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**COMMUNICATIONS
EVENTS TOOLKIT**

THE EUGENE &
MARILYN GLICK

**Indiana
Authors
Awards**

Speaker Program

Preparation and Overview

Congratulations on being awarded the opportunity to host an Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program. This toolkit is designed to help you put together the most successful event possible. From communications tips to event checklists, you'll find all the tips and tricks needed to host an exciting author/writing event in your community.

The toolkit includes:

- ☐ Event Timeline
- ☐ 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.

Thank you for partnering with Indiana Humanities on this program. We're confident that your program will be a big hit in your community!

Speaker 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

- ☐ Submit the online event calendar to Indiana Humanities.
- ☐ If you plan to take RSVPs, use Eventbrite or provide an email address.
- ☐ Post the event on your own web calendar.
- ☐ Think through contacts at local media (newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, etc.) and send them your customized press release (find the customized template on our website | [Speaker Program](#))
- ☐ Consider creating a customized hashtag for the event (e.g., #MartoneTalkIPL).
- ☐ Begin promotion (local media, partner organizations, emails, social media, personal invitations, etc.).
 - Use the social media template and images to get you started.
 - Invite local VIPs to attend.
 - Invite partner organizations to promote.
 - 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 they heard about the event.
- ☐ Set up your room and double check any multimedia or sound systems.
- ☐ Ensure that your speaker is ready and has everything they need.

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

- ☐ Fill out the final report form within 30 days of the event. The report form asks for information including:
 - 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
- ☐ Send a follow-up email to your attendees. Content could include:
 - A thank-you for attending the Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program event
 - A list of other events coming up at your organization

Speaker Program

Communications Overview

Explaining the Speaker Program

What is the Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program?

Indiana Humanities awarded up to 30 nonprofit organizations (libraries, schools, museums, etc.) the opportunity to host an honoree of the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards.

This program is made possible with the support of Glick Philanthropies.

What are the Indiana Authors Awards?

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards celebrate the best books by Indiana authors written in nine different categories and published during the previous two years. Winners receive a \$5,000 prize, a physical award featuring Indiana limestone, and the opportunity to make a \$500 gift to an Indiana public library. Winning and shortlisted books were selected by panels of judges, including former winners, writers, educators, scholars, local bookstore owners, and librarians.

Explaining Indiana Humanities

What is Indiana Humanities?

Indiana Humanities sparks curiosity, connects people, and explores the human experience through programs, grants, and storytelling.

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 X/Threads (@INHumanities and @INAuthorsAwards), Facebook (/INHumanities and /INAuthorsAwards), and Instagram (@INHumanities and @INAuthorsAwards). You can also learn more on our websites, www.indianahumanities.org and www.indianaauthorsawards.org.

Pitching Your Event

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 on our website | [Speaker Program](#)).
- 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 to engage with an expert writer in a creative, welcoming space. Here are a few ways to encourage buzz before your event.

- Post it on an event site like Eventbrite or Humanitix. 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 event 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. Provide friends of your organization 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?

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

- Interact with us. Tag @INHumanities and @INAuthorsAwards, and we will be sure to retweet and favorite tweets about your event.
- Create an event-specific hashtag. We have seen our partners succeed with this before. For example, you could use something like #MartoneTalkIPL. 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.

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 registration list, thank your guests for attending and provide them a link to an album with pictures from the event or to other events your organization 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 website and social media. 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.

Speaker Program

Social Media Samples

X/Threads

X and Threads are great platforms for spreading the word about your event in short and sweet messages. Here are a few sample posts.

- Join us for an exciting conversation with Bryan Furuness on March 10. RSVP: [link here]
- Hear from author Maurice Broaddus at our Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program: [link here]
- Author of “The Life List of Adrian Mandrick” 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 them. 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. You could even link to the author’s works to increase interest in the program. See a sample below:

- Join us to hear Chris White, author of “The Life List of Adrian Mandrick,” on March 10 from 6–7:30 p.m. White will discuss her award-winning novel about a pill-popping anesthesiologist and avid birder, who embarks on a quest to find the extremely rare Ivory-billed Woodpecker only to become stranded in the thick swamplands of Florida’s panhandle. This event is made possible with the support of Indiana Humanities and 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 Bronwen Carlisle at bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org.

Speaker Program

Communications Materials

To help you promote your event, we have provided materials for download on our website ([Speaker Program](#)).

These materials include:

- ☐ A press release template (which you will be able to customize to your organization, event and author)
- ☐ Logos and author headshots

Speaker 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 and contact information
 - How they heard about the eventThis is a great way to collect information and follow up after the event.
- ☐ For Speaker Program events: create a seating plan that allows for an organized flow and direct access to the presentation.
- ☐ Let people know where the restrooms are, where they can hang their coats, etc. Make sure everyone feels welcome and willing to share in your space.
- ☐ Be sure to check with your presenter about any needs, including:
 - A podium
 - A microphone
 - A chair
 - Multimedia needs (projector, computer, music, speakers, etc.)
 - Whiteboard
 - Scrap paper and writing utensils
- ☐ Provide water for your presenter.
- ☐ Consider providing snacks for participants.
- ☐ 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.