



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Authors and Publishers Lead Discussion of Diversity
in Children's Book Publishing*

Sunday, July 1 at 10:30am on the Diversity Stage (Booth 2250)

San Diego, Ca.—Sunday, July 1 on the Diversity in Publishing Stage at the American Library Association Conference, The Collective Book Studio, Lil' Libros, and Bitty Bao Books will take a deep dive into the current and future state of diversity in children's book publishing – as authors, publishers, parents, and educators.

Author Phillip D. Cortez will discuss the inspiration behind his latest children's book, *I'll Be the Moon: A Migrant Child's Story* (The Collective Book Studio, published in both English and Spanish).

Author and Educator Audrey Barbakoff will share her insight regarding both visibility and representation, as well as the educational value of her Jewish Own Voices picture Book *The Schlemiel Kids Save the Moon* (The Collective Book Studio).

Author of more than 15 bilingual first-concept books and Co-Founder of Lil' Libros, Patty Rodriguez, shares her vision on children having accessibility to the books she has written and published.

Author and Co-Founder of Bitty Bao Books, Lacey Benard, will share the rewards of having culturally relevant Chinese bilingual board books to aid in literacy and education for the earliest of readers.

The Panel will be moderated by Monique M. Dupree, Chicago-based social media influencer and diversity advocate also known as Nanny Miss Monique.

Angela Engel Publisher & Founder of The Collective Book Studio brought this panel together. "We want to showcase how far children's book publishing has come in representing the diverse world in which we live, but also discuss the realities of navigating discoverability and accessibility for diverse books. When kids grow up seeing themselves in books they grow up feeling like they matter and this is important to us!"

Audience Q&A and book signings to follow, along with raffled gift bags and books from the publishers.

Details:

Sunday, July 1, 2024

10:30am – 11:20am

Location: Exhibit Hall - Diversity in Publishing Stage (Booth 2250)

Diversity Discussion with The Collective Book Studio, Lil' Libros, and Bitty Bao Books

About the speakers:

Phillip D. Cortez: Author of multiple children's books, including "Night Rhythms" and "When I Close My Eyes." Based in El Paso, Texas, Cortez draws inspiration from his family and upbringing.

Audrey Barbakoff is a librarian, educator, and entrepreneur. She holds a doctorate of education and a master of library and information science. As a Jewish mother, she is passionate about sharing the vibrancy of Jewish humor, languages, and stories with the next generation. Though she has written several professional development books for librarians, this is her debut picture book.

Patty Rodriguez: Born and raised in Los Angeles, Patty is a leading American Latina figure and co-founder of Lil' Libros, a critically acclaimed children's publishing house. Despite initial rejections, she and her childhood friend Ariana Stein successfully launched Lil' Libros, which has sold over two million books and is widely recognized in the Latinx community and beyond.

Lacey Benard: Former educator turned co-founder of Bitty Bao, creating Chinese bilingual board books for young readers. Benard, an American-Born-Chinese woman, prioritizes language acquisition for her children through bilingual literature and cultural events.

Monique M. Dupree, based in Chicago, transitioned from a 20-year nanny career to a social media influencer and advocate for diversity in children's literature. Founder of the Nanny Miss Monique brand, she manages content for nanny agencies, partners with international publishers, and has interviewed over 80 authors and illustrators. Monique speaks at major conferences and is featured in various publications and podcasts, leveraging her extensive childcare experience to connect with parents and address their unique challenges. www.nannymissmonique.com

About the Publishers:

The Collective Book Studio The Collective Book Studio is an award-winning publisher, dedicated to producing high-quality, diverse, and authentic books that inspire, inform, and entertain readers of all ages. Founded by Angela Engel, the studio prides itself on being a women-owned, West Coast-based publisher that values creativity and innovation.

Lil' Libros is a community-owned, employee-owned, minority and woman-founded children's bilingual publisher based out of Los Angeles. Its mission is to inspire a love for reading in two languages by creating multicultural books that celebrate the lives and experiences of its community. www.lillibros.com

Bitty Bao Books creates bilingual books and products that inspire, teach, and thoughtfully connect families to Asian culture and language in a loving and authentic way. www.bittybao.com

For more information, please contact:

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