

2019 Children's Book Festival
presented by
Lafayette County Literacy Council, Junior Auxiliary of Oxford,
Center for the Study of Southern Culture, Square Books, Jr.,
and First Regional Library

OXFORD, Miss. (**March 22, 2019**) – The Children's Book Festival begins March 25 in conjunction with the Conference for the Book and in partnership with the Lafayette County Literacy Council, the Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, Square Books, Jr. and First Regional Library. Each organization fosters a love for books and reading. Children's books with dynamic plots and fascinating characters are chosen as centerpieces of the festival. Not only does every 1st and 5th grader in Oxford and Lafayette schools get a free copy of a featured book, they also get to meet the author.

The Lafayette Literacy Council and Junior Auxiliary of Oxford team up to purchase over a thousand books. This year, Lafayette Literacy Council selected Caldecott Medal recipient and *New York Times* best-selling author Dan Santat's *After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)*. The Junior Auxiliary of Oxford chose *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper, five-time winner of the Coretta Scott King Literary Award.

The Children's Book Festival will travel to Bramlett Elementary School, Oxford Elementary School, Lafayette Elementary School, Lafayette Upper Elementary School, Oxford Intermediate School, Oxford University School, Regents School of Oxford, and Magnolia Montessori School. Members and volunteers of both Junior Auxiliary of Oxford and Lafayette Literacy Council, along with staff members from First Regional Library and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, will perform skits and create crafts with the students inspired by the books.

The festival concludes March 29 with an event at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts on the University of Mississippi campus, where Dan Santat and Sharon Draper will speak to students from the Oxford community. Afterwards, there will be a meet and greet with the authors at Square Books, Jr. where they will sign their books from 3-4 pm.

"As the Lafayette County Literacy Council works to promote literacy and a love of reading throughout the community, it's hard to think of a more fun or more effective way to do so than through the Children's Book Festival," said Hanna Lee, chair of the Children's Book Festival and board member for the Lafayette Literacy Council. "By putting a beautiful, thought-provoking book in the hands of each local first and fifth grader—and, with the support of our partners, providing children with the opportunity to engage with a book and meet the book's author—we create a completely memorable experience for our young people that goes a long way towards creating lifelong readers."

For more information about the Lafayette County Literacy Council and the Children's Book Festival, visit the website at lafayetteliteracy.org. To make plans to attend some of the book sessions that are part of the Oxford Conference for the Book, visit <https://oxfordconferenceforthebook.com>.

About Lafayette County Literacy Council:

The Lafayette County Literacy Council is a nonprofit organization led by a board of directors in Lafayette County, Mississippi. Aimed to better the community, their mission is to improve the quality of life in Oxford and Lafayette County through literacy and reading. The Council's four priorities are to: 1) provide professionally developed and administered literacy education programs; 2) promote a love of reading to children and families; 3) serve as a literacy resource and information clearinghouse for the community; and 4) become an excellent organization with which to work and volunteer.

About Junior Auxiliary of Oxford: Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, Mississippi, founded in 1989, represents a serious endeavor by women to serve and be a vital part of the community in rendering charitable services which are beneficial to the general public, with an emphasis on children. Last year, JA members provided over 2100 service hours in our community. We were able to reach 4,337 children in the City of Oxford and Lafayette County.

About the Center for the Study of Southern Culture:

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture, founded in the mid-1970s, is an educational institute at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi, and the first regional studies center in the country. The Center's mission is to investigate, document, interpret, and teach about the American South through academic inquiry and publications, documentary studies of film, photography, and oral history, and public outreach programs. The cross-disciplinary Southern Studies faculty and the undergraduate and graduate degree programs are the core of the Center's work. To learn more, visit <https://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/>.

Media Contact:

Sarah McLellan, Lafayette Literacy Council Executive Director

Email: lafayetteliteracy@gmail.com

Office number: 662-234-4234