

The Payson Book Festival Over The Years



The Payson Book Festival started at the Gila Community College in 2016 with 60 authors and vendors stationed all over the campus. There were about 300 visitors strolling throughout the grounds. We had food and music vendors to entertain the participants. As we grew, more authors heard about our success and wanted to join. We needed more parking. We expanded to the Mazatzal Casino. In the past years we grew to over 90 authors and more than 700 attendees.

The major purpose of this event (held this year on Saturday July 23 from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm), to promote literacy and showcase Arizona authors, has continued for seven years with one year off during the COVID 19 crisis. The original organizers, Connie Cockrell, Carol Osmon Brown and Marie Fasano with the Arizona Professional writers organization, have enjoyed working with the authors and other committee members over the years.

A big part of the success of the event has been a large cadre of volunteers who come back every year to help maneuver the authors to their spaces and show the visitors to all the activities, author tables and answer the myriad of questions.

Buckshot Dot and Marshall Trimball have entertained folks most of the years with their country western songs. Other major authors have included Navaho poet Laura Tohe, travel writer Roger Naylor, and Conrad Storad with Story Monster, and locals Marsha Ward and Bonnie Bohn.

The auction table, put together by Bobbie Bennett, always draws visitors for gifts from stores throughout Rim Country. A special favorite is the Pine/Strawberry gift basket. Each



visitor also has always had a chance to win a free book donated by an author.

Our children's programs include story times for the little ones each year. We had puppet shows, Clifford The Big Red Dog, Story Lady, Cat in the Hat, and Young Peoples Writers workshop. Story Monster has been with us every year with great hugs to the delight of all the kids and adults. This year at the Kids Zone the children and their parents will receive a passport and travel to countries all over the world.

Come join us at the Mazatzal Casino, Saturday 9:00 am to 2:30 pm, July 23, 2022 to see how "Reading takes us to amazing places." To learn more about the event, visit us online at paysonbookfestival.org.

