



# The Review Crew

## What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 7 Number 4

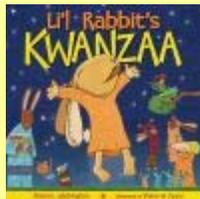
December 2010

## Fiction

### Li'l Rabbit's Kwanzaa

Written by: Donna Washington

Illus. by: Shane Evans  
Katherine Tegen, 2010  
ISBN: 9780060728167



*Curriculum: Kwanzaa; Religions*

This Kwanzaa is hard for Li'l Rabbit. Granna falls sick and the family decides not to celebrate the Karamu banquet, so Li'l Rabbit looks for help. He, and all the other animals of the forest, bring Karamu to Granna and without knowing it, he provides her with the best gift of all: The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elem.

### Hanukkah Trike

Written by: Michelle Edwards  
Illus. by: Kathryn Mitter

Albert Whitman, 2010  
ISBN: 9780807531266



*Curriculum: Hanukkah; Religions*

Little Gabi loves to celebrate Hanukkah with her parents and especially loves to hear the story of the Maccabee's heroism. She applies the moral of this historical story to her own life as she learns to ride her Hanukkah bike. She perseveres and learns an important les-

son about herself and about achieving success.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elem.

### A Plane Goes Ka-Zoom!

Written by: Jonathan London

Illus. by: Denis Roche  
Christy Ottaviano Books, 2010



ISBN: 9780805089707

*Curriculum: Planes; Transportation*

London's use of rhyming text describes the sounds of planes while providing the reader with copious amounts of information about different types of planes, how they run and how they land. The illustrations are brightly colored and great for engaging children in the story. "A plane could fly high.... or very low, a plane could fly fast...or very slow"

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elem.

### The City

By: Armin Greder  
Allen & Unwin, 2010

ISBN: 9781742371429



*Curriculum: Family; Parents; Folktale*

When a city woman's husband is killed in the war, she takes her baby son to the forest where few ever tread, a place he will be safe. There she dotes on him. When the woman dies, the now grown son tries to find a place to bury her

## 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.)

bones. When the bones slip from his pole, he realizes he is free and goes about finding the city.  
Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

### Father Grumble

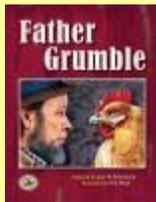
By: John Martin Feiera-bend

GIA Publications, 2009  
ISBN: 9781579997564

*Curriculum: Gender Roles; Folksongs; Farming*

Father Grumble is certain his wife does hardly anything compared to his hard work of plowing fields. Once his wife consents, Father Grumble takes on her tasks for the day soon learning that she does a week's worth of work in a single day... he would much rather return to his plow.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.



### Hippo Has a Hat

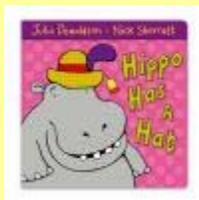
By: Julia Donaldson  
Illus. by: Nick Shar-ratt

Macmillan, 2006

ISBN: 9780230711457

In playful story-in-rhyme pattern this board book follows many animals as they try on many different clothes. "Tiger tries a shirt. Leopard likes this skirt" and "Toad's tracksuit is too big. These jeans are tight on Pig," are a few of the quirky examples of rhyme in this book.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



### A Bedtime for Bear

By: Bonny Becker  
Illus. by: Kady Mac-donald



Candlewick Press, 2010

ISBN: 9780763641016

*Curriculum: Bedtime stories; Bears; Mice*

Bear has invited his friend Mouse over to spend the night. They enjoy an evening of checkers and hot cocoa before it is time to sleep. Bear reminds Mouse of his need for absolute quiet, but Mouse has his own routine. Bear closes his eyes and Mouse "bristle, bristle, bristles" while brushing his teeth, then hums while putting on his nightshirt. This and other antics go on for quite a while until Bear roars "Will this torment never cease!"

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni

### Library Mouse: A World to Explore

Written and Illus. by:  
Daniel Kirk

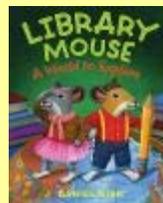
Abrams Books, 2010

ISBN:  
9780810989689

*Curriculum: Libraries; Mice; Friend-ship*

Sam is a mouse who lives behind the children's reference books in a cozy little hole. His idea of adventure comes from looking between the covers of books and gazing at projects that are made by children. Sam is afraid of heights and never wants to climb up high. All that changes when he meets Sarah who would rather climb the shelves and roam the library for adventure than read. Between the two of them, Sarah begins reading and Sam learns to overcome his fear of high places. Let the adventures begin!

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni



### Birdy's Smile Book

Written and illus by:  
Laurie Keller

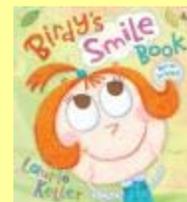
Ottoviano Books, 2010

ISBN:  
9780805088830

*Curriculum: Smiling*

According to Birdy, "it's important to have a good umbrella. But it's MORE IMPORTANT to have a good smile." She shares her smile - its value, its power, and all its uses - every day and enjoys those that are given to her. Adults and kids alike will enjoy Birdy's humor throughout the story, which comes through both her words and the comical illustrations. A mirror provided at the end gives readers a chance to practice this most important skill.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocer-nich  
Ford Elem.



**Spanish!**

### Siempre

By: Alison McGhee

Illus. by: Pascal Le-maitre

Blume, 2009

ISBN: 9788498014273

*Curriculum: Dogs*

A tiny dog's duty is to protect "his castle" and the little girl that lives in it. He is ready to take on any danger that comes his way. The dangers are both big and small: the stormy sea, meteors, invading mice, or monstrous spiders. This heartwarming story uses both the text as well as the illustrations to show the extreme love and devotion that can develop be-



tween a dog and his owner.  
Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

## Nonfiction

### Irving Berlin's White Christmas

Illus. by: Michael Hague  
Harper, 2010  
ISBN: 9780060291235



Curriculum: *Christmas; Christmas classic; Irving Berlin*

The lyrics to Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* are set to beautiful illustrations that invoke the fairy tale magic of Christmas. Children and adults will enjoy this amazing picture book version of the eternal Christmas classic. The sheet music is also included.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

If you have never said "Excuse me" to a parking meter or bashed your shins on a fire-plug, you are probably wasting too much valuable reading time.  
Sherri Chasin Calvo

## The Best for Upper Elementary

Many of these books will work in middle

## Fiction

### Old Pig

By: Margaret Wild  
Illus. by: Ron Brooks  
Allen & Unwin, 2009



ISBN: 9781741757064

Curriculum: *Death; Pigs*

Grandmother Pig knows her days are numbered. She prepares by paying all of her bills, returning her books to the library, and closing her bank account. She and her granddaughter walk slowly around town, taking in all the natural beauty. They spend the night holding each other tight.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

### Light your way

By: Carla Mooney  
NorwoodHouse, 2011  
ISBN: 9781599533872



Curriculum: *Candle making; Candle history*

Light a candle with your right hand for good fortune. Light a white candle for protection during a storm. Light a candle at birth, death and on birthdays for protection from evil. These and more bits of candle lore fill this book as well as directions for making and decorating several different types of candles.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

## Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

## Fiction

### Dracula

By: Nicky Raven  
Illus. by: Anne Yvonne Gilbert



Templar (2010)

ISBN: 9780763647933

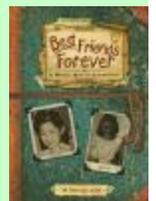
Curriculum: *Classic Literature; Horror; Vampires*

This beautifully illustrated adaptation of the classic tale focuses more on the story of the men who fought to take out the powerful Count Dracula. Though condensed, the full tale remains intact within the pages, but the illustrations are what draw the reader in. Gilbert's beautiful cross-hatched drawings capture the gothic romance and beauty that underlie this tale of the undead.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

### Best Friends Forever: A World War II Scrapbook

By: Beverly Pratt  
Marshall Cavendish, 2010  
ISBN: 9780761455776



Curriculum: *Japanese Americans Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945; World War, 1939-1945; Friendship*

*Fiction; Seattle (Wash.) History*

In 1942 after her best friend Dottie Masuoka and other Japanese families are sent to a relocation camp, 14-year-old Louise Kruger starts a scrapbook reflecting changes wrought by America's entrance into WWII. Though fictional, extensive research, along with period photos and newspaper clippings support this unique perspective on the era.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8

**The Body at the Tower**

By: Y. S. Lee

Candlewick Press, 2010  
ISBN: 9780769649685

*Curriculum: Mystery; Female detectives; 19<sup>th</sup> Century London*

The adventures of Mary Quinn, a female detective, continues. She is a member of the Agency, an all-female detective unit operating in Victorian London. This time she must go disguised as a boy and become apprenticed to a builder in order to solve a murder. She must earn the respect of the work crew and not reveal her true identity in order to solve the crime. There are many tense moments, especially when recognized by an old friend.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy



**The Mummy Snatcher of Memphis**

By: Natasha Narayan  
Quercus, 2010

ISBN: 9781849160216

*Curriculum: Adventure;*



*Mummies; Ancient Egypt*

The adventures of Kit Salter and her friends begin in this fun new series. Kit's father works at the museum and her archeologist aunt brings some artifacts from Egypt for the exhibit. Inside a packing crate, they find a young stowaway from Egypt trying to recover a sacred scarab. Then the mummy is stolen and the children are right in the middle of the investigation. There is action and humor and looks to be an enjoyable series.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

**Grease Town**

By: Ann Towell

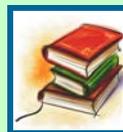
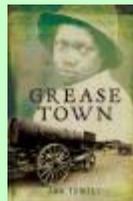
Tundra Books, 2010

ISBN: 9780887769832

*Curriculum: Fugitive slaves; Historical fiction*

It is 1863 and oil has recently been discovered in the small town of Oil Springs, Ontario. Lem and Titus are both orphans living with their aunt in London, Ontario. 19-year-old Lem decides to go live with his uncle in Oil Springs. 13-year-old Titus stows away in Lem's wagon. Shortly after arriving in Oil Springs Titus becomes a friend with Moses, the son of former slaves. Racism has followed the freed slaves into Oil Springs. Racists stir up trouble that culminates in a fierce attack against black townspeople.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA



**Sweet 15**

By: Emily Adler and Alex Echevarria

Marshall Cavendish, 2010

ISBN: 9780761455844

*Curriculum: Quinceañeras; Family life; Friendship*

Destiny's mom wants to throw her a big, fancy Quinceañera. America, Destiny's older sister thinks Quinceañeras are an antiquated, misogynistic ritual. Destiny just wants to ride her skateboard. But as the tensions build in her family, she realizes she is going to need to take a stand and be in control of her own life.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.



**A book is the only place in which you can examine a fragile thought without breaking it, or explore an explosive idea without fear it will go off in your face. It is one of the few havens remaining where a man's mind can get both provocation and privacy.**

# Young Adults Deserve the Best!

## Fiction

### Freak Magnet

By: Andrew Auseon  
HarperTeen, 2010

ISBN:  
9780061139260

*Curriculum: Grief; Relationships;  
Healing; Astronomy*

Charlie (Freak) is a geek who depends on a Superman suit for strength and comfort to deal with his sick mother. Gloria (Magnet) is a social recluse since the death of her brother. Can they find the way to each other or are their emotional walls too high to overcome? A steady storyline and good characterization draw readers in to caring for both Freak and Magnet. Give this to teens dealing with loss or those seeking a hopeful romance.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.



### Low Red Moon

By: Ivy Devlin  
Bloomsbury (2010)

ISBN: 9781599905105

*Curriculum: Paranormal; Romance;  
Werewolves; Mystery*

Avery Hood's parents were horribly murdered and all she can remember about that night is a flash of silver, then red. When Ben Dursic comes to town, Avery



finds herself drawn uncontrollably to his silver eyes, but Ben has a secret. He can't remember that night either.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

### Finding My Place

By: Traci L. Jones  
Farrar Straus Giroux,  
2010

ISBN: 9780374335731

*Curriculum: African Americans; Prejudices; Race relations; Friendship; High schools; Denver History*

In 1975, when her upwardly mobile parents move to a Denver suburb, Tiphonie becomes the only black girl in her high school. An articulate white hippie chick from the wrong side of Sheridan becomes her ally. Their struggles to come to terms with their unique circumstances provide an insightful read. The 4.8 AR level makes this appropriate for middle school as well.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8



### Spotting for Nellie

By: Pamela Loewll  
Marshall Cavendish, 2010  
ISBN: 9780761455837

*Curriculum: Brain injuries; Car accidents; Sisters*

This novel is told from different points of view. It centers on two sisters, Claire and Nellie, who were involved in a terrible car accident returning from a party involving underage drinking. Before the accident Nellie was an aspiring gymnast with Olympic hopes. After being in a coma for two weeks she struggles to recover from her traumatic brain injury.



## Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

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JFK High School

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TJ High School

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Cheri Hilton  
South High School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill Elementary

Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elementary

Leah Rounds  
Alumni

From ERS:

Dave Sanger  
Karen Shannon  
Antonio Nicotera

Claire was the driver of the car and while she was not intoxicated her lack of experience as a driver lead her to lose control of the car.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA

# Nonfiction

## Hidden Teens, Hidden Lives: Primary Sources from the Holocaust

By: Linda Jacobs Altman

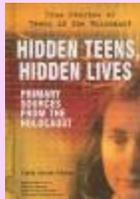
Enslow, 2010

ISBN: 9780766032712

*Curriculum: Holocaust; World War II; Teenagers*

Survivors recount their lives as World War II teenagers hiding in plain sight. Detailing various viewpoints, primary documents explore how they never revealed their faith or the accommodations they had made with protective gentiles and how many rebels defended what they believed, often with graphic ends that forever changed the world.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.



# Series Books

## Pop Culture Revolutions



By: Various authors 6th grade and up

Focuses the rebellious pop culture of books, music, comic books and video games.

## Shakespeare Explained



By: Various Authors 9–12

Each easy guide includes background information, act-by-act explanation of the action and dialogue, and discussion of motifs, themes, and allusions within the featured play.

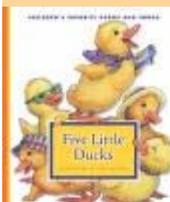
## The Agency



By: Ying S. Lee 6–8

Orphan and thief Mary Quinn is trained to be part of an all-female investigative unit called The Agency.

## Children's Favorite Poems and Songs



Various Authors PS -2  
Classic poems and songs brightly illustrated for young audiences.

## Picture Books in Winter By: Robert Louis Stevenson

Summer fading, winter comes-  
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,  
Window robins, winter rooks,  
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone  
Nurse and I can walk upon;  
Still we find the flowing brooks  
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,  
Wait upon the children's eye,  
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,  
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are  
Seas and cities, near and far,  
And the flying fairies' looks,  
In the picture story-books.



How am I to sing your  
praise,  
Happy chimney-corner days,  
Sitting safe in nursery  
nooks,  
Reading picture story-  
books?