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For more information, contact Barbara Fisch and Sarah Shealy, Blue Slip Media
619.938.3193; barbara@blueslipmedia.com; sarah@blueslipmedia.com

Kwame Alexander Named 2017 Summer Reading Champion for Nationwide Campaign



Newbery Medalist, poet, educator, and *New York Times* bestselling author Kwame Alexander has been named the 2017 National Summer Reading Champion for the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP).

“Serving as Summer Reading Champion gives me the opportunity to reach more teachers, more librarians and more parents, and share what I feel is one of the secrets to the success of the future: the mind of an adult begins with the imagination of a child,” Alexander says. “Books open up doors of possibility and potential and purpose—and allow children to imagine a better world for themselves and for us.”

CSLP is a nonprofit consortium of states that work together to provide an annual unified summer reading theme and professionally created, evidence-based materials for member libraries to enable them to provide high-quality summer reading programs to

their communities at the lowest possible cost. They reach approximately 16,000 member libraries nationwide, representing the District of Columbia and all fifty states, plus American Samoa, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, and the Mariana Islands.

The 2017 theme is “Build a Better World.™” CSLP has created a comprehensive array of resources for libraries to use in their summer reading programs, including program ideas, booklists, posters, clip art, and activities for four age groups, from babies to adults. The early literacy manual is available in both English and Spanish, and the slogan is also promoted in Spanish (“*Construye un mundo mejor*”™). Alexander plans to provide a top ten list of reasons to join a library summer reading program and will also create a list of his favorite recommended summer reads for 2017.

“Being a poet as well as an author, Kwame Alexander’s words are energetic and rhythmic and I don’t know of any reader, young or old, who isn’t spellbound and totally engaged by his books,” says Sharon Rawlins, CSLP President. “We’re absolutely thrilled to have Kwame Alexander as our Champion. He really knows the power that words have to transform readers. His quotes are so inspiring, too. One of my favorites is: ‘Books are amusement parks and you have to let kids choose the rides.’”

A regular speaker at schools and conferences throughout the U.S., Alexander is the author of 24 books, including *Booked* and *The Crossover*, which received the 2015 John Newbery Medal for the Most Distinguished Contribution to American literature for Children, the Coretta Scott King Author Award Honor, The NCTE Charlotte Huck Honor, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, and the Paterson Poetry Prize. Kwame Alexander writes for children of all ages.

Award-winning author Kate DiCamillo served as Summer Reading Champion previously, in 2015 and 2016.

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