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Massachusetts Center for the Book debuts Mass Kids Lit Fest in the Pioneer Valley

Northampton, MA, March 15, 2024—Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) is pleased to announce Mass Kids Lit Fest, a new children’s and teen book festival coinciding with Children’s Book Week, a national celebration of the joy and impact of reading on young people.

The 2024 Mass Kids Lit Fest will be held from May 6 through 12 in partnership with libraries, museums, community organizations, and public schools across Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Counties. Partners include the Children’s Museum at Holyoke, the Yiddish Book Center, public schools in Sunderland and Springfield, Girls Inc. of the Valley, and a dozen public libraries in Belchertown, Easthampton, Florence, Greenfield, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Northampton, Northfield, South Hadley, Southwick, Sunderland, and Ware. High Five Books in Florence, The Odyssey Bookshop in South Hadley, and The Imaginary Bookshop in Greenfield will provide book sales and author signings at select events.

A slate of exciting programs will feature acclaimed Massachusetts-based authors and illustrators, including storytimes, author-led writing workshops and activities, museum tours, and school visits for kids. Highlights include the launch of **Jarrett Lerner**’s new book, *Nat the Cat Has a Snack* at the Children’s Museum at Holyoke on Saturday, May 11; a comics-making workshop with **Jonathan Todd**, author of *Timid*, at Belchertown’s Clapp Memorial Library on Wednesday, May 8; a drawing demo and program with *New York Times*-bestselling author and illustrator **Scott Magoon** at the South Hadley Public Library on Friday, May 10; a writing workshop with **Rebecca Caprara**, author of *Worst-Case Collin*, at the Greenfield Public Library on May 8, and storytime with Newbery honoree **Rajani LaRocca** at Florence’s Lilly Library on Tuesday, May 7. (See information and the full schedule [here](#).)

“The idea of a festival was a no-brainer given the strong community of children’s and young adult authors in Massachusetts,” said Courtney Andree, MCB Executive Director. “We know that author visits and events lead to improvement in kids’ reading enjoyment, attitudes, and confidence, boosting reading frequency and comprehension.

There will also be an event for adults, kicking off the Festival on May 7 with a panel discussion and reception at the Northampton Center for the Arts. Featuring authors Hannah Moushabeck and Mass Book Award winners **Rajani LaRocca** and **Mary Wagley Copp**, “Kidlit Beyond Borders” will focus on the critical impact of migration stories on young readers, as they develop cultural understanding and a sense of belonging.

Recognizing that access to literary programming is inequitably distributed across the Commonwealth, Andree is excited about bringing these free, high-quality programs to young readers in the area. She added, “The Festival is being piloted in the Pioneer Valley in 2024, but MCB’s goal is to take Mass Kids Lit Fest statewide in future years, prioritizing programming and partnerships in Gateway Cities and rural areas.”

About the Massachusetts Center for the Book

Founded in 2000, the Massachusetts Center for the Book is the Commonwealth affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. MCB is charged with developing, supporting, and promoting cultural programming to advance the cause of books, reading, and libraries across Massachusetts. The Center runs youth and family literacy programs; operates the Massachusetts Book Awards and the writing initiative, Letters About Literature; represents the Commonwealth at the National Book Festival; and partners with community organizations on literary initiatives and events, big and small, across the Commonwealth. We engage readers at all stages of life with relevant, diverse, and vibrant programming, reaching thousands of Massachusetts residents each year.

