



7TH ANNUAL BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL YOUTH PROGRAM LAUNCHES VIRTUALLY WORLDWIDE

MAY 1-9, 2021

Teens interviewing bestselling authors, master chefs, hip-hop artists, and environmental activists.

Berkeley, CA, March 18, 2021: Teen power takes center stage at the Bay Area Book Festival’s youth program, presenting [eight high-profile](#) events within the nine tightly packed days for the festival (May 1-9). As it’s been tradition in the past, leading children’s and Young Adult authors will be interviewed by young readers, the toughest interrogators of all. But this year the Festival will also highlight young changemakers, dream-weavers, and magnates-in-the-making, paving the way for a better future: from youth environmental activists like Shreya Ramachandran, Lilly Platt and Haven Coleman to teen entrepreneurs like Simone “Goddess Food Factory” Bridges and Adelle Pritchard to the amazing emerging writers of the Write Your Story program, a collaboration started by the Festival with Cinnamongirl, Inc., an Oakland-based organization that strives to provide girls of color with the access, experiences and a network to grow into successful, global leaders.

Program topics include bringing more diversity to children's and young adult literature, supporting teen entrepreneurship, the fascinating roots and exciting future of the hip-hop generation, and what we can learn from a fierce new crop of girl warriors on how to take action to save our planet and create a better future for ourselves.

For tickets, online access, the full virtual schedule, and confirmed speakers, please visit baybookfest.org.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Saturday, May 1, 3-3:30 PM

[Boss Up Like a Girl: Building up Teen Entrepreneurs, with Quinn-Boyd Roberts, Simone Bridges, Adelle Pritchard, and Brian Weisfeld](#)

It’s never too soon to be a boss. Come listen in while Quinn Boyd-Roberts, 14, aspiring entrepreneur and avid reader, picks the brains of Simone Bridges, 15, and Adelle Pritchard, 17, two young dream-weavers who are taking charge and killing it in the business world. This trio of magnates-in-the-making will be joined by Brian Weisfeld, author of *The Startup Squad* (a middle-grade series hailed as “*The Babysitters Club* for the next generation”) and founder of the organization of the same name that empowers young girls to follow their passions and reach their potential through entrepreneurship.

Media Contact: Julia Drake – Wildbound PR – julia@wildboundpr.com – 310-359-6487

Saturday, May 1, 3:30-4:30 PM

[Now We're Cooking: A Top Chef on Making the Food of Your Dreams, with Kwame Onwuachi, Chariot Waddell, and Jolie Wilson](#)

From a difficult upbringing in the Bronx and Nigeria to *Top Chef* stardom and a place on *Food & Wine*'s "best new chef" list, Kwame Onwuachi's muse and first love has always been food. His memoir *Notes From a Young Black Chef* takes us through the rollercoaster journey that led him to preside over a raved-about menu, at Washington DC's Kith and Kin, that "honors my ancestors," and to running a high-end kitchen that prioritizes diversity in its staff. With his acclaimed book now adapted for young-adult readers, Kwame's joining two young foodies, Cinnamongirl's Chariot Waddell, 15, and Jolie Wilson, 15, in the kitchen to share challenges, victories, and, of course, a cooking tip or two.

Sunday, May 2, 3-3:30 PM

[Your Self on the Shelf: Books That Speak Your Language, with Joanne Marple, Ellen Oh, and Kelly Starling Lyons](#)

All kids and teens should be able to see themselves in the pages of the books they love. And who better to help than your friendly neighborhood librarian? In a conversation that couldn't be more timely and important, Bay Area librarian Joanne Marple interviews two exciting voices on the vanguard of this topic: Ellen Oh, CEO of the grassroots nonprofit We Need Diverse Books, and Kelly Starling Lyons, member of The Brown Bookshelf, an organization championing Black-authored books for young readers, on how to dismantle barriers in children's and young adult literature and embrace the tools to diversify our bookshelves.

Sunday, May 2, 3-4:00 PM

[The Incredible Power of Wattpad Authors](#)

Wattpad Books turns the digital stories its community loves into published books. The result? Stories you can't find anywhere else, by young writers from all over the world. Come listen to these two magnificent young authors as they tell the stories of their lives, their writing, and how their dreams came true through Wattpad and a mountain of talent. Daven McQueen won the Watty Award for Science Fiction and is the author of *The Invincible Summer of Juniper Jones*. Mexican-born Shay Bravo, who won the 2019 Watty Awards, is the author of *Historically Inaccurate*. Together the authors garnered more than a million reads on Wattpad. Daven and Shay will be in conversation with Mariah McCoy, one of the dynamic young writers of *Write Your Story*, the Fest's immersive creative writing and mentorship program for girls of color in partnership with Cinnamongirl, Inc.

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Sunday, May 2, 3:30-4:30 PM

[Can't Stop Won't Stop: Learn Your Hip-Hop History, with Jeff Chang, Dave "Davey D" Cook, and Madison Harvey](#)

Hip-hop, one of America's most influential and constantly evolving musical genres, is about so much more than infectious beats, and you're about to get schooled by the experts! Cinnamongirl Madison Harvey, 15, leads this electrifying conversation with Jeff Chang, whose award-winning hip-hop history, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, has just been adapted for young adult readers; and Dave 'Davey D' Cook, syndicated radio personality and hip-hop journalism pioneer. Learn about the fascinating roots and exciting future of the hip-hop generation...it'll move your feet *and* your heart.

Saturday, May 8, 3-3:30 PM

[I Am the Dream: Voices of a New Generation, Presented by Cinnamongirl, with Misa Sugiura and the literary superstars of Write Your Story](#)

Summer 2020 marked the start of Write Your Story, an exciting year-long collaboration with Cinnamongirl, Inc, that brought creative-writing workshops and artistic mentorship to young women of color, ages 12 to 18. Our amazing inaugural cohort of girls spent the year honing their voices and their visions, with encouragement and instruction from a wonderful faculty of women authors of color, and now they're ready to present their original work in a published anthology and reading at the Bay Area Book Festival! Celebrate these new rising literary stars and one of their instructors, award-winning YA author Misa Sugiura, as they share stories, insights, and nuggets of inspiration.

Sunday, May 9, 3-3:30 PM

[Who Saves the World? Girls! With Rachel Sarah, Shreya Ramachandran, Lilly Platt, and Haven Coleman](#)

Learn how to save the world like a girl! Shreya Ramachandran, 16, Lilly Platt, 12, and Haven Coleman, 14, three phenomenal young women of Girl Warrior, bring us on their fearless climate-activism journey. From leading climate strikes to suing their governments, these inspiring eco-advocates will not back down until we have a planet that's sustainable, healthy, and hospitable to all. Their stories are brought to life by Rachel Sarah in her book *GIRL WARRIORS: How 25 Young Activists Are Saving the Earth*, and they're joining her for a spirited look at how we can all be warriors for justice and a better world.

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Sunday, May 9, 3:30 - 4:30 PM

[Who Says Geniuses Can't Dance? With Meg Medina, Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, Mariah McCoy, and Giselle Caban](#)

Newbery Medalist Meg Medina's new book, *Merci Suárez Can't Dance* (a *Kirkus* “Most Anticipated Book of 2021”), re-introduces us to her touching, funny titular character, now a seventh-grader. Joining her in conversation is celebrated author Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich with *It Doesn't Take a Genius*, a hilarious and moving coming-of-age tale about a young boy’s self-actualizing journey at a historic Black summer camp. These two popular authors are interviewed by Mariah McCoy, 14, and Giselle Caban, 15, two writers who are part of the inaugural cohort of Write Your Story, a yearlong creative-writing workshop for young girls of color in partnership with Cinnamongirl, Inc. Tune in for a warm and intimate discussion of new books, the creative process, and the necessity of anchoring and nurturing diverse voices in literature.

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