



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 5 Number 5
January 2009

Fiction

Look Out, Suzy Goose

Written and illus. by: Petr Horacek

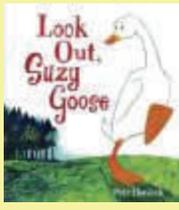
Candlewick, 2008

ISBN: 9780763638030

Curriculum: Animals; Geese

Suzy Goose just cannot stand all the honking as the geese enjoy a beautiful afternoon. In search of peace and quiet, she goes off into the woods where she can be alone. "Look out, Suzy Goose." Behind her tiptoes a hungry fox, followed by a creeping wolf, followed in turn by a padding bear. Suzy does find a very quiet clearing. "Look out, Suzy Goose!"

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8



Cat Nights

Written and illus. by: Jane Manning

Greenwillow, 2008

ISBN: 9780061138881

Curriculum: Witches; Cats; Identity

It is Felicity's birthday. Today she is 263 years old. This is a very important age for a witch. At this age she grows her first wart, her shoes begin to curl up at the toes, she's



able to cast her first love spell, and she is finally old enough to turn herself into a cat. Felicity has always wanted to be a cat! However, a witch can only choose to change into a cat eight times; the ninth time ...!

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8

Addis Berner Bear Forgets

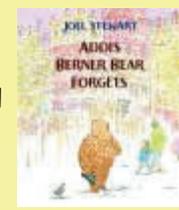
Written and Illus. by: Joel Stewart

Farrar, Straus & Giroux

ISBN: 0374300364

Curriculum: Bears; City and town life; Memory; Musicians

Addis Berner Bear arrives in the city, with his Trumpet, in the middle of winter and is confused by all the people, tall buildings, and traffic. He becomes so bewildered that he forgets his past and can't remember why he has come to the city. Before spring arrives, Addis has many adventures including being robbed of his Trumpet. He finds out that he is to play in a Spring Concert, but how with no instrument? A homeless lady has the solution with a decrepit trumpet. He plays extraordinary music "big and confusing, loud and fast, heart-leaping, fur-bristling, cross-eye making ... and beautiful." When he is finished, flowers are thrown, auto-



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.)

(Continued on page 2)

graphs are signed, and the two robbers are arrested. Addis Berner Bear is a huge success.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni

Nonfiction

Come and Play: Children of Our World Having Fun

Edited by: Ayana
Lowe

Bloomsbury, 2008

ISBN: 9781599902456

Curriculum: Children's poetry; Children - portraits

"Play's safety gives children the freedom to tell the world who they are." In this poetry and photography book, children from around the world are revealed through their words about play. The joy, curiosity, mischief, and energy they feel come through on each page. Matching images of children playing in many parts of the world with a poem written to describe it, the book provides glimpses into an essential of childhood - play. The large, engaging photos and simple words of kids will appeal to readers of many ages.

Reviewed by : Karyn Pocernich

Ford Elem.

Comparing Colors

By: Nancy Harris

Heinemann Libraries,
2008

ISBN: 1432921010

Curriculum: Colors; Nature

This easy-read and beautifully photographed book shows young readers



examples of all the different colors that can be found in nature. Different colors of plants, animals, rocks, and soil are compared to one another, and the book includes activities and vocabulary for teachers to use with young students.

Reviewed by: Leah Jungers

Pioneer Charter

Spanish!

Cómo crece un oso

(How a Bear Cub Grows Up)

By: Pam Zollman

Scholastic, 2008

ISBN: 9780531207048

Curriculum: Bears-Development; Hibernating animals

A variety of bear species is introduced to young readers in this easy chapter book. They will learn bears are mammals and about other common characteristics such as den-building, hibernating, feeding habits and protectiveness of their young. Since bears hibernate, this concept is extended by providing illustrations of other hibernating animals as well. The material is sequentially well organized throughout the book and is summarized with an illustrated timeline of the various stages in a bear's life cycle. The text is clear and presented with interesting facts. It is an excellent introduction to the topic.

(Language comment: "Ella los enseña..." should be "Ella les enseña..." on p. 12)

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish reviewer



La vida en el arrecife de coral

(Life in the Coral Reef)

By: Christine Taylor-Butler

Scholastic, 2008

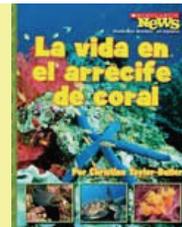
ISBN: 9780531207123

Curriculum: Coral reefs; Coral reef ecology

This colorful, easy chapter book in Spanish introduces young readers to life in a coral reef by describing it as a special habitat. It explains where reefs are found, how coral is formed and how their colonies form reefs, and the plants and other animals that thrive around them and contribute to its ecology. The eel is a fish usually found there and a day in its life is depicted in more detail. Beautifully illustrated, this book will appeal to young learners interested in the natural world. A vocabulary preview, glossary, index, library and internet resources are included as well.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish reviewer



A room without books is like a body without a soul.
~ Marcus T. Cicero ~

The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

The Happiness Tree

By: Andrea Alban Gosline

Illustrated by: Lisa Burnett Bossi

Feiwel and Friends, 2008

ISBN: 9780312370176

Curriculum: Trees

From tiny acorns and seeds to saplings come ten trees, each with its own gift to share. Hope, love, courage, compassion and more are offered by each of the ten in a four line rhyming verse. The trees delight, accept, shelter, and renew the children who treasure them. The artwork is magnificent - giving even more life to each of the trees. This is a book that conveys valuable messages about qualities that can be seen in trees that people might also strive to attain.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich Ford Elem.



The Girl who could Fly

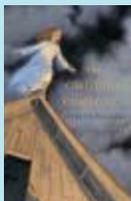
By: Victoria Forester

Feiwel and Friends, 2008

ISBN: 0312374624

Curriculum: Adventure; Self-acceptance; Individuality

Piper is not an average kid by any stretch of the imagination: She can fly. And on top of all that, she has ideas that make her Pa feel "dizzy" when his daughter talks to him. And in small town America where differences are frightening and discour-



aged, Piper finds herself ostracized. When her differences become only too obvious to the town, Piper is whisked off to a "special school." But the flighty flier is discouraged from spreading her wings and there is a distinct lack of specialness among the students. Exhilarating and breath taking, readers of all ages will find the story of Piper's escape and self-possession inspiring.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer Grant M.S.

The Dreadful Revenge of Ernest Gallen

By: James Collier
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2008

ISBN: 1599902206

Curriculum: Supernatural; Horror; Depression Era

On his way home after playing baseball with his friends, Eugene hears a voice telling him that his beloved grandfather had done something unforgivable years before. The voice wants to hurt those responsible for the unforgivable act. Gene is determined to discover what happened years before and in the process protect his grandfather from harm. Set during the depression, Collier does a superb job of matching historical details including the dialog with this time period. Students are continually asking for horror stories and this book will satisfy their appetite and still let them sleep at night.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley Johnson Elem.



Yoon and the Jade Bracelet

Written by: Helen Recorvits

Illus. by: Gabi Swiatkowska

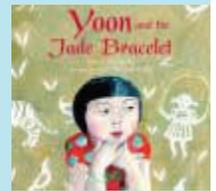
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008

ISBN: 0374386897

Curriculum: Korean Americans; Bracelets; Friendship; Bullies; Schools

Immigrant child Yoon has moved from Korea to the US, and all she wants for her birthday is a jump rope, and true friends. Instead she receives a Korean storybook and a jade bracelet. Yoon loses her bracelet to a school bully, but with the help of her teacher Yoon soon has a story of her own to tell "about a wise girl who tricked a tiger."

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier Stedman Elem.



Emma Dilemma and the Soccer Nanny

By: Patricia Hermes

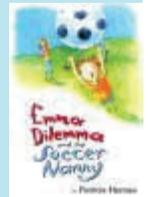
Marshall Cavendish Children, 2008

ISBN: 9780761453017

Curriculum: Soccer; Families; Nannies

Annie has been in Ireland for ever so long, but now she is coming back. Emma can hardly wait because only Annie understands how important it is for Maraduke, her ferret, to travel to the soccer tournament in Washington DC with the team. McClain can hardly wait because at last they can claim the little gray kitten that has been staying at the vet's until Annie's return. When it looks like the kids are not going to get their way, the plan a strike to get their demands met.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble Kepner M.S.



(Continued from page 3)

Minn and Jake's Almost Terrible Summer

By: Janet Wong

Illus. by: Genevieve Cote Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008

ISBN: 9780374349776

Curriculum: Friendship; Families; Summer

Jake was looking forward to his summer in Los Angeles, where he used to live. But his old friends are strangers and don't have much time for him. He feels bad because he knows he has been treating his new friend, Minn, badly by not calling her or answering her letters. Then Minn comes to Los Angeles. Their two families visit Disneyland together and Jake and Minn have the biggest disagreement of all.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Nonfiction

Face to Face with Cheetahs

By: Chris Johns

National Geographic, 2008

ISBN: 9781426303234

Curriculum: Cheetahs; Big Cats; Animals; Endangered Species; Africa; Photography

In this book by renowned National Geographic photographer Chris Johns, the reader learns about the cheetah in her own environment. This book lives up to the National Geographic reputation with beautiful,



insightful photography, an interesting story, and important facts. Key to this book's story is the child who asked him, "What can I do?" In response, the book offers tips for how children can help, from supporting local zoos to encouraging our families to donate to key charities.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
TJH.S.

Thomas Edison: Inventor with a lot of Bright Ideas

Written and illus. by: Mike Venezia

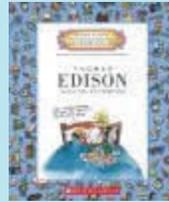
Scholastic, 2009

ISBN: 0531149781

Curriculum: Thomas A. Edison; Electric engineers; Inventors

Photos of Edison from childhood to death, and anecdotes of his successes, failures, and wit make this amazing inventor come to life in this volume of the *Getting to Know the World's Greatest Inventors and Scientists* series. Venezia's amusing cartoons will produce smiles throughout the book; kids will be clamoring for more.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.



All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been-- it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books.
~ Thomas Carlyle ~

Fiction

Dragon Flight

By: Jessica Day George

Bloomsbury Children's Books

ISBN: 1599901102

Curriculum: Dragons; War; Fantasy

This richly layered fantasy is filled with harrowing escapades and many surprises. In this sequel, Creel is partners with Marta in their dress-makers shop "Marisel's Fine Dress-making"; learns of the diabolical plot of King Nason of Citatie to overrun Roulain and destroy Feravel; rides on the back of Feniul to the Citatian Kingdom; becomes a spy, along with Marta, in the royal household; finds out the King is being controlled by the evil dragon Krashath; frees dragons from captivity; fights another war; and many more adventures. An exciting second entry in the new fantasy series.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Alumni



The Graveyard Book

By: Neil Gaiman

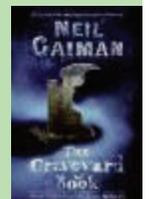
HarperCollins, 2009

ISBN: 9780060530921

Curriculum: Fiction, Ghosts, Fiction; Ghosts; Cemeteries; Supernatural; Assassins; Growing up

Nobody Owens came to the graveyard as a baby. An assassin had just murdered his family and the ghosts of the graveyard took him in, swearing to protect and educate him as long as he remained in the graveyard. Eventually, however, Bod must face his past in order to have a future

(Continued on page 5)



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

(Continued from page 4)

and his childhood friend Scarlett becomes instrumental to his survival. This tale of the supernatural has an ethereal, ghostlike quality to it. In all, a good creepy read with a surprisingly positive moral.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
TJH.S.

Brooklyn Bridge

By: Karen Hesse
Feiwel and Friends, 2008
ISBN: 9780312378868
*Curriculum: Immigrants;
Teddy bears*



It is 1903 and Fourteen-year-old Joe lives with his parents, sister and brother in Brooklyn. His parents are Jewish immigrants from Russia. Teddy dreams of going to Coney Island while his parents are busy with their new business, manufacturing Teddy Bears. Alternating with this story are chapters told in the third person revolving around a band of vagrant children that live under a bridge. It is not until the end of the story that Hesse weaves the vagrant children into Joe's story. This book received starred reviews in the Kirkus Review, Kliatt, and Publishers Weekly.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
Johnson Elem.

Well Witched

By: Frances Hardinge
Harper Collins, 2008
ISBN: 9780060880385



Curriculum: Wishing Wells; Spells; Magic; Friendship

Beware if you steal coins from a wishing well. Ryan and his friends don't think anything of it. Then they each begin to develop unusual powers. The well witch wants them to grant the wishes attached to those coins. The three friends must work together to find the wishers and to do what they can to help their wishes come true. They also have to learn to use the powers the witch gave them in order to succeed.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Rishel M.S.

Spirit

By: J. P. Hightman
Harper Teen, 2008
ISBN: 9780060850630



Curriculum: Ghosts; Witchcraft; Salem Witch Trials; Love

Tess and Tobias Goodraven are an unusual couple. They are skilled in the art of ghost hunting and can speak to the undead. While traveling to Blackthorne, near Salem, their train derails. They encounter an evil spirit; a witch killed by hanging. She stalks the forest, killing and maiming. There are two good spirits trying to protect the couple. Tess and Tobias struggle to understand the past in order to survive in the present. There is an interesting and unexpected twist at the end.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Rishel M.S.

(Continued on page 6)

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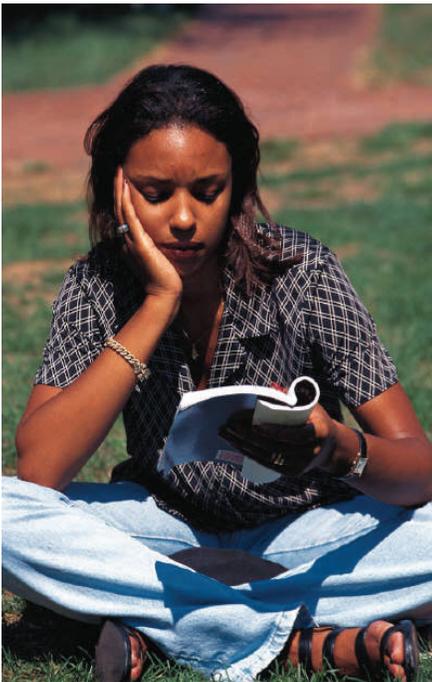
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Jody Gehrig
Karen Shannon
Antonio Nicotera



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

their own life. An intriguing insider look at a hidden world as well as a provocative challenge that life happens beyond the borders of religious structures.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant M.S.

Nonfiction

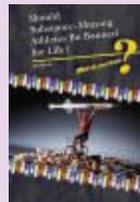
Should Substance-Using Athletes Be Banned for Life?

By: Neil Morris
Heinemann, 2009
ISBN: 9781432916763

Curriculum: Drug use in sports; Professional athletes; Ethics; Health; Debating

Presenting information from reputable cited sources including the IOC, readers are asked to make an argument for or against a life-time competition ban for athletes guilty of drug use. Ethics, health, and screening methods are discussed. Several high-profile Olympians are highlighted and extended coverage is given to the rampant blood-doping scandals of recent Tour de France cycling races. Excellent photos, a glossary, and an extensive index accompany the slim book. Appropriate for upper MS and lower HS students, readers are given guidelines for preparing persuasive essays and debates.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK HS..



Can Earth Support Our Growing Population

By: Kate Shuster
Heinemann, 2009
ISBN: 9781432916732

Curriculum: Population; Sustainability; Resources; Debating

Information and comments from reputable cited sources including Jared Diamond and the World Health Organization supplement the text which offers a variety of opinions on our sustainable existence. Health concerns stemming from poverty, air pollution, and the lack of drinkable water are discussed as they relate to each person's carbon footprint. Excellent photos, a glossary, and an extensive index accompany the slim book. How the concepts are presented make this most appropriate for HS students. Readers are given guidelines for preparing persuasive essays and debates.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



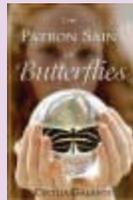
Fiction

The Patron Saint of Butterflies

By: Cecilia Galante
Bloomsbury, 2008
ISBN: 1599902494

Curriculum: Identity; Cults; Christian life; Communal living

Agnus and Honey are best friends. Raised in a Christian commune from birth, one girl strives for acceptance by following the rules while the other struggles for control of her own destiny. When Agnus's little brother is seriously injured, fate steps in, offering a new life to both girls. Taut drama erupts with their escape as the girls react differently to their freedom and the truths that are revealed and each struggles to find the courage to make



A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.

~ Chinese proverb ~