

**SINA, Inc.  
&  
Park Street Library @the Lyric**



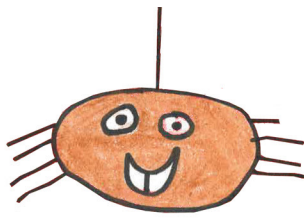
**2024 REACH  
Young Authors  
Awards**



*Reading is the Key to the World*



**Wednesday, May 8, 2024  
3:00 to 5:30 PM  
Park Street Library @ the Lyric  
603 Park Street, Hartford CT**



*“It’s not a disability.  
It’s a different ability.”*



# PROGRAM

## **Welcoming**

Linda Torres,  
SINA

## **Ryan Calhoun,**

Connecticut Childrens  
SINA REACH Chair

## **Nancy Mendez,**

Hartford Public Library

## **Keynote Speaker**

Amanda Russell

## **Awards Presentation**

## **Book Signing & Author Readings**



## Keynote Speaker



### **Amanda Russell**

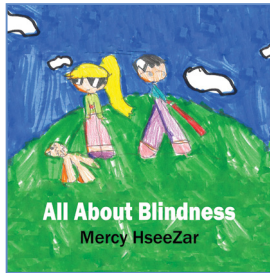
Amanda Russell is a loving and supportive mom whose son has severe autism. She wrote *Jacob Learns to Fly* with the hope that it would be a conversation starter, among children and their caregivers, about children who have special needs. It demonstrates a simple method that they use to connect with their son. The book tells a beautiful story of finding ways to join someone with special needs in their secluded world, and also includes talking points for caregivers to use to enlighten their child on the subjects of Special Needs and Invisible Disabilities.



*Karing  
Kritters*

Visit her website at: [karingkritters.com](http://karingkritters.com)

## 2024 Book Author Contest Winners

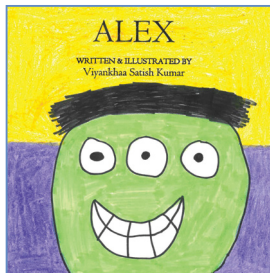


### **All About Blindness**

Written and illustrated by Mercy HseeZar.

Mercy is a second-grade student at Maria Sanchez Elementary School.

This book is centered around the disability of blindness.

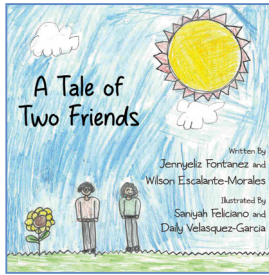


### **Alex**

Written and illustrated by Viyankhaa Satish Kumar.

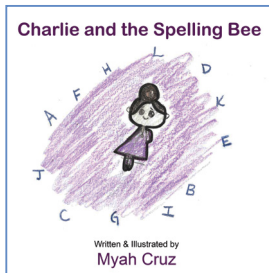
Viyankhaa is a Hartford resident and a first-grade student at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. The book is about a spider who can't understand why a monster named Alex doesn't respond to his questions.

# 2024 Book Author Contest Winners



## **A Tale of Two Friends**

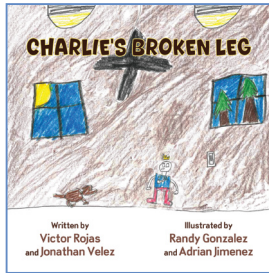
Written by Jennyeliz Fontanez and Wilson Escalante-Morales, with illustrations by Saniyah Feliciano and Daily Velasquez-Garcia. They are fifth graders in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez Elementary School. The book is about how two people became best friends despite each other's differences.



## **Charlie and the Spelling Bee**

Written and illustrated by Myah Cruz.

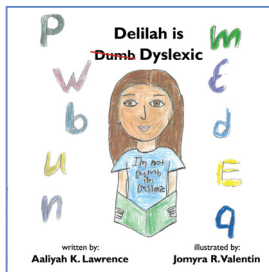
Myah is a third-grade student at Maria Sanchez Elementary School. This book is about a girl with autism who is adamant about proving that she can achieve her goals.



## Charlie's Broken Leg

Written by Victor Rojas and Jonathan Velez,  
and illustrated by Randy Gonzalez and Adrian Jimenez.

They are fifth-grade students in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez Elementary School. The book is about a dog who must relearn to walk after his leg is amputated.

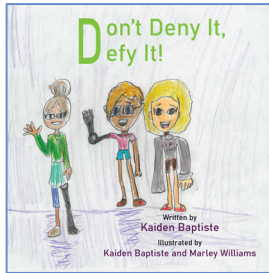


## Delilah is Dyslexic

Written by Aaliyah Lawrence,  
and illustrated by Jomyra Valentin.

Aaliyah is a fifth grader at Noah Webster Microsociety Magnet School. Jomyra is a Hartford resident and fourth grader at CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering Elementary School. The book is about dealing with a learning disability and standing up for yourself.

# 2024 Book Author Contest Winners

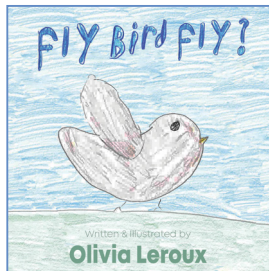


## **Don't Deny It, Defy It!**

Written by Kaiden Baptiste,

and illustrated by Kaiden and Marley Williams.

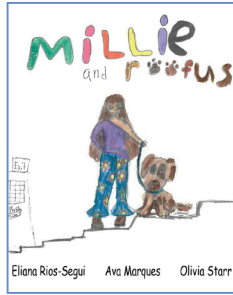
**They are Hartford residents and fourth-grade students at CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts Elementary School. The book is about an individual with a disability finding someone they can connect with.**



## **Fly Bird Fly?**

Written and illustrated by Olivia Leroux.

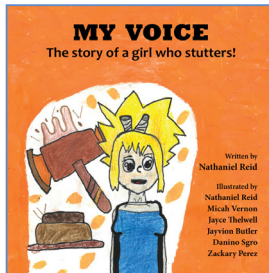
**Olivia is a fifth grader at CREC Montessori Magnet School. The book is about a one-wing bird who is trying to return to its nest.**



## **Millie and Roofus**

Written and illustrated by Eliana Rios-Segui,  
Olivia Starr, and Ava Marques.

**They are fifth-grade students at CREC Montessori Magnet School.  
The book is about a girl with epilepsy and her service dog Roofus.**

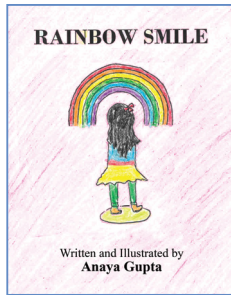


## **My Voice**

Written by Nathaniel Reid,  
and illustrated by Nathaniel, Danino Sgro, Jayce Thelwell,  
Micah Vernon, Jayvion Butler, and Zackary Perez.

**They are fourth-grade students at CREC Ana Grace Academy.  
The book is about overcoming a speech disorder to achieve your dream.**

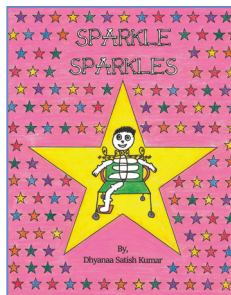
# 2024 Book Author Contest Winners



## **Rainbow Smile**

Written and illustrated by Anaya Gupta.

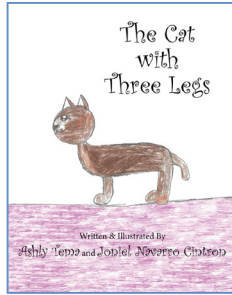
Anaya is a winning author for the second year in a row. Anaya is a third grader at Betances Learning Lab Elementary School. The book is about the importance of empathy, friendship, and creativity in overcoming challenges like a disability.



## **Sparkle Sparkles**

Written and illustrated by Dhyanaa Satish Kumar.

Dhyanaa is a winning author for the third year in a row. A Hartford resident, Dhyanaa is a third grader at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. The book is about a one-legged skeleton named Sparkle who must deal with a mean bully.



## The Cat with Three Legs

Written and illustrated by Ashly Tema,  
and Joniel Navarro Cintron.

They are fourth and fifth-grade students in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez Elementary School. The book is about a cat who is determined to be treated as ordinary despite her appearance.



## REACH Book Author Contest

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**82**

Book Submissions Received  
since 2022



**127**

Students Participated  
since 2022



**25**

Children Books Published and circulated  
at Hartford Public Library since 2022



Recognition • Education • Achievement • Community Health

[www.sinainc.org](http://www.sinainc.org)

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REACH is sponsored by SINA and its member institutions:  
Trinity College, Connecticut Children's Medical Center,  
and Hartford Hospital



[www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org)

Hartford Public Library

Park Street Branch @ the Lyric

603 Park Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 695-7500

Monday through Thursday: 9 AM - 6 PM

Friday & Saturday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Sundays through May 19th: 1 PM - 5 PM