



Book of the Month

***A Christmas Memory* by Richard Paul Evans**

Book Review by Maureen Lang, Friends of the Starkville Library Board Member

The Christmas book that I will feature this Christmas is a poignant one. Many of you have probably sat down with a Richard Paul Evans book and have enjoyed a warm cozy feeling throughout. This book, *A Christmas Memory*, is somewhat different from those other books as this is a memoir of his own childhood.

Richard Paul Evans experienced a somewhat turbulent childhood. His brother died in the Vietnam War, and as a direct result, he was thrown into experience parental separation and movement from California to his mother's hometown in Utah. Bullying, lack of friends, having Tourette's syndrome, and his mother's depression caused a very lonely existence for a nine-year-old boy. That all started to change when he discovered the dog next door.

What follows is a magical friendship which develops between the dog's owner, an elderly African American gentleman who really helps Richard find his way with this difficult hand he has been dealt. Right from the beginning Mr. Foster raises Richard's spirit. His house is a magical place that is always decorated for Christmas ahead of time with carols playing on the Victrola. Mr. Foster's house emanates wonderful smells with the daily baking that Richard gets to take part in after school. He gets to make money by joining in with Mr. Foster to cash in bottles, shovel snow and walk his dog. Most of all though, spending special time with Mr. Foster provides the security and stability that Richard so desperately needs.

Richard's whole life ends up being affected by this remarkable man and his support of this young boy at a vulnerable age. Read the book to see how Richard's life is impacted and be inspired to look around you to see how a little kindness can make the world a better place. You will be glad you did.

