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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mónica Guzmán joins Community Foundation for Elevate NOVA Book Circle’s Culminating Event, Discussing “I Never Thought of it That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Divided Times”

15 November 2023 (Fairfax, VA): Yesterday, the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia hosted author and speaker Mónica Guzmán to discuss her book *I Never Thought of it That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*.

The Elevate NOVA Book Circle was launched in 2023, inspired by a similar book circle held by the [Delaware Community Foundation](#). More than 400 community members joined us to read the book and discuss Mónica’s thoughtful process for how to engage in deeper listening and curiosity to bridge gaps in understanding, helping to promote community resilience.

In its work to build [Social Trust and Civil Healing](#), the Community Foundation has joined a large and growing grassroots movement to rebuild social trust across the United States, each individual having a role to play in the civic healing of our country.

Mónica made two points that those in the room and online resonated with. When asked by an audience member about how and when people should engage in a courageous conversation, she said that “if you think you know something, you won’t ask,” and that “many of our conflicts are over the question ‘do I matter?’” Perhaps one way we can build better community resilience is by reminding those around us that they do matter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mónica Guzmán is a bridge builder, journalist, and author who lives for great conversations sparked by curious questions. Her new book, "I Never Thought of it That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times" was featured on the Glenn Beck Podcast and named a New York Times recommended read. She’s Senior Fellow for Public Practice at Braver Angels, the nation’s largest cross-partisan grassroots organization working to depolarize America; founder and CEO of Reclaim Curiosity, an organization working to build a more curious world; cofounder of the award-winning Seattle newsletter The Evergrey; and advisor for Starts With Us and the Generations Over Dinner project. She was a 2019 fellow at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, where she studied social and political division, and a 2016 fellow at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, where she researched how journalists can rethink their roles to better meet the needs of a participatory public. Mónica is the inaugural McGurn Fellow at the University of Florida, working with researchers at the UF College of Journalism and Communications and beyond to better understand ways to employ techniques described in her book to boost understanding. She was named one of the 50 most influential women in Seattle, served twice as a juror for the Pulitzer Prizes, and plays a barbarian named Shadrack in her besties’ Dungeons & Dragons campaign. A Mexican immigrant, Latina, and dual US/Mexico citizen, she lives in Seattle with her husband and two kids and is the proud liberal daughter of conservative parents.

ABOUT THE BOOK

With our community steeped in divide, Mónica set out to find what was blinding us and discovered the most eye-opening tool we're not using: our own built-in curiosity. The book explores how avoiding one another is hurting our relationships and our society.

Mónica presents a timely and heartening guide, in a way that feels deeply personal yet universal. As the chief storyteller for the national cross-partisan depolarization organization Braver Angels, Mónica takes you to the real front lines of a crisis that threatens to grind America to a halt—broken conversations among confounded people.

A recording of the discussion is available [on YouTube](#).

To keep up to date on Elevate NOVA initiatives, visit our [website and sign up here](#).

About the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia

Founded in 1978, the Community Foundation has been the premier charitable partner trusted by thousands of generous Northern Virginians for decades. Our mission is to advance equity through philanthropy and community leadership. Comprised of donor advised funds, permanent funds, giving circles, and other charitable endowments, the Community Foundation's vision is to build a community that works for everyone. Our Community Foundation serves the entire region, including Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William Counties and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park. For more information please visit us at www.cfnova.org, or follow up on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).