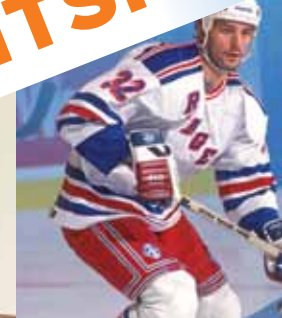
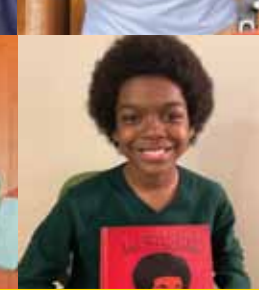


2023-2024 Make It! HAPPEN! TOUR

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culturally responsive
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K-12

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- Life Skills
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- Building Community
- Career Development
- STEM/STEAM
- Achieving Goals

To schedule an **ONLINE** or
IN-SCHOOL visit, call 800.350.7180
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2023-2024 Make It! HAPPEN!

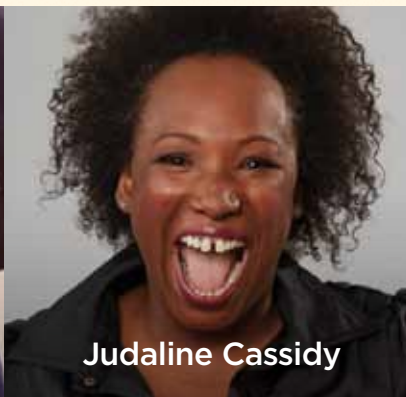
TOUR



Kianny N. Antigua



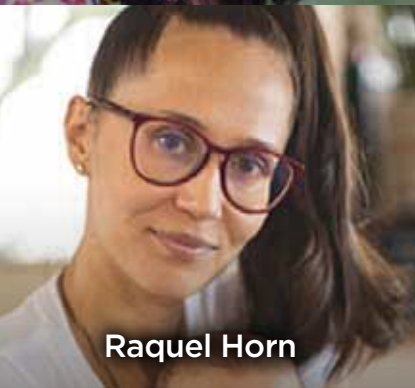
Kobi Backer



Judaline Cassidy



Diedra Cole



Raquel Horn



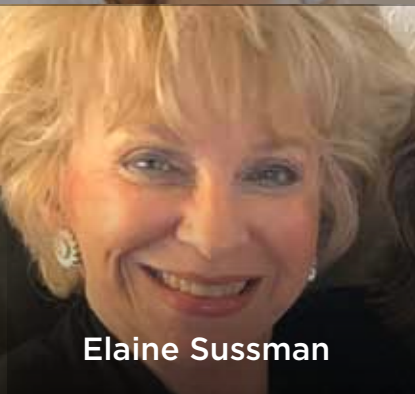
Stéphane Matteau



Patti Newman



Tanya Montás Paris



Elaine Sussman



Aiden Taylor



Linda Taylor



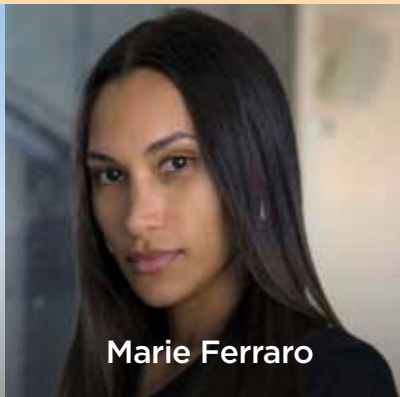
Anaya Willabus

To schedule an **online** or **in-school** visit, call

Online or In-School Author and Role Model Visits and Presentations



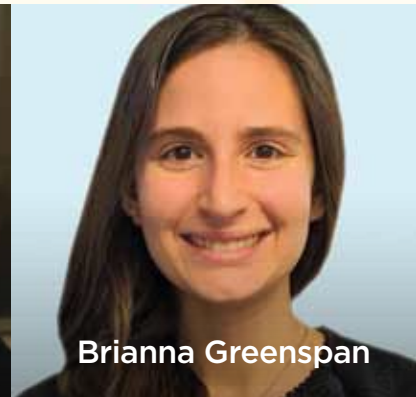
Solomon Dubner



Marie Ferraro



Shelley Goldberg



Brianna Greenspan



Amen Rahh



Stephen Ritz



Jared Sams



Latoya Smith



Big Boy Wills



Cheryl Wills



Domingo Zapata

**Meet the
Make It
Happen!
Team!**



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Available In-person or Online

Kianny N. Antigua, Author

Kianny specializes in writing bilingual children's literature based on her experiences as a young Dominican girl. Faced with a series of dead-end jobs as a teenager, Kianny made the decision to go to school and get an education so that she can pursue her life goals. Her book *Greña / Crazy Hair* won first place in the Most Inspirational Children's Picture Book category of the Latino Book Awards in 2018.

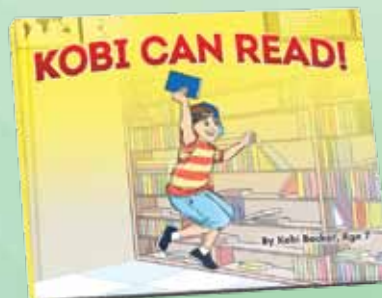
Message: Self-acceptance, girl empowerment, understanding and appreciating differences



Available In-person or Online

Kobi Backer, Author

Kobi Backer lives in Miami, Florida. He has two brothers and two sisters and a chihuahua. He loves to ride and jump ponies and to compete at horse shows. He is the top rider in his division. He loves sports and playing outside. School was very hard for him in kindergarten and first grade. But since he worked so hard in second grade and had so many people around him to support him, he is now great at school and doesn't need any additional help. Kobi wants to do something in riding or sports when he grows up—maybe the Olympics or the NFL.



Message: Literacy, perseverance, self-motivation, overcoming challenges, self-regulation, setting goals



Available In-person or Online

Judaline Cassidy, Plumber

Judaline impacts lives and inspires women around the world given her challenges as a minority woman in a white-male-dominated industry. After becoming a successful plumber in New York City, Judaline founded Tools & Tiaras, a program that teaches girls how to use tools and shows them how they can get involved with trade jobs!

Message: Overcoming bullying and discrimination, financial literacy, finding mentors, perseverance, career readiness, girl empowerment, entrepreneurship



Available In-person or Online

Diedra Cole, Author

Despite being diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of three months, author Diedra Cole is dedicated to showing that through perseverance and positivity, great things can be accomplished. Diedra's work shows her belief that regardless of differences, challenges and obstacles can be overcome.

Message: Perseverance, self-motivation, anti-bullying, overcoming challenges, goal setting



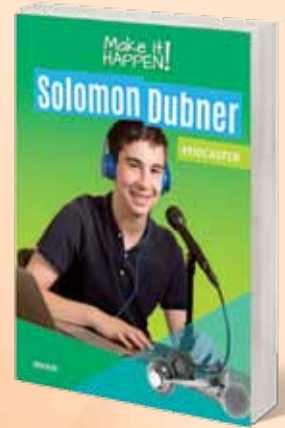


Available In-person or Online

Solomon Dubner, Podcaster

Solomon is a teenage podcaster who worked hard to overcome learning challenges to succeed in school and life. Following a trip to England with his family, he fell in love with soccer. Solomon then started his own podcast that features him and his dad, Stephen, coauthor of the popular *Freakonomics* books. Their podcast reaches audiences around the world.

Message: Overcoming learning challenges, resiliency, career readiness, entrepreneurship, career readiness



Available In-person or Online

Marie Ferraro, Author

Marie is inspired by her family's history of helping people to overcome great challenges to build better lives. Her children's stories focus on messages that promote self-acceptance, diversity, and equity. Her presentations inspire readers to understand the power of friendship and generosity and to respect the differences between people.

Message: Friendship, understanding economic differences, expressing gratitude, social justice, equity





Available In-person or Online

Shelley Goldberg, Educator & Reporter

Shelley was the Parenting and Family Reporter for NY1 News for over 20 years. Her presentations give students and parents the confidence to develop career readiness skills as well as to improve health and wellness.

Message: College and career readiness, nutrition, health and wellness



Available In-person or Online

Brianna Greenspan, Author

Brianna Greenspan has been using the power of positive affirmations for the past 13 years to overcome physical challenges brought on by being born with a chronic invisible illness. When Brianna decided that the labels and limitations of her medical team did not align with what she believed to be possible for her life, everything began to change. Instead of being held back by neck braces, surgeries, and countless doctors' visits, Brianna completed her first 10k and hiked Half Dome at Yosemite National Park. Brianna is living proof that the power of positive affirmations coupled with extraordinary faith and immense effort really can overcome the biggest obstacles.

In spite of Brianna's personal health battles and previous limiting beliefs, Brianna's decision to see the word "impossible" as "I'm possible" has propelled her to reach new levels of achievement. By incorporating *the Miracle Morning* into her life, her outlook on her previous limitations was thrown out the window by adopting the mindset that with a commitment she could achieve anything.

Message: Mindfulness, resilience, wellness, empathy, setting goals





Available In-person or Online

Raquel Horn, Author

Raquel M. Horn is a photographer, designer, painter, writer, and a mom. She lives in Los Angeles with her son Dusko, her dog Governor, and her partner Damon Dash.

Message: STEM, setting goals, self-motivation, collaboration

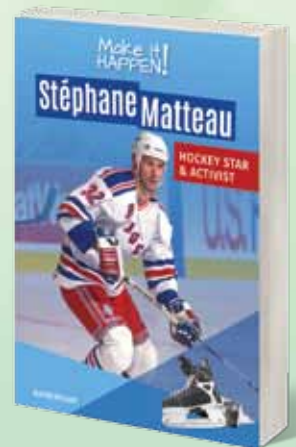


Available In-person or Online

Stéphane Matteau, Hockey Player & Activist

Stéphane is a former New York Rangers player who scored a Stanley Cup-winning goal for the team in 1994. He has battled anxiety and depression. Today, he travels around the world, mentoring and teaching kids to overcome their fears to achieve their own goals in life.

Message: Overcoming anxiety and depression, gaining compassion, setting goals



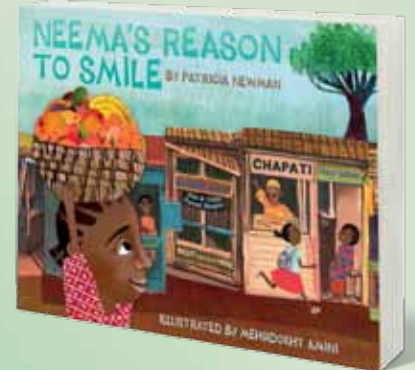


Available In-person or Online

Patti Newman, Author

Patti draws inspiration for her stories from real-world problems, big and small. Her presentations empower children to believe in themselves through explorations of topics, including the environment, girl empowerment, global citizenship, and social justice.

Her recent book, *Neema's Reason to Smile*, features a young girl in Kenya who developed a plan to pay for her schooling. It is a Parent's Choice Foundation Recommended Picture Book.



Message: Social justice, understanding differences, financial literacy, girl empowerment, environment, STEAM



Available In-person or Online

Tanya Montás Paris, Author

Tanya is a Dominican writer and poet. She has been a classroom teacher for over two decades. She enjoys immersing herself in fantastical worlds, whether of her own creation or imagined by others. Tanya is happiest when riding upon dragons, scheming with fairies or concocting potions of mischievous outcomes. Tanya lives in the Boston area with her husband and their two teenagers. She is also the co-founder of Las Margaritas Foundation, a non-profit organization working to educate underserved children in the Dominican Republic.

Message: Empathy, overcoming grief, understanding differences, well-being, mindfulness, compassion, self-expression





Available In-person or Online



Amen Rahh, Author

Amen Rahh is a nationally known educator, writer, and speaker paving the way towards educational revolution. Trained at the International Institute for Restorative Practices, he has been a leading voice in the quest to transform the K-12 education experience in America. He founded University Pathways Public Service Academy, now considered a model school for building a Restorative Community. Amen is from Compton, California and has partnered with the LA Clippers basketball team for a new basketball court, ThinkWatts for a new music program, Planet Fitness for a new weight room, and the FBI for a forensic science academy. He is nationally known for his creation of a unique house system at his school which increases a sense of belonging for his students at his school. The culturally relevant house system consists of four key secondary goals named after key individuals that represent these goals.

Message: Social justice, self-expression, empathy, resilience, understanding differences, career readiness, teamwork



Available In-person or Online

Stephen Ritz, Urban Farmer

Stephen is the founder of the Green Bronx Machine, a K-12 program that inspires students to achieve academic success by growing, eating, and loving their vegetables. As an urban farmer and teacher, Stephen grows healthy students and healthy schools to transform communities that are fragmented and marginalized into neighborhoods that are inclusive and thriving.



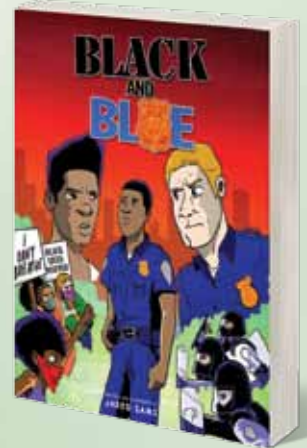
Message: Health and wellness, community building, urban farming, sustainability, STEM, career readiness, achieving success, entrepreneurship, inclusiveness, equity



Available In-person or Online

Jared Sams, Social Justice Writer & Artist

Jared is a self-taught artist who creates impactful graphic novels and channels his hip-hop and punk music influences to help children develop unique skills, passions, and creative expressions. Jared advocates for the voiceless through his art and strives to infuse his work with empathy. His graphic novel *Black & Blue* explores the tension between two brothers as they struggle to find common ground in the face of growing tensions between the police and Black Lives Matter protestors in their community.



Message: Social justice, self-expression, empathy, resilience, understanding differences, STEAM

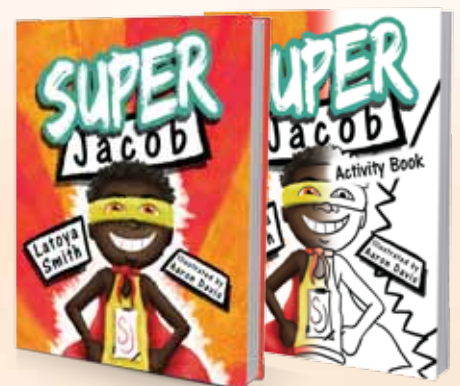


Available In-person or Online

Latoya Smith, Author

Latoya Marie Smith M.Ed. is a certified school counselor and the founder of Devoted 2 Restoration, INC. a nonprofit organization that provides emotional health education to children who have been affected by violence. Latoya has more than 10 years of experience assisting children with emotional discovery and coping skills. Her books are designed to entertain and educate children on emotional health topics such as self-esteem, anger management, jealousy and much more.

Message: Perseverance, empowerment, self regulation, mindfulness





Available In-person or Online

Elaine Sussman, Author

Elaine spent decades as an educational company executive before deciding to fulfill her dream of becoming a children's book author. Her first book, *The Boy Who Opened Our Eyes*, is the poignant story of her blind brother Mark and how he overcame his unique challenges. Her just released book, *Joey's Journey*, is the inspiring story of a young boy who overcomes great family hardship to build a life full of courage, resiliency, and hope. In addition to writing, Elaine presents to thousands of school children around the country every year, inspiring them to have empathy for others.

Message: Empathy, resilience, understanding differences, STEAM, compassion



Available In-person or Online

Aiden Taylor, Author

Aiden M. Taylor is a 13-year-old writer, actor, and model. He has been viewed by millions in television commercials, featured in print advertisements, and seen on one of the largest billboards in New York City's Times Square. Aiden has been featured on *ABC Eyewitness News*, on *NBC Nightly News with Lester Holl: Kids Edition* and in *People Magazine* for his wildly successful debut as an author for his first release, *Me And My Afro*, which promotes self love. With his new follow up, *When I Grow Up*, Aiden has another important message for his young readers: You can be anything you want if you set your mind to it! When Aiden is not writing uplifting books for children or working as an actor and model, he can be found pursuing his many interests and passions. He loves basketball, video games, poetry, math, and learning new things. He is a proud "Little Brother" in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City program.

Message: Self-confidence, goal setting, career readiness, mindfulness, understanding differences





Available In-person or Online

Linda Taylor, Author

Linda taps into her 25 years as a school teacher to write books that inspire students to acknowledge their feelings and work together to solve problems. Her two recently published series, *The Amazing Annabelle* and *Daring David* provide students with valuable life lessons about unity and justice.



Message: Overcoming bullying and discrimination, social justice, compassion, problem-solving, entrepreneurship

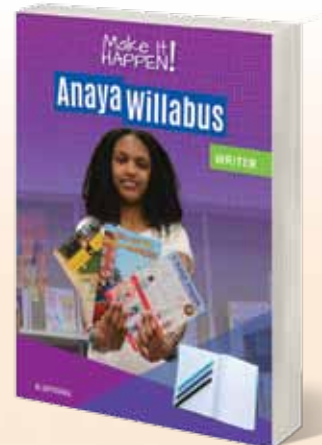


Available In-person or Online

Anaya Willabus, Author

Brooklyn-based Anaya is a 16-year-old student who is one of the youngest published authors in the nation. She has written three books and wrote her first book at age 8. Anaya strives to mentor young children and to inspire them to develop a life plan and to never give up on their dreams.

Message: Overcoming bullying and discrimination, financial literacy, finding mentors, perseverance, career readiness, girl empowerment



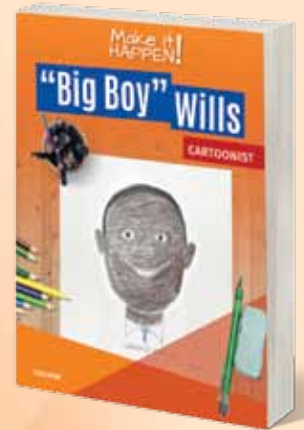


Available In-person or Online

“Big Boy” Wills, Artist/Cartoonist

Clarence “Big Boy” Wills is a cartoonist whose work has been displayed in art galleries and at events around the country. Diagnosed with autism as a child and unable to read until he was 10 years old, Big Boy has had to overcome many challenges to build a successful career. His presentations inspire students to understand that every person has his or her own unique measures of success.

Message: Overcoming obstacles, understanding differences, fostering creativity and self-expression, resourcefulness, determination, career readiness

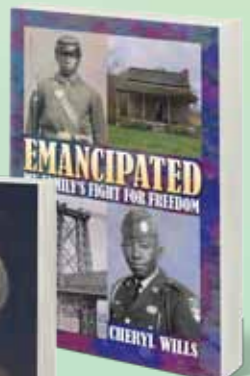


Available In-person or Online

Cheryl Wills, News Anchorwoman & Author

Cheryl is an award-winning Spectrum NY1 News TV anchorwoman and popular children’s author who is inspired by her family’s 150-year-old fight for freedom since the Civil War. Cheryl travels around the world, motivating students to connect with their family roots. Her powerful presentations also provide students with the confidence and skills they need to fight social injustices and to build productive lives.

Message: Exploring family roots, equity, leadership, initiative, perseverance, girl empowerment, social justice





Domingo Zapata, Artist

Domingo is a Spanish artist who as a young boy was happiest sneaking into the studio of the famous artist Joan Miró to admire his art. With discipline and commitment, Domingo found a way to turn his childhood passion into a fulfilling career as a world-renowned artist. Today, he travels around the world creating art and teaching children to achieve their life goals.

Message: Overcoming obstacles, STEAM, understanding differences, developing creativity and confidence, gender identity

Available In-person or Online



Make It HAPPEN! TOUR



2023-2024
Make It!
HAPPEN!

TOUR

Online or In-School Visits

- Features presentations by relatable and diverse authors and role models for K-12 students
- Inspires students to develop skills to overcome challenges and achieve goals in school, career, and life

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