

# 2018 Arlington Reads: Habitats for Inhumanity

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- *Meet award-winning authors Katherine Boo (April 18), Richard Rothstein (May 3) and Matthew Desmond (May 17) and learn about the groundbreaking investigative work behind their recent books on housing, poverty and injustice.*
- *Join “Voices from Arlington: A Panel Discussion on Issues of Housing and Poverty” (Apr. 26)*
- *Visit [library.arlingtonva.us/arlington-reads](http://library.arlingtonva.us/arlington-reads) for more information.*

The 2018 Arlington Reads series features an investigative journalist, a Princeton sociologist turned urban ethnographer and a leading authority on housing policy — each telling stories of people’s hopes, dreams and losses in the imminent face of eviction, segregation and inhumane living conditions.

In conjunction with the author series, the Arlington's Community Progress Network will present a panel discussion and facilitated community dialogue exploring the local realities of the poverty and housing challenges on April 26.

Emerging from the shadows of luxury hotels near the Mumbai, India airport to the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, are themes of the centrality of home, hope against all odds, failed government housing and economic policies and our attempt to understand our own humanity.

In “Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity” (2012), investigative journalist **Katherine Boo** exposes readers to the human stories behind the present-day volatility of global economic change and inequality.

Boo’s book describes Annawadi, a slum of Mumbai, India, where she follows the interconnected lives of several residents, including a young trash picker, a female slumlord and a college student. All three face daily struggles ranging from corruption, hunger, disease, dirt, ethnic strife and violence while striving toward a better life.

Boo has documented the lives of people from disadvantaged communities over the past two decades and has won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship and the National Book Award.

**Richard Rothstein**, a leading authority on housing policy and author of “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America” (2017), argues that residential racial segregation in the U.S. is not the result of decisions by private institutions or individuals but the direct result of racially explicit government laws and policies — including discriminatory zoning — at the local, state, and federal levels. “The Color of Law” is the story of present-day America in all its municipalities, large and small, liberal and reactionary.

According to Sherrilyn Ifill, President of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, “Rothstein reveals a history of racism hiding in plain sight and compels us to confront the consequences of the intentional, decades-long governmental policies that created a segregated America.”

**Matthew Desmond**, a Princeton sociologist and MacArthur "Genius," is the 2017 Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City” (2016). Desmond takes readers into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee and tells the stories of eight families who struggle to keep a roof over their heads as they face extreme poverty, eviction and economic exploitation.

The fates of these families are in the hands of two landlords: Sherrena Tarver, a former schoolteacher turned inner-city entrepreneur, and Tobin Charney, who runs one of the worst trailer parks in Milwaukee. In vivid, intimate prose, Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today.

Arlington Reads, a community engagement program of Arlington Public Library, promotes literacy, the joy of reading and intergenerational participation. “The program brings together people to talk about books and the important topics of our time,” said Library Director Diane Kresh.

Since its inception in 2006, the program has featured both national and international fiction and non-fiction authors and cultural icons, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Wendell Berry, Junot Díaz, Anthony Doerr, Richard Ford, Colum McCann, Tim O’Brien, Ann Patchett, Viet Thanh Nguyen and Elizabeth Strout.

This program is made possible in part through the generous support of the Friends of the Arlington Public Library. To learn more about Arlington Reads, visit [library.arlingtonva.us/arlington-reads](http://library.arlingtonva.us/arlington-reads).

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*Everyone has a story.*  
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