

# The Review Crew



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

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

Volume 8 Number 4

December 2011

## Fiction

### The Scar

By: Charlotte Moundlic

Illus. by: Olivier Tallec

Candlewick, 2011

ISBN: 9780763653415

*Curriculum: Loss; Mothers and sons; Grief*

The death of a young boy's mother is overwhelming, but he can only deal with it from his perspective. He tries to hold on to her scent by keeping the windows shut, and he worries that she did not teach his father how to make toast the way he likes it. He keeps opening a scab on his knee because that reminds him of his mother's voice when she would comfort him. But finally the wound becomes a scar, and his healing begins. This simple book would be helpful for a student dealing with a death.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller ECE-8



missed eight birthdays in a row. Now that his Aunt Adeline has taken him in, he throws a big party for himself, but it ends in disaster. But the love of a parent is never lost, even when the child is more than exuberant.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

### First Week at Cow School

By: Andy Cutbill

Illus. by: Russell Ayto

Harper Collins, 2011

ISBN: 9780007273386

*Curriculum: Cows; Schools*

Daisy didn't quite fit in with her classmates at Cow School. They excelled at hoof painting, cow pat making, and cud chewing. Although Daisy's mom was a cow, **she** was a chicken. When the chance finally came to show her talent in flying, Daisy realized that she was special, too! Young readers will love the eye-catching, distinctively detailed cows throughout the story as well as understand Daisy's great desire to fit in and be accepted.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich

CMS Community School



### Bumble-Ardy

Written and illus. by: Maurice Sendak

Harper Collins, 2011

ISBN: 9780062051981

*Curriculum: Birthdays; Parent's love*

Bumble-Ardy is a mischievous pig who has



## 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 ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

### Sammy in the Sky

By: Barbara Wash  
Illustrated by: James Wyeth

Candlewick Press, 2011  
ISBN: 9780763649272

*Curriculum: Human-animal relationships; Hounds; Dogs; Death*

For one little girl, her hound dog Sammy is everything - a friend, a protector, and a playmate. Then the inevitable happens and Sammy dies. This straightforward, honest story is illustrated with soft watercolors and tenderly approaches grief and the celebration of life.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen  
Thomas Jefferson HS



**Spanish!**

### La Coleccionista de Palabras

Written and Illus. by: Sonja Wimmer

Cuento de Luz, 2011  
ISBN: 9788493824068

*Curriculum: Vocabulary; Words*

Luna "collected words the same way other people collected stamps." She tried to gather them up and scatter them where needed. She gave words of tolerance where there was hatred and words of hope where there was despair. Eventually this led to other people doing the same and the positive power of words was felt all over. The idea that words really can make a difference for good comes across quite effectively in this evocatively illustrated and creatively presented Spanish text.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
CMS Community School



## Nonfiction

### Animal Safari: Giraffes

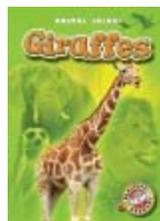
By: Kari Schuetz  
Bellwether Media, 2012

ISBN: 9780531226421

*Curriculum: Giraffes; Animal characteristics and behavior*

One in a series, this book focuses on the characteristics and behaviors of giraffes. Brilliant photographs help to highlight the simple facts on each page.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



### Nutcracker

Written and illus. by Mary Engelbreit  
HarperCollins Children, 2011

ISBN: 9780060885793

*Curriculum: Fairy tales; Christmas*

A new and magical rendition of the 1816 German story that has become a holiday favorite. The extremely elaborate illustrations are a joy to look at for there is no end to the rich detailing and small craftily hidden surprises contained in each one. It is the Christmas season and Marie receives a handsome wooden Nutcracker from her uncle. During the night, a fierce battle ensues between the Nutcracker and the Mouse King. At midnight, Marie throws her slipper hitting the Mouse King in the head. The Nutcracker is able to claim victory thus breaking the spell and returns to being a handsome prince.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni



## The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

## Fiction

### The Unforgotten Coat

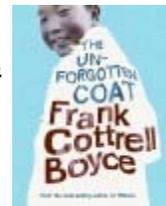
By: Frank Cottrell Boyce  
Illus. by: Carl Hunter and Clare Heney

Candlewick Press, 2011  
ISBN: 9780763657291

*Curriculum: Mongols; Refugees; Emigration and immigration; Bootle (Sefton, England)*

When two Mongolian brothers suddenly appear in her sixth grade class, the eldest declares that Julie will be their "Good Guide". So begins her relationship with these mysterious youngsters. This tale of the hardships British immigrants face resonates with situations state-side. Curious photographs add realism to this story born of the author's experience at a British primary school. A moving read.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8



### Francis Woke up Early

By: Josephine Nobisso  
Illus. by: Maureen Hyde  
Gingerbread House, 2011

ISBN: 9780940112209

*Curriculum: Francis, of Assisi, Saint; Wolves; Farm life*

Francis wakes early while the rest of

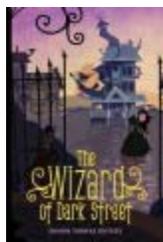


house continues to slumber. He goes out into the farm yard to collect fresh eggs and milk for breakfast. But, the wild she-wolf lurks nearby, her shadow growing nearer and larger all the time. True to his animal-loving nature, Francis wins her over by sharing his breakfast.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Edison Elem.

**Wizard of Dark Street (An Oona Crate Mystery)**

By: Shawn Thomas  
Odyssey  
EgmontUSA, 2011  
ISBN:  
9781606841433



*Curriculum: Mystery; Fantasy, Magical creatures*

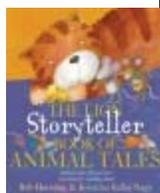
Even though she possesses the extremely rare gift of natural magic, Oona Crate has no wish to be her uncle's apprentice and become the next wizard of Dark Street. She wants to become a detective. On the night Oona signs the papers giving up her right to the coveted position, her uncle is attacked. Oona must find out who wanted her uncle dead before her home is torn down, potentially opening the gates that keep the human and fairy worlds from colliding.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
CEC Middle College

**Nonfiction**

**The Lion Storyteller Book of Animal Tales**

Compiled by: Bob Hartman  
Illus. by: Krisztina Kal-



lai Nagy

A Lion Children's Book, 2011  
ISBN: 9780745961316

*Curriculum: Fairy Tales; Short Stories; Animals*

*There are approximately 36 wonderful and entertaining animal stories and hundreds of bold, bright and colorful illustrations in this book. The stories have been collected from all over the world and will introduce the reader to a variety of different animals. According to the author, "animal stories are really just stories about us!" Most explore some basic human flaws and virtues: helpful badger, lazy grasshopper, kind lion, noble rooster and many more.*

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni

**Cool Stuff for Your Garden**

By: Pam Scheunemann  
Abdo; 2012

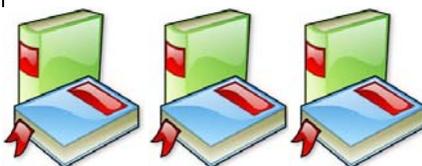


ISBN: 9781617149849

*Curriculum: Gardens; Gardening; Garden ornaments*

A visual list of tools and materials introduces the reader to seven terrific projects for the garden including stenciled stepping stones, a Zen garden, a magical fairy house, and a double-decker bird bath. Kids will have a great time constructing these easy to make yet great looking projects.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Edison Elem.



**The Christmas Coat: Memories of My Sioux Childhood**



By: Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

Illus. by: Ellen Beier  
Holiday House, 2011

ISBN: 9780823421343

*Curriculum: Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk; Dakota Indians*

As the daughter of the Episcopalian minister on South Dakota's Rosebud reservation, young Virginia is raised to think of others before herself. When the charity boxes arrive from eastern congregations, a warm coat of fur she longs for goes to a rival. Though disappointed, her sacrifice is ultimately rewarded. This moving true story is enhanced with realistic watercolor illustrations.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8

**Middle School Reader Gold Mine**

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

**Fiction**

**A Monster Calls**

By: Patrick Ness  
Illus. by: Jim Kay  
Candlewick, 2011



ISBN: 9780763655594

*Curriculum: Loss; Mothers and sons; Guilt*

Thirteen year old Conor is trying to

deal with his mother's cancer and problems at school while being haunted by a nightmare. Now he is visited by the frightening spirit of the yew tree outside his window. What are the monster's stories trying to tell him? In herbal folklore, the yew brings healing, and that happens here as Conor comes to terms with the secret of his own monster. This is a powerful book for students experiencing the guilt that accompanies a loss.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Waller ECE-8

### Wonderstruck

Written and Illustrated by: Brian Selznick  
Scholastic Press, 2011

ISBN:  
9780545027892

Curriculum: *Family; Hearing impaired; Museums; New York City*

Ben and Rose each have a story that is told using pictures and text. Their stories happen many years apart, yet they will blend seamlessly toward the end. After the death of his mother, Ben is searching for a long lost father. Rose is also searching, for the mother who did not want her. How are these stories related? You will just have to read the book and enjoy the wonderful illustrations.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy



### Dark Eden

Written by: Patrick Carman  
Katherine Tegen Books, 2011

ISBN:  
9780062009708



Curriculum: *Suspense; Phobias; Relationships*

This suspense filled story follows seven fifteen year olds who are all battling severe phobias. They are sent to a place called Fort Eden for special treatment. Will has a severe phobia of people and separates from the group. He hides in the basement where he discovers a place to monitor what is going on. He sees a couple of the kids go through an odd treatment and is apprehensive about the results. When they start getting ill afterward, he tries to find a way to help the others escape. What is the real secret of Fort Eden?

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### Everybody Bugs Out

By: Leslie Margolis  
Bloomsbury, 2011  
ISBN: 9781599905266

Curriculum: *Middle school; Friendship; Dances*

Annabelle just can't figure out what the big deal is. All of her friends are freaking out about the first big dance of the year. "Who is going with who" and "Is it okay to ask so and so" are the only topics of conversation. Annabelle knows who she wants to ask but just before she does she finds out that her best friend has already ask him.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.



### The Princess Curse

By: Merrie Haskell  
Harper, 2011  
ISBN:  
9780062008138



Curriculum: *Magic; Herbs; Curses*

Reveka is an apprentice in a castle where the twelve princesses are causing a stir. Every evening the princesses disappear from their tower room and in the morning they reappear with their silk slippers worn through. In another tower room are rows of sleepers - men and women who tried to discover the mystery of where the princesses disappear to each evening. Now Reveka is interested also because the reward for finding the answer to the mystery is a fortune, enough to set her up in her own herbarium.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

## Nonfiction

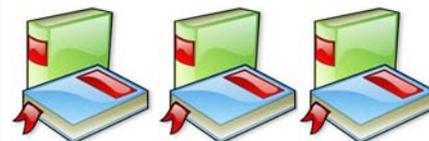
### Around the World

Written by: Matt Phelan  
Candlewick, 2011  
ISBN: 9780763636197

Curriculum: *Voyages, Adventures; Adventurers*

This graphic novel chronicles the journeys of three nineteenth century adventurers. Thomas Stevens rode the first bicycle around the world in 1884. Determined to travel around the world in less than 80 days, Nellie Bly departs from New York in 1889 and travels around the world in 74 days. The last adventurer, Joshua Slocum, travels around the world in his sailboat in 1895.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA



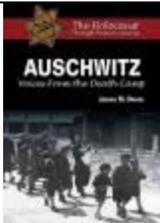
**Auschwitz: Voices  
from the Death  
Camp**

By: James M. Deem  
Enslow, 2012  
ISBN:  
9780766033221

*Curriculum: Jewish Holocaust; Genocide; Concentration Camps; World War II*

This powerful history of Auschwitz, from inception of the camp to the present-day Auschwitz Museum is told from the personal perspective of both prisoners and Nazi administrators. The main text is supplemented with primary source, personal narratives inserted as text boxes. Other primary sources are presented to extend and explain the narrative (camp registers, illustrations by prisoners, and photos).

Reviewed by: Janice Pacheco  
Skinner M.S.



**Spies, Double  
Agents, and Trai-  
tors**

By: Susan K. Mitchell  
Enslow, 2012  
ISBN:  
9780766037113

*Curriculum: Spies; Espionage; Traitors*

An energetic, colorful account of famous spies, traitors and double agents throughout history; this book includes the likes of Benedict Arnold, Mata Hari, Kim Philby and Robert Hanssen among others. Personal motivations for their activities and their "not-so-glorious" endings are presented along with a final section on the career path to becoming a spy catcher (aka counter-intelligence agent) for the FBI.

Reviewed by: Janice Pacheco



Skinner MS

**September 11, 2001**

By Wilborn Hampton  
Candlewick Press, 2011  
ISBN: 9780763657673

*Curriculum: U.S History; Islam; Terrorism*

"We will never forget." Words that invoke the indelible images etched in the minds of so many who were going about daily life on that fateful day nearly twelve years ago. Walk with several people - victims, witnesses and administration as they revisit their experiences in heartbreakingly vivid and candid memoirs of September 11. Retold in an empathetic, yet journalistic manner by an accredited journalist, this volume has been amended to include a Post-script chapter relating a breath-holding account of SEAL Team 6's raid on Osama bin Laden's compound, resulting in his termination.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy  
Henry M.S.

**You Are My Only**

**Young Adults  
Deserve the  
Best!**

**Fiction**

Written by: Beth Kephart  
Egmont USA, 2011

ISBN: 9781606842720

*Curriculum: Kidnapping; Mothers; Daughters*



**Review Crew Staff**

**Committee Chair:**

Nancy Lucas  
JFK High School

**Secretary:**

Sudi Stodola  
CEC Early College

**Editor:**

Chris Coble  
Kepner Middle School

**Reviewers:**

Gretchen Allgeier  
Edison Elementary  
Irene Bell  
Alumni  
Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy  
Cat DeRose  
Trevista@Horace Mann

Cheri Hilton  
South High School

Michelle Jensen  
T.J. High School  
Cheryl Joseffy  
Henry World School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

Peggy Obert  
Waller ECE—8

Janice Pacheco  
Skinner Middle School

Karyn Pocerlich  
CMS Community School

Leah Rounds  
Alumni

**From ETLs:**

Dave Sanger  
Karen Shannon  
Antonio Nicotera

Emmy is devastated when her baby is kidnapped. Hours after it is kidnapped she is accosted by police and eventually interned at a mental institution for being unstable. Meanwhile, fourteen years later, Emmy's daughter Sophie is starting to rebel against the woman who she thinks is her mother. She is tired of being homeschooled and desires to make friends. She makes friends with the boy next door while her mother is at work and for the first time in her life is exposed to a normal family. She goes through some of her mother's personal papers and discovers that she was kidnapped when she was younger. She must decide what to do next.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA

**Life: An Exploded Diagram**

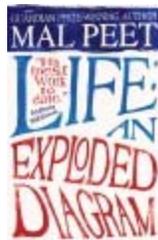
By: **Mal Peet**

Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9780763652272

*Curriculum:* Coming of age; Cuban Missile Crisis; John F. Kennedy; Fidel Castro

Clem pens the history of his family and his own British working-class life from the vantage point of 2011. Highlighted is his coming-of-age during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis and his illicit romance with the wealthy Frankie, daughter of his father's employer. As the Cuban Missile Crisis heats up so does their love, but with disastrous consequences. To fully appreciate this worthwhile novel, readers would benefit with background knowledge about WWII and the Kennedy/Castro era.



Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**All These Things I've Done**

By: **Gabrielle Zevin**

Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011

ISBN: 9780374302108

*Curriculum:* Organized crime; Family

It's 2083. Chocolate and caffeine are illegal, but Anya's family is one of the world's major underground chocolate makers. Couple this with Anya's new romance with Win, the assistant DA's son, the poisoning of Anya's ex-boyfriend, and the fact that Anya's murdered father was the Balanchine crime boss and you're left with an awesome read. Give this book to HS fans of mystery, romance, strong female leads, or drama. Readers will eagerly look forward to the next book in the *Birthright* series.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**The Beginning of After**

By: **Jennifer Castle**

HarperTeen, 2011

9780061985799

*Curriculum:* Grief; Interpersonal relations; High schools; Schools

For Sixteen-year-old Laurel, her junior year is busy. She is preparing for college and looking forward to prom. But in an instant her entire life is turned upside down after a car accident takes the lives of her parents and brother.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen  
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

**Cleopatra's Moon**



By Vicky Alvear Shecter  
Arthur A Levine Books, 2011

ISBN: 9780545221306

*Curriculum:* Ancient Egypt

Though so many are familiar with the name, "Cleopatra VII", most casual followers of history don't know much about her daughter - Cleopatra Seleene. In this fictionalized, definitely romanticized account of the lives of the great Queen's three children with Marcus Antonius (Marc Anthony), another chapter in visualizing the connection between Rome and Egypt in ancient history is sketched in more clearly. The author lends credit to herself and readers as thinkers, with end notes outlining the facts within the fiction.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy  
Henry M.S.

**The Watch That Ends the Night**

By: **Allan Wolf**  
Candlewick, 2011

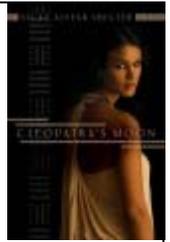
ISBN: 9780763637033

*Curriculum:* Titanic, Novels in Verse

Twenty-four lives featured in a variety of vignettes are full of prosperity for the poor, promises of luxury for the wealthy and a chance for freedom for all. Dreams so alive and strong are countered by the vision of the iceberg, determined to send the mighty Titanic to the bottom of the sea. Written in a variety of perspectives this novel is highly recommended for both classroom and pleasure reading.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

**Tempest Rising**



By: Tracy Deeb  
Walker Children's,  
2011  
ISBN:  
9780802722317  
*Curriculum: Paranor-  
mal Romance; Mer-  
maids; Surfing; Love  
triangles*



Tempest Maguire is a hardcore surfer girl who has taken care of her dad and brothers since her mother left the family six years ago. Tempest resents her mother's choice, but the note her mother left behind makes it clear that she will soon face the same choice: stay on land with her family, or choose the sea, where her mermaid mother battles against the sea witch. As her birthday grows nearer and a new mysterious boy threatens to come between Tempest and her boyfriend, her choice becomes more difficult.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
CEC Middle College

## Nonfiction

### Requiem: Poems of the Terezin Ghetto

By: Paul Janeczko  
Candlewick, 2011  
ISBN: 978076347278  
*Curriculum: Holocaust;  
Poetry*



Friends devoted to one another, now separated because it is illegal for Germans to fraternize with Jews. Families are ravished as each member hears the sad and lonely whistle of the train taking loved ones to their death. Townspeople slip bread crusts to starving children. Soldiers dedicat-

ed to their duty committing unspeakable tasks. All revealing their thoughts hopes and worries through poetry, as each pass through the ghetto of Terezin, in a strange and violent *Requiem*.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

Dear Editor: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says "If you see it in The Sun it's so." Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus? Virginia O'Hanlon.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eter-

nal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

reprinted from the editorial page