



Reading Festival's Schedule Set with Best-Selling Authors

March 9, 2017 /

An opportunity for fun and family-time centered around reading

More than two-dozen nationally acclaimed authors plan to meet their fans and talk about their books at the 18th annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival on Saturday, March 18, at Centennial Park in the Fort Myers River District.

The festival is a free, day-long event filled with sensational author talks, the latest library technology, contests, booksellers, book signings, activities for teens and children, a free book for every child and teen and the Reading Rocks! Teen Battle of the Bands. The Festival draws an average of 18,000 people annually. The Reading Festival is the largest one-day reading festival in Florida and runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine.

"Authors come from all over the country and many genres are represented," said Margie Byers, Festival Coordinator. "Most are award winners, a couple are coauthors with Tom Clancy and James Patterson and all are very popular with their readers. It is a pleasure to meet these creative and interesting people who write these amazing novels and keep track of all the details."

The festival starts Friday evening, March 17, at the Marina at Edison & Ford with the Evening with the Authors. The event provides the opportunity for fans to meet, mingle and dine with authors. Tickets to the dinner and reception can be purchased at www.Readfest.org.

A few of the award-winning authors scheduled to attend both events include adult authors: Shelley Shepard Gray, James Grippando, Gregg Hurwitz, Mark Greaney, Susan Wiggs, Lori Wilde; teen authors include: Sara Shepard, Kami Garcia and S.J. Kincaid; and children's authors: Chris Grabenstein, Salina Yoon and Candace Fleming. The complete list of authors can be found at www.readfest.org.

Festivals with this caliber of authors are uncommon and the 26 best-selling authors are the obvious attraction. The Southeast Tourism Society named the festival a Top 20 Event in the Southeast U.S. – March 2017 for the third year in a row! The festival is the second largest reading festival in Florida and the largest one day reading festival in the state.

The authors are utilized fully while in town. Authors are asked to volunteer to visit Lee County Title 1 schools and community groups to give talks to inspire the underprivileged students there. A partnership with the Gulf Coast Literacy Council helps to facilitate busing of students from other Title 1 Schools to the festival to enjoy the full experience and receive a free book. Children's and teen authors are also encouraged to donate 20 books each to the Lee County School District.

This festival is loved by attendees who come back year after year. It is a fun, free event for all ages and draws an average of 18,000 people to downtown Fort Myers for the day. The fans attend to hear and meet best-selling authors from all over the country and to buy newly released books and have them signed by the authors. There are over 15 venues with concurrent activities and entertainment. There is a marketplace which provides the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the festival audience. The marketplace typically sells out with approximately 100 vendors split between the adult and youth areas. In addition to author appearances, there are programs and shows for the youth, a free book for every child and teen, a Teen Battle of the Bands, crafts, graffiti, chalk wall, contests, and find the latest and greatest in books, technology and accessories.

The Reading Festival, presented by the Lee County Library System is free and 100 percent community supported through generous donations, sponsorships and grants. To help ensure the continuation of this free community event visit www.readfest.org to make a secure online donation. Author information, dates of partner events, directions to the event and more, is available for your convenience 24 hours a day at readfest.org Reading Festival's Schedule Set with Best-Selling Authors or call 239-479-4636.

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

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