



Media contacts:
Allison Baron, 682-551-7172
allison@brendathompson.com

Helen Spencer, 713-556-6380
hspence1@HoustonISD.org

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First-ever Reading Rock Stars Houston program brings books to life for kids at low-income schools

Famed children's authors speak, give kids signed books; Dec. 2

WHAT

The Texas Book Festival's first Reading Rock Stars program in Houston will host nationally known authors at three economically disadvantaged local public schools. The authors will present their literary works in an entertaining fashion, and at the end of the presentation every child will receive an autographed book. The Texas Book Festival will also donate a set of each author's books to the three school libraries. Media are invited to cover the author presentations at Benbrook Elementary School only.

WHO

- More than 600 students, grades pre-K through fifth, at Benbrook Elementary
- [Kathi Appelt](#), Newbery Honoree, National Book Award finalist, and PEN USA Literary Award-winning author, will present her new book "Mogie: The Heart of the House" (a real-life story about a Labradoodle with a special talent for helping sick kids)
- Mogie, the resident pup at Ronald McDonald House Houston, who is the hero of Appelt's book
- [Don Tate](#), an award-winning author and illustrator of numerous critically acclaimed children's books, will present his new book "It Jes' Happened" (a biography of outsider artist Bill Traylor, a former slave who at the age of 83 began to draw pictures based on his memories and observations of rural and urban life)
- [Rene Saldana Jr.](#) and [Carolyn Dee Flores](#), author and illustrator of the bilingual counting picture book for kids, "*Dale, Dale, Dale / Hit It, Hit It, Hit It: Una Fiesta de Números / A Fiesta of Numbers*"
- Literary director of the Texas Book Festival, Steph Opitz
- Benbrook's principal, Dana Darden, and librarian, Susan Scheinthal

WHERE

Benbrook Elementary School, 4026 Bolin Road, Houston, TX 77092

WHEN

Tuesday, Dec. 2, from 8- 10:45 a.m.

8- 8:30 a.m.	Carolyn Dee Flores and Rene Saldana, Pre-K, in the library
8-8:45 a.m.	Don Tate, 4 th grade, in the cafeteria
8:45- 9:15 a.m.	Carolyn Dee Flores and Rene Saldana, Kindergarten, in the library
9- 9:45 a.m.	Don Tate, 5 th grade, in the cafeteria
9:30- 10 a.m.	Kathi Appelt, 1 st and 2 nd grade, in the library
10:15-10:45 a.m.	Kathi Appelt, 2 nd and 3 rd grade, in the library

**Note: book distribution and signing will take place directly after authors' presentations.*

VISUALS

Kids of all ages; famous children's authors; large banners and welcome signs for authors plastered all over the school; a library cart full of brand-new, signed books; stage with book-themed decorations including posters of book covers, cut-outs of authors, and props for interactive parts of the presentations.

WHY

Since 2001, the Texas Book Festival has given nearly 60,000 books to kids at Title I schools in Texas through its Reading Rock Stars program in Austin and the Rio Grande Valley. For many children, it is the first book they have ever owned. The first Reading Rock Stars Houston is made possible by the Read 3: H-E-B Child Literacy Program.

"The festival does not send authors to speak to the children of privilege, rather to the children of hope—all from Title 1 schools. And the event is about more than just one day. Committed teachers and librarians build excitement in the students through creative activities, art and writing projects, guiding them to find their own voices and put their dreams into words," says Monica Brown, past Reading Rock Stars author.

"To own an \$18 picture book is a luxury the vast majority of children in the world can't afford, but the Texas Book Festival makes sure thousands of children do," says Brown.

For more information about Texas Book Festival's Reading Rock Stars program, please visit <http://www.texasbookfestival.org/welcome-reading-rock-stars/>.

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About the Texas Book Festival

The Texas Book Festival celebrates authors and their contributions to the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. Founded in 1995 by first lady Laura Bush, Mary Margaret Farabee, and a group of volunteers, the nonprofit Texas Book Festival promotes the joys of reading and writing through its annual Festival Weekend, the one-day Texas Teen Book Festival, the Reading Rock Stars program, grants to Texas libraries, youth fiction writing contest, and year-round literary programming. The Festival is held on the grounds of the Texas Capitol each fall and features more than 280 renowned authors, panels,

book signings, live music, cooking demonstrations, and children's activities. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and 1,000 volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public. Visit www.texasbookfestival.org for more information, and join the conversation using the hashtag #txbookfest on [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) @texasbookfest.

About Reading Rock Stars

The Texas Book Festival brings books to life for young readers through Reading Rock Stars, a dynamic program in which selected authors from across the country are invited to present their works to students in economically disadvantaged public schools. At the end of the presentations, each child receives an autographed copy of the book, and a set of books is also given to the school library. Originally created to serve children in the Austin area, the Reading Rock Stars program is expanding each year. With support from H-E-B's Tournament of Champions and Read 3 programs, The Wright Family Foundation, Target, and other generous donors, Reading Rock Stars is now serving Austin, the Rio Grande Valley, and new this year, Houston. The Texas Book Festival makes a three-year commitment to each school it accepts, bringing in different authors and new books each year. <http://www.texasbookfestival.org/reading-rock-stars/>