

# JUST WHAT IS THE YOUNG AUTHORS' CONFERENCE?

The Young Authors' Conference, held each year in May at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, is an event sponsored by the Illinois Language and Literacy Council, in conjunction with the Illinois Reading Council. Designed as a celebration to honor exceptional writing by students in grades K through 8, the conference provides an opportunity for these young writers to meet published authors and to hear how the authors themselves create the characters and stories that have become their books.

The daylong event, held on a Saturday, actually begins on Friday night for students, parents, or volunteers who wish to come early to attend a panel discussion by the authors in the Bone Center bookstore. This is an informal chance to meet all of the authors at the conference, and to ask them questions about themselves and their work.

On the actual day of the event, which will be **Saturday, May 19th, 2012**, the students register in the ballroom where they receive their room assignments and a book bag containing a pencil and gold seal, which they can later place on their own story. After hearing an introductory speaker, parents take off on their own until the afternoon, and students' head for small group sessions headed by volunteer parents and teachers. Students spend the next several hours sharing their stories, eating lunch, listening to authors speak. The day ends with students and parents reunited in an awards ceremony where students receive certificates for participating in the Young Authors' Conference as well as copies of the books written by the author they heard speak. The gifted young writers have had a full day, and often leave with stories for next year's Young Author competition starting to take shape in their heads.

Young Authors' materials will be posted on the ISBE website as well as IRC's website later this fall. Notify your district office to watch for these materials so your district will be included in this celebration of young writers! Updated information will also be communicated via Facebook. Please "like" us at "Illinois Young Author's Conference" for the most current information.

**Volunteers are needed!** This conference can only be held with the help of the many adult volunteers who lead or assist small groups, escort authors, or perform other necessary tasks throughout the day. If you can help in any way, please contact Christina Podraza at [cpodraza@lisle202.org](mailto:cpodraza@lisle202.org).