



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

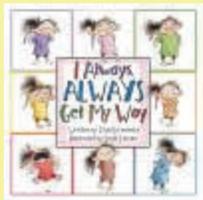
Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 6 Number 4
December 2009

Fiction

I Always, Always Get My Way

By: Thad Krasnesky
Illus. by: David Parkins
Flashlight Press, 2009
ISBN: 9780979974649



Curriculum: Family life; Parent and child
Being *only three* gets Emmy out of a lot of tricky situations. She travels the house wreaking havoc on everyone there - mom, dad, brother, sister, and pets. Yet, eventually, her family tires of her and her excuse of being too little to get in trouble. Older siblings will relate all too well to this little sister story. Told in an entertaining rhyming pattern with comical watercolor illustrations, Emmy's story of mischief will be enjoyed by many.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.

Who Wants to Be a Poodle? I Don't

Written and illus by: Lauren Child
Candlewick Press, 2009
ISBN: 9780763646103



Curriculum: Dogs

Trixie Twinkle Toes Trot-a-Lot Delight lives with Verity Brulee in a sumptuous apartment in a fashionable city. She does not think this is the best life for her. She wants to walk in puddles, poke her head out car windows, and be dangerous and daring! Will she be able to change her circumstances?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Star of the Week

By: Darlene Friedman
Illus. by: Roger Roth
Bowen Press, 2009
ISBN: 9780763646103

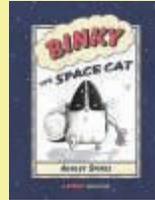


Curriculum: Kindergarten; Adoption
Cassidy-Li's turn has come to be the Star of the Week. She and Mom are making brownies with sprinkles to take for a special snack. She and Dad are creating a poster all about HER. But how can she include her birth parents? She has never met them and knows nothing at all about them.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Binky the Space Cat

Written and Illus. by: Ashley Spires
Kids Can Press, 2009



Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ERS, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

ISBN: 9781554533091

Curriculum: Graphic novel; Creative writing

Fierce and mighty, Binky defends humans from pesky aliens a.k.a. bugs. "Unlike your average cat...he has a purpose", Binky responds to a SPACE CAT ad and becomes certified to protect humans, venture into outer space (the front yard) and build a rocket ship. Ashley Spires beginning graphic novel is a hilarious source for encouraging creative writing and Binky's T-chart note taking strategy, comparing aliens and bugs, is a cute way to represent this research technique.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South HS

My Sister Alicia May

By: Nancy Tupper Ling

Illus. by: Shennen Bersani

Pleasant St. Press,
2009

ISBN: 9780979203596

Curriculum: Down syndrome; Sisters
Rachel's sister, Alicia May has Down syndrome. Rachel talks about the special things her sister does. She describes endearing moments such as Rachel counting the dots on ladybugs and also of frustrating times when she gets tired of looking after her sister. This book provides a special look into the life of living with a sibling with Down syndrome. The illustrations are so realistic that they look like photographs. I highly recommend this book for all libraries. It will give introspection into the world of Down syndrome.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA



Nonfiction

Animals That Live on the Farm: Cows

By: JoAnn Early Macken

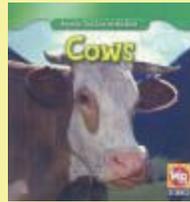
Weekly Reader
Books, 2010

ISBN: 1433923963

Curriculum: Cows; Farm animals; Farms

Part of a series, *Animals That Live on the Farm*, this book focuses on cows and is an ideal research tool for young students. The book is broken into three main sections; calves, daily life of a cow living on a farm, and the many uses a cow has on a farm.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



My Body Belongs To Me

By: Jill Starishevsky

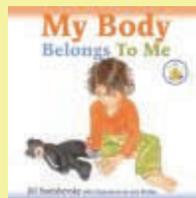
Illus. by: Sara Muller

Safety Star Media, 2008

ISBN: 9780982121603

Curriculum: Child sexual abuse; Child psychology

A little kid is improperly touched by an adult. The author, a lawyer, has written a book for 3- to-10 year-olds that serves as a tool to address the difficult discussion of sexual abuse. The book is written in a sensitive but straightforward manner, and uses rhyme. It includes resources on how to discuss this subject with young children. This is an important book for teachers, psychologists, and parents.



Reviewed by: Dr. Carmen H. Sanjurjo
Alumni

Spanish!

¿Quién es quién?

(Who is Who?)

By: Lotti Scagliotti

Illus. by: Ale González

Nicanitas,

ISBN: 9788496448261

Curriculum: Fingers

A pair of hands is depicted in this Spanish picture book. It is easy to count the fingers, but once they are disguised as puppets it becomes more challenging to identify and name them as a little story is developed around each one of them.

This is a fun way for children to learn the names for each finger as they are introduced in an original way with simple sentences and charming drawings.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer



Key to the colors

Yellow = primary

Blue = upper elementary

Green = middle school

Purple = young adult

The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

Many of these books will work in middle school, too.!

Fiction

Sticky Burr: The Prickly Peril

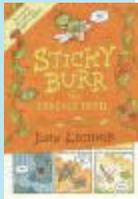
Written and illus. by:
John Lechner

Candlewick Press, 2009
ISBN: 9780763645809

Curriculum: Burrs; Seeds; Adventure; Forests

Told from the point of the bad guy, Scurvy Burr, this short graphic novel tells of the adventure of the bad seeds and their exiled friend trying to take over the Burrwood Village and oust the good guy, Sticky Burr, once and for all. With an easier to follow plot than most graphic novels, the format and silly characters will draw in and keep reluctant readers, and especially boys.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



Wild Stories

Written and illus. by
Colin Thompson

Kane Miller, 2009
ISBN: 9781933605883

Curriculum: Fables, Zoology

Funny, witty, and absurd stories about creatures in an old house and the surrounding garden. The funniest are the ones about insects and their adventures, especially because they are written from the perspective of the animals themselves. Two or three stories are about growing old and moving on in life. With charac-



ters like Ted the Flea who lived on a rat, and Frank1942, an ant who recites poetry; kids and adults will have great fun reading these lively and "wiggly" stories.

Reviewed by: Dr. Carmen Sanjurjo
Alumni

Rule of Three

By: Megan McDonald

Illus. by: Pamela A. Con-solazio

Candlewick Press, 2009
ISBN: 0763641535

Curriculum: Sisters; Acting; Baking; Family life

In Acton, Oregon, oldest sister Alex has always been the one to act in plays while middle sister Stevie has always been content to being the sensible sister, holding the three together. When the Drama Club, at the middle school, announces that the play for the coming season will be a musical (*Once Upon a Mattress*), Stevie decides she wants to try out for the lead. She has a beautiful singing voice that should make her a shoe-in. Alex, however, has other ideas and a stiff competition ensues. "May the best sister win."

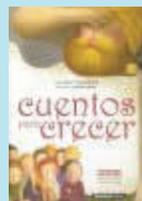
Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Alumni



Spanish!

Cuentos para crecer (Tales to grow up)

By: Anna Gasol and



Teresa Blanch

Illus. by: Jacobo Muñiz

Malsinet, 2008

ISBN: 9788496708501

Curriculum: Traditional tales; Values

Twelve traditional tales from different cultures are used to present values that should help young readers become outstanding citizens. The tales are followed by comments, introspective questions and encouragement to put each value into practice. The values presented are equality, justice, respect, peace, altruism, integrity, solidarity, perseverance, living together harmoniously, patience, and responsibility.

The text, which is easy to follow and attractively supported with soft-colored drawings, will be appealing to youngsters.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

Nonfiction

Django: World's Greatest jazz Guitarist

Written and Illus. by:
Bonnie Christensen

Roaring Book Press, 2009

ISBN: 9781596434226

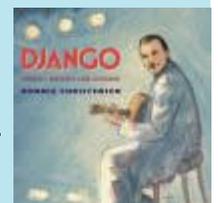
Curriculum: Jazz; Music

Belgium January 23, 1910

Dogs bark

Banjos talk

Dinners boil in black pots



A laugh, a screech, a baby
cries

Django is born

His father's violin sings

Bell ring in a far off town.

The story is captivating. Django is born among the Roma, an ethnic group known as "gypsies" who migrated to France from India nearly one thousand years ago, and is considered a prodigy from a young age. Despite his lack of any education he moves to Paris and on the eve of fame, gets badly burned in a carriage accident.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark

Greenwood Elem.

**Just the Facts:
Writing Your Own
Research Paper**



Written and Illus. by
Nancy Loewan

Picture Window Books, 2010

ISBN: 9781404855199

Curriculum: Research

This is an excellent teaching resource for research skills. The reader is first introduced to a young girl (our guide) as she explains what a research report is: "...a special kind of writing assignment. You don't tell a story. You don't make things up. In fact, writing is one of the LAST steps in putting together a research report." For every 'tool' the narrator describes, there is an accompanying page which illustrates what the students' work should look like. The illustrations are large, modern and eye-catching.

Reviewed by Dana Clark

Greenwood Elem.

**A is for Arrr!: A
Pirate Alphabet**



Written and illus. by Laura Purdie-Salas
Capstone Press, 2010

ISBN: 978142983291

Curriculum: Phonics; Reading

A is for Arrr! is a creative non-fiction title, combining the appeal of pirates with the alphabet. It begins, "Arrr is part word, part growl! Pirates from Bristol, England, probably said 'Arrr.'" The illustrations are realistic and, frankly, some of the photos are a bit frightening.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark

Greenwood Elem.

**Sneaky, Spinning Baby
Spiders**

By: Sandra Markle

Illus. by: Joan Holub

Walker, 2008

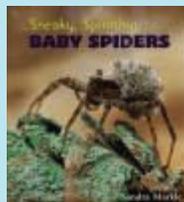
ISBN: 9780802796974

Curriculum: Arachnids; Spiders

This book will take readers on a remarkable journey into the world of baby spiders. Readers will be fascinated by facts about different types of spiders. They will learn that Diving Bell spiders spin a web underwater to make a nursery chamber and that these spiders will make many trips to the water surface, trap air against their bodies and then dive down to the web and deposit the air into the nursery. This fascinating piece of information and others are supplemented by fabulous photography. A map is included showing where each spider photograph was taken. This book is a must for all libraries.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA



Fiction

The Farwalker's Quest

By: Joni Sensel

Bloomsbury U.S.A., 2009

ISBN: 1599902729

*Curriculum: Adventure; Quests;
Magic; Friendship*

The two friends, Ariel and Zeke, are preparing for their name day to find out what training they have the skills for. The two find an ancient artifact called a "telling dart" that appears to be for Ariel. When two strangers come to their village to find the dart, Ariel has bad feelings. She is right and is kidnapped by the strangers. Zeke follows to rescue her and they both travel on to find the meaning of the dart's message and their true calling. Friendship is tested on their journey, and they must follow their instincts to discover the answers to their quest.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



Silver Phoenix

By: Cindy Pon

Green Willow Books, 2009

ISBN: 9780061730214

*Curriculum: China; Family;
Survival; Supernatural; Magic*

Ai Ling was rejected as a suitable wife for most of the families because her father had been disgraced at the court. This didn't bother her as she liked her independence. When her father went to the palace to redeem his name, he never returned. Ai Ling decided to go out on her own to find her father. She meets up with Chen Yong who is on a



quest of his own and finds himself drawn to her. Also drawn to her is a number of evil spirits trying to kill her. She finds powers she didn't know she had and is assisted by the Immortals. She must fulfill her destiny from a previous incarnation. There is adventure, magic, and a young girl finding her place and fulfilling her destiny.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Are These My Basoomas I See Before me?:

The Final Confessions of Georgia Nicolson

By: Louise Rennison
HarperTeen, 2009

ISBN: 9780061459351

Curriculum: Friendship; Dating; Families

Georgie is thrilled to be the one and only girlfriend of Masimo, the hot guy from Pizza-a-Gogo land, Italy, for those of you not up on the language. But if she is so thrilled to be his girlfriend why is Dave the Laugh in her thoughts so often? In the immortal words of Georgie, "Why can't everything be simple???"

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Cat O' Nine Tails

By: Julia Golding

Roaring Brook Press,
2008

ISBN: 1596434455

Curriculum: England-History-18th Century; Sailor's life-18th Century

Cat Royal and three friends find themselves betrayed by a family



member, become impressed into the British Navy, and endure hardships on board a ship whose Captain is crazy. In addition, the *Courageous* is forced to land in Georgia where Cat escapes, becomes adopted into the Creek tribe, is hunted by Mr. Maclean (a totemator from the ship), and finally makes her way to friends in Philadelphia. An enjoyable mystery, adventure, and more.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Alumni

Nonfiction

Killer Ants

By: Nicholas Nirgiotis

Illus. by: Emma Stevenson

Holiday House, 2009

ISBN: 9780823420346

Curriculum: Ants; Predatory insects

Flesh-eating army ants, African driver ants, fire ants, and the bulldog ants of Australia, are the focus of this informative offering. Large gouache illustrations accompany text about the insects' varying social structures, life cycles, physiology, weapons and attack modes. Readers will be fascinated by the facts and detailed renderings of these ferocious hunters.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Chris Jericho

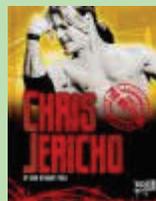
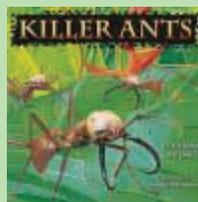
By: Sean Price

Capstone Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781429633505

Curriculum: WWE; Professional wrestling

Chris Jericho, also known as Y2J, was



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From ERS:

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Karen Shannon
Antonio Nicotera

born Chris Irvine in 1970. He was born on Long Island, New York. Chris played hockey, baseball, football and water polo, but he loved wrestling the best. Chris went to college and earned a degree in journalism. After he practiced in the field of journalism for a time, he realized that he wanted to be the one in the spotlight, not the one reporting it.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

The Seed Vault

By: Bonnie Juettner

Norwood House Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781599533438

Curriculum: Plants; Gene banks; Seeds; Global conservation

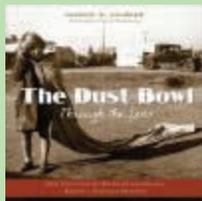
Historically farmers attempt to preserve seeds from crops to plant the following year. Nature and science have caused the agriculture world to collect millions of seed varieties promoting crop diversity and reducing extinction risks. *The Seed Vault* examines the 2004 international treaty which preserves an ever growing 100 million seed collection in a "doomsday vault", insuring food crop production in the event of a global disaster. Highly recommended this book conveys our global community efforts to protect planet resources.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South HS

The Dust Bowl - Through the Lens

By: Martin W. Sandler

Walker & Com-



pany, 2009
ISBN: 9780802795472

Curriculum: Dust Bowl era, 1931-1939; Documentary photography

Not only did they capture some of the most powerful images of this tragic era in American history, but photographers also helped change the country's perception and understanding of the Dust Bowl. Following both the people who tried to escape the devastation as well as those who remained behind, their work tells stories of desperation, perseverance, and hope as well. This compilation of incredible photos with powerful text "provides us with a permanent record of a remarkable time that must not be forgotten."

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.

Stonecutter

By: John Kuramoto

Illus. by Jon J. Muth

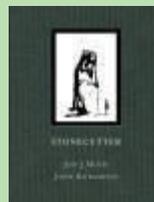
Feiwei and Friends, 2009

ISBN: 9780312554569

Curriculum: Folklore-Japanese

In the stonecutters quest for power he becomes a merchant, a high official, the sun, a cloud, the wind, and finally a stone. In this form "He was strength itself, more powerful than anything else on earth or in the sky." And yet, "The stonecutter stood before the stone, deciding where to begin." Jon Muth's use of white space in his strikingly simple black figures adds a wonderful touch of mystique to this Japanese folktale. This is a story for readers of all ages.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem



Fiction

Jumping Off Swings

By: Johanna Knowles

Candlewick Press, 2009

ISBN: 9780763639495

Curriculum: Teen Pregnancy; Interpersonal relations; Emotional problems

Using sex to feel loved and labeled a slut by her classmates, Ellie discovers she is pregnant and facing all the hard choices inherent in her situation. This sensitive story unfolds through the first person narratives of four teens. Each perspective gives voice to how the consequences of a teen pregnancy reverberate throughout relationships and the community.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8



Liar

By: Justine Larbalestier

Bloomsbury, 2009

ISBN: 9781599903057

Curriculum: High school life; Secrets; Werewolves

Micah is admittedly an unreliable narrator, a liar her whole life. Yet here she promises to tell the truth and to share her biggest secret. Details are revealed and additional lies and mysteries are uncovered as the suspicious death of her "after-hours boyfriend" is related. The reader is left guessing even after the final line as to where the truth lies in this chilling and bizarre thriller where anything or nothing could be true.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



Espressologist

By: Kristina Springer
Farrar Straus Giroux,
2009



ISBN: 9780374322281

Curriculum: Coffeehouses; Match-making

Life for 17 year old Jane, a barista, turns crazy when she is promoted to assistant manager and her hobby of matching people's characteristics to their coffee drinks is revealed. She becomes an espressologist, a matchmaker, who brings many new paying customers to the café but can she find the right match for herself in the beans? An escapist book, readers will believe in espressology and find themselves wondering if their perfect match is just one frappuccino away.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Never Cry Werewolf

By: Heather Davis
Harper Teen, 2009
ISBN:9780061349232



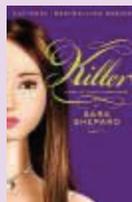
*Curriculum: Mystery;
Romance; Brat Camp;
Dating; Werewolves; Musicians*

Since her mother died and her father remarried, Shelby has made a few bad choices, especially when it comes to guys. So when she finds herself at brat camp deep in the Oregon woods, Shelby is wary of falling for dark, brooding Austin Bridges the Third, son of the famous rock star. Now, Shelby must decide whether Austin is just another in a long line of bad boys she should have stayed away from, whether she will help him retrieve his vials, and whether she believes his secret illness is real.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
T.J. H.S.

Killer

By: Sara Shepard
Harper Teen, 2009
ISBN: 9780061566110



Curriculum: Friendship; Secrets; Conduct of life

The mysteries continue with this latest installment of the *Pretty Little Liars* series. Ali's death continues to haunt the girls and *A* is still sending cryptic text messages. While it is the sixth book in the series and the mystery still hasn't been solved, these rich girls from Rosewood Academy have enough drama in their lives to keep readers interested. With the personal issues and the shallow deceptions that populate these pages, this is juicy reading, even for reluctant readers.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
T.J. H.S.

Blue Plate Special

By: Michelle Kwasney
Harper Teen, 2009
ISBN: 9780811867801



Curriculum: Teen pregnancy; Mothers and daughters; Relationships; Single parents; Rape

Three women, three stories. This is a book about teen pregnancy, addiction, and relationships. Each woman in this book has a deep personal pain she must deal with and each woman finds that she is not as alone as she thinks. One of the strengths of this book is its honesty and truth. The focus is relationships between mothers and daughters and realizing that things are not always the way they seem. Well written with sympathetic characters and a gratifying twist at the end, you may want to hug your mommy when you fin-

ish.
Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
T.J. H.S.

Professional

Cómo hablar de arte a los niños (How to Talk to Children About Art)

By: Françoise Barbe-Gall
Nerea, 2009



ISBN: 9788496431423

Curriculum: Art appreciation;

This is a Spanish book for adults to show how they can introduce children of three age groups (5-7, 8-10, and 11-13) to paintings. The material is color-coded for each age group, with beginners focusing on descriptions, the next group going into interpretation and more reflection, and the older ones looking for external relationships, motivations and historical importance. The approach is well illustrated and documented with questions and comments that apply the principles exposed to 30 famous paintings.

The material is very informative, well organized and thoughtful in its systematic approach to promote art appreciation. Art teachers and parents should take a look at this book.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

My home is where my books are. (1909)
~ Ellen Thompson ~