

## “CHAPTERS” LITERACY FUNDRAISER TO FEATURE THREE AUTHORS

Spend an evening after hours in the library with three favorite authors while helping raise money and awareness for Tulsa City-County Library’s Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service.

In conjunction with National Literacy Awareness Month, Tulsa City-County Library and the Tulsa Library Trust are offering “Chapters: A Casual Evening of Books, Bards and Bites” on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St. The cost is \$50 per person. Deadline for reservations is Sept. 2.

Attendees will enjoy food and wine from some of the area’s favorite restaurants while listening to authors Marisa de los Santos, Lauren Smith and Keija Parssinen.

Marisa de los Santos is the author of three New York Times best-selling novels for adults – *Love Walked In*, *Belong to Me* and *Falling Together*. Her latest work is *The Precious One*, a novel about friendship, family, second chances and the redemptive power of love. She also co-wrote with her husband, David Teague, two middle-grade novels, *Saving Lucas Biggs* and *Connect the Stars*, to be released Sept. 22, 2015. De los Santos lives in Wilmington, Del., with her husband; their two children, Charles and Annabel; and their Yorkies, Huxley and Finn.

Amazon best-selling author of *The League of Rogues* series and *The Surrender* series, Lauren Smith, has been writing her stories since early childhood. At the age of 9 she wrote her first story, entitled *Deadly Shadows*. This romantic suspense story about two reporters investigating the disappearance of the local brown bat population was selected by her school to allow her to attend the Tulsa Youth Writers Conference. She is an attorney by day, traveling the country roads to small-town courthouses and has participated in hearings in 66 of the 77 counties of her native Oklahoma. An author by night, she pens adventurous and edgy romance stories by the light of her smartphone flashlight app. Her latest novel is *The Gilded Cage*, from *The Surrender* series. Smith lives in Tulsa with her three pets: a feisty chinchilla, a sophisticated cat and a dapper little schnauzer.

Saudi-born, Texas-raised author Keija Parssinen is a graduate of Princeton University and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, where she was a Truman Capote fellow. Her first novel, *The Ruins of Us*, won a Michener-Copernicus Award and was long-listed for the Chautauqua Prize. Her second novel, *The Unraveling of Mercy Louis*, was just released by Harper Books. The New York Times calls it “deliciously dark and sumptuously gothic.” This fall, Parssinen will join the faculty of the University of Tulsa as an assistant professor of English.

“Chapters” is sponsored by TulsaPeople Magazine, Charles and Marion Weber Foundation, Gelvin Foundation, Lauren Liles and Dick Ek Dahl, Linda and Douglas Farquharson, Susan and Bob Mase, Lynn and Bill Peacher, Dr. Bernard and Marcy Robinowitz, Dr. Bruce and Beverly Dieterlen, Donna and Will Farrior, Terry and Mike Fenner, Janie and Earl Funk, Margaret and Curt Holdridge, Robert J. LaFortune, Total Pilates, Lacy and Al Whitehead, Paul Woodul, Kathie Coyle, Loretta Raschen, Donna Redyke and Farryl Stokes, with additional support provided by the Mary K. Chapman Foundation and George Kaiser Family Foundation.

Appetizers, wine and dessert are provided by Barnes & Noble, Bodean Seafood Restaurant, Creative Catering by Sherian, HoneyBaked Ham of Tulsa, India Palace, KEO Asian Cuisine, Napa Flats, Oklahoma Joe’s, Oliveto Italian Bistro, Panera Bread, Pepper’s Grill, Ranch Acres Wine & Spirits, Reasor’s, Sweet Devotion Cakery, Toni’s Flowers & Gifts, Tulsa Library Trust, Whole Foods Market, The Wild Fork and Yokozuna.

Authors’ books will be available for purchasing with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the literacy service. Sponsorships for the fundraiser are available. Call 918.549.7494 for more information about “Chapters” or to make a reservation.



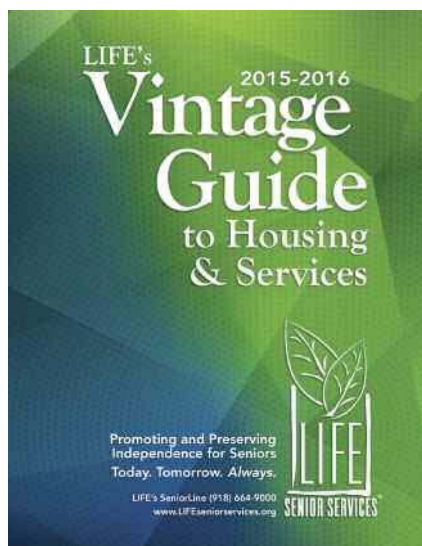
KEIJA PARSSINEN



LAUREN SMITH



MARISA DE LOS SANTOS



## VINTAGE GUIDE AVAILABLE NOW

The 2015 LIFE’s Vintage Guide to Housing & Services is currently available for aging adults in northeastern Oklahoma and their families. The book is a comprehensive collection of senior resources for older adults, caregivers, social workers and other professionals who work with seniors.

“The 2015-2016 Vintage Guide is a 252-page, full-color publication that features nearly 300 housing options categorized by level-of-care; more than 180 healthcare, hospice and specialty services, including local adult day health programs and a new funeral and cremation services section; plus more than 700 community-based services,” wrote Kaylee Campbell, associate editor.

Copies are free and are available at LIFE Senior Services locations, all Tulsa City-County Libraries, and Claremore, Catoosa and Coweta libraries. An online version is at [www.LIFEseniorservices.org](http://www.LIFEseniorservices.org). For more information, call 918.664.9000.



## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The photographer for this photo in the June issue was Holly Anne Felts.

BY LAURA RAPHAEL, M.A., MLIS

# Sharon Draper's outsider art

It's hard being a middle school English teacher. (I know. It's the reason I only lasted a few years.) But it's not the grading or the paperwork or even the discipline that is most taxing. It is the constant emotional management of 100 or so hormonal, energetic, often lovely, frequently frustrating (and frustrated) young souls, day after day. Tweens and young teens are tsunamis of feeling, ping-ponging between the best-of-times and the-worst-of-times. It's exhausting!

One of the best ways for teachers to master the circus of adolescent feelings is to get into the minds and perspectives of students, to feel what they feel – and then express a full understanding of how difficult it can be to act as ringmaster of one's emotions.

Sharon Draper's years as an award-winning middle-school English teacher have clearly equipped her with extraordinary empathy for people of all kinds, but in particular children and young adults. This emotional integrity is what elevates a Sharon Draper novel from mere storytelling to art: Draper creates characters that readers care about, and by expressing their individual perspectives, helps us feel their feelings. Reading a Sharon Draper novel is an exercise in seeing the world through new eyes – when



AUTHOR SHARON DRAPER WILL ACCEPT THE 2015 TULSA LIBRARY TRUST'S ANNE V. ZARROW AWARD FOR YOUNG READERS' LITERATURE ON FRIDAY, AUG. 28, 7 P.M. AT THE HARDESTY LIBRARY.

you finish, you fully get what it is like to be an African-American girl of 11 in a small North Carolina town during The Great Depres-

sion (*Stella by Starlight*), or a high school student just trying to fit in when all around you angry adults want to stop you from getting an

education (*Fire from the Rock*).

Draper, who will accept the 2015 Tulsa Library Trust's Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature on Friday, August 28 at 7 p.m. at the Hardesty Regional Library, is best known for her 2010 novel *Out of My Mind*, an extraordinary story told from the point of view of a severely physically disabled girl. When the novel begins, Melody is thought to be severely intellectually disabled as well. She is not. Through the miraculous use of a new communication technology, her parents discover that she is, in fact, at a genius level of intelligence. They enroll her in school, and while these new educational opportunities are remarkable, the challenges are just as remarkable. How do you make friends? How do you find your place in the world? How do you discover who you really are? These questions are important to every young person, and Melody's particular journey in finding her own answers resonates the universal appeal of *Out of My Mind*. As in all of Draper's works, the best moments are those that express the everyday problems, feelings and experiences of characters who feel real to readers.

Although not explicitly religious, Draper's novels have a strong Christian ethos of caring for others, particularly those people (usually young people) not

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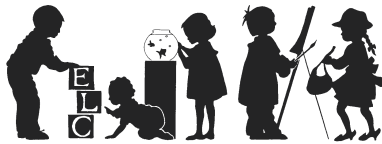


valued by society: the outsiders, the powerless and the weak. (I recall that Jesus had a few things to say about these folks, too.) By giving voice to the voiceless, Draper shows that they may be poor in the currency of our culture but rich in emotion and love.

My favorite Sharon Draper moment comes at the end of *Stella by Starlight*, when Stella, an 11-year-old girl who has faced the senseless hatred of racism and privation of poverty, writes in her journal on Christmas. She wishes for "more love, less hate, and more cookies." Draper gives us exactly that: more love, less hate, and the promise of grace (more cookies) in the form of deep emotional understanding of all people.

I hope that parents and grandparents will bring their young people to see Sharon Draper in August to hear her message of hope and love – and to see her empathy in action.

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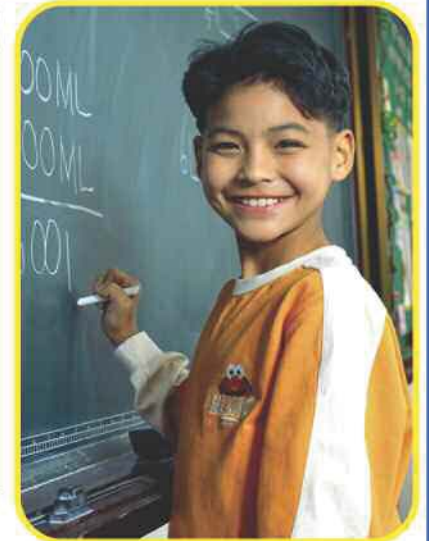
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