

For Immediate Release

Hartford, CT

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Contact: Linda Torres, (860) 493-1618, [lvalentin@sinainc.org](mailto:lvalentin@sinainc.org)

### SINA Honors Student Authors

The REACH Young Authors Awards ceremony will be held on Monday, June 5, 2023, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm, at Hartford Public Library Park Street Branch @ the Lyric. The event honors local students who have written books. This second annual event is hosted by SINA (Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance), a partnership between Connecticut's Children's, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College.

Students in grades K through 5 entered a civic engagement-themed book writing contest. There were 35 authors and illustrators who wrote 21 books, from which 14 winning authors and illustrators were selected by members of the REACH committee and employees of Hartford Public Library. Eight books were selected for publication. The program evolved as the result of a casual conversation. SINA staff learned of a student who wrote a book and snuck it into a library, where the delighted librarian put it into circulation. This inspired SINA to partner with Hartford Public Library to create this program.

Winners will have their efforts published as real books, printed, and bound by the Hartford Public Schools print shop, with copyrights, International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) and bar codes. Copies of these winning students' books will be provided to their schools and to the Hartford Public Library Park Street Branch @ the Lyric.

***Alexandra Being a Hero to the Community*** is written by Saymara Maldonado, and illustrated by Saymara, and Anthony Escalante. They are fifth graders in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez School. The book is about Alexandra helping citizens of California after wild fires.

***Keeping Tommy's Animal Shelter Open*** is written by Jayden and Kayden Medina, and illustrated by Victor Rojas and Jonathan Velez. They are fourth grade students in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez School. The book is about Josh getting the community to donate to Tommy's shelter.

***Hungry Bob*** is written and illustrated by Dhyanaa Satish Kumar, a winning author for the second year in a row. A Hartford resident, Dhyanaa is a second grader at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. The book is about picking up trash and keeping the community clean.

***NEVER Fear To Volunteer*** is written by Paula Sanchez-Barreto with Illustrations by Paula, Mallory Velzaquez and Madison Malone. They are fourth graders at CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts Elementary Magnet School. The book is about volunteering in the community.

***Stopping Light Pollution***, is written and illustrated by Sandrialys Rivera, a second grader at Maria Sanchez School. The book is about a fairy who gets help from birds to stop light pollution.

***The Hunger Heroes*** is written and illustrated by Anaya Gupta, in grade two at Betances Learning Lab Elementary School. The book is about a group of heroes fighting community hunger.

***Yes, We Can Sí, Se Puede*** is written and illustrated by Melanie Perez, a third grader at CREC Montessori Magnet School. The book is about community park cleanup and beautification.

Event hosts will be Nancy Mendez of Hartford Public Library and Linda Torres of SINA. The keynote speaker will be Diane Young Rodney, author of “Russell: The Kid Nobody Wants to be Around.” A Jamaican native, former television journalist and Hartford School educator. She now lives in Connecticut where her passion is working with elementary school students.

Student authors will read from and sign their books, which will be professionally printed and bound. Each student will receive a certificate and a trophy. Copies of each book will also be on the local author shelf of Hartford Public Library Park Street Branch @ the Lyric, so residents can borrow them.

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