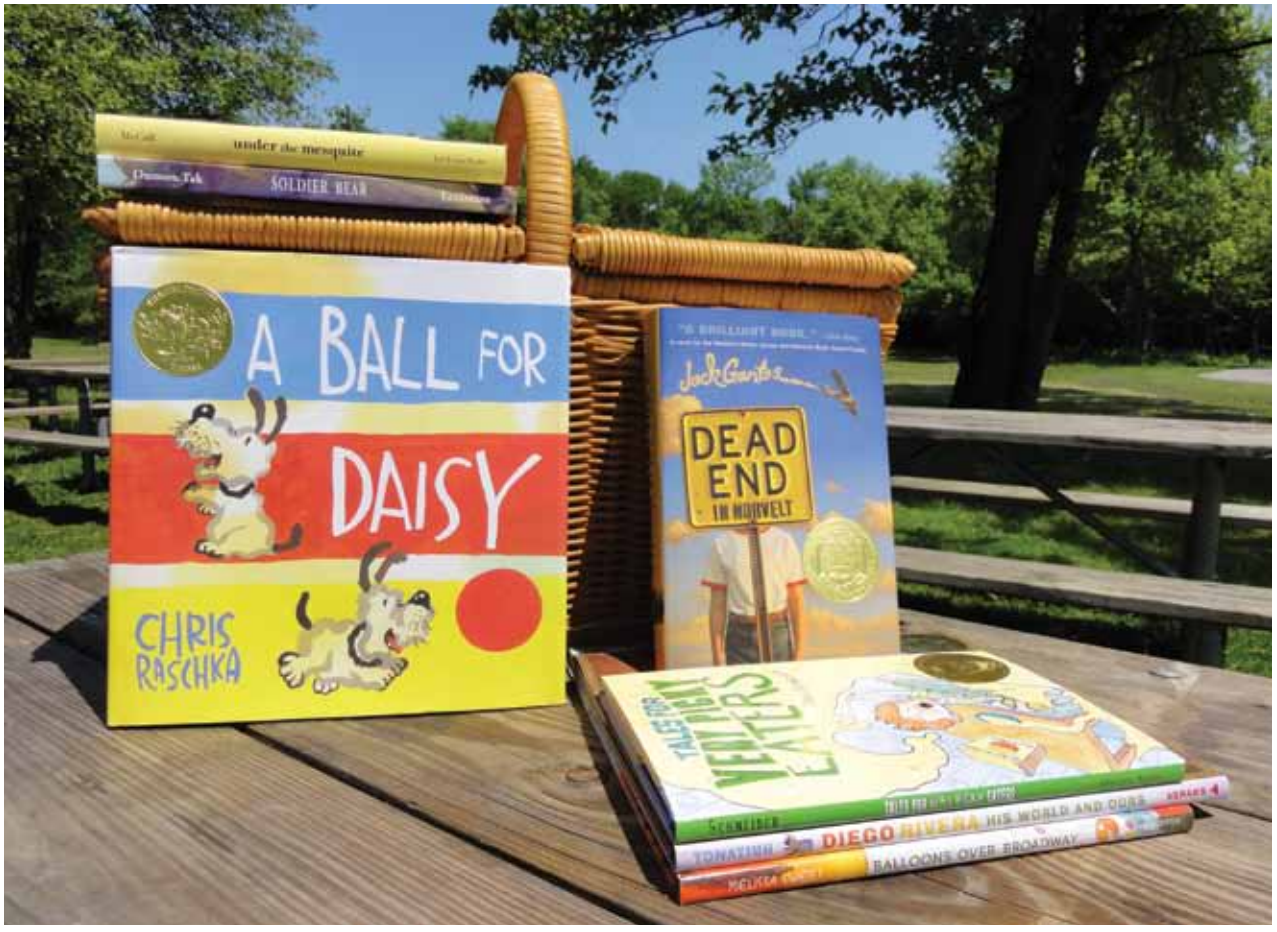
Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

Volume 10 Number 2 Summer/Fall 2012 ISSN 1542-9806



Association for Library Service to Children

2012 Awards Issue

Newbery/Caldecott/Belpré/Batchelder/Geisel Award Speeches
Tricks for Tween Programming
Hosting Author Visits via Skype

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ON THE COVER: Photo by Laura Schulte-Cooper

Editor's Note
Of Max, Mickey, and Maurice

By Sharon Verbeten

When you read this, it will be three months since I wrote this note—on the day my literary icon Maurice Sendak died. But I'm sure I'll still be lamenting the loss of one of the greats of children's literature. I know many of you feel that way too.

While I never met him personally, I did see him at several events—once at a visit he made to the Art Institute of Chicago many years ago (I believe in connection with his work with playwright Tony Kushner). Another time I came close to actually shaking his hand at the American International Toy Fair in New York, when I covered the unveiling of the McFarlane Toys' action figures from *Where the Wild Things Are*. (He did, however, autograph my boxed figures of Max and Goat Boy, my most prized toy possessions.)

His work came to me when I was young, and I pursued it through my life—my office shelves are full of Sendak first editions. In high school, charged with reading a picture book aloud for public speaking class, I chose my then and still-favorite *Outside Over There*. Later, I pored over Selma Lanes' massive two-tome encyclopedic research into the art of the master (which helped me immensely in writing my college thesis on the impact and influence of his illustrations).

Like Max adrift in his boat, Mickey in the batter, or Ida backward in the rain, we can all feel comfortable having inhabited—in childhood or otherwise—the transfiguring worlds created by Maurice Sendak. They may often have seemed dark, yet, as Sendak knew intimately, they were often all too real.

The Dog-Eared Page
Eric Carle Museum: By the Numbers

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Mass., celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. Here's a quick look at the museum by the numbers.

- Size: **40,000**-square feet
- Number of school children from around the world who have visited: **30,000**
- Number of illustrations from major picture book artists in its permanent collection: More than **10,000**
- Average number of family programs each year: **300**

For more information on the museum, call (413) 658-1100 or visit www.carlemuseum.org.

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Circulation

Children and Libraries (ISSN 1542-9806) is a refereed journal published three times per year by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of ALA. Subscription price: members of ALSC, $20 per year, included in membership dues; nonmembers, $40 per year in the U.S.; $50 in Canada, Mexico, and other countries. Back issues within one year of current issue, $12 each. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Children and Libraries*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Members send mailing labels or facsimile to Member Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Nonmember subscribers: Subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to *Children and Libraries*, Customer Service—Subscriptions, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; e-mail: subscriptions@ala.org.

Statement of Purpose

Children and Libraries is the official journal of ALSC, a division of the American Library Association. The journal primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current scholarly research and practice in library service to children and spotlights significant activities and programs of the Association. (From the journal's "Policies and Procedures" document adopted by the ALSC board, April 2004.)

Production

ALA Production Services: Troy D. Linker, Chris Keech, Tim Clifford, Kirstin Krutsch, Chelsea McGorisk, and Rosalie Watts.

Advertising

Bill Spilman, Innovative Media Solutions, 320 W. Chestnut St., PO Box 399, Oneida, IL 61467; 1-877-878-3260 or (309) 483-6467; fax: (309) 483-2371; e-mail: bill@innovativemediasolutions.com. The journal accepts advertising for goods or services of interest to the library profession and librarians in service to youth in particular. It encourages advertising that informs readers and provides clear communication between vendor and buyer. The journal adheres to ethical and commonly accepted advertising practices and reserves the right to reject any advertisement not suited to the above purposes or not consistent with the aims and policies of ALA. Acceptance of advertising in the journal does not imply official endorsement by ALA of the products or services advertised.

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Manuscripts and letters pertaining to editorial content should be sent to Sharon Verbeten, editor, 820 Spooner Ct., De Pere, WI 54115; (920) 339-2740; e-mail: CALeditor@yahoo.com. Manuscripts will be sent out for review according to the journal's established referee procedures. See www.ala.org/alsc, "Communications & Publications" for author guidelines. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer referee for manuscripts submitted to *CAL*, contact Editor Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com. More information about the referee process is available on the Web at the above address.

Indexing, Abstracting, and Microfilm

Children and Libraries is indexed in *Library and Information Science Abstracts* and in *Library Literature and Information Science.*

Children and Libraries is indexed, abstracted, and available in full text through EBSCOhost. For more information, contact EBSCO at 1-800-653-2726.

Children and Libraries is also available from ProQuest Information and Learning in one or more of the following ways: online, via the ProQuest information service; microform; CD-ROM; and via database licensing. For more information, call 1-800-521-0600, ext. 2888 or online at www.il.proquest.com.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Outgoing President's ALSC Message

Mary Fellows
ALSC President, 2011–12
maryalsc@gmail.com

Mary Fellows *is Manager, Youth and Family Services, Upper Hudson Library System, Albany, New York.*

Communicating Value

I began this presidential year last June with a determination that ALSC become more effective at communicating value—the value of our members' work, the value of the children we serve, and the value of an organization that provides resources and leadership to create a better future for children through libraries.

There are two parts to this goal: "communicate" and "value." As I look back over the past year, I see progress in how ALSC members and leaders have improved our communication and increased the value of our work.

- Quarterly "community forums" through live chat now regularly connect ALSC leadership and members on ALSC business and professional issues.
- The ALSC blog content is stronger than ever, and now includes monthly posts from the ALSC president.
- ALSC Twitter and Facebook activity is growing. Members and ALSC leaders alike are using these networks to share information.
- Members attending Division Leadership at the 2012 Midwinter Meeting learned how to deliver an "elevator speech" to communicate the value of their work or specific request to decision-makers.
- Ten ALSC committees have converted or are in the process of converting to virtual operation, allowing more of our members' voices to be heard as we do our work.

In addition, we have formed a stronger partnership with YALSA to better serve youth in the upper end of our range of service. The joint ALSC/YALSA president's program held in Anaheim, The Digital Lives of Tweens and Young Teens, and other tween- and young teen–related collaborations underway are the beginnings of that work.

ALSC also has reached out through partnerships, strategic marketing, and media interviews to connect with organizational peers and the public to assert the essential influence of libraries in children's lives.

None of this progress would have been possible without the efforts of three special groups.

- **Our ALSC members.** It was a treat this year to become better acquainted with more of you and of your inspiring work in ALSC. There are many, many gifted leaders and generous contributors in our division. With your talents, ALSC can offer products like the Great Early Elementary Reads booklist and the new Great Websites for Kids database, and programs like the Morris Book Evaluation Seminar and the ALSC Institute. Ongoing efforts that keep us valuable and viable—like those of our Advocacy and Legislation Committee and the Meta Team—are the result of skillful and focused efforts as well. Thank you all for your work to further our mission. It has been a privilege to count myself among you.
- **ALSC Past Presidents.** It was very clear, as I did this work, that I succeeded some exemplary leaders whose wise and courageous decisions positioned ALSC for the success that served as my foundation. Familiar with a job that offers few peers, members of this group made it a point to encourage and support me. Thank you all for your strong and gracious example. It has been a privilege to follow you.
- **The 2011–12 ALSC Board.** With smart and generous outgoing and incoming presidents in Julie Corsaro and Carolyn Brodie, respectively, I've had an enviable leadership team. In addition, I've had a strong group of board members who think deeply, ask useful questions, provide diverse perspectives, and understand how organizations function: Ernie Cox, Rhonda Puntney Gould, Tali Balas Kaplan, Nina Lindsay, Cecilia McGowan, Jennifer Ralston, Ellen Riordan, Michael Santangelo, Lisa Von Drasek, and Jan Watkins. Thank you all for your skills in guiding our division. It has been a privilege to lead you.

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Incoming President's ALSC Message

Carolyn S. Brodie
ALSC President, 2012–13
carolynalsc@gmail.com

***Carolyn S. Brodie**, PhD, is Professor at Kent State (Ohio) University School of Library and Information Science and Director of the Reinberger Children's Library Center & Marantz Picturebook Collection at KSU.*

Everyone's Story Matters

"'Everyone's story matters,' said Morris. And all the books agreed." [1]

A story of creating a better future for children through libraries

Last fall, I was in Chicago for the Fall ALA Executive Board meeting. I arrived early to see the Butler Children's Literature Center (www.dom.edu/butler) at Dominican University and visit with Curator and past ALSC president Thom Barthelmess.

After my delightful afternoon of children's books and conversation, I caught a cab back into Chicago for a slow, rainy, forty-minute ride. It happened that I had a friendly cab driver named Michael who wanted to chat. An expert at conversation, he quickly learned that I was from Ohio and just in Chicago for a couple of days for a library meeting. Then he *really* began to talk.

He began his story by telling me how proud he was of his family of five children, ranging from four to seventeen years old. He shared their names, interests, favorite books, and even recent good grades on their report cards. This introductory information was really just Michael setting the stage for the last half of the cab ride conversation. His story then turned to his appreciation, support, and thankfulness for librarians and libraries—for they had changed the lives of his children.

Michael, his wife, and their children have been regular library patrons for many, many years and see the value in the services provided. He shared remembrances from over the years of reading aloud to his children (citing particular books), storytimes at the library, and countless homework assignments. He strongly believed that the success of his children in school has been due to their school and community librarians and the library resources that have helped his children.

His oldest son is ready to attend college next year, and Michael *knows* the rest of the children will follow his example. I have no doubt that they will. I was sad to see the ride come to an end, but I knew I had been given a gift of this father's story to tell to others.

This is *just one story* among the many thousands that reaffirms why ALSC members and staff work hard every day *in creating a better future for children through libraries*. This next year, I hope that when your community members share stories of library experiences that you will share them with ALSC through our advocacy initiative. Everyone's story matters!

* * * * *

ALSC Stories Worth Telling

This next year as ALSC President, I am certain that it will be a year filled with countless stories yet to be shared, told, and retold. Following are just a few of our selected ALSC association stories that will unfold this next year.

A story of communicating value

Our immediate past-president, Mary Fellows, led with the message of "Communicate Value," which has moved our association forward in our communication and advocacy initiatives as identified in our strategic plan. Among all of the effort, one step was to rename our Legislation Committee to Advocacy and Legislation. As this committee gets underway with a new name under the excellent leadership of Penny Markey, we will also see the plans for an ALSC Advocacy website unfold during the next year. During the process, we'll ask you to tell the stories from your communities to share on our new site, like the one shared above.

A story of connecting communities

Last fall, I decided on the presidential theme of *Connecting Communities* for this next year. This theme extends Mary's *Communicate Value* theme by also focusing on valuing communication and advocacy. So how are some of the ways we will connect? Our ALSC Division Leadership meeting in Anaheim featured R. David Lankes of Syracuse University as our speaker. His presentation was linked to ALA President Molly Raphael's theme of *Empowering Voices, Transforming Communities* and focused on the role

of youth services librarians now and in the future.

Second, we will also continue to connect through the communication channels that Mary Fellows initiated this past year, including the chats, blog posts and further ways to involve virtual members. And, the 2013 Charlemae Rollins President's program in Chicago will feature community connections made by libraries and museums for children, with a focus on art. Wendy Lukehart, Youth Collections Coordinator, DC Public Library, is chair of the program committee, and Kevin Cherry, Senior Program Officer, Institute for Museum and Library Services is serving as consultant.

A story of celebration

ALSC will observe the 75th Caldecott Anniversary during 2012-2013. Nina Lindsay, Supervising Librarian, Children's Services, Oakland (Calif.) Public Library, is chairing this special anniversary task force; for a complete update on scheduled events, visit www.ala.org/alsc/Caldecott75.

There are many special Caldecott-related events and activities in a variety of formats that will provide opportunities for celebration with children in local communities. Mark your calendar! The 75th Caldecott Preconference Committee under the leadership of K.T. Horning, Director, Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin, Madison, is planning our day-long program for Friday, June 28, 2013 in Chicago.

A story of service

Serving on an ALSC committee is a fine example of giving back to the profession on behalf of the children we serve. ALSC is vibrant because of its members and their good work. We are about service—with the organization serving its members and the members serving the organization.

This past spring, I made appointments to the ALSC process committees. Appointments to committees are one of the more challenging parts of the job. The number of volunteer forms for face-to-face and virtual committees made the appointments much easier.

Opportunities to serve will continue to arise this next year as task forces are formed or a member drops off a committee for some reason. Don't hesitate to go to the ALSC site and submit your form. The awards committee placements will be filled in the Fall; submit a form and please realize there are a limited number of placements (click on the Members link on http://www.ala.org/alsc).

A story of learning and networking

The ALSC Institute will be held on Sept. 20-22 in Indianapolis for "Libraries Leading the Race." The 2-1/2-day workshop is filled with more than thirty hours of programming, a number of award-winning children's illustrators and authors, and the kick-off of the Caldecott Award's 75th anniversary celebration. Come to the event planning to network and meet colleagues from across the country. Check out www.ala.org/alsc/institute.

A story of thankfulness

I grew up in the small Southern community of England, Arkansas, and I am thankful for the Thursday afternoon bookmobile (also called the "library on wheels") that parked beside our post office. Those afternoons firmly set me on the path to library school and later to ALSC membership in 1988 and now to a leadership role.

These are just a few of our collective ALSC stories, there will be many more…. because everyone's story matters!

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your ALSC President. Please connect with me if you have stories, suggestions, or ques-tions via email at carolynalsc@gmail.com. We have much good work ahead of us as the stories above and others unfold this next year. On behalf of ALSC, I will expect more of myself, of you and of those we serve so that we may work together *in creating a better future for children through libraries.*

References

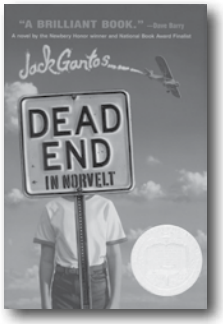
1. *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*. Film. Directed by William Joyce and Brandon Oldenburg. Los Angeles, Calif.: Moonbot Studios, 2011.

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 3

- **The ALSC staff.** Marsha Burgess, Laura Schulte-Cooper, Caroline Jewell, Jenny Najduch, Dan Rude, and Executive Director Aimee Strittmatter are the best staff that any division could have. They are a hardworking team with great humor, savvy, perspective, and vision—all of which moves our work forward every single day. Thank you all for your efforts in building the tracks on which the ALSC train travels. It has been a privilege to work with each of you.

As I end my presidential year, I am reminded of author and CEO Max DePree's quote, "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant."

Thank you for allowing me to lead ALSC this year. It has been my honor to serve you.



Newbery Medal Acceptance Speech

The Newbery Win and the Mausoleum Library

Jack Gantos

Photo: Anne Lower

Jack Gantos *is the winner of the 2012 Newbery Medal for* Dead End in Norvelt, *published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, an imprint of the Macmillan Children's Publishing Group. His acceptance speech was delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, on June 24, 2012.*

Good evening. Good evening. Good evening. Everyone, please pour yourself a drink and settle in as I haven't yet timed this speech.

I like a formal occasion that calls for good posture and traditional modes of expressing gratitude. I find that sprucing up and saying "thank you" brings out the best in people, and I'm no different. I've given a lot of thought to my recent good fortune and have practiced saying "thank you" in the mirror about a hundred times so that when I say "thank you" it does not sound ironic, smarmy, or even mandatory.

Honestly, I haven't been more earnest since I surprisingly won the first-place medal for religious studies in second grade. Even then, as I accepted the medal, I told myself not to laugh first at my own jokes.

I'm a very conventional person, and so I wish to first thank my lovely and ever-supportive wife, Anne, who sometimes thinks a spirit from above sent me to exasperate her patience each and every hour of her life. And I thank our daughter, Mabel, who is far more clever than her father and who has a generous heart when it comes to not being harsh toward his speeches—especially since she has a leading role in this one.

Next I wish to thank Wesley Adams, my longstanding editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux, who for twenty years has worked with me, fenced and sparred with me, and sustained me throughout all nineteen of our publications, from picturebooks to collections of short stories to novels and even a truly nonfiction memoir in which the main character is most certainly the fully realized *Jack Gantos*. (More on *that* Gantos to follow.)

I'd also like to say "thank you" to Amy Berkower, my ever-insightful, hard-working, and always charming agent, who is president of Writers House in New York.

And finally, with great joy in my heart, I want to express my gratitude to Viki Ash, chair of the Newbery committee, and to all of the diligent committee members who met in a very secretive scrum and came away with the sweet conclusion that *Dead End in Norvelt* would be the recipient of the 2012 John Newbery Medal "for the Most Distinguished Contribution to American Literature for Children." What could be more blessedly formal than the honorific phrasing stamped upon that gleaming, golden medal? I will have to purchase a monstrance at the All Things Religious shop to properly display it on my writing desk.

I thank all of you on the committee and all of my readers for the pillar on which I stand this evening—and now on with the speech.

Given the ceremonial tone of this occasion, I really feel as if I should be wearing a tuxedo, but instead I will just structure this talk in the tuxedo of literary genres: *the obituary*. After all, the tuxedo has long been the fancy pajama choice for the eternal thereafter. The formality of an obituary dictates that it begin with the announcement of a death, then continue with a short bio, a list of survivors, and a notice of final viewing, and end with where cash donations or royalties can be dropped off.

The "obit" is a very tidy literary form and one that *Dead End*'s Miss Volker generously stretched to also include some meteoric moment in history that intersected with the life of the deceased in order to point out how, in life, we might feel like but a speck of dust on the planet but in truth we are all tied together in one massive hand-holding of humanity—for better or for worse.

That said, I cannot assume that everyone has read my recent *Horn Book* article "Mausoleum Madness," in which I detail my final resting place, and so I will paraphrase myself here. Upon noticing one day that Walt Whitman had a mausoleum, I wanted one, too. So I have designed mine thusly: on a small hillock of grass will be standing a tombstone in the shape of an eight-foot granite book mounted on an ebony threshold.

On the book is a keyhole. My daughter Mabel will have the large cast-iron key. When she misses me she will insert the key into the lock and pull it open, revealing a passage of stairs leading into a heated granite library. One wall of

the library will be lined with shelves of my collected works. When she touches a volume, a light from the ceiling will project a hologram of me onto a small stage, and I will read that selected volume aloud. For her listening comfort there will be a lovely Le Corbusier lounge chair and a small beverage refrigerator.

In addition to the above, there will now be a wall button in the shape of the golden Newbery Medal that she can push and that will deliver this portion of the Newbery speech, which begins with my voice saying:

Dear Mabel, when I was a child I realized that a book was an object you held in your hands, and when you read it, all the theater of the text took place on the stage within the mind. This caused me to go stand in front of a mirror, where I saw only the outline of my small boy body. But when I closed my eyes I saw the inside of myself—my mind, and the emotions and passions and hopes and dreams and the ever-growing, ever-changing, ever-invented fictional self in there. The playful mutations of the self were as endless as a vast library of books and mirrors. In short, whatever I read I could then close my eyes and become. And when I was called to dinner I would then open my eyes and take my seat and eat like the young boy I was.

The town of Norvelt, where I was born, is similar in construction. It may be a town and not a boy, and it may have streets for boundaries rather than skin, but within the town are people shifting around like movable type and constantly gathering to spell and unspell the stories of their lives. It didn't take me long to realize the town itself was a vital, living book—just an un*written* book. And like the fiction spooling 'round and 'round within the boy, the town too had an interior engine of fiction sitting upon its foundation of history.

And I liked exploring history, but since we don't have forever to read Hendrik van Loon's *The Story of Mankind*, the five-hundred-plus-page winner of the first Newbery Medal in 1922, let's just pick one auspicious date on the calendar—say, January 23rd—and see where that leads us.

On that day in 1737, John Hancock was born, and later he planted an English Elm tree on the Boston Common in order to help block the view of a ramshackle prison from his window. It seems the Puritans were becoming less pure. That tree stood for well over a hundred years, and a man named Joseph Henry Curtis wrote a first-person autobiography from the tree's point of view, which had seen so many seasons come and go beneath its leaves. What the tree did not see was that years later, in 1974, it was there, on the site where it had been planted, that I did a little Snoopy "happy dance" when I found out I had sold my first book for children, *Rotten Ralph*.

I just love the neatly tied knots of history.

On January 23, 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first female medical doctor in the United States. Miss Volker wasn't a doctor, but she didn't need a degree to practice medicine—she *inflicted* medicine on her patients in Norvelt, and we were better for it. When she cauterized my nose with that veterinary tool I felt the *burning conviction* of that *infliction*.

On January 23, 1897, Elva Zona Heaster was found dead. In court, her mother testified that the ghost of Zona returned and revealed to her that the husband had strangled Zona to death. The husband became the first and only man convicted by the testimony of a ghost and was sent to prison for life. Somehow I knew this fact, and after my mother had found all my Christmas gifts unwrapped in the back of her closet, I told her a ghost revealed to me that I had an evil twin who had been living in the attic and that he had done it. Moments later I found out my *mother* had an evil twin because she was the one who cracked me across the butt with a bedroom slipper.

On January 23, 1912, the International Opium Convention was signed at The Hague. It was the first drug control treaty to outlaw various preparations such as hashish and all other cannabis resins not used for medical purposes. Somehow I hadn't read that fact, and in 1970, I made the mistake of smuggling two thousand pounds of hashish on a British yacht from St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands into New York City. After about a year and a half in prison, I got out and wrote the *Rotten Ralph* book that made me dance where John Hancock planted his tree. About thirty years later, I wrote *Hole in My Life* about my time in prison.

I've always felt so impure for breaking the law and then going on to write books for

"Upon noticing one day that Walt Whitman had a mausoleum, I wanted one, too. . . . on a small hillock of grass will be standing a tombstone in the shape of an eight-foot granite book mounted on an ebony threshold . . . On the book is a keyhole. My daughter Mabel will have the large cast-iron key. When she misses me she will insert the key into the lock and pull it open, revealing a passage of stairs leading into a heated granite library. One wall of the library will be lined with shelves of my collected works. When she touches a volume, a light from the ceiling will project a hologram of me onto a small stage, and I will read that selected volume aloud."

innocent young readers. But recently my spirits were lifted when I learned that, prior to winning the Newbery for *Smoky the Cowhorse* in 1927, Will James had been sentenced to fifteen months in a Nevada state prison for cattle rustling. He was released a month early, as he convinced the parole board that he wanted to write books for children. Shocking! Just amazing how history repeats itself.

*"Within the town [of Norvelt] are people shifting around like movable type and constantly gathering to spell and unspell the stories of their lives. It didn't take me long to realize the town itself was a vital, living book—just an un*written *book."*

Then in 1928 the Newbery "runner-up" was Ella Young, who earlier had been convicted of smuggling guns to Republicans during the Irish Easter Uprising. Once released, she crossed the ocean to the United States. At Ellis Island, she was detained. It looked like her past had caught up with her, but when she told her examiners that she "believed in fairies," she was instantly welcomed into the country, where she wrote *The Wonder Smith and His Son*. There are other stories of the slippery lives of Newbery winners, but this is *my* obituary and the only dirt I'm supposed to dig up is my own. So let's push on.

On January 23, 1930, Clyde Tombaugh discovers and photographs the planet Pluto. He feels jubilant. In 2006, Pluto is downgraded from a planet to a "dwarf" chunk of ice. He feels deflated. I've had book reviews that were equally as dispiriting.

On January 23, 1941, Charles Lindbergh testified to Congress that the U.S. should sign a neutrality pact with Germany, which had already blitzkrieged Poland. The patron saint of Norvelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, was against such a treaty. Wisely, Congress was against it, too.

But I wasn't so wise when years later I signed a truce with my older sister. It was called the "No More Bickering" treaty. This went well for a time until her constant kindness got under my skin, and one afternoon when she was sleeping I took one of my cockroach friends, Zippy, and dropped him into her open mouth. She was bigger than me, and to punish me, she made me remove my clothes and run naked around the perimeter of the house. I went sprinting out the back door without a stitch on (contrary to popular belief, this was not very freeing). I ran screaming blindly as I circled the house, utterly terrified of being seen by our psychopathic neighbors, who might have thought we were throwing a wild party. When I reached the back door, my sister had locked it, as well as all the other doors and windows. I then ran to the neighbor's yard to pull laundry off the line—ladies' things—and was caught by the lady, who called me a "pervert" as I hopped away, hands cupping my crotch like a shaved rabbit, back to my yard, where I hid in the bushes.

In the evening, when I was missed for supper, my father went outside to hunt for me and found me hiding under a "shrubbery." He took one look at me and summed up the situation. "Never trust your sister," he said. "She's smarter than you and unscrupulous."

"What's *unscrupulous* mean?" I asked.

"Like I said," he replied dryly. "She's smarter than you."

On January 23, 1957, Walter Frederick Morrison sold the rights to his flying-disc thingy to the WHAM-O toy company. (They later call it the "Frisbee" and make a zillion flying discs that taunt the ex-planet Pluto.) As for me, I invented "The Genius Test." It didn't work on me, so I scrapped it. But later I helped reinvent the "Roman Catapult" with Scary Gary Pagoda—the tattooed ex-criminal son of the next-door lady neighbor who had had the nerve to call *me* a pervert.

For the catapult, we used a springy Australian Pine tree. We sawed off the branches but left climbing stubs on the trunk. Then I took a rope and tied it to the top of the tree. Scary Gary got into his tow truck with the other end of the rope and put it in his winch and winched the tree down into a tense, unstable arc. I hung onto the tip of the tree like an upside-down koala bear and watched as he removed a machete and cut the rope with a mighty hack. The tree sprang forward, but instead of shooting across the yard, I let go too soon and was launched straight into the air. A few seconds later, I landed awkwardly on his father's parked Mercury. The roof did not dent, but I dislocated my shoulder. When I staggered back home, my mother popped my shoulder bone in place, then walked off muttering, "He's no genius, that boy."

I could continue, as the latitude and longitude of history has a way of discovering the most mundane of days. But I'd better move on.

As for a bit of contemporary history, early in the morning of January 23, 2012, I was in the kitchen feeding our cat, Scootch, some treats and glancing suspiciously at my cell phone. I was trying not to think what I was thinking, but the week before, *Dead End in Norvelt* had received the Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction, and so the Newbery was toying with me like the fruit that Tantalus could never reach or the water he could never drink.

To distract myself, I read the "This Day in History" column in the *Boston Globe*. It was the birthday of Captain Chesley Sullenberger, the pilot who successfully landed US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River. The nation's spirits were floated by his skillful accomplishment. Would my spirits float or sink, I wondered.

And then my phone rang. I stared at it and thought, "If this is my mother calling to tell me again where she hid her life insurance policy, I'm going to put that policy to work."

I picked up the phone and it was not my mother but it was Viki Ash and a chorus of excited voices in the background, and she

told me—I think but I wasn't sure because of the raucous background noise—that *Dead End in Norvelt* had been chosen as the John Newbery Award book for 2012.

After a moment, Viki asked, "Do you have anything to say?"

I had been oddly silent. I wanted to ask if I had won the gold or silver because I wasn't quite sure I had heard her correctly, and as I hesitated I thought that it would be rude to ask for clarification. So I just said, "Why, thank you. I'm very thrilled that I wrote a book about history that made history." There were more cheers. More giddy conversation. Then I was sworn to secrecy not to tell anyone except my editor, and then I was told about the live webcast in two hours. And in a flash the call was over.

My wife read my confusion and asked, "Well?"

"I'm not sure if I won the gold or silver," I replied.

"Of course you won the gold," she said. "I'm sure they are very specific when they call."

"But maybe they *did* tell me it was the silver and I just didn't hear it—I heard only what I wanted to hear. When I won the silver for *Joey Pigza*, people were cheering. Maybe I should call Viki back."

"No!" my wife insisted. "You have a history of doing stupid things. Don't embarrass yourself. Call Wes. He'll straighten you out."

I called. Wes was in the shower, but luckily he was using his cell phone for a bar of soap.

"I think I won the Newbery," I said.

"No way!" he shouted.

That was not the response I was looking for. "Well, to tell you the truth, I only *think* I did," I said. "I'm not totally sure."

"Of course he won," my wife cut in.

It went on this way. Him in the shower. Me in a quandary. My wife absolutely certain.

She and I both went back to bed and turned on our laptops. The cats joined us. And in about two hours, we watched the live feed and there it was: *Dead End in Norvelt* had won. It was the very last book announced. "It just squeaked in," I said to my wife.

"No. They saved the best for last, you moron."

I was grinning like one. "You were right," I said to her.

"No kidding," she replied. "For the entire history of our marriage, I've been right on every single issue."

"I should remember that so I'm not stupid again."

"Write it down," she suggested.

And then the phone rang, and rang all day. That night I was lying in bed thinking, This day in history Jack Gantos received the Newbery Medal for *Dead End in Norvelt*. I haven't stopped thinking about it. Or talking about it—right, Mabel?

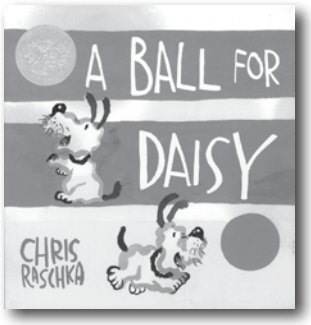
And now we cut back to Mabel in the mausoleum library. She presses the golden button. My voice stops. The speech ends. I've vanished, and she stands and exits into the fresh air. She gets into her car, and amazingly the same cast-iron key fits her ignition switch and she zooms off.

But wait a minute! I've broken my own rules and once again created a fiction of myself. I'm still alive and talking. For a real obituary, you need a corpse and not just a *corpus* of work. As Mark Twain said after reading his obituary in the *New York Journal*, "The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

And this is how history works: it's one infinite ball of bailing wire connecting each bit of information—big or small, eventful or human—to each other. Just as I always thought it was when as a boy I closed my eyes and saw it all.

I thank each of you for this wonderful occasion, and this lifelong award. Good night, and go "Read in Peace." &

Photo: Catherine Wink



Caldecott Award Acceptance Speech

Seeing Like an Artist

Chris Raschka

***Chris Raschka** is winner of the 2012 Caldecott Medal for* A Ball for Daisy, *published by Schwartz and Wade Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books. His acceptance speech was delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, on June 24, 2012.*

A while ago my neighbor, Dan, asked me, "What's new in Chris Raschka industries?"

I've known Dan for many years. We both left stiffish academic worlds at about the same time to pursue our iffy dreams in New York; Dan became an opera singer, and I, you know, an illustrator.

I said to Dan, "My book won the Caldecott."

"Good night nurse!" said Dan. "This calls for a neighbor dinner."

Over the last twenty years or so, Dan's family and my family have developed the habit that whenever something important happens, we have dinner together. Often what's happened is nothing more than having gotten through the week, or preparing for the next one. In fact, almost every Sunday night, we have dinner with the neighbors.

The neighbors are Dan, Kate, and Catherine. Dan I've known since we sat next to each other in History of American Christianity in college. It was Dan who found us our apartment when my wife, Lydie, and I decided to move to New York City. When we arrived, we moved in directly across the hall from him, with Kate, who is a dancer, living immediately above Dan. We made a happy foursome. Then Catherine was born. Ten months later, our son, Ingo, joined us. Catherine said hello to Ingo in the hospital when he was two days old.

These are our dear neighbors. Two years after Ingo's birth, we Raschkas moved exactly one block downtown.

Anyway, throughout all these years we've had dinner with the neighbors. "The nabes," as we refer to one another.

I mention all this because I thought I might consider this evening just another dinner with the neighbors. Although what I'm about to say tonight I would never say at a neighbor dinner. Nevertheless, it is the kind of thing we might talk about, only I've expanded it a bit. This is a much bigger room, after all.

And considerably less cozy, of course.

Let us therefore return to the neighbors.

We are in Dan's apartment, a high-ceilinged room in yellows, reds, and browns. We will have hors d'oeuvres. Nuts, olives, and some wonderful cheese, the favorite being a runny French one known to us as the face-plant cheese. A glass of wine or a cocktail. When it is time to eat dinner, we will all get up from where we are sitting and pull the small table from the wall, drawing out the leaves; bring in a chair from the desk in the back room, another from the wall by the breakfront, perhaps the piano bench and one of the stools from next

to the front door. We will lay a lovely tablecloth, crisp linen napkins (ironed by Kate), silverware, candles, flowers, glasses, plates, carafes of water—bubbly and still—and bottles of wine on their silver traylets. Kate will then emerge from a kitchen that could make many an airplane galley look spacious, with delicious plates of whatever is on for tonight.

Dan pours the wine, red or white. Catherine pours the water, bubbly or still.

"Well, Christopher," says Dan. "Did you ever dream you would win the Caldecott?"

Actually, no, I never dreamed I would win the Caldecott. I never did. Really, I never did. But I did, once upon a time, after some other dreams, dream of being an artist.

Cheers, Dan.

Or maybe what I really dreamed of was *seeing* like an artist. I have never known a time when I didn't want to look at things, wanted to see things and draw them. (I find it almost literally painful if I am denied a window seat.)

And as to drawing, really anyone can do it; you just need a little training. This basically consists of learning to forget what you know or care about. Broadly speaking, the training teaches you to shed, one by one, the thousands of meanings each light impulse hitting your eyes holds in your everyday brain—important meanings that keep you standing upright, get you around corners, recognize your children, and so forth. You slowly must learn to get rid of these and treat light impulses just for what they are, light impulses, which you then transfer through your hand into lines and shapes and colors onto a flat something or other. There are techniques—many, many different techniques—to teach you this. The equivalent of standing on your head is one.

But if you want to skip the techniques and still know at least what it *feels* like to see like an artist, I'll tell you. It is much like traveling to a foreign country, especially on the first days of your trip. You look about you and nothing registers properly. You walk around in a kind of daze, and then some hand grabs you from behind, jerking you back onto the sidewalk to keep you from getting hit by a bus.

And if you're lucky it's Ryan Gosling who's grabbing you, says Kate, offering more salad.

Yes, exactly. You stare like an idiot at the coins in your palm, uncomprehending. Everything is new. Nothing is familiar. You are no longer on automatic pilot. As a result, your mouth may be hanging open in a slobbery dog way. Your eyes are staring. You apparently are from somewhere else. In short, you look like a blithering idiot.

And not unlike an artist. Because when you look and see like an artist, you are someplace else and the old meanings are gone. It's almost an out-of-body experience.

Anyway, you learn to unlearn everything your mind knows about things. I got that. I learned how to draw what I saw. Look, draw, look, draw.

And then, hanging around in the Borders bookstore in Ann Arbor one day, I picked up a book illustrated by Vladimir Radunsky called *The Pup Grew Up!* And then I began to dream of picture books and of making them myself.

But looking at my own drawings and thinking of them as picture book illustrations, I could see that something was missing.

The "look, draw, look, draw" was not enough to make a picture book. For want of a better word, *time* was missing. *Time* needed to enter the pictures.

Here's what I mean. First of all, what I *don't* mean is a narrative. Every moderately classical picture you can think of is packed to the gills with all kinds of narratives and the questions they provoke. Think of Botticelli's *Venus* (how did she get into that shell?) or Andrew Wyeth's *Christina* (why is she crawling?). Not that.

What I wanted was what Chinese scrolls have, where a bunch of things happen at once, unfolding as you go from one end of the scroll to the other, the point of perspective constantly changing. Or when a scroll depicts nothing more than a landscape, but still time is contained in it as you walk slowly from one end to the other, or as you unroll it, or as your eye travels from bottom to top. And the paintings contain time in another way, too, as you contemplate the movement of the brush itself, which contains the very time of the making of the art.

Now, when you have time, or perhaps even to perceive time, you need memory. If you're reading a book, you must remember the pictures that came before. If you're painting the book, you must remember the pictures that came before as well as the pictures that will come after.

They say goldfish only have ten-second memories. I dispute that. I take care of a turtle named Elmo. I've nursed him since he was a tiny mite. He is now enormous, and one reason he's enormous is because I feed him goldfish. He doesn't eat them all at once. He eats a few at a time. There's actually a long and fascinating story about Elmo, but let me just tell you how one day a little boy named Manuel was watching me feed Elmo. Elmo was making a pig of himself. He had the colorful wriggling tail of a large goldfish sticking out of his mouth and was chomping happily away when Manuel, normally not a very talkative person, said, "That's not good for the goldfish." No, indeed. And the other goldfish knew it and tended to live in the shelter of the rocks for some time after this. For about a week. Goldfish memory lasts that long—a week.

Now, back to me. Exploring this idea of memory in my own picture book illustration improved enormously the day I threw out my morgue. What's a morgue? A morgue is a collection of images—everything and anything. A morgue is—this is something you used to learn as an illustrator—something that you must have and must constantly update. For me, when I began twenty-three years ago, it was newspaper and magazine clippings of everyday

objects, or settings, or situations; like men shaking hands, or small dogs, or mountains, or goldfish, etc.—in short, a picture reference file. The New York Public Library has an enormous one.

Nowadays you don't need any of this, of course, you just Google it. We are no longer in the Stone Age. Back then, each illustrator was expected to have a morgue and to use it. You used your artist-seeing, staring at the light impulses from your illustrator's morgue, to make a good artist drawing.

So I threw mine away.

Which left me to rely on memory. For better or for worse, I would draw it as I remembered it. Why did I do this? I sometimes wonder. Well, for one reason, I found that when I painted, the better paintings were done at least in part from memory. And, as a matter of fact, in any drawing, memory is essential. Even when drawing from a photo, or a model, or a photo of a model, the split second between looking at the model and looking at your drawing pad is a split second of memory. I merely decided to push that interval further and further, actually, as far as it could go.

This has its drawbacks, of course, and can lead to some awkward moments, like when an art director with whom you have worked for years and whom you respect and admire asks you *if you've ever seen a chicken and know what one looks like* and also suggests Googling it. (Yes.)

To draw from memory requires a whole new set of skills. Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher, asked his students to name what the last person he or she spoke to was wearing. And if the student couldn't, Steiner suggested that he or she practice noticing. You may now try to remember what your roommate put on this morning. Artists have likewise encouraged developing a split-second visual memorizing. Manet or Monet or Toulouse-Lautrec or somebody said something like if you see someone falling from a roof, you must turn away and draw him before he hits the ground.

For me, the greatest memory-painters come from the ancient line of painters in the classical, ever-evolving, Chinese tradition. The discipline itself in this kind of painting is a communal act of memory, as each painter spends years copying the masters who came before, pulling into his hands the memory of the physical movements themselves. Approximately half of every show of Chinese paintings I see at the Metropolitan Museum of Art carries within its title "in the style of." Sometimes painters have copied painters copying painters. In this way, the earlier painters are forever remembered.

And when you gaze upon the slowly changing styles of the Chinese painters, who are all painting the same kinds of things—landscapes and flowers and figures—you see what emerges when you paint from memory: a vocabulary, a painted vocabulary, to tell your tale. This is what the Chinese painters are so expert at. Each practitioner in the long line of succession adds to or alters what came before him. Instead of flipping his brush like *this* for a pine tree, he flips his brush like *that*. Instead of dabbing his brush, he drags it. Instead of dots, lines. Or simply instead of thin and refined, fat and rough-edged, which I particularly like.

But back to picture books. You learn to draw what you see. Then you learn to draw what you remember. Finally, you have to learn to draw what you feel. The task of a picture book illustrator, I would say, is to remember a particular emotion, heighten it, and then capture it in some painted vocabulary, so that the same emotion is evoked in the child, in the reader. I must make you feel what I feel, and maybe even more.

And this is why memory is so essential. So helpful. So necessary. Because, really, emotion has always been and will always be embedded in memory. As soon as you work with memory, you have emotion; I think they are nearly inseparable. Sometimes so much so that it becomes hard to draw. It can even be an imagined memory, a future potential memory.

I made a book once about the death of a child, called *The Purple Balloon*. I almost couldn't paint it. I made a book once about the death of a fish, called *Arlene Sardine*, and I didn't have any trouble. There is less emotion in the memory of a fish, much as I like them. Still, I accept the death of a fish. This ability and inability to draw doesn't surprise me when it happens to me. But I've even seen it in paintings hanging in museums.

There is another room in the Metropolitan Museum that is filled with Rubens paintings. Peter Paul Rubens, one of the great master painters, probably did not use the optical aids—lenses and so forth—that many of his contemporaries used, relying much more on his own preliminary sketches and his memory of them. And this is what makes his paintings grand. They are sometimes more, sometimes less, but always somewhat sketchy (at least the ones he finished himself). Even as they look like what they're supposed to look like, they never look rigid; they're shifty. Sometimes you can't tell where that arm is going or which cupid's leg is whose, but the paintings hold together perfectly. He's a memory painter.

I was walking through the Rubens room a few years ago, really kind of just passing through on my way to the Chinese collection, when I was stopped by the nose of a woman, the painted nose of a painted woman. There was something wrong with that nose.

Peter Paul Rubens married twice. In 1630, when Peter Paul was fifty-three, he married Helena, who was sixteen. *(Ahem.)* From all accounts, he loved her very much and considered her the embodiment of beauty and maternal goodness. And then I knew: Peter Paul was trying to make the nose of his beloved Helena perfect. Over and over he tried to get the nose and mouth just so, and in doing that he actually made it look like Helena's nose and mouth are going in one direction and the rest of her face is going in another. The painting is called *Rubens, his wife Helena Fourment, and one of their children*. (I don't remember the room number; ask a guard.) It's an enormous painting. Look at Helena's nose. Her nose is in profile and there is a veritable mountain range of pigment in the delineating shadow, which you can well see if you bend down and look up toward the skylight. That mountain of pigment tells the tale. Too

much emotion getting in the way of Peter Paul's painting. Now look immediately to the left, at a portrait of a woman in black. The model for this one is Helena's not-quite-so-beautiful (at least one supposes in Rubens's eyes) sister, Susanna. The brushwork is marvelously smooth and easy looking. There is no trouble about the nose.

Let us return to the neighbors because my glass needs refilling.

Kate asks, "Was there any trouble with Daisy's nose?"

Yes, there was a lot of trouble with the nose of my dog Daisy. Lots of trouble. And not just about the nose, but the tail, and the eyes, and the fur, etc. I'll not soon forget what Lee said to me one morning after looking at my latest attempts. Lee is Lee Wade, who, along with Anne Schwartz, is most responsible for *A Ball for Daisy*. Lee said to me, "How did we ever go so wrong with this book?"

I had been working on this book for so long then that I could hardly remember its beginnings. Certainly my son Ingo was very small at the time. And Daisy's ball was *his* ball, which he loved very much. It was yellow, I'm pretty sure. Daisy was the big black dog who lived on the tenth floor of our building and who, in her exuberance, took Ingo's beloved yellow ball and bit down just a little too hard and popped it. That I remember well. What I don't remember is, did it happen at our usual ball-playing spot, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, or did it happen in the elevator of our building? I don't remember. But I do remember Ingo's tears and genuine disbelief at the finality of the damage, the irrevocableness of the event, the un-turn-back-able-ness of time.

The Daisy I drew is not big and black, of course. She is modeled on a dog I only saw once, in a bar on 104th street. She was white, longer-limbed than my Daisy, scraggly haired, and quite amusing. I don't have a dog. I watch them. I imagine what they do. I had two dogs as a child and I remember them well. But Daisy is neither. Daisy is very much a dog I dreamed up, which is to say she inevitably has a lot of me in her.

Well, I hear Dan already washing up, and Lydie is starting to give me the big wink.

All right. I'll close in a minute.

So this is how I see making my picture books today. First, I'll draw what I see. Then I'll draw what I remember. And finally I'll draw what I feel.

I remember when I was a teenager on a family trip to Europe, standing on the balcony of our hotel room in Geneva looking down on the street and then over the lake to the mountains. I remember I had just put down a careful pencil drawing I had been working on, a copy of a photograph of a man on a horse jumping over a fence. I put the drawing down and went to the balcony. Cars and trucks were moving about below me, and a postman was shoving along his three-wheeled cart. I thought then that I would be happy doing any job so long as I could live in a place where I could see beautiful things.

Then some years later I was walking up a long, leaf-strewn allée in the small city of Arolsen in Germany, having hitchhiked there from my job as a caretaker of disabled children in another German city, to visit my friend Bruce for an expatriate Thanksgiving. And as I kicked the leaves I thought, I could be happy living anywhere in the world so long as I had a job that I loved.

I live in New York City now, not far from the room filled with Rubenses, and the rooms that contain an ever-changing collection of the entire history of Chinese painting. And I have a job: to paint pictures of things I see and remember and care about. For twenty-three years this job has worried me, kept me awake at night, aggravated me, and always entranced me, making me eager to dream of a next picture book again.

I see Kate stifling a yawn. Catherine and Ingo are moving the chairs back and closing up the table.

* * * * *

Before I go I'd like to make my thank yous.

Thank you, Dan, Kate, and Catherine.

Thank you, Lydie and Ingo.

Thank you, Vladimir.

Thank you, Bruce.

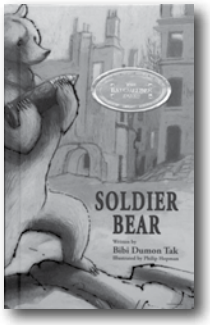
Thank you, Dr. Steven Herb, and all the members of the Caldecott committee for your enormous work and for the great honor you have bestowed on me.

Thank you, Lee Wade and Anne Schwartz, for your persistence, patience, and thoughtfulness. If not for you, I wouldn't like my book half so well.

Thank you, everyone at Random House. You are the nicest security staff. You are the best messenger center. You have publishing's greatest lobby. From the sub-sub-basement to the president's floor, I thank you all. There is no finer publisher.

I thank all of you who have listened to me tonight.

Good night.



Batchelder Award Acceptance Speech

Both Foreign and Close to Home

Anita Eerdmans

***Eerdmans Books for Young Readers**, an imprint of Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, received the 2012 Mildred L. Batchelder Award for* Soldier Bear. *Originally published in Dutch in 2008 as* Soldaat Wojtek, *the book was written by Bibi Dumon Tak, illustrated by Philip Hopman, and translated by Laura Watkinson. **Anita Eerdmans** is Vice President of Eerdmans Books for Young Readers.*

Good morning. On behalf of Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, I would like to tell you how honored we are to receive the 2012 Batchelder Award for our book *Soldier Bear.*

It seems only fitting that the original language for this translated book should be Dutch, given our company's longtime Dutch connection. Eerdmans Publishing Company, of which we are an imprint, was founded 101 years ago by a Dutch immigrant. (And the company is still proudly independent, I might add.) Its earliest books were actually published in the Dutch language to serve the large community of first-generation immigrants in West Michigan in the early 1900s. We've come a long way from those days, but we do remain attached to our Dutch heritage.

Our company is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which can seem a little bit off the beaten path from the main New York–Boston children's publishing corridor. But there's a Batchelder connection here too—it turns out that the original idea for the award came from Eleanor Burgess, the children's services librarian at the Grand Rapids Public Library back in the mid-1960s. Apparently she had been so inspired by a speech of Mildred Batchelder's that she was moved to propose a new award for children's books in translation, to be named in honor of Ms. Batchelder. And now, nearly fifty years later, someone from Eleanor Burgess's own backyard has won the award.

There are many good reasons for publishing children's books in translation. One might be to familiarize kids with people that are different from themselves. Another might be to show them how much we have in common with people around the world, despite our different cultures and surroundings. But none of this matters without that prerequisite for all good children's fiction—memorable characters inhabiting a good story. So as with the books we originate here at home, the first thing we look for in foreign language titles is a compelling story.

Soldier Bear is a wonderful example of just that. The characters—both animal and human—are endearing and real. The story has humor and adventure and tenderness. The settings are exotic, ranging across many countries, from Iran to Scotland. And to top it all off, the novel is based—almost unbelievably—on a true story, the evidence for which is provided in photographs of the real Voytek the bear at the back of the book! The book feels both foreign and close to home.

In this polarized time in the political and cultural life of our country, when it has become common to use words like "foreign" and "European" and "other" as *insults* hurled at opponents, it seems that more than ever our children need the bridge to other people and other places that books in translation can provide. At Eerdmans, we intend to continue including international books as a regular part of our publishing program, and we view this award as a strong vote of encouragement to do that.

And now for my abundant thanks.

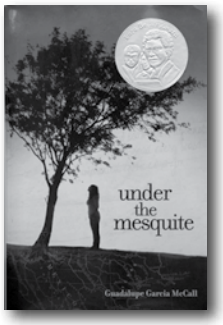
First and foremost, thank you to ALSC and the 2012 Batchelder committee, chaired by Susan Stan. Knowing that our book was selected by a panel made up of such distinguished and discriminating judges has made it especially gratifying.

Thank you to my brilliant colleague Gayle Brown, whose job title is art director but who actually has a guiding hand in everything we do at Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. In these years of lean budgets, Gayle has often been our only representative at the Bologna Book Fair, and it is her keen eye for the best in foreign language books that has brought so many wonderful titles in translation to our list.

Thank you to Bibi Dumon Tak, for a wonderful, well-told story. And thank you to our translator, Laura Watkinson, whose gift for producing a seamless English rendering of the original Dutch produced a manuscript that was so clean, with a text so readable, it was a joy to work with.

And finally, thank you to the many, many librarians, including the wonderful folks at USBBY [The United States Board on Books for Young People], who do so much to encourage and support international books year in and year out. It would be impossible for us to continue publishing these books in translation without your continued interest and support.

Thank you very much. &



Belpré Author Award Acceptance Speech

The Blessing of Books

Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Guadalupe Garcia McCall *is winner of the 2012 Pura Belpré Author Award for* Under the Mesquite, *published by Lee and Low Books. She delivered her acceptance speech at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, on June 24, 2012.*

As I was getting this piece ready, trying to find the focus of my speech today, I realized just how much of a blessing books are in our lives. As modern Americans, we are so busy, so active, we are severed from the rest of the world. Even as we try to stay connected by e-mailing, tweeting, facebooking and blogging, the truth is we are too disconnected.

Books are blessings, *bendiciones*, because they have a way of linking us again. As I sit and read a new book like *Hurricane Dancers,* I am connected to the wonderful voice of Margarita Engle and the world she has brought to life for me. Every word in that book is a whisper from her heart, a reminder that lives are important. Every page I turn is a breath, *un murmuro de sabiduría*, a murmur of wisdom from her spirit passed on to future generations, linking her to me and you, tying us all together through the ages. Her book is her soul sitting in libraries all across the world waiting to be rediscovered by the hands and eyes and hearts of young and old—her being waiting to reconnect, to be reborn.

Books are blessings because they find us wherever we are in life and bring us back home. As I sat and read *Maximilian and the Mystery of the Guardian Angel,* I was reminded of my brothers and their excitement and playfulness and the wonderment of youth. That book took me back to our living room in Eagle Pass, Texas, and I remembered just how much I loved my brothers' sense of adventure. Xavier Garza's book is a blessing to boys and girls everywhere because it will remind them that life is magical and full of excitement.

Sometimes the pictures in books take us home too. The drawings by Duncan Tonatiuh in *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours* certainly did that for me. The book took me back to my roots, and I loved looking at the images. They reminded me of who we are and where we come from. Children everywhere will be blessed by this book; Mexican children in particular can reconnect with their ancestry, and that is the precious gift that Duncan has given to our Hispanic youth.

But books are a blessing too because they illustrate our lives in a way nothing else can. When I gazed upon the wonderful, breathtaking drawings of Rafael Lopez in *The Cazuela that the Farm Maiden Stirred*, I was delighted to see my own family's features depicted in his characters. The beautiful brown faces with their wide-generous smiles and the colorful dress and lovely scenery, all reminded me that our culture is beautiful. American children are blessed to have Rafael's gorgeous drawings to feast upon.

Sara Palacios' illustrations for *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match* depict a quirkier, richer way of life as my own children found out while they were growing up in a bicultural household. Living a bicultural life can be difficult, but it can also be fun and exciting and full of blessings. Sara's drawings are delightful reminders of that.

Under the Mesquite has been a blessing for me in many ways. *Mesquite* has given me the opportunity to share my memories of my mother with the world. Mi Madre was an extraordinary woman, a great nurturer, willing to do whatever was necessary to see her children follow and fulfill their dreams. When I was in the second grade, she would pick me up at the gate of San Luis Elementary three times a week and walk me down to the middle of Brazos Street so that we might catch the city bus. We'd ride that old city bus all the way downtown, get off, and walk hand-in-hand across the international bridge. In Piedras Negras, we'd get on a Mexican bus more ancient than the one *en Los Estados*. We'd sway back and forth rhythmically against each other on that bus until we reached the edge of the city. There, we'd get off and walk all the way up a hill, arriving a sweaty, disheveled mess at the *Seguro Social*, Piedras Negras' multicultural art center, just so that I might take part in drama and dance classes offered by local professionals. We didn't have much money back then, but somehow she squeezed out the tuition for those classes because she believed in me, in my talents, in my gifts.

When I stopped wanting to go, she didn't get upset. Instead, she let me concentrate on reading and writing and listened to every one of my *historietas* while she pounded out *tortillas* at the kitchen counter or rocked the baby to sleep on the edge of her bed.

My life with my mother was full of love and acceptance. I was blessed to be her daughter, even if for a little while. That's why I wanted my book to be a true reflection of her nature. I wanted Mesquite to do what my mother did best—to nurture young people's dreams, to give them the courage and strength to pursue those dreams. Writing *Mesquite* was both wonderful and painful. For in the process of writing this book, I pulled out and dusted off memories I had set aside—memories I had tucked into deep crevices in my heart and put away for fear of losing them. I am glad they are written down now. My mother lives because this book exists. It is her nurturing spirit that resides in these pages, her wisdom, her love, and I am so happy to be able to share her with you.

But *Mesquite* did more than immortalize my mother's love. It brought me closer to other members of my family as well—my father in particular. For during my mother's illness and especially after her passing, my father distanced himself. His loss and my pain pulled us apart. We found comfort and solace in silence. And as time passed and I grew up and moved away, the distance between us grew. Like a lake pooled by years of tears, it widened, expanded, and we found ourselves sitting on opposite sides of that mournful lake without a sense of how to get back across and reach out to one another.

It wasn't until I was revising *Mesquite,* when my editor at Lee and Low, Emily, suggested that I make Lupita's father a bigger part of her support system that things changed. She wanted me to keep the connection between Lupita and her father close, even as I expressed their pain. She suggested I find ways to show how much he was there for her. Therefore I had to sit down and reach into the only source of inspiration I had for this aspect of the story—I had to access memories of my father.

So I sat on the front porch of my little country home in Somerset, Texas, thought about my father back in Eagle Pass and tried to remember the goodness in him. It wasn't hard. Almost immediately, the memories came flooding back to me like morning rain, like light summer showers, like blessings from above, and I remembered him as the father of my youth: the one who squeezed me tight the minute he stepped out of the truck when he came home from work every night, the one who taught me how to read and write, the father I had loved so much. I remembered things so vividly that I felt compelled to call him. And so it began: the frequent phone calls, the visits, the, "What made the think of that *m'ija*?" in the middle of our ever-growing conversations.

It was then that I came to the understanding that I was raised by not just one, but two very special people. That I was the product of two great parents. That God had taken, but had also provided much love in my life. That realization was a blessing, because it built a bridge between me and my father, it closed the gap that used to separate us when we hugged, and it healed old wounds.

When I was about to start school, my father taught me how to "respect" books. I was his pride and joy, his first child, *his hija mayor*, and he wanted to make sure I always knew how to do things right. So he put me on his lap that day in our living room and showed me how to put my fingertip at the top right hand corner of the book and lift every page delicately, carefully, and with *mucho respeto* for all the artistry and *corazón* the author had put into writing it. I practiced and practiced until I could do it just as perfectly as he did. It was an accomplishment, and I was blessed with a kiss on the crown of my head from my Papi.

I recalled that beautiful moment with my father when *Mesquite* first came out. I had a copy of it that I was going to donate to the library of the school where I teach, but I lent it to one of my best friends, Veronica, to read before I turned it over to our librarian. The very next day, she called to say she had loved the book but that she was mortified because she had ruined it. She had smeared tears with mascara on one of the pages. She was so sorry and upset by the incident, especially because she had great respect for books and she'd never had this happen before. "I never stain books," she kept saying. "I'm very careful with them."

I reassured her I was not upset, that my greatest hope is that my book be blessed by just that kind of emotional response from everyone who opens its pages. That I hope, above all else, that readers can understand it, connect with it on that level, and come to love it. In truth, I hope *Mesquite* gets all kinds of stains on it.

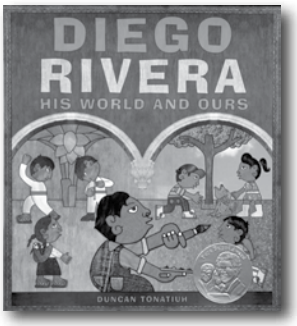
I want *Mesquite* to be carried, passed around, shared, shuffled, thrown, caught, dropped, lost, and found. I want my book to be shoved face down into overstuffed backpacks. I want it to be wedged between mattresses and placed under pillows late at night. I want it laid on coffee tables and kitchen counters early in the morning and picked up again in the afternoons. I want the cover of *Mesquite* to get dented and scratched and scarred. I want readers to get taco sauce and margarine on it, to drop peanut butter and jelly on it, to get grass stains and mud splatters on it. I want young people to read it anywhere and everywhere, and not be afraid to bless it with the stains of their everyday lives. Because to love it, they must live with it, and that is what reading is all about.

I would like to thank Lee and Low for believing in me and my little collection of poems, for nurturing it, for primping it with a beautiful cover, for publishing it, and for bringing me here today and celebrating this blessed moment with me.

I'd also like to thank the Association for Library Service to Children and REFORMA and especially the Pura Belpré committee members who picked *Mesquite*—those dedicated, hard-working individuals who put a golden kiss on the crown of its head and blessed it with this great gift. I am overwhelmed by your award and honored to receive it. Nothing I can say or do could ever express the gratitude, the humbleness, the joyfulness, and pride you have instilled in me today. Thank you; *mi corazón* is full of love for you.

I also want to thank this great organization for the blessing of books to come. For I know that ALA will continue to find and honor and bless books that connect us, books that bring us home and illustrate our lives, books that set us in motion and give us the courage, wisdom, and strength to embrace all that life has in store for us.

Mil gracias.



Belpré Illustrator Award Acceptance Speech

Becoming Proud of My Roots

Duncan Tonatiuh

Duncan Tonatiuh *is winner of the 2012 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award for* Diego Rivera: His World and Ours*, published by Abrams Books for Young Readers. He delivered his acceptance speech at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, on June 24, 2012.*

It is a great honor to be here among such an excellent group of authors and illustrators. I wish to thank the Pura Belpré committee for choosing my book *Diego Rivera, His World and Ours*. I was truly blown away that lazy Sunday afternoon in late January when the committee called me to give me the news. I also want to thank ALSC and REFORMA for all the excellent work they do getting books into children's hands.

I would like to thank all the people at Abrams that made this book possible, especially my editor, Howard Reeves, who is full of great advice, and Jason Wells, who always looks out for me. Thanks to Chad, Sylvia, and to the rest of the gang who have always made me feel welcome at the 6th floor of 115 West 18th Street. Thanks also to Michael Jacobs, the president of Abrams. He is a cool dude, and I'm not saying that because he signs the checks. I remember getting into some deep conversations with him at last year's ALA Conference about *Chicharito* and other emerging soccer stars. I repeat he is a cool dude.

And I would like to thank my family and friends, of course, who are always supportive and encouraging of my work. I am very fortunate in that I do something that I love for a living: writing and illustrating. It is extremely gratifying that my work is able to speak to others.

Diego María de la Concepción Juan Nepomuceno Estanislao de la Rivera y Barrientos Acosta y Rodríguez, better known as Diego Rivera, was born in the city of Guanajuato in 1886. Last year, he would have turned 125.

From a young age, Rivera showed an exceptional ability to draw. He received his first artistic training at the San Carlos Academy when his family moved to Mexico City. He excelled, and at the age of 21, he was awarded a scholarship by the Governor of Veracruz to travel to Madrid to study with the painter Eduardo Chicharro.

Diego Rivera spent the next fourteen years in Europe. He lived in Spain, France, and Italy. In Paris, he met and mingled with the artistic vanguard. He was influenced by painters like Cezanne and Picasso and became an accomplished cubist painter.

In the 1920s however, Diego Rivera's career took a dramatic turn. Jose Vasconcelos, Mexico's Secretary of Education, urged Rivera to return to his native country. He wanted him to be a part of the major murals program he was launching.

In 1921, Rivera returned. He was encouraged to travel around the country with other painters. The nation was just emerging from the Revolution—nearly ten years of violence and struggle to take the power away from the few and spread it among the entire population. Vasconcelos wanted the murals to be about Mexican history and the Mexican people.

Rivera painted his first mural in 1922 at the National Preparatory School and his second one from 1922 to 1928 at the Secretariat of Public Education, both of them in Mexico City. While painting these murals, Rivera developed his own unique style of painting, the one that has come to identify him. In his artwork, Rivera combined the aesthetics and techniques of the Renaissance frescoes, the experimentation and space compression of cubism, and the boldness, roundness, and geometry of Mexican pre–Columbian art that Rivera had come to admire.

Over the next twenty-five years, Rivera was involved in more than twelve major mural projects; sometimes the projects involved entire chapels and multiple floors and walls. Many of his murals are in Mexico City, but a number of them are in the U.S., in San Francisco and Detroit. He was very prolific and painted an incredible number of canvases and watercolors up until his death in 1957.

Diego Rivera was a multifaceted and often controversial person. It is hard to do justice to all different aspects of his life. He was, among other things, a lover of science and technology, an avid pre–Columbian art collector, a member of the Mexican Communist Party, the husband of the famous painter Frida Kahlo, an infamous Don Juan, and a self-alleged child-eater. I recently met the author and journalist Elena Poniatowska. She interviewed Rivera on a couple of occasions and she confirmed this. He told her that he liked eating children and also little girl reporters that asked too many questions.

Rivera is undoubtedly one of the most famous and important artists of the twentieth century. I must be honest though. I did not think much of him growing up.

I was born and raised in Mexico, but I came to the U.S. when I was 16 to attend high school and college. My mother is Mexican and my father is American and I truly feel like I am both Mexican and American. Before I came to the U.S., I never thought much of the food, music, history, or art of my native country. I took them for granted.

Art and drawing interested me from very early on. As a kid, the Spider-Man comics that I bought at the news stand and the Japanese cartoons about soccer and Zodiac Warriors I saw on TV inspired me to draw. As a teen, I admired painters like Van Gogh and Egon Schiele. But I never thought much of the art that is representative of Mexico. Pre–Columbian codex or the paintings of Diego Rivera seemed to me to belong on mugs and souvenirs for tourists at the crafts market.

Soon after I arrived in the U.S., I began to feel nostalgic for things that I always had around me in Mexico. I missed *tortillas*, *elotes*, *chiles*, *mole*, *pozole*, *molletes*, *tacos*, and basically all the street food, the *antojitos*. I missed the *rancheras* of Jose Alfredo Jimenez too. That longing grew, and with it my interest and drive to know more about Mexico. I remember vividly reading Octavio Paz' *The Labyrinth of Solitude* at age 17. It had a deep impact on me, especially an essay called "Mexico and the United States" in which he compares and contrasts the two countries. I highly, highly recommend it.

Paz' masterful analysis of the history of Mexico and its influence on the psychology of the Mexican people helped me see and understand Mexico in a new light. That winter break when I came back to San Miguel, my hometown, for the holidays, I remember devouring Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* and seeing Manuel Alvarez Bravo's photography in Bellas Artes. Rulfo and Alvarez Bravo are two of Mexico's most iconic artists. However, Diego Rivera did not captivate me yet.

I returned to school with a new understanding of my heritage and of who I was, on both sides of the border. Later, in college, I incorporated Mexican themes in my different classes. Sometimes that meant photographing an immigrant reform march for a journalism class or writing a short story that took place in San Miguel for creative writing class. My senior thesis was a short graphic novel shaped like a codex about an undocumented indigenous Mexican worker.

While working on my thesis, I developed my current illustration style. I draw by hand contemporary images inspired by pre–Columbian art and collage them digitally. That piece called *Journey of a Mixteco* lead to my first children's book *Dear Primo, A Letter to My Cousin*, thanks to a Parsons professor named Julia Gorton who liked my work and who introduced me to Howard, my editor.

I came to admire Diego Rivera only recently. I was doing an illustration for a textbook on Mexican history a few years ago. I looked at a lot of Rivera's images for reference in books and online. The more I looked, the more impressed I was. Rivera painted the pre–Columbian civilizations of Mexico, the Spanish Conquest, the Independence, and the Mexican Revolution in his murals at the National Palace. He painted the dances and traditions of Mexico in his murals at the Secretariat of Public Education, and he painted factories and the Industrial Revolution in his murals in Detroit.

Rivera's murals are epic. Looking at his work I began to think, what would Diego Rivera paint nowadays? What would he paint in our globalized world of smart phones and the Web 2.0? With that thought in mind I began to write and draw *Diego Rivera, His World and Ours.*

I have seen many of Rivera's murals by now. They are luminous and formally exquisite. But what I have come to admire the most about Rivera is the way in which he celebrated the art and culture of his country.

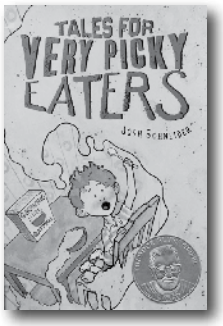
Rivera's work especially celebrates our indigenous past. I especially marvel at the way in which he looked back at the art of ancient Mexico and was able to incorporate some of its aesthetic into his own work. He combined that ancient art with the art of his time and was able to create something new and exciting that speaks to the heart of people of Mexican origin on both sides of the border and beyond: something I yearn to do.

I hope that my book pays Rivera the homage that he deserves. My wish is to introduce Diego Rivera and the culture he celebrated to a new generation of young readers and artists. I hope that it is a book that not only teaches children about the past, but that it is a book that they can relate to, and that stirs their imagination: "Would Diego paint the Big City today like he painted the Ancient Tenochtitlan, would he paint Luchadores wrestling in their costumes like he painted the Aztec warriors fighting the invading soldiers, the Spanish Conquistadores?"

"I have seen many of Rivera's murals by now. They are luminous and formally exquisite. But what I have come to admire the most about Rivera is the way in which he celebrated the art and culture of his country."

Again, it is a great honor to receive this award named after the wonderful Pura Belpré. Pura Belpré herself hosted Diego Rivera at her 115th Street branch in New York during one of his visits to the city. I can only imagine what that was like. I hope that Diego Rivera behaved and that he did not eat any children.

And now if I may I'd like to give a brief synopsis of my speech in Spanish so that my mom, my grandma, my family, and friends who don't speak English can get the gist of what I said.



Geisel Award Acceptance Speech

Reading Opens Doors

Josh Schneider

Author/illustrator ***Josh Schneider*** *is winner of the 2012 Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal for* Tales for Very Picky Eaters *published by Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. His acceptance speech was delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, on June 25, 2012.*

Nothing focuses the mind like being hit in the nose. It clears away all the mental clutter and plops you very firmly in the moment, like an hour of transcendental meditation delivered by injection.

I had the good fortune of having my mental clutter cleared away when I walked into a door while struggling to write this speech. This speech was hard for me because, as an extremely modest and retiring person, I had tastefully managed to live my life so far in a way that did not invite compliments.

But now I was in the position of having to accept a compliment from a highly respected committee of librarians, and I wasn't sure what to say, other than "thank you," which while appropriate, is on the short end. What could I say about my book or the process of writing it? As is generally my approach when it comes to writing, my first thought was to steal. I went back and looked at the speeches of past winners, but was dismayed to find that, although they were uniformly excellent, they were personal in a way that discouraged theft. (It is hard to talk about the pleasures of writing the Elephant and Piggie stories without betraying your source material.)

What being whapped in the face with a door made me realize, though, is that I don't have much to say about this book—it's not that long—but that I do have something to say about learning to read. It's been said a lot, and better, by many other people, but it's something that deserves repeating. Reading opens doors. When a child scraps her way through her first beginning reader, she is walking through a door that leads, not just to knowing what Frog and Toad are up to this time, but to a new person. This person will someday be able to pass through the back of a magical wardrobe before moving on to fall in love with vampires and then spend vacations on the beach with James Patterson. This person will also be able to understand chemistry textbooks and the newspaper and the instructions for her new clock radio. Reading opens the door to a room full of every writer ever, which is a great room to be in, even though many of those writers are dead. All this, free with every Frog and Toad story at no extra charge. In these tough economic times, that's a really good deal.

I would also like to say "thank you," but longer. Thank you to my wife, Dana, and to my mother, who would probably not like to be publicly thanked, but who is states and states away and can't do anything about it. Thank you to Paul Rodeen, my agent; Clarion Books; and Lynne Polvino, my editor, who had the vision to turn my original proposal for an un-illustrated monograph on the health risks of trans fats into a children's book. Thank you to the committee for bestowing this award on my book, but more importantly, for caring so passionately about books for beginning readers. Because learning to read is something people pass through so young and so quickly, it is easy to forget it ever happened and move on to caring about other things. It's important to have librarians to care about keeping it happening.

And I would also like to thank you for putting my book in the company of the other honor books. As everyone knows, the smallest indivisible unit of children's literature is not the page or the chapter or the book, but the armload brought home from the library. I am honored to have been given a place in such a distinguished armload.

Finally, I would like to thank that door, which gave me the idea for this speech. Because, after rubbing my nose and clearing my head, I looked down, saw that the sign said "pull," not "push," and walked through yet another door opened for me by reading. &

PEER-REVIEWED

Expanding on Early Literacy

Promoting Emerging Language and Literacy during Storytime

JULIA R. IRWIN, DINA L. MOORE, LAUREN A. TORNATORE, AND ANNE E. FOWLER

One of the most important academic achievements for a young child is learning to read. Unfortunately, many children are already behind when they enter kindergarten. Sobering evidence from multiple sources indicates that children who fall behind in reading acquisition do not catch up.[1] For example, Francis et al. demonstrated that children who fall behind in reading at seven years of age continued to lag behind at age twelve and beyond.[2] In the classic model known as the Matthew effect, Stanovich indicates that early lags in literacy become magnified with reading development.[3] Specifically, the Matthew effect shows the rich get richer (in this case, good readers become more fluent and effective) and the poor get poorer. This phenomenon has been observed in research examining how new readers acquire the skills to read: early success in acquiring reading skills typically leads to later successes in reading as the learner grows. Failing to learn to read before the third or fourth year of schooling may be indicative of life-long problems in skills central to literacy.[4] Children who fall behind in reading read less, increasing the gap between them and their peers. As children advance in school, text becomes increasingly difficult and students must "read to learn" (where before they were learning to read). Their reading difficulties then create deficits in most other subjects.[5] Thus research-to-practice efforts for a number of intervention programs focus on preliteracy skills.

The current research on early literacy instruction has provided the information necessary to promote emerging literacy in young children. Several special panels have convened to address the issue of literacy in children, focusing in part on the skills and types of interventions that are precursors for later literacy. These panels include the National Research Council, National Reading Panel, and the National Early Literacy Panel.[6] The results of these panels provide overlapping support for a common set of skills important for literacy development as well as a basis for the activities designed to promote early literacy presented below.

Preliteracy Skills to Prepare Children for Reading Success

Converging evidence suggests the skills that best prepare children for later reading success include alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, phonological awareness, and expressive vocabulary.[7] Alphabet knowledge is simply the ability to recognize and name letters. Young children who know letters




Photos, left to right: ***Julia R. Irwin****, PhD, is Senior Scientist at Haskins Laboratories in New Haven, Connecticut, a not-for-profit independent laboratory conducting basic research on spoken and written language. She is also an Associate Professor in Psychology at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven.* ***Dina L. Moore****, PhD, is Associate Professor in Psychology at Southern Connecticut State University and a Research Affiliate of Haskins Laboratories. Her research examines individual differences in reading skill and the cognitive factors that underlie these differences.* ***Lauren A. Tornatore****, M.A., M.Ed./CAGS, is School Psychologist for Heartland Area Education Agency in Iowa. She has worked for the past three years serving the social, emotional, academic, and mental health needs of children with disabilities. The late* ***Anne E. Fowler****, PhD, was Senior Scientist at Haskins Laboratories who developed the lab's Early Reading Success Program and was coauthor of the* Connecticut Blueprint for Reading. *Her work helped change the way educators and administrators look at reading.*

are likely to be those with the greatest exposure to books. While it is important to teach children these labels, the research is clear that teaching letters alone will not make a child a reader.

Similarly, "knowing" about books, such as knowing the difference between words and pictures, the front and back of the book, and tracking from left to right tell us about children's exposure to books. These concepts about print can be taught rapidly through shared book reading.

However, similar to alphabet knowledge, concepts about print are not sufficient to make a child a reader. For children to begin to learn to read they first need to understand that the spoken word comprises different sounds. This knowledge, referred to as phonological awareness, is a very strong predictor of later reading success.

Specifically, phonological awareness refers to attention to how spoken words sound and are pronounced. This can include global aspects of words, such as attention to word length, number of syllables, and shared rhymes. Phonological awareness also includes more fine-grained analysis, referred to as phonemic awareness: the understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual consonants and vowels, or phonemes. While phonological awareness is a powerful predictor of later reading success, research has shown that phonological awareness is just one of the oral language proficiencies important for reading. Along with phonological awareness, expressive vocabulary (the number of words a child can produce) consistently has been shown to be a strong predictor of later reading success. Vocabulary production highlights the critical importance of spoken language in the preschool years. Simply put, children who know fewer words will be able to identify fewer words once they begin reading. Hart and Risley found children who enter school with lower vocabulary scores tend to hear fewer different words, hear fewer words per interaction, hear more commands rather than prompts and questions, and have less interaction with adults.[8] Thus an emphasis on expressive vocabulary together with alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and phonological awareness can help to promote early literacy in young children. As outlined below, these concepts can easily be integrated into library storytime.

Effective Literacy Instruction during Storytime: Research to Practice

In this section, we turn to the elements of effective literacy instruction that can be applied by librarians while reading a story to young children. Based on what we know from studies of young kindergarteners, we have established that effective literacy instruction includes a number of important elements.

First, effective literacy instruction is intentional. That is, activities and books are planned in advance to meet a specific goal, such as choosing vocabulary words to focus upon when reading stories. To be effective, it is important to decide explicitly what the information is the child should learn, to model the desired activity or skill, and to provide the opportunity for the child to try it out and give feedback.

Additionally, effective literacy instruction is both systematic and sequential. Together these terms refer to the fact that instruction must build from what is known to what is new, presenting developmentally appropriate concepts. For example, an emphasis on book handling is more appropriate for a group of two- and three-year-olds, while working on alliteration might be better suited to four- and five-year-olds. The activities and books chosen should be interesting and developmentally appropriate to fully engage children so they enjoy learning. Concepts also should be reinforced with ample practice.

Children love to do things over and over (including reading a favorite book). Hands-on practice with concrete materials, such as an easel for writing, manipulatives for youngsters (for example, foam models of the alphabet), and access to previously read books, facilitates this practice. Finally, in every activity, it is important to involve all of the child's modes of interacting. During storytime, children should not just be listening, but speaking and "reading."

Activities to Promote Literacy

Below we identify specific skills essential to literacy development and provide activities to introduce these skills to children during storytime. The activities make use of children's books found in local libraries and can be adapted for use with any favorite children's books.

Alphabet Knowledge

One important skill essential to the acquisition of literacy is familiarity with the alphabet. For children to recognize words, they must recognize the letters of the alphabet. To introduce alphabet knowledge, one can begin by showing a child the first letter of her name. This helps the child not only identify the letter, but connect it to something meaningful. To expand on alphabet knowledge during storytime, there are countless books that focus on the letters of the alphabet. These books can be used and then linked to the alphabet song. When working with very young emergent readers, it is important to choose books that use one sound for each letter and have consistent, easy-to-read text (for example, "C is for cat"). This gives each child a clear example of what the letter should look and sound like. Some popular alphabet books useful to read at this stage are *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, *The Letters are Lost*, or *Dr. Seuss' ABC*, which are composed of repetitive, sing-song phrasing to capture a young child's attention.

Concepts about Print

Concepts about print include the ability to differentiate between letters, numbers, words, and pictures. This can be taught while reading a simple book with large clear print and labeling what is on each page. In addition, children must be taught that it is print, not the picture that is read in stories. This can be done by tracking each word with a finger or pointer while reading aloud.

Book Handling Skills

Book handling skills include knowing how to hold a book properly and knowing that reading progresses from left to right. This initially can be taught through example by letting the children watch as you read. Later on, children can be explicitly taught how to hold a book and turn the page with books that have repetitive patterns. A good example of a book with repeating patterns is *I Went Walking*. This book repeats the same lines of "I went walking. What did you see? I saw a . . ." This story can help children develop book-handling skills by using the pictures and repetitive pattern to anticipate the next line. One activity that can be done with this book is to read aloud "I went walking" and have the children respond chorally "What did you see?" Then, read the first half of the answer "I saw a . . ." and have the children use the picture to answer what was seen.

An important element of book handling skills is the concept of translating speech to print. This is the concept that what the reader is saying corresponds directly to a printed word. This understanding gives the child a concept of the word as a unit of meaning composed of letters. One activity used to reinforce this concept is to read repetitive, rhythmic books with few words on each page, such as *I Went Walking*, *Jump, Frog, Jump*, *Barnyard Banter*, and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Children first learn to chant the refrain and then begin to match what they are chanting with the written words. As previously stated, tracking what is read with your finger is helpful for children to understand they are saying words written on the page.

Phonological Sensitivity

Phonological awareness refers to attention to how spoken words sound and are pronounced including word length, number of syllables, shared rhymes, and phonemes. Phonemic awareness is one small but critical part of phonological awareness and is defined as an understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual consonants and vowels known as phonemes. As a good start, some books emphasize the sounds of words. For example, *Rattletrap Car* includes such phrases as "Clinked clanked bing bang pop!" which is a fun book to both read and listen to during storytime.

As children first begin to learn how to read, their phonological awareness develops through their phonological sensitivity. Phonological sensitivity is the ability to recognize specific attributes of groups of letters larger than phonemes (words). One important concept involved in phonological sensitivity is the production and recognition of rhyming words. Children as young as two years are sensitive to words that rhyme, and the ability to recognize and produce rhyming words is central to developing phonological awareness. Examples of books that introduce children to rhyming are *There's a Wocket in My Pocket*, *Is Your Mama a Llama?*, *Fox in Socks*, and *Jamberry*.

Another important concept involved in phonological sensitivity is the ability to segment and delete syllables. Teaching children to recognize syllables can be done during storytime by asking children to "clap out" words into syllables. One way to introduce this skill is by demonstrating it with the child's name. The librarian leading storytime may choose several children to stand up and state their name, and then demonstrate how to clap out the syllables in the child's name (for example, Meredith, "Mer" clap, "e", clap, "dith" clap). After the children become familiar with the activity, the librarian can expand it to include vocabulary words from the storytime.

An additional skill that contributes to phonological awareness is alliteration. Alliteration is the ability to recognize repetition of word onsets (initial sound before the first vowel). An example of alliteration is the "L" sound in "Lawrence the leopard made lemonade." There are many books with a focus on one or two initial sounds that can help foster this skill during storytime. Such books include *Wemberly Worried*; S*lowly, Slowly, Slowly, Said the Sloth*; and *Dr. Seuss's ABC*. One activity children can participate in during storytime that can help develop the recognition of alliteration is matching picture cards depicting the same initial sound. Another activity is having children sort objects and pictures with the same initial sounds into labeled mailbags. Each bag can have a picture cue reminding them what sound belongs in each bag. It is important not to confuse letter names with the sounds that the letters make. Again, phonological awareness focuses on the sounds of our language.

Expressive Vocabulary

Strong expressive vocabulary is another predictor of reading success. Recent estimates indicate poor children often enter school with limited vocabulary knowledge. Children with low vocabulary need to solidly establish two or three words a day to be ready for fourth grade material by the fourth grade.[9] Yet research indicates there is currently minimal instruction in vocabulary in the early elementary grades; teachers typically do not focus on explicit vocabulary instruction until third or fourth grade, when it is already too late for kids to catch up.[10]

Books, not surprisingly, are the richest source of diverse vocabulary.[11] Thus storytime can be utilized to help develop a rich expressive vocabulary for children. For example, children can be asked to act out verbs, such as "squabble," introduced in *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*. Furthermore, you can ask children to relate a new word to their own life. For example, in the story *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, the word "furious" is introduced. At the end of the story, you can define the word for the children by saying, "furious means very, very mad" then, expand on this lesson by asking children if they or anyone they know has ever been furious. The children can explain and act out their answers. Another activity to foster expressive vocabulary is to take advantage of a new word that is repeated several times in one book. Evidence shows the best way to teach a word is to use it multiple times in different contexts.

For example, *Tops & Bottoms* uses the word "harvest" five times. Although this is not a critical word for four-year-olds, it is central to the story. The reader could explain what it is in the first or second mention (when you pick the vegetables) and

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from then ask the child to produce it (When it was time for the. . . . "harvest"). Another activity to support expressive vocabulary is a concept sort. In the case of *Tops and Bottoms*, children could be asked to sort pictures of different things harvested in the book according to whether they are fruits or vegetables. An additional way to support vocabulary is to include books with verbs that can be acted out, such as "stared" or "roared" in *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. Other examples of books to support vocabulary development are those with nonfiction information, such as *The Water Hole* and *Commotion in the Ocean*, which introduce scientific vocabulary to children. The introduction of a familiar story paired with higher-level vocabulary can further support the learning of new words, as demonstrated in a more modern version of the classic story *Henny-Penny*, which has such words as "wolfed," "greedy," and "grunge."

As stated in the introduction, researchers know early intervention is of the utmost importance for children to learn to read and to avoid problems with literacy as children develop. Researchers have also identified many of the specific skills that are shown to be powerful predictors of reading skill. The library storytime provides an excellent opportunity to introduce some of these skills. Although time and resources may be limited during storytime, some simple and targeted activities as suggested in this article can provide young children with an opportunity to practice the skills essential to pre-literacy development. While specific books were presented to accompany these activities, there are many other books that would support these skills and promote early literacy during storytime.

The authors would like to thank Susan Cormier, the Children Services Consultant for the Connecticut State Library, for her help with this article.

This work was supported by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the Connecticut Libraries' "It's never too early" initiative.

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PEER-REVIEWED

Beyond Frog and Toad

An Exploration of Transitional Books

ANDREA A. ZEVENBERGEN AND ALLISON L. ANGELL

Steven, a beginning second grader, is doing very well reading "easy readers" in his classroom and at home. At the library one evening, he picks up *Stink: The Incredible Shrinking Kid* by Megan McDonald. He was ready to move on to longer books, and now he's hooked, not only on *Stink*, but also on transitional books.

Transitional books include books like Mary Pope Osborne's *Magic Tree House* series, Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones* series, and Nikki Grimes's *Dyamonde Daniel* series, as well as single titles such as Colby Rodowsky's *Jason Rat-a-Tat* and Jessie Haas's *Runaway Radish*. Transitional books are characterized by short chapters (about six to eight pages), a reader-friendly font, a few illustrations per chapter, language and vocabulary accessible to children reading at a second- through fourth-grade level, and subjects and emotions appropriate for seven- to ten-year-olds.[1]

The characters typically have unique personalities, but they do not tend to change or develop across the stories or books within a long series. Transitional books may help the child to feel like a "real reader"; there is no number on the front of the book indicating a reading level, and transitional books look like books read by older children and adults. The Gryphon Award, which has been given annually since 2004 by the Center for Children's Books at the University of Illinois, seeks to draw attention to transitional literature as an important stepping-stone from easy readers to longer chapter books.

Series books can be particularly valuable to children in this transitional reader age group. Series prepare children to read longer books; they learn about narrative structure and how a more complex plot can be put together. Publishers are increasingly willing and even eager to publish books in series because they are selling a known quantity. That is why children like series books, too. The familiarity with characters and scenes they have met before is reassuring.[2]

The repetition of characters, scenes, and plot setup is especially helpful for children new to transitional books. For children of any age, series help ensure that there will always be a book to enjoy that is similar to the last one the child has read. For a reader who is just learning how to navigate around a library, it is handy to be able to turn to a series instead of trying to find a new type of book to read each time.

When helping children select transitional books, know that transitional books can vary quite a bit in reading difficulty. For example, some are highly decodable; that is, their words can be read (i.e., "sounded out") relatively easily using knowledge of sound-letter relationships. For example, Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying* includes, "Then I had to sit in the big wood chair again. And Mrs. sat down next to me."[3] A more advanced transitional book, *Cam Jansen and the Scary Snake Mystery* by David Adler, includes, "Under it were the dates of the Matisse exhibit. 'Isn't that beautiful?' Mrs. Jansen asked."[4]

Andrea A. Zevenbergen *(far left) is Professor of Psychology at State University of New York—Fredonia.* ***Allison L. Angell*** *(left) is Senior Children's Librarian at Benicia (Calif.) Public Library.*

Examples of transitional books

Relatively more challenging transitional books include those with advanced vocabulary and unfamiliar topics. For example, Jeff Brown's *Flat Stanley* includes such passages as, "This is where we art robbers pull a sensational job whilst the civilized community sleeps."[5] Sentence length and complexity also influence how challenging a particular transitional book is.[6] Consider, for example, Mary Pope Osborne's, "It was a gold stick. About a foot long. A dog's head was carved on one end," from *Mummies in the Morning*, against "And then he picked up two boulders, each as big as a car, and ground them to gravel with his bare hands," from Jon Scieszka's *Knights of the Kitchen Table*.[7]

Another differentiating factor is the use of illustrations in the book. Transitional books vary in how many illustrations are included in the book and how redundant the illustrations are with the content of the written text (e.g., a blue ball).

Transitional books provide opportunities for children to practice decoding, improve their sight vocabulary, and generally become fluent readers. Reading vocabulary may improve because authors of transitional books typically surround unfamiliar words with context that will give clues to the reader. For example, Ann Cameron, in *The Stories Julian Tells*, helps the reader understand the word "fig":

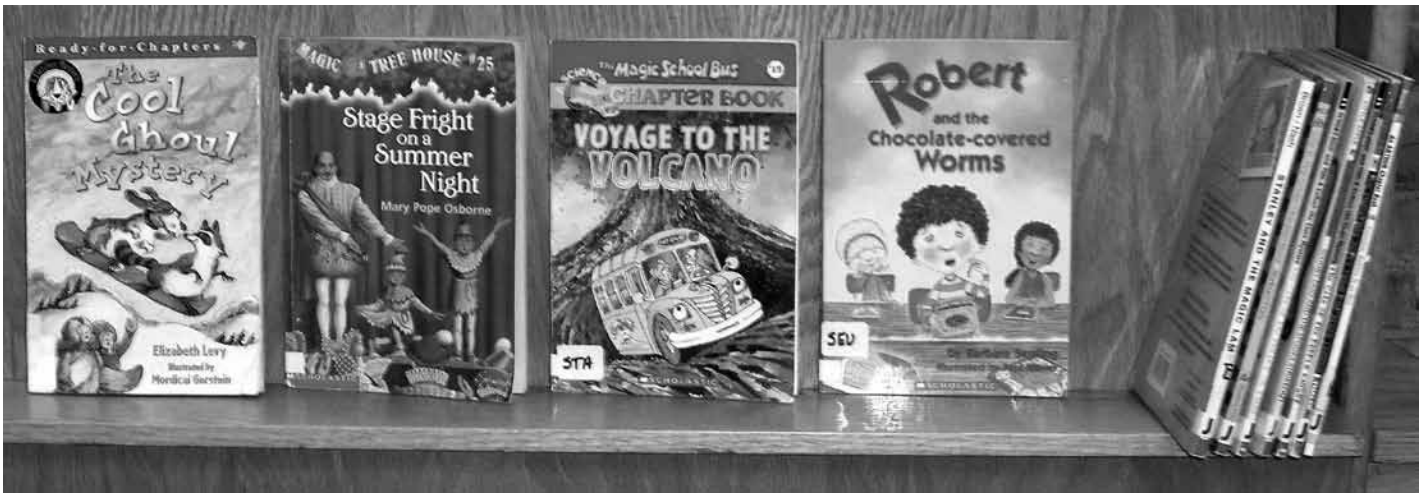
> In the summer I like to lie in the grass and look at clouds and eat figs. Figs are soft and purple and delicious. Their juice runs all over my face, and I eat them till I'm so full I can't eat anymore.[8]

Transitional books also help the child develop sustained attention on reading.[9] Within the category of transitional literature, chapters and books vary in length. Children moving across transitional literature series will be able to tackle longer chapters and books over time. Because children are often drawn to particular transitional books because of their genre, there is ample opportunity for children to be exposed to transitional books at an appropriately challenging level for them. For example, children who like history who have been reading Mary Pope Osborne's *Magic Tree House* can move into the *You Wouldn't Want to Be a . . .* series, written by David Salariya and others, as they advance in their reading skills.

Besides facilitating better reading skills, transitional books may develop motivation for reading. The child's motivation to read is influenced by the degree of success the child anticipates when reading.[10] If a child has positive experiences with transitional books and comes to see him- or herself as a good reader, he or she might spend more time reading (and developing better reading skills) over time.[11] Chapter books often include more interesting character development, complex plot twists, and increased suspense compared to picture books.[12] Moreover, language in transitional books that is rhythmic and vivid may help to develop reading motivation.[13]

Transitional books also have the added benefit of potentially facilitating children's social and emotional development. Common challenges of children in early elementary school include having a new sibling, starting sports and other activities, handling bullying, making new friends, determining one's talents, moving, blended families, going to camp for the first time, and self-acceptance. Transitional books focus on these themes, which are familiar and important to children in the early elementary school years.[14]

Erik Erikson, who detailed a psychosocial theory of human development, indicated that children ages six to twelve are in the stage called "industry vs. inferiority."[15] School-aged children develop industry by successfully dealing with the demand to learn new skills; failure leads to feelings of inferiority. Experiences with texts that are presented at an appropriately challenging level can facilitate children's development of industry (e.g., feeling able to rise to challenges and work hard on future tasks). Reading about individuals successfully mastering challenges in life also may develop children's confidence in their abilities to handle new or difficult situations.



Transitional books cover a variety of topics.

Transitional books may also facilitate children's social and emotional development in that they may expose children to social, economic, and political issues, such as prejudice due to differences in race or ethnicity, experience of living with few economic resources, death of family members, war, peers with physical or cognitive disabilities, and natural disasters. Transitional books promote insight into other people's ways of thinking and living, which can help children develop perspective-taking and empathy skills.[16]

Nonfiction transitional books also can contribute a great deal to the knowledge of young readers. These books expose children to specialized vocabulary and help them become familiar with the various structures of expository text, including informational texts, biographies, and procedural texts.[17]

Informational texts may particularly build children's knowledge of the world around them.[18] This awareness may result in greater appreciation of the need for sustainability-related actions (e.g., recycling, assistance for threatened species). Although young readers typically have much less exposure to nonfiction text compared to fiction, some children prefer informational texts as reading material.[19] Thus it is important for young children to have access within libraries to both fiction and nonfiction transitional books. Examples of nonfiction transitional books include Tomie dePaola's *26 Fairmount Avenue* and its sequels, Nic Bishop's *Frogs*, and even Doreen Rappaport's award-winning *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Clearly, transitional books have a lot to offer children as they become comfortable, independent readers. What may be less evident is where to place transitional books in the library. Should transitional books be put in with easy readers or juvenile fiction? Should they be shelved separately? Distinguishing transitional books from other books by shelving them separately may help children and parents find them more easily. On the other hand, having transitional books on the shelves with juvenile fiction may facilitate children's selecting more difficult books that catch their interest as they are browsing and selecting transitional books. Labeling transitional books in some way is likely to help in their identification. To obtain some ideas of where children's library services are placing and easing the identification of transitional books, we conducted a survey of children's librarians in 2008.

The top ten libraries in the United States, according to the 2006 Hennen's American Public Library Ratings, for each of the ten population brackets (i.e., ranging from library systems serving more than five hundred thousand people to libraries serving less than one thousand people) were contacted by phone from April to June, 2008. Ninety-five of the one hundred librarians contacted (librarians who work with children) agreed to participate in a survey, four declined to participate, and one could not be reached during the study period.

Two main questions were asked: "How are transitional books organized in your library?" and "Do you label transitional books so they are distinct from other books?" Because we also were interested in how transitional books are used within the broader library system, we additionally asked, "Do you have a book club using transitional books for this age group?" and "What other services do you provide specifically for this transitional reader age group?"

The results of the survey indicated that 31 percent of the libraries shelve transitional books separately. Of the libraries who shelve transitional books with other children's books (69 percent of all libraries surveyed), 44 percent shelve them with juvenile fiction, 15 percent shelve them with easy readers, 13 percent shelve them by difficulty (i.e., some are shelved with easy readers and some are shelved with juvenile fiction), and 7 percent shelve them with other series, which helps to show how ubiquitous series are in transitional literature. Twenty-one percent indicated shelving them by "type" (e.g., putting transitional series books with other series, and nonseries transitional books with juvenile fiction or easy readers).

Forty percent of the libraries surveyed use some sort of label to distinguish transitional books from other books—such as colored dots, colored tape, stickers, or use of a specific term such as First Fiction, First Chapter Book, Easy Chapter Book,

Easy Js, Young Fiction, Junior Reader, Junior Fiction, JFict for Younger Readers, and In-Betweeners.

Across the libraries sampled, there was not much relationship between the size of the library and the likelihood of transitional books getting their own section. However, bigger libraries were more likely to label books, possibly because they have more personnel available to label.

Twenty-two percent of the surveyed libraries had book clubs for this age range. These book clubs ranged from standard book discussion groups; to a club where a librarian reads a few chapters to the children; to one where parents attend with children in second or third grade, and then children attend on their own when they are older. One library has a book club for children of this age that reads only nonfiction. Several libraries do not have book clubs, but they provide book lists for children at this reading level.

We found that the amount of programming done for this age group tended to relate to the size of the library, with larger libraries offering more programming. Other programs for this transitional reader age group included book buddy programs, where children read to an older child, to an adult, or to a trained service dog. There were Junie B. Jones, *Magic Tree House*, and Captain Underpants events. One library has a LEGO program, after which children are encouraged to take books home. Another library mentioned an after-school story hour. A parent–child reading group also was included in the responses. At a Lunch Bunch program, a librarian read a book aloud while the children ate.

Transitional readers are learning to become independent, both in their reading and in other aspects of their lives. The best books for these readers reflect new experiences and levels of development, tell readers about new ideas or things—such as Matisse or figs—and familiarize them with different genres and book structures. Libraries shelve and label transitional books differently, according to the needs of their own communities, but are aware of these books as a discrete part of children's literature. The range of programs done for children in this transitional reader age group is promising because it shows that librarians are recognizing the needs of these readers. &

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Beyond the Brochure

Promoting Early Literacy through Born to Read

JENNA NEMEC

The ALSC Early Childhood Programs and Services (ECPS) Committee has completed the next phase of Born to Read (BTR) renewal and provides a two-part framework for ALSC members to use in thinking about their current efforts to promote the topic in their communities.

This article has the following goals:

- *Encourage ALSC members to recognize what they are already doing to serve expectant and new parents and their babies.*
- *Highlight the content on the newly updated and expanded BTR website.*

ALSC members are encouraged to embrace their roles as BTR practitioners and focus on a relationship-based approach to promoting early literacy development in the very youngest children.

* * * * *

My love affair with BTR began on a frosty January morning when a rosy-cheeked charmer swept into the library and stole my heart.

With his irresistible laugh, playful smile, and fascination with books, John-Harvey was a Midwestern librarian's dream realized. True, he was a bit on the short side and only had a few teeth, but I didn't mind. John-Harvey had other fine qualities to recommend him, like dimples and a boundless enthusiasm for everything I did.

Although we shared twenty joy-filled minutes of board books, rhymes, and songs on our first wintry Monday together, I couldn't deny there was someone else for John-Harvey. The love of his life was his mother, Amanda, whose exuberance for parenthood was matched only by a keen interest in what the library could offer her and her baby.

How could I have been anything less than thrilled? John-Harvey and Amanda had that BTR spark, and I couldn't wait to help them kindle it.

Through the warm, friendly relationship Amanda and I came to share, we showed one another what it means to partner for a baby's early literacy success. Amanda's stories about my role in the boisterous fun and quiet, tender moments she created with John-Harvey were heartening proof of the magic that unfolds when we read to babies from birth.

I'll bet you know a baby like John-Harvey and a parent like Amanda. They're the faces of early literacy in your community and your target audience for the infant and toddler programs and services you already provide.

Now what if I told you I'm confident you also use BTR on a regular basis, but you just don't realize it?

In this follow-up to the Early Childhood Programs and Services (ECPS) Committee's recent *Children and Libraries* article on the history and renewal of BTR,[1] you'll deepen your understanding of BTR's current purpose, audience, and scope by learning how you're already using this concept successfully at your library, and in myriad ways.

Moreover, you'll step beyond the promotional brochure and into the wealth of long-awaited resources on the newly updated and expanded BTR website.

Prepare to be surprised, fellow ALSC members. You're about to be very impressed with yourselves.

"But we don't use BTR at my library!"

Yes, you do. But, of course, I understand your reluctance to believe me.

Jenna Nemec *is a children's librarian living in Chicago. She is a member of the ALSC Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee.*

I can just imagine what you're thinking: "I'm not even sure I know what BTR is these days, and here you're telling me it's alive and well at my library?" It's no wonder you're confused, and you're in good company. Even the ECPS Committee has gone twelve rounds on more than one occasion while trying to define BTR for the next generation of library staff and parents.

Let's start with a frank checklist of what BTR isn't:

- It's not a program, an initiative, or a service model to be implemented.
- It's not a revision, an update, or an amendment to its predecessor.
- It's not something extra the ECPS Committee is asking you to do.
- It's not a competitor of Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR).

Now where does that leave us?

Simply put, BTR has become a topic for which ALSC and its members advocate. It's the message conveyed through your efforts to reach expectant and new parents about the importance of reading to babies from birth. Most importantly, BTR is a collection of resources (now available on the newly updated and expanded website) that can stand on its own or complement the ECRR toolkit.

Just like a favorite subject among friends, I challenge you to think of BTR as an ongoing conversation about early literacy that grows organically from the relationships you're already cultivating with the expectant and new parents in your community.

So how does all this translate into BTR at your library?

When you have a lively chat with an expectant couple about what your library can offer their family, you're using BTR. The shiny new board books and picturebooks prominently featured in your latest display deliver the BTR message to browsing parents and enthusiastic little ones. And your lap-sit program filled with babies and caregivers eagerly awaiting your brand of storytime magic? You've struck BTR gold.

Rather than marketing BTR as a brand, try using it as a catchphrase when talking with parents. For example, I often find myself saying, "Did you know babies are born to read? Here's one of my favorite board books to share with your little one. It's never too early to start!" Use talking points like these in conjunction with your ECRR efforts or on their own to open a dialogue with a caregiver about early literacy.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter what you call your early literacy efforts for infants, toddlers, and their families. Anytime you champion book sharing from birth as a critical aspect of every baby's healthy growth and well-being, that's BTR in spades. So give yourself some credit for a job well done! You're a relationship builder and an early literacy advocate, the very essence of a BTR practitioner.

Fresh, Focused, and Free: The New BTR Website

Since the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, the ECPS Committee has dedicated its efforts to developing fresh, focused, and free resources beyond the promotional brochure to support library staff as they advocate for early literacy. These new resources are now available on the BTR website, which has been updated and expanded to address the broader topic of early literacy: www.ala.org/alsc/issuesadv/borntoread (Find the link under the "Parents" dropdown menu on the ALSC homepage.)

The website content is aimed primarily at library staff seeking to promote the importance of reading to babies from birth among expectant and new parents in their communities. However, parents may also find tremendous value in the available resources, particularly recommendations for stories and rhymes to use with their little ones as well as current research on the impact of sharing books with the very youngest children.

Whether you're just getting things started at your library or looking for ways to refresh your existing efforts, you're sure to find a wealth of early literacy gems amid these online treasures. Why not use the BTR website to spark your next conversation with an expectant or new parent? Invite your patrons to explore the new content, then be ready to welcome the oodles of questions they're sure to have afterward.

Brochures, Bibs, and Bookmarks: Additional BTR Resources

Indeed, the BTR website places a multitude of resources right at your fingertips. Nevertheless, the BTR brochure and related promotional merchandise remain integral tools for promoting the importance of reading to babies from birth.

Refreshed and updated this year, the latest version of the brochure offers tips to expectant and new parents on reading, sharing, talking, and playing with their babies and includes a suggested booklist of developmentally appropriate titles. While the brochures in Spanish and Chinese can be downloaded free from the BTR website, the brochure in English is fee-based and available for purchase.

Visit the ALA Store website to order the English-language brochure and browse the growing collection of BTR merchandise, which includes infant and toddler apparel, bibs, bookmarks, and more.

Embracing Your Role in BTR

As the ECPS Committee proudly presents these new early literacy resources for ALSC and its members, I call on the wisdom of one of my personal library heroes, Dr. Virginia A. Walter. In her introduction to *Children & Libraries Getting It Right*, a seminal work on the past and present state of children's librarianship and what we can do to improve it for future generations, Walter asserts, "This is not a how-to-do-it book. It is more of a how-to-think-about-it-book."[2]

Highlights of the New BTR Website

The ECPS Committee is pleased to introduce the newly revised and expanded BTR website, featuring a host of free early literacy resources to support library staff as they advocate for the importance of reading to babies from birth.

Find the website link under the "Parents" dropdown menu on the ALSC homepage and start exploring this new content:

- **Benefits of programming and services to babies in libraries.** Perhaps you, your community, or your library administrators still need a little convincing of why it's critical to welcome the very youngest patrons and their families into your library. This list of salient points can help you sway even the staunchest critic.
- **Booklist.** Sorted into eleven different categories, this extensive booklist may be helpful when recommending titles to parents with specific needs. The wide range of categories includes books with sharp color contrasts, daily routines, American Sign Language, and diversity.
- **Funding sources.** We may hate to admit it, but sometimes a little money can make a big difference in what we are able to offer our communities. Investigate funding opportunities for your programs and services through this list of links to corporations, foundations, and publishers offering early literacy grants to schools, public libraries, and not-for-profit organizations.
- **Outreach to expectant and new parents.** You know they're out there, but how do you find them? And once you do, how do you sell them on the BTR message? Check out these tried-and-true ideas for reaching expectant and new parents compiled by the experts—your fellow ALSC members.
- **Partnerships.** There's strength in numbers, so why not seek the support of other agencies, organizations, or groups in your community serving very young children and their families? Use these tips on creating great partnerships as a starting point for your efforts.
- **Sensory storytimes.** If you've considered expanding your library's early literacy programming to include children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), look no further than these developmentally appropriate resources carefully crafted by a librarian and a special education teacher. Find storytime plans and suggestions for adapting traditional program elements for children with ASD.
- **Storytime ideas.** Whether you're new to early literacy programming or a long-time professional looking to spice things up, it's always helpful to see how someone else is doing it. Here you'll find suggested book titles and rhymes as well as ready-to-go infant and toddler storytime plans from practitioners across the country.
- **Storytime resources.** Planning your own infant or toddler storytime can be overwhelming. Where do you start, what do you include, and how do you make the most of those twenty minutes? This collection of print and electronic resources can help you make the planning process more manageable—and fun!
- **Talking points.** You've identified the expectant and new parents in your community, and they're eager to hear your BTR message. But what do you say, exactly? Use these talking points when giving presentations or talking one-on-one with parents about their babies' early literacy development.

In the spirit of Walter's approach, the ECPS Committee isn't asking you to change what you're doing for expectant and new parents and their babies. We're challenging you to think differently about it. You may find these tips helpful as you take your next steps toward promoting early literacy in your community:

- **Recognize your efforts.** What are you already doing for expectant and new parents of babies at your library?
- **Evaluate your methods.** How are you incorporating the BTR message into your existing efforts?
- **Consider alternatives.** What are some other simple yet effective ways you can promote the BTR message to expectant and new parents and other community advocates with a vested interest in the healthy growth and development of very young children?

As you ponder the answers to these questions, think beyond traditional methods like storytime programs and handouts. And don't overlook informal techniques like book displays, bulletin boards, and the most versatile and effective means of all—the conversation.

Remember, the relationships we cultivate every day help us foster a lifelong love of literacy, libraries, and learning in children beginning at birth. That's the essence of BTR, and you're its greatest asset.

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PEER-REVIEWED

Oh the Places We've Been!

The Roots of Evaluation in Youth Services, 1882–1930

KATE MCDOWELL

Evaluation is a key part of youth services. We use measurements to gauge our effectiveness—including statistics, output measures, surveys of patrons to determine the outcomes of our work in their lives, and a host of other measurements.

Every grant we write and many of the programs we develop are subject to evaluation. Virginia Walter and Eliza Dresang have been leaders in translating outputs ("quantifiable and measurable results") and outcomes (changes in "attitude, behavior, skill, knowledge, or status that occurs for users after a purposeful action on the part of library staff") into terms directly applicable to librarians working with young people.[1] What we don't know, or have forgotten, is that evaluation was a vital and fundamental part of youth services from the beginning.

At a time when conventional library histories criticize or dismiss them as mere "hostesses" doing "sentimental" work,[2] women serving children in public libraries were the first librarians to systematically use survey methods to understand the emerging field. They created the earliest national standards for children's librarianship.

This is not to say that evaluation has developed in a straight line from surveys in the nineteenth century to the latest outcome-based evaluation approaches today. Like any history, the path has been complex, and there are arguably as many disjunctures as continuities between the evaluation methods of then and now. However, understanding that the earliest development of services to youth was informed by national data from libraries as well as local data from child patrons is fundamental to the places we've been.

In the early days of the field, children's librarians gathered two kinds of evidence. First, youth services advocates used survey methods to gather evidence of how youth services were developing at a national level through a series of surveys from 1882 to 1898 collectively known as the Reading of the Young reports.[3]

This series of efforts marks the first systematic attempt to gather evidence in the field of librarianship, and it inspired many similar surveys in other areas of librarianship.[4]

Second, from the 1890s to 1920s, librarians surveyed and extensively quoted children regarding their reading activities, favorite books, authors, genres, and much more. Both of these developments—surveying librarians and surveying children—mark significant and overlooked moments in the early history of youth services evaluation.

Kate McDowell *is assistant professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign, where her courses include Youth Services Librarianship, History of Readers, and Storytelling. Her article "Surveying the Field: The Research Model of Women in Librarianship, 1882–1898" won the biennial 2010 Donald G. Davis Award of the American Library Association's Library History Round Table.*

To understand how innovative it was for women to use survey methods, we need to consider the context of the late nineteenth century. The public library as we know it today was a recent innovation, and, especially in the Northeast and Midwest, the idea that every community deserved a public library was taking off like wildfire. A few communities in the South (New Orleans among them) and the West (including San Francisco and Los Angeles) were regional innovators in establishing public libraries and services to youth, but most of the action was in the Northeast. Though we think of librarianship as a female-dominated profession, at this period women were a minority in the field; women comprised 20 percent of librarians, and their male colleagues comprised the other 80 percent of the profession.[5]

Women would not win the right to vote at the federal level until 1920, with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, almost forty years after this story begins in 1882. Even in professional contexts, women were expected to demure to men, sitting rather than standing at meetings in such fields as education.[6]

In Hartford, Connecticut, librarian Caroline Hewins was one of the very few women to direct a public library, and she did so in innovative ways. Children were typically excluded from public libraries in the late 1870s, but Hewins opened the library doors to them, created programming for them, and promoted her work at American Library Association (ALA) conferences. In fact, in 1879, she was the first woman to speak publicly at any ALA conference, asking a practical question about whether a tax source could contribute to library funding.[7]

Because of her innovations in services to children, Hewins was one of several expert librarians asked to provide reports on new developments in the field of librarianship for the 1882 ALA conference. Unlike any of her peers, and for reasons that remain lost to us historically, Hewins conducted a survey. This was well before the establishment of the academic social sciences. She sent letters and bought advertisements in newspapers, and collected the voices of librarians from across the nation.

By asking for input from around the country, Hewins was doing something important for women in the field. She was able to speak with a kind of authority not typically afforded to women by basing her Reading of the Young report on survey evidence. This strategy successfully made her voice heard in a predominately male environment.

The 1882 Reading of the Young report was the first in a series of survey-based reports given at ALA conferences, all done by women who were early leaders in youth services. There were eight reports in the series—published in 1882,1883,1885,1889, 1890,1893,1894, and 1898. Hewins herself wrote and presented three of the eight reports, and the five other women librarians were either local leaders in establishing youth services or early authors of children's book lists. Hewins was both; her 1882 book list was the first major standard list of best books for children's public library collections.[8]

From year to year, Hewins and her colleagues developed more comprehensive survey questions, leading the way in establishing professional expectations for services to youth. The increased numbers and specificity of these questions demonstrates the development knowledge and professional sophistication in the area of children's librarianship.

At first, Hewins'1882 survey posed only one question ("What are you doing to encourage a love of good reading in boys and girls?") and reported all the results qualitatively, excerpting written replies from twenty-five librarians. Then, in 1885, Hannah James quantified the response rate, noting that she had received seventy-five responses to one hundred twenty five queries.[9] In 1894, Lutie Stearns quantified some of the results of her survey, finding that one-fifth to one-half of library card holders were young people under the age of sixteen.[10]

Then, in 1898, Caroline Hewins did the final survey in the series and took quantification one step further. She posed seventeen questions that suggested the standardization of various aspects of service to youth and gathered replies from one hundred twenty five libraries, reporting the results in chart format, with questions listed on the X axis and each responding library listed on the Y axis, allowing for a quick visual apprehension of the most common practices in the field.

Some of her questions were: "Have you a children's room or department?" (thirty replied yes); "Do you work with schools?" (one hundred replied yes) "Have children access to the shelves?" (twenty-six replied yes, with three additional descriptions of free access to two hundred to one thousand volumes); and "Do you make book lists on special subjects, [such] as holidays?" (thirty-nine replied yes).[11] The increased numbers and specificity of the questions asked in 1898 demonstrate the development of greater sophistication in the area of children's librarianship.

In the period from 1882 to 1898, women were trying to gain an authoritative voice for themselves as professionals within librarianship. Surveys were a central tool for gaining this voice. From the late 1880s on, both male and female librarians used surveys to gather information for ALA conference reports on a variety of topics.[12]

This was in the development of librarianship, which would go on to be a profession that valued surveys, collective voices, and collaboration. It is extraordinary that women who were a minority in the field and subject to restrictions relative to their male colleagues were able to influence the direction of librarianship through these surveys.

Establishing the first major empirical research method in the field of librarianship was only the beginning for Hewins and her colleagues. In the late 1890s, after more than a decade of surveying their librarian colleagues for the Reading of the Young reports, they began to survey children directly.

In most cases, they started with their own local child patrons. Librarians surveyed children about their favorite books, authors, and activities in the library, and published reports of both the numbers of responses and, in many cases, excerpts of children's written responses. Children's librarians' writings

showed the high value they placed on understanding the children they served.

A few examples illustrate the creative ways that librarians surveyed children. In 1897, Mary Wright Plummer distributed a survey in the children's room, collected about one hundred replies from children, and reported "specimen answers" in her article. Queries included how long children had been library users, whether children received reading suggestions at home, whether they preferred help in choosing books, how many books children read, and the "best book the child had ever read." Popular favorites included *Little Women, The Swiss Family Robinson, Uncle Tom's Cabin,* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales*.[13]

Then, as now, some librarians found a need to publicize their services to children. In 1897, Electra Doren of the Dayton Public Library in Ohio conducted a survey of 3,192 children through their teachers, and she found that almost two-thirds of these school children were not yet library users.[14] She also found that nearly all of the children surveyed had only limited help from their parents in choosing books. Replies to the question "Do your parents ever tell you good books to read, and help you to select them?" included: "Not very often." "Nobody helps me." "I choose my own books." Doren's survey documented the need to further promote library services to children.

"It is extraordinary that women who were a minority in the field and subject to restrictions relative to their male colleagues were able to influence the direction of librarianship through these surveys."

Other surveys were direct forerunners of contemporary evaluation methods. At the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 1898, Plummer launched a new approach to library exhibits that provided librarians with both quantitative and qualitative evidence of their efficacy. The 1898 Heroes Exhibit included visual displays of portraits of a range of heroes—men and women—as well as informal storytelling about the heroes.

More than forty-eight portraits of famous heroic figures were displayed on bulletin boards, with accompanying text to explain who each was as well as a list of books about them. Of course, by presenting children with portraits of heroes, librarians were indicating their opinions about the kinds of role models they hoped children would emulate.

Librarians also followed the exhibit with a survey to determine what children had gleaned from the experience. Children were invited to fill out "question papers" designed "to discover the effects of the exhibition upon the children."[15]

This was entirely voluntary, given only to those "children *who wanted* to fill out the blanks" (emphasis in original). Children answered six questions about their experience, including: "What picture in the exhibition do you like best? Give the name of your favorite hero. What do you think makes a hero? What book or books have you read which have interested you in heroes?" Based on the ninety-eight responses received, the favorite heroes were George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Ulysses S. Grant.

Children's responses to the question of why they chose a particular portrait as their favorite included, for instance, one child's reason for preferring George Washington: "Because he was the father of his country and never told a lie." One boy named Joan of Arc as a favorite "because she was brave and a girl." A girl preferred Abraham Lincoln because "he was a self-made man," and another child named Lincoln "because he stopped slavery."[16]

Librarians determined that the exhibit had a positive effect on their child patrons. The results demonstrated that young people were interested in the exhibit and surrounding events. They not only benefitted from the library's services, they also engaged in thoughtful writing about the idea of a hero.

Though librarians of this time would not have thought in these terms, it is easy to see the connection between this kind of qualitative survey and contemporary outcome-based evaluation that focuses on how library activities improve participants' lives.

Some communities used surveys to demonstrate that they had already attained great success with publicizing library services to children. For instance, an 1899 survey of one hundred fifty high school pupils, jointly conducted by a teacher and a librarian in Redlands, California (population five thousand in 1899), found that more than half of the young people visited the public library once a week.[17] In fact, more than two-thirds had library cards, and only one young person surveyed had not been inside the library at some time.

This survey also asked children about their favorite books and authors. The librarian reported that Sir Walter Scott's novels, *Ben Hur*, and Louisa May Alcott were the top choices, and the librarians were pleased to see the quality of the choices.

In 1902, Hewins published a "Report on List of Children's Books with Children's Annotations" that included information about favorite titles and children's reasons given for preferring them. She circulated four questions to children in sixth through ninth grades, relying on teachers to distribute the questionnaires; she received twelve hundred replies.[18]

Hewins' report focused on why children liked various books, but unfortunately she focused more on children's inabilities to answer questions like how books have "helped you" than on understanding their responses. Hewins' conclusions are more about her criticisms of the teachers who administered the surveys. Nevertheless, this example shows Hewins herself engaging with surveying children as well as her fellow professionals.

Librarian Mary Root of the Providence (RI) Public Library surveyed children in 1920 through their school to discover more about their library use. Root asked them to name a few books they liked and a few they disliked. Interestingly, the author Horatio Alger was both the most liked and most disliked author. Alger's books were frequently banned from libraries and disapproved by librarians, so this polarized response may indicate equal parts compliance with and resistance to librarians' values.

Root reported some of the children's reasons for disliking books, paraphrasing their words: "*Tale of Two Cities*—too deep; [Horatio] Alger—too much alike; *English Orphans*—too sad; *Henty*—too monotonous; *From Cattle Ranch to College*—too much description; *Life's Shop Window*—too much work to figure out; *The Halo*—too mushy."[19]

In 1932, Marian A. Webb of the Fort Wayne, Indiana, public library surveyed children through the local schools and found that 85 percent of them were reading library books.[20] Favorite books included "*Heidi,* the Alcott books, *Tom Sawyer, Treasure Island,* and *Kidnaped* (sic)." Webb noted that the survey also made it clear that "15 percent of the children of Fort Wayne were not being reached by the public library," and that plans were underway to reach those young people.[21]

What we can infer from these surveys is that many children's librarians took children's voices seriously. In these examples, they took them seriously enough to pose questions directly to them. Of course, librarians who collected favorite books and other reading-related information from children had a vested interest in proving the worth of their library services to children, and their stories should be interpreted in light of their motives.

They collected fascinating data, but, in most cases, their findings wouldn't be the basis for valid evaluative arguments in contemporary terms. There is no doubt that contemporary evaluation methods that Virginia Walter, Eliza Dresang, and others promote are far superior in rigor and validity to the methods used by earlier children's librarians.

However, there might yet be vital evaluative strategies to be borrowed or adapted from our predecessors' work. As far as they collected qualitative statements from children about the impact of the library on their lives, they were foreshadowing evaluation methods to come. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) encourages grant applicants to use outcome-based evaluation when planning grant evaluations. They define "outcomes" as "benefits to people: specifically, achievements or changes in skill, knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition, or life status for program participants."[22] Read in this light, lists of favorite books are evidence of "achievements" and may be evidence of "changes in skill."

What counts as evidence of effective service remains a live question in children's librarianship today. Just as our predecessors did, we can and should approach evaluation with clear-eyed creativity. Reevaluating the historical record raises interesting questions about contemporary evaluative practice, but in the meantime we will continue to gather evidence of efficacy. Knowing our history may help us to call for intelligent analysis of that evidence that informs what kinds of claims we can make for the efficacy of current or future services.

Our survey history is a story that we can and should reclaim as we move into an era of greater accountability and evidence of efficacy. Understanding the evaluative roots of youth services can help us to contextualize and even critically appraise contemporary evaluative methods such as collecting statistics, identifying outputs, measuring outcomes, and the methods of the future.

Early librarians treated children as individuals who could actively inform the development of youth services in public libraries. The value of respect for children remains central to youth services work today, and we can continue this respectful tradition as we think about new forms of data that we may gather.

We know great things are happening in our libraries, and we know we need to tell the story better, louder, and more convincingly. Telling our stories with characters, settings, motivations, gripping plots, and satisfying conclusions will require a whole range of forms of data, some of them perhaps yet undiscovered. Embracing the challenge of documenting and communicating the worth of the work we do may spur us to yet unexplored heights of success in the places we have yet to go.

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Reaching Tweens

Tricks of the Programming Trade

AMANDA MOSS STRUCKMEYER

Tween services have become a popular topic in the library world, and for good reason. Once our young patrons graduate from storytimes and head off to school, we need to continue to provide targeted programming for them.

By tailoring programs for the tween demographic, we can expand the audience we serve while retaining patrons. A patron who has been attending programs consistently from infanthood through adulthood may engage in more of our library services than a patron who attended storytimes as a toddler but found no appropriate library programming during elementary or middle school.

At our library, we define tweens as ages eight through twelve. We built in an intentional overlap between tweens and children (birth to eight) and teens (twelve to nineteen). This allows for leisurely transitions and provides flexibility.

Patrons who are eight years old, for example, are welcome to participate in children's programming as well as tween programming, while a twelve-year-old is eligible to attend tween and teen programs. Typically, our young patrons are eager to move to the next category and choose the higher age group, but some feel more comfortable staying in the younger category while trying out a program here and there in the older one.

Amanda Moss Struckmeyer *is Head of Youth Services at the Middleton (Wis.) Public Library.*

Finding out what's popular for tweens might take a bit of research. We might think we have a good handle on trends, but it never hurts to dig a little deeper to make sure we're really catering to our target age group.

Look at circulation statistics for tween-appropriate books and magazines, and read some of the most popular ones. Take a peek at the current television shows or movies that tweens are talking about. When an opportunity arises to network with other librarians—nationally or at the state, regional, or local level—listen to their success stories. Don't be afraid to use someone else's great idea for a program.

Most importantly, talk to tweens in the community. As tween programming develops, this becomes easier and more natural because we get to know tweens and they become comfortable sharing their ideas and enthusiasm.

How can we possibly reach the entire range of interests and developmental stages that represent the tweens in our communities? Building as much variety as possible into our programs is a good place to start. At many events, I like to offer a buffet of activities, and participants are encouraged to pick and choose between them. Generally, tweens will select the activities that match their abilities and interests.

For example, at one program I might offer two very simple crafts, an advanced craft, a poetry station, and a movement activity, such as a relay or Hula Hoop tournament. Participants move freely between the stations, choosing the ones that

appeal to them. This allows them to have ownership of their experience, which they love.

The activities I select are typically ones tweens can do on their own after a short demonstration. If I'm offering an advanced craft, I usually station myself or an adult volunteer in that area to help. I always make it clear that participants are welcome to do as many or as few of the activities as they like; it's fine with me if a tween stays at the same station for the length of the entire program, working on just one project or doing the same activity multiple times.

To help ensure success, I provide clear written instructions for each activity, usually displayed on the corresponding table in an acrylic sign holder. Displaying instructions not only encourages independence, it also makes my job easier. I don't have to talk as much, and I save the instruction documents on my computer. The next time I offer that particular program, I can simply print them again.

I have tried many tween programs over the past three and a half years. Some, of course, have been much more successful than others. We consider a program successful when patrons are enthusiastically engaged. While we do record attendance at all of our programs, we don't anticipate a specific number. A program with a "low" attendance of five or six tweens gives me the chance to really get to know attendees, and smaller groups allow for more hands-on time and exploration.

In spreading the word about these programs, I like to use tools already at my fingertips. In addition to traditional brochures (print and online), I advertise through our library's Facebook page and an e-mail discussion list that patrons may join. And our library newsletter has been a great place to highlight upcoming events through short articles.

Occasionally, I send home fliers through the local schools, but I limit these to one or two per year to make sure we're not asking too much of school staff. The Youth Services department frequently creates eye-catching posters for the library, and I suspect these posters are responsible for the majority of attendees at our programs.

For upcoming craft programs, I display examples of the items we'll be making. We purchased a glass display case (designed to hold a collectible baseball), which sits on the Youth Services help desk, displaying the crafts we'll be making in upcoming programs. Not only does this build excitement and interest, it also fosters confidence. I want tweens to see a project and think, "I could make that!"

I'm fortunate to work with a director who sees our tween program as a work in progress, which I feel is a very healthy, helpful outlook. We have maintained an attitude of development, rather than a static viewpoint. I am encouraged to experiment, incorporating past successes with new ideas.

As stated earlier, other librarians are a great source of programming ideas.

"When an opportunity arises to network with other librarians—nationally or at the state, regional, or local level—listen to their success stories." Don't be afraid to use someone else's great idea for a program."

Here is a look at four of our most successful programs, which we will likely offer again in the future. Please feel free to adapt these any way you like and use them at your library.

Greece-ology

We held this program as a three-hour event in the summer of 2011. Tweens circulated several craft stations and sampled Greek snacks. After cleaning up, we watched *The Lightning Thief*. Our library holds a movie license that allows us to show a wide variety of movies, including this one. More than fifty tweens attended. The craft stations included the following:

- Greek pottery (draw on black paper plates with silver and gold markers)
- Scrolls (cut copier paper lengthwise; tape each end of one half-sheet to one of two pencils, and roll pencils toward each other into a scroll)
- Olympic torches (roll newspaper into a cone shape, using tape to secure; fill with yellow, orange, and red tissue paper "flames")

Banned Books Club

This was a one-time event during Banned Books Week. Participants were invited, but not required, to read any of the chapter books on a provided list. We had a pizza dinner to start our program, and while we ate, we talked about the chapter books. The books included *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*, so even if participants hadn't read any of the books for this program specifically, most of them were familiar with at least one, and they could easily jump into the discussion.

After dinner, I read aloud several picturebooks and we talked about why they might have been banned or challenged. After our discussion, the following activities were available:

- Harry Potter fortune tellers (folded paper fortune tellers featuring book characters, landmarks, and items, ending with the proclamation of which of the Hogwarts houses awaits)

Tweens at the Alien Art program. Photo by Amanda Struckmeyer.

- Toilet toss game (tossing rolls of toilet paper through a suspended toilet seat; this quickly became an unplanned tournament)

- Banned books BINGO (participants received blank BINGO grids and wrote a title in each square; I placed all of the books in a large box, drew out one at a time, and the tweens marked the drawn books off their grids until BINGO was achieved)

Out of This World: Alien Art

This was one of the cheapest and easiest programs I've done. I planned it for a weekday when there was no school, as close to Earth Day as possible. For a few months prior, I collected plastic bottle caps, empty yogurt containers, toilet paper tubes, oatmeal containers, and other clean, safe "junk." By enlisting the help of other staff members at our library, I was able to come up with quite a bit of material.

We asked participants to register ahead of time, so I was able to thoroughly prepare for this program. Twenty tweens signed up, and I prepared for twenty-five to accommodate last-minute additions. For each participant, I packed ten to twelve small pieces of "junk" into a box. Each box was placed at a seat in our program room. I set up a table full of adhesives: duct tape, masking tape, and a hot glue gun (which I operated).

As tweens entered the room, they were instructed to find any seat, but not to open the boxes until we were ready to begin. Once everyone arrived, I explained that a rocket from outer space was going to be landing, and it was up to us to build the items that would be on board. The only rule (aside from not touching the glue gun) was that each tween had to use everything inside his or her box.

In the middle of the room was a table full of optional items, including more "junk" as well as art supplies, such as Magic Markers, wiggly eyes, and ribbon. Tweens were welcome to use anything from that table—they just had to use everything that was in their boxes.

Participants loved the free-flowing format of this program, and it was fun to see them helping each other figure out how to make certain pieces work together. At the end of the program, they took their creations home. Clean-up was a breeze; aside from the adhesives and art supplies, any leftover materials were recycled or thrown away.

American Girl Party: Kanani

We've done several American Girl parties, all of which have been popular. At first, I was hesitant to host a program focused on a book character so closely tied with a product, but in the end, I viewed it no differently than a Clifford or Spot party; we celebrate the book characters at these parties, not the dolls.

Some participants do bring their dolls, which I don't encourage or discourage. I set up a space on the edge of the program room where the dolls can watch our program without running the risk of getting messy.

We held our Kanani party in December. Kanani is an American Girl from Hawaii, and this was perfect in the middle of our cold Wisconsin winter. We served fresh pineapple decorated with colorful cocktail umbrellas, and participants circulated between these stations:

- Hula dancing (we kept a kids' instructional DVD playing on a monitor in one corner of the room)

- Tissue paper hibiscus (Hawaii's state flower)

- Hawaiian nicknames (tweens created nicknames for themselves using the twelve letters of the Hawaiian alphabet)

- Create a lei (made from beads, yarn, and muffin tin liners with holes punched in them)

Tween programming can be enjoyable and rewarding as we see participation grow and relationships develop. By providing events for our tween patrons, we're increasing the likelihood that they will remain connected to the library throughout their lives. We're also showing tweens—and the community—that we are committed to serving every patron. My best advice is to keep an open mind, try new things, and have fun!

The Skype Is the Limit

Prepping for Successful Video Chats

LISA TAYLOR

Planning a Skype visit with an author? Here are answers to a few questions you may have (and a few that may surprise you).

Where do I start?

If you're not familiar with Skype, the video chat platform, don't worry! It's simple and free. Go to the Skype website (www.skype.com), download the program to your desktop, laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Skype must be installed on whatever computer you will use for your author visit, so if you're in a larger library, this may require approval or assistance from your technology department.

Carefully choose your "Skype name" (similar to an instant messenger screen name, it will be seen by everyone you contact), set up your account, and you're ready to go. There are even "Skype-ready" TVs. This is the easy part. Now you've got to find an author and audience.

Who?

If there is a particular author that suits the needs of your library's patrons or your classroom students, by all means, try to contact that author. It never hurts to ask. If you're unsure of where to start, the author-run site, From the Mixed Up Files of . . . Middle-Grade Authors (www.fromthemixedupfiles.com/for-teacherslibrarians/virtual-visits), suggests Skype an Author Network (http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com) or author Kate Messner's Kate's Book Blog (http://kmessner.livejournal.com/106020.html). Both have extensive lists of authors who Skype. If cost is your primary consideration, a general rule is that short visits of fifteen to twenty minutes are often free. Longer visits must be negotiated. Be sure to clarify the details.

How about Wednesday?

When the boys in my book club agreed that the author they most wanted to meet was Tom Angleberger, author of the popular *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda,* I said it was unlikely he would Skype with our small group for our budgeted amount of zero. I agreed to try though and contacted him via Twitter with a short (less than 140 characters) and sweet request. "Would a Skype visit with my library book club be possible?" I *expected* him to answer, "No."

What he *did* answer was, "Very doable," and suggested that he was free on Wednesday (sending me into an immediate panic—would I be able to pull it all together by Wednesday?)

Lisa Taylor *is Senior Youth Services Librarian with the Ocean County (N.J.) Library. She serves on ALSC's Oral History Committee and on the Executive Board of the New Jersey Library Association Children's Services section.*

Students in Andrew Risser's fourth grade class at Birdsboro (Pa.) Elementary Center Skype with author Nan Marino. Photo by Andrew Risser.

After several more "tweets" we finally decided on the following month, giving me more time to prepare. A word of advice: Have some dates in mind before you contact an author, and be prepared to be flexible. Angleberger may hold a record for Skype visits. He once had seven visits planned for a single day!

What?

In addition to the obvious (computer, screen, webcam, microphone), be sure to have an adequate sound system—not only for you to hear the author, but also for the author to hear you. I learned this lesson the hard way. When the children at my library met the very funny Angleberger on Skype, they roared with laughter as he called each one of the kids by the same name—joking with them as they playfully protested, repeating their real names to him.

It wasn't until later that I realized that my laptop microphone was probably not of good quality, and rather than accidentally calling children the wrong names, he decided to make a joke of it. He was prepared; I wasn't.

However, the ease with which he joked with the kids and made them feel comfortable made *me* feel certain that he had encountered this problem before. A word of advice: Test your sound equipment. Skype offers a "sound check" call feature, but a test call in ideal circumstances is not the same as testing the microphone with a room full of people. Try to test all of your equipment in circumstances as close to the actual visit as possible.

Is that your dog? I have a dog!

Pay attention to your setting. When award-winning author Nan Marino's dog trots across the screen, meaningful conversation about her book ends, replaced with questions about her dog and stories of children's pets. (She now keeps the dog in another room and only brings him out for Plan B—more on that later.)

Obviously, you have no control over the author's setting, but you can and should control yours. According to Marino and Angleberger, it's difficult to develop a rapport with a large group of blurry kids all bunched together. Put the camera near the screen and ensure that the camera is in focus and the kids are facing the correct way.

Authors may have difficulty determining which child is asking a question. Place a chair near the webcam and offer children the opportunity to question the author "up close and personal." My own advice? Ask the children to say their names clearly, or they may all become "George."

Was I sleeping?

Marino was unpleasantly surprised when she saw photos of herself taken during a Skype visit with schoolchildren. Her eyes were closed. Why? Whether you're the author or the librarian, if your webcam is centered at the top of your screen (or worse, not centered at all) and you're looking at the display in the middle of your screen, your eyes will appear shut to your counterpart.

Be aware of your webcam's location. As awkward as it may feel, try looking directly at the camera whenever possible. This is particularly apparent if using an iPad in the horizontal position, as the webcam will be located on the side.

The Internet is down?

Your worst nightmare—there's no Internet. At a recent youth services forum, I was planning an author Skype visit for a group of librarians. Shortly before the session, the library's Wi-Fi service failed. In most cases, if this happens, there's not much you can do. I was lucky. There was a technology specialist on hand. She connected my laptop to the Internet with an Ethernet cable, and we were back in business (albeit with a few more wires to step over).

Lesson learned? Sometimes things just happen. A word of advice though—if you're Skyping in a location other than your own library, assume there is nothing available where you are going. Bring a computer (with microphone and webcam), speakers, projector, a screen, and an Ethernet cable might be helpful as well.

Anything else?

Communication! Testing! Preparation! Exchange Skype names and cell phone numbers with the author. Add the author to your list of contacts well in advance of your visit date. Send a reminder e-mail, tweet, or text the day before your scheduled visit.

According to Marino, authors are usually happy to do a test call to ensure that everything is working properly. Set up early and leave plenty of time for testing or unexpected problems. Testing, testing, testing!

What is Plan B?

Well, there are back-ups, depending on the situation. Be flexible. If the Internet is down or your equipment malfunctions, be prepared to reschedule or visit via speakerphone. If there is a lull in the conversation, have some questions ready.

Marino comes prepared. Since her book takes place in 1969, she sometimes plays a quiz game with fans, "Did 'this' exist in 1969?" Skittles? Nope. Cell phones? Nope. The Internet? Not as we know it.

When my book club Skyped with Angleberger, he requested that I have a particularly sized paper available for each child. When the questions were finished, they each created an "emergency," seven-fold, Origami Yoda—very fun and very handy for those times when you're in need of instant advice from the wise Yoda. When all else fails, bring out the dog.

What about the children?

Remember that the technology is only a means to an end, not the end. The goal is to connect children with authors and instill a lifelong love of books and reading. Don't leave the visit to chance and hope the kids will be prepared with insightful questions and comments. Ask them to prepare questions in advance.

If you're in a public library, make reminder phone calls to ensure that everyone shows up. Authors won't mind a small group, and depending on how your camera is set up, they may not even notice if your group is very small. What's best for the author *and* the library is a group of kids that is genuinely enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the author's books. Worry less about filling the room and more about filling the child with a great experience.

Thanks to authors Nan Marino (*Neil Armstrong Is My Uncle & Other Lies Muscle Man McGinty Told Me*, Roaring Brook, 2009) and Tom Angleberger (*The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*, Amulet, 2010; *Darth Paper Strikes Back: An Origami Yoda Book*, Amulet, 2011; *Horton Halfpott, or the Fiendish Mystery of Smugwick Manor, or the Loosening of M'Lady Luggertuck's Corset*, Amulet, 2011), who have Skyped with countless children and graciously shared their advice for successful Skype visits.

OH THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN!, continued from page 35

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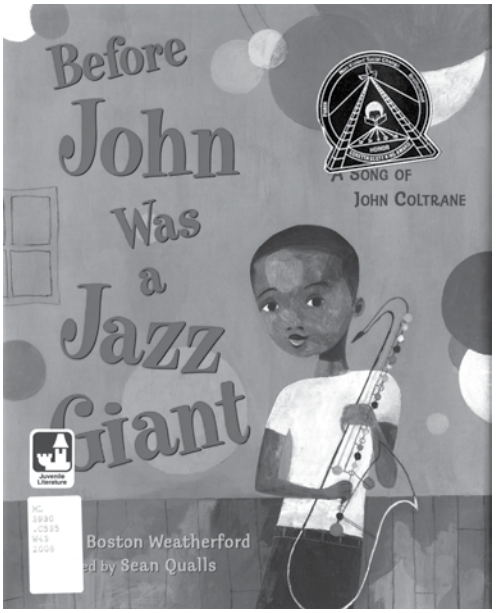
PEER-REVIEWED

Staying in Tune

Music Picture Books for Children Ages 4–8

ELIZABETH JOAN KELLY



Educators have argued for many years that music can be beneficial for teaching children language and reading skills. For this reason, I set out to create a selective bibliography of music-related picture books for beginning readers age 4–8.

At this key stage of development, picture books about or containing music can help young children develop language skills, vocabulary, literacy, critical thinking, and imagination while fostering a love and appreciation of music. It is my hope that librarians, parents, and educators will use this list in choosing the best music picture books for young children.

Since there are so many, I limited this project. For the most part, I omitted the abundant picture biographies of musicians. However, I did make four exceptions: Stephen Costanza's *Mozart Finds a Melody*; Holly George-Warren's *Shake, Rattle, and Roll*; Deborah Hopkinson's *A Band of Angels*; and Carole Boston Weatherford's *Before John Was a Jazz Giant*. I felt each of these books not only gave biographical information about the musicians, but also employed tools and information (such as onomatopoeia in *Mozart Finds a Melody* and *Before John Was a Jazz Giant*, or under-represented historical content in *Shake, Rattle, and Roll* and *A Band of Angels*) that would be beneficial to young readers beyond those in a good biography.

The books on this list are meant to educate and facilitate literacy, musicality, and general creativity, and I felt that these four biographies did so far better than any of the other music biographies I examined.

The rest of the books range from nonfiction books about instruments and ensembles (but sometimes still fanciful, featuring animal performers) to fictional stories about performers or music lovers. My criteria for fiction was that the book must show an inherent musicality through rhythm and language that could enhance literacy, such as through the use of onomatopoeia and stories about finding music in everyday life.

The first book I selected, before I had even narrowed the target audience for this list or the types of books I wanted, was Karla Kuskin's *The Philharmonic Gets Dressed*. One of my favorite books as a child, it may very well be what first intrigued me about the life of a musician—a life I now lead complete with the special black and white clothes the characters in the book don for performances.

Elizabeth Joan Kelly *is a graduate of Loyola University New Orleans (B.M. Music Composition), the Cleveland Institute of Music (M.M. Music Composition), and Florida State University (M.S. Library and Information Studies). She is currently Instruction and Special Collections Librarian at Loyola University New Orleans and has worked teaching piano, music theory, and Kindermusik.*

To create this bibliography, I analyzed what was so special about this book and then tried to find nineteen others like it. After re-reading the book as an adult, I think now that it is Kuskin's inherently lyrical approach to writing—there is a gentle rise and cadence to the prose that is almost imperceptible—along with clean, quirky illustrations and use of an entirely approachable subject (getting dressed) for what could be a completely alien subject for children (a symphony orchestra), that makes this book unique. Therefore I wanted the books on my bibliography to be written with a musical rhythm that could engage children and teach something about music that the reader may not have known before.

Much has been written—both in scholarly journals as well as elsewhere in print and on the Internet—about the benefits of using song picture books in emergent literacy. Songs can be used to teach sight vocabulary and punctuation.[1] Song picture books, such as Raffi's Songs to Read series, encourage children to sing their favorite songs "while being exposed to print in a natural and motivating framework."[2] Through repetition and predictability, young readers become involved in "authentic, holistic literary experiences."[3] Using picture books enables the reader to engage in vocal play and practice difficult rhythms; these books can also be used specifically to encourage movement, experimentation with instruments, vocalization, and literacy.[4]

Most of the scholarly articles I read included lists of recommended books, and I was happy to see Kuskin's *The Philharmonic Gets Dressed* on many of these lists. In addition to the aforementioned articles, I looked at winners of the Newbery Medal, the Caldecott Medal, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards, and the ALSC Children's Notable Media Lists (Book and Media Awards),[5] as well as the American Musicological Society's general list of music books for children.[6] The website also includes separate lists of books about composers and performers.

While I did not choose books based solely on their inclusion on one of these lists, or based on awards they had won, I did consult these sources to locate books to read and evaluate based on their ability to provide the educational benefits previously discussed.

Emily Sotherden published an extensive and comprehensive bibliography of music-based picture books in 2002, which included categories ranging from styles of music to musical humor; I found her sections on instruments and ensembles to be particularly useful, but unfortunately many of the books she selected are now out of print.[7]

While some of the books on this bibliography are clearly fiction (*The Jazz Fly*) and others clearly nonfiction (*Ah, Music!*), I chose not to divide my list into fiction and nonfiction sections. Some of the books fall into an in-between area (like Raffi's *Songs to Read*), and all of the books offer the same educational opportunities, regardless of whether they are fictional or not.

Instead, I simply have a ten-book core list—those books I feel are absolutely essential to a collection of music picture books—and a recent titles list of ten more books, which are excellent representations of the genre and have the potential to become classics. I have personally read each of the books on this list and found them to meet the standards I set for a selective bibliography of music picture books. The common thread running through all twenty titles is the potential to encourage children's literacy through music.

Core Titles

Note: Information is for hardcover books unless otherwise noted.

Aliki. *Ah, Music!* 2002. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins, 2005. 47p.

For young readers, this is the quintessential introduction to music. The book begins with a description as simple as, "What is music? If you hum a tune, play an instrument, or clap out a rhythm, you are making music." The book provides easy explanations of rhythm, melody, pitch and tone, volume, and feeling. It also explains conductors, instruments, voice, dance, and provides a brief history of music. All of this is done with color illustrations of children playing and listening to music. *Ah, Music!* is an excellent initiation into the foundations of music which will be both visually appealing and intellectually stimulating to children.

Emberley, Barbara. *Drummer Hoff.* Illus. by Ed Emberley. Prentice-Hall, 1967. 32p.

Winner of the 1968 Caldecott Medal.

Drummer Hoff tells the story of seven military personnel building and firing a cannon. The book ends in an explosion of color, and the last page shows the cannon in disuse, overgrown with flowers. The brilliantly-colored illustrations resemble woodcuttings. The story carries a message of peace. The repetitive nature of the book ("And drummer Hoff fired it off" ends each stanza) imbues the nontraditional narrative with an inherent rhythm that makes it easy for children to chant along with and subsequently to memorize.

Fleming, Candace. *Gabriella's Song.* Illus. by Giselle Potter. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1997. 32p.

ALSC Notable Children's Book 1998

This book uses onomatopoeia to represent the sounds Gabriella hears as she walks through the streets of Venice—the "slap slap" of laundry, the "flap-flap" of pigeons, the "ting-aling-ling" of church bells, and the "jing-aling-ling" of the lire. Gabriella uses these sounds to create a melody, which she hums while buying a cannoli. Everyone who hears the tune begins to hum it as well, and soon it has passed through the entire city. The famous composer Giuseppe Del Pietro hears it, ending his writer's block so he can finish his new symphony. At the premiere of the symphony, the Venetians eventually trace the origin of the tune back to Gabriella, and she receives a standing ovation. This is both a simple and inspiring story, with beautiful earth-tone pictures, which illustrates that music can be found in everyday life, not just in a concert hall.

Hayes, Ann. *Meet the Orchestra.* Illus. by Karmen Thompson. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, paper, 1991. 32p.

This book introduces children to the instruments in the orchestra, and, which many children enjoy, the musicians are animals! The book takes the reader through an evening at the symphony, beginning with buying tickets and ending with the audience and musicians going home. The concept of instrument families is explained, and the sound of the instruments is put into words easy for a child to understand (the viola reminds you of "evening shadows, cloudy skies, and the color blue"). The conductor is a lion, and the musicians are dressed in formal tails and dresses. This is a decent introduction to an orchestra, and the silly illustrations will be alluring to children.

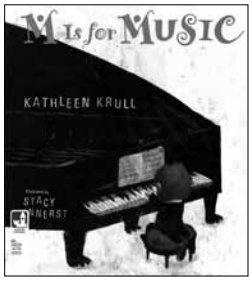
Komaiko, Leah. *I Like the Music.* Illus. by Barbara Westman. Harper & Row, 1987. 32p.

A little girl does not like to go to the symphonym although her grandma thinks it's "a treat." Instead, she likes the music of the streets, where the garbage man "shabops-it on the tops-it of the garbage cans." Her grandma takes her to an outdoor concert, where the little girl is selected by the conductor to replace him, and she begins to understand what the big fuss is about. This book also uses onomatopoeia to represent the sounds the little girl hears, as well as rhythmic rhymes that encourage easy memorization. The illustrations mirror the vibrant city the little girl hears so musically.

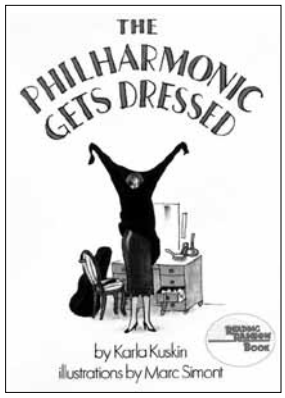
Koscielniak, Bruce. *The Story of the Incredible Orchestra: An Introduction to Musical Instruments and the Symphony Orchestra.* Illus. by the author. Houghton Mifflin, 2000. 40p.

This picture book, featuring elaborate and detailed illustrations by the author, tells the history of the orchestra, beginning with instrumental ensembles pre-1600 and detailing the construction of the instruments ("Viols, lutes, harps, and zithers used gut strings"). The illustrations show the musicians in period dress playing their instruments in venues varying from courtyards to concert halls. The book also provides descriptions of the periods in music history and uses specific pieces by composers as examples of the growing ensemble over time. While some of the information presented might be too detailed for younger readers, they will still enjoy the illustrations and be able to learn the names of the instruments.

Krull, Kathleen. *M Is for Music.* Illus. by Stacy Innerst. Harcourt, 2003. 56p.



This is an alphabet book featuring music-related terms. "Aa is for anthem and accordion," and also allegro, alto, aria, a capella, and Armstrong (Louis). This book seamlessly combines the worlds of jazz, classical, and pop music (Elvis, The Beatles, Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Frank Zappa all make appearances) to provide an education of the alphabet and of musical terms, song lyrics, musicians, and unusual instruments. Most of these terms will be new to children; a glossary defines many of the words floating in the watercolor illustrations. This is a rare book that celebrates the diversity of music.



Kuskin, Karla. *The Philharmonic Gets Dressed.* Illus. by Marc Simont. Harper & Row, 1982. 44p.

The Philharmonic Gets Dressed tells the story of the New York Philharmonic as ninety-two men and thirteen women bathe, dress in black and white, and head downtown to work. The tension builds throughout the story as the reader is taken through every single step the orchestra members take before they are completely ready. At exactly 8:30 p.m. they are joined by a man with wavy black and white hair, and begin to work—by playing music. The suspense created throughout the story lends an air of mystery and excitement to what could be a very boring process for children, and the lyrical prose imitates a musical phrase in a gentle and subtle way. The cartoonlike illustrations show the musicians throughout the evening. This book introduces children to the orchestra in a very unusual and creative way.

Moss, Lloyd. *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin.* Illus. by Marjorie Priceman. Simon & Schuster, paper, 1995. 32p.

ALSC Notable Children's Book 1996

Caldecott Honor Book 1996

This rhyming picture book introduces the reader to the names of instrumental chamber ensembles—such as solo, duo, trio, quartet, etc.—one by one while also introducing the look and sound of the instruments through clever alliteration ("the flute sends our soul a-shiver"). The illustrations are big and bright and tell the story not only of the instruments, but of the musicians who play (and also in some cases resemble) them. Reminiscent of Toulouse-Lautrec, the pictures show the musicians in their formal attire but they still appear approachable as they swoop across the pages. Again, this book uses rhythm to create easily memorized verse for children and is useful both as a counting book ("TWO, now THREE-O, what a TRIO!") as well as an introduction to the orchestral instruments.

Raffi's *Songs to Read* series. Currently in-print books include:

- ***Down by the Bay.* Illus. by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Crown, paper, 1988. 32p.**
- ***Shake My Sillies Out.* Illus. by David Allender. Crown, paper, 1990. 32p.**
- ***Wheels on the Bus.* Illus. by Sylvie Kantorovitz Wickstrom. Crown, paper, 1990. 32p.**
- ***Baby Beluga.* Illus. by Ashley Wolff. Crown, paper, 1992. 32p.**
- ***Five Little Ducks.* Illus. by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. Crown, paper, 1992. 32p.**
- ***Spider on the Floor.* Illus. by True Kelley. Crown, paper, 1996. 32p.**

- ***If You're Happy and You Know It.*** **Illus. by Cyd Moore. Knopf, 2007. 32p.**

Raffi's music and books are wonderful tools for young readers and singers. Using repetition, rhyming, and rhythm, these songs are easy to learn. The illustrations help the young reader associate words with what they see in the pictures. Melody line and chords are included so the songs can be played. Many of the songs (particularly *Down by the Bay* and *Shake My Sillies Out*) encourage creativity through making up new verses. The illustrators vary from book to book, but the pictures are consistently bright and quirky. The same qualities that make Raffi's songs easy to sing also make them easy to read, and introduce readers to the principles behind beginning reading: "story, sequence of events, rhyme, and rhythm" (from the back cover of *Spider on the Floor*).

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Recent Titles

Costanza, Stephen. *Mozart Finds a Melody.* Illus. by the author. Henry Holt, 2004. 40p.

When the young Wolfgang Amadeus has writer's block, he tries everything to find inspiration. He sings standing on his head and plays the violin in his bathtub. It is not until his hungry pet starling, Miss Bimms, begins to sing that Mozart has an idea for his piano concerto.

Unfortunately, Miss Bimms escapes through the window, and Mozart sets off to search Vienna for his pet. The sounds of the city—carts, geese, vendors, and other noises—inspire Mozart to write his piece. During the premiere concert, Miss Bimms recognizes her song and flies to the concert hall to be reunited with Mozart. In addition to introducing young readers to Mozart, this book is also another good example of finding music in everyday life. The story is enhanced by Costanza's sepia-tone illustrations, and the cartoonish boy Mozart (who one reviewer compared to a "Cabbage Patch doll") is easily relatable to children.[8]

Garriel, Barbara S. *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello.* Illus. by John O'Brien. Boyds Mills Press, 2004. 32p.

I Know a Shy Fellow . . . is a variation on the traditional ditty "There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly," but this time the protagonist has accomplished the even more unlikely feat of swallowing an instrumental ensemble. He starts with the cello but moves on to the saxophone, the fiddle, the kazoo, a harp, and a bell. Garriel uses the ditty to describe the sounds of the instruments; when the main character swallows a cello, the narrator muses, "Perhaps he'll bellow." When his stomach has finally had enough, he begins to belch (music notes, of course) until the offending instruments come out. Out of his mouth "buzzed the kazoo" and so forth until at last "out cha-chaed the cello!" The shy fellow's shape changes with each bell and harp he imbibes, but by the end of the story he has returned to his svelte self. This is a fine book for memorization, and the amusing illustrations will engage young readers.

George-Warren, Holly. *Shake, Rattle, and Roll: The Founders of Rock & Roll.* 2001. llus. by Laura Levine. Sandpiper, paper, 2004. 32p.

While many picture books introduce young readers to classical musicians and their instruments, this is one of the few about rock and rollers. This collective biography gives brief overviews of fourteen rockers, from Bill Haley (and the Comets) to James Brown. The illustrations are folk-artsy and set in "found object" frames. The individual bios avoid some of the racier episodes (Elvis's pelvis, Jerry Lee Lewis's controversial marriage, Chuck Berry's later-life scandal) and focus on their childhoods and hit songs. A great introduction to the pioneers of rock.

Gollub, Matthew. *The Jazz Fly.* Illus. by Karen Hanke. Tortuga Press, 2000. 30p.

This is yet another story that shows the music of everyday life, but this time the "music" comes from animal sounds. A fly is running late to a gig and asks for directions from a frog, a pig, a donkey, and a dog. They all speak different languages, so the fly is left to himself to find the club. Once there, the Queen Bee demands a new type of beat, "or this band is OUT!" The fly remembers the "Rrrribit" and "Oink" of those he met earlier that night, and turns their directions into a scat that makes his band famous. The nonsense animal words in this story will be fun for children to recite out loud, and the suit-wearing fly is an excellent guide to the

musicality of the animal world. The book is accompanied by a CD with jazz music and narration by the author.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *A Band of Angels.* 1999. Illus. by Raúl Colón. Aladdin, paper, 2002. 40p.

This book is a fictionalized biography of Ella Sheppard Moore, a freed slave girl who accompanied and sang with Fisk School's Jubilee Singers. In 1871, music teacher George White took the singers on a tour to raise money to keep Fisk open. The choir significantly increased their popularity when they began singing "jubilee" (spiritual) songs. The Jubilee Singers eventually sang for Queen Victoria and President Ulysses S. Grant, and raised enough funds to build Fisk University and Jubilee Hall. Told from the point of view of Ella's great-great-granddaughter, this book not only shows the power of music, but also gives readers a historical lesson in post-Civil War black history. Told from the voice of a child, it is relatable to young readers. The illustrations beautifully show the choir in action.

Johnson, Angela. *Violet's Music.* Illus. by Laura Huliska-Beith. Dial, 2004. 32p.

Violet was literally born a musician—she began banging her rattle within hours of her birth. Growing up, she thought about and played music all the time, from her self-made horn to her guitar a few years later. Violet saw that other children had passions too—like arts and crafts or playing in the sandbox—but no one cared about music quite like she did. Her family encouraged her to keep playing.

One day while playing her guitar in the park, she met a drummer, a saxophone player, and a singer. These children also never gave up playing their instruments or looking for others like them. Johnson includes onomatopoeia and rhythmic verse to move the story along in a musical manner, and the bright illustrations add to the energy of the book. This book also spreads the message that moving to your own beat is OK.

Lach, Dr. William. *Can You Hear It?* Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006. 39p.

Produced with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, this book pairs great works of art with great works of classical music. The included CD has twelve short pieces on it and asks readers to listen for specific sounds, like the "gun battle" in Aaron Copland's "*Billy the Kid*" with a painting by Frederic Remington, or the buzzing bees in Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "*Flight of the Bumble Bee*" paired with Utagawa Hiroshige's painting *Chrysanthemums*. This book helps young readers make connections between the sounds they hear and the things they see, and is as much an introduction to art history as it is to classical music. Factual information about instruments, artists, and composers is also included.

McPhail, David. *Mole Music.* Illus. by the author. Holt, 1999. 32p.

After hearing someone play a violin on TV, Mole wants to learn how to play too. At first, Mole's screechy playing almost kills the tree that grows above his hole. But soon Mole is playing even better than the musician from the TV, and the tree above him thrives. Mole imagines that his playing will make people happy and maybe even spread peace throughout the world. Little does he know that he has already accomplished his goal; the tree above his hole is so calm and happy that people and animals flock to be near it.

Most of McPhail's beautiful watercolor illustrations split the page between Mole's home underground and the world above. This book encourages young musicians to keep practicing and carries the message that music can powerfully affect the world.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane.* Illus. by Sean Qualls. Holt, 2008. 32p.

ALSC Notable Children's Book 2009

Coretta Scott King Honor Book 2009

The large text sprawling across the pages in this fictionalized biography of a young John Coltrane will remind the reader of jazz itself. "Before John was a jazz giant" is a repeated refrain throughout the book, like a jazz melody. John pays attention to the sounds around him: hymns, trains, dancers, and the sounds of his busy Southern house. The book ends with "Before John was a jazz giant . . . he was all ears," a lesson to readers that John was a listener before he was a performer. This book is yet another example of the music we can find in our everyday lives, as well as an introduction to a true jazz legend. The use of Coltrane as a curious child will relate to young readers, as will the simple collage-style illustrations.

Wheeler, Lisa. *Jazz Baby.* Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. Harcourt, 2007. 40p.

ALSC Notable Children's Book 2008

Jazz Baby is a rhythmic, song-like book that should be read aloud to be fully appreciated. "Grandpa TOOT-TOOTS, Grandma sings scat. Bitty-boppin baby goes RAT-TAT-TAT." The entire family joins in the song until the baby is tired and has to take a nap. This is another book that will be easy for children to chant along with thanks to the repetitive rhyming structure. The text appears in bold letters all around the characters and will be easy for beginning readers to identify. The illustrations show brightly colored and happy people moving and making music, and young readers will want to do the same. &

Making a Difference

The Importance of Purposes to Early Learning Programs

PAMELA J. MCKENZIE AND ROSAMUND K. STOOKE

One of the most compelling questions for any group of professionals is "does our work make a difference and, if so, what kind of differences does it make?"

This question is particularly relevant to children's services staff because so much of their work may look like *play* to outsiders.[1] Few would dispute, for example, that leading a rhyme-and-song-based circle time for babies and toddlers is a joyful experience for librarians and participants alike. Moreover, while it has often been said that play is a child's work, rarely has it been said (until recently) that attending an early learning program is parents' work. *Work* and *play* are slippery words.

The research we discuss in this article examines early learning programs for very young children and caregivers. We describe what the children, the caregivers who bring them to the programs, and the librarians who lead the programs all do to make programs happen. We also think about how storytime affects and supports what happens in other settings.

Librarians are attuned to thinking this way. They pay attention to changes in school curricula and to major educational policy changes when planning and evaluating their programs for school-age children. For example, they would not find it difficult to see connections between a public library "book buddies" program that matches teen volunteers with struggling readers and the service-learning work required of teens by local high schools.

They might find it harder to make similar links for early learning programs for babies and toddlers because very young children are not involved in school and because these programs are experienced by both leaders and participants as leisurely and enjoyable.

However, our research shows exactly that—what happens in storytime for the youngest children is connected to those children's future worlds of school and work and to educational policies that have no official authority over library programming.

Method

In this article, we present findings from a study that examined links between what happens in early learning programs and work in other settings, including family work, community support work, literacy development work, schoolwork, and library advocacy work.

Our primary method of data collection was observation. We visited library and other community storytime programs

Pam McKenzie *(far left) has worked as a children's librarian and a family literacy program leader. She is now Associate Professor and Assistant Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario, Canada.* ***Roz Stooke*** *(left) is a former elementary teacher, children's librarian, and community literacy practitioner who now works as Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario, where she teaches courses in literacy, children's literature, and curriculum studies. Her current research examines how literacy initiatives in informal settings can support community vitality and social inclusion.*

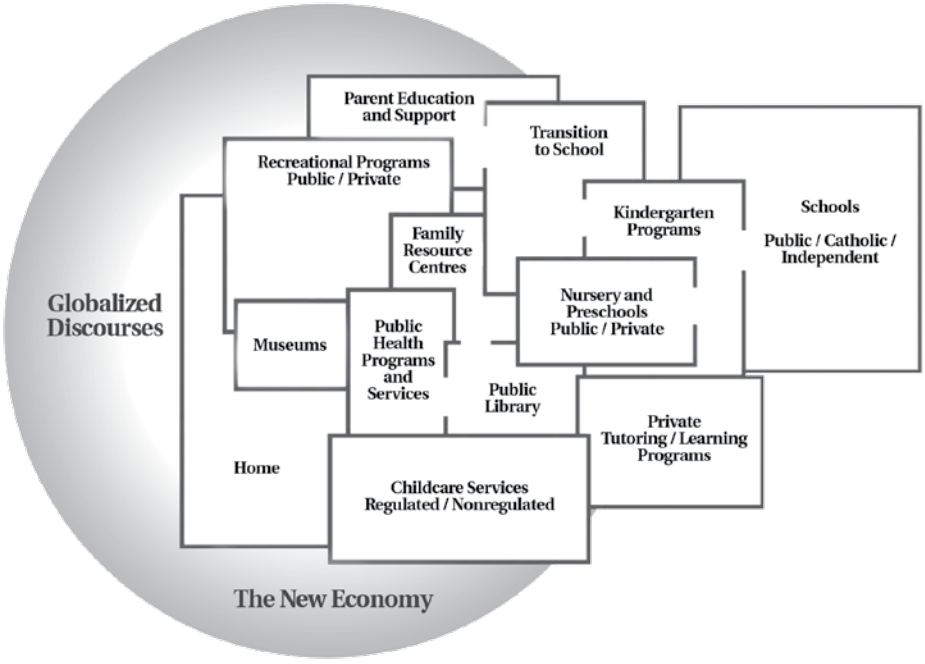

Figure 1. The diverse array of Canadian programs for very young children.

targeted to children ages zero to three, with their parent or caregiver, and made field notes describing in detail what people were doing before, during, and after the programs.

We also talked with participants about how the programs fit into their everyday lives. Not only did we want to learn how program work connected to other kinds of work, but also to learn about the purposes that programs seemed to serve for participants, leaders, and libraries.

As former practitioners and parent participants in similar programs, we noticed that although programs had a familiar rhythm, and although much of the content was still what we might loosely call *traditional*, the programs have changed since our days as program participants and leaders in the 1990s, and indeed, so has family life.

The landscapes of early childhood no longer look as they did even a decade ago, especially in urban areas where a plethora of neighborhood-based initiatives have sprung up with the express purpose of supporting family life in the years before school. Figure 1 illustrates the diverse array of programs and services in place to support the development of Canadian children from birth to school age.

The Importance of Purposes

Our data suggest that early learning programs are fulfilling a variety of purposes for children, caregivers, leaders, and the organizations sponsoring the programs. By paying attention to these goals or purposes, we were able to identify situations in which the goals of different individuals were in sync with one another and produced positive consequences and situations in which they conflicted to produce unanticipated negative consequences. For example, we witnessed several situations in which conflicting purposes resulted in the unintentional exclusion of participants from programs designed to be inclusive.

Purposes

For the parents and caregivers we talked to, early learning programs fulfilled the purpose of getting out of the house and getting a break from day-to-day routines. Programs also were a place, especially for first-time parents, to become part of a group whose members give and receive social support and share information. Participating in early learning programs such as storytimes also may reassure caregivers that they are supporting their children's healthy development and laying the groundwork for future literacy.

The most important purpose for many program sponsors relates to their commitment to fostering children's well-being. Some sponsors, particularly parent–child resource centers, emphasize parent support and education. Others, such as Parent–Child Mother Goose (PCMG) programs focus on promoting healthy attachments between parent and child. (See www.nald.ca/mothergooseprogram/history.htm for an overview of PCMG). Public library programs see themselves primarily as supporting parents in raising readers.

Regardless of the particular perspective of the program sponsor, hosting organizations will have specific goals and purposes that support their own mandates and well-being, such as cultivating current and future users and advocates, and showing funders that programs and services make a unique and meaningful difference in support of a valued outcome.

In this context of an expanding range of early learning programs competing for parents' attention as well as for public and private funding, we argue that it is crucial to pay attention to the goals and purposes of the various participants in library early learning programs.

- First of all, goals are often tacit. People often do not articulate reasons for doing something, sometimes not even to themselves.
- Second, the goals of one person or a group may be clear to them, but not to another person or group. For example, a new mother who signs up for storytime may not know how important her registration is to the survival of that program.
- Third, the varying purposes may be so different that they create tension or conflict or lead to social exclusion.
- Finally, having a clearer idea of the multiple purposes can help practitioners show what differences programs actually

make and can reveal how the purposes of the library may tie in to the purposes of other individuals and organizations.

Our Study

We observed fifty sessions in eight program sites in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. Three of the programs were sponsored by public libraries and four by other not-for-profit community organizations, while the eighth was jointly sponsored. All programs were geared to children between birth and thirty-six months with a parent or caregiver attending, were free, and were led by at least one paid employee.

Programs took place in a variety of locations: two public library branches in a mid-size city, one large metropolitan public library, one rented space in a childcare center in an inner-city neighborhood, three neighborhood community centers, and one parent–child resource center.

Although most of the programs took place in a space associated with their sponsorship, one community program took place in a library, and one library outreach program operated in a community space. The three library-sponsored programs comprised six weekly half-hour sessions. One community-sponsored program and the jointly sponsored program took place over ten weekly, two-hour time blocks. The other three community-sponsored programs were ongoing weekly drop-ins. In all eight sites, each program session included a formal activity period and one or more periods set aside for informal socializing, but the length of the program and the proportion of time assigned to formal and informal activities varied.

Numbers of participants varied, but programs were set up to accommodate about fifteen adults with one or two children each. In accordance with Canadian ethical guidelines,[2] we sought and gained consent from adult participants. For child participants, we sought and gained consent from a parent or guardian. Most adults attending programs identified themselves as the child(ren)'s parent, and most parents were mothers.[3] One or two people per site identified themselves as fathers, and an equal number were nonparental caregivers (paid babysitter or grandparent).

At each location, a research team including one or both authors and one or more of our nine research assistants observed six to ten consecutive program sessions. We observed as unobtrusively as possible and took handwritten field notes. As participant observers, however, we also participated in group activities that included listening to stories, looking at picture books, and chanting, singing, and "doing the actions" for nursery rhymes. We also chatted with children, caregivers, program leaders, and planners during informal socializing times and made notes about our conversations. We approached our study as full-time academics but also as former participants in baby and toddler storytimes both as parents and as librarians. We have anonymized both participants and locations.

Our data collection and analysis reflect the methodological perspectives of Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith. Smith's approach to data collection focuses concretely on what members of a setting do and uses these accounts to identify the kinds of work done in the present setting and how this work is linked to work done in other settings. An advantage of the approach is that it brings visibility to the otherwise invisible actions that make up work.[4]

Our intent here is not to present a full report of our findings, but rather to draw attention to the varying purposes of program leaders, participants, and hosting organizations, and to show how these purposes are hooked into the goals and purposes of organizations outside of libraries.

When Purposes Align

In many cases, we observed that varying purposes aligned and worked to further one another:

> [Four-year-old sibling] is sitting on a chair reading *Max's Toys* by Rosemary Wells, looking at the page and saying "Maaax" as though she's trying to determine where the word is on the page. . . . Four-year-old: "It's a bird!" Caregiver: "Hold the pictures so everyone can see." Caregiver mimics holding the book up like the librarian does.

Children's librarians will clearly recognize that the caregiver and child are doing work that supports the child's early literacy. We see other kinds of work happening here in a mutually supportive relationship. For example, we might argue that this caregiver and child were working toward what we have called "learning the library"[5] because they discussed not just how to read a book, but how a librarian shares a book with a group. This interchange also provided the opportunity for a pleasant social interaction, so it could be seen as contributing to the work of caregiver–child bonding.

In the next example, the work of caregiver–child bonding is quite evident. Literacy work also is happening here as children experience rhythmic language and learn to anticipate an exciting ending:

> The leader says, "Here's where you really have to work. Jack-in-the-box sits so still. Won't you come out? Yes—I will." The babies get lifted in the air. I notice that for this rhyme, most of the babies are faced away from their moms and toward the program leader, but the moms nuzzle the babies' necks, plant kisses on cheeks, and find other ways to let babies know they are right there.

We also see other kinds of work here that may not be so evident to program leaders and caregivers. One is the work of learning to be an audience. Whether the baby faces the caregiver or the program leader may seem to be a very insignificant detail, but we observed that the physical positioning of babies was related to larger program goals.

In programs inspired by the PCMG model, which emphasizes caregiver–child bonding, babies generally faced their caregivers.

Library programs, on the other hand, made use of a wide array of materials, such as felt boards, puppets, and, of course, books. In the library, the leader's stool was where the action was, and caregivers held babies to face the leader.[6]

The different kinds of "audience" behavior expected in the two kinds of programs reflected underlying goals and purposes that were not always communicated explicitly to caregivers. We particularly noted challenges in a PCMG-inspired program hosted by a public library. Whereas PCMG makes a strong commitment to the oral tradition and makes a point of not using any books in programs, library programs aim to connect participants with their collections, so regularly include books in programs. In one program setting, we learned that PCMG and library staff had reached a compromise by making board books available to participants, but only after the program.

In addition to the kinds of literacy and social purposes identified above, work in the next example supports other purposes, including providing a safe physical environment for children:

> Several children are running across the center of the circle, crashing into one another and collapsing in giggles. The leader . . . announces . . . , "I think we should do *Sleeping Bunnies*, don't you?" The children immediately curl up on the floor, imitating bunnies. . . . *Sleeping Bunnies* seems to cue the children that it's time to listen again. At the end of the rhyme they settle back with their own caregivers.

By invoking a familiar rhyme to settle the children, the program leader did work in support of providing a safe physical environment. Even though school may be the furthest thing from these participants' minds, we argue that the song is doing work that will help prepare these children to participate in the kinds of social situations they will encounter when they get to school. In this way, the work of storytime hooks into the work done in support of schools.

Friendly chatting between parents may, in fact, contribute to a program's goal of providing social support for caregivers:

> [Leader] comes over and sits across from [mother] on the square rug. This mother has really chosen to sit far away from a fairly close knot of people and at this program that's an indication for a leader to go and check in.

We observed that leaders in all kinds of programs attended to social inclusion for participants. Leaders of library programs made nametags for participants so adults would be able to address the children and other caregivers by name. Leaders at the community drop-in programs we visited made a point of noting the names of caregivers and children as they signed in and greeted both newcomers and returning families by name. They also kept an eye out during informal playtimes for situations like this, when one parent or caregiver looked to be physically isolated from the others, to ensure that they also were not being excluded from spontaneously forming social groups.

When Purposes Conflict

We also observed cases where differing goals and purposes could cause conflict or distress. For example, although informal conversations about babies and their development could provide an accessible way for caregivers to initiate a mutually supportive social interaction, such conversations also could spark parental anxiety about whether their child was keeping up with expected development norms:

> Newly walking baby and his dad approach. Leader: "How old is he?" Dad: "Ten months." Another mom, about her baby: "She's eleven months." There's definitely a sense of comparison here: the other baby's not walking yet.

We would like to highlight two kinds of conflict that we feel are particularly relevant to practitioners. First is the conflict between institutional goals and purposes and the goals and purposes of parents and caregivers. For example, we saw many cases where a leader's purpose of promoting caregiver–child interaction conflicted with the caregivers' own goals of friendly socializing:

> I ask [Program Leader] about the bicycle song that she taught that day. . . . I ask if her purpose was to bring the group's attention back to her? She says, "Well, I wanted to refocus and regroup. People were disengaging with their children and engaging with each other. I wanted to bring them together."

It is important to emphasize that all of the program leaders we observed and talked to were skilled, sensitive, and committed to the unique contribution they felt their program made to children's well-being. One librarian both told us and showed us her deep commitment to providing a program that supported children's early literacy.

However, when we asked a mother who attended this program about the things she and her baby did together, the program appeared to be just one of many equivalent options for engaging with her baby and socializing with other mothers. The leader's literacy goals were nowhere in sight:

> Mother: Okay, Monday swimming, Tuesday swimming, Wednesday library, Thursday Kindermusik and sometimes swimming in the afternoon, and Friday I go to a playgroup at [commercial play space] with other mothers. . . . Um, and sometimes swimming again in the afternoon.

This mother's perspective illustrates the challenges the library now faces in positioning its programs and services and showing how they make a difference in the new landscape of early childhood programs.

The second kind of conflict we noted is the kind that leads to the inadvertent exclusion of the very participants libraries are most committed to serving. One of our most distressing observations was in a program that had a goal of providing parents and caregivers with a repertoire of rhymes, bounces, and fingerplays that they could use as tools to soothe, distract, entertain, or otherwise engage with their babies.

Because this program valued the opportunity for parents to have these tools available to them at any time, the leader expected parents to memorize the rhymes. She therefore focused on oral learning and did not provide printed versions of the rhymes. This strategy generally worked well for English-speaking parents, many of whom remembered the rhymes from their own childhood. For one English language learner, however, this program goal was completely at cross-purposes with her own needs:

> Danielle's mother approaches the leader and asks if she could have the words to the rhymes. English is not her first language. She cannot understand the rhymes and songs. She needs to see them. The leader explains to the mother that this is an oral program. No books, no print—although this leader adds that she is not so hardcore. She gives the words out after the last session.

While we don't believe the program leader intended in any way to exclude, her strict adherence to the letter of the program goals had that effect. Danielle and her mother stopped coming to this program. One of our research assistants heard later that Danielle and her mother had joined a library program that provided printed materials and where "you get to make things and have fun." We observed other cases of well-meaning program practices resulting in environments that might feel inhospitable to parents and caregivers outside the female, heterosexual, partnered, able-bodied, English-speaking middle-class mainstream of caregivers participating in storytime.

Making a Difference

Our research has given us some compelling evidence of the importance of looking carefully and critically at the goals and purposes of the people and organizations whose work makes early learning programs happen. In an environment in which library programs for babies and toddlers are just one of many options available to parents, ignoring hidden or conflicting purposes can have unintended consequences with negative implications for both individuals and institutions.

We would argue, however, that early learning programs *are* making many kinds of difference. In particular, we believe that there is much that library and community early learning programs can learn from one another. Community programs for young children can learn from libraries' use of physical artifacts, like books and puppets, in addition to rhymes and physical interactions between caregiver and child. In the library programs we observed, children were invited to experience the pleasures of playful language, the physical beauty of books, and the magic of social symbolic play. The use of artifacts promotes multiliteracy,[7] which scaffolds language acquisition in ways that support the learning of young children and of caregivers learning English.

Libraries can learn from community programs' institutional commitment to the work of social support. The community programs we observed invested both physical and staff resources into doing social support work. They prioritized the casual social use of program rooms and encouraged staff to take the time to sit down and talk with caregivers in supportive ways.

Although there were as many important differences between individual programs as there were between library and community programs as a group, we identified several factors that stood out to us as holding true across a variety of settings:

- First, good programs, regardless of location, develop in context. Program leaders make improvisational judgements all the time; the more program leaders and planners know about the bigger picture, the better judgements they are able to make.

- Second, one of the problems of standardized programs is that they require a leader to focus on getting the job done and do not leave much space for contextually sensitive decision-making. Adhering too closely to instrumental goals and standardized programs may in fact limit leaders' flexibility to be user-centered, as the case of Danielle's mother illustrated.

- Finally, although programs may be open to all, ignoring differences between participants may lead some to feel excluded.

In an era when libraries and other community agencies must compete with one another for program participants and for funds, they need to demonstrate to stakeholders and funders the kinds of differences they are making. We argue (and we have evidence to show) that early learning programs in libraries are making many kinds of difference. However, evaluation models that seek to demonstrate specific developmental outcomes for individual children are not able to capture the kinds of differences we have observed. These methods are often experimental or quasi-experimental and involve a pretest, intervention, and posttest.

To demonstrate differences with confidence, they also require tightly controlled situations where only the variable of interest is manipulated and all other things are equal. In community programs we know that all other things never are equal—the children who come to storytime are more likely to be those whose parents value books and reading. Those parents are consequently more likely to read themselves, to live in print-rich environments, and to expose their children to multiple learning opportunities,[8] as is evident from the mother's description above of what she and her baby do together.

Given this complexity, it is impossible to isolate the incremental contributions of a single community-based early learning program to an individual child's development.

Experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation methods also ask narrow questions that evaluate literacy in terms of a series of stages or steps.[9] They therefore miss broader questions important to libraries, and other community agencies that are interested in making differences to children's well-being, that are not captured by an assessment of a child's ability to recognize a particular letter or word.

Other community agencies, particularly those advocating for community transformations, are facing a similar situation, and there is much libraries can learn from them. In a comprehensive review, Roz Stooke has identified a number of strategies that have allowed community agencies to work from their strengths rather than from their weaknesses in evaluating their performance.[10]

Appreciative inquiry is one possible alternative for library staff to evaluate their early learning programs according to what *they* hope to achieve. Appreciative inquiry is an asset-based approach that allows evaluating agencies to focus on strengths, needs assessments, and planning processes. It allows groups or organizations to appreciate the factors that give life to them when they are at their most effective, committed, and empowered. Appreciative inquiry seeks out the best of *what is* (discovery) to help organizations imagine what *might be* (dream). The goal of this process is to generate a collective vision of a desired future and to translate that vision into achievable steps for implementation.[11]

As the concepts of *work* and *play* are slippery, so is the concept of *evaluation*. We believe libraries and library staff are better served by looking at evaluation through a broad lens, one that allows them to consider early learning programs from perspectives they value. A broad perspective on evaluation can capture the kinds of differences these programs can make, but it also can allow library staff to identify the purposes of the various participants in programs and uncover how those purposes are hooked into the purposes of other institutions. With this broad context in mind, libraries will be in a better position to understand—and to advocate for—a place in the diverse array of programs for young children.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the libraries, staff, caregivers, and young children for granting us access to their worlds. We also would like to acknowledge the assistance of our research assistants. We are grateful for the support of the American Library Association (Carroll Preston Baber Research Grant to Lynne McKechnie and Pam McKenzie), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Standard Research Grant to McKechnie, McKenzie, and Stooke), and The University of Western Ontario (Research and Development Grant to Stooke and McKenzie).

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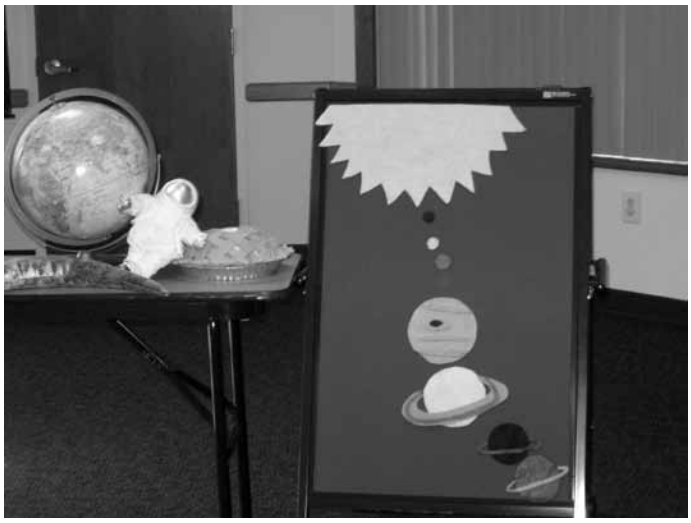
Initiating STEM Learning in Libraries

Jennifer Hopwood



Blast off with a space-themed storytime.

As librarians, we tend to think of library outreach and programming in terms of literary and cultural events. In storytime, we share songs or crafts that complement books to help with emergent literacy skills, while our book clubs help older readers retain their skills.

It makes sense, then, that we should focus on literacy when we are a place people come to for books. However, this view excludes much of our collection and misses out on an opportunity to reach new demographics.

More than half of our collections consist of nonfiction books covering everything from the arts and humanities to mathematics and science. Over the past few years, STEM (an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) has become today's buzzword, is already being incorporated into school curriculums, and is now trickling into the library world as well.

What is STEM?

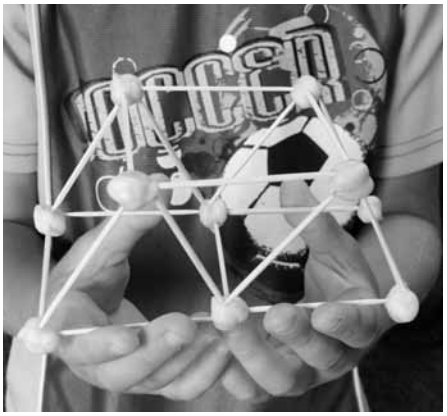
The term "STEM" was first used in political sectors in reference to jobs related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In 2006, George W. Bush proposed an initiative to target funding for STEM resources and academic programs to address the shortfalls witnessed by graduates in the STEM fields; part of this plan also addressed K–12 science and math education support and focus.[1]

For the next several years, STEM education remained a focus of agencies like the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Focusing on STEM education became a law in 2007 with the signing of the America Competes Act. However, STEM really made headlines in 2011 with the reauthorization of that law.[2] Education groups and businesses across the country embraced STEM, including the American Library Association (ALA).[3]

Benefits to the Library

While STEM has readily been accepted in school systems, including school library programs,[4] it is still relatively new in more informal education settings like the public library. However, STEM can provide great opportunities for public libraries to gain support as part of educational initiatives, as well as to increase community partnerships.

Jennifer Hopwood *is the head of youth services at the Franklin T. DeGroodt Memorial Library, Palm Bay, Florida. She is currently serving as a member on the ALSC Children and Technology Committee, which also includes chair Gretchen Caserotti, Cen Campbell, Sondra Sue Eklund, Elizabeth Enochs, Amy Graves, Debra H. Marshall, John Schumacher, Andrea Vernola, and Larence James Wawro.*



Top: Discovery Zone display on weather. *Bottom:* These toothpick and garbanzo bean structures were a great and fun way to learn about science.

By partnering with community groups or businesses with a vested interest in STEM, libraries can benefit through financial support, resources, or even volunteers at events. Many groups, like NASA, have informal education departments whose goal is to partner with institutions like libraries to provide out-of-school STEM-based programs. The Boy Scouts of America recently launched a campaign to incorporate STEM into their programs, and Girl Scouts groups also have seen a push toward science-related service projects to promote females entering the science fields. The National Girls Collaborative Project (www.ngcproject.org) is a great resource for finding partnerships, project ideas, and grants.

By focusing on educational goals like STEM, library youth programs strengthen their role in the community as partners in education. This also can show library stakeholders that youth programs have a value beyond entertainment, which can be important in deciding issues like funding and other requests for support. It also is an opportunity for parents to become more involved with their children through programs that hold universal appeal.

Some STEM-based Program Examples

Here are some examples of STEM-based programs to consider.

- **Legos.** Traditional Lego® bricks are ideal for teaching engineering skills, but they can also incorporate math skills, with tasks like sorting, addition, and subtraction. Lego® Mindstorms®, though a more costly product, allows for the inclusion of technology (www.legoeducation.us).
- **Family Science Night.** Partner with local schools, businesses, or civic groups to provide programs featuring hands-on examples or presentations. Teen volunteers can help younger children prepare for science fair competitions.
- **Storytimes**. STEM isn't just for school-aged children. These concepts can be introduced through related stories and activities that promote learning, like pairing a book about dinosaurs with making dinosaur molds with clay and teaching how fossils are made.
- **Gaming.** Video games incorporate technology into library programs, but they also teach skills like hand-eye coordination and social skills. Traditional board and card games can teach math skills, like probability.
- **Cooking.** Cooking programs combine both math and science skills, as well as providing enjoyable bonding experiences for families.
- **Sports.** From the statistical probability involved with fantasy team activities to the science behind what makes a ball fly through the air, the possibilities are endless. You could also invite a guest speaker on topics like sports medicine.
- **Technology.** Many libraries have introduced digital "petting zoos," where they allow patrons to take a closer look at devices like tablets, mp3 players, e-readers, and cameras. Technology also can be incorporated into library events, such as a robotics program presented by the local college or even kid-friendly computer classes. Hold a demonstration or contest on creating RubeGoldberg-inspired machines.

For more ideas and resources, visit the following websites:

- www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/educate-innovate
- www.nasa.gov/education
- www.stemgrants.com
- www.stemedcoalition.org
- www.pbs.org/teachers/stem
- www.community.discoverexhibits.org

Getting Started

When you first decide to incorporate STEM into your programming, you might want to start by looking at your nonfiction collection. Science fair collections are a great place to find step-by-step ideas to incorporate into events. An easy way to promote STEM, for example, without holding a traditional event would be to offer a book-of-the-month program using a nonfiction book in an open-book trivia contest.

Creative displays can be made featuring books that cover STEM-friendly topics like "mad" scientists, modern technology, or weird inventions. Think of it as just another way of promoting nonfiction books.

With so many advances in science and technology, make sure your collections

are still current. Weed outdated books with information that may no longer be valid. Think about the changes in technology that have happened in the last ten years compared to the last twenty years—such as nanotechnology, mobile devices, computers, and medi-cines. If your collection is aging because of short funds, Marcia A. Mardis, Assistant Professor at Florida State University's School of Library and Information Studies, recommends that rather than hanging on to your old science nonfiction books (i.e., the 500s), weed them, and start gathering links to science-related websites.[5]

However, you do not want to adhere only to scholarly or nonfiction printings; pairing these nonfiction titles with fictional ones also helps enforce the concepts through real-world understanding. Readers' advisory booklists also should include a selection of nonfiction titles.

A study done of minority women in the STEM fields stated a need for informal hybrid learning environments that allow youth to make needed connections between the concepts related to STEM and their own experiences.[6]

In other words, you don't need to have a science background to implement STEM concepts in your programming. In fact, without the formal jargon and training, an informal library program conducted by a nonexpert might relate the information more clearly to students. All you really need is a passion to provide for the youth that visit your library and a willingness to try new things.

If you are still unsure where to begin, consider the Common Core State Standards (www.corestandards.org) which have been designed to provide clear and relevant skills and knowledge to help students succeed. Chances are you are already providing STEM programming without even knowing it.

Next, capitalize on what you are already doing through promotion and marketing. Valerie J. Gross of the Howard County (Md.) Library System recommends using a terminology that enhances the value of what we do through "aligning ourselves with education."[7]

Consider how you can reword your current descriptions to emphasize education. For example, if you are offering a hands-on activity, consider calling it a STEM workshop.

While grants are wonderful ways to support your STEM events, they are not always available. By gathering simple supplies and materials, you can provide effective, yet inexpensive, programming.

As youth librarians, we are already pretty thrifty when it comes to our programs. We know how to turn a plastic milk carton into an elephant, but it could just as easily be turned into a terrarium to grow plants. Materials can be found in your kitchen cabinets, recycling bins, and even toy bins.

In a time when budgets are still being tightened, stakeholders and constituents are still urging that funding for educational endeavors remain in place. While arts and humanities programs should not be ignored, by incorporating STEM into what we are already doing, we are opening the door for libraries to expand services beyond arts and humanities to offer more well-rounded learning environments. This inclusion across the curriculums will best serve the needs of patrons and enforce the importance the library holds as a center for informal education.

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Lighting the Way

Grant Applications Showcase Range of Programming Ideas

Africa S. Hands and Amy Johnson

The 2012 Light the Way: Library Outreach to the Underserved grant review committee received nearly thirty applications from public and school libraries. Applicants sought grant funds for projects aimed at serving children in special populations and their caregivers. The projects' names give you an idea of the populations served—Leamos/Let's Read, Graphic Novels for ALP Students, Asperger's Youth Support Group, and American Sign Language Storytime. The winner of this year's $3,000 grant was Memphis Public Library and Information Center for its Read with Me, Sign with Me project.

Because so many great project ideas were presented in the applications, the committee wanted to share several of the ideas we received with the larger ALSC community. Many of the projects can be replicated and implemented by libraries large and small.

We conclude this article with a few tips for application submission. Applications for the next Light the Way grant are due November 15th, 2012. The committee wishes to thank Candlewick Press for its continued, generous sponsorship of the grant in honor of author Kate DiCamillo.

Outreach to the Underserved: Proposed Projects

Two applications were submitted for projects serving teen parents. The Planting Seeds for Learning project aimed to serve teen parents through a monthly storytime program for teens and their children, ranging from one to three years old. Early literacy activities would be integrated into the regular programming at the high school, and books would be given away at the end of each session to help parents build their personal collections. Project coordinators hoped to encourage use of the public library as well as learn from the teen parents what barriers may exist when it comes to using library services.

"Several studies have shown that children living at or below the poverty line . . . have little or no access to reading material," according to the grant application for the Early Literacy for Young Families project. This project, intended for teen parents, focused on fostering early literacy development through storytime and instruction on the use of literacy materials and activities—such as fingerplays and felt board stories.

The library proposed to partner with a high school child care center to provide the programming. In addition to teaching the importance and use of a variety of early literacy materials, library staff wanted to discern which activities teen parents wanted to become familiar with and which materials they wished to add to their home collections. The project also included giveaways of books and other literacy materials to build at-home collections.

Perhaps the most inventive project was the City Bus Outreach project, which places librarians and library supporters on public buses to reach out to underserved segments of the community. During bus rides, library staff point out branch locations; discuss available resources and services such as tutors, legal advice, and computer classes; provide library card registrations; and even demonstrate Playaways and Tumblebooks.

They also would distribute resource bags with books for children and teens, bookmarks, brochures, and other materials. This

Africa S. Hands *(far left) is a Library Assistant for Louisville (Ky.) Free Public Library and a freelance information professional with interests in online resources, social media, education, and children's services. She is a member of the* Children and Libraries *Editorial Advisory Committee.* ***Amy Johnson*** *(left) is Head of the Curriculum Materials Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has taught undergraduate children's literature courses at the university. Both serve on the ALSC Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers Committee, which administers the Light the Way Grant. Other committee members are chair Paula Holmes, Betsy Dalton, Sara Hathaway, Rebecca Hickman, and Deborah Sandler.*

project has been successfully piloted and is expected to expand to other bus routes in the applicant's community.

One proposal was submitted in response to a community need for programs geared toward deaf and hearing-impaired children. According to the grant proposal, a majority of deaf children (95 percent) live in homes with hearing parents, and communication between parent and child can be a challenge.

This project would provide three storytimes augmented by American Sign Language for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing families. The grant also would fund early literacy workshops for parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children, provide for an outreach program for older family members and other adults and teens to show the PBS documentary *Deaf Jam*, and offer the participants an opportunity to write and perform expressive poetry.

Additionally, sign language videos and books would be added to the collection. This program would have been an extension of an existing project the library had undertaken on a smaller scale.

The Read Out! project was a proposed monthly storytime designed for children with physical or learning differences. The project would also include Read Out! resource bags containing items for the child's growth and development, including a picture book, a full-size puppet, and an audio version of the story, as well as materials to assist parents in their interaction with their child, such as a guided lesson plan, a bibliography of age-appropriate books, and instructions on related craft activities. These bags would be available for checkout in the general library collection.

This project not only provides library programming designed with children with special needs in mind, but also creates awareness in the community among those with typical development and allows opportunities for growth and friendship between both groups.

The last project was a unique program to provide tools and support to help ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) parents feel confident and comfortable in helping their children with their homework. Many parents in this population express frustration and discouragement at not being able to understand their child's homework or help the child complete assignments.

To build the necessary skills, parents and caregivers would meet with a certified teacher to learn the vocabulary and processes needed to complete actual school assignments given out by the local elementary school. While the parents are engaged with their part of the program, the elementary students would work on reading, writing, and listening activities with certified teachers and assistants. The last thirty minutes of the program would be devoted to the parents and caregivers and the students coming together for supervised homework help.

As you can see from programs highlighted above, we received many wonderful and worthy proposals. Choosing just one winner was a difficult task, particularly during these trying economic times when we all know how difficult it is for libraries to get extra funding.

If you have a program that serves an underserved population and you are looking for additional funding, or if you have a program you have been thinking about trying, but need extra funding, we encourage you to apply for the Light the Way Grant.

Read more about the 2011 winner of the Light the Way Grant on p. 58 in this issue.

Application Submission Tips

How can you push your application to the top of the pile? The review committee offers several tips:

- **Target/serve a specific special population.** The committee received several applications that did not adequately describe a specific special population being served. Examples of special populations include, but are not limited to, children who have learning or physical differences, children who speak English as a second language, children in foster settings, the juvenile justice system, teen parents, and GLBTQ families. If your project proposes to serve multiple populations, be sure to adequately describe and address each population and their needs.
- **Provide data**. In addition to providing an economic and demographic profile of the community-at-large served by your library, provide data specific to the special population you intend to target. Fully detail the need for outreach to the special population with data on how the population is (or is not) currently being served and why there is a need for your project.
- **Highlight partnerships.** Some of the better applications came from libraries with established partnerships with community organizations. Though partnerships are not a requirement, each project will likely require some interaction with community agencies also working with the specific special populations targeted.
- **Have SMART goals.** While your project may have just a few goals make sure they are specific, measureable, attainable, relevant, and timely.
- **Provide a detailed project timeline and budget.** The committee has to be certain a project can be completed within the timeframe and budget allowed. Provide as much detail as possible regarding how grant funds and expected in-kind donations will be spent, as well as a timeline with action steps.

Grant Writing

One Librarian's Journey into There and Back Again

ODETTE BATIS

Bookmobile Librarian Odette Batis, right, works with a family from Catholic Charities.

In 2008, when my book budget was cut from $14,000 to $3,000, I had to do some soul searching about where new books were going to come from.

Grants and donations were the obvious choices open to me, so that is what I focused on. First, I solicited local illustrator Ashley Wolff, who graciously donated her work. Her colorful lion and rhino—both voracious bibliophiles, of course!—now grace the sides of our bookmobile.

I also wrote several small grants ($300 and $500 to our Friends group and a small local foundation that grants $500 to groups that work with children). Then I wrote a larger grant for materials, and received the 2010 ALA/ALSC Bookapalooza Grant, amounting to about $10,000 worth of books and audiobooks. It was the first time my branch had back-up fiction of our own. Before, we only had money to replace classics and buy new easy readers and easy chapter books. It has allowed the children we serve to broaden their reading horizons.

I also got local businesses to donate thousands of dollars in summer reading program prizes to our library. For the last three years, I have successfully solicited fourteen hundred hamburger meals, fourteen hundred slices of pizza, and fourteen hundred cupcakes. Yum!

Targeting the Light the Way Grant

With that successful track record, I felt ready to apply for the 2011 ALSC Light the Way: Library Outreach to the Underserved Grant for funding to create a project for an underserved Hispanic population in a geographically isolated area in Richmond, a city of 102,000. The city is 55 square miles (22 square miles under water).

Richmond is full of closed factories and industrial facilities; some areas of housing are isolated by being pressed up against San Pablo Bay. According to the school district, 97 percent of the children at Montalvin School (the school I wrote the grant specifically to target) receive a subsidized lunch and breakfast.[1] Children and parents are further isolated by gang activities and, often, the lack of a driver's license in the family.

In Richmond, there is no racial majority, and it is a city with great disparities of income. Based on estimates, there are homes that are $5 million and homes that are $19,000; according to the 2000 census, the mean income is $24,000 a year, and the city has 18 percent unemployment.

To begin writing the grant, we worked with a literacy coach from a local elementary school who told me that in the year after the bookmobile started weekly visits, they had sixty children move into the English track, opposed to only fourteen children the year before (a 300 percent increase).

Odette Batis *is a Bookmobile Librarian in Richmond, California. She and her staff of two, Wolfgang Moll and Veronica Rojero, visit twenty stops each week within the borders of the city, seeing five thousand to eight thousand children a month.*

The Richmond Library bookmobile is emblazoned with artwork by illustrator Ashley Wolff.

Our goal was to get the members of the school's parents' group to obtain library cards and check out book bags to engage their children with both English and Spanish books. We believed that if they had both languages in the same place, the parents and the children could improve in speaking both languages. The literacy coach and I met three times, discussing just the right books to obtain for the Mexican and Guatemalan families at that school.

Out of our talks, we came up with a list of more than thirty topics of interest to children. We planned to attend the Spanish Book Fair in Oakland and agreed that the literacy coordinator would translate marketing materials for his parents' group and anything else that needed translating (directions on using the OPAC) for the book bags to be successful. Meanwhile, I identified books to fill thirty book bags.

We both agreed, however, to try not to get overly anxious if we did not win. But, very soon, the call came, and we were thrilled to find out we had won the $3,000 grant. Then the real work started.

Since the literacy coordinator could not return to the book fair, I took a volunteer, a bilingual member of the community. We looked at all the books and met vendors, but I did not place any orders until March, when we received the grant monies.

We use our Friends group as fiscal agent for this type of grant. The booklists were all ready, the heavy-duty book bags were in house, and we ordered the books quickly. It took longer than expected to receive them, but I had everything ready by the end of April 2011.

At the end of April, I learned that the literacy coordinator's position had been eliminated by the school district, and the school district literacy headquarters would not help with translation or anything else that wasn't official school business.

Since I do not speak Spanish, this was a great concern for me. But right before school started in August, I was fortunate to find another community outreach person from Catholic Charities; they had a space within an elementary school where they taught English as a Second Language (ESL).

It took six weeks to get the book bags together, inventoried, numbered, materials listed, and off to cataloging, which took another two weeks. When the bags came back, my staff of two processed the materials, duplicated barcodes, typed materials cards for each bag, and covered each book with a protective Colibri cover.

Subjects in the bags range from themes like colors, feelings, and occupations, to popular literary themes like princesses, dragons, vehicles, graphic novels, and scary stories. Each book bag has from five to ten books and a small toy that coordinates with the theme. A few have family themed Spanish DVDs not generally available at the library.

The book bags have circulated well since the day we put them on the bookmobile. During September and October, we circulated these bags to just the parents at the Catholic Charities ESL facility, and every week 90 percent of them checked out.

After looking at the statistics for the book bags, I realize that circulation is dominated by the child's desire for a particular theme—our best circulating bags are David Shannon's books, princesses, and vehicles.

Gradually, circulation has fanned out to other schools where Latino parents get on the bookmobile. Latino parents are discussing which books they want to read to the child and, conversely, the child tells the parent what they are interested in.

Parents are pleased that they get to take selections home in an attractive bag. One parent said he was so glad to read to his son both in Spanish and in English because his son wanted the stories repeated many times; having both languages available made the repetition more enjoyable for him (the dad).

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ALSC News

Board Actions: Anaheim

Board documents are posted on ALA Connect (http://connect.ala.org) and provide complete details about the issues listed below. Go to the ALSC section of ALA Connect and click on "Online Docs." Board documents are usually posted about two weeks before conference.

During the 2012 Annual Conference in Anaheim, the ALSC Board voted to take the following actions:

ACCEPTED, the final draft of the committee manual for ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production.

APPROVED, in concept, the Resolution that School Libraries and Librarians are Critical to Educational Success.

APPROVED, the establishment of a Popular Picks for Pre-Teens Implementation Questions Task Force.

APPROVED, licensing of existing ALSC book award seals to appear on e-book versions of award-winning titles, with messaging from ALSC that publishers are required to include information within the e-book about the original edition that won the award. This will include all winners and honor books for awards administered exclusively by ALSC. Additional educational content will be provided on the ALSC website to aid readers in research related to the awards.

APPROVED, the establishment of a task force to explore the impact on our awards' terms and criteria as a result of having award seals appear on e-book editions of medal and honor titles.

APPROVED, creation of the Website Advisory Committee to provide direction, guidance, and support regarding the content, currency, and relevance of the ALSC website.

APPROVED, the Organization & Bylaws Committee motion to amend the membership statement for the (May Hill) Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Committee to read: "Chair plus four, all of whom function virtually."

APPROVED, the Organization & Bylaws Committee motion to amend the membership statement for the *Children and Libraries* Editorial Advisory Committee to read: "Editor and ALSC President serve as ex-officio members. Chair plus five members, all of whom function virtually (2-year term staggered). Fall."

APPROVED, the Organization & Bylaws Committee motion to amend the membership statement for the Managing Children's Services Committee to read: "Chair plus nine members plus one LLAMA representative, all of whom function virtually."

APPROVED, the Organization & Bylaws Committee motion to amend the membership statement for the Education Committee to read: "Chair plus five members, all of whom function virtually. Chair shall serve as ALSC's liaison with the ALA Committee on Education and as representative to the ALA Library Education Assembly."

APPROVED, the Organization & Bylaws Committee motion to amend the membership statement for the Oral History Committee to read: "Chair plus eight, all of whom function virtually."

APPROVED, the Organization & Bylaws Committee motion to amend the function statement for the Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee to read:

> To identify and disseminate information of effective, cooperative, or innovative programs for young children to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children (birth to 5). To develop training workshops on early childhood programs and services and present them at conferences and institutes and for other institutions serving youth. To update and develop ALSC resources with early literacy information. To cooperate as appropriate with other ALSC committees and other associations working with the young child to initiate activities and projects.

APPROVED, the Fiscal Year 2013 preliminary proposed budget as presented by the Budget Committee to be submitted to ALA.

APPROVED, the Distinguished Service Award Manual with changes as presented.

2012 Election Results

Spring election results were announced on May 8. Starr LaTronica, youth services/outreach manager, Four County Library System, Vestal, N.Y., was elected

ALSC vice president/president-elect. LaTronica received her MLS in 1980 from University of California, Berkeley, and has been an ALSC member for 26 years. She currently serves on the ALSC Advocacy and Legislation Committee and has served on numerous other committees, including Intellectual Freedom, Newbery, School-Age Programs and Services, and Membership. She also was priority group consultant for child advocacy, 2008-2010, and served on the ALSC Board of Directors, 2005-2008. Outside of ALA, LaTronica has been an active member of the New York Library Association (NYLA), serving as president of the Youth Services Section in 2001-2002.

Three members were elected to serve on the ALSC Board of Directors: Rita Auerbach, N.Y.; Jamie Campbell Naidoo, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; and Michael Santangelo, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library. In addition, Megan Schliesman, Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, was elected to a one-year term to fill a Board vacancy. Andrew Medlar, Chicago Public Library, was elected as division councilor.

The newly elected vice president, board members, and councilor were seated to the ALSC Board of Directors in June 2012, at the close of the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.

The following individuals were elected to serve on the 2014 Newbery, Caldecott, Sibert, and Wilder Committees:

2014 Newbery: John Schumacher, Brook Forest Elementary School, Oak Brook, Ill.; Marilyn Ackerman, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library; Amy Sears, Teaneck (N.J.) Public Library; Debra McLeod, Lenexa, Kan.; Kathy Jarombek, Perrot Memorial Library, Old Greenwich, Conn.; Meg E. Smith, Cumberland County Public Library, Hope Mills, N.C.; Laura Jenkins, Chicago Public Library; and Andrea Erickson, Prince Georges County Memorial Library System, Laurel, Md.

2014 Caldecott: Judy Freeman, Highland Park, N.J.; Carla Kozak, San Francisco Public Library; Travis Jonker, Wayland Union Schools, Dorr, Mich.; Dennis Leloup, Avon (Ind.) Intermediate School East; Leslie Molnar, North Royalton, Ohio; Natasha Forrester, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.; Deborah Burns, Chicago Public Library; and Kathy Short, University of Arizona, Tucson.

2014 Sibert: Barbara Genco, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Tish Wilson, Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library; Victor Schill, Fairbanks Branch Library, Houston; Sally Miculek, Austin (Texas) Public Library; and Allison Kaplan, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2015 Wilder: Kathleen T. Horning, Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Jane Marino, Great Neck (N.Y.) Library; and Ellen Ruffin, McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg.

Mary Fellows, immediate past president, appointed the following award committee chairs: Elizabeth Orsburn, Free Library of Philadelphia, 2014 Newbery Award Committee chair; Marion Rutsch, Chevy Chase, Md., 2014 Caldecott Award Committee chair; Cecilia McGowan, King County Library System, Issaquah, Wash., 2014 Sibert Award Committee chair; and Karen Nelson Hoyle, St. Paul, Minn., 2015 Wilder Award Committee chair. This fall, Carolyn Brodie, current president, is appointing the remaining members of these four committees, as well as members of ALSC's other prestigious award committees.

Arbuthnot Archives

A video of Peter Sís' 2012 Arbuthnot Lecture, titled "Reading in the Dark," presented at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, delivered this past spring is available at http://sc.lib.muohio.edu/handle/2374.MIA/4489. Sís' lecture also will be printed in its entirety in the next issue of *Children and Libraries*.

In 2003, the legendary Maurice Sendak presented the Arbuthnot Lecture in Cambridge, Mass. A video of his presentation, "Descent into Limbo," also is available to view online at http://videolectures.net/mitworld_sendak_dil.

Wanted! Award Applications

ALSC is seeking nominations and applications for its professional grants and awards:

- **Bechtel Fellowship.** The Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship finances a month of study at the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The $4,000 fellowship is for travel and living expenses during the period of study. A mentor will be assigned on request.

- **Bookapalooza.** This program offers selected libraries a collection of materials, including books, videos, audiobooks, and recordings. The materials are primarily for children age birth through fourteen and have been submitted to ALSC award selection and media evaluation committees for award and notables consideration.

- **ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Program Grant.** This $3,000 grant is designed to encourage outstanding summer reading program development by providing funding to implement such a program. Applicants must plan and present an outline for a theme-based summer reading program in a public library.

- The **Light the Way: Library Outreach to the Underserved Grant**, sponsored by Candlewick Press, provides one library with $3,000 to fund outreach programs for underserved populations. The award is in honor of author Kate DiCamillo and the themes represented in her books.

- **Distinguished Service Award.** This prestigious award recognizes a member who has made significant contributions to and had an impact on library services to children. Nominees may be practicing librarians, a library or information science educator, a member of the library press, or an editor or other employee of a publishing house. The individual may be active or retired. The recipient receives $1,000 and an engraved pin.

- **Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award.** Established with funding from Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, this award pays the honorarium and travel for a visiting author/illustrator up to a maximum of $4,000. Hayes Award applicants

Caldecott Award Turns 75

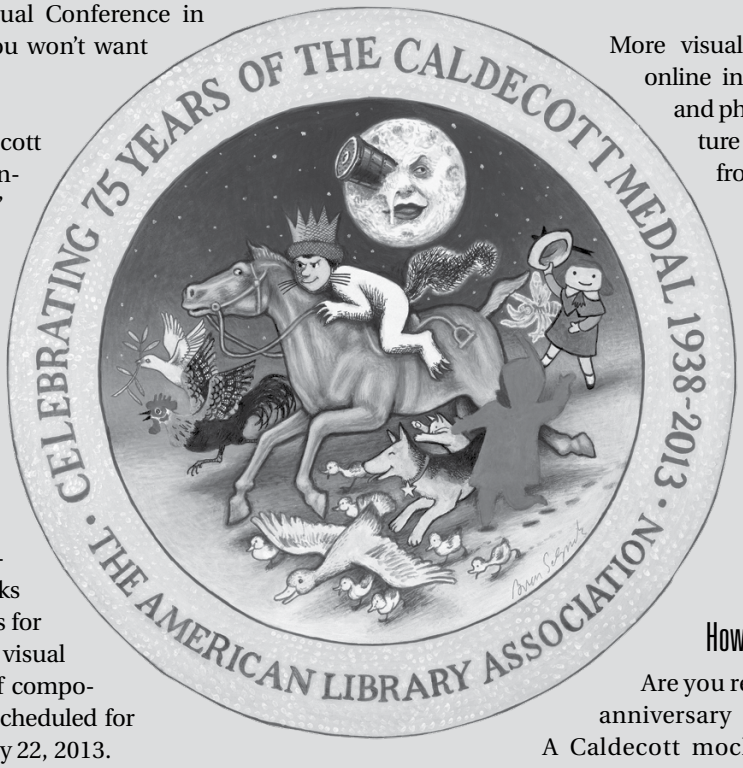
Join us in celebrating 75 years of distinguished picture books! ALSC has many special Caldecott-related events and activities afoot, making it possible for fans of the award and children's book art to be involved in the celebration, in person, online, and via print.

- **2013 ALSC Preconference.** On Friday, June 28, 2013, ALSC will host a preconference devoted to the 75th anniversary during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. Save the date; you won't want to miss it.

- **Online Course.** "The Caldecott Medal: Understanding Distinguished Art in Picture Books," a six-week course taught by Kathleen T. Horning, director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, looks at the history of the award itself and how the winners are selected, and addresses the artistic elements behind winning books over the years, with how-tos for identifying media, style, visual elements, and the basics of composition. A winter session is scheduled for January 13 through February 22, 2013.

- **Webinars.**—An archived copy of "Caldecott Uncovered: What You've Always Wanted to Know about the Caldecott Medal," presented by Rita Auerbach, past Caldecott Committee chair, and held last May and July, is available online free. Author and illustrator Dilys Evans will present a webinar, "The Fine Art of Children's Book Illustration," twice this fall. Details are at www.ala.org/alsc/Caldecott75.

- **More fun stuff.** 2008 Caldecott Medal Winner Brian Selznick has cleverly brought together characters from past Caldecott Medal-winning books—beginning with the very first in 1938 and spanning all the way to the twenty-first century—in the logo featured here that he created especially for the 75th Anniversary celebration. Check out the ALSC website to see the full color logo and identify the characters featured. We sincerely thank Brian for this wonderful homage to the Caldecott Medal and the illustrators and estates of the depicted characters for allowing Brian to bring them together.



More visual treats will be available online in the Caldecott Scrapbook and photo archive, which will feature historic photos and more from the award's storied past.

In addition, the Spring 2013 issue of *Children and Libraries* will be completely dedicated to the Caldecott anniversary. Watch for it in your mailbox in May 2013!

For more, visit www.ala.org/alsc/Caldecott75.

How Will You Celebrate?

Are you ready to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Caldecott Award? A Caldecott mock election program is a great way to stimulate interest in book awards, foster children's appreciation of fine art, and teach book evaluation skills. ALSC's ***Newbery Caldecott Mock Election Tool Kit***, revised in 2011 by Steven Engelfried, Wilsonville (Ore.) Public Library, delivers everything a planner needs to pull off an engaging and gold-medal mock program, including planning guidelines, tips on how to kindle meaningful discussion, ideas for follow-up activities, and much more. As a digital download, this tool kit also provides Word, PDF, and Excel files of audience handouts, evaluation forms, certificates, and voting ballots that can be easily customized. More information is at www.alastore.ala.org.

seek to provide a visit from an author/illustrator who will speak to children who have not had the opportunity to hear a nationally known author/illustrator.

- **Penguin Young Readers Group Award.** This $600 award is presented to up to four children's librarians to enable them to attend the ALA Annual Conference for the first time.

The 2013 Annual Conference will be held in Chicago.

For more information about and criteria for each award and to download award

applications, visit the ALSC website at www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Awards & Grants—Professional Awards." To request a form by e-mail, send a request to alsc@ala.org. Deadline for all professional award applications is **December 3, 2012**.

Suggestions Welcome

ALSC members are encouraged to suggest titles for the 2013 book and media awards. Send recommendations with full bibliographic information to the award committee chair.

- The **Newbery Medal** is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. **Steven Engelfried**, engelfried@wilsonvillelibrary.org.

- The **Caldecott Medal** is given to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. **Sandy Imdieke**, simdieke@nmu.edu.

- The **Mildred L. Batchelder Award** is a citation given to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States. **Jean Hatfield**, jhatfield@wichita.gov.

- The **2014 Arbuthnot Lecture** will feature a speaker who is an individual of distinction in the field of children's literature. Send recommendations for lecturers for the 2014 lecture to **Susan Moore**, smoore2629@yahoo.com.

- The **Pura Belpré Award**, cosponsored by ALSC and REFORMA, is presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. **Charmette Kuhn-Kendrick**, ckendrick-kuhn@cvrls.net.

- The **Andrew Carnegie Medal**, supported by an endowment from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, honors an outstanding video production for children. **Maeve Visser Knoth**, visser-knoth@plsinfo.org.

- The **Geisel Medal** is given to the author and illustrator of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books. **Carla Morris**, carlam@provolibrary.com.

- The **ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production** will be given to the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States. **Teri S. Lesesne,** lis_tsl@shsu.edu.

- The **Sibert Medal**, sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books, and named in honor of the company's long-time president Robert F. Sibert, is given to the author of the most distinguished informational book for children. **Kathie Meizner**, Kathie.Meizner@montgomerycountymd.gov.

We also welcome suggestions for the Notable Children's Media lists. Send titles with full bibliographic information to the committee chair.

- Notable Children's Books, **Wendy Woodfill**, notables2013@gmail.com.

- Notable Children's Recordings**, Lynda Poling,** Lynda.Poling@lbpl.org.

- Notable Children's Videos**, Maeve Visser Knoth**, visser-knoth@plsinfo.org.

New from ALSC/ALA

Librarians and teachers everywhere have come to rely on ***The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books, 2012 Edition*** for quick reference, collection and curriculum development, and readers' advisory. The annual guide gathers the books deemed most distinguished in American children's literature and illustration since the inception of the renowned prizes. In this year's opening essay, Deborah Stevenson, editor of the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* and director of the Center for Children's Books at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, traces the path of the Newbery Award through news coverage, providing a thought-provoking and delightful look at how the award has inscribed itself in history. Available at www.alastore.ala.org.

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THE LAST WORD

A Joy-Filled Day in the Life of a School Librarian

Anna L. Nielsen

You arrive at 7:30 a.m., even though school doesn't officially begin for an hour, because there is always, always something to do.

You grab your bags and your coffee and your water.org bottle (because your love of children and literacy is rivaled only by your love of clean water and the environment and yes, they do all go together—it's that whole positive future thing) and you stride into the building.

Meeting a parent along the way, you smile and say, "Good morning!" because *you mean it*, it really *is* a good morning. Any morning you get to work with kids is a good morning—politics and budget concerns be buggered.

Juggling your things, you reach for the door and a kid holds it open for you. (This really happens.) You smile even more because it is proof that the world is a good place and civility does exist and that children can be, and are, thoughtful and wonderful.

You make it to the library, and adults and kids are already there for early morning activities. You feel your mouth spreading in a smile again, so much so that your cheeks are pushing your glasses up off your nose. You adjust your frames, and flip on your computer.

There are books in the return bin, and you start blipping them through the circulation scanner—then you hear, "Boo!" It's your first visitor of the day, a first grader who wants to help you do the "blipping thing."

Then another first grader swings through slow and empty-handed at first . . . and then back again with a book. Then again. You get the hint.

She scurries with you to the big comfy chair in the New Book Nook you made a few months ago just by moving furniture and asking fantastically talented and willing parents for help. She hands you the book, slides onto the cushion next to you, leans on your leg . . . and you begin.

You think maybe your job is a dream. Then it's time for homeroom, and everyone's off. You stand and take a breath—*whew!*—time to get to work.

You start looking for a funny book that will keep a second grader's interest. Monsters are good. So are dinosaurs . . . and guys named Fly.

At 9 a.m., the first group of preschoolers arrive, the ones who think that the giggliest, most wonderful thing in the world is to jump on the librarian's reading bench, and well, *let's be truthful here*, the librarian.

So the librarian giggles too, and learns to forego cashmere. Or silk. Or any knit that doesn't do well when picked and grabbed and scrunched and loved with unbridled glee and giggles. And you don't mind, not even a little bit.

Once the crew settles, storytime begins and you read aloud with all your heart and soul. Before you know it the story is over and *whoosh!* Off they run . . . books, books, books! And back they come to you, clutching your leg, your sweater, your hand . . .

"Can we check out three books today? Please?

Do you have a book on horses? On shipwrecks? On cats who eat mice? On mice who eat cats?

What about the one with the blue cover my brother had last year? Please?"

"Yes, yes, yes," you say. And this time you don't just smile or giggle. This time you laugh so fully your glasses almost fall off your face.

"Yes, yes, yes," you say, and you feel your glasses moving again. "Yes."

Anna L. Nielsen, PhD, is a school librarian at Belmont (MA) Day School.

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com.