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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2015 Newbery Medal Winner Kwame Alexander Thursday

The American Library Association announced today that Kwame Alexander is the winner of the 2015 Newbery Medal for his book *The Crossover*. In this book, twelve-year-old narrator Josh Bell uses the rhythms of a poetry jam to emulate the "moving & grooving/popping and rocking" of life on the basketball court with his twin brother, J.B. This powerful novel in verse paints an authentic portrait of a closely-knit family on the brink of crisis.

Kwame Alexander will be at the Bay County Public Library on Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 7 p.m. The appearance is part of booksALIVE, presented by the Bay County Public Library Foundation.

Kwame Alexander has written eighteen books, including the award-winning children's book *Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band*, which was recently optioned as a children's television show, and his *Junior Library Selections: He Said She Said*, a young adult novel. Alexander believes that poetry can change the world, and he uses it to inspire and empower young people through his Book-in-a-Day literacy program, which has created more than 3,000 student authors at 69 schools across the US, Canada, and the Caribbean. A regular speaker and workshop presenter at conferences in the US, he also travels the world planting seeds of literary love. Recently, Alexander led a delegation of 20 writers and activists to Ghana, where they delivered books, built a library, and provided literacy professional development to 300 teachers, as a part of LEAP for Ghana, an International literacy program he co-founded. *The Kwame Alexander Papers*, a collection of his writings, correspondence, and other professional and personal documents, is held at the George Washington University Gelman Library. In 2015, Kwame will serve as Bank Street College of Education's first writer-in-residence.

The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most outstanding contribution to American literature for children.

The Bay County Public Library is located at 898 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Panama City.

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