



First U.S. National Ambassador for Young People's Literature to be Revealed on January 3, 2008

NEW YORK, NY December 13, 2007 – The Children's Book Council (CBC), in association with the Library of Congress' Center for the Book, will announce the inaugural National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, a children's laureate for the United States, on January 3, 2008. Appointed for a two-year term, the post was created to raise national awareness of the importance of young people's literature as it relates to literacy, education, and the development and betterment of children's lives. The National Ambassador will choose a platform accordingly, also to be revealed on announcement date, and will advocate this policy throughout his/her travels and tenure.

The National Ambassador was chosen by a selection committee based on a number of criteria, including the candidate's contribution to young people's literature, known ability to relate to children, dynamic and engaging personality, among other considerations. The five members of the inaugural selection committee include:

- **Leonard Marcus** – preeminent children's book historian and critic. He has directed *Parenting* magazine's annual Best Books of the Year Awards since its inception and is a three-time judge of the New York Times Best Illustrated Books of the Year prize. He is a standing member of The Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award committee.
- **Hazel Rochman** - editor at *ALA Booklist* and now a contributing editor, reviewing books for children and young adults. She has served on numerous book committees, and chaired the National Book Award committee for young people's literature.
- **Maria Salvadore** - Coordinator of Children's Service for the DC Public Library until 2000. Her work for numerous local and national organizations includes the Kennedy Center Education Department, Reading Is Fundamental, BPS Ready To Learn Service, WETA's Reading Rockets, among many others.
- **Henrietta M. Smith** - professor emeritus, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida. Service to ALA includes membership on Newbery, Caldecott, Batchelder, Carnegie and Notable Film committees and chair of the Wilder committee.
- **Jewell Stoddard** - co-owner of the Cheshire Cat Book Store in Washington DC—one of the first children's bookstores in the country. She has served on the Caldecott and Boston-Globe Horn Book Award committees, and chaired the 2002 Award committee for the Washington Post-Children's Book Guild Award for Nonfiction.

Cheerios® is the leading sponsor of the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature initiative. Through its Spoonfuls of Stories® program, Cheerios gets books into children's hands and encourages families to read together. Over the past 6 years, Cheerios Spoonfuls of Stories has distributed more than 30 million books free inside cereal boxes, and donated more than \$2.5 million to First Book®, a national children's literacy organization.

Additional financial support for this program is provided by Penguin Young Readers Group, Scholastic, Inc., HarperCollins Children's Books, Random House Children's Books, Holiday House, Charlesbridge, National Geographic Children's Books, Houghton Mifflin Company, Harcourt Children's Books, Candlewick Press, Marshall Cavendish, and Macmillan Publishers.

About the Children's Book Council

The Children's Book Council, established in 1945, is the non-profit trade association of publishers of trade books for children and young adults in the United States. The CBC promotes the use and enjoyment of trade books for young people, most prominently as the official sponsor of Children's Book Week, the longest running literacy event in the country. The goal of the Children's Book Council is to make the reading and enjoyment of books for young people an essential part of America's educational and social goals, as well as to enhance the public perception of the importance of reading by disseminating information about books for young people and about children's book publishing.

About The Center for the Book

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress was established in 1977 by Public Law 95-129 to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. Its entire program is supported by private funds. To carry out its mission, the center has created two national networks: affiliates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and national reading promotion partners, mostly non-profit organizations such as the Children's Book Council, that promote books, reading, literacy, and libraries. The Center for the Book plays a key role in the development of the National Book Festival, held each year on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

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