

Ready Set Go Books for Kids



14-year-old young author, Leyla Marie Fasika Angelidis, and award-winning children's book author Jane Kurtz

14 year old author and writing coach produce books geared towards Ethiopian Children

Leyla Marie Fasika Angelidis is a 14-year-old young Black author from Seattle, Washington, who has co-authored 8 bilingual books featuring stories about life in Ethiopia. Her books are available in multiple languages including Amharic, Kiswahili, and other African languages. This Ready Set Go bilingual book series is written, illustrated, and published specifically with Ethiopian children in mind. She has accomplished all of this with the help of Jane Kurtz who is her writing coach. Leyla, her mom, Ellenore Angelidis, are the founders of Open Hearts Big Dreams (OHBD), a non-profit organization that creates, publishes and distributes bilingual culturally appropriate early reader children's books. With the help of Jane as creative director, their focus is to increase literacy and a love for reading in Ethiopia and beyond. Leyla learned from her mom that children in Ethiopia don't always have the chance to go to school, learn to read, and some children have never held a book in their hands. Her response was "That's not fair, mama. You need to fix it."

The three of them traveled to Malaysia for the 38th IBBY In-

ternational Congress. While they were there Kurtz was presented with the prestigious IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award, and Open Hearts Big Dreams accepted funding as the nonprofit that Kurtz selected for that portion of the award. Kurtz is being honored for her volunteer work promoting international literacy initiatives for over two decades.

Through her work in Ethiopia, most recently with OHBD, Kurtz has, in the words of award jury president Sylvia Vardell, "planted the seeds of literacy all over Ethiopia," the country where she spent most of her growing-up years. Vardell highlighted that Jane's collaborative work with OHBD and others, "addresses the challenges of multiple official languages; lack of books reflecting Ethiopian culture, history, and landscape; obstacles in the translation, publication, and distribution process; and the insufficient professional opportunities for ed-

ucators and librarians." Kurtz is also an award-winning children's book author and holds a faculty position at Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA in Children's and YA Literature. She now lives in Portland, Oregon.

OHBD creates and publishes culturally appropriate bilingual books and distributes them to readers in Ethiopia and around the world. Kurtz heads the OHBD creative team that coordinates writing, illustration, design, and Amharic translation of the books. These books are printed in Ethiopia to help build local capacity and to make them more affordable. Another 30,000 copies of these books have been distributed globally through print on demand.

To learn more about programs carried out by Open Heart Big Dreams, exploring volunteer opportunities, making a donation, or purchasing books can visit the OHBD website at OpenHearts-BigDreams.org



Coolio performs on day three of Riot Fest on Sept. 18, 2022, at Douglass Park in Chicago. (Photo by Rob Grabowski, AP Photo)

Death of Hip Hop Legend

(AP) — Coolio, the rapper who was among hip-hop's biggest names of the 1990s with hits including "Gangsta's Paradise" and "Fantastic Voyage," died Wednesday at age 59, his manager said.

Coolio died at the Los Angeles home of a friend, longtime manager Jarez Posey told The Associated Press. The cause was not immediately clear.

Coolio won a Grammy for best solo rap performance for "Gangsta's Paradise," the 1995 hit from the soundtrack of the Michelle Pfeiffer film "Dangerous Minds" that sampled Stevie Wonder's 1976 song "Pastime Paradise" and was played constantly on MTV.

"I'd like to claim this Grammy on behalf of the whole hip-hop nation, West Coast, East Coast, and worldwide, united we stand, divided we fall," he said from the stage as he accepted the award.

Born Artis Leon Ivey Jr., in Monessen, Pennsylvania south of Pittsburgh, Coolio moved to Compton, California. He spent some time as a teen in Northern California, where his mother sent him because she felt the city was too dangerous.

He said in interviews that he

started rapping at 15 and knew by 18 it was what he wanted to do with his life, but would go to community college and work as a volunteer firefighter and in airport security before devoting himself full-time to the hip-hop scene.

His career took off with the 1994 release of his debut album on Tommy Boy Records, "It Takes a Thief." Its opening track, "Fantastic Voyage," would reach No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100. A year later, "Gangsta's Paradise" would become a No. 1 single.

His career album sales totaled 4.8 million, with 978 million on-demand streams of his songs, according to Luminate. He would be nominated for six Grammys overall.

And with his distinctive persona he would become a cultural staple, acting occasionally, starring in a reality show about parenting called "Coolio's Rules," providing a voice for an episode of the animated show "Gravity Falls" and providing the theme music for the Nickelodeon sitcom "Kenan & Kel."

He was married to Josefa Salinas from 1996 to 2000. They had four children together.



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