

AHSHAY and Partners Publish 'The Belonging Collection', a Series of Original Children's Books Authored by Youth

The Storybook Project culminates in 20 original children's books

SEATTLE, WA, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [AHSHAY](#), in partnership with [Young Authors Publishing](#), [Worldreader](#), and authors Jodi-Ann Burey and Reagan Jackson, announced the completion of the first cohort of the Storybook Project and the publication of The Belonging Collection, a series of 20 original children's books authored by youth who have navigated significant life challenges and used their experiences to shape stories of connection and belonging.

The Belonging Collection explores themes that speak directly to the lives of young readers: living life authentically, dealing with anxiety, overcoming fears, feeling ignored, and living with different abilities. Written by youth participants, guided by award-winning authors, and published through Young Authors Publishing, the books in this collection reflect the full depth of what young people carry — and the creativity and vision they bring to the page.

The Belonging Collection is now available globally through Worldreader's free BookSmart app (www.worldreader.org/booksmart) and will be included in Worldreader's All Families Reading Challenge this September. For bulk orders of the Belonging Collection, please contact hello@ahshay.org.

A Novel Approach: Centering Youth Voice

The Storybook Project was designed to center youth creative authority. Participants worked alongside authors Jodi-Ann Burey and Reagan Jackson to shape every element of their stories. Over the course of the project, youth engaged in storyboarding, worldbuilding, and narrative development, while also practicing their concept pitch, giving and receiving feedback, and studying the craft of storytelling from an author's perspective.

The project also included a unique intergenerational component, bringing youth participants together with children ages four to six to help inspire and inform the books being written. In parallel, younger children and their families participated in their own sessions designed to encourage creative freedom and family engagement in the reading and storytelling process.

"This project was built on a belief that young people who have navigated significant life challenges, have stories the world needs to hear. This collection is proof of what is possible when youth are given the space, tools, and community to bring those stories to life." - Dr. Benjamin Danielson, AHSAY Center Director

"At Worldreader, we believe stories have the power to expand possibilities, especially when young people see themselves reflected in the pages they read and create. The Storybook Project is so meaningful because it doesn't just encourage literacy; it affirms belonging, creativity, and voice. Through this partnership with AHSAY and Young Authors Publishing, we're helping ensure these young authors are not only heard but celebrated and shared with readers everywhere." - Rebecca Chandler Legee, Worldreader CEO

"I believe this project will not only transform the lives of the young authors by giving them the opportunity to share their own stories, but will also inspire young readers who will finally see their experiences reflected in these incredible books." - Leah Hernandez, Young Authors Publishing CEO & Founder

About AHSAY

AHSAY (Allies in Healthier Systems for Health and Abundance in Youth) works to unbuild systems that imprison youth and build ones that honor their brilliance. AHSAY promotes paths to opportunity that support youth and the communities they live in to thrive.

About Young Authors Publishing

Founded in 2018, Young Authors Publishing is a children's and young adult book publisher that shares diverse narratives written by diverse young authors. With over 30 children's and young adult titles, Young Authors takes pride in helping to redefine the literary landscape by giving young voices the space and resources to share their own stories using their own pens.

About Worldreader

"Share a story, shape a life."

Worldreader is a global tech nonprofit on a mission to get families reading. By supporting parents and caregivers with free and accessible digital tools and resources, we build reading routines that improve the learning outcomes and social-emotional skills of children in underserved communities around the globe. With more than 15 years of experience designing, testing, and scaling evidence-based, adaptive approaches to family reading, Worldreader understands what it takes to address the global literacy crisis. Our work is grounded in research, shaped by local context, and delivered through trusted partnerships and platforms. By investing early in parent and caregiver-led reading today, Worldreader helps lay the foundation for tangible economic and social gains tomorrow – for children, their families and their communities. For more information, visit www.worldreader.org.

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