



## Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival

*Our mission is to foster a community effort to celebrate and promote reading by connecting teens and authors.*

\* [www.teenbookfest.org](http://www.teenbookfest.org) \*

January 17, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Teen Book Festival Receives Grant for Additional Author**



The Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival, Inc. will be able to host an additional author at the 2018 Festival, thanks to a \$3,420 grant from the LGBT Giving Circle at Rochester Area Community Foundation.

The grant will underwrite the costs to bring award-winning author Bill Konigsberg from Arizona to participate as a featured author at the Teen Book Festival (TBF). The goals of the Festival are to connect teen readers to award-winning authors, enhance students' reading and literacy skills, and to help youth develop their potential by encouraging interaction between aspiring teen writers and established authors.

The thirteenth annual festival will be held at Nazareth College on Saturday, May 19, 2018. TBF Board Member Lisa Wemett thanked the LGBT Giving Circle at a reception held for the grantees, "on behalf of the thousands of teens who have come to know TBF as a safe place to be a reader and to share that enjoyment with everyone across all backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and dreams." The grant funds will underwrite several appearances while Konigsberg is in Rochester. He will visit three school districts prior to the Teen Book Fest and also present a three-hour master class for adults on creative writing on Thursday evening, May 17, at Writers & Books ([www.wab.org](http://www.wab.org)).

Bill Konigsberg books are known for their humor, tenderness, and sympathy. *Out of Pocket* won the Lambda Literary Award in 2009 and *The Porcupine of Truth* received the Stonewall Book Award in 2016. Bill worked as a sports writer and editor for the Associated Press from 2005-2008. His front page article,

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"Sports World Still a Struggle for Gays," on ESPN.com earned him a GLAAD Media Award in 2002. Currently, Konigsberg is the Assistant Professor of Practice at the Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University.

Catherine Lewis, Chair of the Grant Making Committee of the LGBT Giving Circle, stated that a crucial priority is reaching youth and celebrating the varied culture of the LGBT community. Bringing an author whose work includes LGBT characters and themes to the Teen Book Festival and Writers & Books can help make a real difference in the quality of life for LGBT individuals and the community at large. The Giving Circle was established at the Community Foundation by a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and allies. In the sixth year of their grant awards, the Giving Circle distributed \$30,000 to fifteen nonprofit organizations that are inclusive and support the LGBT community across an eight-county region.

The mission of the Teen Book Festival is to foster a community effort to celebrate and promote reading by connecting teens and authors. TBF has developed a loyal following, doubling its attendance over the past five years, reaching over 2,200 participants in 2017 who were able to hear more than two dozen authors at this all-day event. Stephanie Squicciarini, Teen Services Librarian for the Fairport Public Library, is founder and president of the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival which was first offered in 2006.

Many school districts make the day a field trip opportunity for their middle- and high-school students, indicating a clear endorsement of the academic and social benefits of TBF. In 2017, over 1,100 students and chaperones arrived at the Fest by bus, representing 45 school districts from across Central and Western New York and the Southern Tier. Attendees also traveled from as far away as Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, New England, and even Italy to meet their favorite authors.

With the assistance of more than 300 adult and teen volunteers from area school districts and the community, there is no direct cost to the participants to attend the Festival. Students and adults interested in supporting the Festival or volunteering for 2018 should visit the Teen Book Festival website, **[www.teenbookfest.org](http://www.teenbookfest.org)**.

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