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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Press Release

### *Laura St. John Awarded DCASE Individual Artist Program Grant*

CHICAGO—Laura St. John, owner and founder of Play In A Book, is happy to announce that she recently received an Individual Artist Program grant from the **Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)**. This grant will allow her to further develop a manuscript set in Chicago's South Shore community called *The Lake Michigan Monster*. She plans to use funding to work with an illustrator and designer while also workshopping the manuscript with students from South Shore Fine Arts Academy who will participate in a summer program.



*Picture of South Shore Fine Arts students with Play In A Book's Laura St. John and Abigail St. John*

"I am thrilled to be receiving this grant," said Laura St. John. "This story has been percolating with me for a while. I did a summer workshop program at South Shore Fine Arts Academy in 2018 working with students on an earlier version of the story. I really began to see that community as my setting for the story."

Laura is the author of the eight volume Act It Read It Series™ from Play In A Book, a set of illustrated leveled adaptations of classic tales often set in Chicago neighborhoods. The Lake Michigan Monster is an original manuscript that is not part of the series, but one she has been developing on her own for the juvenile market while drawing on her experience working with members of the community as the Director of Play In A Book.

Prior to founding her company that partners with area schools on drama based literacy projects, Laura has worked for a number of years as a teaching artist. She also collaborated on the *Through The Cracks* (Davis Publications, 1992.) She serves as Past President on the executive board of the Chicago Area Reading Association, and is a member of the Illinois Reading Council and the International Literacy Association.

According to the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Individual Artists Program aims to assist Chicago's practicing artists in creating work that develops their craft and elevates their careers, while adding to the cultural vitality of the city of Chicago. DCASE received an unprecedented increase to the Cultural Grants Program budget in 2022, which has doubled the funds available through this program this year. For more information, please visit [www.chicagoculturalgrants.org](http://www.chicagoculturalgrants.org).



[Play In A Book](http://PlayInABook.com) is a Chicago based provider of educational materials and services and an arts partner for Chicago Public Schools.

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