

NEWS

“The Great Read” Finale to feature cultural art, performances

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Plainfield – The “Great Read” community reading initiative will wrap up its 2009-10 season on April 8, 2010 with a Finale Celebration featuring a Mexican opera singer, a female Latina-African American dance troupe and the winners of the “Great Read” Art Contest.

This special event will be held at 7 p.m. at the Bolingbrook Golf Club, 2001 Rodeo Drive, Bolingbrook. The Gala Celebration is free and open to the community.

This year’s “Great Read” program has featured the novel, “Into the Beautiful North,” by award-winning author Luis Alberto Urrea.

This lyrical, funny and timely story tells the tale of three modern Mexican girls inspired by a classic American movie to immigrate to the United States and bring back old-fashioned warriors to save their tiny village.

Their journey also provides a thought-provoking overview of the many-faceted issue of immigration; changing community; and the kind of challenges and opportunities experienced by the Plainfield area in recent years thanks to its growing cultural, racial and ethnic diversity.

In line with the culturally-diverse themes of “Into the Beautiful North,” the “Great Read” Finale Celebration is scheduled to include performances by singer Gabriela Sevilla, and the YMS Step Team.

Sevilla was born in Mexico City, Mexico, and has been living in the United States for two years.

She is a classically-trained singer who has performed as a soloist with several prestigious Mexican orchestras. She now sings with the “New Classic Singers” group from the College of DuPage.

The YMS Step Team is a group of 7th and 8th grade girls from Yorkville Middle School representing the African American and Latina community. The troupe has been dancing for three years.

The Finale Celebration will also highlight the winners of the first-ever “Great Read” Art Contest. Local artists have been invited to create works around the theme, “Coming To America – the Immigration Experience.”

This year’s “Great Read” program has also featured:

- several visits, readings and signings by the author;
- bilingual educational children’s programs;
- a display of students’ “heritage art”;
- a contest to name a new coffee drink around the book’s theme;
- a showing of “The Magnificent Seven”, the movie which inspires the main characters to come to the United States in search of their own heroes;

“Into the Beautiful North” is a wonderful story about immigration, changing community and similar issues relevant to the Plainfield area, which has experienced significant cultural and racial change in recent years.

The main characters’ town is being overrun by bandits because the men left years ago to find work in “Los Yunaites.” Along the way they meet a cast of characters as interesting as any in modern literature.

Urrea is a master story teller who knows first-hand about living in both Mexico and America. The book is rich, charming and inspirational.

He also knows quite a bit about cultural diversity, having been born in Tijuana, Mexico to a Mexican father and American mother, and raised most of his life in the United States.

Urrea now lives in Naperville and teaches creative writing at the University of Illinois-Chicago. He is a critically acclaimed author of 11 books, and award-winning poet and essayist.

The Great Read was created in 2004 and designed to promote literacy, reading, conversation and community in the greater Plainfield area.

“The Great Read” is presented by the Plainfield Public Library, Plainfield School District 202, Joliet Public Library, Fountaindale Public Library and Shorewood-Troy Public Library; and the Joliet, Bolingbrook, Plainfield and Naperville Barnes and Noble stores. The program is supported by a generous grant from the Plainfield Foundation for Excellence.

More information about The Great Read 2009-2010 is available at www.psd202.org/greatread.

