2022 - 2023 Highlights

INPRINT

COOL BRAINS!

SERIES
Press Clippings
Houston author's stories reflective of her Dominican American roots

Jasmine Mendez says she writes to help fill a literary void created by a lack of Dominican voices.

Jasminne Mendez is often labeled an overnight success. That makes her laugh. “If you count 15 years, then I guess I am,” she said.

Her literary voice may be new to some, but her words are a confluence of many perspectives that have been developing for more than a decade.

The Houston-based Dominican American poet, playwright and author has written two memoirs for young adults, “Island of Dreams” and “Islands Apart: Becoming Dominican American,” chronicling her coming of age as an Afro Latina girl. Her poetry in “City Without Altar” was hailed by acclaimed author Julia Alvarez for bringing vividness to voices that are often silenced. Mendez also has written a children's book, “Josefina’s Habichuelas” and a book of essays, “Night-Blooming Jasmin(e).”

Her latest book, “Aniana Del Mar Jumps In” (Penguin), is a middle-grade novel about a 12-year-old Dominican American swimmer who is diagnosed with juvenile arthritis. On March 26, Mendez will be the featured author for Imprint Cool Brains! Series for children at Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School. Although she's been sharing her story for years, there has been a surge of interest in Mendez and other Black and Latino authors after the death of George Floyd and the nation’s racial reckoning and social unrest. Some readers may want to understand what they don’t know. Others may want to reaffirm what they do know.

There’s more acknowledgment now of why stories like mine matter and need to be heard,” Mendez said. “There is more of a yearning for stories that are intersectional and that combine a variety of experiences, like the female narrative, the Latina narrative, the Afro Latina narrative and living with chronic illness.” Mendez has been diagnosed with lupus and scleroderma, which are autoimmune diseases.

“I live at the intersection of all of these things,” she said. “I’m a daughter of immigrants. I’m bilingual. I live in Texas, which complicates things even more. There has been a yearning for these kinds of stories.”

For Mendez, who was raised in San Antonio, writing became the outlet for her tell the stories about her life and experiences, something she had never read in literature books. Dominican authors sharing their personal stories were rare, except for Alvarez, who rose to prominence with her novels, “In the Time of the Butterflies” (1994) and “Yol” (1997).

Mendez said she devoured books growing up, even though her parents couldn’t afford them. Her father took the family to the library every two weeks on weekends.

“My dad was very big on reading, and he always read in front of us, so I would write these short little quirky stories in my notebook, sharing them with my dad, with teachers, but I never really thought or considered it as a sustainable career,” she said.

Mendez turned to theater in middle school, high school and as a college student at University of Houston. She even tried to break into the local theater scene, but with the exception of the Ensemble Theatre, a Black artistic company founded in 1975, there weren’t many opportunities for a Dominican American actress, she said. So she discovered the local spoken-word scene, where she could combine poetry and theater.

Her first published work came out of a health crisis. Mendez, who holds both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from UH, was teaching full time at a local charter school when she became ill. She took a leave from teaching and used the time off to put together a book of poems and essays. The book, “Island of Dreams,” came out in 2013 and won an International Latino Book award.

That lack of seeing herself reflected in books as a child fueled her desire to create her own stories as an adult, Mendez said.

“When I sit to write a story, or a book or even a poem, it’s because there’s a part of me that would have needed that poem or that story at some point,” she said. “So it’s this desire to want to share my story so that someone else doesn’t have to feel as alone as I have throughout my life, because I didn’t have those stories reflected back at me anywhere in literature, for the most part. It’s a desire to make connections and build those connections between people.”

Mendez’ personal stories explore her experience as a Dominican American. But it was after the death of Sandra Bland, who was pulled over in 2015 for a traffic violation in Waller County and found dead hanging in her jail cell three days later, that Mendez started calling herself a Black woman.

“Between Trayvon Martin and Sandra Bland, I started to interrogate my own internalized anti-Blackness. I never felt comfortable as a Black woman because culturally I grew up Latina with merengue, eating rice and beans and plantains and talking about the island. It wasn’t until those tragedies that I really started to interrogate and tried to reframe my own understanding of my identity.”

She’s called “Afro Latina,” but Mendez said her choice is to put her Blackness front and center. “I rather say, I’m Black and Latina’ because folks think that they are mutually exclusive identities, and that only perpetuates the anti-Blackness that continues to exist in Latino communities,” said Mendez, who has a 4-year-old daughter with husband Lupe Mendez, an educator and the current Texas poet laureate.

Her next book will focus on race and racism, and she’s branching herself for pushback with book bans, especially in Texas.

“It makes me very nervous that this will be the book that gets banned and will get me front and center for the wrong reasons and the right reasons,” she said. “Book bans take access away from kids who, if they don’t get it in their classroom, their parents are not going to take them to the library. They don’t have money to go to Barnes & Noble. And if you pull those books, you’re depriving them of seeing themselves in these stories. That’s not OK.”

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Books

Jasminne Mendez among the authors at Houston book events this week

Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents acclaimed Houston author Jasminne Mendez, sharing her new middle-grade novel.

Ana Khan | March 29, 2023 Updated: March 21, 2023, 11:32 am

Houston author Jasminne Mendez.

Photo: Photo Tasha Gorel
SUNDAY

Jasminne Mendez: Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents acclaimed Houston author Jasminne Mendez, sharing her new middle-grade novel "Aniana del Mar Jumps In." 3 p.m., Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School, 10410 Manhattan; inprinthoodton.org
Top 10 Book & Author Events in Houston: March 2023

By Holly Beretto - Mar 7, 2023

- **Inprint presents Jasminne Mendez at Meyerland Performing & Visual Arts Middle School** | Sunday, March 26 | FREE with RSVP – Part of the organization’s *Cool Brains!* series for middle-grade readers, the Houston-based and award-winning author discusses her latest novel *Aniana del Mar Jumps In*, which tells the story of a 12-year-old Dominican American swimmer diagnosed with juvenile arthritis. Free copies of the book are available to the first 100 families, and attendees can also enjoy free personalized poems by the Inprint Poetry Buskers and a performance from youth slam poets, Meta-Four Houston. 3pm to 4:30pm.
Disney On Ice and Houston Palestinian Festival top family fun picks

Disney On Ice returns to Houston with its “Into the Magic” tour, featuring Moana, Frozen, Coco and Beauty and the Beast with other beloved Disney characters.

Inprint Cool Brains! Series

Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents the 2021 Newbery Medal winner Tae Keller, sharing her new novel "Mihi Ever After."

When: 3 p.m. Nov. 6

Where: Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School, 10410 Manhattan

Tickets: Free. registration required; inprinthiston.org
Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents Tae Keller

Date & Time
Sun. Nov. 06
3:00 PM

Where
Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School
10410 Manhattan Drive
Houston

Inprint Cool Brains! Series proudly presents 2021 Newbery Medal winner Tae Keller, sharing her new novel Mini Ever After.

RESTAURANTS NEARBY

Turner's
The Annie Café & Bar

Related Coverage
Lee and Andrew Child among the authors at Houston book events this week
Q&A: Evira helps introduce the world, finally, to Cassandra Peterson
Houston author J. Elle pivots to younger readers with a new tale of magic
Top 12 Book & Author Events in Houston: November 2022

By Holly Beretto - Oct 25, 2022

Dig into virtual and live book events, the latest appearances by authors, and more with our roundup of book and literary events taking place in Houston in November 2022.

- **Inprint Cool Brains! presents Tae Keller at Meyerland PVA Middle School | Sunday, November 6 | No Cover** – The popular 2021 Newbery Award–winning middle-grade writer discusses her latest novel, *Mihi Ever After*, the story of three friends who fall into a fairytale world. There will be a Q&A, as well as a book signing following the discussion. Books will also be available for purchase at the event. 3pm.
Top 14 Things to Do for Kids in Houston This Week: October 31 to November 6, 2022

By Shea Kummer - Oct 30, 2022

Make the most of what Houston has to offer this week with the best kid-friendly things to do from Monday, October 31 to Sunday, November 6, 2022.

- **Inprint Cool Brains! presents Tae Keller at Meyerland PVA Middle School | Sunday, November 6 | No Cover** – The popular 2021 Newberry Award-winning middle-grade writer discusses her latest novel, *Mihi Ever After*, the story of three friends who fall into a fairytale world. There will be a Q&A, as well as a book signing following the discussion. Books will also be available for purchase at the event. 3pm.
THIS SUNDAY AT Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School, Houston literary arts organization Inprint hosts and afternoon with Newbery Medalist and New York Times best-selling children's author Erin Entrada Kelly, who will discuss and answer questions about her new book, Those Kids from Fawn Creek.

The free event begins at 3pm and includes a book signing, giving young readers and aspiring authors a chance to meet Kelly. The event marks the in-person return of Inprint's Cool Brains! Series, which since 2007 has hosted readings by more than 40 award-winning children’s book authors, including Lois Lowry, Gary Paulsen and Jon Scieszka.
Set in a small factory town in Louisiana (population 650), *Those Kids from Fawn Creek* tells the story of a tight-knit group of seventh graders who find their relatively tiny world rocked when New York-born new kid Orchid Mason arrives from Paris to begin the school year. As the 13th student among a dozen kids who literally grew up together, Orchid is alluring, but a bit weird, wearing bangles on her wrists and a white flower behind her ear. No one is quite sure what to make of her, or even who she should sit with in the lunchroom.

On one level, it’s a story to which any kid who has had to move and start over again in a new school can relate, but Kelly expertly honors the voice of each Fawn Creek child, switching to first-person throughout, and gives readers a variety of perspectives on this stranger in their midst. Being the new kid is tough, but so is learning to accept and make friends with him or her.

The first 100 families to arrive at Sunday’s event will receive a free, signed copy of *Those Kids from Fawn Creek*. And since April is National Poetry Month, The Inprint Poetry Buskers will also be there, ready to type out a poem on a topic chosen by attendees, on the spot and free of charge.
Robin Roberts among the authors at Houston book events this week

Other featured authors include Sally Hepworth, Alice Oseman and Erin Entrada Kelly.

More Information

SUNDAY

Erin Entrada Kelly: Author will discuss "Those Kids From Fawn Creek" as part of Inprint Cool Brains! Reading Series. 3 p.m., Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School, 10410 Manhattan; inprinthouston.org
Here are the top 15 things to do in Houston this weekend

By Craig D. Lindsey

Apr 7, 2022, 6:00 am

Sunday, April 10

Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents Erin Entrada Kelly

The 2021/2022 Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents Newbery Medal winner Erin Entrada Kelly, sharing her new novel *Those Kids From Fawn Creek*. Kelly is the *New York Times* bestselling author of seven books for young readers, including *Hello, Universe*, *We Dream of Space*, *The Land of Forgotten Girls*, and *Blackbird Fly*. Erin will give a brief presentation and answer questions from the audience. The program will conclude with a book signing, giving kids a chance to meet the featured author. 3 pm.
Paid Advertising
Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents Houston kid-lit star Jasminne Mendez

Come as a family to celebrate the power of the written word with Houston kid-lit star Jasminne Mendez on Sunday, March 26, 3 pm at HISD’s Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School.

Mendez joins our friends at Inprint to share her *new middle-grade novel in verse Aniana del Mar Jumps In*, the story of a 12-year-old Dominican American swimmer who gets diagnosed with Juvenile Arthritis. About the book, David Bowles writes, “Aniana del Mar Jumps In is about trusting our own bodies when they tell us what they can and cannot do, trusting our own hearts when they point the way, and trusting one another when we say who we are and what we need.” Natalia Sylvester adds, “Beautiful in its honesty and vulnerability, this is a powerful story about dreams that sings from the heart.”

The program will include an interactive presentation, a Q&A, and a book signing where kids will have the chance to meet the author. The Inprint Poetry Buskers will also be on-site writing free personalized poems, and the youth poetry slam team Meta-Four Houston will give a short performance.

For free tickets and free signed copies of Mendez’s *new novel Aniana del Mar Jumps In*, visit inprint.org.
This Sunday, March 26 at 3pm (doors open at 2:30pm), Inprint presents an exciting Cool Brains! Series event with local kids’ lit rockstar Jasminne Mendez, a Houston-based poet, playwright, translator, and award winning author of several books for children and adults. Mendez will be sharing her new middle-grade novel in verse, Aniana del Mar Jumps In. This event will take place in-person at Houston Independent School District’s Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School (10410 Manhattan Drive, 77096).

Mendez will give an interactive presentation, and then answer questions from the audience. The program will conclude with a book signing, giving kids a chance to meet the featured author. Inprint will provide free signed books to the first 100 families at the event. Discounted books are available for purchase from Brazos Bookstore, and free bus scholarships are available for school groups. The Inprint Poetry Buskers will also be on-site writing free personalized poems, and the youth poetry slam team Meta-Four Houston will make a presentation.

Click on the image for more info.
The 2022/2023 Inprint Cool Brains! Series proudly presents 2021 Newbery Medal winner Tae Keller sharing her new novel Mihi Ever After this Sunday, November 6 at 3pm at Meyerland PVA. Click here for free tickets and click here for more info about the info -- the first 100 hundred families will receive a copy of the novel! Mihi Ever After is the story of three friends who fall into a fairy tale world. Mihi has always wanted to be a princess, but when her friends decide they want to go home she must decide where her true loyalties lie: Should she stay here forever or try to find a way out?

Tae is the winner of the 2021 Newbery Medal for her middle-grade book When You Trap a Tiger. About the New York Times bestselling novel, Booklist writes “Readers young and old will want to trap this story in a jar forever” and School Library Journal adds, “This deeply moving book is a must-purchase for all collections, showcasing vulnerable and mythic storytelling.” Keller is also the author of The Science of Breakable Things, Jennifer Chan is Not Alone, and She Persisted: Patsy Mink. Tae grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii, where she subsisted on kimchi, purple rice, and stories! She is passionate about helping biracial girls find their voices, and lives in Seattle.

***Please note that the book signing will be conducted on a first-come, first-served basis. Upon entering the theater, people wishing to have books signed will be given a number, and the book signing will take place in numerical order after the on-stage presentation.***

Click on the image for more info.
What to Do in Houston Today, November 1-13, 2022

The things to do in Houston, November 1-13, 2022, are listed below.

Enjoy the Night Market at the Asia Society and take the family on a hike at the Houston Arboretum. And go to the Hands on Houston Family Festival at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft.

Experience the joys of reading and writing with Tae Keller, 2021 Newbery Medal-winning author of When You Trap a Tiger. She comes to Houston to share her new middle-grade novel Mihi Ever After, a fun fantasy tale that explores themes of friendship, imagination, and identity. The program will include an interactive presentation, a Q&A, and a book signing. For free tickets and free signed copies of Mihi Ever After, visit inprint.org.
From: Houstonia Magazine <newsletter@houstoniamag.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 11:13 AM
To: Stephanie Rice <srice@houstoniamag.com>
Subject: Meet Erin Entrada Kelly 4/10

Houstonia. Bespoke

AN EXCLUSIVE MESSAGE FROM OUR TRUSTED PARTNER

COOL BRAINS!

FEATURING
Erin Entrada Kelly
Bestselling author of the Newbery-medal winning Hello, Universe and We Dream of Space, with her new novel Those Kids from Fawn Creek

FREE!

SUNDAY
APRIL 10, 2022
IN-PERSON EVENT
3 PM CT
Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School
10410 Manhattan Drive
Houston, TX 77096

“Erin Entrada Kelly is working at the top of the middle-grade children’s literature game.”
— The New York Times

- Free copies of Those Kids from Fawn Creek to the first 100 families
- Presentation and Q&A by Erin Entrada Kelly
- Meet the author, book sale, and signing
- Book discounts available through Brazos Bookstore
- Free poems upon request from the Inprint Poetry Buskers

Houstonia, 2799 Katy Fwy, Suite 250, Houston, TX 77007. US, 713-862-4570

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KidsOutAndAbout
Houston Newsletter
April 7, 2022

Local in-person events this weekend
Local in-person events next weekend

Local After School and Weekend Classes
Virtual Classes

101 Local Family Day Trips
Top 20 Places to Take Kids

Add your organization and events to our calendar (It's FREE to do so!)

Inprint Cool Brains! Series presents Erin Entrada Kelly

Inprint invites you to an exciting afternoon with Newbery Medal winner Erin Entrada Kelly. Erin is the New York Times bestselling author of the middle-grade novels Hello, Universe, We Dream of Space, The Land of Forgotten Girls, Blackbird Fly, and the Maybe Maybe Marisol Rainey series. She joins us to read from and talk about her new book Those Kids from Fawn Creek, a wholesome story that explores themes of family, friendship, and staying true to yourself. The first 100 families to arrive will receive a free signed copy of Those Kids from Fawn Creek.

For more information, visit inprintheaston.org.
Plan your week!

Head to Discovery Green for Toddler Tuesday, enjoy My First Orchestral Concert at Miller Outdoor Theatre, go see the Art Cars, volunteer as a family with Generation SERVE, go to Astros Fanfest and spend an afternoon with the Newbery Medal-winning author of *Hello, Universe* Erin Entrada Kelly. She will share her new middle-grade novel *Those Kids from Fawn Creek*.

For the top things to do in Houston, with kids, this week... click the button below.
April 7, 2022

Dear GISH PICKS: CURATED CULTURE FOR KIDS & ADULTS reader,

If you're new here, well howdy! Welcome to my blog about Houston arts and culture, plus whatever else I wish to share from my brain. I've been publishing this since 2004 (yes, 'tis true) and I am very proud of being Houston's "cultural champion"! If you'd like to get to know me, click here.

This week's curated KID PICKS and ADULT PICKS are below -- they are my PICKS of the best and most unique arts events coming up this weekend (and sometimes beyond!). I focus on the greater Houston area, I hope you'll join me in loving local.

✉️ As you read, please note that all the words in blue are linked to websites. Click on all of them (and all of the images!) -- you never know what you'll find. ✉️
This Sunday, April 10 at 3pm is an IN PERSON Inprint Cool Brains! Series event featuring New York Times bestselling kids author Erin Entrada Kelly at Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School. This free and fun program for families features Erin speaking about her new novel, Those Kids from Fawn Creek, and a Q and A after her presentation. The first 100 families will get free copies of it!

The book is set in small-town Louisiana and explores themes of family, friendships, and staying true to yourself. When Orchid Mason shows up at Fawn Creek Middle School from Paris, the other kids don’t know what to think of her or where she will fit in. A starred Publishers Weekly review says, "this contemporary novel, timely in themes of self-acceptance and bullying, builds on the experiences of the author’s childhood to create a raw, real exploration of belonging that’s also sweetly hopeful.”

Kids will get to meet Erin in person and there will be a book sale and signing. The groovy Inprint Poetry Buskers will be on hand to create free poems upon request, and there will be book discounts available at Brazos Bookstore with the promo code INPRINT. Bus scholarships are available for student groups at info@inprinthouston.org.

Click on the images for more info.
Come as a family for a lively celebration of written word with @inprinthouston and local kids lit star Jasminne Mendez, sharing "a powerful story about dreams and bodily agency that sings from the heart."

For FREE tickets, signed books, and personalized poems, visit inprint.org!
We're giving a #LoneStarLit Shout-Out to @InprintHouston Cool Brains! series featuring @taekeller, sharing her new novel MIHI EVER AFTER. Houston, 11/6, 3pm. Learn more & get FREE tickets: inprinthoust... #inprintcoolbrains #middlegradebooks #LiteraryTexas #TexasReaders

Great partnership with inprinthoust... houstoniamag Come as a family to experience the joys of reading and writing with Tae Keller, Newbery Medal-winning author of When You Trap a Tiger. For free tickets and free signed copies of Tae’s new novel MIHI Ever After, visit inprint.org.

inprinthoust... inprinthoust... - Original audio

inprinthoust... Korean American author Tae Keller is passionate about helping biracial kids find their voices. To meet her this Sunday at 3 pm, visit inprint.org for more details!

#inprint #inprintcoolbrains #inprintcoolbrainsseries #taekeller #whenyoutrapatiger #mihieverafter #middlegradefiction #middlegradebooks #authorevent #family #giveaway #bookgiveaway #youngreaders
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ıyor by cedilnik and 10 others

inprinthouston All Mihi Whim Park ever wanted was to be "someone important, someone who mattered, someone who belonged," because she never really felt like one of those perfect princesses from the stories she read growing up. Join us as a family next Sunday to find out Mihi's fate & meet Newbery Medal winner Tae

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inprinthouston SAVE THE DATE! 🎉🎈🎉 Newbery Medal-winning author of When You Trap a Tiger Tae Keller will be with us in Houston on Sunday, November 6, 3 pm. For free tickets and books, visit inprint.org!

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inprinthouston Did you know that the Inprint Cool Brains! Series offers FREE bus scholarships for school groups? 🚗=* Tag a teacher who may want to bring their students to meet Newbery Medal winner Tae Keller this November!

#inprint #inprintcoolbrains #inprintcoolbrainsseries #taekeller #whenyoutrapatiger #mhlieverafter #middlegradefiction #middlegradebooks #author event #family #giveway #bookgiveaway #youngreaders
"Erin Entrada Kelly is working at the top of the children's literature game."
— @nytimesbooks

For free signed books and free personalized poems, come out to Meyerland PVA Middle School this Sunday at 3 pm CT!
Don’t miss Erin Entrada Kelly this Sunday at @MeyerlandMS! Presented by @InprintHouston Cool Brains! Erin Entrada Kelly will be here at 3 on Sunday. First 100 families receive a FREE autographed copy of her newest book, Those Kids From Fawn Creek. @HISDLibraryServ @MPVAPTO

Bestselling author of the Newbery Medal winning Hello, Universe and We Dream of Space, with her new novel Those Kids From Fawn Creek.

SUNDAY APRIL 10, 2022
3 PM
Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School
10400 Manchester Drive
Houston, TX 77096

FREE!

Don’t forget Cool Brains! this Sunday featuring @erinentrada hosted by our friends, @InprintHouston

Calling all kids!! Join our friends at @InprintHouston for an exciting afternoon with Newbery Medalist @erinentrada in the Inprint Cool Brains! Series. Erin will share her new middle-grade novel, "Those Kids from Fawn Creek." inprinthouston.org/event/inprint...

#CoolBrains #Inprint #htx