



Otto Foundation launches inaugural Children's Book Award

Date: 17 May 2024

The Otto Foundation is pleased to announce the launch of the inaugural Otto Foundation Children's Book Award.

Nominations for the award open on 17 May and, following a selection process that will kick off on 31 July, the Foundation will award two book prizes: one for a picture book targeted at learners aged 5 to 9, and one for a chapter book or graphic novel aimed at learners aged 10 to 13. The winners will receive prize money to the value of **R25 000** each. The winning titles will also be promoted through the foundation's website and social media channels.

The Otto Foundation Children's Book Award was conceived with the aim to support local publishers, promote new authors and illustrators, and to recognize quality storytelling. The goal is also to celebrate South African stories and promote diversity in children's literature.

This forms part of the Otto Foundation's broader strategic focus on supporting and improving early literacy in South Africa. The foundation is the philanthropic trust of the Otto Family and was established in 2016 by Chris Otto and his daughter, Zephne Ladbrook. The Foundation works to foster a love of reading and promote access to books. To date, the team has worked with local role players to build and/or renovate five school libraries in District Six and the Cape Town CBD, with three new library projects currently in the pipeline.

What makes the Otto Foundation Children's Book Award unique is that young local readers will also play a role in the selection of the winners. Following the nomination process, shortlisted titles will be included in the Otto Foundation's annual Reading Relay, which is hosted among six schools in the District Six area in Cape Town. Book reviews submitted by participating learners during the relay process will be considered in the final selection of the award winners. (This reading relay, which will take place during October and November, has previously proven to be very popular among learners – more than 3700 reviews were received during the 2023 relay.)

Says Zephne Ladbrook, co-founder and chairperson of the Otto Foundation: "We are launching the Otto Foundation Book award to celebrate South African stories. And we are celebrating the unique minds and creative views of the children visiting our libraries by including them in the selection of the winning books."

Following the reading relay, a final review and selection by the Otto Foundation team and an advisory panel will take place during November and December 2024. The winners will be announced in January 2025.

During the judging process, the review panel will consider factors like authentic representation of South African culture and traditions; the quality, creativity and originality of the storytelling and artwork; the relevance to the target audience and the title's celebration of diversity, inclusivity and the multicultural reality of South Africa.

Nominations for the Otto Foundation Children's Book award can be sent to bookaward@ottofoundation.org. The deadline for nominations is on the 31st of July 2024. Titles nominated must have been published within the last 18 months (starting on January 2023) or expected to be available in print by the end of July 2024. The publisher must be South African-owned or based in South Africa. (Local self-published titles will also qualify.)

Says Frouwien Bosman, chief executive of the Otto Foundation: "We look forward to seeing submissions from authors who share our belief in the transformative power of books and who want to create stories that will make children fall in love with reading."

A detailed description of the award criteria, the entry requirements and the award process can be viewed at <https://www.ottofoundation.org/book-award>.

For more information on the Otto Foundation Children's Book Award, contact the foundation's director for stakeholders & partnerships, Nonikiwe Mashologu, at nonikiwe@ottofoundation.org.

For more information about the foundation, or further details about the prize, visit www.ottofoundation.org.