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DCCCD putting on African American Read-In

BY *PEGASUS NEWS WIRE*

A celebration of literature for children by African-American authors continues this year with the 2008 Dallas County Community College District's citywide African American Read-In, featuring award-winning author and illustrator Ashley Bryan.

On Sat., Feb. 2, community members are invited to attend the 2008 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 just won the 2008 Coretta Scott King Book Award for illustration for "Let It Shine" and was named a 2008 NAACP Image Award winner. The noted author and artist will read from his works and share his experiences with children and their families as they enjoy learning about new worlds in the books they read.

"The ninth African American Read-In celebrates family reading and learning, particularly books written and illustrated 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 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."

"Read, Believe, Achieve!" is this year's theme. The program will treat audience members to staged readings, artistic performances and the unveiling of the 2008 U.S. Postal Service commemorative Black Heritage stamp honoring writer Charles W. Chesnutt. Lyndale the Literary Lion will welcome children and their families to kick off the event, and program hosts are WFAA-TV's Brenda Teele and KRNB-FM's Skip Murphy. Special performances are scheduled by the Dallas Black Dance Theater, David Carr, Jaco Velarde, Richmond Punch, Ayubu Kamau Kings and Queens, O.W. Holmes Boss Band, Bryan Pitts, Christopher Weinstein, Jessica Williams, Natasha Ramvhanie, Audrey McClure, Cynthia Dorn Navarratte and area elementary school students.

Bryan has written and/or illustrated a number of award-winning children's books, including "The Ox of the Wonderful Horns and Other African Folktales"; "The Dancing Granny"; "Beat the Story-Drum, Pum-Pum"; "The Cat's Purr"; "Beautiful Blackbird"; and others. Bryan, who has been writing and illustrating children's books for more than 30 years, has lectured widely and appeared at schools and colleges across the country. He has been a May Hill Arbuthnot lecturer and the recipient of numerous other awards, including a previous King Award for "Beat the Drum, Story, Pum

awards, including a previous King Award for "Beat the Drum-Story, Tum-Pum." He lives in Islesford, Maine, one of the Cranberry Islands off the coast of Mount Desert Island, where his paintings of island flowers are shown and sold at a local gallery.

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: she will attend this year's read-in. 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; Dallas Morning News; WFAA-TV; Dallas Weekly; Downtown Business News; NTheKnow.com, WRR-FM; Scholastic; Holt Rinehart Winston; Jokae's African American Books; McDonald's; Dr Pepper; Amerigroup; Comerica Bank; City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs; Dallas Children's Theater; Harlem Book Fair; LIFT; QBR The Black Book Review; National Council of Teachers of English/Black Caucus; American Reading Company; Dallas Public Library; Enterprise; DART; and Millennium Motor Cars.

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

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