

Contact: Kristin Forselius, kforselius@gmail.com, 603-765-7730

Finding Joy: Oyster River Community Read Announces 2026 Book Selection and Community Event Calendar

The Oyster River Community Read Committee (ORCR) is delighted to announce its 2026 book selection: *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. This year's companion title for children is *The Little Book of Joy*, also by the same authors.

The ORCR volunteer committee, composed of librarians and educators, selected the 2026 book because, as Kristin Forselius, ORCR Chair, explained: "We wanted to create spaces where our community could come together to read, reflect, and explore ways to bring more joy into daily life. The long New England winter can be challenging, and with so much happening in the world, we thought it might be the perfect time to use reading as a way to connect, share, and support one another, neighbor to neighbor." This is the sixth Read event organized by the group since its inception in 2017.

The 2026 program will kick off with an **Open Mic Night on Friday, February 6, from 6:30–8:30 p.m.** at the Freedom Café, located at 37 Main Street in Durham. All ages are welcome to share music, poetry, stories, or other talents inspired by the theme of joy, or simply come to listen and enjoy the creativity of others. Complimentary cookies will be served, and the café's coffee and tea bar will be open for purchase.

This event is the first in a series of programs inspired by the book's eight pillars of joy—humor, humility, forgiveness, acceptance, compassion, perspective, generosity, and gratitude. The ORCR committee has created additional events to be offered at locations across Madbury, Lee, and Durham from February through April. All events are free and open to everyone, and reading the book is not required. For those who would like to read along, print and audio copies of both the adult and children's titles will be available at the Durham, Lee, Madbury, and Newmarket public libraries, as well as through partner organizations across the community.

A full schedule of events can be found at www.orcread.org.

The Oyster River Community Read Committee extends its sincere appreciation to its partner organizations, including Durham Public Library, Lee Public Library, Madbury Public Library, Newmarket Public Library, Community Church of Durham, St. George's Episcopal Church, the Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the NH Humanities, Rotary Club of Durham–Great Bay, Durham Public Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Lee Library, NH Charitable Foundation's Thorland Fund, The Freedom Café, and The Barn at Powder Major Farm, along with the many community members contributing presentations and programs throughout the season.

PHOTO (L-R): Kristin Forselius, ORCR Chair; Kerry Cronin, Madbury Library Director; Audra Lewis, Durham Public Library Assistant Director