

30 November 2010

Arabic and Somali books showcase

Inaugural London event: Zaylai Books

In partnership with The Reading Agency, Zaylai books yesterday (29 November 2010) showcased its catalogue of Arabic and Somali books for librarians at Mayfair Library, central London.

Zaylai Books supplies UK libraries and schools with specialist books from Arabic, Somali and other cultural backgrounds. Presentations at yesterday's event including those by Somali storyteller, teacher and author Jawahir A Farah (*Mr Holes/The Sky - How The Sky Was Made & Somali Rhymes And Action Games For Children*) and Harry Halls, sales manager for London-based Arabia Books.

Librarians were able to discover how Zaylai Books can help them engage with 'hard to reach' readers, and learn about Somali and Arabic cultures and needs, plus strategies for engaging with black and minority ethnic communities. They were also given advance information on upcoming Zaylai books and the chance to network with other professionals.

Zaylai Books is the trading arm of the Zaylai Foundation, a UK registered charitable organisation: it uses its links with Somalia and the Arab world to source the best literature in its field and act as a one-stop shop for quality, enjoyable materials. Zaylai Books is the newest member of the Reading Partners consortium, which links publishers and libraries in creating successful and exciting events and activities for readers. Reading Partners is led by The Reading Agency, the independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. This event was Reading Partners' first-ever showcase of Arabic and Somali books for librarians.

"This was a very successful opportunity to outline our services," says Abdulahi Hassan, managing director of Zaylai Books, who is available for media comment. "We received very helpful feedback from attending librarians, and we hope to hold another London showcase in the summer."

"Working with the library sector offers publishers a new way of marketing books and growing writers. We are delighted to be linking librarians with Zaylai Books' specialist expertise in working with Somali and Arabic communities - communities that libraries

want to better understand and serve, in order to spread the pleasure reading can bring to even more readers,” says Sandeep Mahal, Reading Partners project manager.

For more information please contact Debbie Hyde:

debbie.hyde@oasismedia.co.uk

07956 320 486

Notes to editors:

- More information about Zaylai Books, including its online catalogue, can be found at: www.zaylaibooks.co.uk/
- The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. It is funded by the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. www.readingagency.org.uk
- Reading Partners involves the whole UK public library network and 34 major adult publishers. A children’s version of the scheme was set up in May 2008 involving 12 children’s publishers, The Publishers Association and the main children’s library bodies. For more information, please contact Sandeep Mahal on 0871 223 2041 or sandeep.mahal@readingagency.org.uk
- Mayfair Library is a Westminster Council public library, based at 25 South Audley Street, London, W1K 2PB.