

For Immediate Release
April 9, 2009

Children's Book Fair to showcase national authors and illustrators;
Mrs. Laura Leppert will again serve as honorary chair of the multicultural celebration

Dallas, TX – A multicultural event in Dallas April 17-18 will bring together children, families and an impressive roster of children's authors and illustrators. The Dallas Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival is a partnership between the Dallas Public Library, the African American Museum and the Dallas Independent School District, for children in grades pre-K through sixth. The event is supported by AT&T.

"Literacy is a challenge that we face right here in our own backyard," said honorary chair Mrs. Laura Leppert. "This year's Children's Book Fair theme is "Opening Minds by Opening Books," which is so appropriate given the fact that 61 percent of lower income families have no access to books for children in their homes," she said. "Last year, more than a thousand children and their families benefited from the Book Fair, and in 2009 we anticipate an even greater level of participation."

The Book Fair begins Friday, April 17 with an Authors/Illustrators Read-In from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Central Library, 1515 Young St, geared primarily for school groups. The Book Fair and Festival will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18 at the Central Library. All these events are free and open to the public.

"Education is AT&T's key philanthropy focus," said AT&T Regional Vice President of External Affairs Holly Reed. "We are driven to help students succeed in school, in the workforce and in life. Through our philanthropic initiatives and partnerships, AT&T and the AT&T Foundation support projects like the Children's Book Fair & Literacy Festival, which engage children in the love of reading and which can impact keeping them in school through graduation," she said.

"We're very proud to be a part of this important multicultural event in the City of Dallas," said City of Dallas Director of Libraries Laurie Evans. "There's nothing more rewarding to a librarian than helping to foster a love of reading and learning among our children, and that's what the Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival is all about."

The Dallas Children's Book Fair and Literary Festival was started 15 years ago by Dr. Harry Robinson, Jr., president and CEO of the African American Museum in Fair Park. Proceeds from the fair and festival sponsorships benefit the Museum's Multicultural Summer Camp for students ages 6 to 12. Special features of the all-day camp include daily instruction in reading and Spanish language skills. Students will also explore how America's diversity in music, drama, visual art, folk art, literature and media has been influenced by historical events, people and places.

-more-

“The Children’s Book Fair and Literary Festival is a wonderful way for children to experience the magic of books and reading,” Robinson said. “With this event, we are reaching out to our children, inspiring them to read and write by giving them a unique opportunity to meet and talk with authors and illustrators of some wonderful books.”

For more information about the Book Fair and a list of the authors visit www.dallaschildrensbookfair.org.

The Dallas Public Library operates the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, 1515 Young St., and 26 branch locations. A library card is free for any Dallas resident. For information on the many free programs and services available at the Dallas Public Library, visit: www.dallaslibrary.org.

The African American Museum is located at 3536 Grand Ave., in Fair Park. It is the only museum in the Southwestern United States devoted to the preservation and display of African American artistic, cultural and historical materials. Its impressive collections serve to educate and inform today's generation about often overlooked aspects of American history. For more information, go to <http://www.aamdallas.org>.

The Dallas Independent School District is the 12th largest school district in the nation with a diverse population of more than 160,000 students. The District has achieved record-breaking success in terms of student and school accomplishments. These achievements stem from the dedication of many people - the students themselves, their teachers and other school staff, principals, administrators, and the more than 19,000 community volunteers and school partners who support students with time, talent, and funds. For more information go to <http://www.dallasisd.org>.

###