## The Miller College Children's Literature Project 2013-2014

## The Fifth Year

The Children's Literature Project has continued each year. 2013-2014 is the fifth year for this exciting project. The theme of this year's project is **Let Your Creativity Shine!** And it will shine as over 2,500 students are participating in this year's project.

The mission of the project is to enrich the appreciation of the world of literature and the theatre for all elementary and middle school children in Barry, Branch, and Calhoun counties by offering opportunities for them to explore, learn, and develop their minds. To accomplish, this all elementary and middle school teachers in the three counties were invited to have their students participate in one of the project's three segments

As in the previous four years, one segment of the Project will be a book writing/illustration contest for students in the second through sixth grades. Students write and illustrate a book on a subject of their choice. The books are then entered in a contest and winners from each grade and category are chosen. The students may enter their books in one of three categories: best overall book; best written book; and best illustrated book. This year the College is planning a **Young Authors Celebration** open house in late April 2014 at the College where all books will be displayed.

The second segment of the Project is new this year. The College is collaborating with Michigan children's author Leslie Helakoski. Leslie is the winner of many awards, among which are *Michigan Reads! One State One Picture Book in 2007 and 2013* and the *Great Lakes Great Books Award in 2007*. Her books are popular with early elementary students. Judy VanZanten,

Director of the Binda Dyslexia Center, commented when she heard that Leslie would be this year's guest author: "I'm geeked! Her books are great for children learning to read."

Guest author Leslie Helakoski will visit over 60 kindergarten – second grade classrooms in the three counties. She will tell stories, play word games, and sing with the students. This is an opportunity for young students to meet and interact with a real live author. It will help them understand the importance of reading and writing, and how much fun each can be.





The third segment of the Project is a theatre experience for middle school students. In collaboration with *What A Do Theatre* and Sarah Gillette. These students have been asked to adapt one of Leslie's books into a play. Sarah Gillette is

working with them on script writing. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to not only improve and enhance their writing skills but have the opportunity to learn more about the world of theatre. The three winning scripts will be



