

Family Day at the Fest author lineup announced for the 2026 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University

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Young readers pick out free books at Family Day 2025, sparking joy, curiosity and a lifelong love of reading. The book giveaway was made possible through the book festival's collaboration with Scholastic. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

The [**New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University**](#) has unveiled the author lineup for the 2026 Family Day at the Fest, which will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 15. As one of the festival's most joyful traditions, Family Day

brings stories to life through imagination, creativity and community connection, and this year it is growing in exciting ways. Family Day is free and open to all thanks to the support of the City of New Orleans, Ochsner Children's Hospital and Scholastic.

Designed as a vibrant celebration of children's literature, Family Day invites young readers and their families to enjoy author readings, book signings, costumed characters, hands-on crafts, lively performances and interactive storytelling.

In partnership with community literacy organizations, Family Day offers a full slate of interactive activities, including temporary tattoos, face painting, hands-on STEM experiences, storytelling and reading stations, crafts and opportunities for creative play. Every child may also select a free book from Scholastic.

This year's lineup features a dynamic mix of local and national voices, including authors, illustrators and animators whose stories inspire curiosity, confidence, resilience and joy.

The featured participants include Gary Alipio (*Craziest Cajun Football Tale*), Melina Alipio (illustrator, *Craziest Cajun Football Tale*), Shannon Atwater (*Fais Do-Do*), Monisha Bajaj (*A Year of Kites: Traditions Around the World*), Jesse Byrd (*Dream Warriors: A New World*), Connie Collins Morgan (*Hercules on the Bayou*), Kaye Courington (*Scrim: A New Orleans Story of Resilience and Rescue*), Adam Dennis (*The Boy from the Swamp*), Marti Dumas (*Secret Society of Rebel Girls: Nina and the Keeper of the Keystone*), Britt Gondolfi (*Look Up! Fontaine the Pigeon Starts a Revolution*), Jen Hayes Lee (*The Golden Hoops*), Monique Lorden (*I Wish for Freedom*), Dr. Holly MacKenna (*Inhale, Exhale...Shoot!*), Alicia McKenzie (*These ABCs Belong to Me!*), Malcolm Mitchell (*My Very Favorite Book in the Whole Wide World*), Margaret Orr (*Scrim My Tail: As Told to Margaret Orr*), Misako Rocks! (*Bounce Back series*), Lawrence Roberts II (*Lucy Sings on Lucy Street*), Sally-Ann Roberts (*Lucy Sings on Lucy Street*), Wendy Rodrigue Magnus (arts educator), Xavier Rush (*Fitness Alphabet: XRELITE Xperience*), Michael Strecker (*Jokes for Crescent City Kids*), Raleigh Stewart (illustrator, *Fly Who Flew to Space*), Ali Terese (*Vote for the G.O.A.T.*), Cleo Wade (*What the Road Said*), Zachary Warter (*Otis the Do Happy Dog*) and Jamy Wheless (director, *Andy: A Dog's Tale*).

The character Flynn the Fly, from the bestselling *Fly Who Flew to Space* and the forthcoming *Fly Who Flew Under the Sea* by Lauren Sánchez Bezos, will also be joining in the fun, along with the book's illustrator, Raleigh Stewart.

For the first time, Family Day will take place on Sunday, giving families a dedicated day to enjoy the festival. This expansion allows Family Day to shine on its own while offering more space, more activities and more ways for children to discover the magic of books.

In addition to the main stage in the Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse, Family Day will expand this year to include a second stage of programming and a larger event footprint, creating more opportunities for author talks, performances and interactive readings, as well as additional space for hands-on activities, crafts and community partners. The expanded layout will also introduce Author Alley, a new meet-and-greet area where children and families can interact with authors and discover new stories up close.

Programming will also extend into the neighboring Navy ROTC building with a full day of conversations designed to engage older children, caregivers and educators. Highlights will include discussions on early literacy and community-based reading initiatives in New Orleans, a behind-the-scenes look at how stories move from page to screen through animation, conversations with athlete-authors on how reading builds confidence on and off the field and lively middle-grade panels exploring sports, creativity and the making of heroic characters.

As part of the expanded Family Day experience, the festival will also host a Family Day Student Writing Contest for students in grades 4–8 across Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes. Selected student writers and their families will be recognized at Family Day at the Fest. Full contest guidelines and submission information are available on the Family Day [website](#).

“Family Day is one of the most joyful and welcoming parts of the festival,” said Cheryl Landrieu, festival co-chair. “This expansion gives it the spotlight it deserves and creates even more opportunities for families to connect and explore the power of literacy and storytelling.”

This evolution builds on the success of recent years, when Family Day welcomed more than 20 children’s authors, partnered with 22 community organizations and — thanks to Scholastic — distributed more than 5,000 free books to young readers.

“It is thrilling to see the growth of Family Day at the New Orleans Book Festival,” said Judy Newman, chief impact officer at Scholastic. “When kids have the opportunity to meet authors and experience a wide range of storytelling, their

imaginations soar and they are inspired to see themselves as readers. At Scholastic, we know that bringing family members together around books and reading is pure magic for children and is a major factor in successful literacy. We are excited and gratified to support Family Day.”

For updates on authors, schedules and programming, visit bookfest.tulane.edu.

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