

OUR EXCLUSIVE LOOK

CHECK IT OUT!

HUMAN LIBRARY: RESERVE A PERSON FOR A PAN AM CONVERSATION

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Just like a good book that can tell a good story, each of the 19 "human books" available at the North York Central Library this Saturday will all have a good story to tell.

Library patrons can "check out" a person at the Human Library and have a conversation with athletes, journalists and many others involved with the upcoming Toronto Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

The idea came about two years ago with the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games organizing committee (TO2015) working with Toronto Public Library acting as the cultural piece

to the Games that will see 41 countries represented from the Americas and the Caribbean.

"It was a partnership with TO2015 from the very beginning," said Gail MacFayden, who is working as the Pan Am lead for the Toronto Public Library.

While the Human Library will present an opportunity for young people to talk one-on-one with athletes, MacFayden noted they can also learn about other jobs available in the sports industry by speaking with an athletic therapist, sports lawyer, media relations, and project co-ordinator for the Games.

"It's also an opportunity to bring youth athletes to young

people. It makes them accessible," said MacFayden, adding there were many more volunteers willing to participate in the Human Library than they could sign on. "We had an overwhelming response."

MAY 30

Some of the "human books" that can be reserved in advance to talk to for a 30-minute session include CEO of Canadian Sport Institute Ontario Debbie Low, NHL hockey scout Sheldon Sookdeo, Olympian-turned-entrepreneur Jessica Tudos, and wheelchair basketball

athlete Jamey Jewells.

Francis Atta, who is one of the 3,000 torch bearers, will also be available to talk about his own life and looks forward to sharing his story, from being a homeless youth to a motivational speaker and author.

"It's amazing and I think it's a good concept," said Atta, who grew up in the Jane and Finch community. "I learn better when I'm being taught in person."

One of the lessons he hopes to pass on to those he speaks to at the Human Library event is that life's challenges shaped him into who he is today. "From the negatives, it's up to you to change it into a posi-

tive," Atta said.

He added that failure isn't something to be afraid of, but rather an opportunity to learn from in order to succeed, just like many of the top athletes who will be competing in the Pan Am Games July 10 to 26.

"It's because they never gave up," he said.

The Human Library runs from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday at the North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge St. Email humanlibrary@torontopubliclibrary.ca to request a time slot with one of the participating "human books" or drop by the day of the event.

i For a full list of 'human books' available to check out, visit www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/human-library



Pan Am torch bearer Francis Atta can be 'reserved' this Saturday.



Jamey Jewells, athlete, wheelchair basketball



Matthew Cutler, The 519 Sport Inclusion director



Telise Carmichael, athletic therapist



Sheldon Sookdeo, NHL hockey scout



Phyllis Berck, runner and sports advocate



David Goldstein, sports lawyer and journalist



Amy Agulay, City of Toronto project co-ordinator for the Games



Jessica Tudos, educator, speaker, author, Olympian



Debbie Low, CEO, Canadian Sport Institute Ontario



Natalie Wideman, athlete, softball



Julia Wilkinson, Olympian and TO2015 athlete relations



Dayo Kefentse, TORONTO 2015 Games manager, media relations



Also participating is Kevin Arnisdorf, sport development manager

