



**Minnesota Humanities Center Announces New Anthology  
Written By Young Somali Minnesotans  
*Crossroads: An Anthology of Resilience and Hope by Young Somali Writers***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 20, 2020 – St. Paul, Minn.** – The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) is pleased to announce the publication and launch of ***Crossroads: An Anthology of Resilience and Hope by Young Somali Writers***. Edited by author and educator Marian A. Hassan, the collection includes compelling poetry and prose from 31 Somali American youth and young adult authors from Minnesota. The poets' and writers' journey of self-discovery and exploration of their histories, dreams and determination inspire pride and increase understanding for all who read the stories.

“To be included in this anthology is such an amazing opportunity not only for me but for the other authors involved,” notes *Crossroads* author and Ubah Medical Academy student Khadija Mohamed. “To be recognized and to bring the Somali people into a new light is such a spectacular feeling.”

Minnesota is home to the largest Somali diaspora in the United States. However, decades after immigrants began arriving here, inequities in education still abound due to a lack of Somali staff in schools and a lack of cultural competencies and resources for teachers. *Crossroads* will address many community-identified needs by providing a resource that increases student engagement, helps educators who work with Somali students and families better understand their students, and assists non-Somali students to better appreciate the experiences of their Somali classmates. Expanding on Somalia's rich oral heritage, the poems and stories in *Crossroads* speak to the challenges and uplift the opportunities within this growing community.

Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter said, “These stories of resilience and hope are acts of self-representation and empowerment not only for Somali youth in our community, but for immigrant communities across our nation. *Crossroads* reflects Minnesota's increasingly rich, vibrant, and diverse story, which we continue writing together.”

In conjunction with the release of *Crossroads*, MHC will hold a series of book launch events that celebrate the Somali youth voices found in this anthology. These events will include opportunities to meet the young authors of *Crossroads*, live entertainment, and light refreshments. All events are free and open to all, but require advance registration. *Crossroads* is available for [purchase](#) through Itasca Books. Additionally each household in attendance will receive a free copy of *Crossroads*. Communities hosting *Crossroads* book launch events include:

- [Eden Prairie](#). March 15, 2020, 2:00 – 4:30 pm. **Venue:** Eden Prairie High School – East Entrance 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- [Minneapolis](#). March 21, 2020, 4:00 – 6:30 pm. **Venue:** Brian Coyle Center

- [St. Cloud](#). April 18, 2020, 4:00 – 6:00 pm. **Venue:** Southside Boys & Girls Club
- [Rochester](#). June 9, 2020, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. **Venue:** Rochester Art Center

“*Crossroads* is a book I wish I had in grade school,” said multimedia artist Ifrah Mansour. “There’s a familiar tender feeling almost on every page like a sweet hug from your favorite grandma.”

*Crossroads* builds on the success of four widely distributed children’s books from MHC’s [Somali Bilingual Book Project](#) that retold traditional Somali tales. Initially published in 2007, these books were recently reprinted by [Books for Africa](#) and 11,000 copies of all four titles (44,000 books in total) will be shipped to Africa over the next 12 months and will be distributed throughout all regions of Somali.

*This project is funded with money from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund that was created with the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.*

### **About the Minnesota Humanities Center**

The Humanities Center connects our past, present, and future by bringing people together to increase understanding and spark change. Using story as a catalyst and the humanities to explore the question of what it means to be human, MHC seeks to create a just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate. MHC, founded in 1971, is a statewide nonprofit organization affiliated with and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. MHC operates a full-service Event Center in a historic building on St. Paul’s East Side. More information available at [mnhum.org](http://mnhum.org).

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Image/*Crossroads* book cover by Chris McDuffie