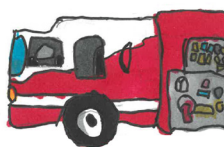




**SINA, Inc. &
Hartford Public Library's
Park Street Branch @the Lyric**



**2025 REACH
Young Author
Awards**



Reading is the Key to the World

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

3:30 to 5:30 PM

HMTCA

53 Vernon Street, Hartford, CT



Not All Heroes Wear Capes

PROGRAM

Welcome Remarks

Linda Torres, *SINA*

Luis Rivera, *Connecticut Children's*

Ravonne Barret, *Hartford Public Library*

Special Remarks

Mayor Arunan Arulampalam

Keynote Introduction

Nancy Mendez, *HMTCA*

Keynote Address

Stefania Muniz, *Artist, Author & Educator*

Awards Presentation

Book Signing & Author Readings

Special thanks to the Betty Knox Foundation for supporting this event through a generous grant that covered the cost of printing the books.



Keynote Speaker

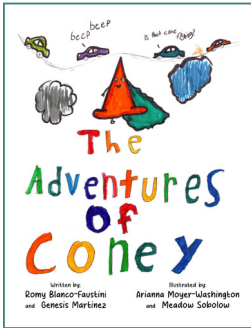


Stefania Munzi

Artist and author Stefania Munzi graduated Magna Cum Laude from Albertus Magnus College with a BA in Fine Arts and received the Beverly Chieffo Award for Excellence in 2012. She currently teaches art in Hartford, CT. After her son Joseph was born with microtia, Stefania began creating portraits that celebrate difference and representation. Her work received national attention and inspired her debut picture book, *Jojo's Tiny Ear*. In 2024, she published her second children's book, *C'era Una Volta in Wooster Square*, featuring watercolor paintings of New Haven's beloved Italian-American neighborhood. As this year's keynote speaker, Stefania was chosen for her impact as both an artist and educator—uplifting children, families, and the disability community through creativity, compassion, and visibility.

Visit her website at: stefaniamunzi.com

2025 Book Author Contest Winners

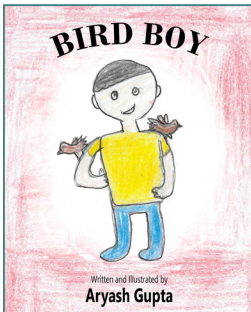


The Adventures of Coney

Written by Romy Blanco-Faustini and Genesis Martinez, with illustrations by Arianna Moyer-Washington and Meadow Sobolow.

All four students are fifth graders at CREC Montessori Magnet School.

This imaginative story follows a safety cone on a mission to keep roads safe for everyone—cones and people alike.

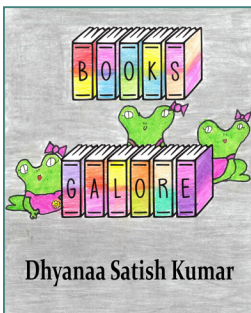


Bird Boy

Written and illustrated by Aryash Gupta.

Aryash is a kindergartener at Betances Learning Lab Elementary School.

This heartwarming tale follows a boy and his friend as they help a bird family find a new home, bringing joy back to their community.

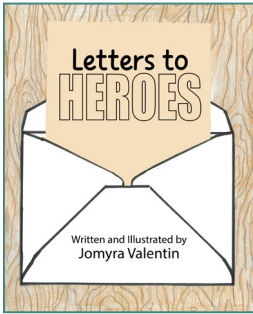


Books Galore

Written and illustrated by Dhyanaa Satish Kumar.

Dhyanaa is a Hartford resident and a fourth grader at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. She is a four-time winner.

This imaginative story follows a cheerful little toad who brings brightness to a gloomy world.

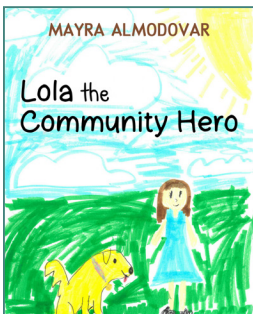


Letters to Heroes

Written and illustrated by Jomyra R. Valentin.

Jomyra is a Hartford resident and a fifth grader at CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering Elementary School.

This inspiring book is about recognizing everyday heroes and discovering that anyone can make a difference through kindness and care.

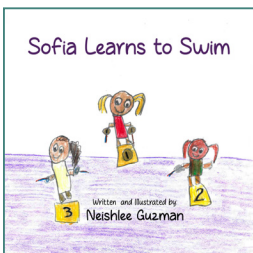


Lola the Community Hero

Written and illustrated by Mayra Almodovar.

Mayra is a fifth-grade student at CREC Montessori Magnet School.

Lola's adventure begins when she meets a service dog and helps save a young girl during a medical emergency, showing that anyone can be a hero.



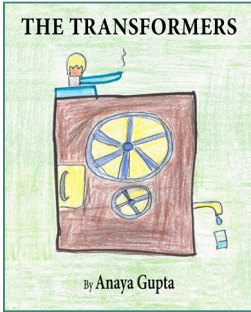
Sophia Learns to Swim

Written and illustrated by Neishlee Guzman.

Neishlee is a third-grade student at Maria Sanchez Elementary School and a member of the Hispanic Health Council's Extended Learning Afterschool Program.

This heartwarming story follows Sophia as she overcomes her fear of water with the help of a kind lifeguard and learns to feel safe at the pool.

2025 Book Author Contest Winners

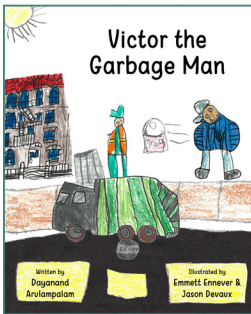


The Transformers

Written and illustrated by Anaya Gupta.

Anaya is a third grader at Betances Learning Lab Elementary School and a three-time winner.

In this story, scientists use creativity and teamwork to tackle pollution with innovative recycling solutions, inspiring a young boy named Jack.

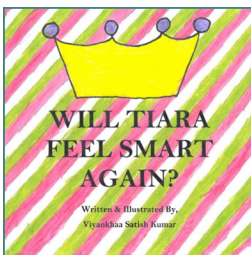


Victor the Garbage Man

Written by Dayanand Arulampalam; illustrated by Emmett Ennever and Jason Devaux.

Dayanand, Emmett, and Jason are all fifth graders at CREC Montessori Magnet School.

This book follows Victor, a dedicated sanitation worker, whose encounter with a boy named Alex teaches Alex that small actions can lead to big changes.



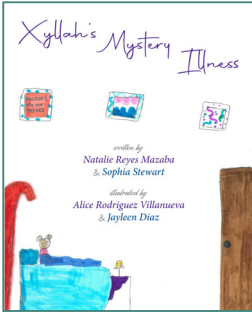
Will Tiara Feel Smart Again?

Written and illustrated by Viyanakha Satish Kumar.

Viyanakha is a Hartford resident and a first grader at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. She is a second-time winner.

This story follows Tiara, who begins seeing the world in unusual colors after an accident—and the doctor who helps her find clarity.

Xyllah's Mystery Illness



Written by Natalie Reyes Mazaba and Sophia Stewart, with illustrations by Alice Rodriguez Villanueva and Jayleen Diaz.

All four students are fifth graders at CREC Montessori Magnet School.

In this story, nine-year-old Xyllah's fun summer turns mysterious when an unexplained illness send doctors racing for answers.



REACH Book Author Contest



98

Book Submissions Received
since 2022



146

Students Participated
since 2022



35

Children Books Published and circulated
at Hartford Public Library since 2022



See the full list of book titles:
sinainc.org/bookcontestwinners



Recognition • Education • Achievement • Community Health

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

Hartford Public Library

Park Street Branch @ the Lyric

603 Park Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 695-7500

Sunday: closed

Monday through Thursday: 9:30 AM - 6 PM

Friday: 9:30 AM - 5 PM

Saturday: 9 AM - 5 PM