

## New Rio Rancho Library Card Design Revealed



The Rio Rancho Public Libraries have a new limited edition library card design, available beginning September 1. The new design shows a watercolor painting of books with the Libraries' tagline, "Encourage \* Enrich \* Explore" on the spines of the books.

The new library card will be available at both Rio Rancho library branches, while supplies last. September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month, and in celebration of the new design, the library card replacement fee will be waived during September so that those who want a limited edition card with the new design can get one.

The design was created by Ivonne Orozco Sahi, a high school Spanish teacher, who stated, "What a cool way of creating community engagement! This opportunity opened up conversations in my classroom about the public libraries." We interviewed the artist by email to learn more about her and her design.

### Can you tell us a little more about discussing public libraries with your students?

"Both public libraries and public education systems are so powerful, and their roles are interconnected. As a teacher, I often engage with students in conversations around what they're reading and learning, how they access resources and where they can find information and community programs. The library inevitably comes up as students have needs for not just books, but technology, information access, and sometimes even just a space where they are welcomed."

### How did you come up with your design?

"The design was inspired by a book in our own home library, *My Ideal Bookshelf* with art by Jane Mount and edited by Thessaly La Force. My wife had shown me the designs and she had a vision for what the library card design could be, so we brought it to life together. Furthermore, I know that the Rio Rancho Public Library is deeply committed to the 'Encourage, Enrich, Explore' values, so I knew that would be an important message to show in this special edition library card design."

### How did you create your design?

"My wonderful wife who is an avid reader and book lover put together a stack of books of

different sizes, textures and colors. I used watercolors to recreate the six books and finished the outlines with a very thin black calligraphy pen."

### **Can you share a memory of going to a library?**

"My family immigrated to the United States from Mexico when I was twelve years old. When we first moved to a rural small town in central New Mexico, one of the first places my aunt took me to was the library. It was a dream come true for me, I had never been to a place like it before. There were so many stories in those shelves that I wanted to devour, one problem was that I did not know English yet. So I worked my way through the small Spanish books selection, while at the same time checking out the children books with cassettes included that read the story out loud. Yes, cassettes, and no I'm not that old, but it was what was available and I loved those books, I loved that I could follow the page as it read to me and I could infer what the story was about by the pictures. In a few months I was keeping up in school with classmates and completing homework in my newly learned second language. I won't ever forget the way I felt taking those books home: I felt seen, capable, smart. The library made sure I had that when so much of my life was changing, I am so grateful for that experience."

Ivonne Orozco Sahi lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is a queer woman of color, a wife, a mom, a teacher, an immigrant, a beginner activist, a poet, a birder, occasional water-color painter and more.

The Libraries held the library card design contest in January and February. Entries were accepted from anyone living in New Mexico. Twenty-one entries were submitted, and a committee of library staff selected three finalists. The public voted on the winning design in February, casting 716 votes.