

Hundreds of Book Lovers Attend First River City Reading Festival

by Maria Butler, Community Relations Coordinator, Lawrence Public Library

The first River City Reading Festival was held in Lawrence on October 14, and beautiful, sunny weather brought out several hundred people to take part in the festivities. State Librarian Christie Brandau helped steering committee chair Kassie Edwards kick things off with remarks about the importance of reading. Keynote speaker Jim Lehrer then talked about his newest book, *Eureka*, and about being an author and a Kansan. Kansas Poet Laureate Denise Low followed, and Diane Eickhoff presented her first-person performance as Clarina Nichols to finish up this year's Read Across Lawrence program.

Lise Lunge-Larsen, a Minnesotan originally from Norway, entertained kids and adults with stories of fairies, elves and trolls, and helped children make felt while she read from her book *Noah's Mittens*. Stephen Johnson of Lawrence explained how he creates children's books, and Ande Parks took his audience *Behind the Scenes of a Comic Book*. The costumed storybook characters were a big hit, as was storytime in the tent in many different languages and with Kansas authors Ann Parr, Susanna Pitzer, and Alice Bertels. The Vodvill Clown, Richard Renner of Lawrence, entertained all ages with his zany act promoting reading.

Too many authors, poets and presenters participated in the Festival to name them all here, but it is clear that a wealth of quality writing is being produced right here in Kansas, from children's chapter and picture books to young



***Christie Brandau (r.) and
Kassie Edwards During***

Welcoming Remarks

adult novels, history, mystery, poetry, memoirs, humor, and everything in between. Furthermore, these authors are really great people who love to share their work and interact with the public. They deserve an enormous thank you for helping to make the day a success.

Now that we have rested (but not on our laurels), we will begin the process again, and plan an even better event for next year. We hope we will see you there.



*Kansas Poet Laureate
Denise Low*