

Press Release

14 August 2006

**Hyde Park Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the 57th Street Children's Book Fair
Sunday, September 17th from 1-6pm**

It was 20 years ago that the neighborhood of Hyde Park fought to preserve its heritage of independent booksellers in the battle to save O'Gara and Wilson, a rare and antiquarian bookstore, from losing their lease. As these Hyde Parkers created a network of like minded individuals, the focus became not only on the survival of O'Gara and Wilson (which still stands on 57th Street today), but to the survival of independent bookstores and the character of the Hyde Park neighborhood. In the end, these individuals decided to expand their initial focus by creating a community wide event showcasing our love of literature and the independent spirit. To that end, the 57th Street Children's Book Fair was born.

This year, we are reminded of our humble beginnings and our focus for the future. As the need for literacy remains a struggle within our schools, the 57th Street Children's Book Fair encourages a love of literature in a fantasy-filled, three-dimensional exploration of books. At the Fair, children have the opportunity to walk into the pages of *Goodnight, Moon* and lift the flaps of a life size *Spot* book. Young visitors to the Fair realize that adults are just excited about children's literature as they are. Tara Baldrige, this year's organizer, says, "Nothing puts a smile on a child's face faster than hearing that their favorite book is also your favorite. Especially if you've read it so many times that you know the words!" Adults interested in finding their long lost favorite will be happy to see that antiquarian booksellers, Bibliodisia Books, Chicago Rare Book Center and Dorothy Meyer Books will be in attendance. Combined with independent bookstores, 57th Street Books, Powells, African American Images, Barefoot Books, The Book Fair, Pennyworth Books, Transitions and a host of others, an abundance of literary choice will be available.

The 57th Street Children's Book Fair, held Sunday, September 17th from 1:00 to 6:00 not only focuses on reading literature, but also on the many ways in which storytelling inspires the creative arts. Storytellers, Oba William-King, Mama Edie and Chris Fascione infuse their performances with musical instruments, song and creative movement while noted storyteller, Judith Heineman takes children on an international holiday with her tales from Native American, Egyptian and Jewish cultures. The Hyde Park School of Ballet will explore the relationship of literature and dance. Muntu Dance Theater will tell stories through drumming and music in an interpretation of a traditional African village performance.

Penny Cox, 2006 Rochelle Lee Awardee and teacher at Dulles school recommends the Fair to her parents saying, "The Fair offers exposure to art and music that children may not get in school. When they look onstage and see other children performing and think, 'I want to do that!' it's a great opportunity for encouragement." This year, children will see their possibilities reflected in the Championship Ballroom Dance group from Pershing West, the Canter Music Trio, the Mexican Folkloric Dance Group from Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Chicago Children's Choir. In addition, Camille Hamilton-Doyle and her group of teens from Kenwood Academy will paint faces, host creativity tables and disguise themselves as life-size storybook characters.

The Fair starts at 1:00 on the corner of 57th Street and Kimbark with a parade led by the Kenwood Academy Marching Band, Mother Goose and the famed CTA mini-bus.

For more information, contact Tara Baldrige at
57bookfair@gmail.com or 773.619.8371 **www.57cbf.org**