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Mark your calendar for 2022 Southwest Florida Reading Festival; festival's new mobile app offers sneak peek of authors

Fort Myers, FL, Oct. 15, 2021 – Mark your calendar for the 23rd annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, which will feature more than 20 acclaimed and bestselling authors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 5, 2022, in downtown Fort Myers. A sneak peek of the author lineup can be found now by downloading the festival's new mobile app "SWFL ReadFest" at the App Store or Google Play.

The full author list is currently only available through the app but will be advertised on the festival website, www.ReadFest.org, in November. The Southwest Florida Reading Festival is a free, all-ages event at the Fort Myers Regional Library campus, 2450 First St.

After a fully virtual event in 2021, the Lee County Library System is returning to the original, outdoor format. Fans have the opportunity to listen to and meet a diverse lineup of bestselling authors, participate in contests and activities, and find the latest in books and technology. In addition to author appearances and autographing sessions, there will be food truck vendors, storytelling programs, arts and crafts, youth writing contests and a free book for every child and teen.

"Last year's virtual reading festival drew people from all over the world, but I know our local community will really appreciate having the authors back in their hometown again next year," festival organizer Melissa Baker said.

Some virtual components will carry over into this next festival, including reading and activity challenges with chances to win prizes. Leading up to the festival, the library system also will feature virtual author presentations, an online book discussion and grab-and-go festival bingo.

"The Southwest Florida Reading Festival is a wonderful way to spend the day, interacting with authors and learning more about library services," said Mindi Simon, director of the Lee County Library System. "Held on Cornog Plaza, with programs for all ages and virtual options too, we pride ourselves on this fun-filled event."

Attendees who want more exclusive access to meet and mingle with this year's festival authors can do so at An Evening with the Authors, a fundraising dinner scheduled to take place at the Edison Restaurant, Bar and Banquet Center on March 4. More details will be shared soon on the festival website at www.ReadFest.org.

The Southwest Florida Reading Festival is community supported through donations, sponsorships and grants. To help ensure the continuation of this free community event, visit www.ReadFest.org to make a secure online donation. More information is available at www.ReadFest.org or by calling 239-533-4832.

ABOUT THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA READING FESTIVAL

The Southwest Florida Reading Festival is a family-friendly event that celebrates books and the written word. The festival began in 1999 with the goals of emphasizing the importance of reading and bringing literary talent to Southwest Florida. Now in its 23rd year, the free festival has grown in popularity and averages 10,000 book-loving attendees annually. Past authors have included Sue Monk Kidd, Susan Mallery, Zane, R.L. Stine, Janet Evanovich, Diana Gabaldon, Nelson DeMille, Jeff Kinney and hundreds more.

The festival's objectives are to promote reading and literacy, increase awareness of the library's programs and foster partnerships between the Lee County Library System and the community. It is also an opportunity to share with the community the resources and services available at their local Lee County libraries with a library card. The festival aims to build a literate community by encouraging children to develop an interest in reading independently, which fosters an increase in vocabulary and improved writing skills. For more information, go to www.ReadFest.org.

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