



Light A Candle For Literacy Presents

LITERACY PARADE & CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL



The Return: September 10, 2022



Early in the pre-Covid period, a group of Southside community members (the committee) initiated an effort to bring back the Light a Candle for Literacy Parade, first held in 2006. The parade and festival were initiated by reading and education advocate Geneva Hayden, a long-time Southside resident of Syracuse.

After many months of planning, the day arrived with great expectations.

Light a Candle for Literacy (LACFL) is a meaningful and symbolic expression. Over the entry to the Carnegie Library in Dunfermline, Scotland (the first Carnegie Library in the world) is a bas-relief and the biblical expression, “Let there be light.”

Light represents having one’s eyes opened to knowing or knowledge.

Reading is the switch that turns on the light. Enlightenment is the result of learning and shedding light on knowledge.

Throughout history, being forbidden to learn to read and write was a way for oppressors to keep people oppressed. So, the selection of our name was meaningful and relevant.



The Return of LACFL:

The day began with a parade starting at Beauchamp Library led by our Co-Grand Marshalls, Geneva Hayden, event founder, and Ruth Colvin, founder of Literacy Volunteers 60 years ago.



Ruth Colvin with
volunteer, Ms. Carter



Geneva Hayden with
husband, Al Hayden

The parade was a wonderful celebration of a grassroots effort to promote children's learning and success in school. In addition, to the Grand Marshalls, it included community members, Mayor Ben Walsh, NY State Senator John Mannion (an event sponsor), the Syracuse Fire Dept, local mascots (Oakie the Acorn from ESF, Syracuse Crunch man), Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Library staff, Save the Rain float, a puppeteer on stilts, children in costume, and many more.

The parade ended at Brighton Academy (formerly Danforth School), where the festival began at 1 pm. The Syracuse Parks and Recreation bandwagon was the stage for the presentation by Mayor Walsh of the Joint Proclamation by him and County Executive Ryan McMahon (right) and continuous music and live entertainment.





Inside the school auditorium, cafeteria, and many of the classrooms were the many exhibitors and demonstrations, including Bubble man, a puppet show, food (provided by Tops Friendly Markets as they had at each previous event), face painting, Princess Tiana and valuable information for parents and children.

Exhibitors included: Upstate Medical University, Upstate Stroke & Pharmacy, Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF), LeMoyne College, YMCA, the MOST, Onondaga County Health Dept Lead Poison Control, United Way, Early Childhood Alliance, Operation Northern Comfort...and many more.



Passport Required!

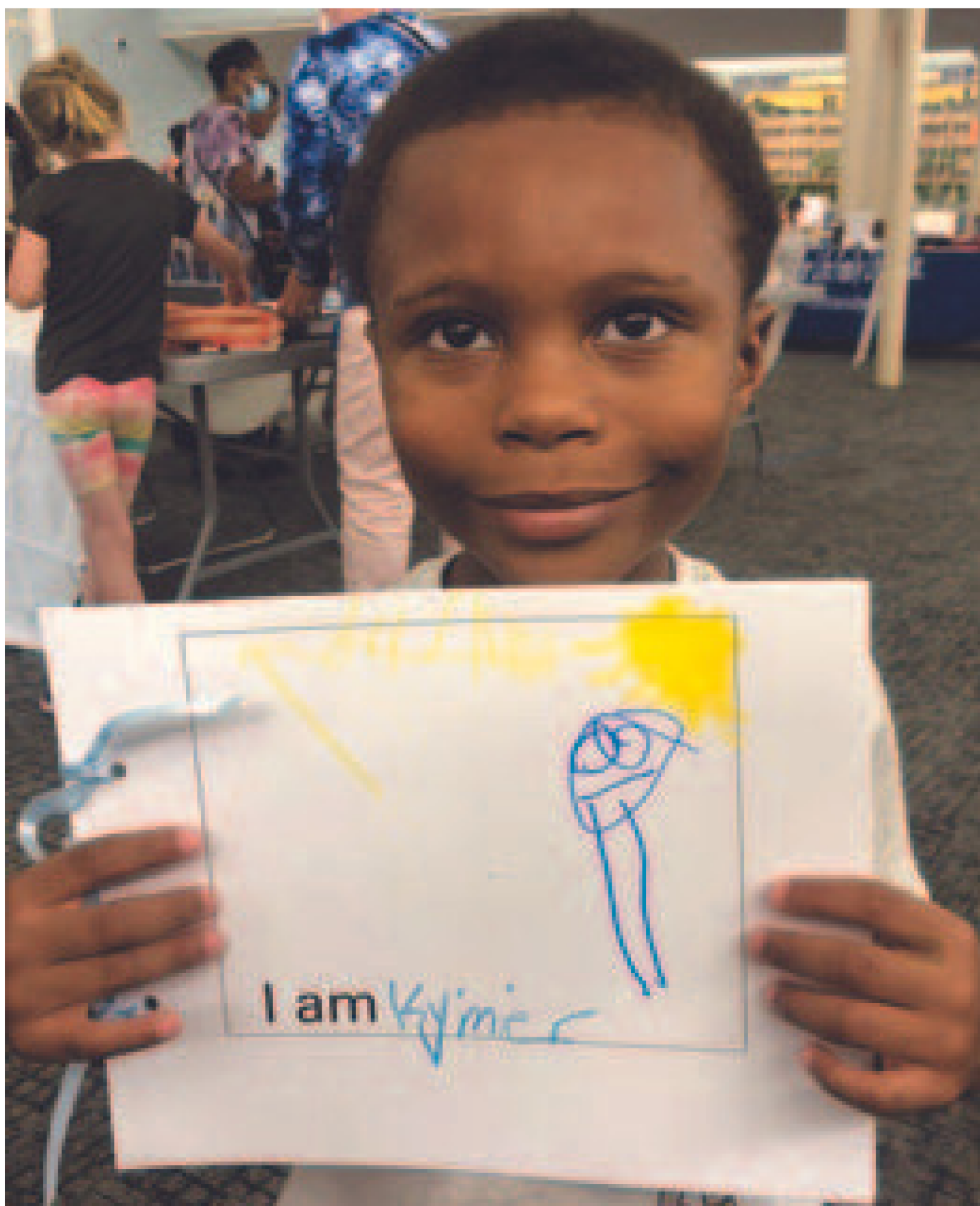
Children were given our version of a passport which required them to visit five (5) or more exhibits in order get a free book(s).

Operation Northern Comfort also offered bookcases to provide a place for books in children's homes.

The presence of fifteen children's book authors and illustrators (including a teenaged author) for storytelling was a high point of the festival.

The authors and illustrators:

Jasmine Holden, Bruce Coville, Fatima Salaam, Marsita Jordan, Susan Keeter, Uzo Unobagha, Leslie Youngblood, Darrick Dunham, Jessica Sicherman, Michael Gilbert, Jody Lee Mott, London Ladd, Frank Cammuso, Latasha Pride and Moesha Wright.



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Notable Comments:

Geneva Hayden, Grand Marshall, when asked about the parade and festival, said, “I was dumbfounded, it was amazing. The parade was fantastic; I’m still dreaming about it. People really care about kids, literacy/reading. It really touched my heart.”

Ruth Colvin, Grand Marshall, has visited 62 countries promoting and teaching literacy. She repeatedly said during the parade and festival, “I have never seen anything like this; it is amazing.”

Uzo Unobagha, author, educator, and multiyear participant, said, “Light a Candle for Literacy is a great opportunity to teach children to value books, learning, imagination, and creativity.”

Susan Keeter, author, artist, and children’s book illustrator and perpetual contributor from the first event, said “...The teenagers were awestruck when they met the author of the books. It was a joy-filled day of books, creative activities, community resources, and entertainment. I am honored to be a part of this event which continues Mrs. Hayden’s powerful, love-centered work supporting children and reading.”

Camille Coakley, Chair of the Committee, “We were exhilarated by how well our event and efforts were received and appreciated. We look forward to next year!”

Gratitude:

Our committee worked diligently for many months to enable the successful return of the event:

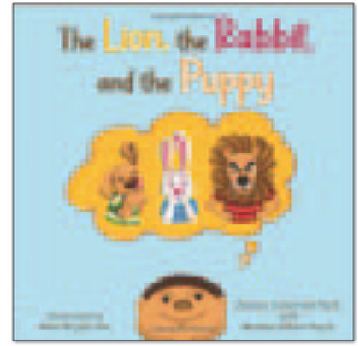
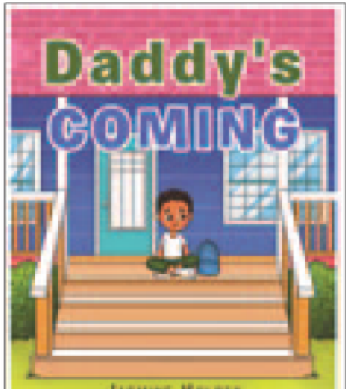
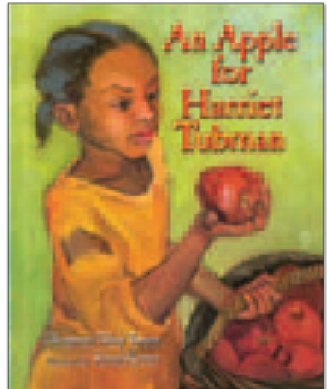

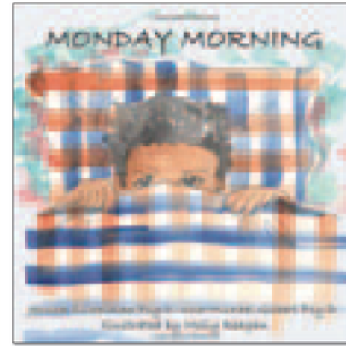
Camille Coakley the Chair, Sue Wood, Jaime Howley, Cheryl Bellamy, Jasmine Holden, Ossie Edwards, Susan Keeter, Edward Kochian.

This event was much needed after the learning losses due to the disadvantages many urban students suffered from COVID and distance learning.

The community showed its appreciation by their presence. The many children and families that visited left with books and bookcases along with important useful information for parenting, healthful living, and raising readers! Our estimated participants, including parents and children, are estimated to be 400 plus!

Visit our website: lightacandleforliteracy.org

Photos by Deborah Menifee, Michael Greenlar, Susan Keeter

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| <p>Author JESSICA SICHERMAN</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> | <p>Author DARRICK DUNHAN</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> | <p>Author JASMINE HOLDEN</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> | <p>Illustrator SUSAN KEETER</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> | <p>Author JODY LEE MOTT</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> | <p>Author FATIMA SALAAM</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> | <p>Author MICHAEL GILBERT</p>  <p>www.theworldofbooks.org</p> |
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CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL**

Save the date for next year: September 9, 2023