

Author Donates Maxy Prize in Tribute to Late Brother and Contest's Namesake

*Genre-defying debut novel earns Maxy Awards' top honor ahead of June 3 release of *The Wake of Expectations**

MORRISTOWN, NJ, UNITED STATES, May 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Javier De Lucia was named the [2025 Book of the Year winner by the Maxy Awards](#) for his debut novel *The Wake of Expectations*, he

“

This felt like a meaningful way to bring attention to the books—while also shining a light on a worthy charity. I'm grateful for the chance to honor my brother's memory.”

*Javier De Lucia, author of *The Wake of Expectations**

didn't just receive the contest's highest honor—he paid it forward. He donated the \$2,000 prize to Home of the Innocents, the Louisville-based nonprofit supported by the Maxy Awards, in honor of Max—the child affectionately known as Maxy—who inspired the contest, and in memory of De Lucia's recently deceased brother, whose life helped inspire his second novel, [A Pleasant Fiction: A Novelistic Memoir](#), due out just weeks later.

Now in their tenth year, the Maxy Awards are a well-established indie contest recognizing standout works across a wide range of genres and publishing backgrounds. With a focus on storytelling, emotional impact, and literary quality, the awards celebrate originality and innovation outside traditional publishing pipelines—making them a coveted achievement among indie authors and small presses.

The Maxy Awards were founded in memory of Max, a child with a severe congenital brain disorder whose short life left a lasting impact. The contest now supports Home of the Innocents, which provides care and advocacy for children and families in crisis.

“I didn't feel right keeping the money,” said De Lucia. “Not when the goal of the contest is to raise funds for a charity like Home of the Innocents. It's exactly the kind of organization that could have helped my brother and my family during our hardest times.”

Set for release on June 3, *The Wake of Expectations* has already earned a Firebird Book Award in the Coming-of-Age category and garnered multiple five-star reviews from Readers' Favorite, as well as praise from the International Review of Books. The book has been described as “both a portrait of a generation and a deeply personal tale of growth and resilience,” “raw and honest in

a way that's hard to look away from," and "a poignant meditation on adolescence, identity, and the often-painful process of growing up."

The novel follows Calvin McShane, an aspiring musician, as he navigates friendship, romantic misadventures, and the long echo of family expectations. De Lucia describes the work as autofiction—"a deeply personal novel wearing the clothes of fiction."

His follow-up, *A Pleasant Fiction* (releasing July 1), continues Calvin's journey as he grapples more directly with grief—processing the deaths of his brother and parents, and examining how those losses reshape his identity and beliefs. One of the most affecting threads is the story of Jared, Calvin's brother, whose developmental disability and declining health expose heartbreaking gaps in support for families of special needs adults. Like many real families, they are left to navigate a system that often disappears once childhood ends. Home of the Innocents is working to change that with a new facility designed to care for young adults with complex medical needs and developmental disabilities—a mission that deeply resonated with the author, whose own family faced similar challenges.

De Lucia is the founder of [Chapelle Dorée Publishing](https://www.chapelledoree.com), an independent imprint dedicated to emotionally resonant, character-driven storytelling. He is an active blogger with companion essays, a podcast, and several short stories planned for release later this year.

"Of course I want to bring attention to the books—and this felt like a meaningful way to do it, while also shining a light on a worthy charity," De Lucia said. "It's simply the right thing for me to do. I'm fortunate to be in a position where I could pay it forward—and grateful for the chance to turn recognition into something that honors my brother's memory."

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The Wake of Expectations by Javier De Lucia, 2025
Book of the Year winner from the Maxy Awards

The Wake of Expectations by Javier De Lucia

□ ISBN (eBook): 978-1-967093-00-7

□ Release Date: June 3, 2025

A Pleasant Fiction: A Novelistic Memoir by Javier De Lucia

□ ISBN (eBook): 978-1-967093-06-9

□ Release Date: July 1, 2025

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