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The African-American Read-In returns to the Orlando Public Library on February 24

[Orlando, Fla.] Almost 30 years ago, the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English came together in hopes of creating an event that would highlight the contributions of African-American authors in the literary world. This year, the Orlando Public Library is proud to once again host that event: The National African-American Read-In.

On February 24, the African-American Read-In takes place on the library main stage. Special guest speakers will be sharing their favorite works of literature including poems, stories, songs and more. This year's participants includes Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, Orange County Clerk of Courts Tiffany Moore Russell, Nerd Nite Orlando host Ricardo Williams, Paralympic athlete April Holmes and WESH-2 News anchor Jazmin Bailey. The annual event celebrates and promotes diversity in literature by highlighting work created by African-American authors.

The African-American Read-In is hosted annually at the Orlando Public Library in conjunction with the National African-American Read-In, the nation's first and oldest event dedicated to diversity in literature.

The ultimate goal is to promote diversity in literature. Authors of color, including African-American authors, are underrepresented in literature in general, and are particularly difficult to find in children's literature. According to the Cooperative Children's Book Center, a research library that focuses on the field of children's and young adult literature, African-American and Latino authors wrote only 7 percent of new children's books published in 2017. Of 3,700 children's books reviewed by CCBC in 2017, only 340 of them featured African-American characters or content, and only 100 of them were actually written by black authors. That's a significant diversity gap that the African-American Read-In hopes to change.

The African-American Read-In is open to all ages and will be taking place on Sunday, February 24, 2–4 p.m at the Orlando Public Library, 101 E. Central Ave. For more information and a complete listing of readers and performers, visit ocls.info/readin.

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