

Book Festival Family Day authors visit Tulane's Newcomb Children's Center

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roger@tulane.edu



Tyrell Plair (left) and Elizabeth Johnson, two Family Day authors from the New Orleans Book Festival, shared their book, "Just Like My Dad," with the children, parents and staff of the Newcomb Children's Center. (Photo by Audrey Burroughs)

Thousands of book-loving fans of all ages descended on Tulane's uptown campus for the inaugural [2022 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University](#), March 10-12. But for one young group of students on campus, the authors came to them.

Tyrell Plair and Elizabeth Johnson were among the 15 talented and award-winning authors who participated in Family Day at the Festival, which featured children's and family programming. Plair and Johnson, co-authors of the book [*Just Like My Dad*](#), came to campus looking to make an impact on their young audience, and their first stop was the Newcomb Children's Center on Friday, March 11.

The duo received a warm welcome and was moved by the number of posters and signs the children had made prior to their visit. Two classes of 4-year-old children spent the week with their teachers reading *Just Like My Dad* and memorizing the different characters and their journey in the book.

Due to COVID-19 protocols, Plair and Johnson generously spent an hour in the outdoor covered play area discussing their book with the children, taking questions from the group and even promised to name two characters for their next book after a pair of the children. The session ended with Plair and Johnson sitting down, drawing pictures and chatting with their happy participants. The two authors distributed a signed copy of their book to each of the 24 children, who also received book festival stickers and bookmarks.

"It was an amazing opportunity to have the authors of *Just Like My Dad* visit our school," said Julie Smith-Price, director of the Newcomb Children's Center. "During this phase of early literacy development, children are just beginning to understand how books are created.

"Providing them a chance to meet Elizabeth Johnson and Tyrell Plair face-to-face and ask them questions about writing books and sitting to draw pictures together, and chatting was more than we could have asked. This event took our children's appreciation for books and their authors to a new level."

"Amazing! The true one-word explanation for the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University. The opportunity to engage with the students and administrators of the Newcomb Children's Center and share with them during my interaction and their playtime reminded me of why I loved the classroom. The parents were remarkable during the book signings and photo opportunities. Overall, the experience was priceless, and every author should have the chance to experience the joy and grace of their work being received by its target audience and hearing the questions they asked," Johnson said.

“Being invited to the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University was an awesome experience. The highlight of the trip was visiting the Newcomb Children’s Center and being able to engage with the kids and staff. I can't wait to see the growth of those kids next year,” Plair said.

Published in 2021, *Just Like My Dad* is a book that focuses on the plight of children being compared to their parents’ mannerisms. The book explores all sides of how this comparison can affect children. The book focuses on the children’s feelings but can also be a great teaching moment for parents. *Just Like My Dad* can be beneficial for the two-parent home and homes led by single parents.

Parents everywhere are experiencing distance between their children and their activities. Many parents struggle with how to start a productive dialogue with their children. *Just Like My Dad* helps create this dialogue and encourages children to feel comfortable.

For more information about the Newcomb Children’s Center, please email newcombchildren@tulane.edu.



Tyrell Plair (left) and Elizabeth Johnson co-authored the book, "Just Like My Dad."
(Photo by Audrey Burroughs)