

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia Office of the Chief Clerk Room 402, City Hall Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 250013)

RESOLUTION

Honoring the African American Children's Book Project on its 33rd Annual African American Children's Book Fair.

WHEREAS, Books can change lives, and the AACBF provides a unique opportunity to celebrate diverse stories that enlighten, enrich, and empower young readers. This family-friendly event is packed with activities designed to spark a lifelong love of reading. The African American Children's Book Project is dedicated to developing and encouraging young people to expand their horizons through literature; and

WHEREAS, The African American Children's Book Project (AACBP), which was founded in 1992 by Vaneese Lloyd-Sgambati, was created to promote and preserve children's literature written by and about Black Americans. The AACBF has put Philadelphia on the map as a literary destination for children's books. Book lovers traveling from around the country come to experience the Philadelphia literary magic. In fact, the African American Children's Book Fair as a significant event in the literary history of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The work of The African American Children's Book Project is in response to numerous studies that show that children who read outside of their normal school coursework tend to excel in other aspects of their lives. The African American Children's Book Project emphasizes in their programs for children pre-school to young adult the importance of providing access and choice of what they read. The African American Children's Book Project promotes outside reading by expounding the selection of books that students gain access to. Adults who attended as children now bring their children. They credit exposure to book received at the book fair for helping them learn Black American history; and

WHEREAS, The African American Children's Book Fair is one of the oldest and largest single-day events for African-American children's books in the country, with an average yearly attendance of more than 3,500. It is a true book fair that brings national award-winning authors and illustrators for children pre-k to young adults to Philadelphia. These presenters are American Library Association and New York Times bestselling authors and illustrators. They are the stars of the book industry who have produced some of the best books of our generation; and

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WHEREAS, Rich or poor, no one leaves empty handed, as the books themselves are priced at a level where they are more affordable. The legendary literary Row gives away – free of charge – posters, book markers, postcards, and resource information on literary trends. Their educator’s book giveaway program allows teachers and librarians to receive free books of our guest presenters to use in the classroom or libraries; and

WHEREAS, Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati, the founder of The Literary Media and Publishing Consultants, a public relations /marketing firm that specializes in publishing with a focus on Black books, she knows the “art of the pitch.” For over thirty-three years the firm has served as literary consultants to authors, illustrators, consumers, librarians, booksellers, educators, publishers and corporate entities interested in literacy. The literary is known in the industry as the go to firm to produce award winning publicity and marketing campaign for Black books. She is one of only 10 Black literary publicity professionals that work with all the major publishers. The organization’s virtual events have attracted a global audience. In addition to her career Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati is also a native to Philadelphia. Her education also includes a degree from Temple University honors program where she graduated cum laude; and

WHEREAS, The premier of eight new books will take place at the event. This exciting feature is joined by a host of opportunities to meet and speak with renowned authors and illustrators, the likes of whom appear on national best sellers and literary honorees. In total 35 nationally known literary creators will be present at the event; and

WHEREAS, To kick-off Black History Month, the African American Children's Book Project honors people in the community who open the pages of books and keep the literary flames ablaze not only in Philadelphia, but also across the country; and

WHEREAS, The AACBP’s year-round initiatives emphasize the transformative power of books and literacy through: Book fairs and book signings, Workshops to encourage engagement with literature, ‘I Read To See Me’ author/illustrator virtual and in-school visits, Guidance for families on building home libraries, Advocacy campaigns to promote Black American children’s literature globally, Resources and trends to support youth literature for parents, educators, and librarians, Black History As Seen Through The Lens of Black Children’s Picture Books; and

WHEREAS, Steven Briggs is a community development professional with over 30 years of diversified experience in the financial services industry. He was born and raised in Philadelphia. Mr. Briggs is a Vice President within the Philanthropy and Community Impact group at Wells Fargo. In this capacity he manages the strategic allocation of Wells Fargo’s philanthropic resources in Pennsylvania and Delaware. He is an active member of Philadelphia and Delaware based nonprofit boards and advisory committees that include the Regional Foundation, REACH Riverside Development Corporation, and Philadelphia LISC; and

WHEREAS, Jamar Nicholas is an award-winning artist and educator, born and raised in Philadelphia and from an early age, strived to become a cartoonist. He has taught and lectured on the topic of

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comic's creation at numerous institutions, dedicating his career to empowering young people to create their own cartoons and comics. His books are published by Scholastic Books, an international publisher of children's books. Mr. Nicholas was also honored with the Dwayne McDuffie Award for Diversity and GLYPH Comics Award for Best Writer of 2018; and

WHEREAS, Jamar Nicholas was also a writer and columnist for DRAW! Magazine, the How-To source for comic book and animation professionals, and was a host of the COMIC BOOK DINER podcast, focusing on the business of comics. He currently is the producer and co-host of PENCIL TO PENCIL, a podcast on the business of creativity. A mainstay of the cartooning world, Jamar also holds a board seat in the National Cartoonists Society, as well as serving as Chapter chair for Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, M.S.Ed, is a Philadelphia-based educator and children's book author. A curriculum writer and former English teacher, she has educated children and teens in traditional and alternative learning settings for 15 years. Her picture books and short stories, which feature young Black and Muslim character, have been recognized as the best in children's literature by TIME magazine, Read Across America, and NPR.; and

WHEREAS, She is published by four of the largest publishers in the world; Harry N. Abrams, Random House, HarperCollins and Simon and Schuster's Salaam Reads. Founded in 2016, Salaam Reads is an imprint that celebrates joy, vibrancy, and variety in stories of Muslim life. These books are widely popular across the United States; and

WHEREAS, The FREE 2024 African American Children's Book Fair will take place on Saturday, February 1, 2025, live in person at the Pennsylvania Convention Center from 1PM to 4 PM; and

WHEREAS, Council has no doubt that this year's iteration of the Book Fair will exceed all expectations inspired by its history of excellence. We encourage all of our city's residents, young and old alike, to discover, for the first time or once again, the wonders to be found in the pages of a good book; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, that we hereby honor the African American Children's Book Project on its 33rd Annual African American Children's Book Fair.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies of this Resolution be presented to the African American Children's Book Project, further evidencing the sincere respect of this legislative body.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-third day of January, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson

Sponsored by: Councilmember, Council President Johnson, Councilmembers, Gilmore Richardson, Phillips, Gauthier, Jones, Lozada, Young, O'Rourke, Driscoll, Squilla and Ahmad