m. Bates will discuss her prison class on Shakespeare and how it transformed one prisoner who had been locked in solitary confinement for a decade. This event is sponsored by Indiana Humanities with support from Glick Philanthropies. [link here]

AFTER THE EVENT

Social media is a great way to thank your author, attendees and community partners.

These tips/sample posts are just to get you thinking. If you have questions or need more specific ideas, contact Kristen Gandenberger, Indiana Humanities events and communication coordinator, at kgandenberger@indianahumanities.org.
NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKERS PROGRAM
COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

To help you promote your event, we have provided materials for download at www.indianahumanities.org/ncspeakersprogram.

These materials include:
- A press release template (which you will be able to customize to your organization, event and author)
- Social media graphics
NOVEL CONVERSATIONS SPEAKERS PROGRAM
EVENT SETUP TIPS

In order to create a functional event, it is important to consider your space and setup. Here are a few tips and tricks to ensure your event flows well.

- Place your check-in table by the entrance door or the entrance of your room. Make sure this table does not hinder anyone from entering your event.
- At the check-in table include a sign-in sheet asking attendees for:
  - Their name
  - Their mailing address
  - Their email address
  - How they heard about the event
  This is a great way to collect information and follow up after the event.
- Create a seating plan that allows for an organized flow and direct access to the presentation.
- Be sure to check with your presenter about any needs, including:
  - A podium
  - A microphone
  - A chair
  - Multimedia needs (projector, computer, music, speakers, etc.)
- Provide water for your presenter.
- Set up your Novel Conversations Speakers Program table-top banner in a prominent location.
- Identify distinct roles for volunteers and staff prior to the event. Here are a few to think through:
  - Registration table attendant
  - Someone to support the speaker/author before, during and after the event
  - Greeter/person to direct folks to the event
  - Emcee to introduce the speaker/close the event
- If you’re having food, be sure to put it in a spot that does not distract from the presentation.
- Have your own literature on hand; this a great place to promote future events that might be attractive to this audience.