

The Review Crew



President's Day



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 8 Number 6

February 2012

Fiction

Plant A Kiss

By: Amy Krouse Rosenthal
Illus. by: Peter H. Reynolds



Harper, 2012

ISBN: 9780061986758

Curriculum: Sharing; Kindness; Generosity; Plants; Kisses

Little Miss planted a kiss, and when it sprouted she shared a piece of it with the world. After spreading her kindness to all, she returned to find a huge tree of endless bliss.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

Same, Same but Different

Written and illus. by: Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw



Christy Ottoviano Books, 2011

ISBN: 9780805089462

Curriculum: Pen pals; Friendship

Elliot and Kailash become 'picture pals' with each other, painting images of their worlds to share. Their pictures show that although there are many differences in their lives, most things are very much the same. They share their families, homes, language, pets, and more with each other - becoming best

friends in the process. Readers will be drawn to the simple story of friendship so wonderfully depicted through colorful and detailed pictures of the most important parts of the two boys' lives.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich
CMS Community School

Hippo and Rabbit in Three Short Tales

Written and illus. by: Jeff Mack



Scholastic, 2011

ISBN: 97805455274456

Curriculum: Friendship; Hippopotamus; Rabbits

Hippo and Rabbit find themselves in many silly situations throughout the day. Whether they are figuring out what to eat, playing at the park, or trying to sleep during a storm, their differences in size usually add to the fun. Large comic illustrations with simple text in speech bubbles will add to the appeal for the youngest of readers. The friendship of Hippo and Rabbit isn't limited by their differences, but made much more interesting!

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich
CMS Community School

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.)



When My Baby Dreams



Written and Illus. by:
Adele Enersen

Balzer & Brag Books, 2012

ISBN: 9780062071750

Curriculum: Infants; Feelings

Throughout the book Mila is dreaming that she can be anything as the reader is taken on an "imaginative journey through irresistible dreamscapes of a newborn." At various times, Mila is an astronaut, a butterfly, a book worm, a surfer girl, a busy bee, a mermaid and more. At other times, she is big enough to conquer a city or small enough to shelter under a mushroom; or meander through a cotton candy park; or lounge on a raspberry moon.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni

Little Bea and the Snowy Day



Written and Illus. by:
Daniel Roode

Greenwillow Books,
2011

ISBN: 9780061993954

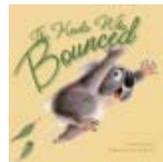
Curriculum: Snow; Bees; Animals

It is snowing and Little Bea is excited about going outside to play. Little Bea and bear join the rest of their friends in playing a game of hide-and-seek; making snow angels; catching snowflakes on their tongues; riding a sled down a hill, "Wheeeeeeeeeee!"; throwing snowballs; ice skating on the pond; drinking hot chocolate; building a snowman; and more. As it gets dark, the friends depart and Little Bea tells the snowman, "See you tomorrow!"

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni

The Koala Who Bounced



By: Jimmy Thomson

Illus. by: Eric Lobbbecke

Random House, 2011

ISBN: 9781742752242

Curriculum: Australia; Koala; Basketball

When Karri falls from his mother's back, he discovers he can bounce. Bouncing is a lot of fun, but Karri finds that with no one else to bounce with, it is also lonely. When suddenly separated from his family, Karri searches for a friend with whom he can bounce. Unfortunately, everyone he meets is either too sleepy, too tall, too fast, or too old. Finally, Karri meets another bouncing 'koala' and he learns just how useful bouncing can be.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Nonfiction

Paul Thurlby's

Alphabet



Written and illus. by:
Paul Thurlby

Templar Books, 2011

ISBN: 9780763655655

Curriculum: Alphabet

This is an extraordinary and creative new alphabet book. Each letter is devoted to its own page, and each taking on the form of its subject in unique illustrations.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

Breadcrumbs



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

By: Anne Ursu

Walden Pond Press,
2011

ISBN:
9780062015051



Curriculum: Magic; Fairy tales; Friendship

Hazel is a loner at her new school, struggling with her parents' divorce. Her only friend is Jack, but suddenly he ignores her and it seems as if his heart has been frozen. And indeed it has been, by a shard of magic mirror. Captured and taken into the Minnesota woods by the legendary Snow Queen, he can only be saved by the love of a friend. So Hazel sets out to rescue him, encountering many other familiar fantasy and fairy tale characters along the way.

This is a beautifully told story of the power of friendship that upper elementary and middle school students would enjoy.

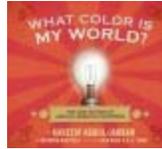
Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8

What Color is My World? The Lost

History of African-American Inventors

By: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar



Illus. by: Ben Boos and A.G. Ford

Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780763645649

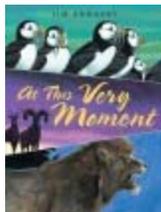
Curriculum: Inventors; African-Americans

Twins Herbie and Ella have moved into a new house that needs a lot of remodeling, and as mysterious Mr. R.E. Mital does the work, he engages their interest with stories about African-American inventors that worked on many common household items, such as the ice cream scoop and cell phone technology. With additional facts being revealed through flaps that open and Herbie's journal entries, this is a fun and informative book with a surprise ending.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

At This Very Moment

By: Jim Arnosky
Penguin, 2011



ISBN: 97805254222525

Curriculum: Stories in rhyme; Nature; Animal Habits; Animal behavior

At the exact same moment that you are waking, brushing your teeth and combing your hair, an animal somewhere is running across the ice, sipping water from a pond or swimming in the cold water. Amazing things are happening everywhere, every day, every moment.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elem.

Here Lies Linc

By: Delia Ray
Alfred A. Knopf, 2011
ISBN:
9780375867576



Curriculum: Cemeteries; Families; Friendship

Lincoln Crenshaw's mother is an expert on burial customs. He has traveled the world's graveyards with her and now his backyard is the town cemetery. For school his class is supposed to choose an old grave in the cemetery and do a research project on the family entombed there. Embarrassingly, his kooky mom has been asked to lead the tour through the graveyard and provide expert commentary. Linc chooses to study the cursed black angel monument. A great cast of characters is revealed throughout the book.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Ten rules for Living With My Sister

By: Ann M. Martin
Feiwel and Friends,
2011



ISBN:
9780312367664

Curriculum: Sisters; Individuality; Aging

Pearl's older sister is Lexi. She is cool, has friends and even a boyfriend. She has rules about Pearl visiting her room and she insists on proper apparel and behavior. When the girls' beloved grandfather falls and hurts his shoulder he is no longer able to live alone. Daddy Bo moves into Pearl's bedroom and Pearl moves into Lexi's. The girls

are always at odds until Pearl creates a list of rules that she tries to follow to make life more bearable. But, frighteningly, Daddy Bo has more than just his shoulder to worry about.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

The Life Cycle of a Clown Fish

By: L.L. Owens

Child's World, 2012

ISBN: 9781609731458

Curriculum: Biology; Clown Fish; Sea Anemone; Symbiosis

The unique characteristics of the clown fish, its habitat, body, hatching, larval stage, metamorphosis, diet, mating habits, and symbiotic relationship with sea anemones are introduced in this volume from Child's World *Life Cycles* series. Easy-to-read text faces full page color photos. Clearly-written, this series, from ferns to humans, is a good choice for updating any elementary biology collection.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Saving Animals from Hurricanes

By: Stephen Person
Bearport, 2012

ISBN: 9781617722905

Curriculum: Animals; Animal Rescue; Hurricanes

Hurricane Katrina was devastating to people but animals were at the mercy of humans to save them. This story collection of courage and compassion tells of domestic pets stuck in homes or



wandering for days with no water, food or shelter from 100 degree temperatures while they await rescue workers. "Tails" of exotic animals with more demanding needs from the Aquarium of the Americas, the Audubon Zoo and New Orleans famous horse-drawn carriage company revolve around heroic efforts of caretakers risking their lives for the animals they loved.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

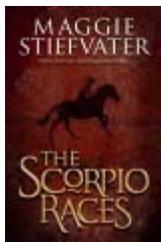
Fiction

The Scorpio Races

By: Maggie Stiefvater
Scholastic Press, 2011
ISBN: 9780545224901

Curriculum: *Fantasy;*
Family; Water horses; Racing

Every November the Scorpio Races



are held, and someone will die. The water horses are captured from the sea and are wild and carnivorous. Sean is the champ and has his own reasons for riding. Puck is going to be the first girl to ride in the races, even though many try to discourage her. She must ride in order to save her home. Both riders have obstacles to overcome, and they begin to care for each other. The reader will stay true to the end.

Reviewed by Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

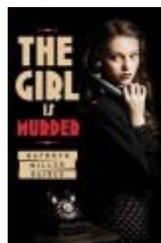
The Girl is Murder

By: Katherine Miller
Haines
Roaring Book Press, 2011
ISBN: 9781596436091

Curriculum: *Detectives;*
Family; Mystery; World
War II era

The story is set during World War II when resources are scarce. Iris's father lost a leg in the war and is working as a private detective. Against her father's wishes, Iris wants to be a detective and help her father. She tries to learn all she can. When a fellow student at her high school goes missing, she wants to solve the mystery herself. This is a new school for Iris, run by the Rainbows, a group of mean girls who say what goes. She must find her identity and get her father to accept her help. She discovers there is real danger along the way.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Nonfiction

Is the End of the World Near?

By: Ron Miller
Twenty-First Century
Books, 2012

ISBN:
9780761373964

Curriculum: *End of the world*
(Astronomy); Science-Miscellanea

To answer the title question, Miller explores popular, pseudo-scientific, religious and mainstream-scientific theories and predictions about the eventual and certain demise of our planet. From ancient beliefs, the current Mayan 2012 Prophecy and humankind's destructive behavior to the eventual burnout of our sun, each scenario is discussed and weighed as to its merit. With ample photographs and illustrations, this is an engaging look at a high-interest topic.

Reviewed by:

Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner M.S.

Colorado: Past and Present

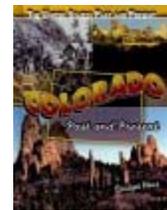
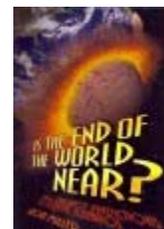
Bridget Heos
Rosen, 2011

ISBN: 9781435894778

Curriculum: *Colorado*

Information about the state is given, in juxtaposition with Colorado's past in regards to the geography, history, political and economic scenes. Famous and important people, past and present, are also referenced. A timeline rounds out this perspective of the past and present of Colorado.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elem.



Witches! : the Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem

Written and Illus. by:
Rosalyn Schanzer

National Geographic, 2011

ISBN: 9781426308697

Curriculum: Witchcraft; Salem; Puritans

This compelling treatment of the Salem witch trials lays out the culture, personalities, religious beliefs and times that fostered this madness and its devastating consequences. The author's black and white illustrations with red accents underline the tale's morbidity. This is an excellent addition to any middle school or high school collection.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8



Between Shades of Gray

By: Ruta Sepetys

Philomel Books, 2011

ISBN: 9780399254123

Curriculum: Lithuanian history, Soviet occupation, Labor camps, Survival, Siberia, Genocide

Lina (a 15-year-old artist), her mother, and younger brother are ripped from their home in Lithuania by the Soviet secret police to begin a ten-year struggle for survival that eventually takes them 6,500 miles to the northernmost regions of Siberia. Without food or shelter, and with disease rampant, the family and thousands of others are forced to labor for their captors. Their haunting struggle for survival, beautifully narrated by Lina, is told in stark detail - softened only by flashbacks of their former life. Hi/Lo Lexile 490.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco

Skinner M.S.



Without Tess

By: Marcela Pixley

Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011

ISBN: 978-0-374-36174-7

Curriculum: Sisters; Guilt; Death; Mental Health

Five years after her sister's death, fifteen-year-old Lizzie is still struggling. She and her sister Tess had always been best friends. Tess had an imagination that led both girls to pretend they were selkies and Pegasus. Tess delves deeper and deeper into these and other fantasies and pretending turns to belief for her. Her delusions become worse and worse until one night she convinces Lizzie that they are selkies and they will enter the water and will turn into seals. When Tess drowns, Lizzie feels it is her fault and



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



**Young Adults
Deserve the
Best!**

Fiction

keeps this inside her until a school psychologist helps her release her feelings.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Where She Went

By: **Gayle Forman**
Dutton Books, 2011
ISBN:
9780525422945



Curriculum: Relationships; Forgiveness; Music; New York

Adam and Mia haven't seen each other in the three years since the accident that killed the rest of her family. Adam is an angry famous rock star still struggling with Mia's sudden departure. Mia, haunted by the ghosts of her past, is a Julliard graduate beginning her career as a headlining cellist. One fateful night brings them together again. Forman's sequel to *If I Stay* is a wonderful look at healing, acceptance and forgiveness. Give this to HS fans of the first book.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Shine

By: **Lauren Myracle**
Amulet Books, 2011
ISBN:
9780810984172



Curriculum: Homophobia; Hate crimes; Friendship

This powerful novel set in a rural North Carolina brings homophobia to the forefront as Patrick, a gay teen, fights for his life after a brutal beating. Cat, a self-imposed loner, decides to investigate who hurt her former best friend while slowly revealing her own complicat-

ed history. What she discovers leads to a painful and startling conclusion. Myracle hits the nail on the head with this contemporary look at small town life and homophobia. Recommend this book to HS students looking for a thought-provoking read.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Bronxwood

By: **Coe Booth**
Push, 2011
9780439925341



Curriculum: African-American teens; Teen Choices; Emancipated Teens

Life in Bronxwood is not where "happily ever after" resides for Tyrell. (See also *Tyrell*, ©2007) At fifteen, he's on his own, trying to make ends meet while making the best possible choices from an extremely slim selection. With a cautionary note that language, sex and violence make this an "edgy" read, Coe Booth nonetheless vividly portrays a side of life that unfortunately may be more realistic to our teens than we'd like to admit. Definitely a draw for high-low, young adult readers.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy
Henry M.S.

The Running Dream

By: **Wendelin Van Draanen**
Alfred A Knopf, 2011
9780375866678



Curriculum: Disabled Athletes; Sportsmanship; Service Learning

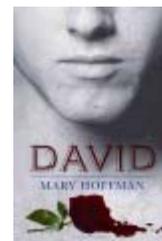
The notion that starting lines and finishing lines could be one and the same never occurred to Jessica - a regional

champion runner until the day she couldn't run anymore. A tragic accident not only cost Jessica one of her legs, but her former lifestyle as a track star. Thanks to a supporting cast of optimistic family and friends plus a few surprise mentors in a variety of forms, Jessica is able to view starts and finishes through considerably different lenses.

Reviewed by Cheryl Joseffy
Henry M.S.

David

By: **Mary Hoffman**
Bloomsbury, 2011
ISBN:
9781599907000



Curriculum: Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1475-1564; Artists; Italy

18-year-old Gabriele leaves his village to make his fortune as a stone-cutter in Florence, Italy. Gabriele finds beauty, romance, art, intrigue, and danger as political factions vie for dominance over the city. While posing as a model for his brother Michelangelo, who is working on the statue of David, Gabriele is recruited as a spy into the wealthy houses of Florence. When the statue David becomes a focal point for the hostilities, tensions escalate and Gabriele soon realizes that what once seemed an amusing game has deadly consequences.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

The Mephisto Covenant: The Redemption of Ajax

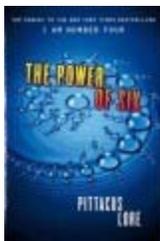
By: **Trinity Faegen**
Egmont, 2011
ISBN:
9781606841709



Curriculum: Fantasy; Romance; Angels and Demons; Star-crossed Lovers

Sasha's life has been turned upside down; her father was murdered, her mother is being deported, and she must go live with her uncle and his wife who detests Sasha for no apparent reason. Sasha is also in the middle of a struggle for control of lost souls. She is an anabo - a child of Eve, and she is falling in love with Jax - a son of Hell. This surprisingly addictive paranormal romance is a fast-paced mystery/adventure that readers will love.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College



The Power of Six

By: Pittacus Lore
HarperCollins, 2011
ISBN: 978-0061974557

Curriculum: Fantasy; Adventure; Extraterrestrials

The sequel to *I am Number Four* picks up right where the first book left off. John Smith, Six, Sam and Bernie Kosar are all over the tv for their "terrorist" attack on the school. Despite the problem of having their pictures splashed all over the world, the fugitives' popularity brings them to the attention of Number Seven, who has been cloistered in Spain for the last few years. In a desperate bid for their lives, the fugitives must find each other and the headquarters of the Magadorians so they can retrieve Six's box and hopefully rescue her guardian.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

The Secret Sisterhood of Heartbreakers

Written by: Lynn Weingarten
HarperTeen, 2011
ISBN: 978-0-06-192618-1



Curriculum: Love; Friendship; Relationships

When Lucy's boyfriend breaks up with her on the first day of her sophomore year she is devastated. A girl she barely knows approaches Lucy and asks her if she would like to become a member of the Secret Sisterhood of Heartbreakers. If she decides to join she will have magical powers to never have her heart broken again. To get into the club she must make a boy fall in love with her and she must break his heart and capture his tears within seven days.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Nonfiction

Wheels of Change: how Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom: (With a Few Flat Tires Along the Way)



By: Sue Macy
National Geographic, 2011
ISBN: 9781426307614

Curriculum: Women's history; Bicycles; Gender roles

Exceptionally well researched, Macy explores the influence of the bicycle on women's independence. Deemed a threat to female morality, safety, and health, the acceptance of bicycles for women was a long battle. Through many bicycle design changes, scandalous

clothing modifications (bloomers!), and feats of endurance, the idea of females on two-wheels slowly gained acceptance by the mid-1920s. This title has amazing photographs along with news and magazine clips and includes the source list for these. Additional web and print resources are also provided. This book is a must for HS collections.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Eye on Art: Graffiti

By: Michael V. Uschan
Gale, 2011
ISBN: 9781420503421



Curriculum: Art; Graffiti

Art-one of the most variable mediums helping humans express emotion, communicate perceptions and emphasize the fact that "I exist". From historical evidence of cave wall art to most modern urban graffiti beginning in the 1930's, this art form identifies territory, documents ceremonies, entertains and disturbs many. Counterbalancing what many find offensive, new methods of "fighting graffiti with graffiti", offering acceptance to appropriate artists and enforcing appropriate consequences and outlets for inappropriate taggers work toward making graffiti an art form that can freely be seen by all. This title will be a hit in any high school library.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

