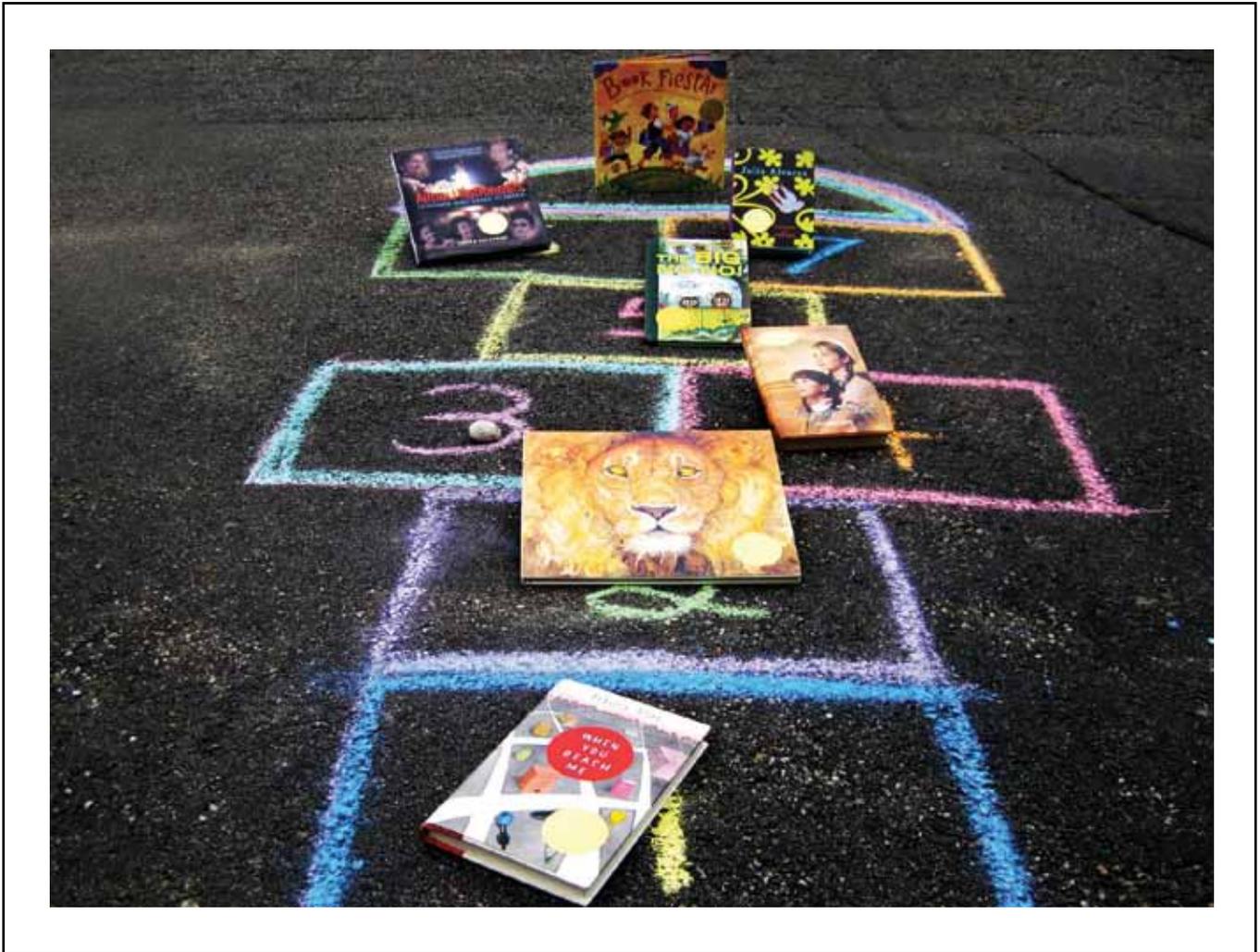


Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

Volume 8 Number 2 Summer/Fall 2010 ISSN 1542-9806



ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children

2010 Awards Issue
Newbery, Caldecott, Belpré, and Geisel Speeches
Taking Part in Art • Great Collaborations!

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Editor's Note Embarking on a "New-Old" Path

By Sharon Verbeten

This year, I feel like my life has come full circle, with my career finally fully embracing my two passions—writing and librarianship.

Almost twenty years ago, after earning my MLS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I began my library career in children's work at Milwaukee Public Library. We still had card catalogs; the online transition was still a few years off.

As much as I loved library work, I missed writing full time, so I returned to the world of journalism and, as fate would have it, eight years ago, I was lucky enough to become editor of *Children and Libraries*. This publication culminated all my skills and interests—and, for those reasons, it is the job I have treasured most in my career.

Now, this summer, I began a part-time job as children's librarian at Brown County (Wis.) Library—and I was thrilled to return to my library roots. Working in the ranks of librarians again will, no doubt, be a huge benefit as I continue to edit CAL.

It will intensify the meaning of the ALA conventions for me. It will make me an even more kindred soul to all of you. I've always felt you were my colleagues—now I can truly say you all are again.

I'm looking forward to everything old being new again...except maybe those dusty old card catalogs! ☺



Executive Director's Note

By Aimee Strittmatter

What a year! September is the start of the new fiscal year and as I close out the previous year's financials, I review the success of ALSC's programs and services to members. To name just a few, the revised *Competencies for Librarians*

Serving Children in Public Libraries pamphlet and Spanish Born to Read brochure are available for free download; continued online course offerings; a successful Bill Morris book evaluation seminar at Midwinter; a fascinating and relevant Arbuthnot Lecture by ALSC past-president Kathleen T. Horning, exploring library service and multiculturalism; and one amazing Annual Conference.

An array of fantastic programs were presented by our members and committees during Annual. The preconference, exploring the collaborative and creative processes involved in picturebook development, was a tremendous success. The President's Program kicked off with a rousing storytelling program by author and ALSC member Lucía Gonzalez, followed by Dr. Patricia Kuhl's incredible presentation of her early language and brain development research findings. The print program, found on the ALSC website under Events and Conferences, includes links to Dr. Kuhl's research and other resources.

We've got quite a bit to look forward to this year! We'll be using this space in upcoming issues to bring you fresh and entertaining information. I'll be back next fall with a year-in-review. Until then, best wishes for the year ahead. ☺

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Outgoing President's ALSC Message

Thom Barthelmess
ALSC President, 2009–2010
alscthom@gmail.com

Issuing Thanks to the ALSC Staff

As I wind up my term as president of the Association for Library Service to Children, I find myself especially thankful. Thankful for the new colleagues I have encountered and the friends they have become. Thankful for the trust and respect so many have shared. Thankful for the responsibility to advocate for the youngest library users with individuals and institutions across the country.

Indeed, this experience has afforded me no shortage of wonderful opportunities, and among the most dear has been the chance to get to really know and deeply appreciate the strength, courage, and commitment of the ALSC staff. I have the additional privilege of living and working in Chicago. My proximity has facilitated frequent contact, making my appreciations more substantive and more personal.

That these individuals apply themselves with diligence and dedication is no surprise. But the degree to which they do just that, and the underlying commitment

to us, the membership, and the work we do, are simply remarkable. And so, before stepping back, I want to personally thank the very people who keep our institutional engine running, with grace, without complaint, and ever in pursuit of the association's goals:

Marsha Burgess, Program Coordinator

Marsha manages our inordinately cumbersome committee appointments process with precision. What was already a difficult process became doubly so in the face of the current economic climate and the exponential increase in committee turnover it precipitated. Marsha faced it all with her trademark combination of detailed attention and great good humor, making my job much, much easier.

Thank you.

Jenny Najduch, Marketing Specialist, Membership

Whether new-to-the-fold or been-around-forever, every ALSC member knows Jenny for her technological savvy, innovative energy, and wide-open demeanor. Through tireless promotion of everything we do, and regular support of those same efforts, Jenny makes the work of the division visible, relevant, and exciting. Her enthusiasm is infectious, and we are the better for having caught it.

Thank you.

Laura Schulte-Cooper, Program Officer, Communications

Laura manages multiple lines of communication, untangling and presenting what might otherwise be a cacophony of messages, and bending an arcane and unintuitive technological roadmap to her will. Whether assisting members with electronic discussion list subscriptions or uploading committee content to the ALSC website, Laura approaches all of her work with sincerity, enthusiasm, and care.

Thank you.

Linda Mays, Program Officer, Projects and Partnerships

Linda never met a project she didn't like, and the division is especially lucky to have her diligence and persistence in our corner, nailing down details and

continued on page 5



Incoming President's ALSC Message

Julie Corsaro
ALSC President, 2010–2011
juliealsc@gmail.com

Following the Money

As someone who was never very good at balancing a checkbook, I've been a little surprised at how interesting and informative learning about the finances of ALSC has been. It may just be that in these hard economic times, with library cutbacks so often in the news, it's hard *not* to think about the hard realities of funding. Whatever the reason, I want to share some of the knowledge I've acquired as vice president regarding ALSC's eleven endowments, since the interest from these accounts supports some of our best-known endeavors. In addition, I'm using these endowments as a starting point to mention some upcoming events, recent news, and developing trends within our association.

1. Arbuthnot (2002): This endowment covers the honorarium and travel expenses for the annual speaker, who in 2011 will be none other than the incomparable Lois Lowry. I am especially pleased that Lowry will deliver her lecture when I am president because of my service on the 1994 Newbery Award committee. In my experience, her book

The Giver has inspired more reluctant readers and more vigorous debate than any other children's book.

2. Belpré Award (1997): Beginning with the 2010 Annual Conference, proceeds from the sales of Belpré Award seals will help support the Pura Belpré Celebración—the intimate, poignant, and festive ceremony cosponsored by REFORMA that honors winning Latino authors and illustrators.

3. Carnegie Video (1989): The Carnegie Corporation of New York, made famous by public television, provided the cash to establish this media award that goes to the American producer of the most distinguished DVD of the year. Beginning this year and in a return to its roots, the Carnegie Award and Notable Children's Videos committees have merged under the management of Angelique Kopa.

4. Carole D. Fiore ALSC Leadership (2009): Through a generous donation from a past-president of ALSC, funds were approved by the ALSC board in 2009 and will soon be available to enhance leadership abilities and opportunities in our division.

5. Charlemae Rollins (1982): Named after the pioneering African American children's librarian, this endowment contributes to the President's Program every year. At the 2011 ALA Annual Conference, it will foot the bill for keynote speaker Ricki Robinson, a nationally recognized pediatrician and leader in the field of autism spectrum disorders. Program planning committee co-chairs Marian Creamer and Edie Ching—together with ALSC Program Officer Linda Mays—have also been hard at work putting together an accompanying panel that will include Francisco X. Stork, author of the critically acclaimed *Marcelo in the Real World*.

6. Children's Library Services (1982): Even though it has been around for close to thirty years, when it began as the Helen C. Knight Memorial Fund, this endowment was news to me—which is unfortunate because it provides important financing for special ALSC committee projects. In the near future, the fund will support the Children and Technology Committee's educational program, 21 Things for 21st Century KidLibs, which

will introduce Web 2.0 tools to our members. To increase the visibility of this endowment, Andrew Medlar and the ALSC Budget Committee are developing a flyer that will pair essential information about the endowment with an application timeline.

7. Distinguished Service Award (1986): While this endowment has always covered the cost of a commemorative pin and a monetary prize, the 2011 Distinguished Service Committee, chaired by Gretchen Wronka, has gone virtual on a trial basis. On a related note, the Strategic Plan Alignment 2.0 Board Subcommittee, with Marge Loch-Wouters at the helm, continues to explore ways for our members to work virtually to achieve our goals.

8. Frederic G. Melcher (1955): Since Melcher proposed both the Newbery and Caldecott Awards, it is fitting that the publishers of the winning books donate money annually to this endowment. It provides scholarships every year to two graduate students studying library service to children. Beginning this year, and in response to the ALA Spectrum Presidential Initiative, interest

from this endowment will also fund an ALSC Spectrum Scholarship to encourage a diverse workforce.

9. Geisel (2004): The newest active endowment on the ALSC block was founded with a donation from Random House and The San Diego Foundation's Dr. Seuss Fund. In response to the debate, fueled by some of the Geisel Award books, over what constitutes a beginning reader, ALSC member Ernie Cox has organized the program *Move Over Dick and Jane: Reconsidering Books for Beginning Readers* for the 2010 Annual Conference.

10. Wilder (1999): Supporting a lifetime achievement award for a distinguished children's author or illustrator, this endowment brings money to the table every two years to cover the cost of a medal and photographs, as well as committee expenses.

11. William C. Morris (2003): Named after the longtime—and beloved—library marketing director at HarperCollins, this endowment pays for the biannual Morris Seminar. Under the headship of K. T. Horning and Nina Lindsay, it was held

for the second time at the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston. In this historic city, twenty-eight ALSC members learned about evaluation skills and the award committee process from veteran award committee members who served as discussion leaders as well as panelists and presenters. This endowment also supports Breakfast for Bill at the biannual ALSC Institute, which will be held in September 2010 in Atlanta, Georgia. Under the guidance of Institute Planning Task Force co-chairs Sharon Deeds and Ellen Hinrichs, the impressive line-up of speakers includes Walter Dean Myers, Christopher Myers, Brian Selznick, and Creative Director David Saylor.

For me, following the money makes two things very clear. One is that ALSC is indeed achieving its mission of enhancing the future prospects for all children through many programs and projects. The second is that none of these initiatives would exist without the tireless and selfless efforts of our member volunteers.

On behalf of the young people that we serve, I thank you for your continuing efforts and support. ☺

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 3

setting up success. From the seamless organization of programs at ALA Annual Conference to the smooth rollout of high-profile initiatives, Linda's assiduous attention gets ALSC product to the librarians and children who need it.

Thank you.

Kirby Simmering, Deputy Executive Director

Though he was with us only briefly, Kirby wasted no time rolling up his (impeccable) sleeves and getting down to business, picking up critical pieces of the divisional puzzle and fitting them together, without missing a beat. Expecting someone new to the organi-

zation (and to the profession) to take over high-profile and complicated projects like ALSC's institutes, preconferences, and online courses is enough to ask, without adding on responsibilities to respond to any and all manner of alien questions and requests. Yet Kirby exceeded the challenge, in a congenial and unflappable way.

Thank you.

Aimee Strittmatter, Executive Director

The executive director's responsibility—to steer our behemoth craft through a barrage of unending, conflicting, and successively imperative instructions to serve the ALSC membership without

upsetting our balanced place in the bigger organization—is profound. Aimee does just that and manages, at the same time, to maintain a strategic perspective, always looking not only to address today's issue, but to position ourselves to do better tomorrow and down the line. Her dedication and commitment appear to be boundless, and we are all in her debt.

Thank you.

I have spent much of the last year careful to do more listening than speaking. But I hope that you'll allow me to add your voices to my own and thank the whole ALSC staff for their peerless, superior service. ☺



Newbery Medal Acceptance Speech

Don't Think. Write.

Rebecca Stead



Rebecca Stead is the winner of the 2010 Newbery Medal for *When You Reach Me*, published by Wendy Lamb Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., on June 27, 2010.

My favorite Newbery-speech advice came from a Texas librarian who told me to speak for the shortest time allowable and to remember that I am among friends. She's here tonight, and I have given her a flashlight, and when I have been talking for twelve minutes, she is going to give me a few blinks. And after fifteen minutes, she's just going to throw it at me. Because this is the kind of thing a real friend will do for you . . . especially one from Texas.

I wanted to write a great speech. I wanted every person in this room to walk away knowing exactly what the Newbery Medal means to me and how awed I am to have any kind of place in this room full of passion and talent. I wanted your knees to lock with the kind of happiness I felt on the morning of January 18th, and I wanted you to see the lightning bolts of joy that seemed to streak past my dark kitchen window.

But it turns out that it's really hard to write a great speech when I can still barely grasp that the book won the award in the first place. Whenever I think about it, my mind seems to go in four directions at once. And I want to say all of these four things, but I don't want to get hit by the flashlight. So instead of giving one long speech, I'm going to give four short speeches. And they are all mostly about the journey to this place where I am standing right now.

Speech #1

Philip Pullman has said that your life begins when you are born, and your *story* begins when you discover that you have been born into the wrong family by mistake.

But when does the life of a storyteller begin?

Mine began when I was about six. Up until then, I had half-believed that my mother could read my thoughts. But at some point during first grade, I realized that I was completely alone in my own consciousness. I used to regularly freak myself out by sitting still, closing my eyes, and asking myself the same question over and over until I was in a sort

of trance. The question was, "How am I me?"

What I meant was, "How did my particular self get in here?" Again and again, I would close my eyes and plunge myself into this existential angst. Why did I do it?

I think that, like someone alone in a dark room, I was feeling around for a door. Because I really, really did not want to be alone in there.

And I did find a door, eventually. The door was books.

When I read books, I wasn't alone in the rooms of my own mind. I was running up and down other people's stairs and finding secret places behind their closets. The people on the other side of the door had things I couldn't have, like sisters, or dragons, and they shared those things with me. And they also had things I did have, like feelings of self-doubt and longing, and they named those things for me.

Take Meg, for example. In the first chapter of *A Wrinkle in Time*, she calls herself an oddball and a delinquent, makes a horrible face at herself in the mirror, and complains that she is "full of bad feeling." All of this was a revelation for me.

The people in books told me things that the real people in my life either wouldn't admit or didn't realize I needed to know in the first place. And the more I read, the more I thought about writing my own stories, with my own kinds of truth in them. By the time I was nine, I knew I wanted to write. But I didn't tell anyone, because it was too wild a dream. Instead, I told people I wanted to be an actress, which I thought was much more practical, and I waited. I waited about twenty years. Meanwhile, like a lot of people who secretly want to write, I became a lawyer.

Then one day it dawned on me that it's difficult to become a writer without ever writing anything. So I began to write short stories, and I worked on those stories for years until the universe intervened by telling my three-year-old son to push my laptop off the dining room table. No more stories. And suddenly the whole secret writing dream felt very

worn-out. I asked myself why I had ever wanted to write in the first place.

And then I remembered that door, and what I had found on the other side of it, and I began writing again. But this time, I was writing for children.

Speech #2

I started writing *When You Reach Me* in 2007, after I read a *New York Times* article that brought two things to the front of my mind—the first was an idea for a book plot about a life-saving time-travel mission, and the second was the memory of a homeless man who stood on my corner a lot when I was growing up. We called him the laughing man.

And so the book took off on both of these tracks—an impossible mystery played out on the stage of my own New York City childhood. Here was my elementary

“I wanted to write a great speech. I wanted every person in this room to walk away knowing exactly what the Newbery Medal means to me and how awed I am to have any kind of place in this room full of passion and talent.”

school, my mom’s apartment, and my lunchtime job at Subway Sandwiches on Broadway. But pretty soon, my younger self began to leak into the story in ways I’d never intended—memories of feeling mean and not being able to help it, of wanting things that I couldn’t even begin to talk about, of that time in life when I started to see more, whether I wanted to or not. And as I wrote, the story became more and more about these ordinary mysteries of life, and less about the fantastic time-travelly one.

I was halfway through the first draft of the book when I became afraid of it. There came a moment of doubt—was I really going to pour all of my inner weirdness into this book? Was I losing my story, or finding it? I wasn’t sure. By the time my fortieth birthday rolled around in January 2008, I had stopped writing the book.

Even as a kid, I have always partly dreaded my own birthday parties, and this is because of the Happy Birthday song. I’d spend days thinking about streamers and little Dixie cups full of candy, but the Happy Birthday song hung like a funky black cloud over all of it. It was twenty seconds of torture. Everyone would be looking at me, and I had absolutely no idea what they expected from me, but whatever it was I was sure to let them down. It was only after a terrible period of anticipation, and then, of course, the singing itself, that I could really enjoy the party.

So for my fortieth birthday, I skipped the big celebration that a lot of our friends were having that year. Just dinner at a good Chinese restaurant, I told my husband. Maybe a little cake. But no singing.

The cake arrived quietly at our table at Shun Lee, and we ate it, and it was good. We were getting our coats on to

go home when our waiter came out with the leftover cake in the cardboard box we’d brought it in. And on top of the box, someone in the kitchen had written my husband’s instructions—my instructions—in pen:

“Table 16: One candle, no singing.”

One candle, no singing: I stood there in my coat, looking at those words and wondering, for the first time, what it was that I was so afraid of.

A week later, I went to a writers’ conference where Laurie Halse Anderson spoke about craft. Her talk was called: “Plot v. Character: Cage Match Smackdown.”

It was a great talk, and at the end of it, Laurie spoke about fear. She told us that sometimes you just have to stop thinking and write.

“Don’t think. Write.” I drank these words down like an antidote—an antidote to the worry that my book was becoming too truthful or too strange. An antidote to the poisonous message written on that cardboard box: “One candle, no singing.”

I walked out of the meeting room, opened my computer, and created a new folder, called “Don’t think.” In that folder, I began writing my book again, and this time I managed to get to the end without worrying too much about exactly what kind of a book it was.

Speech #3

I recently sat next to my nine-year-old, Eli, on an airplane. He seemed to feel fine during takeoff, but as the plane began to climb, he looked more and more worried. I began to tell him about what keeps the plane up in the air, but he interrupted me.

“I’m not afraid it’s going to fall,” he said. “I’m afraid we’re going to get sucked into orbit.”

This is one of many examples of how adults assume they know what kids are thinking, and of how we are usually wrong. It’s also a pretty good metaphor for how I felt as the morning of the Newbery announcements approached.

We have one phone in our apartment, and it’s a finicky phone. It rings, or not. It’ll take a message when it’s in the mood. Occasionally it goes on what we writers like to call a retreat, and we can’t find it for a day or two.

On the morning of January 18, I woke up early (actually, I woke up earliest, and then earlier, and then just early), aimed myself toward the kitchen to make coffee, and noticed that the phone was not on its charger near our front door. I began to look for it.

I looked in all of the regular places—on the kitchen counter, and in the cracks between the couch cushions. I crawled around looking on the living room floor for a bit, and while I was down there, I began to wonder if I even wanted to find the phone.

The days leading up to that morning had been full of good wishes and mock-Newbery results, and now, despite my best efforts, I was nervous about something that I had always assumed would stay safely beyond my reach. To me, the Newbery Medal was an impossibility. But, like Eli, I was a little bit afraid that the impossible might actually happen. That the phone might ring. Because along with the wild happiness of that fantasy, there was also a fear that, like someone sucked into outer space, I wouldn't be able to breathe. I wouldn't know what to do. My head might explode.

It was 6:45 a.m. Maybe I didn't want to find the phone. Probably it was never meant to ring in the first place. I poured myself a cup of coffee.

And then the phone rang. My husband came flying out of the bedroom holding it as if it were something on fire. It turned out that he'd put it on my bedside table the night before. I had been too busy staring at the clock to notice.

And then Katie O'Dell was saying that she was about to tell me something that would change my life. A cheer went up—the whole Newbery committee, on speakerphone. I have a distinct memory of hearing it at the same time I looked down at my bare feet on the kitchen floor and realized I couldn't move my legs.

You know what it felt like? It felt like a lightning bolt of joy. It felt like knee-locking happiness. It felt like the longest, loudest round of Happy Birthday in the history of the world. And I loved every moment of it.

Speech #4

This last speech is about being grateful. The truth is that I could have written all four speeches about being grateful.

The first person I want to thank is a librarian whose name I don't remember. She worked at my elementary school library, where, about thirty years ago, someone left *James and the Giant Peach* out on a table. I picked it up and started reading. James's horrible aunts had just been squashed to death when the library

“When I read books, I wasn't alone in the rooms of my own mind. I was running up and down other people's stairs and finding secret places behind their closets. The people on the other side of the door had things I couldn't have, like sisters, or dragons, and they shared those things with me. And they also had things I did have, like feelings of self-doubt and longing, and they named those things for me.”

period ended. Now I had a problem. I was in sixth grade. This book appeared to be for younger readers. How was I going to get it out of there while maintaining my dignity?

I lied to the librarian. For a good two minutes, I explained to her that I had a younger brother at home who might like the book. I have a vague memory of a complex story about why this brother did not attend school. It wasn't a good story, but she nodded at me a lot, and believed every word. Or so I thought.

And this is what I have come to love about librarians. In addition to being some of the smartest, funniest, most open-minded people I've ever met, librarians will do a lot to put a book into the hands of a kid, even if it means nodding enthusiastically in the face of a long and obvious lie. And I want to thank every librarian here for that and for protecting and carrying the stories we all need.

I also want to thank the spectacular people at Random House, who gave this book absolutely everything they had to give, including Chip Gibson, Kate Gartner, Adrienne Waintraub, Tracy Lerner, Mary Beth Kilkelly, Barbara Perris, Colleen Fellingham, John Adamo, Rachel Feld, Alyssa Sheinmel, Judith Haut, Tamar Schwartz, Robert Passberger, Schuyler Hooke, and Joan DeMayo and her truly wonderful sales team.

Next, from the bottom of my heart, I want to express my gratitude to the following terrific people:

Faye Bender, who is my advocate, my guide, and my friend.

Caroline Meckler, gifted editor, who asked for more Julia.

Emily Pourciau, a great publicist, who is also great company.

And Sophie Blackall, for the gift of her gorgeous cover art.

I am grateful to my husband Sean, and my sons, Jack and Eli, for the joy that they bring me, and to my parents, who have made me feel loved every day of my life.

And of course, I am grateful to Wendy Lamb. I met Wendy thirteen years ago in a writing workshop at the 92nd Street Y, where she became the first person (other than my mother) who ever asked to keep something I had written. At the time, I was a lawyer daring myself to write, and I still remember how it felt.

Wendy is an enormously talented editor and a kind human being, and she is also a kind editor and a talented human being. She's the sort of person who brings you a brownie at the exact moment you most need one, and who hides nice notes in your desk drawer. I shudder to think that there might exist some alternate reality in which she and I have never crossed paths.

Finally, to Katie O'Dell and the members of the Newbery Committee—thank you for the knee-locking happiness. Thank you for the lightning bolts of joy. ☺



Caldecott Medal Acceptance Speech

A Peaceable, Wordless Kingdom

Jerry Pinkney



Jerry Pinkney is the winner of the 2010 Caldecott Medal for *The Lion and the Mouse*, published by Little, Brown. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., on June 27, 2010.

In the weeks leading up to the ALA Midwinter conference in Boston, there was little I could do to sidestep the active buzz surrounding *The Lion and the Mouse*. It bounced around in my head like a child on a brand-new trampoline. I understood that everyone meant well with their good wishes. However, as a five-time Caldecott Honor recipient, I couldn't entertain the popular talk of another ALA award. I tried to trick myself by not paying attention to the convention date or to the fact that my publishers would be in Boston.

On the Sunday morning before the press conference that would announce the Newbery and Caldecott awards, my wife, Gloria, and I were attending church services when I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder. A fellow member told me that she had given *The Lion and the Mouse* to her nephew and described with great excitement how he had read it by creating his own narrative. Then, when he read it a second time, he had a completely different interpretation of what he saw in the pictures. This is exactly what I had hoped for—a child claiming ownership of this much-beloved fable.

After the service, I was approached by another church member. With much warmth, she expressed how my depiction of the plains of the African Serengeti brought vividly back to mind her visit to that majestic slice of earth. It seemed remarkable to me that Sunday morning that even though *The Lion and the Mouse* had been published several months earlier, I now felt as if I were watching it embark on an entirely new voyage. I returned home with a deep feeling of satisfaction. I felt content that, even if my phone did *not* ring at all the next morning, *The Lion and the Mouse* was still a winner, to my mind, because of how it was inspiring the imaginations of children and adults.

Nevertheless, when Gloria and I turned in that evening, I brought a cordless phone up from my studio—just in case someone needed to reach me early in the morning. And, indeed, at 6:20 a.m. the phone rang. Both Gloria and I had been sound asleep, so neither of us was certain where the phone was. Gloria exclaimed, "My phone is ringing!"

"I think it's *mine!*" I responded, bouncing out of bed. The voice on the other end of the line was Rita Auerbach, chair of the 2010 Caldecott Committee, informing me that I'd just received "the Caldecott. . ."

Time seemed to stand still as I waited for the word *honor*. And even after I heard her say *medal*, I was *still* somehow waiting for the word *honor* to sandwich itself between those two words. After the call ended, I kept wondering what the cheering librarians in the background must have thought when I took so long to respond. Gloria, who was standing close by, knew something special had occurred. "*The Lion and the Mouse* has just received the Caldecott Medal," I announced. Then, with much excitement, we held each other.

I am honored and humbled by this prestigious recognition. Many warm, heartfelt thanks to the Randolph Caldecott Award Committee for your dedication and efforts. And congratulations to Rebecca Stead for her Newbery Medal.

Looking back over the years, at the age of seventy, I've found it interesting to trace how the early chapters of my life have knitted themselves into my art. As a young boy, my buddies and I were fascinated by all kinds of creatures and insects we found in our urban backyards and vacant lots in Philadelphia.

On family trips to visit relatives in the country—back in the day, when New Jersey was "the country"—there were woods and streams filled with wildlife. Those were my first real experiences with nature. Even then I sensed that I was more centered, more balanced, when I was in touch with the natural world.

My first job after art school was delivering bouquets for a flower shop, where, later, I was promoted to floral designer. If you look at the body of my work, you'll find flowers embellishing many of my images. Sometimes they're used as a decorative device. Often they also lend a sense of harmony between humanity and nature. This interest in living, growing things, planted more than fifty years ago, blossomed in the illustrations

for this adaptation of *The Lion and the Mouse*.

Could my fascination for this tale have been fueled by field trips to the zoo when I was a child? In the late 1940s, zoos were not like the zoos of today. The animals were housed in dark, musty structures with just a little light trying to make its way through thick, humid air. The large cats were in rectangular cages, several feet off the ground, with guardrails in front. The animals paced back and forth with blank eyes staring into space, and I recall feeling that something was not right. I knew little of the big cats' natu-

“Here is the heart and soul of this book—it’s about what you discover in the images, what someone other than the artist can bring to them. In many ways, the journey each reader traverses parallels my creative process, that of discovery.”

ral habitats, but I still felt that animals should not be confined in such a way. I didn't want to be there and didn't want to return.

Many years later, I immersed myself in the natural habitat of animals, frequently enjoying walks in the woods surrounding our home in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, which is situated between a nature preserve and land governed by the Audubon Society. One day, I decided to break from the main path and hike up a hill to a favorite tree, when a plump, speckled grouse limped out of the tall grass in front of me. The grouse dragged its wing with great effort, as if it were broken. I veered out of its way, but slowly it worked its way in front of me again. This awkward dance went on for a minute or two.

Then I remembered I had learned that a mother bird, in order to protect her young from potential harm, might fake an injury. So I allowed her to guide me with her antics, and with deliberate calm, I looked back over my shoulder and saw movement in the grass. It was the grouse's little chicks. When the distance was great enough between her and her brood, the grouse's wing miracu-

lously corrected itself. Then she lifted herself off the ground and flew back to her family.

I've remembered that experience so clearly because it was one of many moments when it seemed as if nature were speaking to me. And, from the very beginning, much of my art for children, at its core, was about nature speaking. *The Adventures of Spider* by Joyce Cooper Arkhurst, published by Little, Brown in 1964, was my first illustrated book, and I'm really pleased to say it's still in print.

But it wasn't until after illustrating over

a hundred books for children that I decided to create my first nearly wordless picture book with *The Lion and the Mouse*. I'm not sure when I first heard this fable, but it's been coursing through my mind for years. I even gave its central characters a cameo appearance in an illustrated collection of Aesop's fables published in the year 2000. It seems fitting, somehow, that the book's only words are the sounds of animals, such as the owl's screech, the lion's roar, and the mouse's squeak. And so nature *still* has a voice in this book.

When beginning the thumbnail sketches for the fable, my intent was to add text after I had a clearer idea of the visual rhythm and pacing. But once I saw those sketches on paper, I wondered, "Did this compact narrative really need words?" The answer came back to me a tentative "no," which motivated me to think about expanding the tale in other ways. I knew of the fascination young children have with animal sounds and how captivated I am by the nature sounds that find their way to my ears when I'm at work in my studio. So I decided to experiment with incorporating sounds into *The Lion and the Mouse*.

I prepared a dummy purely as a visual exercise, and added sounds to the thumbnail sketches as well as animal action words, such as *scurry*, *flee*, and *scamper*. Another set of thumbnails was completely wordless. The two versions were sent to my editor, Andrea Spooner. She had been my editor on five previous books, and so I had great trust in her gifts and ability to listen and, most importantly, the clear space in her own head to see my vision. Andrea's skill in this collaboration of artist and editor is to sometimes push and sometimes pull in her own gentle manner, always bringing me closer to the fullest potential for each project. Her insightful response to the materials I sent was to keep the sounds, but drop the action words. She was right. Sometimes there can be too much of a good thing.

The next question to be answered was the story's setting. I chose the African Serengeti of Tanzania and Kenya in part because the lion was a central character in the story, and in part because of my fascination with Africa. The Serengeti provided me with an expansive backdrop that opened a host of visual possibilities. I began adding other creatures and vegetation of the Serengeti plains to provide a strong sense of place.

The lion and the mouse are two engaging characters, both heroes in this enthralling drama. I've always found it interesting that while the lion may be the majestic king of the jungle, if a gray or brown rodent were to scurry across a library floor, some of us would go running. The drawings of these two players were developed by sketching first in order to determine what I needed their body language to express, then research of the animals' anatomy using pictorial publications. Some days I would stand in front of a mirror and go through a series of expressions and body movements in order to incorporate what I'd learned into my drawings, and have them mimic the expressions of humans.

In my art, you can find the influences of Beatrix Potter, Arthur Rackham, and A. B. Frost, all masters of personification. And if you remove the book jacket, you will find on its back case cover my homage to the artist Edward Hicks's painting

The Peaceable Kingdom. While in my illustration I substituted the animals of the African Serengeti for Hicks's biblical animals, I believe ultimately the enduring strength of this tale is in its moral: no act of kindness goes unrewarded. Even the strongest can sometimes use the help of the smallest. To me the story represents a world of neighbors helping neighbors, unity and harmony, interdependence.

In fact, I learned from a librarian who had introduced the book to her students that the zebra, with its keen sense of smell, and the ostrich, with its sharp vision, sometimes warn other creatures of impending danger. The librarian pointed out to me that my art for the endpapers had both of these species depicted in the same scene with other animals that might depend on them for help. "Did you do that on purpose?" she asked me.

Here is the heart and soul of this book—it's about what *you* discover in the images, what someone other than the artist can bring to them. In many ways, the journey each reader traverses parallels my creative process, that of discovery.

The journey of my own career has been deeply enriched by you, the librarians.

"Here is the heart and soul of this book—it's about what you discover in the images, what someone other than the artist can bring to them."

With much gratitude, I thank all of you for your continued friendship and support throughout my career.

The design, shape, paper, and printing of a good book all lend themselves to a quality reading experience. My thanks to Patti Ann Harris and Saho Fujii for their attention to every detail in the production of this book. Can you believe the jacket spine was scored from the inside?

Thanks also to Victoria Stapleton, Ames O'Neill, Megan Tingley, and all of my friends at Little, Brown and Company and Hachette Book Group for their support of this book, which is so important to me.

Thank you, Shelly Fogelman, my friend and agent of many years, for such strong

support and wise guidance. I can still remember one of our early meetings when you said, "Be patient and wait for that right project that will be something that you're passionate about, but that also has the potential of reaching a large audience."

I can't help but also remember my mother's support when I, as a young boy, dreamed of becoming an artist. Her warm hand was always on my shoulder, encouraging me in her quiet way, saying, "You can do it, Jerry." That continuity of someone always being there for me was kept in place by my wife, Gloria Jean. By the way, in March we celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary. Gloria, this award is as much yours as it is mine. To our children, their spouses, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchild, thank you for your love and for keeping me grounded.

At the end of my school presentations there is always a question-and-answer period where I get to ask the last question. The one I most often ask is, "Do you think I am just as excited today as I was some forty-six years ago when I illustrated my first book?" Tonight I am asking you. Do you think I am just as excited today as I was some forty-six years ago when illustrating my first book? 🐾

Call for Referees

To make *Children and Libraries* a truly interactive publication, we're looking for ALSC members to serve as volunteer referees for journal articles. Unsolicited articles and those of a scholarly nature must be submitted to at least two referees to judge the submissions on accuracy, style, impact, importance, and interest. Specialists in particular genres (such as technology, literature, intellectual freedom, programming, and so on) are especially needed.

Referees make recommendations to the editor on whether or not manuscripts should be accepted for publication. Interested librarians should contact *Children and Libraries* Editor Sharon Korbeck Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com for more information on the referee process.



Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Acceptance Speech

Connecting Children to Books

Rafael López



Photo Credit: Stephen Simpson

Rafael López is the recipient of the 2010 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award for *Book Fiesta!: Celebrate Children's Day/Book Day; Celebremos El día de los niños/El día de los libros*, written by Pat Mora, published by Rayo, an imprint of HarperCollins. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. on June 27, 2010.

Where does one begin to celebrate books and children? In Mexico, we keep this spirit alive by honoring the day of the child, *el día de los niños*.

In San Miguel de Allende, this day is celebrated at the old public library, with its sun-drenched courtyard and fountain. There's storytelling, and kids take part in contests for stories, poems, and paintings. Their imaginations run wild while creating amazing animal sculptures using all kinds of materials.

On fiesta days, church bells start ringing about 5 a.m., followed by the pre-dawn boom of fireworks every half hour. It's time to gather your friends and neighbors, pay tribute to saints, pluck the *guitarra*, and join the celebration.

San Miguel's library seems like a world and a century or two apart from Pura Belpré's Harlem libraries. But they share one thing in common: connecting children to books. Isn't it so important that certain things in life be celebrated and connected? Like family and food. Molé and fiestas. Chilé and chocolate. In *Book Fiesta*, Pat Mora's clever words remind us that children and books everywhere deserve to be connected.

I remember my first experience traveling alone, when I was a child growing up in Mexico City—taking a rickety train to the metro station, past colorful vendors who sold everything from comics and Chiclets to medicinal herbs to cure a broken heart. Moving through an ocean of people, I boarded a second train to take the hour ride to Zocalo station. Leaving that metro was like stepping back into another time.

I was surrounded by Neoclassical buildings on my way to the Hemeroteca, the city's central library. Among the stacks there were ancient, sometimes dusty, heavy, leather-bound books. More than just the words and pictures, it was the grain of the paper, the smell and feel of the way a book ages that awakened my curiosity. On weekends, my father would take me to the Lagunilla flea market. I held his hand tightly as we searched for treasure. On these expeditions, we got lost in our quest for old relics and dis-

covered the magic of collecting broken books that other people left behind.

My uncle Jose Luis labored at a paper mill and would give us giant rolls of discarded brown paper. Mom and I would move the furniture as I rolled the paper out from one end of the room to the other. Inspired by the art of Guadalupe Posada, I decided to draw a parade of skeletons complete with trumpet players and flame-throwers. There were skeleton cows that waved flags, goat drummers and *calaca* cats carrying candelabras. Eventually I ran out of paper, so I began to draw on the walls. My mother, Pillo, was scolded endlessly by my five aunts for her lack of discipline, but she secretly whispered in my ear to keep going. After reading *National Geographic*, I decided the time had come to turn my bedroom into Tutankhamen's tomb. I enlisted my mother once again, to help me choose the true colors of the pharaoh's frescoes. Our poor Mexican *molcajete*, once destined to make only salsas, was given the new task of grinding stones, egg whites, and vegetables to recreate the royal colors of the Egyptian dynasty.

In Mexico we have an expression, "*no dar color*," literally the inability to give off color or emotion. Color and texture are very important to my work. Because I paint on pieces of wood, there are the tactile emotions associated with cutting and sanding, then letting the grain speak to me. I buy my paints from a little *tien-dita* in San Miguel, and they come in big jars that look like they should hold pickles.

My wife, Candice, has been my beautiful accomplice for twenty years, and together we walk the streets with a camera cataloging the colors, textural history, and stories of well-worn doors and peeling paint. I'm thankful that there is no chromophobia in my native country. Perhaps color is our way of preserving the spirit of childhood, our way of living a vibrant life full of wonder.

My friend Pat Mora is the founder of the family literacy initiative that is celebrated on *el día de los niños*, April 30. It's known in the United States as

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Geisel Award Acceptance Speech

From Frustrated Actor to Illustrator

Geoffrey Hayes



Photo courtesy of TOON Books, published by RAW Junior.

Geoffrey Hayes is the winner of the 2010 Geisel Award for Benny and Penny in the *Big No-No!* published by Toon Books, a division of RAW Junior. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. on June 28, 2010.

For a time when I was in grade school, our classes would disperse on Friday afternoons to various “clubs.” There was the Science Club, the Glee Club, the History Club, the Drama Club, and so on. My first choice was *always* the Drama Club.

I was big on theatre and had starred in two school plays, so this seemed like a no-brainer, but to my extreme frustration, I was never put in the Drama Club. I thought, “Don’t they know who I am?” Instead, I always got my second choice: the Library Club. Once I got past my initial disappointment, I *did* love the Library Club. We learned about the Dewey Decimal system; we shelved books; we read them and wrote reviews. Best of all, I was exposed to titles I might not otherwise have known about.

The books in the school library were different from the Little Golden Books I had at home—here were books with hard covers, with black and white or two-color illustrations, books that had color plates “tipped” in. Some seemed old-fashioned—*Angus and the Ducks*; some seemed magical—Wanda Gág’s *Snow*

our house. Our mother read classics such as Winnie-the-Pooh, Raggedy Ann and Andy, and Rudyard Kipling’s *Just So Stories* to my brother and me, but on our own we read comic books. Our parents, to their credit, never implied that comic books were inferior forms of literature. They simply encouraged us to read what we liked. Comics were cheap and prolific and what’s more, they were written with kids in mind.

I was too young to have seen Walt Kelly’s *Fairy Tale Parade* or his *Christmas with Mother Goose*, but I read *Classics Illustrated*, as well as many *Funny Animal* comics, movie adaptations, *Little Lulu*, *Dennis the Menace*, and *Dick Tracy*. Rory and I probably learned to read as much from comics as from anything else. The first creative writing we undertook was to make our own comics. Comics led me away from the dream of acting and into the world of writing.

By the time I became an adult, the comics I grew up with had disappeared, due to the media furor against comics unleashed by Dr. Wertham’s *Seduction of the Innocent*, and the mid-fifties comic

“Reading aloud was a nightly ritual in our house. Our mother read classics such as Winnie-the-Pooh, Raggedy Ann and Andy, and Rudyard Kipling’s Just So Stories to my brother and me, but on our own we read comic books.”

White; others were simply fun, like *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* and *And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* by a fellow with the curious name of Dr. Seuss. Doctors could also write books? I wondered if he wrote them in between seeing patients.

How could I have imagined then, that one day I’d receive an award named in Dr. Seuss’s honor given by the American Library Association? After all, this library business, enjoyable as it was, was just something to keep me occupied until I could become an *actor*.

Reading aloud was a nightly ritual in

book burnings and Congressional hearings that followed. This was the heyday of Marvel and DC, but I had no interest in superheroes. Instead I put comics on the back burner and channeled my creativity into children’s books.

I began to call myself an “illustrator” and to work in watercolor and pen and ink. In 1980, I actually did a comic book for HarperCollins called *Elroy and the Witch’s Child*. But the climate was not receptive to comics, and it didn’t do well. Later, I tried incorporating comic book conventions, such as word bubbles, into my picture books, only to conclude that hybrids are ultimately unsatisfying. What

I longed to do was a full-fledged comic like the kind I grew up reading.

So, five years ago, when Françoise Mouly asked if I'd like to be a part of a new series she was planning called Toon Books ("Toon Into Reading" it was called then), which were an original idea, Beginning Readers in comic book form, I jumped at the chance. I had seen and admired the Little Lit series that she and her husband, Art Spiegelman, had done, and wondered why my art wasn't included.

I saw myself as a comics artist, but how could anyone else know that, with over forty traditional children's books to my credit? Well, it turns out, Françoise knew. She had relished reading some of my early books with her small children, and she sensed the closet cartoonist screaming to get out.

Happily, I had learned much about what makes a good children's book and was eager to apply what I'd learned to this new venture. During the next couple of years as the Toon books took shape,

we worked hard to ensure that everything—the font size, the page layouts, the language, and the stories—made them books that children would want to read and *re-read*. After that came the equally challenging task of having Toon Books accepted as legitimate Readers, instead of seeing them dismissed as sub-literature, or being lost among the new kind of graphic novels, definitely *not* for children.

Fortunately for us, librarians are a savvy bunch. You have been the first ones willing to break boundaries and overcome prejudices, the first to see the value of well-written and well-edited comics for children, and the first to recognize the impact these books can have on their future reading habits. That's why a Toonbook receiving the Geisel is especially significant. It affirms that you see and appreciate what we have been trying to do. I say "we" because *Benny and Penny in the Big No-No* is not a stand-alone title. If it's good, it's because the collection itself is so good.

In fact, nothing I have done, I've done

alone. Throughout my career, my first editor and long-time agent Edite Kroll's persistence has kept me focused, her editing skills have honed my craft, and her belief in me has been unswerving. Françoise Mouly has restored me to creative life through my love of comics. She is justly famous for her taste and talent, but I value her even more for her love of family and friends and her dedication to improving children's literacy. And finally, it would be a big no-no not to give a word of thanks to the ever-creative Art Spiegelman for his friendship, his generosity, and for coming up with the title.

Still, I reserve some space for personal satisfaction and am pleased to pieces that you have awarded me this honor. It seems those grade school teachers knew who I was better than I did. And although my young actor self would probably chafe at the thought, how truly gratifying it is to know that I am still a part of the Library Club.

Thank you so much. 🐘

PURA BELPRÉ ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, continued from page 12

Children's Day and Book Day. Talk about connections. Librarians, teachers, and parents who believe in sharing book *alegría* are doing their part and linking kids to books, languages, and cultures.

My son, Santiago, grew up believing that paintbrushes were magic wands, but

incredible opportunity to work together on this project. The power of Pat's words in *Book Fiesta* challenged me to create paintings where kids could see their own faces and the world around them.

Books anywhere, anytime, is the message of *Book Fiesta*. Who wouldn't want

“Perhaps color is our way of preserving the spirit of childhood, our way of living a vibrant life full of wonder.”

when Pat's joyful, poetic words came tumbling across my drawing table, I was spellbound. I'd like to thank my Harper Collins-Rayo book family and editor Adriana Dominguez for giving us the

to travel to faraway places in hot-air balloons and submarines? To imagine that you are a pirate or a mermaid? Didn't Emily Dickinson say, "There is no frigate like a book"? It's amazing to take a ride

on the back of a great purple elephant or sail along with your closest friends in the mouth of a whale. To use our open books as wings and fly away.

I am so grateful and offer my deepest thanks to the Pura Belpré committee and the American Library Association. I am pinching myself to be here with all of you who love books as I do, my illustrator *compadres*, my family, and friends.

Receiving the Pura Belpré is like reading an extraordinary book. You forget what you are doing, you couldn't possibly put it down, and you wish that it would never end. I promise to check it out, take very good care of it, and return the spirit of Pura to the library where her legacy is still busy in the stacks. 🐘

Collaboration at Its Best

Library and Autism Programs Combine to Serve Special Audience

GEORGIA WINSON AND COURTNEY ADAMS

Throughout the seventy-eight neighborhood branches, two regional locations, and the central location in Chicago's South Loop, the Chicago Public Library (CPL) served more than 260,000 children in the 2005–06 fiscal year.¹ The typical Chicago family is more than likely taking advantage of the library's vast, citywide system. CPL's commitment to serving diverse and underserved populations is now reaching a new segment of the population.

According to new prevalence rates released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States is affected by an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).² The importance of library services, the number of families to be served, and the growing number of individuals with ASD highlights the importance of training library staff and providing specialized supports to ensure that individuals with ASD have access to the wide range of library services.

ASDs are neurologically based developmental disorders. Autism results in difficulties in communication, social interaction, and behavior. This translates to delays in or lack of spoken language, difficulty determining social nonverbal cues, and preoccupation or highly circumscribed interests.³ The most common disorders on the spectrum are "classic" autism, pervasive devel-

opmental disorder—not otherwise specified (PDD–NOS), and Asperger's syndrome.⁴

ASDs affect four to five times more boys than girls.⁵ A relatively large percentage of individuals with "classic" autism also have some level of intellectual disability; however, there are many individuals with autism spectrum disorders who have average or above average intelligence.⁶ In fact, autism is viewed on a spectrum because of the many different manifestations and presentations of the disorder and the presence of wide individual variation in intellectual functioning.⁷

Failure to understand the wide variation between persons with autism has led to broad generalizations and misconceptions about the characteristics of autism, such as having lack of eye contact, possessing an inability to show affection, having no verbal skills, being unable to improve or learn, or being geniuses or savants.⁸ Each person on the spectrum has unique strengths and weaknesses. Each one also has the potential to "experience positive outcomes" with early intervention and appropriate supports.⁹

Statistics and clinical definitions are important; however, a true understanding of ASDs requires going beyond clinical definitions



Georgia Winson (far left) is Chief Administrator of The Autism Program of Illinois at the Hope Institute for Children and Families. She has led regional and statewide forums to support consensus, resulting in a network of twenty-seven agencies and universities working in collaboration to increase access and quality of services. **Courtney Adams** (near left) is the Network Coordinator for The Autism Program of Illinois at the Hope Institute for Children and Families.

to discussions with family members and self-advocates living with the disorder. Lilya Zigelman, a parent of a child with Asperger's and an employee at CPL, is amazed by her son's ability to study a subject of interest until he has fully exhausted the topic. Many individuals on the spectrum have keen rote memory that allows them to amass and retain an impressive amount

Bernadette Nowakowski noted that the library is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, and they strive to accommodate all individuals.

"Our mission is access for all," said Nowakowski. "We make sure all have equal opportunities."

"The library would seem like an ideal place for someone who has the patience and tenacity to explore every aspect of a given subject. Unfortunately, the traditional lack of autism-specific training and support in libraries and other community settings has reduced access for individuals with autism."

This mission is supported by a new collaboration with the Autism Program of Illinois and the Hope Institute for Children and Families. The collaboration is designed to enhance the library experience for Chicago area children with autism and their families. It has resulted in the development and implementation of a training series for CPL.

of information. Unfortunately, individuals on the spectrum may have difficulty putting their knowledge to practical use and may have problems relating to others outside of these interests.

The Autism Program of Illinois, a division of the Hope Institute for Children and Families, is the largest statewide system of care for individuals with ASD in the country. The Autism Program is headquartered in Springfield, and impacts sixteen thousand children statewide through diagnostics, treatment, training,

and resource support at twelve regional centers and via a robust, centralized system-development program with a strong focus on outreach and accessibility. The Autism Program's outreach and accessibility programs are supporting services through a variety of community programs, including the CPL.

"Right now, he is studying sharks," Zigelman said. "He told me about a shark in Lake Michigan, but I did not believe him until I saw the book." He also spent four years learning about every country in the world. "Not just the names," said Zigelman. Her son learned everything he could about each of the countries.

"We train our staff to be aware of people with autism and how we can best serve and understand them," said Nowakowski.

The library would seem like an ideal place for someone who has the patience and tenacity to explore every aspect of a given subject. Unfortunately, the traditional lack of autism-specific training and support in libraries and other community settings has reduced access for individuals with autism. When her child was young, Zigelman said it was harder to use the library. During storytime programs, they would have to leave after fifteen minutes.

Each year, trainers from the Autism Program provide a full-day seminar and four one-hour presentations for library staff. As Lead Trainer Chris Flint noted,

"He took the stories very literally, [and] he could not sit through them," said Zigelman, whose son did not receive a proper diagnosis for Asperger's Syndrome until he was twelve.

"The librarians are enthusiastic and committed to creating greater access for persons with ASD and developmental disabilities. The collaboration with Chicago Public Library is one example of our work to enhance independence and community engagement. We are currently working with a variety of organizations, including City of Chicago Department of Aviation, Chicago Children's Museum, and Chicago Transit Authority, to further increase accessibility to community services and resources."

"If my son were young now, it would be different."

"All librarians need to be trained," said Zigelman. "We don't want to close the door [for people with autism]. A little knowledge in autism can help with other disabilities, too."

Zigelman's experience is shared by many parents of children on the spectrum, but CPL has launched an initiative that will drastically improve the library experience for Chicago area families.

"We did this [training] last year and will repeat it this year," said Nowakowski. "In the future, we would like to train our [security] guards, too. All staff needs this training."

CPL's Initiative

The mission of CPL is to "welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and pursuit of lifelong learning. Working together, we strive to provide equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, programs and other resources. We believe in the freedom to read, to learn, to discover."¹⁰ CPL Director of Children and Young Adult Services

"Autism is complex. But we need to put the person first, before autism is even involved. We need to look at the uniqueness of the person, just like we would with a 'typically' developing child," said CPL Foundation Board Member Joanne Hughes.

"The Chicago Public Library has taken a proactive approach to recognize that people on the spectrum are patrons, and

our mission is to include access of services and programs for everyone. That includes people on the autism spectrum,” said Hughes.

Accessibility Kits

The Autism Program of Illinois and CPL are taking a proactive approach by creating an accessibility kit. These kits, which will be available to check out and to download online, will include many things, including transition aids for the storytime programs.

“We have three storytime programs,” said Nowakowski, who described a program for children under two, another for children from two to three, and finally, a preschool program for children three to five.

“If we have a program where we read a story and do a craft, we are working to adjust our presentations to make them more accessible,” said Nowakowski. “We are making our staff aware that we have children and other patrons on the spectrum. We are all for inclusion, but we are also open to creating special programs that can help children [on the spectrum] if there is a need.”

Storytime and other programming at the library will, according to Zigelman, “expose [children with autism] to regular life and improve their skills. It is wonderful when you can read to your children and let them know they are not alone.”

Individuals with ASD, often disturbed by change, gravitate toward what is familiar. The accessibility kits, through pictures and brief descriptions, will make the library familiar and will teach individuals with autism what to expect in all areas of the library, from storytime to the circulation desk. There will be a story that shows step-by-step in pictures that you need to have a library card and the book you want to check out, and that you might have to wait in line. There are similar stories for using a computer or getting a library card.

The Autism Program has also been instrumental in creating accessibility kits for the Chicago Children’s Museum and the Illinois Department of Aviation. Nowakowski indicated an

interest in housing the aviation and museum kits at the library and on their website.

“We are still learning,” said Nowakowski. But CPL is working to make the computers more accessible by outlining the steps for reservation in a way that children with autism can follow and purchasing talking books and audiobooks to accommodate different learning styles.

“There are always opportunities for increasing accommodations,” said Hughes. Innovative collaborations such as the one that exists between The Autism Program and CPL will continue to advance understanding, create accommodations, and increase access.

“The more we know, the better we can help,” said Nowakowski. ☺

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“Where Did I *Really* Come From?”

Assisted Reproductive Technology in Self-Published Children’s Picture Books

PATRICIA MENDELL AND PATRICIA SARLES

For those wanting to become parents but unable to conceive naturally, reproductive medicine has offered alternative routes to having a baby. The most difficult decision for parents who decide to use alternative family-building options is whether to tell their child that he or she was born with the assistance of a donor and/or surrogate. Parents want to know what to say when their child starts asking “Where did I come from?”

Parents often are concerned about what language to use in discussing disclosure and conception and how their child will react once told. Because most children’s understanding of reproduction evolves over time, so will the questions they ask about their origins. While there are many excellent books that have helped parents address the question of natural conception, only in the last twenty years has there been a gradual increase in books about third party reproduction, and in particular, in those written for children. What is there, if anything, and how do librarians locate these materials for their patrons?

It is this body of literature that intrigued me when I (Patricia Sarles) met Patricia Mendell, a psychotherapist specializing in reproductive health, in 2003, when my partner and I attempted

to get pregnant via artificial insemination.

It was pure coincidence that around the same time that I met Patricia, I read a book review of *Donuthead* by Sue Stauffacher, a tween novel about a boy who happened to be the product of donor sperm. How interesting I thought—and so did Patricia—that there could be books written for teenagers with characters who were the products of ART (assisted reproductive technologies). How common was this, or was it not? Had anybody else ever written about children who were the products of ART?

Patricia was curious, and so was I. Thus began a fascinating search that brought us first to the Library of Congress (LC) to see how *Donuthead* was cataloged, only to immediately discover that the subject headings “Courage,” “Fear,” “Self-actualization,” “Friendship,” “Mothers and sons,” and “Single-parent families” were not going to help us find other books like it, specifically books with characters who were the product of donor sperm.

While the cataloging for this novel certainly seemed thorough, where was any indication that the main character was the product of a sperm donor? I would have to use a keyword search to see what would come up. Could it be that there were no

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subject headings for donor offspring or the donor-conceived? I had never searched for this subject, so I had no idea what I would find. Could *Donuthead* be the only one? Could it be that the LC had no need to create a new subject heading for donor offspring, as there was only one book out there? How interesting this was becoming, for how does a librarian find books on certain subjects if there are no subject headings for those books?

A keyword search quickly uncovered another book, *The Sperm Donor's Daughter and Other Tales of Modern Family* by Kathryn Trueblood. Was this indeed a book about a child conceived via sperm donor, or simply a clever title? A summary in *Books in Print* confirmed that yes, the main character in the title piece was indeed the product of sperm donation. So here were two books, Trueblood's book, first published in 1998, and Stauffacher's, published in 2003. An LC keyword search uncovered one other book, published in 2003, whose main character was also conceived via donor sperm: *Singing the Dogstar Blues* by Alison Goodman. Our hesitation about this title was that it was cataloged as science fiction and therefore might not have been a "realistic" novel about the experience of being a donor offspring.

In 2003, the year we began looking for these types of books, this was all that had been published. But how could we be totally sure that we'd left no stone unturned unless we had a subject heading with which to begin our search?

Our search turned to children's books. Patricia had shared with me that over the years, she had found that many of the books published on donor offspring had either been written by colleagues in the field or by donor offspring parents who had felt the need to write their own book to help explain to their own children the special circumstances of their conception. Armed with these titles, we went back to the LC to see if it owned them and if so, what subject headings they were assigned.

Not only did the LC not own most of these books, but, again, the few they did own made no mention of the fact that the books were about donor offspring. In fact, the subject headings the LC did apply did not truly reflect the books' contents: "Infertility," "Babies," "Test tube babies," and "Artificial insemination, Human," were the most common subject headings used.

None of these subject headings contained the words "donor offspring" or even directly mentioned these children, nor did they provide a hint at the books' purpose for their readers—to help parents explain to their children their donor origins. And in the case of two children's book series written for donor-offspring by authors Janice Grimes and Iréné Celcer, the LC cataloging is odd. It catalogs Grimes' books as nonfiction even though she uses talking bears as the main characters and Celcer's books as fiction even though she uses human beings as its main characters. Both books are actually fiction.

To add even more confusion to the inconsistency of the listings, Grimes and Celcer both wrote a series of books that explain the different methods of conception to children, yet the LC did not feel the need to include all the books in Grimes' series, while

it did include all the books in Celcer's series. As Hope A. Olson states in her article in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* about LC Subject Headings,

library users seeking material on topics outside of a traditional mainstream will meet with frustration in finding nothing, or they will find something but miss important relevant materials. Effective searching for marginalized topics will require greater ingenuity and serendipity than searching mainstream topics.¹

Both the Grimes and Celcer book series are clear examples that LC subject headings need to be updated to reflect the growing number of children born from alternative family choices as a result of the advances made in the last thirty years in reproductive medicine. While both series are part of the LC catalog, they are cataloged differently.

Both series contain donor offspring characters for children and serve the same purpose for the parents of these children, but because they are cataloged differently, the average reference librarian would most likely not direct a patron to these books. This lack of uniformity in subject headings, as well as the absence of the LC subject heading "donor-offspring," makes it difficult to search for books on this subject.

As one donor-offspring mother said, "Considering that there have been well over one million donor offspring born, this sends the message that children like my son do not exist because the Library of Congress has not established an official subject category for these children and their families."²

Bibliographic Access

Inconsistencies in LC cataloging are notorious and unfortunate, since librarians and patrons rely so heavily on the cataloging as the "de facto standard for libraries in the United States and elsewhere."³

In the case of donor offspring, there are no LC subject headings at all, yet the term could also conceivably be constructed as "Children of sperm donors," "Children of egg donors," or "Children of gamete donors," as well as "Children of donor embryos," and "Children of surrogate mothers," since the LC does delineate the concept of "Children of . . ."

Take for instance the children of entertainers in Great Britain, France, West Germany, and the Soviet Union. There is just one book each on these topics in the LC, yet these subjects have been given their own subject headings. Take, as well, the children of epileptics, the children of football players, and the children of ex-Jews. These too have a single book in the LC, yet they have all been given their own subject heading. So why not donor offspring or at least children of gamete donors?

When I began searching the LC catalog and uncovered the above discrepancies and the lack of consistency with LC subject headings, I contacted the LC via the Ask a Librarian correspondence

form (www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-main2.html) hoping to bring this to their attention. I told them I had identified more than forty books at the time that were either about donor offspring or had donor offspring as main characters, and I received this response:

We have not had the need to establish a heading for the children of sperm donors, as we have not cataloged any items that specifically focus on that topic. The existing headings have been adequate for the items that we've cataloged. We establish new headings only as they are needed for cataloging new works being added to our collection.⁴

I wrote back giving them the titles of the thirteen books that did exist in their catalog—seven for children, five for young adults, and one for professionals—but I never heard back from them.

Technical services, however, is not the subject of this article. Nonetheless, how does the average reference librarian help a patron find books written for and about donor offspring? We have discovered seventy-eight books written for children and young adults that include donor-offspring characters. The annotated booklist included at the end of this article was created in the hopes that it will aid reference librarians with patrons, both parents and children, who come to them with these questions. It is also our hope that this list will help professionals outside the field of librarianship and in the field for which these books are intended: health-care professionals and consumers in the field of reproductive medicine.

While the children's booklist is primarily for parents of donor offspring to help explain assisted conception to their children, the list for young adults is meant to help older donor offspring children who are seeking books that address their questions about their unique origins.

ART and Donor Offspring

In England in 1978, Louise Brown was born via in vitro fertilization (IVF) and became known as the first “test-tube baby.” A year after her birth, the Browns used IVF again to conceive their second child.

Currently, there have been more than three million babies born of ART.⁵ The genetic origins of children of ART can vary depending upon the reproductive issues of their parents. These children are born to infertile couples and same-sex couples, as well as to women and men who choose single parenthood. Recipient parents can create their children through ART procedures using the following:

- An ovum (egg) of the mother and sperm from the father that is carried by the mother.
- A donated egg from another woman that could be related to the potential mother or not (egg donor) and the sperm of the intended father, carried by the intended mother (single or in a relationship).

- The definition for Gestational Surrogacy—is a woman who carries an embryo to term from an egg and sperm of persons not related to the carrier and therefore the carrier has no genetic connection to the resulting child.
- A donated egg and donated sperm from a sperm donor that is carried by the intended mother or gestational surrogate.
- A donated sperm and donated egg from one of the intended mothers that is carried by the other intended mother.
- A donated egg and sperm from one of the intended fathers that is carried by a gestational surrogate.
- A donated embryo that has been donated to another person or couple by the original recipients who have now completed their family and have decided to donate their excess embryos.
- A surrogate mother—a woman who has agreed to carry a baby that is a result of an egg donated from her and fertilized with the potential recipient father's sperm.

While there are still many more possible combinations that could be discussed, it is important to be clear that children conceived through reproductive technology via a third party, whether it be a donated egg, donated sperm, a donated embryo, or a surrogate mother, fall under the label “donor offspring.”

In 1983, Australia reported the first birth of a baby born through the use of a donated egg and IVF.⁶ Presently, the number of children created through donor eggs is estimated to be close to one hundred thousand.⁷

While little is known about the first use of donor sperm for procreation, it is believed that this option has been around for more than a hundred years. In the last thirty years, donor insemination has gone through many changes. It is more mainstreamed and accepted in society, there are increased regulatory rules and licensures of sperm banks, and there is a growing awareness and demand that donor information and identity be more available to the parents and their donor offspring children. The estimated number of children created through donor sperm is unclear because, initially, accurate records were not kept. At this time, better efforts are being made to record these births, but the failure of fertility programs and parents to report births makes it difficult to keep accurate records.

As the number of donor-offspring children created through a third party has grown, so has the demand by parents and their donor offspring for literature that would help parents explain to their children, as well as to others, the special circumstances of their child's conception. In fact, for many parents, the most difficult decision is whether to disclose to their children that they were born with the assistance of a third party.

Numerous parents seek out mental health professionals trained in the field of donor conception for guidance on disclosure. They frequently want help with

- how and at what age should they begin to discuss donor conception with their children;
- what age-appropriate language to use;
- how they will feel;
- how their children will react;
- what others will say;
- how to answer questions from their children and others; and
- how to address concerns that it will negatively affect their relationship with their child.⁸

For this reason, the following questions become important: Are there any books for these families? How can families access these books? Where are the books for these children? And if more exist beyond the Grimes and Celcer books mentioned above, how can they be found?

Sex and the Children’s Book

Explaining sex and reproduction to a child is often difficult enough for parents without the added challenges presented in cases of children created with the assistance of a third party.

Knowing that many parents must face the “sex talk” with their child makes the topic of donor offspring even more daunting. And as Anne C. Bernstein, author of *Flight of the Stork: What Children Think (and When) about Sex and Family Building*, states,

although it is seldom easy for parents to know what to tell children about sex and birth and when and how to tell them, the challenge is multiplied when developments in reproductive technology increase the complexities—physiological, technical, psychological, and ethical.⁹

It is natural, then, that parents of donor offspring, given the complexity of their child’s conception, might turn to books to help them explain this subject to their children. Yet most sex instruction books for children only tell one story—that of fertile heterosexual couples being able to make a baby without obstacles. Therefore it is important for parents, in their search for help with disclosure, to keep in mind that sharing information is a process that evolves as children’s needs and their ability to understand grows.

However, as Lisa Jean Moore writes in *Sperm Counts: Overcome by Man’s Most Precious Fluid*, children who do not enter the world in the way that is often represented in children’s books about sex and reproduction “could be misled, confused, or ashamed by reading a book that does not reflect the reality of their conception.”¹⁰

In one of the most popular and well-reviewed series of books

for children on sex education, Robie H. Harris does devote one page to assisted conception: “Sometimes when people want to have a baby, the egg and sperm cell are not able to meet . . . that’s when some people use ways other than sexual intercourse for an egg cell and a sperm cell to meet. In fact, scientists have figured out several ways for an egg cell and a sperm cell to meet.”¹¹ But assisted conception is not given any in-depth treatment.

In fact, children remember only the information that is understandable at each stage of their physical and cognitive development. Young children (ages three and four) usually know that a baby comes from a mother’s body. Most children around age seven can understand more complex concepts; while during adolescence, donor offspring may want more information about the donor to help them better understand their own personalities and appearance. Frequently over time, a shift happens for parents: as the child becomes older and verbal, the language changes as the story is reshaped and owned by the child. This is developmentally favorable because, as Robert D. Emde et al. state in their book, *Revealing the Inner Worlds of Young Children*,

putting together large chunks of memories into a storied whole that makes sense can promote health. But more immediate, everyday experience is also organized in narrative form. We make sense of everyday events for ourselves in relation to others in a way that takes on a story form and is connected to our feelings. In other words, we pull together what is emotionally meaningful to us. We are then able to tell others about our experience, engage their interest, share meanings, and, in so doing, enlarge or “co-construct” new meanings. Affective meaning making in narratives, both for ourselves and for sharing with others, is a vital human endeavor. It is thus a momentous development when a child acquires the capacity for narrative at around three years of age.¹²

Unlike a young child, however, adolescents are able to access information about themselves without their parents’ knowledge or permission, giving a whole new meaning to information, the terms for donor offspring, and their personal search around their identity questions.

The questions remain: What information is there for parents and their donor offspring children? What books are available to them? And what can libraries do to serve this underserved but growing population of children and their parents? Hopefully the list here will serve as a start and at least bring attention to the fact that as many as 10 to 15 percent of reproductive age couples in the U.S. are infertile, which translates to hundreds of thousands of children conceived via ART. As Celcer, a therapist and the author of the *Hope and Will Have a Baby* series points out,

this book collection came into being to give parents a way to manage a task that may at first seem too overwhelming or stressful. It is meant to give couples a way to talk about their desires to become parents and their final success in doing so. It also is meant to give children an appropriate way to start understanding how they became their parents’ offspring.¹³

In our search, we found that most of these children’s books are self-published. None of the books, with one exception, was published by a major publishing house. The exceptions include *Where Did I Really Come From?* and the *Hope and Will* series, which were both published by small, independent presses, and *And Tango Makes Three*, published by Simon and Schuster. A number of the authors—like Celcer, Grimes, and the Donor Conception Network—have published a series of conception books, all with similar characters but differing family templates (i.e., donor sperm, donor egg, single parents, same sex parents, and so on).

Self-publishing

Self-publishing is not just a vanity enterprise. People turn to writing their own books for several reasons—one of which is to fill a niche that may not exist. In the case of donor-offspring books, all fill the authors’ need of creating a family story that expresses the unique qualities and similarities of families created with the help of a third party. Rarely are these books published through a major publishing house.

Although “self-published books are usually shunned by professionals who fear amateurish execution,”¹⁴ a situation that indeed applies to some of these titles, there continues to be a growing number of self-published books by donor-offspring families in their efforts to create understandable and meaningful family stories for themselves.

Researchers have found that families and individuals tend to remember facts more accurately if they encounter them in a story.¹⁵ Through casual family discussions and the use of these books, there evolves a re-sharing of the information over time in the context of the everyday family life, giving parents and children over the years an opportunity to revisit and add facts to the story, thereby making stories helpful to the donor offspring child as well as providing them with a healthy way to view their conception. It is important for parents to remember that the only “correct script” is the one that works for their family.

In regards to the stories in the books presented in the list below, these are in fact stories that are unique to the families who have written them, yet they are valuable because they validate for the children they are written for the fact that their conception was unique and special. And although the stories are unique and may or may not have a place in public libraries, it is important for librarians to know that they exist. As Juris Dilevko and Keren Dali state in “The Self-Publishing Phenomenon and Libraries,”

in public and academic libraries, there has been, for the most part, an awkward silence about how to deal with books from self-publishers, mainly because of the lack of reviews of self-published books in the mainstream reviewing outlets. But, as the nature of publishing changes . . . the issue of whether to collect self-published books assumes importance.¹⁶

Berinstein also states that “you may avoid self-published material today, but sooner or later, you will need to deal with it. And

that’s not a bad thing; some of it is great stuff.”¹⁷ Many donor offspring who were told of their origins from the beginning of their lives have said that they are glad their parents were open with them and always ready to answer their questions. Books like these can be conversation starters for parents and their children.

Parents must remember that their children’s questions about their origins should not be viewed as pathological nor a rejection of the parents, but a normal outgrowth of their need to understand who they are genetically. For many having little or no access to literature on disclosure can often discourage parents from sharing with their children information about their conception. Literature can foster a more open discussion about the aspects of disclosure giving families the tools they need to build meaningful stories about how each person came to be a member of this family.¹⁸

Having helpful, age-appropriate language, understanding the difference between biological and real parents, and addressing these fears, is useful in promoting honest, accurate, and meaningful family stories for these families. Even for parents who feel that it is the right of every individual to have information about their genetic heritage, being able to find books that assist with talking to their children can ease the way for these developmental dialogues to progress normally in the everyday life of a family.

The series *Telling and Talking about Donor Conception*, by Olivia Montuschi from the Donor Conception Network, is designed to guide parents who have built or are building their families with the help of donor conception (sperm, eggs, or embryos).

These guides are divided into four booklets by age group (0–7, 8–11, 12–16, and 17 and older). The series aims to support parents by giving them practical help in starting and continuing to share the story about how their family was made. While these are not booklets that would be read to children, they are helpful in assisting donor-offspring parents in their search to talk with their children about their conception.

It is our hope that the list compiled here will aid librarians—as well as donor offspring and their parents—and other professionals who have found it difficult to access information for this particular population.

The Search

As already mentioned, there are seven children’s titles already in the LC catalog. None of the titles is cataloged in a way to indicate that the books are written to help parents of donor offspring explain to their children their special conception. So how did we find them? We searched the online catalogs of several self-publishing houses, including BookSurge, Trafford, PublishAmerica, iUniverse, Xlibris, Lulu, and Authorhouse. The key words used are listed in table 1, and the subject headings currently employed by LC are listed in table 2.

It is easy to see why it would not be possible for the end user to find these books using a standard subject heading search in a library catalog. No other choice was left but to search Google. But before doing that, we searched Books in Print, WorldCat, and Google Books. We also used the "search inside" feature at Amazon using the same keywords.

The Booklist

The following booklist for children from birth to twelve is arranged alphabetically by author and includes books for children conceived through IVF, sperm donation, egg donation, embryo donation, and traditional and gestational surrogacy. The list is designed to help librarians help patrons with children conceived through these various methods, as well as to help those in the field of reproductive health.

Appleton, Tim. *My Beginnings: A Very Special Story.* Illus. by the author. IFC Resource Centre, 2005.

Out of print and not available for review. Owned by the Vancouver Public Library in Canada and the British Library; available from www.mybeginnings.org. Ages 2–5. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Ovum—transplantation; Human embryo—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human*

———. *I'm a Little Frostie.* Illus. by the author. IFC Resource Centre, 1999.

Not owned anywhere but available from www.mybeginnings.org/frostie.htm. Ages 2–5. Subject heading: *Human embryo—transplantation*

Baxter, Nicola. *Our Story: For Children Conceived Through DI Into Single Parent Families.* Illus. by various. Donor Conception Network, 2002. 22p. \$8 (ISBN 0954399501) paper.

A child asks his mother if he ever had a dad and she goes on to explain the different kinds of families there are and how babies are made. Having never met the right man, she explains how "some very kind men" she had never met gave "some of their sperm so women like me could have babies." Each of the books in the series has many of the same simple, stick-like figure illustrations and includes a couple in need of egg donation and a lesbian couple using sperm donation (there is no mention of the eggs and whose eggs were used). Owned by a British public library, the Vancouver Public Library in Canada, the State Library of Western Australia, and the University of Oxford; available from www.dcnetwork.org (The Donor Conception Network). Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Single-parent families; Ovum—transplantation; Children of gay parents; Human embryo—transplantation*

Other books in the series:

———. *Our Story: For Children Conceived Through Egg Donation.* Illus. by various. Donor Conception Network, 2002. 24p. \$8 (ISBN 0954399528) paper.

———. *Our Story: A Book for Young Children about Their Conception through Donor Sperm to Lesbian Parents.* Illus. by various. Donor Conception Network, 2002. 22p. \$8 (ISBN 095439951X) paper.

McKee, Alison. *Our Story: For Children Conceived Through Double or Embryo Donation.* Illus. by Evelyn Short. Donor Conception Network, 2002. 44p. \$8 (ISBN 9780954399535) paper.

Bourne, Kate. *Sometimes It Takes Three to Make a Baby: Explaining Egg Donor Conception to Young Children.* Illus. by Don Thompson. Melbourne IVF, 2002. 24p. \$30 (ISBN 0958190305) paper.

Explaining that "lots and lots of kids begin like this" and written by an infertility counselor, this is the story of a Mum and Dad

Table 1. Keywords and Subject Terms Used in the Search

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ■ Donor egg, oocyte, or ovum | ■ ART |
| ■ Donor sperm | ■ Surrogacy |
| ■ Donor embryo | ■ Surrogate mother |
| ■ Donor offspring | ■ Gestational carrier |
| ■ Donor conceived | ■ Assisted reproductive technology |
| ■ IVF | ■ Third party reproduction |
| ■ In vitro fertilization | ■ Gamete donation |
| ■ Artificial insemination | ■ Sperm donation |
| ■ Donor insemination | ■ Egg donation |
| ■ Assisted conception | ■ Embryo donation |
| ■ Assisted reproduction | |

Table 2. Subject Headings Currently Employed by LC

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Artificial insemination, Human | ■ Babies |
| ■ Ovum—Transplantation | ■ Genetics |
| ■ Human embryo—transplantation | ■ Surrogate mothers |
| ■ Fertilization in vitro, Human | ■ Sex instruction for children |
| ■ Infertility | ■ Human reproduction |
| ■ Test tube babies | ■ Human reproductive technology |
| | ■ Family |



who tried very hard to have a baby and couldn't. When the doctor said it was because the Mum's eggs didn't work, the Mum and Dad used an egg donor to help them get pregnant. Excellent illustrations. Ages 3–9. Subject headings: *Ovum—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Bryan, Leah. *The Baby Doctor: Explaining IVF to Your Child.* Illus. by Sara Riches. Nuhouse, 2008. 14p. \$37 (ISBN 9780980469615) paper.

Narrated by a little girl, this is the story about how her parents want to give her a baby brother or sister, and about her anxiety over all the treatments her mother has to go through in order to have that baby. One of the goals of the book is to help older siblings understand IVF and reduce their anxiety about it. It also is a helpful book to explain to IVF children, when they are older, how they were conceived. Available from www.nuhousepress.com. Ages 2–9. Subject heading: *Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Carter, Kristin. *What Matters Most: A Children's Book of Families.* Illus. by the author. Booksurge, 2008. 25p. \$12.99 (ISBN 9781439201534) paper.

Four-year-old Keira questions her dad about whether they are a real family because she does not have a mommy. Her dad assures her that they are a real family by sending her on playdates with a different family each day of the week. She meets several different kinds of families, including ones with two moms, two dads, adopted children, and divorced parents. She comes to realize that families are a group of people who love each other, and that is what matters most. Written and illustrated by the author, a preschool teacher in California, as part of her master's thesis at California Polytechnic State University. Included here because it is narrated through the eyes of a four-year-old girl living with her single dad. Simple and colorful illustrations. For children who spend time with other families. Available from www.booksurge.com. Ages 4–8. Subject heading: *Families*



Celcer, Irénée. *Hope and Will Have a Baby: The Gift of Sperm Donation.* Illus. by Horacio Gatto. Graphite, 2006. 28p. \$19.95 (ISBN 9780975581032) paper.

Written by a mental health professional, the books in this series

tell the fictional story of Hope and Will, who have trouble having a baby and need "a little bit of extra help." Told as a bedtime story to their son Matthew, Hope and Will explain the long road it took for Matthew to come into being with the help of donor sperm. Other books in the series tell the same story, but include donor egg, donor embryo, and traditional surrogacy as the methods in which Matthew came into being. The author is planning in 2010 to publish the books in Spanish. Available from www.amazon.com and www.hopeandwill.net. Ages 3–10. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Ovum—*

transplantation; Human embryo—transplantation; Surrogate mothers

Other books in the series:

Celcer, Irénée. *Hope and Will Have a Baby: The Gift of Egg Donation.* Illus. by Horacio Gatto. Graphite, 2006. 28p. \$19.95 (ISBN 9780975581018) paper.

———. *Hope and Will Have a Baby: The Gift of Embryo Donation.* Illus. by Horacio Gatto. Graphite, 2006. \$19.95 (9780975581025) paper.

———. *Hope and Will Have a Baby: The Gift of Surrogacy.* Illus. by Horacio Gatto. Graphite, 2006. 32p. \$19.95 (ISBN 097558104X) paper.

Cirisan, Wava. *The Very Special Ducklings: A Very Simple Story about Egg Donation.* Illus. by Stella Schultze. Trafford on Demand, 2004. 16p. \$10.15 (ISBN 141204216X) paper.

This is a story of two duckling families who were friends; one mother duck was able to lay six eggs and one mother duck could not lay any. Seeing that her friend was so sad because she could not lay any eggs, she decided to give two of her six eggs to her eggless friend. This story is for very young children but introduces the concept of egg and embryo donation in a simple way without all the possible questions that could be raised in the future about being a child of a known egg/embryo donor. What is interesting is that it does not discuss the father duckling's role in the decision to receive or donate eggs but highlights the mother duck's. Available from www.trafford.com. Ages 2–5. Subject headings: *Ovum—transplantation; Human embryo—transplantation*

Clay, George Anne. *Why Don't I Have a Daddy? A Story of Donor Conception.* Illus. by Lisa Krebs. AuthorHouse, 2008. 15p. \$16.50 (ISBN 9781425995874) paper.

Written by a single mother for her son, this is the story of a lion cub who notices all the animal families around him that have daddies and asks his lion mama why he doesn't have a daddy himself. She goes on to explain how there are different kinds of families and that she chose to have him alone with the help of a donor lion. In a note in the back, a clinical counselor writes, "This book can be a tool to help children work through some of the complexities of their situation." It also attempts to help the donor-conceived child anticipate and answer some of the questions that others may ask about his or her origins. Available from www.amazon.com and www.claystories.com. Ages 2–7. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Single-parent families*

Corning, Meg. *Nick's Story: How One Family Proved that Miracles Can Happen.* Illus. by Deborah J. McGee. Author House, 2008. 12p. \$6.95 (ISBN 9781434372116) paper.

This discussion-starter is narrated by four-year-old Nick who tells the story of how he "didn't grow inside [his] mommy's tummy," but rather inside the tummy of his surrogate mother who happened to be his aunt. The story is

unclear whether the aunt is a traditional surrogate or a gestational carrier for her sister and brother-in-law's embryo. Nice illustrations. Available from www.amazon.com and www.authorhouse.com. Ages 3–9. Subject heading: *Surrogate mothers*

Ellen, Nance. *The Egg Lady*. Illus. by Lon Eric Craven. Bittersweet Books, 2009. 33p. \$16.95 (ISBN 9780615305981) hardcover.

A "loving couple" wishes and hopes for a baby to share their love with but no baby comes. One day a beautiful woman who calls herself "the egg lady" appears at their door and offers to help them have a baby in the form of a basket of eggs. The couple is encouraged to pick one beautiful egg which the Egg Lady assures them will help them have their baby. Includes an "Our Story" section for readers to share with their children. Ages 3–6. Subject headings: *Ovum—transplantation*. Available from www.bittersweetbooks.net.

Geise, Brenda. *Love Spot: A Story of In Vitro Fertilization Conception*. Illus. by Blair Geise Merkle. AuthorHouse, 2008. 24p. \$10.99 (ISBN 9781438911021) paper.

Told in rhyme, this discussion starter narrated by the mother of a child conceived via IVF tells her child how "the doctor said / you would get a good start / outside my body / close to my heart." It reassures children conceived this way that they were still conceived in love. The author uses the idea of a "love spot" as a metaphor for a baby or the mother's egg. The theme of the book is the idea that through love a child can be created. For a younger child it may be fine but may not be clear to an older child. Available from www.amazon.com and www.authorhouse.com. Ages 2–5. Subject heading: *Fertilization in vitro, Human*

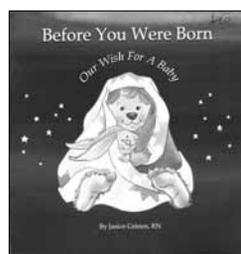


Gordon, Elaine R. *Mommy, Did I Grow in Your Tummy? Where Some Babies Come From*. Illus. by Kathy Clo. EM Greenberg Press, 1992. 28p. \$9.95 (ISBN 0963456105) paper.

This discussion-starter (one of the first books for children on this subject) was written by a clinical psychologist who experienced infertility herself. It tells the story of Sandy and Bob, who try very hard to make a baby, and when they can't, they go to a doctor who tells them that he can help them make a baby "another way." The book goes on to explain all the other ways a baby can be made. Excellent illustrations. Book to be updated and reissued in early 2010 with a new illustrator. Available from www.amazon.com and www.elainegordon.com. Ages 4–12. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Ovum—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human; Surrogate mothers*

Grimes, Janice. *Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Donor Sperm*. Illus. by Mary Moye-Rowley. X, Y, and Me, 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 095502816) paper.

Each book in this series presents a different conception story. Written by a nurse, this is the story of a baby bear who *loves* to hear the story of how he was born. Though mommy and daddy



bear had trouble having him, they were finally able to have him with the help of a "nice man called a donor." Excellent illustrations. High-quality paper. Available from www.xyandme.com. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Ovum—transplantation; Human embryo—transplantation; Children of gay parents; Human embryo—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human; Surrogate mothers*

Other books in the series (all written by Janice Grimes, illustrated by Mary Moye-Rowley, and published by X, Y, and Me):

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Donor Egg. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502824) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of a Frozen Embryo. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502859) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: A Baby Conceived for Female Partners. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502883) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: A Baby Conceived for Male Partners. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502891) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of a Donor Embryo. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502867) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of an IVF Baby. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502808) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Surrogacy. 2005. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0977344134) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of a Gestational Carrier. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502840) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Donor Egg (Gestational Carrier). 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0977344142) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Donor Insemination. 2004. 16 p. \$14.97 (ISBN 097734410X) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Donor Sperm (IVF). 2004. 16 p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502875) paper.

Before You Were Born . . . Our Wish for a Baby: The Story of Donor Insemination. 2004. 16p. \$14.97 (ISBN 0975502816) paper.

Infertility Research Trust. Jessop Hospital for Women. *My Story: For Children Conceived by Donor Insemination*. Illus. by Julie Heath. J.W. Northend, 1991. 36p. \$8 (ISBN 0901100293) paper.

Narrated by a child and written by two mothers who, with their respective husbands, both conceived via artificial insemina-



tion, this book talks about how Daddy's sperm could not reach Mommy's egg. This was one of the first children's books on the subject of donor insemination. Told in very simple language, this is a discussion starter for parents to help explain sperm donation to their children. Illustrations include nudity.

Available from the Donor Conception Network, www.dcnetwork.org. Ages 2–6. Subject heading: *Artificial insemination, Human*

Jover, Carmen Martinez. *Recipes of How Babies are Made*. Illus. by Rosemary Martinez. Self-published, 2007. 32p. \$15 (ISBN 9789709410341) paper.

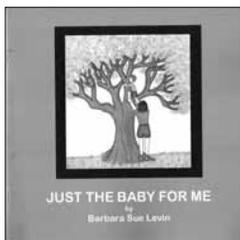
The book uses the metaphor of baking a cake to begin the discussion about baby-making. It describes traditional baby-making as the "classical recipe" for making a baby and then goes on to discuss the various other ways for making a baby when something goes wrong with one of the "ingredients." These include the need for donor sperm, donor egg, donor embryo, or a surrogate mother and goes on to explain that when none of these options works, there is also adoption as an option for having a child. Excellent illustrations. Includes nudity. High-quality binding. Available from www.amazon.com and www.carmenmartinezjover.com. Ages 4–8. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Ovum—transplantation; Human embryo—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human*

———. *A Tiny Itsy Bitsy Gift of Life, an Egg Donor Story*. Illus. by Rosemary Martinez. Carmen Martinez Jover, 2005. 24p. \$15 (ISBN 9709410326) paper.

With rabbits as stand-ins for a Mummy and a Daddy, this simple story for very young children tells how Pally and Comet tried to have a baby but couldn't, so they borrowed some "tiny itsy bitsy seeds," a "tiny itsy bitsy gift of life" from another rabbit Mummy to help them grow their baby inside of Pally. It may be difficult to explain to children how the donor knew that seeds were needed and that the gift was so small even though it is so large. Illustrations are excellent. High quality binding. Available from www.amazon.com and www.carmenmartinezjover.com. Ages 2–6. Subject heading: *Ovum—transplantation*

Leicester, Mal. *Making Miracles*. Illus. by Taryn Shrigley. ACeBabes, 2001. 20p. (ISBN 0954186109).

Not available for review. Owned by two public libraries in Great Britain, the University of Oxford, and the British Library and available outside the United States from www.infertilitynetworkuk.com. Subject heading: *Fertilization in vitro, Human*



Levin, Barbara. *Just the Baby for Me*. Illus. by the author. Lulu.com, 2008. 15p. \$17.96 (No ISBN) paper.

This very positive story was written and illustrated by a woman who chose single motherhood when she could not find the right man over a

period of time. This is the story she wrote for her own little girl to explain how she was conceived via sperm donation. This book has no ISBN but is available from www.lulu.com. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Single-parent families*

Logan, Katrina Kay. *Who's Ivy F I.V.F.?* Illus. by Geoff Logan. Self-published, 2009. 31p. \$19.95 (ISBN 9780980616200) hardcover.

Written by a woman whose nephew was conceived by IVF and who could not find any books that were "neither too scientific nor too clinical" on the subject. It is narrated by a little boy who overhears his parents talk about their "special I.V.F. baby." But, not knowing it is he they are talking about, he has no idea who Ivy F. is. After going on a search to find Ivy and being unable to, he finally asks his parents who Ivy F. is and they explain to him that *he* is their IVF baby. Available from www.ivfbooks.com. Ages 4–6. Subject heading: *Fertilization in vitro, Human*

———. *I'm I.V.F.* Illus. by Geoff Logan. Self-published, 2009. 30p. \$19.95 (ISBN 9780980616217) hardcover.

This sequel to *Who's Ivy F?* is told in rhyme and narrated by the same little boy in the first book. It goes into a little more detail about IVF: "Mum's egg went under the microscope, joined by dad's sperm and lots of hope." This book is a discussion starter as it prompts parents to explain what sperm and egg are. Available from www.ivfbooks.com. Ages 4–6. Subject heading: *Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Margolis, Amy. *Butterflies & Magical Wings*. Illus. by Natalie Marino. Amy Margolis Publishing, 2006. 34p. \$16.99 (ISBN 0977669203) hardcover.

Using butterflies as a metaphor for people conceiving with help from a third party, Flutter and Milo do a "magic baby butterfly dance" to have a baby of their own. Unfortunately, their magic dance doesn't work until they meet a special butterfly who has "magical spots" that she can lend them. With the help of "scientific technology," they have a baby butterfly of their own. Colorful illustrations. The story is wordy for children under five and would be best suited for ages seven and up. Available from www.butterfliesandmagicalwings.com. Subject headings: *Ovum—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Mileham, Megan. *A Special Beginning*. Illus. by Ryan Voegtle. AuthorHouse, 2009. 26p. \$14.99 (ISBN 9781434391186) paper.

The author, a surrogate mother, wrote this story as a gift to the parents to whom she bore a child. Told as if narrated by the parents themselves, it tells of their love for the woman who agreed to carry their baby. It is unclear whether the child is a result of traditional surrogacy (egg donated by the surrogate) or gestational surrogacy (egg and sperm from the recipient parents). Available from www.amazon.com and www.authorhouse.com. Ages 3–6. Subject heading: *Surrogate mothers*

Miller, Rebecca. *You are a Gift: A Post Infertility-Success Support Tool for Parents*. Illus. by Edie Costa. Trafford, 2003. 21p. \$14 (ISBN 1412012503) paper.

This book for very young children tells how Mommy and

Daddy wanted a baby very much and soon learned that they needed help to have a baby. They then saw a doctor who specialized in making babies. The author speaks in very simple and general terms; describing body parts as broken or missing. She does not describe where eggs and sperm originate or how they end up in the mommy's uterus. Described as a support tool, the book is a starting point for parents over time to add more details to the story of their child's conception and birth. Available from www.trafford.com. Ages 2–4. Subject headings: *Assisted conception; Assisted reproductive technology; Assisted reproduction*

Mizer, Kelly C. Frederick. *Waiting for You.* Illus. by the author. Lulu.com, 2008. 32p. \$26.95 (No ISBN) hardcover.

This is a simple story about waiting for a child to come into your life even long before you're ready to have one. It elicits a feeling that no matter how a child is conceived and arrives in a family (via growing inside the mother or having to travel to another country), that child was meant to be in that family. Every family has one thing in common—waiting for their child. It's included here because it touches on the fact that not all babies come from inside their mothers. Excellent illustrations. Available from www.lulu.com. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Childbirth; Pregnancy; Birth*

Nadel, Carolina. *Mommy, Was Your Tummy Big?* Illus. by the author. Mookind, 2006. 24p. \$19.95 (No ISBN) paper.

Written and illustrated by the author, a doctor who had fertility problems. This story begins when a baby elephant asks his mommy elephant if her tummy was big when he was in it and how he got there. She begins to explain that after several visits to the doctor and several attempts at pregnancy, the doctors helped her find a "special lady" whose eggs helped her become pregnant. The story's purpose is to help parents explain IVF and egg donation to their children. The author wrote a second book with the same characters and similar illustrations—a little elephant asks his daddy if his mommy's tummy was big and how he got there. The daddy elephant goes on to explain that mommy needed to borrow a "part" (sperm) from someone else in order to have him. Colorful illustrations. High quality binding. This book has no ISBN and is available from www.amazon.com and www.carolinanadel.com. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Ovum—transplantation*

———. *Daddy, Was Mommy's Tummy Big?* Illus. by the author, 2007. Mookind, 2006. 24p. \$19.95 (No ISBN) paper. Ages 2–5. Subject heading: *Artificial Insemination, Human*

Napier, Juliet. *Super Special Sisters: A Story about the Miracle of In Vitro Fertilization.* Illus. by Sheila G. Johnson. Trafford, 2006. 32p. \$14.77 (ISBN 1412078660) paper.

Written by a mother and librarian who conceived her second child, a son, after four attempts at IVF, it is narrated by her older son who is six to eight years old at the time of the telling. The story is written for older siblings to help them understand that some families may take longer to have a family. The story is realistic in that it explains that medical help may be needed to help a couple conceive, and even that may not always work. The story is altered in that the parents in the story conceive

with fraternal twin girls, the "super special sisters" that their older brother is talking about. Includes a child's glossary and a frequently-asked-questions section. Ages 6–11. Subject heading: *Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Nathalie, Rozanne. *Our Beautiful Work of A.R.T.* Illus. by Jennifer Lofchie and Bruce Sulzberg. Beaver's Pond, 2002. 13p. \$19.95 (ISBN 1931646767) hardcover.

Told in rhyme, Mommy and Daddy couldn't make a baby on their own, so they went to the doctor and the doctor helped them. Although cataloged as "Fertilization in vitro, Human," baking metaphors rather than technical explanations are used as symbols for how to make a baby. High-quality paper and binding. Colorful illustrations. Available from www.amazon.com and www.tellyourchild.com. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Ovum—transplantation; Human embryo—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Nathalie, Rozanne et al. *A Part Was Given and an Angel Was Born.* Illus. by Jennifer Lofchie and Bruce Sulzberg. Beaver's Pond, 2002. 15p. \$19.95 (ISBN 1931646783) hardcover.

Told in rhyme, this story explains how Mommy had to use a "part" from a "very special lady with a heart" in order to make her baby. Again metaphors are used as symbols for baby-making ingredients. The story is told very simply for young children but may be unclear for children over six years of age. Colorful illustrations. High-quality binding. Available from www.amazon.com and www.tellyourchild.com. Ages 2–6. Subject heading: *Ovum—transplantation*

———. *From Out of My Body Your Soul Did Grow.* Illus. by Jennifer Lofchie and Bruce Sulzberg. Beaver's Pond, 2002. 15p. \$19.95 (ISBN 1931646775) hardcover.

Told in rhyme, this is the story of how a couple could not carry their own child, so a gestational carrier, a "wonderful lady with a heart made of gold" carried their baby in her own tummy. The story is about surrogacy, but it is left unclear whether the egg was from the surrogate, an egg donor, or the couple themselves. Colorful illustrations. Available from www.amazon.com and www.tellyourchild.com. Ages 2–6. Subject heading: *Surrogate mothers*

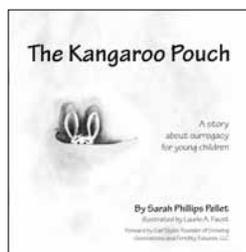
N.S.W. Infertility Social Workers Group. *How I Began: The Story of Donor Insemination.* Illus. by Merri Spencer. Fertility Society of Australia, 1988. 28p. (No ISBN), available online.

When Mummy and Daddy try to make a baby and can't, they go to the doctor. After many tests they discover that Daddy's sperm couldn't make a baby, so the doctor explains donor insemination to them as their option. For older children (includes nudity and a detailed description of lovemaking). Available online at www.infertilitynetwork.org/files/HowIbegan.pdf. Subject heading: *Artificial insemination, Human*

Packard, Robbi Anne. *Two Daddies . . . And Me.* Illus. by Lori Ann McElroy. AuthorHouse, 2009. 23p. \$11.10 (ISBN 978148955582) paper.

Told in rhyme, this story is written by a woman who was the surrogate mother to a little girl born for a gay male couple. With

colorful illustrations and few words, it is for very young children describing a day in the life of this little girl with her two dads, emphasizing that they are a family. The story is not clear about whether the author is a traditional or gestational surrogate and any of the other genetic questions regarding paternity. Ages 2–4. Subject headings: *Surrogate mothers; Children of gay parents*



Pellet, Sarah Phillips. *The Kangaroo Pouch: A Story about Gestational Surrogacy for Young Children.* Illus. by Laurie A. Faust. Trafford, 2007. 24p. (ISBN 1425105572) paper.

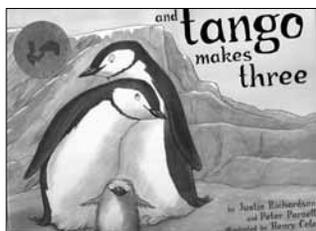
This discussion-starter is narrated by Oliver the Kangaroo who lives happily with his parents and brother. He

tells the story of how his mother one day had the idea to help another family have a baby by carrying that baby in her kangaroo pouch. It was written by a mother to help explain her decision to become a gestational surrogate to her children. Very nice illustrations. Available from www.amazon.com. Ages 2–6. Subject heading: *Surrogate mothers*

Poston, Karen. *A Baby for Mabel and Frederick.* Illus. by the author. Lulu.com, 2005. 20p. \$13.25 (ISBN 9781411660243) paper.

Emma's mom is a gestational carrier, and Emma has mixed feelings about it, sometimes wishing that the baby her mother is carrying was her new brother or sister, worrying about all the doctor visits her mother has to make, and also sometimes having to explain to her friends that her mother is carrying the baby for another family. This story is narrated by the daughter of a gestational carrier and is also available in a version narrated by a boy as well as a coloring book version. This book is available from www.lulu.com. Ages 4–8. Subject heading: *Surrogate mothers*

Richardson, Justin and Peter Parnell. *And Tango Makes Three.* Illus. by Henry Cole. Simon & Schuster, 2005. 28p. \$16.99 (ISBN 9780689878459) hardcover.



Central Park Zoo penguins Roy and Silo act like their male/female counterparts and do everything together. Watching the other penguin pairs build a nest, they too build a nest, but unlike the other penguins, their nest remains empty until one

day their zookeeper finds an egg that needs to be cared for and brings it to their nest, where it eventually hatches, and Roy and Silo become parents together. Wonderful and clear illustrations. Included on this list because this story can be used as a metaphor for embryo donation and for same sex couples. Held widely and available widely. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Human embryo—transplantation; Children of gay parents; Surrogate mothers*

Roling, Kerry. *A Most Precious Gift: A Story of Egg Donation.* Lulu.com, 2009. 44p. \$17.68 (No ISBN) hardcover.

Told in rhyme, this blank-page book created to “support [the]

child to draw their own illustrations or attach photographs,” is a long poem that tells the story of a fairy godmother who donated her egg so that another couple could have a child, “But your fairy god mum, gave a generous gift that’s true / A perfect little tiny egg, that helped us to make you.” Available from www.lulu.com. Ages 4–8. Subject heading: *Ovum—transplantation*

Schaffer, Patricia. *How Babies and Families Are Made: (There Is More than One Way).* Illus. by Suzanne Corbett. Tabor Sarah, 1988. 52p. \$7.95 (ISBN 0935079173) paper.

This is the first sex book ever published for children that mentions artificial insemination. This book includes a description of how babies are conceived naturally as well as how they are made in the cases of IVE, donor sperm, and adoption. The book also discusses pregnancy, miscarriage, fetal death, labor, types of delivery, prematurity, and disabilities. The author also discusses kinship in families and terminology for birth parents, step-parents, half-siblings, adopted parents, and biological parents. Language is straightforward and there are drawings in black and white with nudity, body parts, and a couple hugging in bed to represent sexual intercourse. Book could be updated to include donor egg, embryo, and surrogacy. Available from www.amazon.com. Ages 5–12. Subject headings: *Human reproduction; Sex instruction for children; Families*



Schnitter, Jane T. *Let Me Explain: A Story about Donor Insemination.* Illus. by Joanne Bowring. Perspectives, 1995. 32p. \$14 (ISBN 0944934129) hardcover.

One of the earlier books published on donor insemination for families with a mother and father. A little girl narrates the story of how alike she and her dad

are despite the fact that they don't look alike because she was conceived via sperm donation. It includes an introduction to genes, sperm, and ova. The book is about the child's thoughts on her origins and the questions that she is able to ask her parents about her donor. She even shares with her readers, “I think though, that I'm always going to wonder a little about what he is like.” She later goes on to share the fact that she does not feel any different from others, and that being made by a donor is just who she is. These reflections could be helpful for children who may find it hard to explain their background to others. In limited supply at www.perspectivespress.com. Ages 5–12. Subject headings: *Artificial insemination, Human; Father and child; Genetics*

Schwein-Coff, Traci K. *Before You Were Born.* Illus. by James Vaughn Jackson. AuthorHouse, 2006. 30p. \$11.40 (ISBN 9781420892260) paper.

This discussion starter tells the story of how Mommy and Daddy couldn't get pregnant and needed the help of an egg donor. Available from www.amazon.com and www.authorhouse.com. Ages 2–6. Subject headings: *Ovum—transplantation; Fertilization in vitro, Human*

Sherwin, Ali. *The Adventures of Princess Mommy.* Illus. by the author. 13th Moon, 2009. 30p. \$19.99 (ISBN 9780981955910) paper.

Using a fairytale template, the author, a single mom, describes meeting several potential mates. She describes in great detail why she rejects each one as a potential mate and dad to make a baby. Still wanting a child, she obtains "some magic seeds to plant in her eggs" so that she can make a baby. Available from 13thmoon.net/html/mommy.html. Ages 4–12. Subject headings: *Single-parent families; Artificial insemination, Human*

Smith, Holly Jean. *My Parent(s) Made Me in a Special Way: With Love and the Help of Donor Insemination.* Illus. by Janet Boley. H.J. Smith, 1996. 8p. (ISBN 9780968063309).

Subject heading: *Artificial insemination, Human*

Stamm, Linda. *Phoebe's Family: A Story about Egg Donation.* Illus. by Joan Clipp. Linda Stamm, 2003. 16p. (No ISBN) available online.

Written by a clinical psychologist, Mama loves to tell eight-year-old Phoebe the story of how Phoebe came to be with the help of an anonymous egg donor. This book is for children who have a mommy and daddy. The author understands that children will often be confused by the discussion about eggs and sperm, and for that reason she raises and answers some of the questions about egg and sperm that a child of that age might have. Younger children might not understand some of the terminology used here, but it is a wonderful discussion-starter for explaining egg donation to children. This is a good starter book when talking about the donor and the feelings that the child may have about not looking like her mommy but still being like her mommy. This book has no ISBN and is available online at www.infertilitynetwork.org/files/in_phoebes_family.pdf. Ages 4–9. Subject heading: *Ovum—transplantation*

Wickham, Narelle. *Where Did I Really Come From?: Sexual Intercourse, DI, IVF, GIFT, Pregnancy, Birth, Adoption and Surrogacy.* Illus. by Ingrid Urh. Learn to Include, 2008. 32p. \$19.95 (ISBN 9780646496153) paper.

First published in 1992 and now in its second edition, this is the first sex instruction book for children that mentions same-sex parenting as well as the various assisted reproductive technologies. Although the book includes all aspects of alternative family building, none is explained in any detail. Young children will find the language difficult and older children may need more details. Includes nudity. Available from www.amazon.com and www.hotkey.net.au/~learn_to_include. Ages 6–12. Subject headings: *Children of gay parents; Artificial insemination, Human; Fertilization in vitro, Human; Surrogate mothers; Human reproduction; Sex instruction for children; Adoption* ☺

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The Heat Is On

ALA Annual Conference, June 2010, Washington, D.C.

Photos by Sharon Verbeten



Gaye Hinchliff, left, of King County (Wash.) Library System manned the ALSC booth on the exhibits floor. Visiting the booth, above, was Kristen Cure of Tucson, Ariz.



Author Laura Purdie Salas of Minnesota signed a copy of her book *A Is for ARR!* at the Capstone booth.



Patty Saidenberg of the ALSC Children and Technology Committee, right, discusses e-book formats with a visitor.



Author and "Knucklehead" Jon Scieszka hammed it up with Clare Kindt of the Kress Family Branch of the Brown County Library, De Pere, Wis.



Author/illustrator Tedd Arnold shares a story with a guest at the Monday awards presentation. Arnold received a Geisel Honor for his book *I Spy Fly Guy!* (Scholastic).



Caldecott Award winner Jerry Pinkney, left, answers questions posed by *The Horn Book* Editor Roger Sutton.

Taking Part in Art

Designing a Children's Art Center

MARIA V. KRAMER

The preservation of culture and its transmission to the people has been one of the founding purposes of the American public library system.¹ While visual art clearly counts as part of culture, most people think of libraries as a source of books, and they more often associate museums or galleries with the visual arts. Certainly most people don't think of libraries as a space for art education.

With schools increasingly cutting art programs to comply with budget shortfalls, however, the library can step in to fill the need for visual arts education, becoming a place to foster creativity and artistic exploration. While many libraries already provide education in the visual arts through programming, not many have incorporated the visual arts into their everyday structure.

On my first day, I began working on the library's art center, which services Ann Arbor's 113,000 residents, 18,000 to 19,000 of which are under the age of eighteen.² The art center, a favorite project for previous interns, had undergone many different incarnations. My manager told me, and I soon found out as I investigated the displays left behind by previous interns, that art center displays had been oriented more toward "crafts" than "art"—including coloring sheets and step-by-step instructions.

My task was to reorient the center toward art.

In four months, I created multiple displays and observed noticeable increases in patron interest and activity. For some displays, more than one patron per hour will stop to engage in the art center. Families participate in the art center together, and my colleagues assure me that the art center is more popular than it has ever been.

Following are some of my findings about what makes a quality art center display, including the rationale for having an art center in a library, general guiding principles, and complete templates for four example displays.

Benefits of Visual Art and the Role of Libraries

Part of the premise of the public library system is that culture should be accessible to all, not simply to the cultural elite. Unfortunately, visual arts education is moving out of the grasp of mainstream American youth. Because of increasing financial constraints, many states have chosen to reduce funding to public schools.³ Schools often respond to cuts in funding by reducing or eliminating arts programs on the premise that the arts do not affect school performance on mandated state and federal exams. Despite this lack of perceived value, education in the visual arts is beneficial to children in many ways.

Visual literacy has been identified as a twenty-first-century skill, increasingly important for navigating the modern world. Visual literacy consists of "the ability to interpret, recognize, appreciate, and understand information presented through visible actions, objects and symbols, natural or man-made."⁴ Visual literacy is



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more than simply the passive interpretation and comprehension of visual symbols, however. It also involves being able to engage creatively in dialog with visual materials, responding to them, and incorporating them into one's own visual products.⁵ Visual literacy is a literacy of both interpretation and creation. The creation of art itself teaches students certain ways of thinking that can be transferred to other areas, both in school and in life. The ideas of craft and technique, critical reflection, constructive self-expression, observational analysis, and creative problem-solving are all taught by the practice of art, though they are by no means unique to the domain of art.⁶

Despite the importance of visual literacy in a world replete with visual information, and the complexity of visual literacy itself, many seem to think that children will learn to be visually literate intuitively without any formal educational guidance. Art education is the ideal framework in which to teach visual literacy by encouraging deep analysis and interpretation of works of art, as well as the design and creation of visual artwork.

Because of budget cuts, many students are not commonly exposed to works of art at school. Art museums may charge entrance fees or be thought of as “inaccessible” by the public, so many students are not often exposed to art after school either. Just as many educators would say that true print literacy cannot be achieved without exposure to good literature, true visual literacy cannot be achieved simply by watching television or viewing magazine advertisements—and just as true print literacy cannot be achieved without being able to communicate effectively in writing, true visual literacy cannot be achieved without being able to communicate effectively through images.

An art center is a convenient way to promote both components of visual literacy—interpretation and creation—by exposing children to art, encouraging analysis of art, and promoting creative expression in response to classic artwork.

Establishing an Art Center

One of the great benefits of starting an art center is its low start-up cost, and an even lower maintenance cost. The most expensive item in any art center will be the furniture; if you do not already have a table that can be used for this purpose, durable tables are available from library vendors such as DEMCO for less than \$200. Most public libraries will already have the supplies for an art center—construction paper, markers, glue sticks, and so on—for use in children's programs. In fact, an art center is a great way to use up leftover craft supplies. If you have an abundance of paper plates and Popsicle sticks, for instance, perhaps a mask-making or paper sculpture display is in order. An art center does not rely on expensive supplies to be a success, but on creative, intriguing displays; if you find yourself spending a lot of money on your art center, rethink your approach.

To engage both facets of visual literacy, an art center should provide children the opportunity to view and analyze quality works of art as well as the chance to create their own artwork. A table set against a wall is a good way to provide both space for



An art center should provide space for display as well as space for construction.

the creation of art and space for display.

The two key principles that should guide a public library art center are freedom and guidance. While these two principles might seem contradictory, they complement and support each other. Public libraries are used to promoting freedom in the form of freedom of access to materials of the child's choice. Creative freedom is equally important—any project that would limit the child's artistic output to a certain prescribed product is not art. No art center should include anything from a coloring book, or a craft that has to be followed step-by-step to match a certain pattern, as these do little to foster creative thinking.

While too much regulation stifles creativity, total freedom can be overwhelming. This is where the second principle, guidance, comes in. Guidance, however, is not the same as instruction. A librarian cannot, and should not, provide the same level of in-depth, one-on-one instruction as an art teacher. An art center doesn't exist to teach children a certain artistic technique, but rather to enable them to explore art creatively themselves. Providing guidance means giving suggestions, asking questions, and providing examples and frameworks to inspire and facilitate creation.

One easy way to provide guidance is to give the art center display a theme. That could be an artistic style, such as surrealism; a specific type of art, such as self-portraiture; or an artistic medium, such as collage or mosaic. A definition of the theme, examples of artwork that relate to the theme, questions, and suggestions for the children's own art provide a framework for the children's creative activity and constitute the art center's display.

It is crucial that any text appearing on the art center's display be

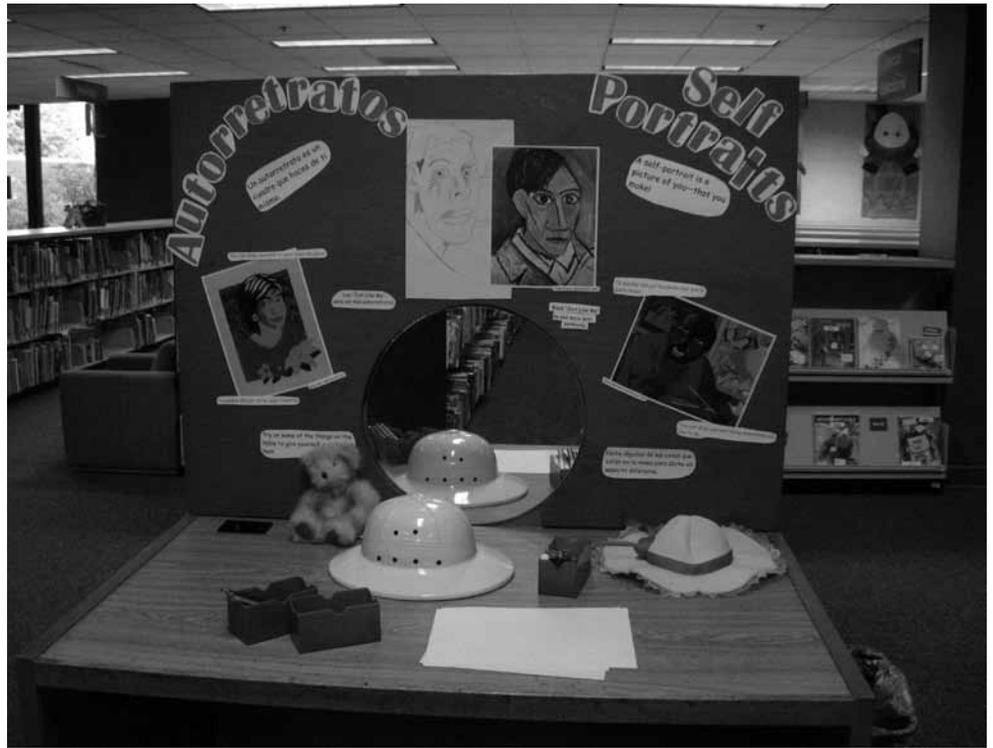
clear, visually appealing, and, above all, brief. Large pages of text giving artist biographies or the history of landscape painting will largely go unread and may intimidate children who have trouble with reading. It might help to think of text in terms of “bubbles,” rather than “blocks”—in other words, don’t put all the text for the art center on one page, in one place. Caption one artwork with a short comment or question, and offer a brief suggestion to accompany another. Try to keep any text “bubbles” on the art center display one to two sentences in length. This enables children to read as much as they are comfortable with, in small chunks.

In choosing what specific artworks to include as part of the display, make diversity the guiding principle. First, make sure the artwork represents ethnic and gender diversity. If children don’t see anyone who looks like them, it could be a subtly alienating message. When using representational art, include representations of men and women, as well as representations of different ethnic groups.

Artistic diversity is also important. For each theme, try to include examples from a variety of time periods, countries, mediums, and artistic styles, if possible. This serves an educational purpose, demonstrating the broad scope of art, as well as its different expressions worldwide. It also helps in appealing to a broad group of people, increasing the likelihood that at least one artwork in the display will resonate with each visitor.

Another important aspect of diversity to consider is the age of the artist. Make sure to include examples of children’s art that correspond to the theme of the display. It can be intimidating to children if only the art of professional artists is included. Children’s art should be equally represented, intermingled with other artworks, and not pushed off to one corner. Consider incorporating patron art into the display as well if that is acceptable to the patron in question. While some patrons probably would not be comfortable with seeing their children’s art displayed in public, others may feel honored to be included.

An important issue to consider in planning an art table is copyright law. If your library happens to possess many posters of the artwork that you want to use, you are in luck. If not, and you wish to print pictures of an artist’s work, copyright comes into play. A convincing argument can be made that display of art in a library art center for children falls under the “fair use” clause, as it is an educational, noncommercial use of the artwork.⁷ If in doubt, talk to your library manager and colleagues. If you are still in doubt, use only artwork in the public domain.



An art center display should demonstrate artistic, gender, and ethnic diversity.

Wikimedia Commons (<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki>) is a good source of this type of material. Wikimedia Commons is a branch of the Wikimedia project, which also sponsors Wikipedia. While Wikipedia has certain issues in terms of reliability and authority, Wikimedia Commons does not claim to be a source of authoritative knowledge, but simply a repository of public-domain images. Each image is accompanied by a tag justifying its inclusion in the public domain.

Besides artwork, it is important to incorporate manipulatives into the art center display—actual objects that children can pick up and interact with. While creating art is itself a physical process, interacting with abstract concepts is challenging, as is translating one’s imaginative vision into an actual picture. Having something to touch and play with greatly enhances the child’s experience.

The caveat in this case is that anything you put on the art center table will end up all over the library at some point, so only put things on the table that you can accept having to pick up and return to the table periodically. On the practical side of things, large, durable objects work better than small or fragile objects, for obvious reasons. Small, portable objects have a tendency to vanish with children, and anything remotely breakable will be broken within days or even hours. Items that you make yourself—for example, laminated paper shapes for tracing—work well as they are easily replaceable, but on the other hand, you are the one who will be replacing them, so consider how much effort to put into them.

When constructing the display, consider its educational potential, especially when educational elements can be incorporated easily and subtly. For example, in a display on art and shapes,

include laminated tracing shapes with the names of the shapes written on them in different languages. Always include the titles of a few books for further reference on the subject in your display; after all, you do work in a library. In my experience, patrons will check out the books that are recommended in an art center display, so this is an effective way to draw attention to your collection.

One of the most important factors in creating an art center is ensuring that the other library staff members are behind the project. Include instructions and an explanation for the display on your staff website, wiki page, or shared drive. You could also place them physically at the desk. Ideally, maintenance of the art center should proceed smoothly whether you are present or not.

Sample Displays

To help you in your efforts to include an art center in your library, here are four sample displays I have used in my library art center. I found these displays to be very popular—some displays were so popular that it was almost impossible to refill the supplies frequently enough, and patrons came to the desk to request supplies themselves! To keep the art center fresh, I recommend changing the display about every four to six weeks. This may seem like a lot of work, but remember, once you have a certain number of displays made and stored, you don't have to make new ones every month. Store displays both physically and online for maximum accessibility. Unless otherwise noted, all the artwork listed is taken from Wikimedia Commons and is in the public domain.

1. Self-Portraits

Explanation:

A self-portrait is a picture that you make of yourself.

Text bubbles and captions:

- You can draw yourself in your favorite place.
- You can draw yourself doing something you enjoy.
- You can draw yourself with a friend.
- How do you think this person feels?

Manipulatives:

Various costume elements and props, such as hats, leis, and stuffed animals. You can include the caption, "Use the props on the table to give yourself a new look," if you feel that guidance in the use of props is necessary. If germs are a concern, choose items that can be cleaned easily, such as plastic hard hats.

Artwork:

- Artur Timóteo da Costa. *Auto-retrato*.
- Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. *Self-Portrait in a Turban, With Her Child*. 1786.
- Franz Wilhelm Seiwert. *Selbstbildnis*. 1928.
- Georgette Piccon. *Autoportrait*. 1972.
- Joseph Ducreux. *Self-Portrait, Yawning*. 1783.

- Judith Leyster. *Self-Portrait*. 1630.
- Master of Frankfurt. *Self-Portrait with Wife*. 1496.
- Murayama Kaita. *Self-Portrait*. 1918.
- Morton Traylor. *Self-Portrait*. 1994.
- Nellie Mae Rowe. *Untitled*. 1979.
- Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *Self-Portrait of the Shunga Album*.

Related Books:

Harriet Rohmer, ed. *Just Like Me: Stories and Self-Portraits by Fourteen Artists*. Children's Book Press, 1997. 32p.

Artists of many different ethnic and stylistic backgrounds use self-portraits as the starting point to discuss how they were introduced to art and what it means to them. Both the art and the stories are accessible and kid-friendly. The combination of art and personal experience makes the self-portraits meaningful and demonstrates the intimate connection between art and life.

Raczka, Bob. *Here's Looking at Me: How Artists See Themselves*. Millbrook, 2006. 32p.

What Rohmer's book does for contemporary artists, Raczka's does for the classics. The self-portraits of revered artists such as Van Gogh, Chagall, and Rockwell are explained in easily understandable bites, which combine history, biography, and art education all wrapped up in neat little paragraphs.

Holzhey, Magdalena. *Frida Kahlo: The Artist in the Blue House*. Prestel Verlag, 2007. 30p.

A succinct biography of one of the world's most famous self-portraitists. Frida Kahlo's complex and surreal images are the primary focus of this book, and they form the basis for questions and discussion of the artist's culture, life, and values as well as the meaning of the paintings themselves.

Note: For this project to be successful, the art center display should include some kind of small, attached mirror.

2. Art and Shapes

Explanation:

Artists love exploring different shapes. How many different shapes can you draw?

Text bubbles and captions:

- You can use lots of different shapes or just one.
- How many different shapes can you find in this picture?
- You can make a picture out of shapes.
- What do you think this artist's favorite shape is?

Manipulatives:

Blocks make wonderful props for this display, if you don't mind them getting drawn on. Large shape puzzles work well for older children, but make sure you have spare pieces because one or two will inevitably go missing. For an inexpensive yet effective prop, die cut different shapes out of colored construction paper and laminate them. If you feel up to it, you can also include a bucket of die-cut shapes for collage.

Artwork:

- *Pointe Folle*. 1897.
- *Tupa Inca Tunic*. 1550.
- *Sarape*. 1850.
- Angelsmiralles. *Curvas Concéntricas*. 2007.
- Jeanne Rij-Rousseau. *Portrait*. 1915.
- Kazimir Malevich. *Suprematist Composition*. 1916.
- María Blanchard. *Composición Cubista*. 1919.
- Philip Absolon. *Cassie Thinking about Cubism*.
- Theo van Doesburg. *Contra-Composition with Dissonances XVI*. 1925.
- Torsten Jovinge. *Kvarteret Bergsund*. 1931.

Related Books:

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Eight Hands Round: A Patchwork Alphabet*. Illus. by Jeanette Winter. HarperCollins, 1996. 32p.

Twenty-six quilt patterns are listed in alphabetical order, with short paragraphs linking the patterns to early American history. The illustrations are well done, and the text is interesting and readable. Part of the appeal of this book is that it describes a different kind of art than the standard oil paintings, fostering diversity.

Micklethwaite, Lucy. *I Spy Shapes in Art*. Greenwillow, 2004. 40p.

This book is an excellent way to introduce critical viewing of art to young children, prompting the reader to look for specific shapes in several different works. A variety of styles and mediums of art are used as examples, from Cubism, to Pop Art, to Surrealism. This book would be an excellent book to be read aloud with a child because of the interactive nature of the text.

3. Art that Tells a Story

Explanation:

You can tell a story with words, or you can tell a story with pictures.

Text bubbles and captions:

- What do you think is happening in this picture?
- What can you find in this picture?
- You can draw a story from real life.
- You can draw a story from your imagination.

Manipulatives:

Any kind of toy works well here, such as trucks or cars, animals, plastic cooking pots, and so on. The key is to arrange them in interesting combinations—not all trucks, but trucks and rubber snakes, for instance. The more unusual the combination, the more interesting the story it suggests. Costume elements or hats would also work well.

Artwork:

- *Akbar's adventure with the elephant Hawa'i, on Yamuna River, outside the fort of Agra, in 1561*. 1592–1595.
- *Kazanlak Tomb Fresco*.
- *The Lady and the Unicorn: Desire*. 1484–1500.

- *Pochtecas Obtienen Plumas de Quetzal*. Late 16th century.
- *Wow Comics Cover*.
- Diego Rivera. *Market in Tlatelolco*.
- John William Waterhouse. *Consulting the Oracle*. 1884.
- Pieter Bruegel. *Netherlandish Proverbs*. 1559.
- Shah-nama. *Bahram Gur's Combat with the Dragon*. 1370.
- William Holman Hunt. *The Lady of Shalott*. 1889–1902.
- Yoshitsuya Ichieisai. *The Fiery Dragon*. 1860.

Related Books:

Lomas Garza, Carmen. *In My Family/En Mi Familia*. Illus. by the author. Children's Book Press, 2000. 32p.

Famous Mexican-American artist Carmen Lomas Garza tells the stories behind her paintings of everyday life in Texas. This book is another great example of how art can be used to document and validate personal experience. For an extra bonus, the text is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Gherman, Beverly. *Norman Rockwell: Storyteller with a Brush*. Atheneum, 2000. 64p.

A smoothly written biography of illustrator Norman Rockwell, focusing on his artistic methods and motivations. Though the text in this book is geared toward older readers, the pictures of Rockwell's paintings will appeal to all ages.

Richardson, Joy. *Telling Stories in Art*. Gareth Stevens, 2000. 32p.

This book examines famous works of narrative art from different periods, engaging the reader with questions and drawing attention to the details that convey the story. The final section offers guidelines and suggestions for children to make their own work of narrative art.

4. Marvelous Masks

Explanation:

Masks hide your face . . . but reveal your heart.

Text bubbles and captions:

- Masks can be scary.
- Masks can be beautiful.
- Masks can be fun.
- Masks can be important.
- Would you wear this mask? Why or why not?

Manipulatives:

Masks, of course! The issue with this display is durability. Most inexpensive, commercially available masks are very fragile. If you use masks, expect to replace them periodically because of breakage. Transmission of germs is also important to consider, especially for masks that cover the whole face. A homemade, domino-style mask might be the best alternative. Some die-cut machines have mask templates that could be laminated and used for tracing.

Artwork:

Because masks, unlike the previously mentioned artworks, are

Further Resources

The four sample displays are only the starting point for your own creativity. Here are some excellent children's books on art that serve double duty as resources to educate and inspire the librarian whose last art history class was a long time ago—or never.

D'Harcourt, Claire. *Master Pieces Up Close: Western Painting from the 14th to 20th Centuries*. Chronicle, 2005. 63p.

Twenty-one works of Western art are thoroughly examined, explained, and interpreted. Despite this book's rather narrow scope, it is a valuable guide for those unaccustomed to examining art critically and provides ideas for drawing attention to relevant details in artwork and explaining their significance.

Dickens, Rosie. *The Children's Book of Art: An Introduction to Famous Paintings*. Illus. by Uwe Mayer. Usborne, 2006. 64p.

Artistic movements, styles, and mediums; interpretations of paintings; artist biographies—this book has it all. While I would not recommend including as much information in your art center display as this book provides, it is a wonderful, comprehensive way to get a background on art quickly and painlessly.

Raczka, Bob. *Art Is . . . Millbrook*, 2003. 32p.

In pictures and short rhymes, Raczka shows the breadth of items that have been defined as art, from Greek amphorae to Christo's pink-wrapped islands. This is an excellent book to demonstrate the sheer diversity of art, and some of the captions—"Art Is Daring," for instance—could be used as themes for an art center display.

Raczka, Bob. *More Than Meets the Eye: Seeing Art with All Five Senses*. Millbrook, 2003. 32p.

This book prompts the reader to approach art in new ways, not only visually, but imaginatively, through the senses of smell, touch, taste, and hearing. Each of the five senses would make an innovative art center display by itself. "The Art of Smell," for instance, or all five, could be combined in one display on "Art of the Senses."

Raczka, Bob. *Name That Style: All About Isms in Art*. Millbrook, 2009. 32p.

Another great offering by Raczka, this book explains artistic styles from Mannerism to Cubism. The historical context and defining features of each style are succinctly presented and accompanied by a list of artists. A wonderful starting place for an art center display focusing on a style or time period.

Ruggi, Gilda Williams. *The Art Book for Children: Book 1*. Phaidon, 2005. 80p.; and *The Art Book for Children: Book 2*. Phaidon., 2007. 80p.

Another great resource for those who need a quick, comprehensive introduction to art, this duo of books provides commentary on a wide range of artwork, from the classical to the conceptual. These books also teach critical viewing of art, engaging readers by asking them questions and directing their attention to relevant or interesting details.

often used in cultural or religious events, the citations for masks include what the mask was used for, when appropriate. When searching for these artworks, use only the title.

- *Korean Traditional Mask at Insadong, Seoul*. Used in Talchum dance performances.
- *Mask of General Wendjebauendjed*.
- *Máscara de Xiuhtecuhtli*. Used in the Aztec festival of Xiuhtecuhtli. Sixteenth century.
- *Mulwalwa Helmet Mask, Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Used in initiation ceremonies. Nineteenth century to early twentieth century.
- *Tschäggätä Mask, Switzerland*. Used during Carnival. Undated.
- *Tsogo Mask, Gabon*. Used in male initiation ceremonies. Late nineteenth century to early twentieth century.
- *Fish mask of the Yupi'k people, Alaska*. Used in ceremonial dances. Early twentieth century.
- *Mask by the woodcutter Triska*.

Related Books:

Doney, Meryl. *Masks*. Franklin Watts, 1997. 32p. This book briefly explains the uses of masks in the ceremonies and festivals of different cultures, then gives step-by-step instructions for children to make similar masks themselves. The instructions may be too complicated for younger readers, but the variety of projects, techniques, and cultures will appeal to the craft-lover.

Winter, Jeanette. *Niño's Mask*. Illus. by author. Dial, 2003. 40p.

The importance of masks in Mexican culture is expressed through the story of Niño, a young boy who wants to play the role of Perro (the Dog) in his village's Fiesta. This tale is not only informative, but a pleasure to read, written entirely in dialog with colorful illustrations.

Yangsook Choi. *Behind the Mask*. Illus. by author. Frances Foster, 2006. 40p.

Kimin, a young Korean-American boy uses his grandfather's traditional talchum mask to go trick-or-treating on Halloween. This story teaches a good deal about Korean masked dancing without being didactic, focusing instead on Kimin's discovery of a previously unknown side of his grandfather.

Note: This is another display that would benefit from the inclusion of a mirror.

Conclusion

Creating a library art center can be a challenging task, demanding creativity, attention, and a great deal of time. With patience and effort, though, it can be a very rewarding experience for both patrons and librarians, expanding the role of a library as the custodian of culture, and giving children who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity a chance to engage in creative dialogue with great works of art. 🌱

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Asian/Pacific American Awards Selected

The Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), an affiliate of the American Library Association, has selected the winners of the 2010 Asian/Pacific American Awards for Literature. The awards promote Asian/Pacific American culture and heritage and are awarded based on literary and artistic merit.

Here are the winners of the 2010 awards for children's literature.

Picture Book

Cora Cooks Pancit by Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore and illustrated by Kristi Valiant, published by Shens Books.

Honor book: *Tan to Tamarind: Poems About the Color Brown* by Malathi Michelle Iyengar and illustrated by Jamel Akib, published by Children's Book Press.

Youth Literature

Everything Asian by Sung Woo, published by Thomas Dunne Books.

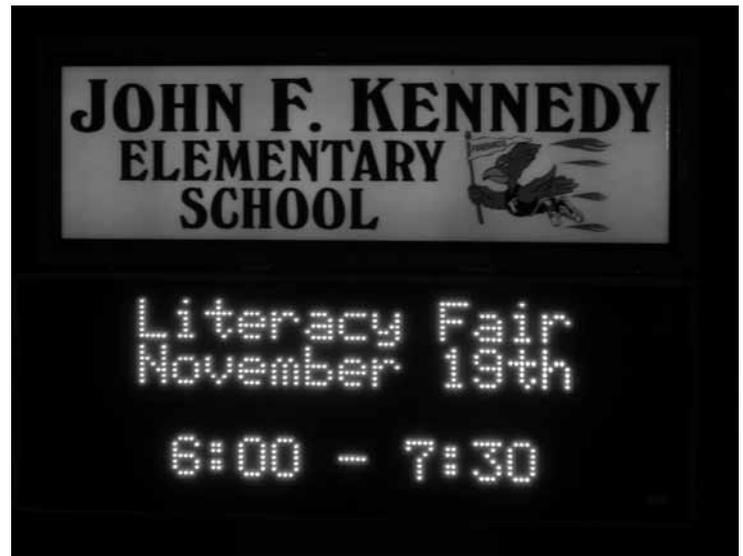
Honor book: *Tofu Quilt* by Ching Yeung Russell, published by Lee & Low.

Winner and honor books were chosen from titles by or about Asian Pacific Americans published in 2009. The APALA was founded in 1980 by librarians of diverse Asian/Pacific ancestries committed to working together toward a common goal: to create an organization that would address the needs of Asian/Pacific American librarians and those who serve Asian/Pacific American communities.

A Small Idea Grows

Literacy Night Solidifies School, Home, and Public Library's Goals

STEPHANIE BANGE, KRISTEN BODIKER, AND VICTORIA DELMAN



The school's sign underscores the importance of this event.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

For us, it began in earnest one morning in 2007. The Literacy Team from John F. Kennedy School in Kettering, Ohio, was formed in response to a reading and writing initiative issued by the Ohio Department of Education; the model is to have a literacy specialist and a literacy team in each school building. Members of our team met briefly in spring 2007 and determined that we wanted to organize an evening celebration to showcase literacy efforts at school and highlight the connection between home and school in literacy success.

The goals of our family literacy project—initially titled “Reading Rally”—were to go beyond Pizza Hut’s Book It! Program, and to have equal importance as our school’s annual science fair held each spring. Lofty goals, indeed!

The JFK Literacy Team met again in late July, and began to flesh

out Reading Rally. Sitting at the table were the school district’s language arts curriculum coordinator, representatives for many grades at the school, and the Title I teachers.

Capitalizing on the close relationship between our school and the nearby public library, we invited the library’s children’s librarian to join us. Stakeholders not present included our school librarian, an intervention specialist, and representatives from a couple of grades and the preschool. We noted their absence and made allowances to include them in future planning.

The first order of business was to develop a mission statement for the rally. It reads: “To raise the awareness of the importance of literacy by fostering reading at home, thereby strengthening the bridge between home and school.”

After some discussion, we named our evening event Family Literacy Night and tentatively set the date for it as the third Thursday evening in November (coinciding with Children’s Book Week and the school’s annual book fair). We felt this



Stephanie Bange is Director of the Charles and Renate Frydman Educational Resource Center at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. **Kristen Bodiker** is a Second Grade Teacher and **Victoria Delman** is a Third Grade Teacher at John F. Kennedy School, Kettering, Ohio.

would give teachers ample time to cover the material required and to allow students to work on projects for display.

We brainstormed ideas about literacy efforts that could occur in the classrooms that fall and what the Reading Rally was going to be shaped like. Because we were tying into an activity that we already had in place during the week (the school book fair fundraiser), we decided to try something that would be novel to us: a school-wide spontaneous Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) event, held daily.

We did not want to burden anyone with additional duties or assignments and agreed that this would be a school-wide effort. We focused on broad wording to allow for adaptation as each grade saw fit, thinking that this would help those absent from the planning meetings feel ownership in this after-school event.

We then outlined the three components of Family Literacy Night—the students' literacy projects, the book fair, and the assembly. To decorate the school, we proposed that each student prepare a display based on an aspect of literacy covered by their teacher in the fall. These projects could include (but were not limited to) trifold, posters, or presentations, with the form and literacy standard it presented coordinated by grade.

The school librarian would oversee the book fair that evening, and the assembly would be opened by the school principal and feature the public library's children's librarian giving literacy tips for families. To add excitement, the public library children's librarian volunteered to secure some donations of new books to raffle off during the evening.

Teachers met by grade levels to write rubrics for their respective grades. These determined whether their students would focus

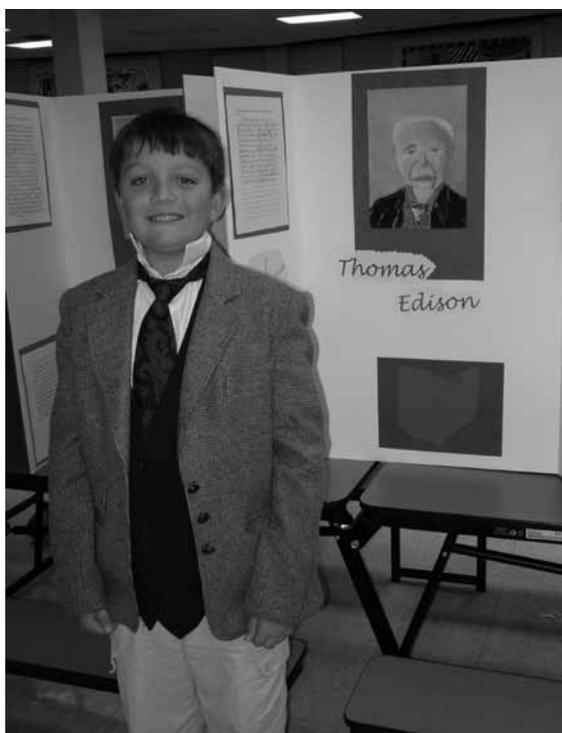
on fiction or nonfiction and what shape their projects would take. For example, third-grade teachers elected to use nonfiction to teach narrative elements and how to write a summary. Individually, teachers then determined if their students were to work on their projects in the classroom or at home; most chose to do the work at school. We were pleased when the music teacher volunteered the school choir to perform as part of the assembly.

That fall, the school buzzed as teachers taught literacy skills, and students learned them and thoughtfully worked on their projects.

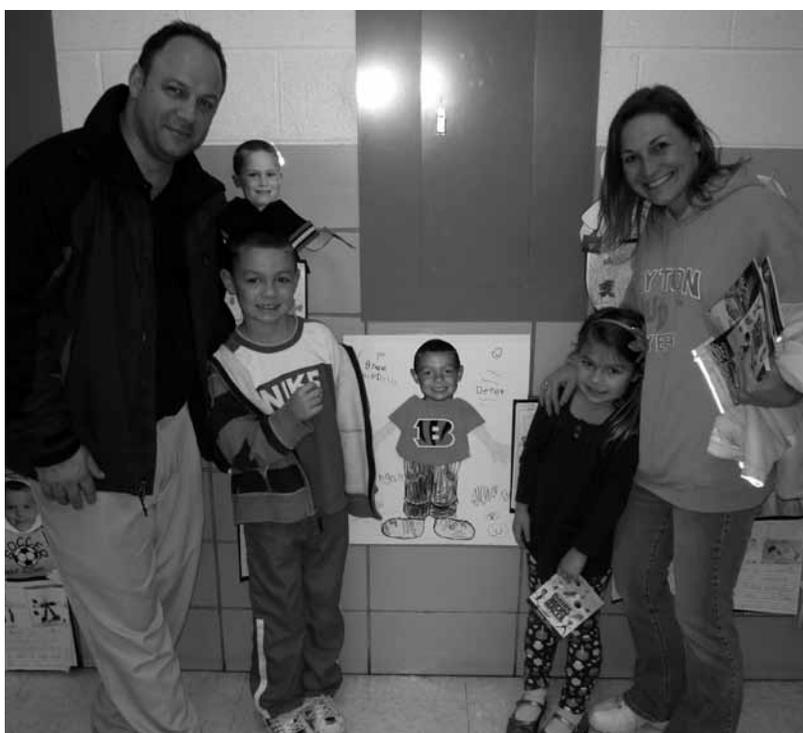
Finally, the week of Reading Rally arrived. Excitement and electricity filled the air as students put finishing touches on projects. Students loved the surprise of DEAR time; they carried a book around with them throughout the day because no one knew when it would occur. Everyone participated in DEAR reading, including office and custodial staff! The book fair was held in the small gym.

Family Literacy Night was a great success. The bleachers in the large gym were packed with parents and students, some still in costume from their oral presentations. The school librarian was in the small gym minding the book fair. Additionally, a local Usborne Publishing representative was selling books in another area of the school.

After a warm welcome from the principal, the choir opened the evening with a song about books and reading. The public library's children's librarian talked about the close literacy relationship between the school and public library and emphasized the importance of the home in children's learning. Families then viewed student projects on display throughout the school.



Andrew proudly poses by his display.



Derek and his family enjoy finding Derek's project.

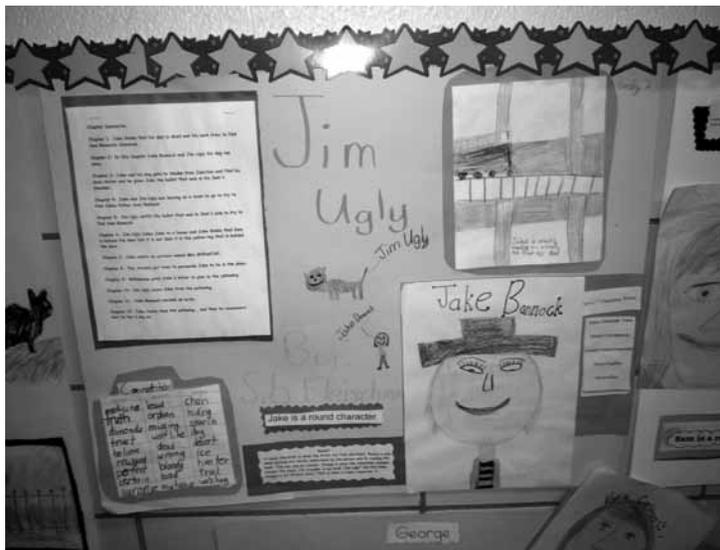
Many stopped by the public library's table to pick up graded booklists and a handout of literacy tips. Boys and girls eagerly filled out raffle tickets, hoping to win one of the books donated by the book fair vendors and the public library. (A number of books were set aside to be added to the school library's collection.)

The big payoff that night was the sense of community and the realization that we are all (school, home, and public library) moving forward together in our literacy efforts.

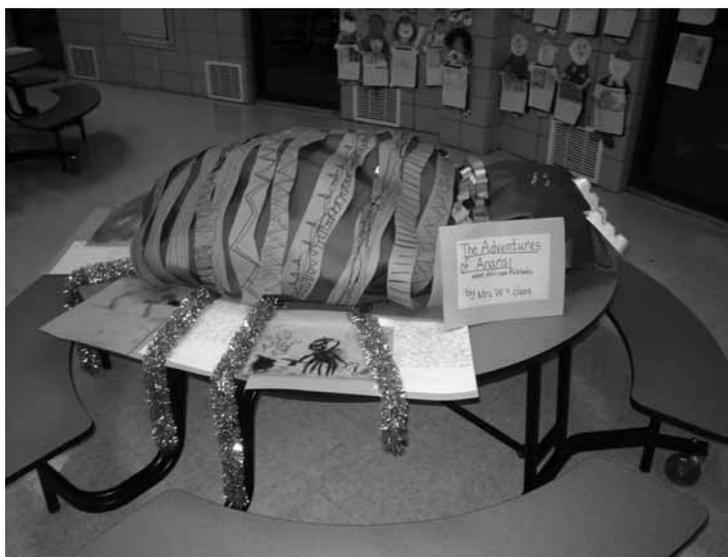
The literacy team reconvened after Family Literacy Night to assess the program. In the past three years, we have seen changes in key positions and a reorganization of the school district's main office.

“The big payoff that night was the sense of community and the realization that we are all (school, home, and public library) moving forward together in our literacy efforts.”

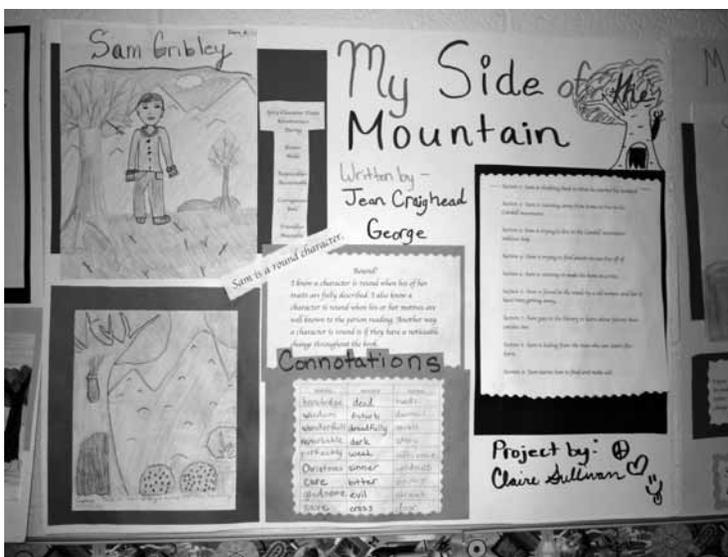
Regardless, each year our weeklong literacy celebration and Family Literacy Night attendance has grown in size and importance to the school. The choir has prepared a new song each year. The public library's children's librarian has shared literacy tips and led us in a group recital of Sharon Draper's poem “Reading Rap.” Other schools in our district have followed our lead and are holding their own Family Literacy Nights. This year, we upped the ante and invited a local author/storyteller to spend the day and evening with us. The literacy team will need to determine how to top ourselves next year. However, this will not be a problem for this small group of people with big ideas. ☺



Fifth graders focused on characterization and vocabulary in novels.



Special education students wove art and literacy.

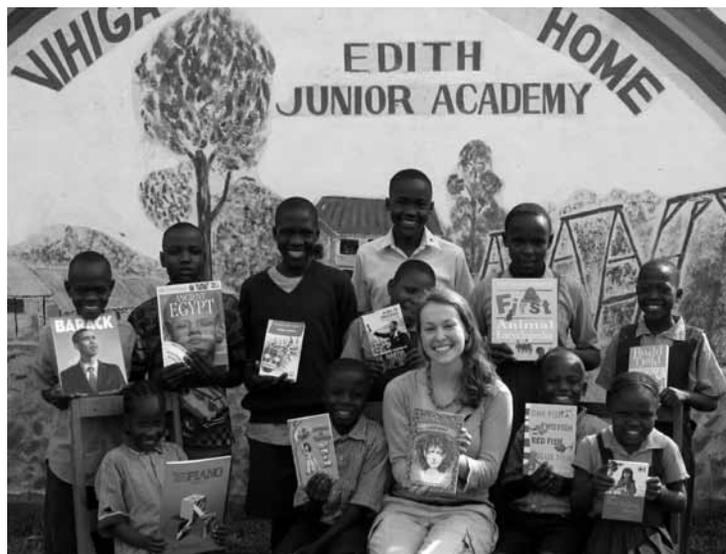


Upper grades interweave art and technology instruction with literacy.

Helping Hands

Must Media Specialists Be Therapists, Too?

MOLLY BARROW



Lillian Tuttle presents students with books for the new African orphanage library in Kenya.

Although clearly not in their job description, counseling is a predominant demand on librarians and media specialists that administration and library associations cannot ignore. Media specialists need support to assist children who come to them for sanctuary. The majority of these children suffer from low self-esteem. What is self-esteem and how can a media specialist make a difference?

“The key to human motivation is self-esteem,” said psychologist Nathaniel Branden. “Self-esteem is confidence in our ability to think, to cope with the challenges of life and in our right to be happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to respect our needs and wants and to enjoy the fruits of our efforts.”¹

Building self-esteem is also the best way to keep children safe from bullying, self-abuse, and predators. Self-esteem is so critical to a child’s well-being that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has abandoned the ineffective Stranger-Danger program and replaced it with a self-esteem program. Nancy McBride, national safety director

for the NCMEC, said, “It is much more beneficial to children to help them build the confidence and self-esteem they need to stay as safe as possible in any potentially dangerous situation they encounter.”²

Many media specialists may suspect that children are in dangerous situations, abused, or neglected, but do not have the experience or tools to intervene. Is it possible to keep children’s therapy and psychology in the realm of school counselors and teachers rather than within the library walls? Alternatively, does a media specialist need to learn to counsel in addition to supplying the best books for the shelves?

The following is a sampling of comments from Lee County Media Specialists gathered at the Fort Myers Barnes and Noble to hear the author speak on *How Media Specialists Can Help Children’s Self-Esteem*. They voiced their opinions, discussed their need for assistance from administration, professionals, and parents, and shared work experiences that demanded expertise in psychological areas.

Deb Hanson of Veterans Park Academy suggested that more training about psychological and emotional problems would help media specialists handle important issues. She said there is a need for “less preachy books and more entertaining ones to help troubled children with abuse—emotional, verbal, and sexual—with bullying by their peers, and with learning to appreciate themselves.”

Karen Meisel of Hancock Creek Elementary School often searched for more books to help children cope with stressful events like the “death of a loved one, dealing with parent’s stress, and help with self-esteem.”



Molly Barrow holds a PhD in clinical psychology and is the author of *Matchlines for Singles*, *Matchlines: How to Survive Step Parenting*, and *the children’s self-esteem building adventures*, *Malia and Teacup Awesome African Adventure* and *Malia and Teacup Out on a Limb*, both selected as *Sunshine State Young Reader finalists for 2010*.

Amy McGinly of River Hall Elementary said she often suspected a child was bullied or abused and had to assist children with extreme problems of neglect, homelessness, and mental illness. She added, "I had a student come to me and tell me that her stepdad had beaten her mom and she was afraid to go home that night. She was afraid of social services and afraid of her stepdad. I ended up taking her home with me and caring for her for nine months."

Connie Bartholomew of Lehigh Senior High said she often suggested a specific book to a child to help with an emotional problem. She deals with topics like alcoholism in parents, sexual abuse, inappropriate parental behavior with their children (such as encouraging them to use drugs or alcohol with the parent or relatives), abuse in dating relationships, and handling parental infidelity.

Margaret Schwartz of Heights Elementary believed that more training would help media specialists in the areas of bullying, cyber-bullying behavior in social networks, and competition. "A girl was being teased by other girls her age. I talked to her about her options at handling future episodes of bullying from these girls," she said. "When I next saw all the girls at the same time, I discussed the problem with them."

Gail Black of Varsity Lakes Middle School wanted books to help with "teens abusing themselves, for example, cutting, and with learning self-esteem and how to love themselves." Black added, "Young girls lack self-esteem and self worth. A student shared her problem with me. As I came to know her and she trusted me, I discovered her love of writing poetry. I encouraged her to realize she was special and had a special gift. I have seen her continue to grow and love herself. I am still encouraging her."

Ellen Chaikin of Ft. Myers High School agreed that she often recommends a specific book to help a child cope with an emotional problem and has often seen or been told of bullying and abuse. She said that, frequently, "students have problems with teachers or parents and they come to the library, sit at my desk, and vent." She wanted more assistance "with helping children avoid peer pressure and how to get along with their parents and siblings."

These librarians and media specialists are just a small sampling of educated library experts asked to deal with problems far outside the scope of their training, and they must face demands beyond the description of their job duties.

When first hired to manage a library, few expected to don a counselor's hat. Even seasoned psychologists have difficulty handling stories of abuse and neglect. Rarely prepared for the role of therapist, media specialists may experience the subsequent backlash of emotional frustration, helplessness, and depression when someone informs them of child abuse or poor parenting. Administrators must recognize the necessity for training and support of media specialists in psychology and counseling techniques. With proper training, media specialists can feel confident that they are responding in a helpful way to troubled children and can learn self-protective skills to avoid the transmission of negativity to their own psyche. ☺

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2. Nancy McBride, email to author, November 18, 2008.

Helping Librarians Respond Appropriately

When faced with such issues, some librarians and media specialists may not know how to respond. Here are some tips.

1. They Tell Only Once

Children perceive a library as a safe place, a haven of knowledge, and a calm space away from chaotic and stressful lives. This often means the media specialist is someone to whom the child can turn for assistance, and the child may entrust the media specialist with gruesome confessions or legal situations requiring immediate intervention.

The most important detail to remember is that children usually will tell only one trusted adult that they are the victim of molestation or abuse. If that adult does not act to protect the child, the child will believe that he or she deserves the mistreatment. Many years may pass before the child finds the courage to tell another adult. Therefore, in situations that involve abuse, neglect, and

molestation, the media specialist must file a report with her administrator and with Child Protection Services.

Put in place a new rule of nonviolence and respect to all that establishes the library as a safe destination. Make a big sign that declares a nonviolence stance, and hang it up where everyone can see it. This assures children that an adult respects and values them within the rules of the library and helps to demonstrate what life could be like in a caring, safe environment.

2. Find a Voice

Bullies require the cooperation of others' silence to continue their bullying. The media specialist is an expert in literature but also an influential, powerful voice of reason in a child's tumultuous world, in the work environment, and within the community. The media specialist is a gatekeeper to knowledge, and her recommendations are powerful for children and parents. Consider whether

playing it safe, not making waves, or letting someone else speak up contributes anything to the job, the community, or to individuals' self-esteem. Be someone who speaks up, politely and relentlessly, if a child is at risk. This can give a child hope even if the media specialist cannot rescue him or her from a bad situation.

If a parent berates a child, the media specialist has a choice—to look the other way or to speak up. If another adult allows the bullying, the child will learn that he or she deserves to be mistreated and that everyone agrees. Instead, simply state in an assertive calm voice, "We have a policy of nonviolence and respect in the library and the classroom that must be followed by everyone. Thank you for observing our rules." Remember to point at the new sign. Although the parent may never change, even one voice of defense can let a child know that he or she deserves better than abuse. The child will know that someone sees the mistreatment and objects. Sometimes that is enough to preserve self-esteem, or even to save a life.

3. Teach by Example

Designate a shelf to display books that depict family and interpersonal problems, nonfiction biographies, and self-help books for psychological and emotional issues that students may be experiencing. Encourage all students to read these books, as many students confide in each other. Give out rewards for reading the books from the shelf. Books that demonstrate survival in dire circumstances can inspire a child to believe in him or herself and to fight for a better life.

Lillian Tuttle, a Fulbright scholar, decided that she wanted to make a difference by establishing a library. Lillian traveled to Vihiga Children's Home, an orphanage in a small village in Kenya, to tutor eighth-grade students in preparation for their high school entrance exams. She carried with her only two books, *Malia and Teacup Awesome African Adventure* and *Malia and Teacup Out on a Limb*. The children had never experienced a library and did not know how to care for books or understand the concept of loaning the books. However, the children were thrilled with the African adventure and emotional challenges that Malia, who had lost her parents, faced in the book. The teachers did not expect one particular boy to pass his exams. Yet, after he read about Malia, a young girl who travels to Kenya and struggles successfully with her self-esteem, he felt that he could relate to her. He made the decision to study hard and he passed his exams. The school has two shelves of donated books now, and the Lillian Tuttle Library has changed the lives of over one hundred orphaned children.

4. Ask for Assistance

Library associations can contribute by compiling lists

of important, non-lecturing self-help books and stories centered on self-esteem. This list could facilitate the creation of the self-help shelves with books about bullying, abuse, eating disorders, and addictions in age-appropriate formats. School media specialists and association representatives could form a committee that includes psychologists and mental health professionals to select reading material that addresses the serious problems many children face every day. The average children's book, often delightful and saccharin, may fail to help children in high conflict challenges of abuse, bullying, and adult situations.

5. Protect the Media Specialist

Continuing education classes should address the need for psychology education and counseling techniques. Many children would seek out the less threatening media specialists before they would consider the important step of making an appointment to see a counselor. Continuing education courses can provide a strong knowledge base when media specialists encounter difficult issues. The psychological battering from dealing with problems that require a professional counselor can take a serious toll on the media specialist.

6. Work Together

Discuss the needs of individuals with teachers and parents who are willing to listen. Avoid endangering a child with violent parents who suspect their child has exposed a family secret. Refer the child to a professional counselor when necessary. To make sure a child does not feel targeted and embarrassed, suggest books to a class or reading group whenever possible rather than to just one child. It is easy to misuse power. The media specialist should remain careful to eliminate personal bias and prejudice, as well as to allow for cultural and social differences in the books that he or she purchases or recommends.

By incorporating these six suggestions in the library, media specialists can make an assertive stance against violence, neglect, and abuse. These proactive acts may seem small initially, but can make a tremendous difference to children's self-esteem. There may be a risk of criticism from some community members. The question remains whether our schools and libraries will be able to meet the needs of all readers or just the ones lucky enough to have idyllic lives. Libraries can provide appropriate books that address difficult issues and contribute to the well-being of children. Media specialists have the power to instill self-confidence in children through important book selections and to make specific recommendations that could change a child's self-esteem and his or her future.

Reading War Novels

Seeking a New Heroic Code

JONATHAN LATHEY

The atrocities and horror of modern warfare in the twentieth century challenged writers of adult and children's literature to reconsider our understanding of what constitutes courage and heroic behavior. This paper explores contemporary war novels for evidence of a late twentieth-century code of heroic action, one at odds with the traditional or chivalric code of heroism evident in earlier war novels. In this context, literature is appreciated as a source of documentary evidence that illuminates our ideals of behavior.

Adult novelists and poets were challenged by the experience of World War I to reconsider the traditional heroic code. Writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald, who understood that young men of his generation would not soon want to wage such a horrible war, rejected any romantic notion of courage. Later in the twentieth century, historical realism in fiction for children also began to reject a depiction of behavior that was overly sentimental or sensational, in favor of increased objectivity. Rebecca Lukens identified Bette Greene's 1973 novel *Summer of My German Soldier* and Lois Lowry's 1989 *Number the Stars* as well-written examples of this genre.¹

This paper considers late-twentieth-century war literature for



children—which, like the best adult fiction, presents authentic dialogue, a reexamination of events, and a search for historical truth—juxtaposed against earlier war novels. Recent award-winning Civil War and World War II literature for children extends a code of shared humanity implicit in adult war novels by Pat Barker and others to younger protagonists. Under this code, the hero or heroine is obligated to understand the world and to act as an agent of social change upon this understanding.

A code of shared humanity can be identified in recent war novels written for both adults and for children. This heroic code opposes traditional codes of conduct construed as confining in their conventional or stereotypical presentation of the hero.

At the outset of World War I, novelists could imagine battle as a confirmation of the soldier's heroic sense of honor and duty. In 1923, Willa Cather won the Pulitzer Prize for *One of Ours*, a war novel that valorized American manhood.² Cather's protagonist, Lieutenant Claude Wheeler, inspired by a heroic notion of war, found fulfillment in his war experience in the trenches of western France, where he gave his life for his country: "Life had after all turned out well for him, and everything had a noble significance."³

Writers like Fitzgerald understood that young men of their generation were horrified by modern warfare, despite its initial attraction. A visit to a battle monument at the Somme prompted Dick Diver in Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* to account for the courage of the British soldiers in terms of sentiment—an abiding love for their culture, traditions, and history.⁴ "You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the Crown Prince and his fiancée . . . and going to the Derby, and your grandfather's whiskers."⁵



Jonathan Lathey is a retired school psychologist. For several years he worked for Cooperstown Central School in New York. Since 2000, he has been an Adjunct Reference Librarian at the Standish Library at Siena College in Loudonville, New York.

Disillusionment with the Great War prompted a rejection—at least in literature for adults—of Cather’s romantic and overly sentimental treatment of the war.

Ernest Hemingway dismissed Cather’s war novel.⁶ Lieutenant Henry, the protagonist in his 1929 war novel *A Farewell to Arms*, freed himself from the old heroic values that were associated with a rigid and autocratic view of the world.⁷ Lieutenant Henry was liberated from the traditional obligations and heroic values promoted by Cather.

Hemingway’s novel suggested a different heroic ideal. Lieutenant Henry demonstrated a range of manly skills. This was a man

“The New Realism that influenced children’s literature in the wake of the social unrest of the 1960s offered a rejection of old certainties—including, it can be argued, a reconsideration of the meaning of duty and courage.”

unwilling to serve as cannon fodder for some abstract concept, and he knew when to quit. Thus, when he saw that he might soon be shot by the Italian military police, as an officer separated from his unit, Henry dove into the nearby river and swam to safety. “You were out of it now. You had no more obligation.”⁸ Lieutenant Henry’s behavior was consistent with Hemingway’s “code hero,” a man who would pick his own battles—a rugged individual whose courage and autonomy other men could admire.⁹

By the late twentieth century, children’s literature also began to reconsider the traditional heroic code. Christopher Collier suggested that war literature for children had been dominated by an outmoded Whig historiography, one reflected in the approach to history of the nineteenth-century historian George Bancroft.¹⁰ “The Whig picture was moralistic and pedantic, depicting simple, freedom-loving farmers marching in a crusade to fulfill God’s plan for a rationally ordered society based on principles of liberty and equality.”¹¹ In Collier’s view, *Johnny Tremain*, the 1944 Newbery Medal winner, was a one-sided and simplistic account of the Revolutionary War, one that ignored the complexities of motivation. “Life is not like that—and we may be sure it was not like that two hundred years ago.”¹²

The New Realism that influenced children’s literature in the wake of the social unrest of the 1960s offered a rejection of old certainties—including, it can be argued, a reconsideration of the meaning of duty and courage.¹³ Historical realism in fiction for children shared a new candor. Lukens identified Bette Greene’s 1973 *Summer of My German Soldier* and Lois Lowry’s *Number the Stars* as well-written examples of this genre.¹⁴ The

ethical impulse that motivated the young protagonists portrayed in these novels contrasts with the standards of heroic action expressed in earlier war novels for children.

Like other postmodern historical fiction, the war novels by Greene and Lowry presented authentic dialogue, a reconsideration and questioning of the historical record, and a search for truth evident in the best adult literature.¹⁵ These war novels extended a code of shared humanity—a code implicit in contemporary adult war literature (for example, Pat Barker’s World War I trilogy)—to younger protagonists.¹⁶

For this article I examined award-winning literature for children dealing with the Civil War and with World War II for evidence of a shift in our understanding of heroic behavior. Recent novels were juxtaposed against earlier classics. The 1958 Newbery Medal winner *Rifles for Watie* and the Scott O’Dell Award for Historical Fiction winners *Charley Skedaddle* and *Bull Run* contributed to our understanding of the Civil War.¹⁷ World War II fiction included, of course, *Summer of My German Soldier* and *Number the Stars*, the 1990 Newbery Medal Winner. Also selected were *I Am David*, winner of the Gyldendal Prize for the Best Scandinavian Children’s Book (and a 1965 ALA Notable Book), and *Someone Named Eva*.¹⁸

Civil War Literature: A Shift in Heroic Code

Rifles for Watie is an exciting account of the Civil War as seen through the eyes of Jeff Bussey, the sixteen-year-old son of a Kansas rancher. As a private in the Union Army and as a spy in the Confederate cavalry, Jeff remains true to his moral precepts of fairness and decency. Jeff rarely had time to read, but when he was sick with malaria, a rebel family cared for him, providing reading material appropriate to his romantic adventure. As author Harold Keith judiciously noted, “There was G. P. R. James’ *History of Chivalry*, two novels by Sir Walter Scott, two border novels, *Guy Rivers* and *The Yemassee* by William Gilmore Simms, and an old copy of *Harper’s Weekly*.”¹⁹

Jeff was physically courageous, often in danger for his life, but he was a “safe survivor” who was able to savor the adventure of war.²⁰ As Harold Keith observed, “Few men in either army had lived the war so fully.”²¹ A scholarly review published at the time of publication acknowledged the thoroughness of Keith’s historical research.²² But whereas the depiction of historical events was factual, the interpretation was consistent with what Collier would characterize as an outmoded Bancroftian historiography. Like the American Revolution imagined by Forbes in *Johnny Tremain*, this presentation of the Civil War taught national patriotism from the point of view of “freedom-loving farmers” defending a “rationally ordered society based on principles of liberty and equality.”²³

Thus the traditional or chivalric code of heroism that dominated adult war literature at the outset of World War I persisted in children’s literature well into the 1950s. Jeff’s character was firm and his code was clear. After the war he recalled his adventure with a sense of nostalgia. His behavior was

motivated by principle, so there was little need of any reconsideration in light of his experience. He did not question the conventional wisdom wherein, for example, blacks were perceived as less than equal. Consider, for example, a scene in an Arkansas town, when Jeff and two other hungry Union soldiers go foraging for food:

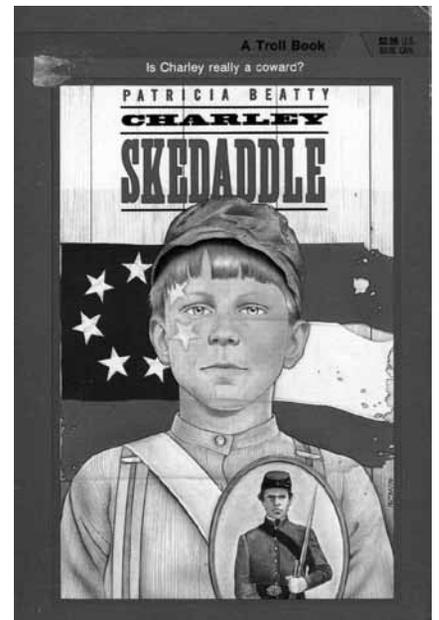
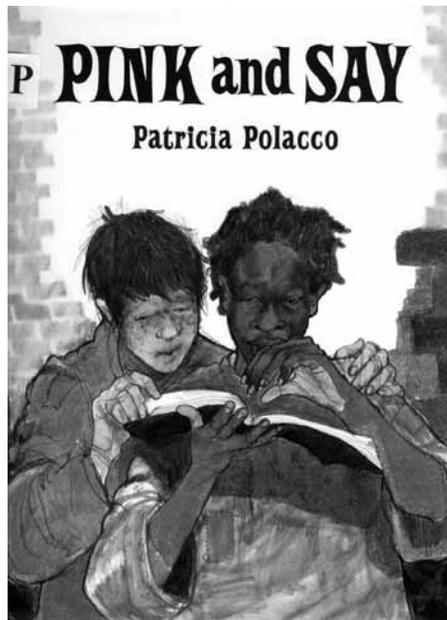
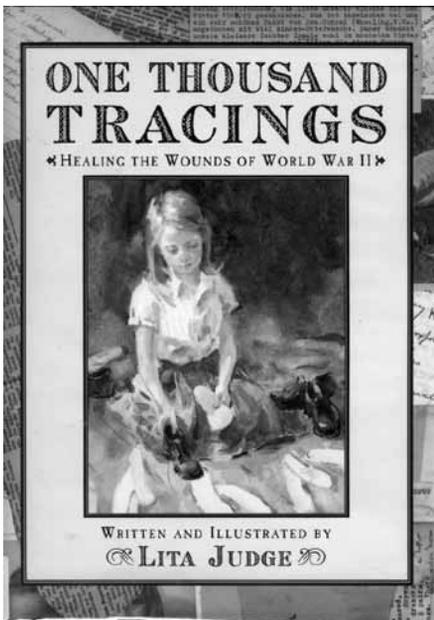
“They ran into a Negro who had emerged from a deserted brick store, carrying a large ham. Noah stepped suddenly in front of him, and the Negro stopped, the whites of his eyes rolling in fright. Seeing the yearning looks of the soldiers, he thrust the meat behind him. But Jeff could smell it anyhow. Noah licked his lips, motioning toward the ham. ‘Any more like that in there?’ The Negro’s white teeth flashed in a relieved smile. ‘Yassuh! Yassuh! Plenty hams in theah, suh.’”²⁴

In the quest story, the traditional hero, who is white, assures the reader of the certainty of the social order.²⁵ Margery Hourihan suggests that the traditional hero represents white culture, and his story “inscribes the dominance of white power.”²⁶ Note that to a contemporary reviewer of *Rifles for Watie* the portrayal of “colorful ways and dialects” of people as they lived and talked “make the book interesting as well as informative.”²⁷

By contrast, Civil War literature for children published in the late twentieth century expressed concerns for equality and racial justice. *Bull Run* told the story of the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861 from several points of view.²⁸ The battle was seen by a white soldier, a black soldier, a white civilian, a black slave, a boy, and a girl. Gideon Adams was a young black man from Ohio who enlisted in the Union Army, wanting the nation to at last “behold the Negro’s energy and courage.”²⁹ Gideon was fair-skinned and presented himself as a white man. He understood the implications of racial stereotyping and attitudes of prejudice, and he observed in his journal that those black men who choose not to serve would be scorned: to hear once more “that Negroes were cowardly, lazy, and disloyal.”³⁰

By the way, Tom Wicker, in his adult war novel *Unto This Hour*, recounting Second Manassas or the Second Battle of Bull Run, also told the story from the perspective of both Confederate and Union soldiers and their respective supporters. He described with sympathy the condition of the poor Southern woman, who had little voice in the war: “Channing had seen the woman before, had known her most of his life—the worked-out, used-up brood mares of the small-farm South. Well, all that would change when they’d licked the Yanks; they’d no longer have to pay life’s-blood tribute to goddam northern money changers.”³¹

Patricia Beatty began her Civil War novel *Charley Skedaddle* as a traditional adventure tale.³² Charley Quinn, age twelve, was a tough New York City gang member who wanted to avenge the death of his older brother, who was killed at Gettysburg in 1863. Charley ran away from home and became a drummer in the Union Army. However, at the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864, he was distressed at the thought that he had killed a Confederate soldier with a borrowed musket: “Now the truth flooded Charley’s consciousness. Gone were thoughts of heroism and revenge. He had shot a man.”³³ Charley deserted into the hills of western Virginia, where he came to live with Granny Bent, an old woman who wore boots and carried a pistol. Surviving in the Blue Ridge country with Granny, a participant in the Underground Railroad, Charley was able to rebuild a sense of courage. He came to understand Granny’s antislavery work and to admire the black Yankee soldier who came to visit their cabin in the woods, and whom Granny and her husband had helped twenty years earlier: “That was Thad Porter ya saw just now. He’s grown big. Last time I saw him, he was yer size. He ain’t no deserter, he’s a soldier.”³⁴ Charley, who was a skilled fighter, displayed the same physical courage as Jeff Bussey. However, in contrast to Jeff’s nostalgic recollection of his adventure, Charley was prompted by his war experience to reconsider his understanding of heroic action, race, and his relationship to humankind.



In an author's note, Beatty commented upon the treatment of black Union soldiers during the war:

"Unfortunately, the black soldiers were not accorded fair treatment by the government that had freed and enlisted them, supposedly to fight. They did a larger amount of ditch digging and breastwork construction than white soldiers, and not until the final year of the war were they paid as much as their white comrades-in-arms. The Civil War may have settled the political issue but not the racial one. It took another ninety years before legislative action was taken against racial discrimination."³⁵

World War II Literature for Children

This basic shift in our understanding of heroism is evident also in children's literature dealing with World War II. An early novel by Anne Holm portrayed the quest of a boy to find his mother.³⁶ The protagonist of the award-winning novel *I Am David* is a twelve-year-old who has escaped from a Nazi concentration camp in eastern Europe. He is a thoughtful young man, who must reexperience life so as to capture its beauty and meaning. He displays physical courage in a scene in which, in an act of heroism, he enters a burning shed to save Maria, a young Italian girl: "And the little girl who was so beautiful and soft to touch—she did not ask a lot of questions; she seemed quite satisfied that he was David."³⁷ David stayed a few days with the Italian family, content to be served dinner by their servants and surrounded by their great wealth and physical beauty.

David fell in love with Maria, and her memory sustained him in his lonely journey to Denmark to find his mother. The night before he left Maria's family—to return to his dangerous quest—he kissed the girl and advised her to think for herself. She replied, "But, David, I'm not clever enough. . . . Oh, why do you have to go when I'd much rather you stayed? Will you take me with you?"³⁸ David could not take Maria with him because nothing could stand in his way of achieving his goal.

For critic Margery Hourihan, traditional heroism is gendered.

"The hero typically avoids any significant sexual involvement for such a relationship would compromise his dedication to his mission, and one of the attributes of maleness, as defined by the story, is a contempt for such involvement, a preference for the sublimation provided by action and male bonding."³⁹ David's assertion of self-control over himself is also characteristic of the traditional hero's masculinity.⁴⁰

The literature of the late twentieth century, however, challenged the conventional "myth of effective individual action" associated with the male hero.⁴¹ The Western novel, a genre popular in the 1950s, which had epitomized this myth of individual action, began to lose its appeal. American failure in Vietnam—a war fought by a generation of young men brought up to admire movie heroes like John Wayne—prompted a debate about our understanding of combat. Hemingway's code hero—the stoical and autonomous male—could not solve the complex issues

that faced the world. Cawelti observed that a conventional understanding of heroism gave way to images of chaos, catastrophe, and a search for "new forms of mythology in order to understand and emotionally accept the more frightening world that they feel around them."⁴²

A code of shared humanity emerged as an alternative to the confusion and chaos of war. War novelists began to articulate a postmodern understanding of heroic action—a perspective that would offer a coherent and affirmative alternative to the sense of chaos and violence described by Cawelti. Psychologist Robert Jay Lifton described an emerging ethic of caring and responsibility: "And beyond a specifically American experience, there is evolving, during the latter half of the twentieth century, a worldwide ethical impulse toward feeling the pain of abused people everywhere."⁴³

"From the perspective of a code of shared humanity, war novels reveal the cowardice of those protagonists who understood the unjust aspects of war, but who failed to take action appropriate to that knowledge."

From the perspective of a code of shared humanity, war novels reveal the cowardice of those protagonists who understood the unjust aspects of war, but who failed to take action appropriate to that knowledge. Consider Greene's historical novel, whose major theme was "the ugly effect that fear and intolerance of difference can wreak on human lives."⁴⁴

Patty Bergen, age twelve, befriended Anton, a young German soldier, who had escaped from a POW camp in Arkansas during World War II. Patty was heroic in her willingness to shelter Anton at great risk to her own safety—she was ultimately sent to a reform school. In terms of the heroic standard Patty set for herself, Anton was a coward. He failed, for example, to intervene when he witnessed Patty's father severely beating his daughter. In fact, Anton acknowledged his cowardice. He had analyzed and could explain to Patty the techniques by which Hitler had risen to power. However, like his own father, Anton had in Nazi Germany chosen "acquiescence and life rather than resistance and death."⁴⁵ He admitted that this was not a "very admirable choice."⁴⁶ Anton was perhaps a decent man and a scholar. However, as a soldier in the German army he had spent two years "being as inconspicuous a coward as possible."⁴⁷

Another example of such cowardice is the historical figure W. H. R. Rivers, the military psychologist who displayed enlightened understanding of the nature of shell shock in Pat Barker's acclaimed war novel *Regeneration*.⁴⁸ His reading of Freud prepared Rivers, who was trained in anthropology and psychology, to interpret the dreams of his shell-shock patients at the Craig Lockhart Military Hospital in Scotland and to make sense

of their traumatic experience in World War I. Rivers explored the latent (or deeper) meaning of dreams much as one might approach a narrative plot: “The process of dramatization is closely connected with this use of symbols. The dreamer sees in the dream persons moving before him and events happening which give it a dramatic character by which the conflict is made concrete and, though in altered guise, conspicuous.”⁴⁹

*“Who, then, are the heroic characters?
From children’s literature recall
Lowry’s Newbery Medal-winning
Number the Stars, an historical novel
set in World War II, where children
would share adult secrets.”*

In the novel, Rivers observed, listened to, and understood the realities of war, and as such could have served as a reliable narrator of the story. War poets Wilfred Owen and Sassoon appeared to trust this kindly man. However, his failure to denounce the war, despite his depth of understanding of its effects, defined Rivers—in the eyes of critic Elaine Showalter—as a true coward.⁵⁰

Showalter observed that Rivers’ psychotherapy was deemed a success only when his clients resumed their proper masculine role and returned to the war. In the bitterest of terms she described the relationship between Rivers and the war poet Sassoon: “This time the patient and the doctor were friends; the therapy was kindly and gentle; the hospital was luxurious; the most advanced Freudian ideas came into play. Yet the reprogramming of the patient’s consciousness was more profound and long-lasting than in Yealand’s electrical laboratory.”⁵¹ Dr. Lewis Yealand, a neurologist and a colleague of Rivers in World War I, used painful electrical shocks to treat physical (hysterical) symptoms of his shell-shock patients.

Who, then, are the heroic characters? From children’s literature recall Lowry’s Newbery Medal-winning *Number the Stars*, a historical novel set in World War II, in which children would share adult secrets. Annemarie, age ten, could not be protected from dangerous knowledge about the Nazi occupation of Denmark in 1943. If she is to help a Jewish family escape persecution, she must understand the nature of the threat, including possible searches and arrest. As critic Don Latham observed, “Such an environment tends to blur the distinctions between children and adults, showing that both groups, in spite of being victimized, can prove to be resourceful, capable, and courageous.”⁵²

Annemarie contributed to the rescue of her Jewish friend Ellen as she negotiated dangerous encounters with Nazi soldiers. At the same time she displayed “an innate desire for connectedness to people beyond her immediate family.”⁵³ This was the same desire that motivated Bergen in Greene’s war novel to

search beyond her own community for confirmation of herself.

Lowry’s novel expressed a conception of heroic action that relied upon shared understanding. Annemarie’s father explained to her early on that her older sister had been killed in the struggle to resist Nazi occupation of Denmark. She had been a Resistance fighter, and they were “very brave.”⁵⁴ Annemarie was seven when her father shared this knowledge with her. This understanding suggested an injunction to risk one’s life to resist the Nazi occupation. This understanding of obligation was contrasted with a more conventional understanding of the survival instinct, which would be appropriate to the mentality of the bystander. Recall that Greene’s German soldier Anton in his acquiescence to the war claimed that his choice, while not admirable, was “a very human one.”⁵⁵ In her advice to her daughter, Ellen’s mother reflected that same understanding, again with the same implications for behavior. “It is important to be one of the crowd, always. Be one of the many.”⁵⁶

Most recently published novels dealing with World War II study the complexities of courage and cowardice in the face of intense pressure. Nick Arvin’s 2005 *Articles of War*, a winner of ALA’s W. Y. Boyd Award for Military Fiction, showed, for example, the emotional turmoil of an eighteen-year-old World War II soldier, nicknamed Heck, obsessed with his own fear and cowardice.⁵⁷

In *Someone Named Eva* by Joan Wolf, a twelve-year-old girl from Lidice, Czechoslovakia, was selected by the Nazis—according to Aryan standards—to receive two years of harsh training in a Lebensborn camp in Poland.⁵⁸ She was selected for this “Germanization” program based on her eye and hair color. In early 1944, she was placed with a family in Furstenberg, Germany, close to the Ravensbruck concentration camp for women. Whereas Herr Werner, the father of this patriarchal family, and commandant of Ravensbruck, was a coward to be despised by any standard (he deserted his family in 1945 to avoid capture by the Russians, taking with him his beloved son), Eva did feel some affection for her adopted brother Peter and sister Elsbeth.

But in a final scene—as Eva learned more about the Ravensbruck camp—she confronted the confused and ignorant Elsbeth, who said “Eva, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean . . . I mean . . . I know you’re not Jewish . . . and I don’t know. I don’t know anything.” Eva responded “You’re right. You don’t know anything about me.” Elsbeth then acknowledged that she did not understand, and Eva agreed: “No, Elsbeth, you don’t.”⁵⁹

Eva clearly understood that, despite the fact that she had forgotten her native language, she needed to be reunited with her Czech family. In an author’s note Wolf recalled the courage and strength of the citizens of Czechoslovakia: “The story of Lidice has much to teach us about humankind’s incredible capacity for brutality, as well as its incredible ability to survive—and even thrive—despite horrific events.”⁶⁰

Hitler Youth, a 2006 Newbery Honor book, reported the effects of the German war machine upon the body and soul of the German youth during the Nazi regime.⁶¹ Children were, for

example, encouraged to inform on their parents. “After one Hitler Youth meeting, eight-year-old Elisabeth Vetter told her parents that she didn’t belong to them anymore.”⁶² When Elisabeth reported her parents to the authorities for derogatory remarks against the regime, they were arrested for three weeks. Joan Wolf’s fictional account helped to illuminate the historical record of the Nazi regime.

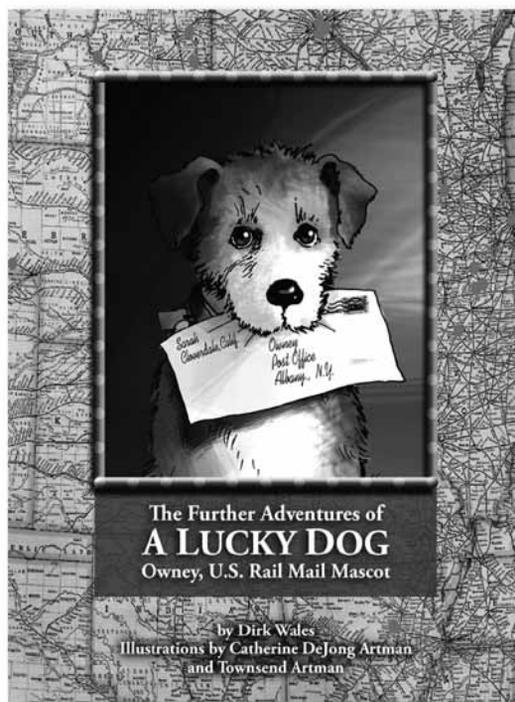
In passing, note that war literature appears in forms appropriate to younger children (picture books) as well as in formats of interest to young adult readers (graphic novel format). *Pink and Say*, by Patricia Polacco, is a Civil War picture book story that won the 1997 West Virginia Children’s Book Award.⁶³ Art Spiegelman’s two-volume *Maus*, a powerful biography of the author’s father rendered in graphic novel format, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1992.⁶⁴ *Maus* can be read as an account of the traumatic effects of the Holocaust upon the children of the survivors.⁶⁵

To conclude, a late twentieth-century standard of heroic action reflects a code of shared humanity, a perspective that admires the protagonist who has the political imagination and courage to act as an agent of change. Recent war novels imply a code of shared humanity that opposes norms of conduct construed as confining in their stereotypical presentation of the hero—the “compulsory masculinity” of World War I, for example.⁶⁶ Or, the “hypermasculinity” evident in post-Vietnam pulp fiction.⁶⁷ An ethic of responsibility motivated our heroic protagonists—including Wilfred Owen in Barker’s *Regeneration*, a war poet, a man ahead of his time, whose published work confronted issues of patriarchalism, gender stereotypes, and war.⁶⁸ Other characters, including Annemarie of *Number the Stars*, who achieved a “quiet heroism.”⁶⁹ Thus children’s war literature published in the late twentieth century—dealing with the Civil War or World War II—extended this code and its preoccupation with authoritarian politics and social justice to the young. ☺

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The Reluctant Weeder

Embracing the Joy of Weeding

GINNY COLLIER

In my opinion, there are two types of librarians—weeders and nonweeders. Okay, I'll admit it. I'm a weeder.

Weeding is one of my top five favorite things about being a librarian. There's something satisfying about methodically going through the collection, flipping through each book, checking the circulation stats, and deciding to keep or discard the book. Often my decision is made in the first few seconds of looking at the book. *How does the cover look? Is it dated? Are the pages yellowing? Does the book smell?*

But, let's face it. We all know a reluctant weeder—those librarians who don't weed their collections. Either they're fearful of discarding something someone may want later, or they don't know where to start, or they're under the misguided notion that once a book is acquired it should stay at the library until the end of time.

The weeders I've known have been equally divided among those categories. Perhaps the most stubborn are those who fall into the latter category. To them, throwing away a library book is like throwing away money.

What follows is an imaginary conversation I had with an imaginary librarian. Wary Weeder may not be real, but she is an amalgamation of several different librarians I've known over the years who have all refused to weed. So, yes, I did put words in Wary Weeder's mouth. It's my imaginary conversation, so I can do that. However, I have had similar conversations before with reluctant weeders, and I know all their excuses for not getting up close and personal with discarded books.

Wary Weeder: My budget is being cut every year. Why should I get rid of books when the number I can purchase each year to replace them dwindles?

Weedaholic: *Weeding isn't only about making room on your shelf for new books. It's about keeping your collection fresh and relevant. Books that don't circulate, either because they're dated or for some other reason, need to be discarded regardless of whether you have something else to replace them or fill their space on the shelf.*

Wary Weeder: What if I get rid of a book and later someone asks for it?

Weedaholic: *Sure, that's possible. Actually, it's probable that for each book you weed you could find a parent/grandparent/teacher/librarian who will tell you she read that book when she was younger or read it to her kids or remembers seeing it in some store once and so you can't, just CAN'T, get rid of it. That's no reason not to weed, though. There will always be books that people ask for that your library won't have. You need to be strong, and do what's best for your collection. Books that languish, unused, on the shelf are of no use to anyone.*



Ginny Collier is Head of the Children's Department at the Roswell Library in the Atlanta-Fulton (Ga.) Public Library System.

Wary Weeder: But what about classics? Surely you're not suggesting I get rid of Rumer Godden's books? I love her! She was my favorite author when I was growing up.

Weedaholic: *Okay, you've got me. I admit that in the past I've held on to books for sentimental reasons. (Please don't tell anyone. I don't want it getting out that I have a soft side when it comes to the serious business of weeding.) However, if it's a book I know I'm only keeping because it means something to me, I'll try harder to hand-sell it when making readers' advisory recommendations. If, after several months, it's still just taking up space on the shelf, I have to make a tough decision. A book that doesn't earn its weight in circulations, so to speak, doesn't have a place in the collection.*

Wary Weeder: So if a book doesn't circulate, I should get rid of it?

Weedaholic: *Yes. No. Well, maybe. I've written a lot about how well a book circulates, but that's only one way to judge whether a book has a place in your collection. A low circulation count is always a sign that a book deserves a closer look, but it does not necessarily mean that you should get rid of it. Is the book on the bottom shelf? Perhaps it would circulate better if you moved it to a higher shelf. Could you put it on display? Would it circulate better if you book-talked it at schools or daycare centers? Does it not circulate because there are newer, more attractive books on the same subject? If so, it may be redundant to have both copies.*

Wary Weeder: Then books with lots of circulations are safe?

Weedaholic: *No. Thought you'd gotten me there, didn't you? Just because books are checked out frequently, that does not mean they still belong in the collection. This is when the published date, condition, and content become primary factors.*

My Personal Experience

Quick story: My first job out of library school was in 2001, and the library system where I worked had a year-round weeding calendar. When I started, they were weeding picture books.

One of the first books I ever discarded was published in 1969 and titled *I Want to Be a Secretary*. It was about a girl who went to work with her father one day and saw all the super fun things his secretary got to do—things like make photocopies and mail letters! Gosh, the things a young girl could aspire to in the 1960s.

This book was a nice piece of nostalgia and provided quite a few laughs in my branch, but why was it still on the shelf? With a year-round weeding calendar, surely the previous librarian had seen it. Most likely it was still being checked out, so it was kept on the shelf. (I can only hope it was checked out by amused adults wanting to show it to their friends.) *Confession: I deleted this book from the library, but kept it for myself. It was too funny not to.*

A book may circulate, even circulate well, and still deserve to be discarded. Having *I Want to Be a Secretary* in your library does



Ginny Collier with a decidedly out-of-date book.

not make your collection well-rounded. It makes it out of touch with reality.

Wary Weeder: But I hate weeding. Do I really have to do it?

Weedaholic: *Do you care about your collection? If you do, then the answer is yes. Weeding is a necessary part of the job. If there ever comes a day when library systems hire full-time weeders, I will be the first to submit my resume . . . seriously . . . the first one.*

Until then, all I can do is urge you to weed your collection. If you're still not sure, start small. Work on a section that has relatively few books. Or choose one shelf and start there. As you get more comfortable weeding, you can move on to larger sections. Weeding doesn't have to be a PROJECT. Spending ten minutes a few times a week can make a big difference.

There are different criteria for weeding fiction and nonfiction books, and much of that information is available online. However, since this is an article about weeding, here are some questions to ask when evaluating whether a book stays or goes:

1. **When was the book published?** This is especially pertinent when weeding nonfiction. The information in some books (like books about frogs or math) won't get dated as quickly. Books containing time sensitive information (books about countries, science, or medicine) will need to be weeded more frequently. Out-of-date information is no good to anyone.

2. **How does the book look?** Evaluate it for loose binding, torn covers, yellowed pages, and so on. Has a budding artist added his own illustrations to any of the pages? Does the book smell? Tape can fix small rips, but books that have been “well loved” need to be discarded. It sends a message, however subtle, that it’s okay to treat books roughly.
3. **How many times has it circulated?** If it’s several years old and it’s only been checked out a handful of times, it’s time to reconsider whether it belongs in your library.
4. **When was the last time it was checked out?** If it’s been more than two years, it might be time to bid it a fond farewell

Think of your collection as a whole, as one entity. What impression do you want your collection to give? What do you want it to say about your library, your community, your patrons? I hope that you want it to be reflective of the needs of those you serve, but also that you want it to be up-to-date and useful

and, most of all, used—used by children and parents, used by teachers and childcare providers, and used by the community as a whole.

You know how sometimes you walk into a library and feel like something’s off? You can’t quite put your finger on it, but something tells you this library is not cared for. It’s not the building itself or the worn furniture. It’s the books. They give off an air of neglect. There they sit on the shelf, day after day, unused and unloved. Don’t let that be your collection!

There’s a reason we use the term “weeding” to describe the act of discarding books. Gardeners do it to get rid of the weeds that hamper the growth of the healthy plants. Weeds take up a lot of valuable nutrients that the other plants (or books, if you’re following the analogy) could use to thrive. Weeding is love! Take care of your collection.

So, are you ready? Go forth and weed! 🌿



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Visit www.ala.org/yalitsymposium for more information on registration, breakout sessions, paper presentations, and special events. Registration starts at \$195 for YALSA members or New Mexico Library Association members!

Leadership at its Best

Library Managers Spearhead Successful Special Needs Programming

Kathy Jarombek and Anne Leon



A mother helps her son focus on the book during shared reading at the Ferguson Library's Sensory Storytime.

In a quiet room on the third floor of the Ferguson Library in Stamford, Connecticut, soft classical music plays as children and their caregivers arrive. Educubes and stools are arranged in a semicircle around a flannelboard easel and a table holding books and other materials. Storytime leader Gabriela Marcus greets everyone in a warm, reassuring voice. Sensory Storytime, the library's new program for children with special needs, is about to begin.

The Ferguson Library's formal initiative to better serve children with special needs and their caregivers began in 2002 when a patron contacted library director Ernest DiMattia about the lack of resources for parents of children with special needs in the community. Caroline Ward, director of youth services at the Ferguson, in turn approached Youth Services Librarian Barbara Klipper who, as the parent of two sons with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs), was interested in expanding the library's services to families of children with special needs.

With grants from a local bank and from the Connecticut Association for Children with Learning Disabilities providing the seed money, and with expert advice from Carrie Banks, head of the Child's Place for Children with Special Needs at the

Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library, the Ferguson Library's Special Needs Collection was born.

Including more than two hundred books, five journal subscriptions, and a DVD collection, it was the first cataloged circulating library collection of its kind in the state and accounts for a significant portion of the interlibrary loan requests that come into the library. A bulletin board with information about upcoming events is on display next to the collection, and articles, fact sheets, and product catalogs that can be used to order books, adaptive equipment, and other items are also available.

Once the collection was in place, Ward and Klipper looked for other ways to expand their services to the special needs community. A Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant provided the money for more materials, as well as for staff training on how to better serve both children and adults with special needs. Two computer workstations—one for younger children (with a touchscreen, oversized monitor, and special kid's mouse) and one for older children (with an oversized monitor, Big Keys keyboard and specialized software, including a Zoom Text Magnifier/Screen Reader and a Write: Out Loud talking word processor)—were also purchased with grant



Kathy Jarombek (near left) is a former school library media specialist for the Greenwich (Conn.) Public Schools and is currently Director of Youth Services for the Perrot Memorial Library in Old Greenwich, Connecticut. **Anne Leon** (far left) was the Broward County (Fla.) Library System as the Head of Youth Services for the North Regional/BC Library before coming to the Alvin Sherman Library at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, FL, in 2001. They are both members of the **ALSC Managing Children's Services Committee**, which also includes Tina Frolund, Rhonda Fulton, Amy Godfrey, Virginia Gustin, Jean Hatfield, Ann Schwab, Angeliqne D. Simmons, Anitra Steele, and Jan Watkins.



Sensory experiment with mixing whipped cream and food coloring during the Ferguson Library's Sensory Storytime.

money. But, as Klipper pointed out, there are computer downloads such as the Zac Browser, an Internet browser designed specifically for children with autism, available for free.

Ward and Klipper realized, however, that just having resources and adaptive equipment wasn't enough—they needed to make sure that children with special needs and their caregivers felt welcome to participate in all that the library had to offer. To this end, a note is printed on library program flyers: *This program is inclusion-friendly. If your child needs any special accommodations to participate, please let us know.*

Since the Stamford public school system follows the inclusion model for children with special needs, all teachers who bring their class to visit the library fill out a form that asks if any child in the class has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) so the librarian in charge of the visit can plan accordingly. Simple accommodations, such as including movement

activities that can be done while seated for a child who uses a wheelchair or allowing the student with a visual challenge to hold the puppets during a story, are then built in to the program.

Sensory Storytime is being funded by a grant from Abilis, a local organization that provides support for people with developmental disabilities and their families. It is not a new idea—Klipper had been reading about other libraries that offered a similar program for years—but Abilis wanted the program to be offered to both children with sensory processing disorders and typical children because, as Klipper said, "We all learn best by using all of our senses. Sensory storytime is good for everyone."

Dynavox Mayer-Johnson's Boardmaker software has been purchased to make picture schedules for the storytimes so that the children know what to expect. Repetition, routine, and a minimum of external stimuli as well as balance-beam and bean-bag activities that build on

the therapies that many children are already experiencing all make sensory storytime a fun, inclusive, and satisfying experience for all participants. And as an added bonus, Klipper noted that many components of the sensory storytime, including the picture schedules and bean-bag activities, have been adopted by the Ferguson youth services librarians for use in their regular storytimes.

It's a lot of activity for one mid-size urban library, but as Ward said,

"I have an innate interest in new initiatives. I'm always looking for grant opportunities because they provide that initial funding that allows you to try new things. You can take an idea and formalize it through the grant writing process and then, once you have the money, the grant itself forces you to act on your idea and gives structure to your efforts.

"I've always been able to find ways



Storytime leader Gabriela Marcus explains the picture schedule at the Ferguson Library's Sensory Storytime.

to continue the programs and initiatives that were begun with grant money. For instance, the Sensory Storytime that we are now offering will have an orientation session for children with sensory processing disorders and their caregivers as well as four sensory storytimes on four Saturdays in a row, but we plan to continue the program on a monthly basis once the grant money runs out. And of course," she added, "having someone of Barbara's caliber on the staff is invaluable."

Another Initiative

Down the East Coast, in South Florida, another initiative to serve the special needs population is catching fire. The Alvin Sherman Library at Nova Southeastern University's (NSU) main campus in Davie, Florida, is a unique, joint-use facility in partnership with Broward County. This private university library offers access to anyone who lives, works, or attends school in Broward.

Sherman Library's Public Library Services (PLS) offer a full range of "traditional" public services and programs,

which include children's special events and storytimes prepared by youth services librarians.

When the PLS staff became aware that a few children with autism were among their program attendees and group visits to the library, they began to self-assess: *Yes, we make accommodations to mainstream children with special needs who are coming to the storytimes, but can we be doing more? Who is not coming?*

Among the many university resources and partners focusing on children and families are the Baudhuin Preschool for three- to five-year-olds and the Mailman Segal Institute (MSI) for Early Childhood Studies. Baudhuin provides early intervention for more than one hundred and fifty children affected by autism, with a broad range of abilities.

In February 2010, the PLS Interim Executive Director Anne Leon and the youth services librarians gathered for an in-depth training session with Sue Kabot, director of clinical and therapeutic programs at the MSI and chair of the Interdisciplinary Council for the Study of Autism created at NSU through the leadership of the MSI.

She shared program strategies and practical tips for making storytime experiences more enjoyable and accessible by adding some visual cues for children with ASD. The youth services team felt that, with some added training, these were easy and welcoming modifications that could be applied across all of the programs that served youth. However, Kabot suggested that even with those welcoming modifications, there still might be families of children more profoundly affected who would be reluctant to attend mixed-group library activities. After some soul-searching discussion, and the practical angst of "How can we fit another program into the schedule?" the question for the staff of "Can we do this?" quickly became "How are we *going* to do this?"

In spring 2010, the Sherman Library hosted Kabot for an all-staff sensitivity training in working with patrons of all ages who have ASD. She also was an honored guest at one of the library's parenting sessions on children's health issues. Smart Start, organized by Youth Services Librarian Meagan Albright, invites a different professional in the healthcare or child development field each month for a Q&A session with parents following storytime. Albright and Leon met with members of the speech and hearing team for training on Boardmaker software for making attractive visual cue signs and other wonderful visual enhancements for favorite stories.

To promote the initiative and provide familiar faces, PLS staffed a library card drive at the annual AutismSpeaks walk on campus. PLS will also have a table at the quarterly Baudhuin Super Saturday meetings with parents of children with autism, to promote library programs for children and put them at ease about approaching staff for accommodation and any questions they may have about library services.

Current works in progress by PLS staff include adapting the program room with visual cue materials, creating an information resource tool at the PLS reference desk for information and referral on all area groups and services for families affected by ASD, and observing classes at Baudhuin to learn best practices in providing a literature experience.

Connecting Libraries and Children with Disabilities

A Web Toolkit

Adult/Family Resources

- **Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA).** Your first stop for quick solutions to library related disability issues. www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/ascla/asclaprotools/accessibilitytipsheets/default.cfm
- **Graphic Artists Guild.** Download disability access symbols. www.gag.org/resources
- **Libraries and Autism: We're Connected.** This website showcases the Scotch Plains (N.J.) Public Library and the Fanwood (N.J.) Memorial Library project to service people with autism and their families. This award-winning model program includes a staff training video, ideas for programs, and resources for librarians. www.thejointlibrary.org/autism
- **Medline Plus.** For people looking for information about a child's disability, treatment options, and other medical issues, Medline Plus is a good place to start. Information is available in print, audio, and video formats in English and Spanish. Scattered information is available in thirteen other languages. www.medlineplus.gov
- **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY).** A comprehensive source of information in English and Spanish about children, youth, and disabilities, NICHCY includes information on medical issues, educational issues, and research-based practices. www.nichcy.org
- **National Lekotek Center.** Lekotek uses interactive play experiences to promote the inclusion of children with special needs into family and community life. www.lekotek.org
- **National Library of Medicine: Directory of Health Organizations.** This resource can help locate national organizations concerned with children and disabilities. From there, you can access local resources for information, networking, and partnering. <http://dirlin.nlm.nih.gov>
- **Seriweb (Special Education Resources on the Internet).** Resources for those involved in special education. www.seriweb.com
- **Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers.** The Alliance's website is a portal to the national network of Parent Training and Information Centers, which are funded by the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs to provide information, resources, and sometimes advocacy, for parents and other caregivers of children with disabilities. They are often an excellent local resource and a good place to start networking. www.taalliance.org/ptidirectory
- **Wrightslaw Yellow Pages for Kids.** Search for educational consultants, psychologists, educational diagnosticians, health care providers, academic therapists, tutors, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, coaches, advocates, and attorneys for children with disabilities on the Yellow Pages for Kids for your state. You will also find special education schools, learning centers, treatment programs, parent groups, respite care, community centers, grassroots organizations, and government programs for children with disabilities. www.yellowpagesforkids.com

Fun, games and disability awareness for children and teens

- **Braille Bug.** Braille fun and games for all children. www.afb.org/braillebug
- **KidsHealth.** Offers basic information for children and teens. http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/special_needs.html

The next phase will be to develop and launch an additional monthly story-time by October 2010 for children and families affected by ASD and to grow the program with direct input from parents. That project will involve the entire youth services team, including tween and young adult librarians Beth Blankley and Jamie Segno, who both have prior experience with early childhood story-time presentation. As bilingual story-

time provider, youth services librarian Rebecca Hickman will also be involved in reaching out to Hispanic families in the community, making information and referral materials readily accessible.

Other PLS staff, including adult services and library assistants, will contribute pieces monthly, such as signs, displays, and resource materials, so patrons who need more information will feel at ease

in asking for support.

With the enthusiastic guidance and support of Baudhuin Director Nancy Lieberman, the input of dedicated teachers and other professionals, and the extraordinary resource information received from Banks, the entire PLS staff of the Sherman Library is excited to see what this coming year will bring. ☺

Technology and Television for Babies and Toddlers

Natalie Arthur

One might wonder why ALSC's Children and Technology Committee would write an article advocating for the needs of children under the age of two to avoid screen time. However, by looking at the facts presented by a variety of research, one can learn that television viewing leads to obesity in children and has been linked to Attention Deficit Disorder later in life.¹ In addition, studies have shown that children's food preferences are highly influenced by the commercials they view, which tend to be those marketing sugary cereals and snack foods.²

So what do we, as librarians, do when these parents request movies and computer games for their infants and toddlers? One idea is to offer alternative entertainment sources, such as age-appropriate toys, finger plays, and board books. The Johnson County (Ind.) Public Library system offers early literacy kits that are geared by age group to children from birth through age 5. The kits include books, CDs, toys, puzzles, and activity ideas, as well as information on how each kit can be linked to one of the six early literacy skills as recognized by ALA and ALSC.

In addition, having a list of baby-appropriate technology—such as toys that jingle, light up, and interact with babies on the basis of movement or pushing a button—may offer parents a way to

introduce their baby to technology without overstimulating the baby's brain. Offering storytimes for babies and toddlers will help parents see how reading can be a fun activity to share with their little ones. Librarians can model age-appropriate ways to share books with babies, and parents can interact with one another and see other children the same age as their own to find out how they interact similarly to and differently from their own child.

As children's librarians, we've all spoken with a patron requesting DVDs or books to help a baby learn to read. After all, turn on your television these days and you are likely to see a commercial advertising *Your Baby Can Read*, a "remarkable learning system" claiming that it can teach your infant to read even before their first birthday.³ Many libraries carry "educational" DVDs such as the Baby Bumble Bee series and Baby Einstein series, though refunds have been offered by Disney, this series' manufacturer, to dissatisfied parents, after removing wording from the packaging claiming that DVDs were, in fact, educational.⁴

In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a statement in 1999 urging parents to eliminate all screen time for children under the age of two.⁵ This includes television,



Natalie Arthur is Collection Services Manager at Johnson County (Ind.) Public Library. She is a former member of the ALSC Children and Technology Committee, which also includes chair Amber Creger, Lauren Anduri, Kelley Beeson, Jill Bickford, Gretchen Caserotti, Jeannie Chen, Patricia Havrin, Joella Peterson, and Patty Saidenberg.

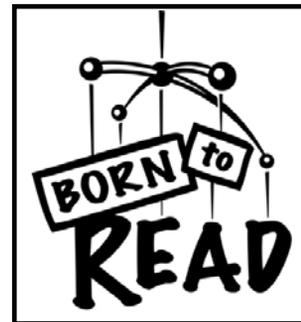
computers, and the all-too-common iPhone applications specifically marketed towards babies and toddlers. But with the wide availability of television programming specifically for the toddler crowd, not to mention the *Your Baby Can Read* phenomenon, parents are likely receiving mixed messages. Combine these with the ease of allowing one's child to watch television while a parent or caregiver completes a quick chore, and it seems likely that most babies are going to be getting some screen time—certainly more than that advocated by the AAP.

One important step librarians can take is to share with parents the AAP recommendations. As children's librarians, it is our job to advocate for the needs of children, and clearly watching television or a computer screen is in no child's best

interest. And, for those parents who feel that this is a current hot topic and not one that is likely to last, direct them to a 1979 article by Sydney Burton, James Calonico, and Dennis McSeveney, which many still find valid today. The authors state, "The more TV preschoolers watch, the less well they do academically in the first grade; also, the more TV preschoolers watch, the less well-socialized they are in the first grade."⁶ ↵

References

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2. Dimitri A. Christakis et al., "Early Television Exposure and Subsequent Attentional Problems in Children," *Pediatrics* 113, no. 4 (Apr. 2004): 708–13.
3. Your Baby Can Read website, www.yourbabycanread.com (accessed Mar. 25, 2010).
4. David Kerley, "Baby Einstein Refunds," *Good Morning America*, ABC (Oct. 25, 2009).
5. American Academy of Pediatrics, "Policy Statement," *Pediatrics* 104, no. 2 (Aug. 1999): 341–43.
6. Sydney Burton, James Calonico, and Dennis McSeveney, "Effects of Preschool Television Watching on First-Grade Children," *Journal of Communication* 29, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 164–70.



Born to Read It's Never Too Early to Start!

Organize a Born to Read program at your library by working with parents and babies to read, share, talk and play. ALSC's Born to Read brochure and website (www.ala.org/btr) feature recommended book lists for parents and babies.

The Born to Read brochure and merchandise are available on the ALA Store website at: www.alastore.ala.org

ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children

Wanted! Award Applications

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

- **Bechtel Fellowship.** Librarians working in direct service to children, or retired members who completed their careers in direct service to children for a minimum of eight years, are encouraged to apply for a Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship to finance 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 upon request.
- **Bookapalooza.** This program offers three select 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. The applicant must plan and present an outline for a theme-based summer reading program in a public library. The committee encourages proposals with innovative ways to encourage involvement of children with physical or mental disabilities.
- **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.** ALSC members are invited to nominate one of their fellow members for the Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes a member who has made significant contributions to and had an impact on library services to children. Nominees may be practicing librarians in a public or school library, 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 and Schuster Children's Publishing, this award pays the honorarium and travel for a visiting author or illustrator up to a maximum of \$4,000. Hayes Award applicants seek to provide a visit from an author or illustrator who will speak to children who have not had the opportunity to hear a nationally known author or 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 2011 Annual Conference will be held in New Orleans, LA. The recipients must be ALSC members, work directly with children, and have less than ten years, but more than one year, of experience as a children's librarian by the opening of the Annual Conference.

For more information about each award and to download award applications, visit the ALSC website at www.ala.org/alsc and click on Awards & Grants—Professional Awards. To receive a form by e-mail, send a request to: alsc@ala.org. Deadline for all professional award applications is **December 1, 2010**.

Major Board Actions

During the 2010 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., the board voted to take the following actions:

APPROVED, in concept the Resolution on Ensuring Summer Reading Programs to All Children and Teens presented by the Youth Caucus councilors to ALA Council. *(Complete text of the resolution can be accessed from www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/aboutalsc/governance/bdacts/index.cfm.)*

APPROVED, the Día de los niños/ Día de los libros Memorandum of Understanding with REFORMA.

APPROVED, the memorial resolution commending Spencer G. Shaw, as corrected. *(Complete text of the resolution can be accessed from www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/aboutalsc/governance/bdacts/index.cfm.)*

EXTENDED, the term of the current Fiscal Officer of the ALSC Board for one year for one time only, to allow for a more evenly staggered schedule of elections to Board membership.

ENDORSED, in concept the Resolution to Maintain the Improving Literacy through School Libraries as an Independently Funded Program. *(Complete text of the resolution can be accessed from www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/aboutalsc/governance/bdacts/index.cfm.)*

ACCEPTED, the "ALSC-L Policy Revision post Saturday Board Meeting Discussion" document dated June 29, 2010.

DECLINED, the Special Collections & Bechtel Fellowship Committee's request for a separate Face Book page.

DECLINED, the Special Collections in Children's Literature Wikiography motion from the Special Collections & Bechtel Fellowship Committee.

ACCEPTED, the consent agenda for 2010 ALA Annual Conference.

REFERRED, the Organization and Bylaws Committee's motion for a proposed bylaws change regarding a non-voting board intern position to the Emerging Leaders Program and ALCTS for input, requesting a deadline for 2011 Midwinter discussion.

ACCEPTED, the following recommended language from the Organization and Bylaws Committee to designate one board of directors position as a "New to ALSC" director:

- "Bylaws Article IV. Sec. 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the Association; the immediate past-president; the ALSC/ALA Councilor; the fiscal officer; eight additional directors, which will include a "New to ALSC" director, three to be elected each year for a term of three years

each, except beginning in 1977 and every third year thereafter when two shall be elected for a term of three years each."

APPROVED, the proposed FY2011 budget as recommended by the Budget Committee.

ACCEPTED, the following recommended language from the Organization and Bylaws Committee regarding the Batchelder Award Selection Committee membership statement:

- "Five members, including the chairperson, all appointed by the President of ALSC
- Language specialists may be added ex-officio to the committee by the President upon recommendation by the chairperson of the committee."

ACCEPTED, the following recommended language (additions/changes in bold) from the Organization and Bylaws Committee:

- "Bylaws Article VIII. Sec. 2. **The Batchelder Award Committee**, the Caldecott Award Committee, **the Geisel Award Committee**, the Newbery Award Committee, the Sibert Award Committee, the Wilder Award Committee, and the Notable Children's Books Committee.

a) **The Batchelder Award Committee shall consist of the following five (5) members: a chairperson appointed by the president and four (4) members appointed by the president.**

b) The Caldecott Award Committee shall consist of the following fifteen (15) members: Eight (8) members to be elected annually from a slate of no fewer than sixteen (16), a chairperson appointed by the president, and six (6) members appointed by the president.

c) **The Geisel Award Committee shall consist of the following seven (7) members: a chairperson appointed by the president and six (6) members appointed by the president.**

d) The Newbery Award Committee shall consist of the following fifteen (15) members: Eight (8) members to be elected annually from a slate of no

fewer than sixteen (16), a chairperson appointed by the president, and six (6) members appointed by the president. e) The Sibert Award Committee shall consist of the following nine (9) members: Five (5) members to be elected annually from a slate of no fewer than ten (10), a chairperson appointed by the president, and three (3) members appointed by the president. f) The Wilder Award Committee shall consist of the following five (5) members: Three (3) members to be elected every other year from a slate of no fewer than six (6), a chairperson appointed by the president, and one (1) member appointed by the president. g) The Notable Children's Books Committee shall consist of the following eleven (11) members: a chairperson appointed by the president and ten (10) members appointed by the president. h) No individual may serve on the **Batchelder Award**, Caldecott Award, **Geisel Award**, Newbery Award, Sibert Award, **Wilder Award**, or Notable Children's Books Committees more often than once every four years. The four year period shall begin from the last year of the term of service regardless of length of term. This guideline will not apply to the selection of nominees for Chair. This guideline will not apply to other **ALSC committees.**"

Suggestions Welcome

ALSC members are encouraged to suggest titles for the 2011 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. **Cynthia K. Richey**, richeyc@einetwork.net
- The **Caldecott Medal** is given to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. **Judy Zuckerman**, j.zuckerman@brooklynpubliclibrary.org
- 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. **Susan Faust**, sanfransue4@gmail.com

- The **Arbuthnot Lecture** features a speaker who is an individual of distinction in the field of children's literature. Send recommendations for lecturers for the 2012 lecture to **Shawn S. Brommer**, sbrommer@scls.lib.wi.us
- 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. **Martha Walke**, walkem@sover.net
- The **Andrew Carnegie Medal**, supported by an endowment from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, honors an outstanding video production for children. **Angelique Kopa**, kopa@hcplonline.info
- 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. **Julie Roach**, jul_roach@yahoo.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. **Sarah McCarville**, smccarville@grpl.org

- 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. **Barbara Brand**, brandb@jocolibrary.org

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, **Katie O'Dell**, kodell@multcolib.org
- Notable Children's Recordings, **Karen Perry**, perrykm5@yahoo.com
- Notable Children's Videos, **Angelique Kopa**, kopa@hcplonline.info

New from ALSC/ALA

ALSC is pleased to announce the following new and forthcoming products.

Have you always wanted to host a mock Newbery or Caldecott election in your community, but just didn't know where to start? A love of children's books, positive energy, and the new **Newbery Caldecott Mock Election Tool Kit** are all you need! This revised publication, coming out later this year, includes guidelines for organizing an election, Newbery and Caldecott criteria, tips for rewarding mock discussions, ideas for follow-up activities, a bibliography of other helpful resources, and much more.

Available as a digital download, the new tool kit also includes Microsoft Word and Excel files of audience handouts, evaluation forms, and ballot forms, making it easy to customize tools for your library's mock election. We've even included lists of suggested book titles for thematic elections focusing on one genre, such as biography, mystery, or historical fiction. The publication was revised by Steven Engelfried, youth librarian at Wilsonville (Ore.) Public Library, who has led successful mock elections for many years in Oregon. Stay tuned to www.ala.org/alsc for the release date.

To take your mock election knowledge up another notch, sign up for Steven's **Mock Election Webinar** and learn firsthand how to plan and execute an outstanding and engaging mock election event. Steven will share highlights from the tool kit and impart his own practical advice and know-how in a live, online presentation. Look for more information about the webinar on the ALSC website later this fall.

"The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books, 2010 Edition" covers the most distinguished American children's literature and illustration. Librarians and teachers everywhere have come to rely on this annual guide for quick reference, collection and curriculum development, and readers' advisory. In this year's essay, Diane Foote presents an enlightening overview of recent clarifications to the awards' definitions and provides an insightful look at some recent trends in children's book publishing that affect the work of the Newbery and Caldecott Award Selection Committees. ISBN: 978-0-8389-3595-8; \$25. Available at www.alastore.ala.org. 

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THE LAST WORD

Sippy Cup at the Ready How Being a Mom Prepared Me for Library School

Genevieve Grove

Like most of my classmates, the desire/urge/calling/impetus/whatnot to earn my MLS did not strike early. Sure, there are a few young faces in the room, but most of us have already crawled our way through the corporate world and are now salivating over the chance to bring home (likely) smaller paychecks in return for deeper satisfaction from our work. Or so we keep telling ourselves.



I also realize that as someone in her early thirties, I can hardly claim to have had a full career life before returning to school, but please hear me out. I spent several years as my own boss, so I do have the gray hairs and boxes of tax receipts required for preliminary entry into “the club.”

Yet, I am quite certain that it was not the, *ahem*, varied joys of small business ownership that put me on the path to librarianship. My librarian dreams stemmed from having children and rediscovering the joys of the public library one bite-mark-ridden board book at a time.

I was in awe of children’s librarians and wanted to join them, learning how to do a great storytime and how to get kids truly excited about reading along the way. Conveniently, everything I needed to learn to survive library school has been amassed in the last three years—working, having a baby, starting school, having another baby . . . well, it doesn’t sound like much when you put it like that, but lugging AACR2 in my school bag never hurt my shoulder because my diaper bag has ten pounds on it, easy.

Here’s a quick first lesson: Comfort is not included in tuition fees. I have come to rely on my Stay-At-Home Mom training to get me through the three, four, or eight hours of class at a time. Classroom X is always freezing—bring a sweater. Professor Y is notoriously stingy with breaks—bring your own water bottle . . . but don’t drink too fast. Vending Machine Z has foods only my dog would eat—granola bars and chocolate both pack very well.

Baby wipes are good for wiping so much more than babies. Colored pen choices make the time pass quicker and make your notes oh-so-pretty. Someone will come to class sick, and you’ll be thankful you brought tissues and hand sanitizer. You can probably leave the Matchbox cars at home, though; I’ve only used mine once or twice.

More tried and true lessons:

- You have to do what you’re told (required classes) before you get to do what you want (electives). Being the mommy means knowing about fair play, though it doesn’t mean you have to be happy about it.
- Use available free time wisely to get ahead on your work. A load of dirty diapers waiting to be washed may be a more pungent reminder than the “Paper Due!” note in your calendar, but both will sneak up on you in an ugly way if ignored.
- If you can interpret the needs and wants of a pre-verbal child, you’ll have learned the first rule of reference librarianship—keep asking questions to get to the bottom of what someone truly desires. Every parent knows if you give them exactly what they asked for, it’s still likely to elicit tears.

Sure, life lessons come in many forms, and I do not believe I’m really any more ready for this than any of my classmates, but you have to admit that being whined at by a three-year-old for hours on end does prepare one especially well for the rigors of any public service desk.

As soon as I’m done nursing the baby, I’d better switch from decaf to something more potent. After all, petulance knows no age limits.

GenevieveGrove is a stay-at-home mom by day and library assistant and grad student by night.

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.