

Contact: Ann Hatch
214/860-2478/ahatch@dcccd.edu
(260)

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**DCCCD Read-In Celebrates Literacy,
African-American Writers and Children's Books**

(Dallas) – Last year, participants in the Dallas County Community College District's citywide African American Read-In celebrated the life of stellar actor Ossie Davis as well as literacy and African-American writers. This year, children and books that they love will take center stage during the family-oriented event that will focus on the theme "Light Up Your Life with Reading, Books and Friends!"

On Sat., Feb. 3, community members are invited to attend the 2007 DCCCD African American Read-In from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Majestic Theatre in downtown Dallas. The program is free and open to the general public – families in particular, and children ages 8 and older. Seating is limited, however, and usually fills early because parents, youngsters and friends traditionally flock to the event.

This year's featured guest reader is award-winning children's author Christopher Paul Curtis, who received both the Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott King Award in 2000 for *Bud, Not Buddy*. The noted author will read from his works and is celebrating the January 2007 release of his newest book, *Mr. Chickee's Messy Mission*.

"The eighth African American Read-In celebrates family reading and learning, particularly books written for younger readers," said Carla Ranger, executive director of DCCCD's office of educational partnerships and founder of the Dallas African American Read-In. "Through the read-in, we share the joys of literature and the legacy of African-American writers with members of the community, creating a celebration of families and friends, based on books, stories, poetry and essays."

DCCCD is partnering with a number of new and returning sponsors who represent both Dallas-based and national organizations, plus businesses, community groups and news outlets to present the event.

Ranger added, "We would like everyone to know that the Dallas African American Read-In is only the beginning of fun for our entire community – a way to kick off Black
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History Month activities, to present an original program and to feature the writings of African-American authors. We encourage schools, organizations and families to hold their own read-ins throughout February to support literacy, to learn and to teach others about African-American writers. The project supports all of these month-long activities."

"Light Up Your Life with Reading, Books and Friends," this year's production and event theme, will treat audience members to a colorful selection of staged readings and interpretations of works written by and for African Americans; a Writer's Walk; and other literary activities. The program was written by Anyika McMillan-Herrod and is directed by Monique Ridge Williams. "We hope to inspire children, young people and their families to use literature as a tool to brighten their world," said Ranger.

Special guest Christopher Paul Curtis will read from several of his works, which include *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*; *Bud, Not Buddy*; *Bucking the Sarge*; *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*; and his January 2007 release, *Mr. Chickee's Messy Mission*. The production will feature

area actors and performers, including the Dallas Black Dance Theater, New Arts Six, Gospel Harmonizers, Richmond Punch, Lyndale the Literary Lion, and several children and youth poets featured in the Dallas Public Library's "Express Yourself" contest. Ronald McDonald also is scheduled to appear and read to children.

Audience members will receive free T-shirts, canvas bags, books and other literacy incentives. "The real treasure they will take with them, however, will be the words – both written and spoken – shared by authors, readers, artists and actors, plus friendships that grow each year as a result of the read-in," said Ranger. "DCCCD's African American Read-In is an extravaganza of creativity, culture and community."

The idea for an African American Read-In originated with Dr. Jerrie Scott, faculty member at the University of Memphis and a member of the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English. The event's purpose is to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month. Since 2000, the caucus has documented a cumulative total of more than 1 million persons who have participated in read-ins held across the country.

Event sponsors for the read-in are: K104-FM; KKDA-AM; KRNB-FM; WFAA-TV; the *Dallas Morning News*; WRR-FM; Time Warner Cable; NTheKnow.com; DCTV; the *Downtown Business News*; Jokae's African American Books; the *Dallas Weekly*; Black Images Book Bazaar; Barnes & Noble; Scholastic; Holt Rinehart Winston; *Highlights* Magazine; City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs; McDonald's; Sam's Club; PRO-LINE International; Amerigroup; Cadbury-Schweppes Americas Beverages; Dallas Public Library; LIFT; Harlem Book Fair; Dallas Children's Theater; National Council of Teachers of English/Black Caucus; Enterprise; DART; Millennium Motor Cars.

Visit www.readin.dcccd.edu for details; or call Ranger at (214) 860-2005 or Allison Neal at (214) 616-2965 for additional information.