



★ All times are Central Daylight Time (CDT)

WIK '26: SEEDS OF INSPIRATION — FRIDAY EARLY SEEDS SCHEDULE

PORTFOLIO DROP-OFF (Pre-registration required)

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Auditorium

BOOKSTORE DROP-OFF (Pre-registration required)

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM and 4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Auditorium

THANK YOU BOOKS: THE AUTOGRAPH PARTY

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Homewood Public Library, Auditorium

(Autograph Party participation as a signing author or illustrator requires pre-registration) Open to the public. Children welcomed with an adult (18+).

Meet your favorite children's book authors and illustrators from Alabama, Georgia, and the Florida panhandle! Browse a selection of Picture Books and Middle Grade (MG) and Young Adult (YA) novels for purchase, and get your copy signed by participating authors and illustrators! Find a new favorite for your bookshelf or pick up a book or two to give as a gift or to donate to a classroom library or the Joan Broerman Book Basket (an SCBWI Southern Breeze tradition since 1997!). There's a story waiting for you at the WIK '26 pop-up bookstore!

PORTFOLIO SHOWCASE

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Homewood Public Library, Auditorium

An Exhibition of artwork by Southern Breeze Illustrators. Open to the public through the end of the conference, Saturday. Portfolio showcase participation as an exhibiting illustrator requires pre-registration.

KIDLIT TRIVIA NIGHT

7:45 PM – 9:00 PM

Tactic Meeting Room, Aloft Hotel,
1903 29th Ave S, Homewood, AL 35209

Come socialize or test your knowledge of children's literature in an evening of fun and friendly competition. If you signed up during registration, you've been placed on a team.

- 7:45–8:00 PM · Check in, sit with your team, and get to know your fellow teammates and creatives.
- 8:00–8:45 PM · Kidlit Trivia Game
- 8:45–9:00 PM · Prizes awarded to winners!

HALF-DAY INTENSIVES (Pre-registration required)

 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM

 Homewood Public Library 1721 Oxmoor Road, Homewood, AL 35209

Check In (Please bring your own water and snacks): 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM · Main Entrance Corridor (outside of auditorium)

Picture Book Intensive

Presenter: Rachel Orr, Agent at Prospect Literary

 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM

 Round Auditorium

- **Voices Carry: How to Develop Your Authorial Voice:** Learn the distinction between a solid voice and a flat one that doesn't grab reader's attention.
- **Live Edits:** Rachel will use work submitted by attendees in advance and do live edits exactly as she would on her client's manuscripts.
- **How to Hook an Agent/Editor:** Rachel will show examples of books that have hooked her. Participants should bring a mentor text to work with as Rachel guides you through some writing exercises using the mentor text. This session is focused on writing craft, but will also touch on the marketing aspect of having your book stand out in the marketplace.

Novel Intensive

Presenter: Matt Phipps, Associate Editor at G. P. Putnam's Sons (Penguin Young Readers)

 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM

 Ground Floor Classroom 102

This workshop will take a holistic and highly collaborative approach to the process of finding inspiration for your novel, going from dreaming to drafting, crafting characters and story arcs that surprise you, and finding the right mentor texts to help guide you along the way. Come expecting writing prompts, conversation, and peer workshops--let's have some fun!

Illustrator Intensive: Cover Stories: Behind the Scenes of Captivating Design

Presenter: Sasha Illingworth, Associate Creative Director at Little Brown Books for Young Readers

 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM

 Ground Floor Classroom 116

A behind the scenes look at the cover design process from the perspective of an Associate Creative Director. With a focus on collaboration, creative strategy, and visual storytelling. We will explore how typography, color palettes, and composition come together to craft compelling covers that not only stand out on shelves but also serve the narrative.

Optional: Each participant is welcome to bring in a cover they have created for a dummy or create a cover for a picture book based on the following prompt: *"The Days The Colors Mixed" — For ages 3–7. Plot: It's the first day of school and hijinks happen during art class.*

WIK '26: SEEDS OF INSPIRATION — SATURDAY CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Homewood Public Library · 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM

CONFERENCE BOOKSTORE

 **8:30 AM – 5:00 PM**

 Auditorium

Support your region and purchase a book today! This pop-up bookstore, in partnership with Thank You Books, features titles from authors and illustrators from the Southern Breeze region.

PORTFOLIO SHOWCASE

 **8:30 AM – 4:30 PM**

 Auditorium

Portfolio Drop-Off (Pre-registration required) – Saturday drop-off: 8:30–9:00 AM · Location: Auditorium

Come browse artwork by regional illustrators.

JOAN BROERMAN BOOK BASKET

 **8:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

 Auditorium

Please consider donating a book to the Joan Broerman Book Basket, a beloved Southern Breeze tradition that dates to 1997! Enter the raffle for a chance to win!

Former RA Joan Broerman conceived of the idea for a book basket when she was inspired by a keynote by children's book editor Harold Underdown encouraging attendees to support library funding. Attendees and faculty are invited to purchase books from the bookstore to donate to the book basket, which will be signed by attending/participating authors and illustrators. Authors/Illustrators are also welcome to bring their own new or gently used children's books, and publishing professionals are welcome to bring books on behalf of their clients/house. At the end of the conference, the book basket collection will be awarded to one winner via a raffle to be donated to a library or school of their choice. Cataloguing funds are included.

Conference Registration

 **8:30 AM – 9:15 AM**

 *Homewood Public Library Main Level Entrance*

Grab your name tag, introduce yourself, and get ready for a full day of honing your craft.

Opening Remarks

 **9:15 AM – 9:30 AM**

 Auditorium

Morning Keynote with Award-Winning Author Randi Pink

 **9:30 AM – 10:00 AM**

 Auditorium

Session One | 10:10 AM – 11:00 AM

What a Character! Crafting Strong Characters

Rachel Orr

Getting to Yes: Why Editors Say No

Matt Phipps

How a Picture Book is Made

Shulokhana Khan

From Doodles to Deals

Sasha Illingworth

Marketing Your Published Books

TK Read

 Auditorium

 Round Auditorium

 Ground Level Classroom 102

 Ground Level Classroom 116

 Ground Level Classroom 109

Session Two | 11:10 AM – 12:00 PM

Beginnings and Endings

Rachel Orr

Write Back! Defying Book Bans

Randi Pink

How to Keep Readers Turning the Page

Shulokhana Khan

From Pitch to Published

Sasha Illingworth

Author Visit Business 101

Shanda McCloskey

 Auditorium

 Round Auditorium

 Ground Level Classroom 102

 Ground Level Classroom 116

 Ground Floor Classroom 109

Lunch (Perfect time to build new connections!)



12:00 PM – 1:30 PM



Nearby restaurants in Homewood, or bring lunch from home

Session Three | 1:30 PM – 2:20 PM

First Pages Panel for Picture Books

First Pages Panel for MG and YA Novels

Illustrator Quickfire Panel

 Auditorium

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 Ground Level Classroom 116

Session Four | 2:30 PM – 3:20 PM

Character Lab: Building Believable Characters

Randi Pink

**Are We There Yet? Looking at Different Publishing Timelines,
From Submission to On-Sale**

Matt Phipps

Putting Together a Graphic Novel Pitch Packet

Shanda McCloskey

Self-Publishing Doesn't Mean You Do It Yourself

Sonja McGiboney

 Auditorium

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 Ground Level Classroom 109

Afternoon Keynote with Award Winning Illustrator Shanda McCloskey

 3:30 PM – 4:00 PM

 Auditorium

Closing Remarks

 4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

 Auditorium

Illustrator Pick up Portfolios

 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

 Auditorium

Pitch Critique / Book Dummy Roundtables | 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Please note: These take place simultaneously with the Informal Critiques.

Roundtable with Editor Matt Phipps

 Round Auditorium

Roundtable with Agent Rachel Orr

 Ground Level Classroom 109

Roundtable with Editor Shulokhana Khan

 Ground Level Classroom 102

Roundtable with Creative Director Sasha Illingworth

 Ground Level Classroom 116

Informal Critiques | 4:45 PM – 5:45 PM

 4:45 PM – 5:45 PM

 Auditorium

Please note: These take place simultaneously with the Pitch Critique Roundtables.

We will be sending out post-conference submission guidelines and an evaluation during the week of April 7th.