City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 170023, **Version:** 0

Honoring the African American Children's Book Project on the occasion of the 25th Annual African American Children's Book Fair and that February 4th 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 four 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 four 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. Literacy also makes our youth more productive global citizens; and

WHEREAS, Strictly judging by attendance the fair is a tremendous success as well over 3,500 people attended the Fair in past years from across the nation; 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, The success of the event is reflected in four elements: the attendees (parents, children, caregivers, and educators), the authors and illustrators, the sponsors and the volunteers. Three of the esteemed participants will be Christine Kendall, Anzio Williams, and the volunteers. In October 2016, Scholastic Corp. published Kendall's debut novel, *Riding Chance*. The novel is nominated for a 2016 NAACP Image Literary Award. *Riding Chance* is a coming-of-age story about Troy's, an urban teen, redemption through horses and the game of polo. The novel entails the story of Troy and his ability to summon the courage to determine his identity on his own; and

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WHEREAS, Kendall's short fiction has also been published in *Niche Literary Magazine* and is forthcoming from the *Kweli Journal*. She also studied children's literature at the Southampton Writers' Conference and was named a semifinalist in the 2014 River Styx Micro-Fiction Contest; and

WHEREAS, Before becoming an author, Kendall held various recruitment and diversity positions at major law firms in Philadelphia and New York. In 2014, Kendall was honored to join the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) to coordinate the 50th anniversary commemoration of the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. She also served as Executive Assistant to LDF's Director-Counsel and President; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, Anzio Williams joined the NBC10 Philadelphia and Telemundo62 family as the new Director and Vice President. Williams is an active member of the National Association of Black Journalists. He has served on many community boards and committees such as The American Diabetes Association, BloodSource and 100 Black Men of Sacramento; and

WHEREAS, As News Director and Vice President of NBC10 Philadelphia and Telemundo62, Williams has set an inclusive and diverse tone that serves the diverse needs of Philadelphia viewers. He has called diverse and inclusive news coverage as a "necessary and serious news undertaking"; and

WHEREAS, Williams' news ratings at NBC10 Philadelphia has been dramatically rising in a competitive news market since his inception in 2012, which reflects the appreciation of the viewers for a more inclusive and diverse news platform. Williams has also attended several journalist workshops sponsored by the National Association of Black Journalists throughout the years; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Williams was honored with the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalist (PABJ) Impact Award for his commitment in striving to build on the work of those who paved the way for him and acknowledging that race is still an issue to be tackled in the news room. He has led the charge to promote literacy in the region through the African American Children's Book Fair and serves as a steward and champion of the NBC10-TELEMUNDO62 Reading Circle; and

WHEREAS, President Bill Clinton said, "Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds." Volunteers are the people who selflessly give their time and dedication in pursuit of achieving the dreams of others. Volunteers are the glue that keeps everything together throughout our City and our nation. Since the inception the African American Children's Book Project it is these volunteers: Constance Ragsdale, Leslie Gaynus, Beverly Gaynus, Sheila Love, Barbara Tyree, Patrika Wellington, Debra Turner, Deborah Johnson, Michelle Lloyd and Jim Harris; that have so willing given up their time to make sure children in Philadelphia have access to books that empower, enrich and enlighten their lives. These are literary ambassadors that promote our mantra, "A Book Opens Up A World of Opportunities"; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?"; and

WHEREAS, The 25th Annual African American Book Fair will be held free of charge on Saturday, February 4, 2017, from one to four pm at 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

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American Children's Book Project on the occasion of the 25th Annual African American Children's Book Fair and that February 4th 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, Vanesse Llyod-Sgambati, Christine Kendall, and Anzio Williams for their hard work and efforts in the promotion of children's literacy, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.