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Young Adult Southern Book Con turns new page for young readers

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com 1 hr ago

Teen suicide, school bullying and other issues are becoming more common themes in young adult literature, according to Veronica Rainwater, the Warren County Public Library's youth services manager.

For Rainwater, who spends much of her time encouraging children to read for fun, it's a welcome trend that explores issues that resonate with young people.

"There's a lot of coming-of-age stories, and most of the young adult genre is based around pivotal points in kids' lives," she said.

This week, students will get the chance to meet writers who inspire them through the inaugural Young Adult Southern Book Con. All events are free and open to the public.

The event will be Friday and Saturday in downtown Bowling Green. It will feature 35 authors of young adult or middle grades literature, including Jay Asher, author of the best-seller "Thirteen Reasons Why."

Sara Volpi, who helps organize the Southern Kentucky Book Fest as a literary outreach coordinator with Western Kentucky University Libraries, said the book fest has seen more teens show up in recent years.

In light of that, Volpi said book fest organizers wanted to create an event to celebrate the young adult genre. Volpi said more than 500 students have registered for the Young Adult Southern Book Con.

A big part of the genre's appeal is the willingness of its writers to tackle contemporary issues, she said.

“They're not straying away from writing about tough subjects, but they're doing it in a way that's palatable for teenagers,” she said.

Kicking off Friday at the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center, Asher will give the event's keynote address. Author panels will be offered throughout the day, including those focusing on authors' writing journeys and writing about high school struggles and issues like immigration, teen suicide and rape culture. Book signings will be at 1:35 p.m.

On Saturday, events and panels will be spread out throughout downtown Bowling Green through an “Author Hop” format.

Asher will sign books from 9 to 9:30 a.m. at Yellowberri.



A larger signing will be from 11:30 a.m. to noon at the D93 WDNS-FM radio station on College Street, with a second signing there from 2 to 3 p.m.

A map of “Author Hop” locations and both days’ schedules are available at yasbookcon.org.

Although the event is geared toward young people, Volpi said adults who love young adult literature are welcome.

Rainwater agreed, adding the weekend’s events will have something for everyone. “Even if they’re not particularly interested in getting a book signed, it still could be a lot of fun for the participants,” she said.

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Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.