



## **TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL BRINGS READING ROCK STARS PROGRAM TO HOUSTON SCHOOLS ON MARCH 10, 2020**

*Texas Book Festival Returns to Four Houston Schools, Presenting Eleven Authors and Illustrators and Donating 1,945 Books to Title I Students*

On March 10, the Texas Book Festival returns to Houston to visit four Title I elementary schools as part of the Festival's annual Reading Rock Stars program. Throughout the day, eleven nationally-acclaimed children's authors and illustrators will visit each school and present to students, a culmination of weeks of each school's preparation for the program. Additionally, TBF will gift each student a copy of the visiting author or illustrator's book.

TBF will donate 1,945 books to classrooms at Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School, Blackshear Elementary School, Port Houston Elementary School, and Kashmere Gardens Elementary School.

With this latest round of Reading Rock Stars, the Texas Book Festival will have given more than 119,800 books to students in Title I schools across Texas since the program's inception.

The Texas Book Festival's Reading Rock Stars literacy program brings books to life for children in Title I schools by inviting authors and illustrators into classrooms with entertaining presentations that inspire students to read, write, and create. Thanks to generous support from sponsors—including H-E-B: Tournament of Champions and the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation—the Texas Book Festival gives each student an autographed copy of their author or illustrator's book and provides the school library with a new set of books by the visiting Reading Rock Stars authors. After each presentation, the author or illustrator personally hands an autographed copy of their book to each student.

The authors and illustrators featured in this year's program include Houston native Tonya Engel, a self-taught artist who illustrated *Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People*, the story of writer and activist Maya Angelou, and Alana Mendoza Dusan, former Oregon State University softball player who co-wrote *There's No Base Like Home*, the story of a 12-year-old starting

middle school and trying out for a softball team, with her sister, Jessica Mendoza, a Major League Baseball analyst on ESPN.

“We feel very excited about our upcoming Reading Rock Stars program in Houston ISD. As the city with the most cultural diversity in Texas, Houston public schools serve children and teens from many backgrounds,” said Lucy Vélez, School and Community Programs Coordinator for Texas Book Festival. “We’ve proudly included authors who mirror the cultural wealth of children in Houston and truly hope that this experience is culturally responsive and fun for everyone at Grissom, Blackshear, Port Houston, and Kashmere Gardens.”

For more information on the Texas Book Festival and its Reading Rock Stars and Real Reads literacy programs, please visit [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org).

**WHO:**

Jacqueline Alcántara  
Varsha Bajaj  
Alana Mendoza Dusan  
Tonya Engel  
James Luna  
Kekla Magoon  
Anna Meriano  
Raquel Ortiz  
Adam Rex  
Naibe Reynoso  
Eric Velasquez

**WHEN:** March 10, 2020

**WHERE:**

Virgil I. Grissom Elementary School  
Blackshear Elementary School  
Port Houston Elementary School  
Kashmere Gardens Elementary School

With a vision to inspire Texans of all ages to love reading, the Texas Book Festival connects authors and readers through experiences that celebrate the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. Founded in 1995 by former 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 Texas Teen Book Festival, the Reading Rock Stars Title I elementary school program, the Real Reads Title I middle and high school program, grants to Texas libraries, and year-round literary programming. The Festival is held on the grounds of the Texas Capitol each fall and features more than 300 renowned authors, panels, book signings, cooking

demonstrations, and children's activities. The 2020 Texas Book Festival Weekend will take place November 7-8. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and 1,000 volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public. Visit [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org) for more information, and join the conversation using the hashtag #txbookfest on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @texasbookfest.