



Deep Center, Inc.  
P.O. Box 5582  
Savannah, GA 31414  
912.289.7426  
writewithus@deepcenter.org

**Contact:**

Dare Dukes  
Executive Director, Deep Center  
912.289.7426  
dare@deepcenter.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 9, 2018

**Deep Center Names Savannah's Best Young Authors**

SAVANNAH, Georgia—Deep Center has named Madeleine Pelli and Rachel Whitehead, eighth graders from Garrison School for the Arts and Isle of Hope K–8 School respectively, as Deep Laureates for spring 2018. This honor recognizes Madeleine and Rachel as Savannah's "deepest" young authors, whose creative writing is among the most skilled, original, and fearless in the county. Madeleine's vivid fictional story, "The Bookshop," and Rachel's historical literary non-fiction, "Movin' On," won each of them the honor.

"Deep has helped me become a better writer, a more empathetic writer," said Madeleine. "Sometimes I see bad things happen to other people, and writing helps me understand and feel better."

"Deep made me a better writer. It honed my skills and helped me learn to write in different genres," said Rachel. "I'm really thankful that I was part of a community of fellow students, laughing and having fun while doing something I love."

Madeleine and Rachel were two of the 128 youth who completed Deep Center's Young Author Project in the spring of 2018, and they were voted to receive the honor by a combination of their program peers, the general public through a social-media campaign, and Deep's staff. Works by all participating students have been published in four anthologies, which are on sale for \$12 at [deepcenter.org](http://deepcenter.org) and in circulation within the Live Oak Public Library system. Artist Shishuang Tu illustrated the covers. All book-sale proceeds support Deep's nonprofit creative-writing workshops.

The spring 2018 semester marked the first time that two young authors were selected for the honor of Deep Laureate.

“The works of Rachel and Madeleine are lyrical, fierce, and honest,” explains Dare Dukes, executive director of Deep Center. “They both in their unique ways exemplify the creativity and leadership we nurture at Deep Center. We are so proud of them, and Savannah should be, too.”

The Deep Center runs the Young Author Project in 14 of Savannah's 18 public K–8 and middle schools, and up to 55 percent of the students come from low-income communities. All Deep young authors, selected by their teachers, participate in a rigorous series of after-school writing workshops throughout the semester. Workshops are taught by volunteers, who are themselves dedicated creative writers.

\*\*\*

Deep Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that empowers Savannah's young people to thrive as learners, community leaders, and agents of change. Through creative writing, cultural production, and art, Deep creates platforms for the city's youth and the village of support around them, including their families and adult allies, to share stories, engage in debates, and make Savannah a more just and equitable place.

Deep Center is funded in part by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Chatham Foundation, the City of Savannah, the Ford Foundation, the Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation, the Georgia Council for the Arts, Georgia Power, Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, the Hodge Foundation, International Paper, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Writing Project, Publix Super Markets Charities, the Savannah Community Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the United Way of the Coastal Empire, and many generous institutions and individuals. Learn more at <http://deepcenter.org>.

Photos of Madeleine and Rachel and examples of their writings can be found here: <http://www.deepcenter.org/press-resources/>.

- end -