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2023 LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL WELCOMES YOUNG READERS

BATON ROUGE, La. – An exciting day of activities and programs for everyone from toddlers to teens will be among the attractions during the 19th Annual Louisiana Book Festival on **Saturday, October 28, 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 from Mo Willems's Elephant and Piggie books, authors talking to children about their featured books, musical performances, face painting, balloon artists, and book-related crafts. Teen HQ in the State Library of Louisiana building is an area for teens and tweens to hang out and plan their day. It will include crafts, giveaways, and trivia games.

"One of the goals of the Louisiana Book Festival is to inspire a love of reading and literature, and we want to make sure that starts with our youngest readers. That's why the staff of the State Library and the Louisiana Book Festival take a lot of care to make sure the day is inviting for everyone, especially children and teens," said Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. "We want the next generation of readers and writers to start here."

There will be three children's tents, where [19 featured authors](#) will make appearances and interact with young readers. Among those authors are Matt Haines (*The Little Book of King Cakes*), Shannon Atwater (*Goodnight, Pothole*), Winsome Bingham (*The Walk*), and Emma Bland Smith, who wrote *Claude: The True Story of a White Alligator*, winner of the 2022-2023 Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award for Grades 3-5.

The annual Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards ceremony, will be held at 11:30 a.m. in the State Library's Capitol View Room, where Smith will be joined by the other two recipients of 2022-2023 Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards, Carrie Firestone, whose *Dress Coded* won the Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award for Grades 6-8, and Robin Ha, whose *Almost American Girl* won the Louisiana Teen Readers' Choice Award for Grades 9-12. Lyla Lee, whose book *I'll Be the One* is the honor book for the Louisiana Teen Readers' Choice Award for Grades 9-12, will also be recognized at the ceremony.

"We couldn't be happier to have all the [winners of the Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards](#) at this year's festival. It's an exciting first for us," said Megan Thomas, the book festival's Children's Coordinator. "The Louisiana Book Festival is a great way for children and teens to meet some of their favorite authors, and the votes that students cast during the Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards made it clear that these authors rank high."

"In addition to all activities like games and arts and crafts, there are [nearly a dozen events](#) where children and teens can meet authors during the Louisiana Book Festival. It's always exciting to connect readers with their favorite writers," said Teen HQ Coordinator Skye Norwood. "Whether young readers are into nonfiction, fantasy, mysteries, thrillers, or poetry, we have something for them."

Another highlight for young people will be the five members of the National Student Poets Class of 2023. The program returns to the Louisiana Book Festival for its second year.

Hayley Arceneaux, a Baton Rouge native who became the first pediatric cancer survivor in space and the youngest person to orbit the earth, will discuss her book, *Wild Ride*, during a program for young readers and adults at 9 a.m. in the State Library Seminar Center.

Musical performer Rick Kelley of Music with a Message for Kids will spend the two weeks leading up to the festival visiting schools and libraries in all corners of the state promoting 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 Emma Bland Smith, Carrie Firestone, Robin Ha, and Chris Barton who will also make appearances at schools and libraries in the days before the festival.

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

For more information about the 2023 Louisiana Book Festival, visit [LouisianaBookFestival.org](#).

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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