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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely Speak to Juveniles Charged as Adults at DC Jail with Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop and An Open Book Foundation

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 21, 2016 – Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop is partnering with An Open Book Foundation to bring *All American Boys* co-authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely to speak to 16- and 17-year-old boys charged as adults at the DC Jail on Thursday, January 21, 2016.

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop is a nonprofit organization that uses the tools of books and writing to empower incarcerated youth. The program begins with a twice-weekly meeting with 16- and 17-year-old boys who have been charged and incarcerated as adults at the DC Jail. Free Minds excites them about reading and writing by providing books that reflect their own lives, publishing their poetry, and bringing in guest authors to speak. Past authors have included George Pelecanos (*The Cut*), Shaka Senghor (*Writing My Wrongs*), Matt de la Peña (*Ball Don't Lie*), Walter Dean Myers (*Lockdown*), Jonathan Franzen (*Freedom*), and more.

An Open Book Foundation (AOB) brings award-winning authors and illustrators into disadvantaged schools and other institutions that serve youth in the Washington, DC area. AOB gives each student a signed copy of the author's book and the school receives a collection of the author's books for their classrooms and library.

Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely co-authored *All American Boys*, a young adult novel about how systemic racism and police brutality affect the lives of young people in America. The novel won the 2016 Coretta Scott King Award as well as the inaugural Walter Dean Myers Award from We Need Diverse Books.

Reynolds and Kiely will be speaking with the teenagers in the Book Club at the DC Jail on Thursday, January 21, 2016. In collaboration with An Open Book Foundation, Reynolds and Kiely also visited Sasha Bruce Youth Works, Luke C. Moore Senior High

School, Ballou High School, Duke Ellington School of the Arts in DC, and Northwood High School in Montgomery County.

The youths read *All American Boys* in preparation for the author visit and felt a strong connection to the book.

Prior to the author visit, one member of the Book Club at the DC Jail, MB*, said, “I can’t wait to meet the authors. I want to ask them ‘what made you choose to write this story?’ I think it must be because of all the stories about people like Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, the woman in South Carolina... There are so many I don’t even remember them all.”

Another member, DJ, said, “I am ready to meet these authors because I’m trying to write a book that is based on what we go through in the streets. I know this is a great opportunity to learn from a couple of really good writers.”

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop is proud to be partnering with An Open Book Foundation in bringing Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely to the DC Jail.

*Book Club members are identified by initials only

About Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop

Founded in 2002 by Tara Libert and Kelli Taylor, Free Minds uses books, creative writing, and peer support to awaken DC youth incarcerated as adults to their own potential. Through creative expression, job readiness training, and violence prevention outreach, these young poets achieve their education and career goals, and become powerful voices for change in the community. To learn more visit www.freemindsbookclub.org, or call us at (202) 758-0829.

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