



Friday, Oct. 18, 2024

## 2024 LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL WELCOMES YOUNG READERS

**BATON ROUGE, La.** — An exciting day of activities and book programs for everyone from toddlers to teens will be among the attractions during the 20th Louisiana Book Festival on **Saturday, November 2, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** in Baton Rouge's Capitol Park area.

The Young Readers Pavilion will feature appearances by beloved storybook characters including Waldo from the *Where's Waldo?* books (if you can find him), authors talking to children about their featured books, musical performances, face painting, balloon artists, and book-related crafts. There's even a "Can you find?" activity that Kelly Mueller designed as a complement to the festival artwork she created. (Grown-ups just may enjoy that, too.)



*Children's author Johnette Downing takes the stage during the 2023 Louisiana Book Festival. She will be among the featured authors for this year's festival on Saturday, Nov. 2.*

"Since day one, we've wanted the Louisiana Book Festival to help young people develop a lifelong love of reading. That's a key part of this festival," said Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. "And that's why the staff takes so much care putting together programs and activities for children and teens."

There will be two children's tents, where [17 featured authors](#) will make appearances and interact with young readers. Among those authors is [Monica Arnaldo](#), who wrote *The Museum of Very Bad Smells: A Dare to Scratch 'n' Sniff Mystery* and *Are You a Cheeseburger?*, winner of

the 2023-2024 [Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award](#) for Kindergarten to 2nd grade. Arnaldo will be recognized during the annual Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards ceremony at noon in the State Library's Seminar Center.

[William Joyce](#), the 2008 recipient of the Louisiana Writer Award, returns to debut *Rocket Puppies*, his first new book in eight years. The book, which he describes as his happiest book ever, is being made available by special permission for the first time at the festival, three days before its official publication date. Joyce will speak from 1:15 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Senate Chamber in the Capitol.

The day is not only for the youngest readers. There will be activities for teens, including games and arts and crafts, and [more than two dozen authors of tween and teen books](#) talking about their books. Among those authors will be [Amina Luqman-Dawson](#) whose novel *Freewater* was named winner of the John Newbery Medal and winner of the Coretta Scott King Author Award. This middle-grade book is about two enslaved children who escape from a plantation and the ways they find freedom. Her presentation will be held from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. in the Senate Chamber in the Capitol.

"We're so happy we can have so many young readers meet their favorite authors," said Jim Davis, director of the Louisiana Book Festival. "It's great to see all the smiles on faces, authors' and readers' alike."

Another highlight for young people will be the five members of the National Student Poets (NSP) Class of 2024 from 1:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. in the State Library's Capitol View Room. The NSP program returns to the Louisiana Book Festival for its third year.

Musical performer [Rick Kelley](#) of Music with a Message for Kids will spend two weeks leading up to the Festival visiting 33 schools and three libraries in all corners of the state to promote the Louisiana Book Festival. His interactive performances, which involve music, singing, and promotion of literacy, inspire kids to read and find joy in books and libraries.

Outreach programs continue with authors [Alton Carter](#), [Jesse Haynes](#) and [Lance Pekus](#) (who has been featured on NBC's *American Ninja Warrior*), and [Marti Dumas](#) who will also make appearances at schools in the days before the festival. The times and locations of their appearances at the book festival can be found on the [children's](#) and [twens and teens](#) pages of the book festival's website.

All authors are scheduled for signings in the festival book tent operated by Cavalier House Books of Denham Springs.

For complete details on the 2024 Louisiana Book Festival and a schedule of events, visit [LouisianaBookFestival.org](https://LouisianaBookFestival.org) and follow us on the [Louisiana Book Festival Facebook page](#).

The [Louisiana Center for the Book](#) was established in the State Library of Louisiana in 1994. Its mission is to stimulate public interest in reading, books, literacy, and libraries and to celebrate Louisiana's rich literary heritage. It is the official state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book.



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