



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 **

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival, Inc. will be able to host an additional author at the 2017 Festival, thanks to a \$1,730 grant from the LGBT Giving Circle at Rochester Area Community Foundation.

The grant will underwrite the costs to bring award-winning author Nina LaCour from California 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 twelfth festival will be held at Nazareth College on Saturday, May 20, 2017. Founder and President of the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival, Stephanie Squicciarini thanked the LGBT Giving Circle at a reception on November 17 held for the grantees at the Strathallan Rochester Hotel, "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."

Nina LaCour has written three critically acclaimed young adult novels: ***Hold Still***, ***The Disenchantments***, and ***Everything Leads to You***. Nina recently collaborated with David Levithan to write a novel entitled ***You Know Me Well***. Her novels have been selected for the Junior Library Guild and ALA Best Books for Young Adults lists. Nina won the 2009 Northern California Book Award for Children's Literature. While in Rochester, LaCour will give a talk open to the public and visit two school districts prior to the Teen Book Fest.

Catherine Lewis, Chair of the Grant Making Committee of the LGBT Giving Circle, stated grants totaling over \$27,000 were awarded to 19 nonprofit organizations across an eight-county region to support a broad array of social service, cultural, and LGBT rights projects. 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 will “help make a real difference in the quality of life for LGBT individuals and the community at large,” said Angela Bonazinga, co-chair of the Giving Circle. The Giving Circle was established at the Community Foundation by a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and allies. In just five years, the LGBT Giving Circle has distributed more than \$100,000 in grants and raised more than \$100,000 for its endowment.

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 2016 who were able to hear more than two dozen authors at this all-day event. 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 2016, over 1,700 students and chaperones arrived by bus, representing 43 school districts from across Central and Western New York and the Southern Tier. 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 volunteering for 2017 may sign up in February on the Teen Book Festival website, www.teenbookfest.org.

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