

City of Dallas News Release

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Children's Book Fair to showcase national authors and illustrators; *Mrs. Laura Leppert will again serve as honorary chair of the multicultural celebration*

Dallas, TX – A multicultural event in Dallas April 17-18 will bring together children, families and an impressive roster of children's authors and illustrators. The Dallas Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival is a partnership between the Dallas Public Library, the African American Museum and the Dallas Independent School District, for children in grades pre-K through sixth. The event is supported by AT&T.

"Literacy is a challenge that we face right here in our own backyard," said honorary chair Mrs. Laura Leppert. "This year's Children's Book Fair theme is "Opening Minds by Opening Books," which is so appropriate given the fact that 61 percent of lower income families have no access to books for children in their homes," she said. "Last year, more than a thousand children and their families benefited from the Book Fair, and in 2009 we anticipate an even greater level of participation."

The Book Fair begins Friday, April 17 with an Authors/Illustrators Read-In from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Central Library, 1515 Young St, geared primarily for school groups. The Book Fair and Festival will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18 at the Central Library. All these events are free and open to the public.

"Education is AT&T's key philanthropy focus," said AT&T Regional Vice President of External Affairs Holly Reed. "We are driven to help students succeed in school, in the workforce and in life. Through our philanthropic initiatives and partnerships, AT&T and the AT&T Foundation support projects like the Children's Book Fair & Literacy Festival, which engage children in the love of reading and which can impact keeping them in school through graduation," she said.

"We're very proud to be a part of this important multicultural event in the City of Dallas," said City of Dallas Director of Libraries Laurie Evans. "There's nothing more rewarding to a librarian than helping to foster a love of reading and learning among our children, and that's what the Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival is all about."

The Dallas Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival was started 15 years ago by Dr. Harry Robinson, Jr., president and CEO of the African American Museum in Fair Park. Proceeds from the fair and festival sponsorships benefit the Museum's Multicultural Summer Camp for students ages 6 to 12. Special features of the all-day camp include daily instruction in reading and Spanish language skills. Students will also explore how America's diversity in music, drama, visual art, folk art, literature and media has been influenced by historical events, people and places.

"The Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival is a wonderful way for children to experience the magic of books and reading," Robinson said. "With this event, we are reaching out to our children, inspiring them to

read and write by giving them a unique opportunity to meet and talk with authors and illustrators of some wonderful books.”

Here’s the list of authors (partial list as of this date):

Lupe Ruiz-Flores: Author of the bilingual picture books *Lupita’s Papalote/El papalote de Lupita* and *The Woodcutter’s Gift/El regalo del lenador*, which has been nominated for the 2009 Tejas Star Book Award.

Gwendolyn Battle-Lavert: Author of *Off to School*, *The Barber’s Cutting Edge*, *The Shaking Dog* and the Parent’s Choice Award book *The Music in Derrick’s Heart*”.

Lila Guzman: Author of the award-winning Lorenzo Series, including her latest effort, *Lorenzo’s Revolutionary Quest*.

Jennifer Kindert: Illustrator of children’s books such as *Hurry Up* by Bernette Ford, *Mommy’s Bed* by Sonia Black, and *The Christmas Puppy* by Teddy Slater

David Rice: Winner of the American Library Association “Best Books for Young Readers” Award and nominated for the “Pura Belpre Award” in 2001 for his book *Crazy Loco*.

Willy Welch: Songwriter, author and storyteller, best known for his song and picture book, *Playing Right Field*

Hector Cantú: Co-creator of *Baldo*, the first nationally-syndicated bilingual comic strip about a Latino family.

Tony Medina: Author of *DeShawn Days* and *Bum Rush the Page: A Def Poetry Jam*, which was named the Best Book of 2002 by *The Washington Post’s Book World*

Christine Granados: Her collection of short stories, *Brides and Sinners in El Chuco*, was published by the University of Arizona Press in 2006.

Vaunda Nelson: Her first book, *Always Gramma*, was selected by the Children’s Book Council as a 1988 Notable Children’s Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies.; since then she has won the Georgia Children’s Book Award (*Mayfield Crossing*), 1999 Parents Choice Gold Award (*Beyond Mayfield*), and a Coretta Scott King Honor for Illustration in 2004 for *Almost to Freedom*.

The Dallas Public Library operates the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, 1515 Young St., and 26 branch locations. A library card is free for any Dallas resident. For information on the many free programs and services available at the Dallas Public Library, visit: www.dallaslibrary.org.

The African American Museum is located at 3536 Grand Ave., in Fair Park. It is the only museum in the Southwestern United States devoted to the preservation and display of African American artistic, cultural and historical materials. Its impressive collections serve to educate and inform today’s generation about often overlooked aspects of American history. For more information, go to <http://www.aamdallas.org>.

The Dallas Independent School District is the 12th largest school district in the nation with a diverse population of more than 160,000 students. The District has achieved record-breaking success in terms of student and school accomplishments. These achievements stem from the dedication of many people - the students themselves, their teachers and other school staff, principals, administrators, and the more than 19,000 community volunteers and school partners who support students with time, talent, and funds. For more information go to <http://www.dallasisd.org>.

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