



# The Review Crew

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

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

Volume 4 Number 7

March 2008

### Fiction

#### Keep Love in Your Heart, Little One

By: Giles Andreae

Illustrated by: Clara Vulliamy

Tiger Tales, 2007

ISBN: 1589250664

*Curriculum: Foxes; Love and friendship*

The lyrical story is told by Mother Fox (Big) as she creeps softly into darling Small's bedroom. He pretends to be asleep and allows her words to float through his mind, "You're everything I always dreamed of, you've got so much beauty inside. The way that you smile, that you laugh, that you dance; Makes my heart want to sing out with pride." Throughout, the warm love of a parent and the boundless enthusiasm of a young child are apparent.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster ECE-8



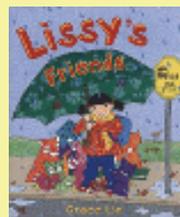
#### Lissy's Friends

Written and illus. by: Grace Lin

Viking, 2007

ISBN: 9780670060726

*Curriculum: Origami; Bashfulness; Friendship;*



#### *Schools; New at school*

Lissy is the new girl at school. No one talks to her, no one smiles at her, no one eats lunch with her. But Lissy is not upset. She uses the lunch menu to make a paper crane named Menu. Menu opens her eyes and becomes real. Gradually Lissy makes many paper animals that keep her company and are her friends. Then, one day, a big wind causes a catastrophe. Poor Lissy?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill ECE-8

#### Goodnight, Me

By: Andrew Daddo

Illustrated by: Emma Quay

Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2005

ISBN: 1599901536

*Curriculum: Orangutan; Bedtime*

An energetic orangutan says goodnight to each of his body parts, recognizing their role in his busy day. Slowly, he eases into sleep, preparing himself for another day. Simple text and illustrations guide the reader through the orangutan's nightly ritual as he winds down, feels his mother's closeness and drifts into his dreams. With soothing colors and expressive illustrations, this would be a calming book for



### 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.)

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young readers before bed or just at a time when they need to quiet themselves.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

## Nonfiction

### Mutts

By: Jody Sullivan Rake  
Capstone Press, 2008  
ISBN: 1429600160

*Curriculum: Science; Animals; Pets*

*Mutts* gives young readers a good overview of dogs that are a mix of two or more breeds. Each two page spread has one or two sentences of simple text on one side with a full-color photograph on the facing page. Showing a variety of dogs from puppies to adult, the book also discusses the basics of animal care and the fact that these dogs make good pets and can be adopted from shelters. Young children will love the photos while getting valuable information about these mixed-breed dogs.

Reviewed by: Brenda Earnest  
Merrill M.S.

# Spanish!

### Bosque tropical (Rain Forest)

By: Cassie Mayer  
Heinemann, 2008  
ISBN: 9781432905064

*Curriculum: Rain forest ecology; Rain forests*

This book presents, in patterned



questions and answers, the contrasting characteristics that can be observed in living beings and inanimate objects found in rain forests. The simple one or two-lines of text per page introduces the unique rain forest habitat and complements it with beautiful color photographs. Since youngsters usually like the predictability of repetition and the interaction called for in frequent questions, their language skills will be developed in an enjoyable way through the patterned sentence structures presented. This is in addition to the observation skills called for, so overall this is an excellent teaching tool.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly  
Spanish Reviewer

### Animals in Color/ Animales en color

Written and illustrated by: Sebastiano Ranchetti

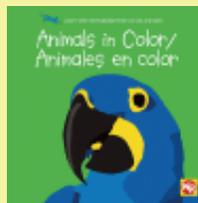
Weekly Reader,  
2008

ISBN: 9780836890372

*Curriculum: Colors; Animals*

A diversity of animals appears in this bilingual book to introduce beginners to the basic colors. Each color is represented by an animal, and the word for the color represented is printed in that color as well, thus reinforcing color awareness and sight word recognition. From the white polar bear, yellow fish, pink flamingo, purple butterfly, etc. to the black cat, all the drawings are in bright, bold colors. This is an appealing book that incorporates sound teaching principles.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly  
Spanish Reviewer



## The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

## Fiction

### The Monster of Lake Lobo

By: Scott Nickel  
Illustrated by: Enrique Cortes  
Stone Arch Books, 2008  
ISBN: 9781598898361

*Curriculum: Monsters; Dogs; Graphic Novels*

This graphic novel from Stone Arch books tells the story of Kevin and his dad visiting Lake Lobo. The legend of Lake Lobo says there is an evil shape-changer haunting the shores of the lake, scaring visitors away each summer and only another shape-changer, called the Defender, can protect visitors from the monster. Both the monster and the Defender have one green eye, and when Kevin realizes his new dog Max has one green eye, he wonders if his dog is also the monster. This would make a great addition to any library searching for high interest, low level graphic novels for middle school or upper elementary.

Reviewed by: Brenda Earnest  
Merrill M.S.



## Nonfiction

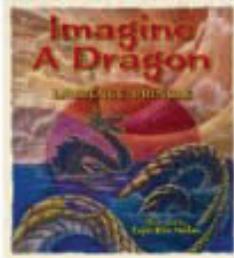
### Imagine a Dragon

By: Laurence Pringle  
Illustrated by: Eujin Kim Neilan

(Continued on page 3)

# Middle School Reader Gold Mine

Boyd's Mills Press, 2008  
ISBN: 1563973284



*Curriculum:*  
*Dragons;*  
*Myths*

"Close your eyes. Imagine you are in a cave. You shine a flashlight into the inky darkness. And there, deep inside, you come face-to-face with a DRAGON! But what kind of dragon do you see? Is it friendly, or is it a scary dragon? The answer may depend on when and where you lived." The brilliant illustrations portray as many varied dragons as there are stories from different parts of the world to accompany them.

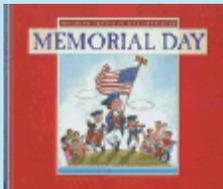
Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster ECE-8

## Memorial Day

By: Trudi Strain Trueit

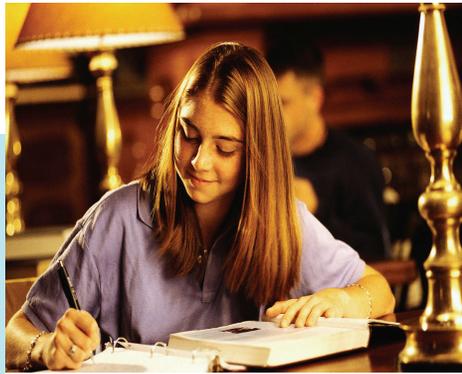
Illustrated by:  
Ronnie Rooney

The Child's World, 2008  
ISBN: 9781592968152



*Curriculum: Social Studies; Holidays*  
*Memorial Day in the Holidays, Festivals, & Celebrations series* introduces young readers to the holiday. Chapters cover the history of the holiday, first called Decoration Day to honor fallen Civil War soldiers, and later changed to Memorial Day to honor all Americans who died in wartime from World War I to the present. Readers also see how Americans celebrate the holiday by visiting cemeteries or war monuments and flying the flag at half-staff. Each book also has poems and songs as well as an activity or recipe associated with the holiday. These books would make a great addition to the holiday section of any elementary or middle school library.

Reviewed by: Brenda Earnest  
Merrill M.S.



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

## Parts?)

By: William David Thomas  
Gareth Stevens, 2008

ISBN: 9780836888720

*Curriculum: American government structure; Divisions of powers and responsibilities; Social studies*



A dialog between youngsters trying to understand the rules of basketball is used as a springboard to introduce our government structure. A parallel is thus established with the coach, the team members, and the referee to present the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government with their components and functions. A chapter is dedicated to each of these branches, concluding with a chapter on state government and local powers. Thorough and interesting in its presentation, the clear text is supported with diagrams and up to date information and photographs. A glossary, references and an index complete this valuable and essential book to understanding the functional structure of our government. ("Suprema Corte" is used throughout the book, but it should be "Corte Suprema.")

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly  
Spanish Reviewer

## The Wright Brothers Fly

By: Robyn O'Sullivan  
National Geographic, 2007



ISBN: 9781426301889

*Curriculum: Orville Wright; Wilbur Wright*

From the time they were young, Orville and Wilbur Wright spent many years studying the progress of 'flying machines'. In 1903, after thousands of tests and years of work, their *Flyer 1* made the first manned, powered airplane flight. This short chapter book gives an easy-to-follow synopsis of the accomplishments in the area of flight by these determined brothers. Powerful photographs as well as a number of further resources (websites, glossary, research paper guidance and more) give a reader a chance to learn beyond what the text alone has to offer.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich  
Ford Elem.

**Spanish!**

¿Cuáles son las partes del gobierno? (What are the Government

Read as you taste fruit or savor wine,  
or enjoy friendship, love or life.

~ George Holbrook Jackson ~

### Don't Call Me Ishmael

By: Michael Gerard Bauer  
Greenwillow Books, 2006  
ISBN: 9780061348658  
*Curriculum: Bullying; High school life; Herman Melville; Moby Dick*



This hilarious novel centers on the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year of a boy suffering from a terminal case of Ishmael Leseur's Syndrome. This boy is Ishmael Leseur. Convinced his name (curses to that Melville fellow!) is to blame for the bullying he receives at school, the only treatment is to draw absolutely no attention to himself at any time for any reason. This works adequately until James Scobie shows up in school. James has victim written all over him but has no fear of the school bully. Through James an unlikely group of students, including Ishmael, create a debate team, become friends and learn how to stand up for themselves and each other. Recommend this novel to upper middle school and high school students looking for a laugh. Very funny and authentically voiced.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK HS

### Edenville Owls

By: Robert B. Parker  
Philomel Books, 2007  
ISBN: 9780399246562  
*Curriculum: Basketball, Friendship, Prejudice, War, Coming of Age*



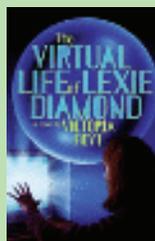
The setting is a small town towards the end of World War II. The Edenville Owls were a basketball team, with five boys and no coach. Bobby and his friends wanted to play in the big tournament, so they did it on their own. Meanwhile Bobby sees a confrontation between his new teacher and an unsavory man. So the Owls and his best friend, Joanie, try to help. This leads to the

discovery of an ugly truth that looks at prejudice, white supremacist, and recruiting young boys for the "fight." The group has a unique plan to protect their teacher and get rid of the evil that could infest their society. You won't be able to put this down towards the end.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Rishel M.S.

### The Virtual Life of Lexie Diamond

By: Victoria Foyt  
HarperTempest, 2007  
ISBN: 0060825634



*Curriculum: Family Life, Computers, Supernatural, Murder*

Lexie feels more at home with her computer and cyber friends than with real life. When her mother is killed unexpectedly, her world turns upside down when her father moves back in with a new girlfriend. Lexie creates a virtual representation of her mother and is amazed to find that her lost soul is floating around the Internet and she is able to talk to her mother. Her mother warns her of danger and Lexie is suspicious of Jane, the new girlfriend. Her father doesn't believe her, so she sets out to prove that her mother was murdered and that Jane is guilty.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Rishel M.S.

### Remembering Raquel

By: Vivian Van Velde  
Harcourt, 2007  
ISBN: 0152059767  
*Curriculum: Death; Grief; Friendship; School; Popularity*

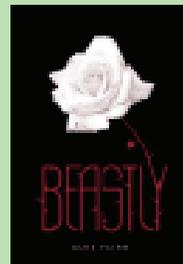


Do you ever wonder what people will say about you when you are gone? One evening on the way home from the movies, Raquel Falcone is hit by a car and killed. Who really knew Raquel? At first it seems as if Raquel was virtually invisible, but as the story unwinds, we see she touched many lives, for better or worse. This is a series of short chapters from the people whose lives Raquel touched; her father, her best friend, her classmates, people on the street the night she was killed.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

### Beastly

By: Alex Flinn  
HarperTeen, 2006  
ISBN: 0060874179  
*Curriculum: Conduct of life; Appearances; Fairytales*



Kyle Kingsbury has everything; perfect looks, lots of money and a famous dad. He hangs around with all the other perfect people in his exclusive, perfect, private school. He has never thought about what it might be like to not be perfect and, truth to tell, he never really cared to. If anything was less than perfect, it was a target for his cruel tongue. One day he is cruel to the wrong person, Kendra, and she casts a spell on him. He will be a beast until he learns to love someone and they love him back, not because of his perfect looks, but because of the kindness in his heart. This is a retelling of the story of Beauty and the Beast; marvelous in every way.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

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(Continued from page 4)

**First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover**

By: Mitali Perkins

Dutton, 2007

ISBN: 9780525478003

*Curriculum: Identity; Pakistani Americans; Politics; Blogs; Adoption; Family*

Sixteen-year-old Sameera Righton has returned from a European private school to work on her father's presidential campaign. The campaign staff wants her to portray an "all-American" image and creates a fake weblog in her name. Meanwhile, Sameera begins her own weblog on which she writes about somewhat controversial subjects to which she wants responses from all ages all over the world.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill ECE-8



**Chaucer's Canterbury Tales**

By: Marcia Williams

Candlewick Press

ISBN: 763631970

*Curriculum: Geoffrey Chaucer, d. 1400 Adaptations; Middle ages*

Catalogued for the literature section, this retelling of the timeless classic The Canterbury Tales is brought to readers in graphic novel format. Colorfully designed cartoon strips give a raucous humor to the bawdy tales that have been cleaned up for a younger audience. The author captures the essence of the original work using oral narrative and loosely woven middle English in the dialogue. Easily set on the recommended shelf, preteen boys will get rib tickling enjoyment out of the exaggerated physical features of the zany characters and the generous use of potty jokes.



Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer

Grant Middle School

# Nonfiction

**The Brothers' War: Civil War Voices in Verse**

By: Patrick Lewis

National Geographic, 2007

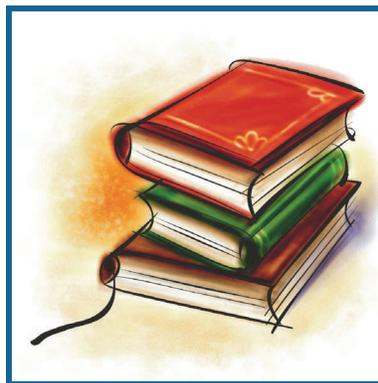
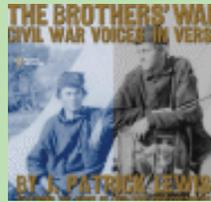
ISBN: 1426300363

*Curriculum: United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865-Poetry*

Voices of Northerners and Southerners: soldiers, civilians, famous or obscure are portrayed through poems. They are written in a variety of forms: ballads, sonnets, free verse, rhythmic and rhyming, and repetition which gives a sense of marching. The 11 poems create a picture of what it was like to live in that time period, "both as a participant and as a mute witness to the muttering cycle of death, the hundreds of thousands of young lives stopped by cannons or volley or folly of determined generals." This book is far more than saber rattles!

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Bryant Webster ECE-



# Review Crew Staff

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**Antonio Nicotera**

# Young Adults Deserve the Best!

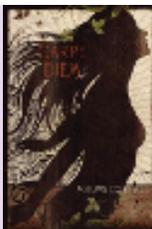
## Carpe Diem

By: Autumn Cornwell

Feiwel and Friends, c2007

ISBN: 9780312367923

*Curriculum: Families; Asia; Adventure; Self-discovery*



At 16, high-achieving Vassar Spore has the next two decades of her life planned; however, a hidden family secret, which Vassar is determined to uncover, gives her free-spirited grandmother ammunition to blackmail her parents into allowing her to travel with her throughout Asia for the summer. Vassar is in for life-altering surprises and challenges. This recommended novel explores the limiting nature of being too regimented and planned versus the need to, at least occasionally, live in the moment, or LIM, as Grandma Gerd encourages.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK HS

## Sisters in Sanity

By: Gayle Forman

HarperTeen, 2007

ISBN: 9780060887476

*Curriculum: Treatment facilities; Fathers; Friendship; Coming of age; Music*



Under the guise of a dreaded family vacation to the Grand Canyon, Brit, 16, is deposited at Red Rocks, a center for troubled and out-of-control girls. Deeply disappointed in her father and his deception, Brit must pull on her inner strength and the friendships she has made with her fellow patients to endure the inhumane treatment and conditions of the facility. An interesting look at the often governmentally ignored "boot camp" facilities that promise to fix broken youth, this novel will cause the reader to ponder their

effectiveness as well as their legitimacy and staffing qualifications.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK HS

## Someone Like Summer

By: M. E. Kerr

Harper Teen, 2007

ISBN: 9780061141003

*Curriculum: Immigrants; Prejudice*



When Annabel falls for Esteban, an immigrant working in her community on Long Island, her father disapproves. She fares no better with Esteban's sister, Gioconda, who calls her a "flour face." Annabel's older brother, and her father's girlfriend do what they can to be supportive, but the prejudice from both sides is overwhelming for the young couple. Young adult readers will recognize the issues facing both characters, and may find an opportunity to examine their own ways of thinking.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley  
South H.S.

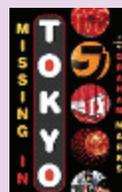
## Missing in Tokyo

By: Graham Marks

Bloomsbury Press

ISBN: 158234907

*Curriculum: Missing persons; Mystery; Tokyo; London*



The curtain floats up into the fly tower. Adam is sleeping soundly when the loud jingle of the telephone alerts the British family of his sister's disappearance. "What is she doing in Tokyo Adam and how long have you known she was working in a bar?" The questions fly fast and furious, with

few answers and a stifling wait-and-see attitude from authorities. Impulsively taking matters into his own hands, Adam finds himself flying off into a tautly woven intrigue that will sweep readers along with him down the streets of London and the alleys of Tokyo right up to his satisfying landing in Heathrow. (Sexual content is alluded to)

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer  
Grant Middle School

# Nonfiction

## Grayson

By: Lynne Cox

Harvest Book-Harcourt, 2008

ISBN: 9780156034678

*Curriculum: Memoirs; Gray whales; Swimmers*

When Lynne Cox (*Swimming to Antarctica*) was 17, she often trained before sunrise, for long-distance ocean swims, by doing half-mile laps between the jetty and pier at Seal Beach in California. On one such morning, Cox was frightened by something large swimming alongside her, which turned out to be a baby gray whale. Her delight soon grew to concern for the well-being of her companion so Cox put her own safety at risk, spending hours, and swimming great distances with "Grayson," in the hope of reuniting him with his mother. What happens, and Cox's skill at telling it, will convince even the most skeptical reader of our connection to those with whom we share the Earth.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley  
South H.S.

