

# City of Dallas News Release

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## Children's Book Fair to showcase national authors and illustrators;

*Mrs. Laura Leppert is honorary chair of the multicultural celebration of children and books*

**Dallas, TX** – A multicultural event in Dallas May 16-17 is bringing 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.

"Literacy is a challenge that we face right in our own backyard," said honorary chair Mrs. Laura Leppert. "While most children enter first grade with 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book sharing, other children never get that opportunity and average just 25 hours. In fact, 61 percent of lower income families have no access to books in their homes for children."

The Book Fair begins on Friday, May 16, with authors and illustrators visiting schools, libraries and recreation centers across the city from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Book Fair and Festival then begins at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, May 17 in the Plaza of the Central Library, 1515 Young St.

The Dallas Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival was started 13 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." This year's Book Fair will showcase these authors and illustrators:

Gwen Battle-Lavert: Author of *Off To School*, *The Music in Derrick's Heart* and *Papa's Mark*.

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

David Davis: Texas writer and cartoonist, author of *Texas Mother Goose*, and the upcoming *Texas Aesop's Fables*.

**Lila Guzmán:** Award-winning author of young adult novels about the American Revolution, including the *Lorenzo* series about the Spanish contribution to the Revolutionary War.

**Jennifer Kindert:** Illustrator of children's books dealing with racial identity and racial pride.

**Tony Medina:** Author of *Christmas Makes Me Think* and *Deshawn Days*.

**Jan Peck:** Author of *The Giant Carrot* and *Way down Deep in the Deep Blue Sea* and the upcoming *Pirate Treasure Hunt*.

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**David Rice:** Author of the award-winning *Crazy Loco* and *Give the Pig A Chance*.

**Lupe Ruiz-Flores:** Author of *My Very Own Room: Mi Propio Cuartito*, winner of the Tomas Rivera Children's Book Award.

**Toni Simmons:** Storyteller and author of *The Cheese Chase: Why Dogs Chase Cats*.

**Irene Smalls:** Award winning author of more than a dozen children's books and interactive storytelling CDs.

**Eleanora Tate:** Her book, *Celeste's Harlem Renaissance*, received the 2007 North Carolina Book Award for Juvenile Literature.

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

**Gwen Zepeda:** Her first children's picture book, *Growing Up with Tamales*, will be published this month.

"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."

Chase Bank is the presenting sponsor of the Book Fair, jointly presented by the African American Museum, Dallas Public Library, Dallas Independent School District, Friends of The Dallas Public Library, Children's Book Boutique, Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce, Latino Cultural Center, South Dallas Cultural Center, City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Dallas Mayor and Council Office Foundation for Community Empowerment, Ricky Rudine Memorial Fund of The Communities Foundation of Texas, Univision and the South Fair Community Development Corporation. Corporate sponsors include the Allen Group, Allyn & Company, Amerigroup Community Care, Atmos Energy, Live Nation, Regali Creative, Southwest Airlines, Superpages.com, Urban Land Institute North Texas, Wal-Mart/Sam's Club, World Vision, Half Price Books, Lakeshore Learning and Rainbow Days, Inc. and Tenet Healthcare.

**The Dallas Public Library** operates the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, 1515 Young St., and 25 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](http://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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