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LONG BEACH READS ONE BOOK
***THE SOLOIST* by STEVE LOPEZ**

Wednesday, March 3 through Sunday, March 14

Donate Books and Help Send a Book on a Journey

LONG BEACH, CA – The Long Beach Public Library Foundation announces the 9th Annual Long Beach Reads One Book. This year's selection is "*The Soloist*" – "A Lost Dream, An Unlikely Friendship, and the Redemptive Power of Music" by Steve Lopez. A variety of events, for all ages, are scheduled throughout Long Beach from Wednesday, March 3 through Sunday, March 14.

Added this year is **SENDING A BOOK ON A JOURNEY**, a literary project that asks the community to donate new or gently-read books for the homeless and mentally ill people of Long Beach. Books may be dropped-off at various **Long Beach Reads One Book** events, the Bixby Knolls Farmers Market on Sundays at Longfellow elementary school, Main and all eleven library branches starting Wednesday, March 3 through Saturday, March 13. Friends of the Library sell bargain-priced/second-hand books at Main and all branch libraries. Donated books will be placed in Mental Health America (MHA) Village and Wellness Center in Long Beach. An inserted "book note" will encourage homeless and mentally-ill readers to share the joy of reading by passing their books on to others...thus sending a book on a journey.

Karlos Karrillo, a local freelance artist, designed the poster celebrating **SENDING A BOOK ON A JOURNEY (see attached poster)**. His impressive art murals grace the entrance wall of the MHA Village Drop-In Center and "Deli 456".
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Karrillo is served by the Village. “The Village is my champion.” Karlos states. “They have provided the support in helping me overcome hearing impairment, past homelessness and unemployment.” Karrillo agreed to donate his award-winning talent to create the official **SENDING A BOOK ON A JOURNEY** project poster for **Long Beach Reads One Book 2010**.

Betty Buffington , chair of **SENDING A BOOK ON A JOURNEY** first met Karlos Karrillo when she toured the MHA Village facility with a team of local mental health professionals. Betty was there to learn first-hand about Long Beach mental health resources, and to encourage these agencies to participate in LB Public Library Foundation’s **Long Beach Reads One Book** community events and city-wide discussions. “It is a rare opportunity to bring mental health awareness and outreach to the community,” says Betty. “We are able to do that because Steve Lopez’s bestseller book *The Soloist*, a true story evolving in a world of mental illness and homelessness, was chosen for **Long Beach Reads One Book** for 2010. “

Karlos Karrillo believes his inspiration and artistic ability are gifts from God. He was born hearing impaired, but it was not diagnosed. His parents knew something was wrong, but thought their baby might be retarded. At age four, he still did not talk. Karlos communicated with his parents and brothers by drawing exact pictures of what he wanted...a slice of bread, a glass of water. After his impaired hearing was recognized at about age five, he began attending special education and regular grammar, middle and high schools, often as a straight “A” student in art. Years of enrollment in art classes at El Camino College taught him to love art in all media: life drawing, water color, oil, silk screen and sculpture.

Betty tells us ... “Someday Karlos hopes to learn all about art history. But for now, his challenge is to make a success of his own fledgling art design business, where he is focusing his art on unique skateboard deck design.”

Karlos may be found at local art shows where he accepts art commissions, and may be reached at email zkuljaka@yahoo.com.

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Mental Health Bookmarks will be available at all libraries and **Long Beach Reads One Book** events. These free MHA bookmarks provide mental health/homeless information, tips on caring for one's mental health, resource phone numbers and how to get involved with local organizations. For additional information call Julia Scalise at MHA - 562/285-1330, x225.

LONG BEACH READS ONE BOOK is a community-focused cultural initiative designed to bring people together and raise the standards of literacy by encouraging everyone in Long Beach to read the same book at the same time. The Long Beach Public Library Foundation, a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) founded in 1996, coordinates this multi-faceted program, which includes participation by dozens of Long Beach organization partners. The Library Foundation provides support to enhance the Long Beach Public Library and encourages literacy and education for all members of the community.

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