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Grab a Book for the Ride

SEPTA's New Books in Transit Program Provides Free Reading Materials for Customers

PHILADELPHIA (July 25, 2019) — SEPTA transports its customers from Point A to Point B, but reading a good book during a commute can take riders on an adventure to a faraway place or another era. No book? No problem! SEPTA's new "Books in Transit" program is making it easy for commuters to grab reading material on the go — for free.

"SEPTA is always looking for ways to improve our customers' experience and commute," Kim Scott Heinle, Assistant General Manager of Customer Experience and Advocacy. "We created Books in Transit as a way to make the ride more enjoyable by offering free literature for our riders."

Books in Transit is similar to book-sharing programs offered by transit agencies across the country and around the world. Long-time SEPTA commuter Barbara Nolan, who works for University of Pennsylvania Press, had spent years thinking of ways to encourage her fellow riders to read while taking the bus, train, and trolley. She researched London's Books Underground program and approached SEPTA with her idea.

"I knew I could make something like that [Books Underground] work here," said Nolan. "I want to get good books into the hands of people who'll enjoy reading them." Thanks to Nolan's research and industry contacts SEPTA's Books in Transit program is up and running.

To participate, riders can stop by the Customer Service offices at 69th Street Transportation Center, Jefferson Station, and 1234 Market Street, browse through the Books in Transit collection (books are marked with decals) and choose a book. Selections include works of fiction, nonfiction, even young adult fiction for SEPTA's young and young-at-heart customers. A list of currently available books can be found at iseptaphilly.com/books.

"Each month, we will rotate the book selection to appeal to all of our riders' interests and to keep them coming back for more," said Heinle.

Unlike programs in other cities, SEPTA riders are encouraged to pass the books along to others and not return them to the Customer Service offices. Customers can provide feedback regarding Books in Transit, by visiting iseptaphilly.com/books. For a limited time, those leaving their names and addresses will receive a Books in Transit tote — perfect for carrying their new literary treasures.

SEPTA's Books in Transit program was made possible with the assistance of Penguin Random House, who supplied all of the titles for the launch of this program. Penguin Random House is the international home to nearly 250 editorially and creatively independent publishing imprints.

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