

Best Books for Libraries 2015 – Elementary School

Prepared by

Netta Aragona, Head of Children’s Services at Lake Hiawatha Library,

Jen Carlin, Children’s Librarian at the Main Library,

and Melissa Okerblom, Head of Children’s Services at the Main Library

Presented to the Morris County School Media Association on January 14, 2016

Parsippany-Troy Hills Public Library System www.parsippanylibrary.org

Main Library	Lake Hiawatha Library	Mount Tabor Library
449 Halsey Road	68 Nokomis Avenue	31 Trinity Park
Parsippany	Lake Hiawatha	Mount Tabor
973.887.5150	973.335.0952	973.627.9508

Picture Books

Antony, Steve. *Please Mr. Panda*. An adorable book that teaches children about manners. Mr. Panda asks a penguin, a skunk, and a whale if they would like a donut and they all say “yes” but do not say “please.” Finally, Mr. Panda meets an upside down lemur and asks the lemur if he would like a donut. The lemur says “please” and Mr. Panda gives him all of the donuts, claiming he does not even like donuts. A funny, engaging picture book. (Grades preschool-kindergarten)

Barnett, Mac. *Leo: A Ghost Story*. A book about an unwanted ghost that finds a new friend. A great book for caregivers who want to read a Halloween story to children that is not spooky or scary. Leo is a ghost who does not want to cause any harm and lives in a house all on his own until a family moves in. The new family is afraid of Leo’s antics so Leo decides to leave his home and move back to the city. It is amusing to watch the family hide in the bathtub when Leo brought them tea and toast. It is there that he meets his new friend, Jane. Leo moves in with Jane and even scares away a robber at her house. This book about friendship and imagination will delight little readers. (Grades preschool-kindergarten)

Dyckman, Ame. *Wolfie The Bunny*. Dot the little bunny gets a little brother named Wolfie. In fact, Wolfie really is a wolf! While Mama and Papa adore Wolfie, Dot thinks Wolfie wants to eat them all up. Is Dot the bunny right? This is an adorable book about sibling rivalry, bravery and loyalty. (Grades preschool-grade 1)

Jenkins, Emily. *A fine dessert. Four centuries, four families, one delicious journey.* Four families, each from a different century, from 1710 England to present day California, prepare a delicious “blackberry fool” dessert. Beautifully detailed illustrations depict how clothing, technology, and society have changed through time. Follow the recipe provided to make your own blackberry fool dessert! (grades 1-3)

Ling, Nancy Tupper. *Double Happiness.* Gracie and her brother Jake cope with moving far away from their grandmother in San Francisco. This beautifully illustrated story of a Chinese American family is told in verse and the poems are titled with Chinese characters. Young children that have recently moved will relate to this story and the initial feelings of sadness that the characters experience. (Grades K-2)

Mattick, Lindsay. *Finding Winnie: the true story of the world’s most famous bear.* Beloved children’s book character, Winnie-the-Pooh was based on a live bear at the London zoo. The author tells the fascinating story of her great-grandfather, Harry Colebourn who rescued a bear cub that he named Winnipeg in honor of his hometown. This book won the 2016 Caldecott Award. (Grades K-3)

Pena, Matt. *Last Stop On Market Street.* C.J. is not happy that he has to accompany his grandmother on a bus ride after church but his nana helps him see the other side of things, especially when they arrive to help at a soup kitchen. This picture book won the 2016 Newbery Medal. (grades K-2)

Stead, Philip C. *Lenny and Lucy.* A wonderful book about imagination. Peter and his dog are having a hard time settling into their house on the edge of the woods until the boy makes pillow and blanket guardians to keep them safe. Eventually, they meet a real flesh and blood friend. (Grades preschool-2)

Easy Readers

Arnold, Tedd. *Prince Fly Guy.* Fly Guy helps Buzz write a fairy tale for a homework assignment in this latest installment of the popular easy reader series. (Grades K-1)

Manushkin, Fran. *Katie Woo, Super Scout.* Katie participates in scouting activities with a partner, Janie who is very different from her. She wonders if they can truly be Scout sisters if they cannot agree. (Grades 1-2)

Moore, Julianne. *Freckleface Strawberry: lunch, or what's that?* Freckleface Strawberry and her friend Windy Pants Patrick love food but they do not like the products available at the school cafeteria. Will Freckleface Strawberry try the green glop? (Grades K-1)

Pilkey, Dav. *Big dog and little dog*. Previously published as board books, this series is now available in easy reader format. Beginning readers will enjoy these stories with a simple sentence per page, bold, colorful illustrations that provide picture clues, and funny, engaging plots. Additional activities, such as practice with story sequencing, amazing facts and funny jokes, will reinforce literacy skills and provide more fun. (Grades K-1)

Virjan, Emma J. *What This Story Needs is a Pig in a Wig*. As pig embarks on a boat ride, her friends come on board, one by one. Here come frog, dog, goat on a log, rat with a hat, and more friends, until the boat is so crowded that pig orders them all off! Will pig realize that being alone is no fun? Fans of Mo Willems will love to read about Pig's adventures in this new easy reader series. Other series titles include, "*What this story needs is a hush and a shush*," and "*What this story needs is a munch and a crunch*." (Grades K-1)

Graphic Novels

Holm, Jennifer. *Sunny Side Up*. 10-year-old Sunny is sent to stay with her Grandpa in Florida during the summer of 1976. Florida is a disappointment until she makes a new friend, Buzz and they spend the summer reading comic books and finding lost golf balls. Part of Sunny's story is told through flashbacks of her family life in Pennsylvania as she remembers why she came to Florida. (Grades 4-6)

Jamieson, Victoria. *Roller Girl*. Astrid signs up for roller derby camp after her best friend ditches her for new interests and friends. Roller derby is physically demanding and Astrid wonders if this is the sport for her. She is encouraged by Rainbow Bite, a real roller derby celebrity. This graphic novel won the 2016 Newbery Honor award. (Grades 4-7)

Lynn, Sarah. *The Boulder Brothers: meet Mo and Jo*. Two caveboys search for the source of a bad smell, play hide-and-seek, and find a way to stay warm. This beginning reader in graphic novel format is perfect for building a young reader's confidence. The warm orange and brown illustrations work well to show the caveman setting. (Grades K-2)

Simpson, Dana. *Unicorn on a Roll: another Phoebe and her unicorn adventure*. Phoebe and her unicorn, Marigold continue to be best friends in this sequel to *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*. Marigold is fond of gazing at herself in the pond and rejoicing that she is a unicorn. Phoebe deals with a mean girl at school, a crush on a classmate, and boogers. The story is told in 1-2 pages of panels that feature little gags or jokes. (Grades 4-6)

Winick, Judd. *Hilo: the boy who crashed to earth*. D.J. is an ordinary boy that happens to see a boy crash to Earth unexpectedly. The boy is a robot and his name is Hilo. Unfortunately Hilo has little memory of his life before he encountered D.J. Slowly he discovers his past and D.J. begins to realize that he needs to help Hilo save the world. This is the first book in a new series that kids will love. (Grades 2-5)

Juvenile Fiction

Beasley, Cassie. *Circus Mirandus*. When he realizes that his grandfather's stories of an enchanted circus are true, ten-year-old Micah sets out on a quest, with his loyal but skeptical friend, Jenny, to find the elusive Circus Mirandus, and to ask the Lightbender, the circus' greatest magician, to save his grandfather's life. (Grades 4-6)

Bracken, Alexandra. *The princess, the scoundrel and the farm boy. An original retelling of Star Wars. A new hope*. This is a retelling of the first Star Wars film, in which the galaxy's fate lies in the hands of Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, and Han Solo. Even for those who know the story, this is a thrilling read! (grades 4-6) Other books in this series include, Gidwitz, Adam. *So you want to be a Jedi?: an original retelling of Star wars: the Empire strikes back*, and Angleberger, Tom. *Beware the power of the dark side!: an original retelling of Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*. (Grades 4-6)

Bradley, Kimberly B. *The war that saved my life*. Nine-year-old Ada's cruel mother, ashamed of Ada's clubfoot, keeps Ada a prisoner in her own home. At the onset of WWII, Ada stows away, with local children and her brother, on an evacuee train destined for the safer English countryside, to live with caretakers until the war is over. What will happen to Ada and her brother? Will they ever find a home where they are truly loved? This dramatic, suspenseful story will keep readers turning the pages until the very end. (Grades 4-6)

Brown, Monica. *Lola Levine is Not Mean!* Second-grader Lola has trouble fitting in with her classmates after she accidentally hurts a classmate during a recess soccer game. Lola is fortunate to have a supportive family and a loyal best friend. Beginning chapter book readers will love Lola's energetic personality. (Grades 1-3)

Cottrell Boyce, Frank. *The Astounding Broccoli Boy*. Rory Rooney has been bothered by the school bully for years. He tries to be prepared for Grim's tactics but he is never able to save himself. When Grim is sent to the hospital due to a severe nut allergy, Rory has to contend with his henchmen. Rory Rooney turns green after he is pushed into a river by his classmates. When he is sent to the hospital, he discovers that his roommate is the school bully who is also green. Rory decides that he must be a superhero just like Green Lantern or any of the other green-shaded creatures. (Grades 4-6)

Draper, Sharon M. *Stella by starlight*. One night, when she is up late on her back porch, practicing her writing for school, Stella sees Ku Klux Klan activity in the distance. What can Stella do to fight against this evil organization and racial injustice in her small town? (Grades 4-6)

Gannon: *The Doldrums*. Eleven-year-old Archer Helmsley misses his famous grandparents, who disappeared while exploring in Antarctica. Archer, along with his two best friends, devises a plan to find and rescue them. Will the three friends be able to escape the notice of Archer's overprotective mother and their eagle-eyed, evil teacher, Mrs. Murkley, as they attempt to carry out their plan? (Grades 4-6)

Gay, Marie-Louise. *Princess Pistachio*. In the first book of this new series, Pistachio receives a golden crown and an unsigned card for her birthday. This leads her to believe that she must be a "long-lost" princess, forced to live with adoptive parents and an annoying baby sister. Pistachio wishes that Penny, her baby sister, will disappear, and when her wish comes true, Pistachio musters up the courage to find Penny and save the day. Colorful, cartoon-like illustrations, add to the fun in this perfect easy chapter book for beginning readers. The second book in this series is *Princess Pistachio and the Pest*. (Grades 1-3)

Gino, Alex. *George*. George is a book about a girl, who the world views as a boy. George, a fourth grader, is referred to as "she" or "her" by the narrator which gives this story more validation of how strongly George feels about being a transgender. She has been trying to keep this a secret for so long even though both her mother and brother question whether or not she is gay which George says that is not what she is. George finally tells her best friend Kelly how she really is a girl and they work together to show the teachers, students and George's family that she really does feel, and always has, that she is a girl. A book about transgender, friendship, family and bullying that is hard to put down. (Grades 4-6)

Graff, Lisa. *Lost in the Sun*. Middle schooler Trent is paralyzed by grief because he accidentally caused the death of another student during a casual hockey game. Trent did not know Jared had a bad heart and he can't bear to play any sports again. He isolates himself from family and friends until another sixth-grader, Fallon begins to reach through his rage-filled exterior. (Grades 4-7)

Kelly, Jacqueline. *The curious world of Calpurnia Tate*. In this sequel to the Newbery Honor book, *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*, smart, adventurous Callie Vee, has a lot on her mind, worrying about her younger brother when he brings home wild animals to keep as pets, trying to befriend her cousin who has come to live with Callie's family after a hurricane destroyed her cousin's home, and attempting to convince her parents that her dream of becoming a veterinarian is a suitable vocation for a girl living in Texas in the early 1900s. (Grades 4-6)

Kidd, Ronald. *Night on Fire*. Billie Sims longs to see the world and she watches the Greyhound buses move through her hometown of Anniston, Alabama in 1961. She never thought of herself as racist but several incidents cause her to examine her beliefs and those of everyone in her small town. She notices that African-Americans are not included in the town spelling bee and that a store owner can order an African-American customer to leave for no reason at all. Finally when the Freedom Riders are attacked in her hometown, she realizes the painful truth about her family and neighbors. (Grades 4-7)

Lawson, Jessica. *Nooks and Crannies*. Only child Tabitha Crum has been neglected by her parents for years and her only real friend is a mouse. She receives an invitation to spend the weekend at the mysterious Countess of Windermere's estate along with five other children. Tabitha must figure out the Countess' secret before the weekend is over or risk living in an orphanage. (Grades 4-6)

McGhee, Alison. *Firefly Hollow*. Cricket and Firefly have dreams that take them beyond their familiar world of Firefly Hollow, and into the world of the Giants. When they meet Peter, a 'miniature' giant, they learn that not all Giants are to be feared. These new friends help each other in unexpected ways. (Grades 3-5)

Oliver, Lauren. . *Curiosity House: The Shrunken Head*. The first book in a new mystery series which takes place in Dumfrey's Museum of Freaks, Oddities, and Wonders. When a new child shows up and the museum's famous shrunken head is stolen, it sets off an unforgettable chain of events. Children will eagerly be waiting for the next book in the series. (Grades 4-6)

Riordan, Rick. *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, Book 1: The Sword of Summer*. Fans of Rick Riordan's previous series will dive right into this new series about Norse mythology. Magnus Chase discovers that he is a demigod and must search for his birthright, an ancient sword. The catch is that he is dead and ends up in the Hotel Valhalla. (Grades 5 and up)

Shevah, Emma. *Dream On, Amber*. Ambra Alessandra Leola Kimiko Miyamoto (who prefers to be called Amber) is an 11 year old girl who is trying to make it through middle school embarrassments, awkward friendships, bullying and dealing with being a biracial tween. Her mother is Italian and her father is Japanese. Her father left them when Amber was only 6 years old and they do not know where he went which obviously contributes to Amber's problems. A quick and uplifting book that will hook readers from the first page. (Grades 4-6)

Vernon, Ursula. *Hamster Princess: Harriet the Invincible*. Harriet deals with the curse of pricking herself on a hamster wheel at age 12 by performing death-defying feats up until her twelfth birthday. Can she save herself from her fate and avoid kissing a prince? (Grades 3-5)

Juvenile Nonfiction

Adler, David A. *Prices! Prices! Prices! Why they go up and down*. Did you ever sell lemonade at your own lemonade stand? How much did you charge? Did you make a profit? Once you learn about how prices are set in this fun look at the laws of supply and demand, your next business venture will be a success! (Grades 2-5)

Arnosky, Jim. *Frozen Wild*. A beautifully illustrated book about how animals survive in the coldest places on earth. Open the giant fold-out pages to see pictures of how different creatures survive in frigid conditions—from the landscape and waters of the Arctic to the frozen continent of Antarctica. Children and adults will be mesmerized by the stunning illustrations and interesting facts in this book. (Grades 2-4)

Eszterhas, Susan. *Koala Hospital*. A first book in a new series called *Wildlife Rescues*, photographer Eszterhas documents the work done at Koala Hospital in Port Macquarie, Australia, where they care for the injured, sick and orphaned koalas. At the hospital, the koalas are rehabilitated so that they can eventually enter into wildlife again. Beautiful photographs of these adorable young and adult marsupials will capture the eye of animal loving children. (Grades 2-5)

Jenkins, Steve. *Egg. Nature's perfect package*. This is another “must read” from Steve Jenkins. Animal lovers and science-minded kids will be amazed when they read about how animals and insects lay eggs and protect them until they hatch, how babies develop and hatch from the eggs, and more! Jenkins’ eye-catching collage illustrations add to the enjoyment. (Grades 2-4)

Jenkins, Steve. *How to swallow a pig. Step-by-step advice from the animal kingdom*. Learn all sorts of survival skills of animals from around the world, in this unusual “how to” book. Step-by-step illustrated instructions are given on how to crack a nut like a crow, how to sew a nest like a tailorbird, how to disguise yourself as an octopus, and more! (Grades 2-5)

Stabler, David. *Kid Athletes: True Tales of Childhood from Sports Legends*. Readers will learn about the childhoods of 16 famous athletes. There are funny incidents, unexpected obstacles, and encouraging stories in this collection. Even children who have never played a sport will enjoy this book. (Grades 4-6)

Juvenile Biographies

Barton, Chris. *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch*. This picture book biography tells the story of a former slave who became elected to the U.S. House of Representatives at age 25. The Reconstruction period of American history is not studied as often as other time periods yet it was a fascinating time. (Grades 2-5)

Kraft, Betsy Harvey. *The Fantastic Ferris Wheel. The story of inventor George Ferris*. Engineer George Ferris thought of a fantastic idea for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair...a giant "observation wheel" that would carry hundreds of people up to 26 stories high! Some people thought this would be an unsafe structure, but Ferris' idea was put to the test when the completed Ferris wheel began operating at the World's Fair and a violent windstorm blew in. Find out if the wheel stood up to the gale-force winds, and if the passengers survived! (Grades 1-3)

Meltzer, Brad. *I am Lucille Ball*. The author describes the life of legendary comedienne, Lucille Ball in this latest edition to the *Ordinary People Change the World* series. Readers will be drawn to the cartoon-like drawings of a red-haired little girl that grew up to bring laughter into many American households. Her humor was not always appreciated growing up but she paved her own way during a time when females were expected to behave like demure ladies. (Grades 1-3)

Nelson, S. D. *Sitting Bull. Lakota warrior and defender of his people*. The historic figure, Sitting Bull, one of the greatest Lakota/Sioux warriors, comes to life on the pages of this picture book biography. Sitting Bull, named after the buffalo, an animal that never backs down, was the last great chief to resist the U.S. government's push to move Native Americans to reservations. (Grades 4-6)

Prevot, Franck. *Wangari Maathai. The woman who planted millions of trees*. Read about an inspiring woman in this beautifully illustrated picture book biography. A political and feminist activist, Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, Through this movement, Kenyan woman planted over 30,000,000 trees in 30 years, halting the devastating effects of deforestation! She also helped change laws that improved social conditions for Kenyan women. Wangari Maathai ultimately won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. (Grades 1-4)

Rockliff, Mara. *Mesmerized. How Ben Franklin solved a mystery that baffled all of France*. In 18th century France, Dr. Mesmer claimed he could cure people of their illnesses using "animal magnetism." Through experiments using the "blind" test technique and the discovery of the placebo effect, Franklin and his peers disproved Mesmer's claims. This fascinating picture book

reveals another aspect of Franklin's life through beautiful illustrations and engaging text, with clear explanations of the scientific method. (Grades 2-5)

Stone, Tanya Lee. *The house that Jane built*. This is the story of Jane Addams, a remarkable woman who knew, as a young child, that she wanted to help those less fortunate than herself. In this fascinating picture book biography, learn about how in the late 1800s, she founded Hull House, a home and community center that helped many poor immigrants to assimilate into American society. (Grades K-2)

Thompson, Laurie Ann. *Emmanuel's dream. The true story of Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah*. In this inspiring picture book biography, you will read about Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah, an African boy who was born with a severely deformed leg. This is the amazing story of how Emmanuel overcame his disability, against many odds, to become an accomplished cyclist, activist and spokesperson for disabled people all over the world! (Grades K-2)