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المجلس الإماراتي لكتب اليافعين
The UAE Board on Books for Young People

Outstanding Books Exhibition

For Young People With Disabilities 2013



INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

iBBY

Introduction

Every two years the Media Center of Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services (SCHS) organises the Al Manal Forum as a celebration of the anniversary of Al Manal magazine. Over the years the forum has dealt with a series of important issues related to the culture and creativity of people with disabilities and their place in different walks of life. Among the topics addressed by the Forum in recent years: Literature and disability (2004), cinema and disability (2005), the media and disability (2006), TV and disability (2008), theater and disability (2010), and dedicated forum in 2012 to the issue of disability and social media and finally disability and children's literature was the subject for this year (2014).

These forums aim to uplift the level of children's literature that deals with the subject of disability and provide an opportunity for skilled writers and illustrators to be harnessed in this area as well as highlighting the most important issues related to disability and children's literature.

This year's forum coincides with the occasion of Sharjah being Islamic Culture Capital. Moreover, the forum's slogan (The Three Apples) was adapted from the Syrian writer of children's stories Nowras Melhim who always ends his stories with (And three apples have fallen from the sky, one for those who heard the story and one to who narrated it and one for those who remember it), confirming the importance of the issue of disability and children's literature and the reason it should receive considerable attention from writers, illustrators, publishers, and experts in the field.

Al Manal Forum

During a panel discussion at the Manal forum, Mrs Heidi Boiesen gave a speech in the presence of Sheikha Jamila Al Qasimi the General Director of SCHS and officials from cultural and educational institutions, in which she covered a number of key matters on the importance of literature for disabled children and why it should be considered as a basic human right. Mrs Heidi Boiesen introduced the aim of the exhibition and explained the process that was undertaken to select the books. She emphasised the importance of providing disabled children in the Arab World with quality books that are easy to understand. Moreover, equality between "Normal" children and disabled children with disabilities was a major issue of her speech.

After the end of the session during the honouring ceremony, all lecturers were given a certificate of appreciation by Sheikha Jamila Al Qasimi for their participation in the forum.



Planning For the Exhibition

The UAE Board On Books For Young People's team saw that our participation in this forum is necessary as the IBBY has a Documentation Centre of Books for Disabled Young People.

Thus, the UAEBBY decided to host the Outstanding Book Exhibition as a contribution to the forum. As a result, the team started to plan and discuss the specifics involved in hosting the exhibition.

We have commissioned our designer to create 10 hexagonal shape book stands. This design allows for the placement of one book in each side of the stand. Further, the book shelves were on a low level to make it easier for those in a wheel chair to grab and read the books. In addition, above each book there was a small poster with a brief introduction about the book.

As the catalogue that has been provided by IBBY was only in English, the UAEBBY decided to translate the catalogue and print it in Arabic. Both catalogues were placed at the top of the stand for people to read them and get a better, clearer idea of the books.



The Opening

The exhibition was opened on the 4th of May 2014 by HE Sheikh Fahim bin Sultan bin Khalid Al Qasimi, Chairman of Government Relations Department in the Emirate of Sharjah, in the presence of UAEBBY Patron Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi and Marwa Obaid Al Aqroubi, the President of UAEBBY Executive Board as well as Mrs Heidi Boiesen, the director of the exhibition.

Mrs Boiesen was given the opportunity to explain to both Sheikh Fahim Al Qasimi and Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi about the exhibition, the books, and the importance of books in spreading cultural awareness.

The visitors of the exhibition were those interested in providing suitable books for youngsters with disabilities. Most visitors were pioneers in the field of children with disabilities, as this exhibition was the result of the joint efforts between IBBY and SCHC.



Reading Sessions

On the sidelines of the exhibition the UAEBBY organised a reading session for children with disabilities as part of the Book Exhibition for Young People with Disabilities. Twenty children with disabilities from the Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services took part in the reading session, which covered stories that included educational values in the field of literature devoted to children with disabilities, and at the same time met the basic principles that must be available in this type of books. The children enjoyed the sessions, followed by colouring and drawing activities.

