

BENTONVILLE'S  
4TH ANNUAL YOUTH LITERATURE FESTIVAL  
APRIL 27 & 28, 2018



## BYLF4 AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR LIST

**Ellen Airgood** grew up on a small farm, as the youngest of four children. For the last nineteen years, she has been a waitress in a Michigan town where she owns a diner with her husband. Her writing reflects her life experiences and she credits her customers for giving her practice as a storyteller. Her book, *The Education of Ivy Blake*, is featured on the Arkansas' "Charlie May Simon Children's Book Award" list. [ellenairgood.com, library.arkansas.gov]

*Recommended for Grades 4 - 6*

**Karen Akins** writes humorous, light science fiction for young adults and the young-in-spirit. Akins' book *Loop* was an Arkansas Teen Book Award winner in 2016 and her book *Twist* was featured on the 2015 "Arkansas Gems" list. [goodreads.com, library.arkansas.gov]

*Recommended for Grades 5-12*

**James Babb** is an award-winning author and a cancer survivor. His novel, *The Devil's Backbone* was named Independent Book of the Day. If he isn't fishing, hunting or writing, he's thinking about fishing, hunting or writing. [jamesbabb.wordpress.com]

*Recommended for Grades 5-6*

**Mary Casanova** is an award-winning children's author of novels and picture books. Much of her work stems from her life on the Minnesota-Canadian border yet increasingly, Casanova's research takes her as far away as France and Norway. Casanova has also published books for teens, as well as several American Girl novels. [marycasanova.com]

*Recommended for Grades K-6*

**Thomas Cochran** was raised in Haynesville, Louisiana, which serves as the model for the town of Oil Camp, the primary setting for his novels: *Roughnecks*, *Running the Dogs*, and *Uncle Drew and the Bat Dodger*. *Roughnecks* was a Young People's National Book Award nominee and has been called "... the best novel ever written about high school football." [School Library Journal] Mr. Cochran currently lives with his wife on some acres in rural Northwest Arkansas.

*Recommended for Grades 5-12*

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**Rich Davis** is a professional artist, children's book artist, and drawing game inventor. He has published more than fifteen books, including the popular *Tiny the Dog* series. Rich teaches drawing instruction at schools and created *Pick and Draw*, which he developed into an activity book and game. [compiled by BPL staff]

*Recommended for Grades K-6*

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**Evin Demirel** is a Little Rock native who is a longtime writer of Arkansas sports. He is a journalist whose work is printed in several media publications and author of *African American Athletes in Arkansas: Muhammad Ali's Tour, Black Razorbacks & Other Forgotten Stories*. [@evindemirel]

*Recommended for Grades 7-12*

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**Alan Gratz** was born and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee. He now lives with his wife Wendi and his daughter Jo in the high country of Western North Carolina, where he enjoys playing games, eating pizza, and, perhaps not too surprisingly, reading books [alangratz.com] Gratz's work has been included in the Bentonville Public Middle Schools' "Battle of the Books" competition in recent years.

*Recommended for Grades 5-8*

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**Kristin L. Gray** drinks coffee (cream, no sugar) and writes books (funny, not sad) from her home in northwest Arkansas. She loves to read, walk her dogs, and eat cake for breakfast. She will also travel any chance she gets. Kristin's fourth-grade self would never believe she has five children, two dogs, one fish, a bearded dragon and a shy gecko. *Vilonia Beebe Takes Charge* is her first novel. [kristinlgray.com]

*Recommended for Grades K-6*

**Ard Hoyt** was born in Temple, Texas and lives in Bentonville, Arkansas. Raised on picture books, from a very early age, Ard discovered that he could go anywhere in a picture book. This freedom grew to include his own pictures. Before long, Ard discovered that with a white sheet of paper, he could change the weather. He knew that he wanted to be a children's book illustrator and dreamed of one day having a book with his name on it next to the great ones. [ardhoytbooks.com]

*Recommended for Grades K-4*

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**Kazu Kibuishi**, author and illustrator of the popular *Amulet* series, is the founder and editor of the Flight Anthologies, a critically acclaimed comics series, as well as the creator of *Daisy Cutter: The Last Train*, a winner of the YALSA Best Books for Young Adults Award. Born in Tokyo, Japan, Kazu moved to the U.S. with his mother and brother when he was a child. He graduated from Film Studios at the University of California Santa Barbara, and then moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the entertainment industry. He currently works as a full-time comic book artist. Kazu lives with his wife in Alhambra, California. [scholastic.com]

*Recommended for Grades 5-8*

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**Caroline Tung Richmond** is an award-winning young adult author, whose books include *The Only Thing to Fear*, *The Darkest Hour*, and *Live In Infamy* (March 2018). Caroline is also the Program Director of We Need Diverse Books, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that advocates for diversity in children's publishing. In her free time she likes to read good books, dabble in graphic design, plot ways to get more stamps in her passport, and hang out with her family. [carolinetrichmond.com] Her book, *The Only Thing to Fear* is included in the 2017-2018 Bentonville Public Middle Schools' "Battle of the Books" competition.

*Recommended for Grades 5-8*

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**Roland Smith** received an old manual typewriter from his parents when he was five years old that quickly became his favorite possession. Smith's passion for writing unexpectedly led him to working with animals, including zoo and conservation work. Over the years, Smith has written numerous books for young readers, including *Jack's Run*, *Zach's Lie*, *Cryptid Hunters*, *Peak*, *Tentacles* and the *Storm Runners* series. [scholastic.com] Smith's work has been included in the Bentonville Public Middle Schools' "Battle of the Books" competition in recent years.

*Recommended for Grades 5-8*

**Janet Wong** was born in Los Angeles, CA, the daughter of a Chinese-immigrant father and a Korean-immigrant mother. She is the author of 30 books for young people, including picture books, poetry, chapter books, the interactive *Poetry Friday Power Book* series for young writers, and *The Poetry Friday Anthology* series for teachers, librarians, and students. Janet has been honored with numerous awards, has been featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and CNN, and has read her books at the White House. [scholastic.com, Janet Wong]

*Recommended for Grades 4-6*

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Questions about presenter list?

Contact: Sue Ann Pekel, Children's Librarian, Bentonville Public Library  
spekel@bentonvillear.com or 479-271-6816



Note: grade recommendations are a general guideline; most of authors/illustrators are appropriate and will adapt their presentations for various ages and grade-levels, including adults.

*BYLF is presented by the Bentonville Public Library and Bentonville Library Foundation.  
Learn more at [bylf.org](http://bylf.org).*