



For Immediate Release

May 31, 2006

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2007 "Reading Together" Book Selection Announced

Community-wide selection committee chooses Mark Haddon's
captivating and widely heralded novel:
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.

Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S. Rose St., announces the early selection of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon as the 2007 "Reading Together" title. Reading Together invites people of all ages from all walks of life to read and then discuss important issues raised by a single book. Thousands of county residents have participated in the four previous Reading Together programs.

Kalamazoo Public Library leads Reading Together with the collaboration of libraries, educational institutions, health and social service agencies, cultural, civic and religious organizations, businesses, the media, and local governments throughout Kalamazoo County. The Kalamazoo Community Foundation helped the library launch Reading Together with funding for the first three years with grants from their "Better Together" initiative.

A committee of thirty-five community leaders, representing local high schools and colleges, libraries, bookstores, book clubs, civic and social service organizations, media outlets and various religious denominations, selected *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Selecting a book whose main character is an autistic teenager offers opportunities to draw in new participants. "The selection committee felt that *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* will spark important conversations about what it means to be different in our community," says Hawxhurst. "The book's combination of unusual language, illustrations, accessibility, humor, literary allusions and compelling characters opens doors to many levels of discussion."

Reading Together programming will take place in February and March 2007. Book discussions and a variety of special events will take place throughout this two-month period.

This year's community read title was selected early in response to repeated requests from the educational community that the title be determined before summer break, when many teachers prepare their curricula and lesson plans for the next academic year. "Our hope," says Reading Together coordinator Joan Hawxhurst, "is that this extra lead time will enable more educators to participate in Reading Together with their high school and college classes. Haddon's novel has been well-received by students and lends itself to lesson plans in English, psychology, sociology, math, and many other topics."

Beginning in the fall of 2006, copies of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* will be available at all Kalamazoo Public Library locations and at other libraries and bookstores throughout the county. More information about the details of the program will also be released in the fall.

About the Book Selection Process

This year's book selection process continued the Reading Together tradition of democratic community participation. Thirty-five community members were invited to serve on the selection committee and to offer their book suggestions. A list of 88 titles was compiled from: suggestions from library patrons and staff solicited over the library website and at all KPL locations, suggestions gathered from last year's evaluation process, librarian recommendations, other community reading programs' selections, and suggestions from community leaders. In the first round of voting, each committee member chose ten titles from the 88 offered. All top ten lists were then compiled into a short list of 21.

The committee members gathered for two hours of intense discussion on May 24 and afterward they voted on the list of 21 books. When the votes were tallied, one book emerged as the clear favorite of the committee. Library staff then confirmed that multiple editions of Haddon's novel would be available from book vendors.

About *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

"Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, Christopher is autistic. Everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning for him. Routine, order, and predictability shelter him from the messy wider world. Then, at fifteen, Christopher's carefully constructed world falls apart when he finds his neighbor's dog, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork, and he is initially blamed for the killing." "Christopher decides that he will track down the real killer and turns to his favorite fictional character, the impeccably logical Sherlock Holmes, for inspiration. But the investigation leads him down some unexpected paths and ultimately brings him face to face with the dissolution of his parents' marriage. As he tries to deal with the crisis within his own family, we are drawn into the workings of Christopher's mind." --BOOK JACKET.

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