



# The Review Crew

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

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

Volume 7 Number 3

November 2010

### Fiction

#### No ghost under my bed

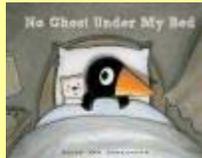
Written and illus. by:  
Guido Van Genechten  
Clavis, 2010

ISBN: 9781605370699

*Curriculum: Nightmares; Father-son stories*

Little penguin, Jake, hears strange noises each night as he tries to fall asleep, just as a young child might do. His reassuring and patient father comes into his room and thoughtfully searches for the source of the noise. Any time he comes across the potential source of the noise daddy explains what the object is and why it makes sounds.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elem.



#### I'm Big!

By: Kate McMullan  
Illus. by: Jim McMullan  
Blazer and Brey, 2010  
ISBN: 9780061229749

*Curriculum: Self - esteem; Dinosaurs*

This is the story of a sorry little Sauro-pod, who is feeling very sorry for himself. He walks around the prehistoric landscape sure he is a small and insignificant dino-



saur. Upon sighting other dinosaurs, he hides. That is until one day when he encounters a pack of carnivores and learns to act and think big.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elem.

#### Ahmed and the Feather Girl

Written and Illus. by:  
Jane Ray  
Frances Lincoln Children's  
Books, 2010

ISBN: 9781845079888

*Curriculum: Folk tale; Circus*

Ahmed, a young orphan, works with a traveling circus, under the heavy hand of Madame Saleem. By chance, one day, he discovers a beautiful egg from which hatches a winged girl who becomes the top attraction at the circus. Ahmed fears she will suffer under Madam Saleem's cruelty and so he frees her at his own peril.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elem.



#### Amelia Bedelia's First Apple Pie

By: Herman Parish  
Illus. by: Lynne Avril  
Greenwillow Books, 2010

ISBN: 9780061964091

*Curriculum: Pies; Baking;*



### 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.)

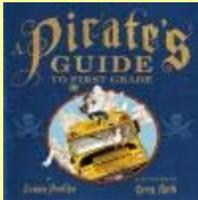
*Apples; Grandparents; Humorous*  
Amelia Bedelia loves fall, especially when the apples are ready to eat. Grandma and Amelia are making pies together. Grandma puts her pies outside to cool. Oh, no! The birds love apple pie too. But Amelia's tiny little pie is just perfect for the whole family.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill Elem.

### **A Pirate's Guide to First Grade**

By: James Preller  
Feiwel and Friends,  
2010

ISBN:  
9780312369286



*Curriculum: School; First grade; Pirates*

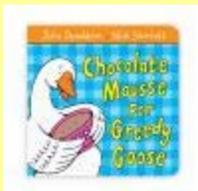
A mother, "soggy with fare-thee-wells" sends her first grader to the first day of school with imaginary pirate mates in tow. His new captain, Ms. Silver, works the young swab like a "black dog on a hot day". All his efforts are rewarded with a map leading him to his true treasure, books in the library.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

### **Chocolate Mousse for Greedy**

#### **Goose**

By: Julia Donaldson  
Illus. by: Nick  
Sharratt  
Macmillan, 2005



ISBN: 9780330512664

*Curriculum: Stories in rhyme; Animals; Food; Expressions*

In playful story-in-rhyme pattern, this board book follows many unique

animals as they ask about and enjoy a tasty dinner together. "What can I smell?' asks shy Gabelle. 'Macaroni' says Shetland Pony", is just one quirky example.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni

### **Little Owl Lost**

Written and illus.  
by: Chris Haughton  
Candlewick Press,  
2009



ISBN:  
9780763650223

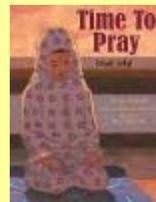
*Curriculum: Owls; Forest Animals; Circle Stories*

Simple and brilliant illustrations follow a newborn owl after he falls out of his nest and can't find his way back to his mom in this cute circle story with repetitive text. Friendly forest animals attempt to help him find his way back, but vague descriptions the baby owls gives of his mother continually lead to the wrong mother animal, until finally the baby owl's mom finds him.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni

### **Time to Pray**

By: Maha Addasi  
Illus. by: Ned  
Gannon  
Boyd Mills Press,  
2010



ISBN: 9781590786116

*Curriculum: Prayer; Muslims; Grandmothers*

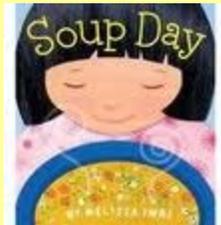
In an unidentified Middle Eastern country, Yasmin is visiting her

grandmother. While there she learns about Islamic rituals and prayers. She returns home to America with a new appreciation of her heritage and a special gift from her grandmother.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

### **Soup Day**

Written and illus.  
by: Melissa Iwai  
Holt and Company, 2010



ISBN:  
9780805090048

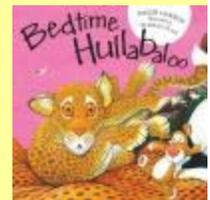
*Curriculum: Soups; Cookery - vegetables*

What could be better on a cold day than cooking homemade soup? This touching account of a young girl and her mom sharing the work of preparing vegetable soup seems especially appealing as winter draws near. The step by step process is colorfully presented with a unique illustration style which brings added warmth to the story. An easy to follow recipe for Snowy Day Vegetable Soup is included at the end.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

### **Bedtime Hullabaloo**

By: David Conway  
Illus. by: Charles  
Fuge



Walker & Company,  
2010

ISBN: 9780802721709

*Curriculum: Savannah animals; Animal sounds; Noise*

"One night on the silly savannah, a ludicrous leopard was leapfrogging to bed when all of a sudden there was a terrible racket ..." He decided to investigate and along the way he met up with a sleepy giraffe singing a lullaby, a baboon reading a story, a hat-wearing hyena, a music-making meerkat, a zany zebra, a sleepwalking lion, an outraged ostrich, a polka-dot-pajama-wearing water buffalo and others. When they finally find the source of the 'hullabaloo,' it was a tiny shrew snoring its head off "HHHRRR-ZZZ! SNORT, SNORT! GRUNT, GRUNT!"

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni

## Nonfiction

### Some Kind of Love: A Family Reunion in Poems

By: Traci Dant  
Illus. by: Eric Velasquez  
Marshall Cavendish,  
2010



ISBN: 9780761455592

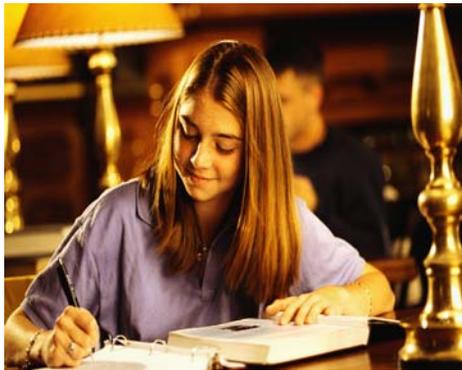
*Curriculum: Poetry; Family reunions; Families*

These fifteen poems about a family reunion are filled with "some kind of love." Relatives squeeze into beds, eat where ever they find a place, hug and kiss at arrivals and departures, sing, tell stories, and share memories. This is a book all members of the family will enjoy.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

# The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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



## Fiction

### The Attack of the Fluffy Bunnies

By: Andrea Beaty  
Illus. by: Dan Santat  
Amulet Books, 2010



ISBN: 9780810984165

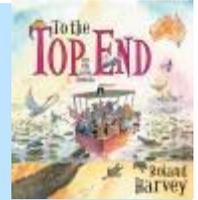
*Curriculum: Humor; Aliens; Camp*

Instead of going to the International SPAMathon with their parents, Kevin and Joules Rockman end up at Camp Whatsitooya. After a long hike in the woods trying to find the camp, the twins are ready for a restful stay. This is not to be as the Fluffy Bunnies, aliens from a galaxy beyond the Milky Way, but not so far as the Peanut Cluster, have crash landed on the planet with the intent of taking over all human life forms.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

### To the Top End: Our Trip Across Australia

Written and illus by:  
Roland Harvey  
Allen & Unwin, 2010  
ISBN: 9781741758849



*Curriculum: Australia - description and travel*

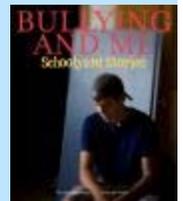
With his wild Uncle Kevin, a boy and his family travel the wide expanse of Australia. Encountering the birds, animals, plants and people of areas throughout the country is an amazing experience for them all. Readers will be drawn in by the intricate details on every page almost as if they were clues to a puzzle that needs to be slowly unraveled. The humor, illustrations, and information all come together in a book that will be carefully pored over again and again by readers.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

## Nonfiction

### Bullying and Me : Schoolyard Stories

By: Ouisie Shapiro  
Photographs by: Steven Vote  
Albert Whitman, 2010  
ISBN: 9780807509210



*Curriculum: Bullying; Prevention;*

Thirteen first-person stories address emotional as well as physical bullying. Commentary is provided by a professor of educational psychology who specializes in adolescent bullying.

The multicultural representatives, age range, and circumstantial variations speak to a wide audience. Tips on dealing with bullies outline some effective strategies. A worthwhile addition to any school collection.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

### Cool Robots

By: Sean Kenney

Christy Ottaviano Books, 2010

ISBN:

9780805087635

*Curriculum: Robotics; Robots; LEGO*

This book is filled with photos of LEGO models. The instructions to build them are next to each model. The photos of LEGO pieces show how they fit together to become robots. Excellent new series.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill Elem.



**Here is where  
people,  
One frequently  
finds,  
Lower their voices  
And raise their  
minds.  
~Richard Armour**

## Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

### Fiction

#### Tangled

By: Carolyn Mackler

Harper Teen, 2010

ISBN: 9780061731044

*Curriculum: Relationships; Emotional problems; Depression; Survival*

The story is told from four different viewpoints. Jena and Skye travel to the Caribbean with their mothers. There they encounter Dakota and Owen. Each has very different personalities and perceptions of themselves. Jena has little self confidence next to the glamorous Skye. Skye is an aspiring actress, but no one guesses the dark secret she hides. Dakota is recovering from the death of his girlfriend while Owen is more comfortable online than in real life. The lives of the four teens are tangled in ways none of them suspect.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



#### Conspiracy of Kings

By: Megan Whelan Turner

Harper Collins, 2010

ISBN: 9780061870934

*Curriculum: Princes; Slavery; Con-*



*spiracies; Coming of age*

The adventures of the world of Attolia continue. Sophos, the heir to the throne of Sounis, does not take life seriously. He would rather read poems than learn to fight. All changes when he is kidnapped by his father's enemies and is sold into slavery. He must grow up fast and use this time to learn the skills he had been neglecting. After he escapes and finds the magus, he discovers he is now king. Sophos is reunited with the King and Queen of Attolia who helps him recover his throne. There are adventures and deceit in the courts of Attolia. Sophos must now act like a king and learn who to trust to survive.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

#### Little Blog on the Prairie

By: Cathleen Davitt Bell

Bloomsbury, 2010

ISBN: 9781599902869

*Curriculum: Frontier living; Families; Technology*

Gen has a great summer planned with her friends hanging out at the pool. But her mom has planned "Frontier Camp" for the family. Frontier camp means they have nothing that was invented after 1890. The family has to work the farm, learn to cook on a wood stove and maybe even kill the chicken so they can eat.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S.



### City of Ships

Written and Illus. by:  
Mary Hoffman

Bloomsbury, 2010  
ISBN: 9781599904917



*Curriculum: Space and time; Adventures and adventurers; Brothers and Sisters*

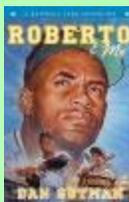
Isabel is an ordinary student in a private school in London until she "nearly trips over a little red pouch. She picks it up, fascinated ... it has something inside and she cannot resist opening the string to see what it is: mosaic tiles called Tesseræ." That night she falls asleep holding the bag and wakes up in another world: one where her presence can make a difference.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni

### Roberto and Me

By: Dan Gutman  
Harper, 2010

ISBN: 9780061234859



*Curriculum: Baseball; Roberto Clemente*

Stosh uses a Roberto Clemente baseball card to transport him back in time. He is determined to convince Roberto not to board the doomed airplane in which he dies. While trying to convince him not to take the flight, Clemente pulls out a card with writing on it. "If you have a chance to accomplish something that will make things better for people coming behind you, and you don't do that, you are wasting your time on this earth."

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

### Is it Night or Day

Fern Schumer Chapman-Balzer

Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2010



ISBN: 9780374177447

*Curriculum: Jewish Holocaust; Jewish refugees; Historical fiction*

It is 1937 and twelve-year old Edith is sent by her German Jewish parents to live with relatives in Chicago. Even after she arrives Edith is touched by the war. She sees white flags with blue stars signifying a member of the family was in the service and white flags with gold stars signifying that they had a member of the member of their family die in service of their country and the biggest blow comes when she finds that her father, mother and grandmother have died in the concentration camps.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

## Nonfiction

### Don't Touch That Toad & Other Strange Things Adults Tell You

By: Catherine Rondina

Illus. by: Kevin Sylvester  
Kids Can Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781554534548

*Curriculum: Superstition; Humor; Folklore*



"If you go outside with wet hair, you'll catch a cold...FALSE... Don't be a drip, Mom-it's not true." Humorous ink drawings illustrate sayings about healthy habits, weird science, food fallacies, and animal tales. Their ve-

## Review Crew Staff

### Committee Chair:

Nancy Lucas  
JFK High School

### Secretary:

Sudi Stodola  
TJ High School

### Editor:

Chris Coble  
Kepner Middle School

### Reviewers:

Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elementary

Irene Bell  
Alumni

Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

Dana Clark  
Greenwood K—8

Cat DeRose  
Trevista@Horace Mann

Cheri Hilton  
South High School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill Elementary

Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elementary

Leah Rounds  
Alumni

### From ERS:

Dave Sanger  
Karen Shannon  
Antonio Nicotera

racity or falsehood is revealed with the turn of a page. An amusing postscript lists parentisms, "the truly unexplainable things" kids hear from adults.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8

### Path of the Pronghorn

By: Cat Urbigkit

Photographs by:  
Mark Gocke

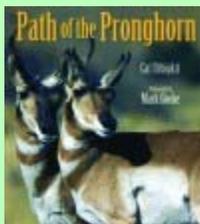
Boyd's Mills  
Press,, 2010

ISBN:  
9781590787564

*Curriculum: North American mammals; Pronghorn*

A clear, informative narrative relates the life cycle, diet, predators, defenses, and migratory habits of members of the Sublette pronghorn herd of Wyoming. The unique qualities of this small ruminant, North America's fastest land mammal, are showcased in breath-taking photographs. Features include a map of the U.S. showing the pronghorn's range and an author's note outlining their recovery from the brink of extinction.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8



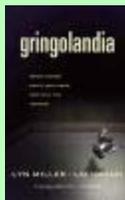
### Gringolandia

By: Miller-Lachman, Lyn  
Curbstone Books,  
(2009)

ISBN: 1931896496

*Curriculum: Chile; Revolutionaries; Coming of Age*

Set during the Pinochet's cruel



reign in Chile, this intense novel brings a tumultuous and politically charged time to life for young readers. Released from prison and exiled from Chile five years after his imprisonment for his work as a revolutionary in Chile. Daniel's father has come to live with them in the US. Will the family be able to survive their tumultuous reunion in their new home in *Gringolandia*?

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
TF H.S.

### Countdown

By: Deborah Wiles  
Scholastic Press (2010)

ISBN: 054510652

*Curriculum: Coming of Age; Duck-and-Cover; Cuban Missile Crisis; Fiction*

It's 1962. Duck-and-Cover is the theme song ringing in Franny's ears as she deals with the fear of impending warfare and her family falling apart. However, this is not your average coming-of-age novel. This intriguing book is peppered with photos, newspaper clippings, and vignettes about the era. While not the most gripping story, the integration of primary source materials makes this a fascinating read.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
TF H.S.



*A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.*

*Chinese Proverb*

## Young Adults Deserve the Best!

### Fiction

#### Rules of Attraction

By: Simone Elkeles  
Walker & Company, 2010  
ISBN: 9780802720856

*Curriculum: Coming of age; Gangs; Drugs; Conduct of life*

This companion novel to *Perfect Chemistry* follows the younger Fuentes, Carlos, as he joins Alex to live in Boulder. Alex hopes to save Carlos from gangs and drugs. Trouble finds Carlos and he is court-ordered to live with the Westfords and their daughter Kiara. Love crosses economic and racial boundaries but creates tough decisions for Carlos and Kiara. Best for upper HS students, the book contains mature language (English and Spanish) and scenes. The theme of controlling one's destiny comes through. Although the quick transformations stretch credibility, this title flies off the shelves.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.



#### Things I Know About Love

By: Kate Le Vann  
Egmont USA, 2010  
ISBN: 9781606840788

*Curriculum: Coming of Age; Siblings; Leukemia; Relationships*



This JLG selection features Livia. Seventeen and a leukemia survivor, she travels from England to Princeton to visit her brother and learn about herself, life and love. Falling in love with Adam gives her the insight she seeks. Fearful of a relapse she and her family keep close tabs on her health. The message to live life and take risks with one's heart shines through. Recommend this title to HS girls wanting a romantic, tender, heart wrenching love story.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**A Life of Glass**

By: Jillian Cantor  
Harper Teen, 2010  
ISBN:  
9780061686511

*Curriculum: Death; Single parent families*

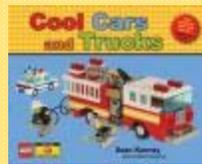
In healing after her father's passing, Melissa faces her unstable relationships. Her best friend Ryan's unreliable compassion, her mom's dating attempts and the possibility of an affair her father may have had, cloud her reasoning. This complex, realistic coming of age story is best described by Melissa, "For some reason, I thought about the way relationships are a little like glass, oh so precarious and fragile and venerable to breaking with the slightest wrong move."

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.



**Series Books**

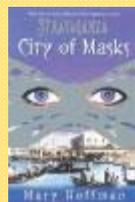
**LEGO Models You can Build!**



By: Sean Kenney - 3-5 Nonfiction

An excellent new series showing photographs and instructions to build with LEGO bricks. So far there are only two titles.

**Stravaqanza**



By: Mary Hoffman 6-8 Fiction

A teen, Lucien, stricken with brain cancer travels between two worlds.

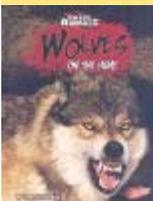
**Baseball Card Adventure**



By: Dan Gutman 3-5 Fiction

Joe Stoshack travels back in time to the baseball greats trying to prevent the disasters that are baseball history today.

**Killer Animals**

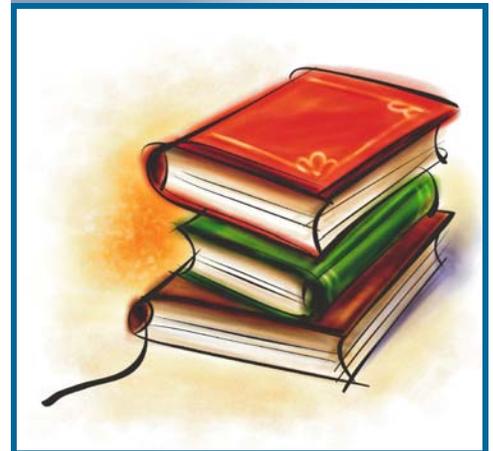


BY: Various  
3-5 Non-Fiction

Describes various animals how they hunt and their role in the food web.

I would be most content if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building enough bookshelves.

Anna Quindlen



**Books are the compasses and telescopes and sextants and charts which other men have prepared to help us navigate the dangerous seas of human life.**  
Jesse Lee Bennett