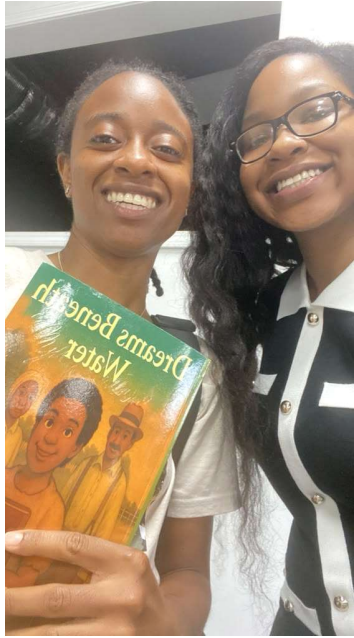




Last week I was invited to a book tour and literacy festival at The Network ATL, and let me tell you my mind was blown. Well, the parts of it that were present anyway. This event was heartfelt in my eyes because it actively took steps to solve current issues, most especially of illiteracy in our children (while simultaneously giving representation through color). Now why is this happening? Some will say social media, parents not spending enough time with their children, unsafe and unsteady environments, global warming, underfunded schooling. The list can go on and on. But a question that came to mind is, “Is the why as important as the how”? Again, we can spend all day rambling on the why, but these authors spent their time solving the how.

Mya Garrison, a young author, whose book keeps the history behind Lake Lanier alive. Oscarville was the name of the flourishing black city that was flooded after the town was slaughtered by hatred. In the book, a young woman by the name of Daisy is accepted into Spellman College. It was her dream. In reading this book, you find out some dreams don’t always come true and racism is modern day hatred. Daisy wanted people to know the truth, that black people thrived and that they lived in harmony instead of hate. She hid her journal entry and some other items in a box to be found, and her story now lives on forever.

Olivia Williams' “The Magic Mirror of Hair”, is an interactive, affirmative coloring book for little black boys and girls. This book gives life to any child reading it—even adults in my opinion. It also gives representation. Growing up, I didn’t see kids like me in cartoons or in the books I read. But a new era rises and Mrs. Williams delivers. The book graces children with confidence, strength, self-love, care and a new way to look at themselves. If you feel good about yourself then no one can make you feel or think otherwise. This book is the foundation.

There were other authors who wrote books about financial literacy, internet safety, spirituality, and so much more. There was face painting, an opportunity for children to sing their favorite songs, and food vendors. The pudding was off the charts! The host of this event prepped for over 500 kids but less than 20 showed up due to weather and other events going on simultaneously. What was honorable in my opinion, is the host giving every author and vendor another shot in November because of the unexpected turnout.

In conclusion, this was my first book and networking event and although I was scared because I'm shy, I met some amazing authors and I grew. Life is evolution; so what will you do with yours? Hope to see you at the next event!

-- by KOE-B

8/5/26