



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **STIBF Youth Bookmark Contest Kicks Off August 3, 2026** *Winning designs to become official bookmarks shared with library visitors*

The South Texas International Book Festival (STIBF) is inviting young artists ages 5 to 18 from across the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) to participate in its 2026 Youth Bookmark Contest.

Inspired by this year's theme, "Pages to Possibilities," participants are invited to tell their stories through art by capturing meaningful moments from their past, present experiences or hopes for the future. Designs may also showcase the world they see today and the possibilities they imagine for tomorrow.

Entries will be judged in three age categories: 5 to 8, 9 to 13 and 14 to 18. Submissions open Monday, August 3, 2026, and must be received by Friday, October 2, 2026, at 5 p.m. Official entry forms are available at all McAllen Public Library (MPL) locations and online at [www.southtexasbookfestival.com](http://www.southtexasbookfestival.com).

Winning artists will be recognized during a special awards ceremony at the STIBF on Saturday, October 24, 2026. Their bookmark designs will be professionally printed and distributed at MPL locations throughout the year, allowing thousands of visitors to enjoy their artwork.

Teachers, homeschool educators and youth organizations are encouraged to share this opportunity with their students. The competition gives aspiring artists a chance to showcase their talents while becoming part of one of the RGV's largest celebrations of books, literacy and art.

"Our Youth Bookmark Contest gives young artists an opportunity to share their creativity in a way that becomes part of the library experience for the entire community," said Kate Horan, Library Director. "Every bookmark tells a story, and we look forward to seeing the unique perspectives students bring to this year's theme."

"The City remains committed to supporting programs that expand access to educational and cultural opportunities for residents of all ages," said City Manager Isaac J. Tawil. "Through initiatives like the STIBF and Youth Bookmark Contest, we continue creating opportunities that encourage learning, celebrate creativity and strengthen connections throughout our community."

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“Our young people have incredible ideas, talents and stories to share, and it is important that we provide opportunities for them to express themselves and grow,” said Mayor Javier Villalobos. “The STIBF Youth Bookmark Contest celebrates imagination, builds confidence and gives students throughout the Rio Grande Valley an opportunity to become part of an event that brings our community together.”

For more information, contact the Main Library’s Teen Department at (956) 681-3090.

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**About the City of McAllen**

Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Known as the “City of Palms,” McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. McAllen city leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement. For more information, visit [www.mcallen.net](http://www.mcallen.net) and follow us on social media @cityofmcallen