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**Dozens of bestselling authors coming to Lee County**

Fort Myers, FL, Dec. 16, 2024 – Twenty-five acclaimed and bestselling authors are coming to Lee County to talk to fans and sign books at the 26th annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 1. The festival takes place at the Fort Myers Regional Library, 2450 First St., and brings in internationally recognized authors for adults, teens and children to celebrate the power of reading, promote literacy and library services and encourage a communitywide culture of reading for recreation and personal development.

The festival is a daylong event filled with diverse and dynamic author presentations, book signings, lively activities for teens and children, the latest library technology, youth writing award presentations, food trucks and more. Plus, every child and teen attending the event will receive a free book of their choosing, made possible by funding from festival sponsor Suncoast Credit Union.

“Seeing all the excitement centered around reading is such a rewarding experience,” Lee County Library System Director Mindi Simon said. “Kids have grown up with the annual tradition of attending the Southwest Florida Reading Festival and the Lee County Library System is honored to be part of their literacy journey.”

An Evening with the Authors, the reading festival’s featured fundraiser, takes place Friday evening, Feb. 28. This ticketed event gives attendees a chance to meet and mingle with the authors as part of an unforgettable dining experience at the Burroughs Home and Gardens. The evening also includes a silent auction with proceeds supporting the festival and giving guests the chance to snag spring training baseball game tickets, weekend getaway hotel packages and more. Tickets are available on the festival website, [readfest.org](http://readfest.org).

This year’s impressive line-up brings in festival favorite Debbie Macomber and other stellar adult authors like Reed Farrel Coleman and Lisa Genova. Featured youth authors include Megan McDonald, creator of the wildly popular “Judy Moody” and “Stink” series, along with Molly Idle and Renée Ahdieh. From mystery and suspense to crime thrillers, fiction, nonfiction, romance, fantasy, humor and memoirs, there will be something for every reader.

The full list of scheduled authors, list of related festival events, directions and more is available on the latest version of the festival’s mobile app “SWFL Reads,” the festival website or by calling 239-479-4636. Attendees also can sign up for the new festival e-newsletter on the website to receive monthly updates.

The Southwest Florida Reading Festival is free and community-supported through generous donations, sponsorships and grants. To help ensure the continuation of this amazing, annual event visit the festival website to make a secure online donation. Funding is provided in part through a Florida Humanities Book Festival Grant with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and in partnership with Lee County Library System.

To receive updates from Lee County Government, sign up for the newsletter here: [www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters](http://www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters). Follow Lee County Government on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc](http://www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc).

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Lee County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in its services, programs or activities. To request an auxiliary aid or service for

effective communication or a reasonable modification to participate, contact Raphaela Morais-Peroba, 239-533-8782, Florida Relay Service 711, or [rperoba@leegov.com](mailto:rperoba@leegov.com). Accommodation will be provided at no cost to the requester. Requests should be made at least five business days in advance.

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**The complete author list and short biographies are below.**

### **ADULT AUTHORS**

**Tracy Clark** is the acclaimed author of the “Detective Harriet Foster” series and “Cass Raines Chicago Mystery” series. Clark draws on real-life people, places, and experiences while crafting her award-winning narratives.

**Reed Farrel Coleman** is The New York Times bestselling author more than 30 novels, including six in the “Jesse Stone” series for the estate of the late Robert B. Parker. The former executive vice president of Mystery Writers of America, Coleman lives with his wife on Long Island.

**Jenny Colgan** is The New York Times bestselling author of numerous novels, including “The Christmas Bookshop,” “The Bookshop on the Corner” and “Little Beach Street Bakery.” Jenny and her family live in a genuine castle in Scotland.

**Eli Cranor** is a nationally bestselling, Edgar-Award-winning author who writes from the banks of Lake Dardanelle where he lives with his family. Eli also pens a weekly column for the Arkansas Democrat Gazette and serves as the Writer in Residence at Arkansas Tech University.

**Alison Gaylin** is the USA Today bestselling author of 15 books, including “The Collective,” the Edgar-Award-winning “If I Die Tonight” and the “Brenna Spector” series.

**Lisa Genova** is The New York Times bestselling author of “Still Alice,” “Left Neglected” and “Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting.” “Still Alice” was adapted into an Oscar-winning film and her TED talks on Alzheimer’s disease and memory have been viewed over 11 million times.

**Ali Hazelwood** is a New York Times bestselling author of several romance novels including “The Love Hypothesis.” With a background in neuroscience, much of her work features women in STEM fields and academia.

**R.J. Jacobs**, a practicing psychologist, has presented at numerous conferences and routinely performs PTSD evaluations for veterans. His latest novel is “This Is How We End Things.”

**Steven Mack Jones** is a published poet, award-winning playwright and winner of the Kresge Arts in Detroit Literary Fellowship. His “August Snow” crime/thriller series won the 2018 Nero Award.

**Jean Kwok**, the award-winning, New York Times and international bestselling author of “The Leftover Woman,” “Girl in Translation” and “Mambo in Chinatown,” has had her work published in more than 20 countries. All her novels are in development for film and television.

**Elinor Lipman** is the award-winning author of 16 books of fiction and nonfiction, including “The Inn at Lake Devine,” “Isabel’s Bed,” and “I Can’t Complain: (All Too) Personal Essays.” Her first novel, “Then She Found Me,” was adapted into a film directed by and starring Helen Hunt.

**Sarah MacLean** is The New York Times bestselling author of 19 novels that have been translated into more than 25 languages. Co-host of the weekly romance novel podcast, “Fated Mates,” she is a leading advocate for the romance genre.

**Debbie Macomber** is a #1 New York Times bestselling author and one of today's most popular writers with more than 200 million copies of her books in print worldwide. Her novels have spent over 1,000 weeks on The New York Times bestseller list. Macomber has also published cookbooks, inspirational and nonfiction works, and two acclaimed children's books.

**Viola Shipman** is the pen name of Wade Rouse, the bestselling author of 17 books, which have been selected as Indie Next and Michigan Notables. He writes fiction under his grandma's name, Viola Shipman, to honor the woman whose heirlooms and family stories inspire his fiction.

**Julie Soto** is a USA Today bestselling author, playwright and actress. Her musical "Generation Me" won the 2017 New York Musical Festival's Best Musical award, as well as Best Book for her script.

**Annabelle Tometich** went from medical school reject to line cook to journalist to author. She spent 18 years as a local food writer, editor and restaurant critic for The News-Press. Her first book, "The Mango Tree: A Memoir of Fruit, Florida, and Felony" was heralded by The New York Times.

## **CHILDREN'S AUTHORS**

**Kate Hannigan** loves to find interesting people from history and share them with young readers. Her titles include the historical novel "The Detective's Assistant," graphic novels like "The Great Chicago Fire," and nonfiction picture book biographies like "Blips on a Screen" about the invention of video gaming.

**Molly Idle** is the Caldecott Honor-winning creator of the picture book "Flora and the Flamingo." Her most recent picture books are "Witch Hazel" and "I Don't Care," written by Julie Fogliano and co-illustrated with her best friend Juana Martinez-Neal.

**Megan McDonald** is the creator of the popular and award-winning "Judy Moody" and "Stink" series for older readers. She is also the author of the "Sisters Club" and "Ant and Honey Bee" stories for children. Her new series for young readers, "The Fairy Door Diaries" launches in February 2025.

**Kate Messner** is a New York Times bestselling author who has written more than 60 books for curious kids. Messner writes award-winning picture books, chapter books, novels and the popular "History Smashers" series.

## **TEEN AUTHORS**

**Renée Ahdieh** is the #1 New York Times and internationally bestselling author of "The Wrath & the Dawn" series, the "Flame in the Mist" series and "The Beautiful" quartet. "Emilio Sloth's Modern Manners" is her debut children's picture book.

**Kristy Boyce** played her first role-playing game in high school and is now the nationally bestselling author of "Dungeons and Drama." Other titles by Boyce include "Hot British Boyfriend" and "Hot Dutch Daydream."

**Karen M. McManus** is a New York Times, USA Today and international bestselling author of young adult thrillers. Her work, which has been translated into 42 languages, includes the "One of Us Is Lying" series, "Two Can Keep a Secret" and "Such Charming Liars."

**Angela Montoya** has been obsessed with the magic of storytelling since she was a little girl. Her debut novel, "Sinner's Isle," received multiple starred reviews and her newest title, "A Cruel Thirst" is scheduled to be released Dec. 17, 2024.

**Ginny Myers Sain** is the author of "Dark and Shallow Lies," a New York Times bestseller. Other titles of hers include "Secrets So Deep," "One Last Breath" and "When the Bones Sing," slated to be released in March 2025.