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Bay Area Book Festival Aims to Grow Readers with Two Days of Book-Related Fun

5th Anniversary Festival Has Plenty in Store for all Ages, May 4 & 5

Berkeley, CA, April 3, 2019—The Bay Area Book Festival is turning five the weekend of May 4 & 5 in downtown Berkeley, celebrating its most extensive children, youth and young adult programming ever. Northern California's premier weekend literary event aims to inspire a future generation of readers through author talks, storytelling, and literary-themed shows on three outdoor stages in the festival's free outdoor fair; DIY and STEAM activities in the free, interactive Family Fun Zone; and free admission for youth (under age 18) to a host of ticketed indoor events featuring popular YA authors.

"Sparking lifelong readers has long been a focus of the festival," says Samee Roberts, Managing Director of the Bay Area Book Festival. "The weekend is jam-packed with fun and exploration – including meeting favorite authors, discovering new reads, catching live performances, and crafting your own books and journals."

2019 Children and Family highlights include:

Unless otherwise noted, the following activities will take place in the festival's **free** outdoor fair, centered in and immediately surrounding Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center Park, 2151 MLK Jr. Way in downtown Berkeley.

- **StoryTime Circle** – geared toward youngsters in a cozy lawn setting. An all-star lineup of picture book authors, including **Nidhi Chanani** ("I Will Be Fierce!"), **Mylo Freeman** (Princess Arabella series) **Tania de Regil** ("A New Home"), and **Rana diOrio** ("What Does It Mean to Be American?"), read aloud from their books. Saturday, May 4 and Sunday, May 5; 12:30-3:30.
- **Young Readers Stage** – of interest to young people, from tots to tweens. Author talks, illustrator duels, Book Club for Kids Podcast, and more. Featured writers include: Annie Barrows, Benny Lindelauf, Laura Atkins, Innosanto Nagara, Kitty Felde, Marissa Moss, Lisa Moore Ramée, Andrew Smith, J.C. Cervantes, Mac Barnett, Oliver Chin, Ying Chang Compestine, Mylo Freeman, Tania de Regil, Meg Fleming, Tim McCanna, Alice McGinty, Steve Bramucci, Anna Meriano, Yamile Méndez, Emma Otheguy, Aída Salazar, Gennifer Choldenko, Mae Respicio, in addition to Ben Costa and James Parks, creators of "Ricketty Snitch."
- **Word Power Stage** – for all ages, with special young adult and youth programming including author duels, poetry, and two live performances by Oakland's beloved Alphabet Rockers.

Word Power Stage highlights include:

Literary Death Match – a humor-centric reading series taking the nation by storm through thrilling competition between established and emerging authors. The Bay Area Book festival brings the first-ever LDMs for young adult and youth writers (middle grade) performing their most electric writing in five minutes or less as they compete for the coveted crown:

YA LDM – Saturday, May 4, 2:30, with Zoraida Córdova (“Bruja Born”), Gordon Jack (“Your Own Worst Enemy”), Cindy Pon (“Ruse”), Lee Wind (“Queer as a Five-Dollar Bill”), hosted by Adrian Todd Zuniga, creator of Literary Death Match.

Youth/Middle Grade LDM – Sunday, May 5, 12:15, with Steve Bramucci (“Danger Gang” series), Gennifer Choldenko (“Tales from Alcatraz” series), Benny Lindelauf (“Fing’s War”), Anna Meriano (“Love Sugar Magic: A Sprinkle of Spirits”) hosted by Adrian Todd Zuniga.

Oakland hip hop artists Alphabet Rockers – The Grammy nominees for “Best Children’s Album” spark an intergenerational conversation about the world, creating a soundtrack for social justice. The beloved group will perform two live shows at the festival: Saturday, May 4, 11:30 and Sunday, May 5, 1:45.

- **Native Voices — Winners of the 2018 Graton Student Writing Contest.** To celebrate Native heritage and writing, the festival held an essay contest open to middle- and high-school Native students from Sonoma. Participants read excerpts from their pieces and release a published anthology of their work. With support from the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. Sunday, May 5, 3:15.
- **Emerging Voices** – To encourage youth to engage in the craft of writing and to develop their voices the Festival holds a yearly writing contest for high school students based on a theme. This year students tackle the topic of “communication.” Winners will be invited to read their work at an awards ceremony held in the outdoor fair, their pieces will be published on the Bay Area Book Festival website, and their names listed in the San Francisco Chronicle Program Guide. The Young Authors Writing Contest is presented by Writopia Lab and the Bay Area Book Festival. Sunday, May 5, 11:00.
- **Family Fun Zone** – offers kids of all ages a chance build and create through DIY book and journal making, arts & crafts with found objects, mind games, robot building and much more. Interactive fun with popular Bay Area children’s artists, museums, and attractions including Habitot, East Bay Center for Creative Reuse, 816 Valencia, Chabot Space & Science Center, Bay Area Garden Railway Society, and Alphabet Rockers, who will host the free Family Fun Zone both days.
- Talks with some of the most beloved YA authors. These include **Justina Ireland**, (“Scream Site”) being interviewed by YA librarian, Alexandria Brown; **Cindy Pon** (“Ruse”) and **Lee Wind** (“Queer as a Five-Dollar Bill”) in conversation about why kids (and adults) need diverse characters and how they fight against the bias and blind spots of the publishing world; **Nathalie Mathé**, an award-winning virtual reality creator, animator, and documentary shorts director, **Lakshmi Sarah**, journalist, educator, and author with a focus on immigration and identity, and **Kevin Tsukii**, producer at the creative agency R/GA, discussing the radical power of virtual reality story telling; a screening of “**The Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin**” followed by a conversation with **Arwen Curry**, the filmmaker; **Annalee Newitz**, (“Autonomous”); **Kim Stanley Robinson**, Le Guin’s friend and sci-fi legend; and **David Streitfeld**, (“Ursula K. Le Guin: The Last Interview and Other Conversations”); **Zoraida Córdova** (“Bruja Born”), **Anna-Marie McLemore** (“Blanca Y Roja”), **Cindy Pon** (“Ruse”) on writing fierce female characters; Poetry for the People, featuring readings by current and former students of June Jordan’s Poetry for the People program at UC Berkeley, including **Aya de Leon**, **Yvonne Fly**, and **Onakeme Etaghene**; **Greg Sarris** (“How a Mountain Was Made”) presenting and adaptation of his story “Rattlesnake Wins Hummingbird’s Heart” with the Word for Word Performing Arts Company, delivered in the oral tradition of native legends; **Atia Abaw** (“A Land of Permanent Goodbyes”) and **e.E. Charlton-Trujillo** (“Fat Angie: Rebel Girl Revolution”) discussing writing the experience of coming of age in war zones and conflict areas; **Jose Antonio Vargas** (“Dear America”) in conversation with delegates from the International Congress of Youth Voices tackling key issues such as mass incarceration, immigration, and the importance of youth voices in activism. Please note that these indoor and [ticketed](#) events.

Photos and logo are downloadable from <https://www.baybookfest.org/press-room>

See the full [schedule of children and family programming](#)

See the full [schedule of YA and Middle Grade programming](#)

More about the [outdoor fair](#)

Festival Website

<https://www.baybookfest.org/>

THE BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL

When

Saturday, May 4, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 5, 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Free outdoor fair hours: 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days.

Where

Downtown Berkeley, California

The Outdoor Fair is in Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, 2151 MLK Jr. Way

Indoor Festival events at various locations. See [Schedule](#) for more info.

Ticket Information

Outdoor venues, including the San Francisco Chronicle Stage, are free. Guaranteed seating in indoor programs can be accessed through Priority Tickets at \$10/session. A General Admission Wristband allows space-available access to all sessions all weekend for only \$15. Go to www.baybookfest.org or find box offices on site. Youth under 18 can attend for free. A Friends program baybookfest.org/contribute-2/ allows attendees to receive wristbands and Priority Tickets while supporting the nonprofit festival.

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