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Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band **Chosen as 2014 Michigan Reads! Book**

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LANSING – The Library of Michigan is pleased to announce *Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band*, by author Kwame Alexander and illustrated by Tim Bowers (Sleeping Bear Press, 2009) as the featured title for the 2014 “Michigan Reads! One State, One Children’s Book” program.

The Library of Michigan coordinates the original “Michigan Reads!” program. The program is devoted to increasing early childhood literacy and pre-reading readiness. Programming, events and author visits are scheduled throughout the state in September and October 2014, with the program launch on September 8 at the Pleasant View Magnet School in Lansing to mark International Literacy Day. You can find full program information and many early literacy resources at www.michigan.gov/michiganreads.

“Reading is fun, enjoyable, and important for children,” said State Superintendent Mike Flanagan. “Having all children reading at grade level by the end of third grade is our top goal and is the bedrock of student success in school and life.”

The “Michigan Reads!” program is modeled after the “One Book, One Community” concept and is designed to emphasize the importance of shared reading practices with babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and young school-age children. These practices set the stage for fluent reading achievement in children as they enter school.

In this book, Acoustic Rooster learns about music, teamwork and sportsmanship. After realizing he can't win the barnyard talent contest as a solo act with such fierce competition, Acoustic, a rooster with a love for jazz, looks to help from other animals. A quartet with an unbelievable sound is created, with their ability to work together cleverly captured in this book with rhyming text, references to key American musicians, and vivid illustrations.

“We anticipate that this year’s Michigan Reads! program will get Michigan residents of all ages reading aloud to children, inspiring a love of reading in both readers and listeners,” said State Librarian Randy Riley. “*Acoustic Rooster* is a great way to bring children and parents together, reading and learning.”

Author Kwame Alexander is a poet, publisher, and an award-winning producer of literary programs. He has written for television, the stage, and authored 13 books. He conducts writing/publishing workshops at schools and conferences throughout the country.

Supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in partnership with the Library of Michigan Foundation, the “Michigan Reads!” program recognizes the importance of early and family literacy skills. For the eighth year in a row, Target continues its generous sponsorship of “Michigan Reads!,” with additional contributions from Jackson National Life Insurance and Sleeping Bear Press. The Lions Club of Michigan also is partnering with the Library of Michigan to participate in programs in local communities.

As a result of Target’s support, the Library of Michigan will provide a hardcover copy of the book and programming materials to all public libraries, elementary schools, Head Start and Great Start Readiness programs across the state. In addition, Kwame Alexander and Tim Bowers will tour a number of Michigan libraries and schools. These books and services provide a foundation for literacy, enabling future school success.

The “Michigan Reads!” program provides librarians, early childhood educators, parents, and caregivers with ideas to help children develop literacy skills through play-based activities. Since its inception in 2004, the program aims to promote the value and benefits of reading early and often to children, to encourage family bonding through reading and to increase awareness and usage of Michigan's libraries as excellent resources for learning.

More information about “Michigan Reads!” including dates and locations of author visits and materials for parents, teachers and caregivers is available at www.michigan.gov/michiganreads.

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