

Legislation Text

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Honoring the African American Children's Book Project on the occasion of the 23rd Annual African American Children's Book Fair and that February 7th is the Kick-Off of the National Literacy Initiative - Preserve a Legacy, Buy a Book.

WHEREAS, In 1926, noted historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February to be "Negro History Week"; and

WHEREAS, The 2nd week in February was chosen because of the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS, During early American History, African Americans were not allowed to learn to read and have books, in some states the penalty for this infraction was death; and

WHEREAS, The importance of book fairs cannot be understated and for twenty three years the African American Children's Book Fair has enhanced multi-culturalism in our City utilizing the joy of reading as a tool; and

WHEREAS, Vanesse Lloyd Sgambati created the book fair because she believes books open up a world of opportunities for children and after twenty three years, the African American Children's Book Fair is the oldest and largest single day event for Children's books in the country; and

WHEREAS, One of the most important reasons to encourage reading in our children is that studies show that the more our youth read the more likely they are to make positive lifestyle decisions as they grow older; and

WHEREAS, Strictly judging by attendance the Fair is a tremendous success as well over 3,500 people attended the Fair in past years; and

WHEREAS, Rich or poor, no one leaves empty handed as the books themselves are priced at a level where they are more affordable and posters, bookmarkers and raffle books are distributed free of charge to attendees; and

WHEREAS, One of the esteemed participants will be Sharon Dennis Wyeth, author. Ms. Wyeth has written more than 50 books and is the proud recipient of the Stephen Crane Literary Award, presented by the Newark Public Library and an Education Award from the National Council of Negro Women. Ms. Wyeth's books have been cited for excellence by: Children's Book Council, Parents Magazine, The New York Public Library and the "Reading Rainbow" television show; and

WHEREAS, Another esteemed participant will be Christopher John Farley, Senior Editorial Director; Features, The Wall Street Journal. Mr. Farley is also the author of "Game World", a children's fantasy adventure tale which Kirkus Reviews called "Exhilarating, thought-provoking and one of a kind". Mr. Farley is also the author of two novels for adults, "My Favorite War" and "Kingston by Starlight," and a number of nonfiction books including the national bestseller "Aaliyah: More than a Woman." Mr. Farley has won numerous awards for his

work including honors from the National Association of Black Journalists and the Deadline Club of New York, and his biography “Before the Legend: The Rise of Bob Marley” was nominated for an NAACP Image Award; and

WHEREAS, Two of the Literary Angels who have contributed to the success of the event are Community College of Philadelphia Vice President of Marketing & Government Relations Lynette Brown-Sow and Erica Harrison, Special Events and Community Relations Manager; and

WHEREAS, The fair is also lucky to host terrific sponsors and partners such as NBC 10, PECO, Wells Fargo, I Heart Radio, Health Partners Foundation, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, and Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, all who have been instrumental in keeping the literary flames ablaze for our children in the City of Philadelphia through tireless contributions to the African American Children's Book Project. The financial contributions have enabled the book fair to give away thousands of brand new books of the guest authors/illustrators participating in the event. For many children, it is the first time they will own a book; and

WHEREAS, The 23rd Annual African American Book Fair will be held free of charge on Saturday February 7th from one to three pm at the gymnasium of the Community College of Philadelphia located at 17th & Spring Garden Streets; 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 the occasion of the 23rd Annual African American Children’s Book Fair and that February 7th is the kick-off of the National Literacy Initiative - Preserve a Legacy, Buy a Book.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to representatives of the African American Children’s Book Project, Sharon Dennis Wyeth, Christopher John Farley, Lynette Brown-Sow and Erica Harrison for their hard work and efforts in the promotion of children’s literacy, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.