



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

2026 REACH Young Author Awards

Secrets & Surprises



*Reading is the Key
to the World*



Wednesday, May 20, 2026

★ 4:00 to 6:00 PM ★

**Park Street Library @ the Lyric
603 Park Street, Hartford, CT**



Open a Book, Discover a Mystery



PROGRAM



Welcome Remarks

Linda Torres, SINA

Luis Rivera, Connecticut Children's

Ravonne Barret, Hartford Public Library



Keynote Address

Rell Erwin and his daughter, Evie Erin



Awards Presentation



Book Signing & Author Readings



*Special thanks to an anonymous supporter
whose generous contribution
helped make this event possible.*



Keynote Speakers



Rell Erwin

Rell Erwin and Evie Erin (known to their community as Erwin T. Hurst, Sr. and daughter) are a dynamic father-daughter writing duo dedicated to the power of representation in literature. Together, they co-authored the *Kizzy Kloo Mystery Series*, including the popular title *The Golden Egg*.

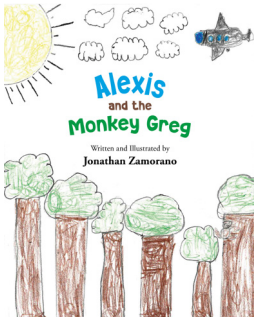
Erwin is the head writer for Keiterbennett Publishers, a Hartford-based family independent press founded in 2014. Beyond the page, he is a tireless advocate for local youth, serving as the Board Chair for Achievement First Hartford Academy and the Founder of Fourth Pov, Inc., a literacy-focused nonprofit. Evie continues to expand her literary footprint with her upcoming middle-grade novel-in-verse series, written under the pen name Kissandra Terrelle. Based in Greater Hartford, this duo proves that storytelling is not just a career, but a family legacy.



2026 Book Author Contest



Featured Authors

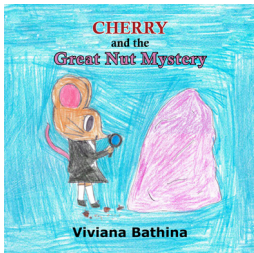


Alexis and the Monkey Greg

Written and illustrated by Jonathan Zamorano.

Johnathan is a fifth grader at Maria Sanchez Elementary School and a member of the Hispanic Health Council's Extended Learning Afterschool Program.

After crashing his plane in the forest, Alexis discovers unexpected friendship and help from a mysterious monkey named Greg.

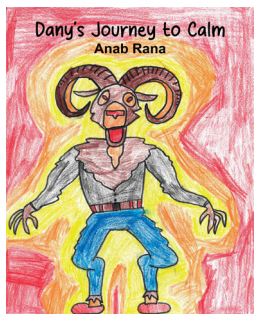


Cherry and the Great Nut Mystery

Written and illustrated by Viviana Bathina.

Viviana is a fifth grader at Montessori Magnet at Batchelder.

Cherry and her friend Chestnut become detectives as they solve the mystery of the disappearing nuts.



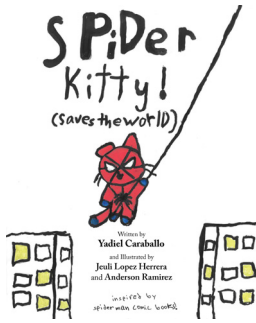
Dany's Journey to Calm

Written and illustrated by Arnab Rana.

Arnab is a fourth grader at Betances STEM Magnet School.

A ram named Dany learns important lessons about controlling anger and finding inner peace.



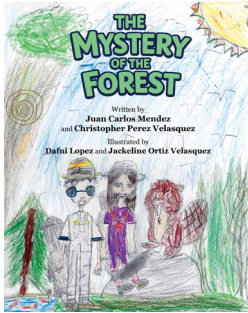


Spider Kitty! (Saves the World)

Written by Yahdiel Caraballo, with illustrations by Jeuli Lopez Herrera and Anderson Ramirez.

All three students are fourth graders at Maria Sanchez Elementary School and members of the Hispanic Health Council's Extended Learning Afterschool Program.

Spider Kitty follows mysterious clues and faces danger as he works to rescue a captured cat.

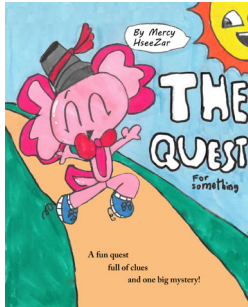


The Mystery of the Forest

Written by Juan Carlos Mendez and Christopher Perez Velasquez, with illustrations by Dafni Lopez and Jackeline Ortiz Velasquez.

All four students are third graders at Maria Sanchez Elementary School and members of the Hispanic Health Council's Extended Learning Afterschool Program.

A family camping trip becomes a surprising adventure when two siblings uncover secrets hidden deep in the forest.



The Quest for Something

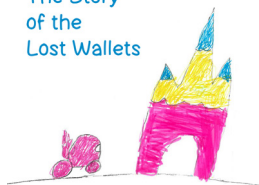
Written and illustrated by Mercy HseeZar.

Mercy is a fourth grader at Maria Sanchez Elementary School and a member of the Hispanic Health Council's Extended Learning Afterschool Program.

Miish, a determined albino axolotl, follows clues and uses creativity to complete an important quest.

More Book Author Contest Featured Stories

The Story
of the
Lost Wallets



Written and illustrated by
Eliana Grace Alicea
and Mia Elizabeth Quito

The Story of the Lost Wallets

Written and illustrated by Eliana Grace Alicea and Mia Elizabeth Quito.

Eliana and Mia are second graders at Maria Sanchez Elementary School and members of the Hispanic Health Council's Extended Learning Afterschool Program.

Mia and Eliana work together to solve the mystery after their wallets disappear during a fun trip to Disneyland.



The Stranger Danger Mystery

Written by Isabella Venkatsammy and Jeremiah Lopez Cruz, with illustrations by Jessica Wah and See Yo Soy.

All four students are fourth graders at E.B. Kenelly Elementary School.

A group of students follows mysterious clues on an adventure that leads them toward an unexpected discovery.

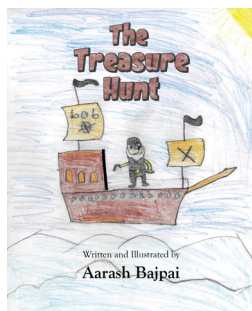
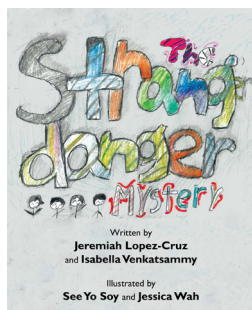


The Treasure Hunt

Written and illustrated by Aarush Bajpai.

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

Bob the pirate sets sail for hidden treasure but discovers something even more valuable along the way.





The Unknown

*Written and illustrated by Carolyn Soto,
Natalie Arias, and Arianis Declet.*

All three students are fourth graders at
E.B. Kenelly Elementary School.

*A mysterious cat secretly watches over a young
girl as hidden truths slowly begin to unfold.*



Growing Young Voices

Celebrating the impact of the REACH Book Author Contest



120

Book Submissions Received
since 2022



187

Students Participated
since 2022



45

Children Books Published and circulated
at Hartford Public Library since 2022

**SCAN
ME!**



See the full list of book titles:

sinainc.org/bookcontestwinners



Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT



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REACH is sponsored by SINA
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Hartford Hospital



**HARTFORD
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Hartford Public Library

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Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 695-7500

Library Hours:

Monday through Thursday:

9:30 AM - 6 PM

Friday: 9:30 AM - 5 PM

Saturday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Sunday: closed