

River City Reading Festival Debuts in Lawrence

by Maria Butler, Community Relations Coordinator, Lawrence Public Library

The first River City Reading Festival will be held on Sunday, October 14, in Lawrence, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lawrence Arts Center, 940 New Hampshire. The Festival is a project of Altrusa International Inc. of Lawrence, in partnership with the Lawrence Public Library and others.

The day will begin with welcoming remarks at 10:45 a.m. by Kassie Edwards, steering committee chair for the Festival, and Christie Brandau, State Librarian of Kansas. Jim Lehrer, a Wichita native, novelist, and host of PBS' *NewsHour*, will give the keynote speech at 11 a.m., followed at 12:30 p.m. by Kansas Poet Laureate Denise Low.

Throughout the day, more than 40 authors with Kansas connections will appear at the Festival, reading from their work and signing copies of their books in the Authors' Tent. They represent a wide variety of genres and age levels, including mystery, history, poetry, memoir, children's, and young adult. A poetry stage will feature Kansas poets reading their original works all day.

Presentations and workshops are planned for readers of all ages. Adults can bring in their old books and receive estimates of their values, or attend sessions on math and science literacy, book conservation, getting their written work published, and writing poetry. Sessions for teens will focus on comic writing and illustration, drumming and poetry, and storytelling through drama. Children can make felt from wool, or learn puppeteering.

In addition, a children's activity tent will offer crafts, face painting, and stories read by children's authors, and in several world languages. Costumed storybook characters and Baby Jay, the Kansas University mascot, will be there. Exhibitors will include the William Allen White Children's Book Awards Committee and the Kansas Center for the Book. Food will be sold by a variety of Lawrence restaurants.

For more information and a schedule of events, please see the website at www.rivercityreadingfestival.org, and start making plans to attend. It will be a great day of books, reading and fun for all ages.



Jim Lehrer