



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 6 Number 2

October 2009

Fiction

Marley Goes to School

By: John Grogan

Illus: Richard Cowdrey

HarperCollins, 2009

ISBN: 9780061561511



Curriculum: Pets; Dogs; School; Relationships

In the continuing story of Marley he finds a way to follow Cassie to school. Along the way he visits the lunchroom and the hot dog tray, the music room, the gym for a little basketball and the principal's office. Not stopping until he finds his best friend he starts an all school chase ending up in Cassie's arms. This lovable and rowdy dog may not be much of an academic, but he's full of school spirit!

Reviewed by: Megan McQuinn

Howell K-8

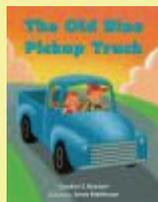
The Old Blue Pickup Truck

By: Candice F. Ransom

Illus. by: Jenny Mattheson

Walker & Co, 2009

ISBN: 9780802795915



Curriculum: Fathers and daughters; Trucks

A small girl accompanies her father as he runs errands in the old blue pickup truck. Gradually it fills up with items from the bakery, the hardware store, and the feed store.

The last stop is to pick up a baby pig! Suddenly it starts to rain, how can they protect everything from getting ruined?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

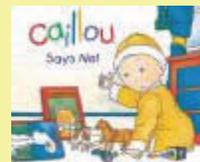
Park Hill Elem.

Caillou Says No!

By: Nicole Nadeau

Illus. by: Pierre Brignaud;

Colloration by: Marcel Depratto



Chouette Publishing, 2009

ISBN: 9782894507070

Curriculum: Child psychology; Pre-school development; Parenting

This is another story of the beloved PBS character Caillou. Written by a child psychologist, the author knows that, similar to many pre-schoolers, Caillou wants to be independent, thus he says "no" to most of his parents' suggestions. The only time he agrees and says "yes" is when dad buys him a pair of red boots, and also when mom asked him if he liked his new boots. The illustrations are just like the ones on the TV program. Any pre-school student will love to listen to this short story of a kid just like them.

Reviewed by: Dr. Carmen Sanjurjo

Alumni

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.)

Good Night Farm

By: Adam Gamble

Illus. by: Cooper Kelly

Our World of Books, 2009

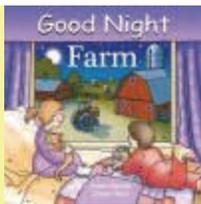
ISBN: 9781602190290

Curriculum: Farms: Good Night series

Children take a tour of a farm, seeing and participating in all the activities that happen there throughout the seasons before saying good night to it all. This board book would be a good tool to introduce or expand any farm unit for young students.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Freckleface Strawberry and the Dodgeball Bully

By: Julianne Moore

Illus. by: LeUyen Pham

Bloomsbury, 2009

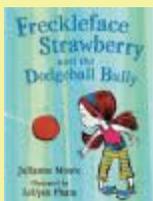
ISBN: 9781599903163

Curriculum: Dodgeball; Bullies; Playground games

Freckleface Strawberry hates dodgeball because Windy Pants Patrick always plays too rough. Freckleface Strawberry instead pretends she's a monster and in the end scares Windy Pants Patrick, but she apologizes and they become friends. This story could be used to show how confidence can overcome obstacles and how it just takes a little understanding to get along with one another.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Spanish!

La gallina de los huevos de oro (The chicken of the golden eggs)



By: Carmen Blázquez

Illus. by: Margarita Ruiz

Combel, 2009

ISBN: 9788498254013

Curriculum: Greed; Fairy tales

A fairy tale about a poor farmer who wishes to improve his lot in life and receives from an elf a special chicken that lays golden eggs. He becomes wealthy, but at the same time impatient for having to wait a full day for each egg. His impatience soon turns into greed when he decides to cut up the chicken to discover the gold mine inside it. Nothing is found but fleshy entrails, and with it the end of his wealth.

The flawless Spanish narration is complemented with beautiful drawings which make this a very attractive book. It will captivate youngsters while teaching important values.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish reviewer

Nonfiction

Lizards

By: Kathryn Stevens

Child's World, 2009

ISBN:

9781602531857

Curriculum: Lizards;

Pets

This book focuses on how to care for pet lizards. Readers will learn what to feed their lizards, what lizards need in their enclosures, and other needs. It also lets the reader know that for safety reasons they should wash their hands after handling lizards and that lizards can bite. This book is written on primary level and does not go into depth about the care of lizards but



gives a good overview. Students will absorb themselves in the color photographs. It is a very good primary non-fiction book.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Fish

By: Kathryn Stevens
Child's World, 2009

ISBN:

9781602531826

Curriculum: Fish;

Pets

This book teaches the reader to take care of fish. It talks about the need for the aquarium to be kept clean. It is also important to put special tablets in the water or to let it sit a few days before putting fish into it.

There are also different types of fish food for different types of fish. Other tips of basic care are covered in this book. Interesting facts are included in the book. For instance did you know that some fish can live up to twenty years? Written on a primary level, this book does not go into detail about the care of fish but give a nicely written general overview. Colorful pictures complement the text. It is a very good non-fiction book for primary readers.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA



Panda Kindergarten

By: Joanne Ryder

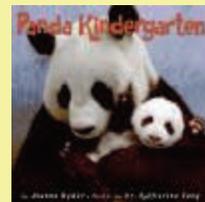
Collins, 2009

ISBN:

9780060578503

Curriculum: Giant panda; Pandas

Sixteen young giant panda cubs are being raised at the Wolong Nature Reserve in China. In this protected setting, dedicated workers are helping them learn skills to enable at least some of these giant pandas to be re-



leased back into the bamboo forests in the mountains nearby.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Triceratops

By: Susan H. Gray

Illus. by: Robert Squier

Child's World, 2009

ISBN:
9781602532434



Curriculum: Dinosaurs

Triceratops lived millions of years ago. This book has all the facts a young reader would need for a report on triceratops. There is a map showing where the bones of this dinosaur have been found. *Triceratops* is part of the series *Introducing Dinosaurs* that includes twelve titles.

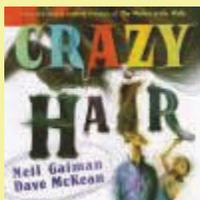
Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Crazy Hair

By: Neil Gaiman

HarperCollins, 2009

ISBN: 978-
0060579081



Curriculum: Humorous stories; Hair

When Bonnie, comments upon a man's long, wild hair, his response is a hilarious, poetic explanation of all the wonders that can be found in his long unruly locks. In those untamed tresses live tigers, bears, and hunters. His unmapped mane is navigated by pirate ships and hot air balloons. But what happens when Bonnie insists on bringing out her comb? Neil Gaiman's award-winning writing and Dave McKean's brilliant illustrations come together in this rollicking tale to

create a beautifully outlandish story. Fans will love this second collaboration by these two artists, and anyone who has ever had a bad hair day can relate to the tale.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
TJ H.S.

Leafy Sea Dragons and Other Sea Creatures

By: Carmen Bredeson



Enslow Publishers, 2010

ISBN: 9780766031258

Curriculum: Weird animals; Sea animals; Marine animals

Looking at the cover you have to ask, *what is it?* Nine wonderfully weird sea creatures are shown in colorful close-up photographs. A simple description of each animal includes an explanation of how their oddity helps to camouflage them in order to prey on others or to protect them from becoming prey. One shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but this one will make kids want to open it to read and learn more.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.

Tiger Pups

By: Tom and Allie Harvey

Photographs by: Tom Harvey and Keith Philpott

HarperCollins, 2009

ISBN: 9780061773099

Curriculum: Tigers, Baby Animals, Safari Zoological Park, Animals In-fancy, Odd animal relationships

Who says dogs and cats don't get



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

along? In this adorable photo-illustrated book, three white Bengal tiger cubs are adopted by a golden retriever, Isabella, after being abandoned by their mother. Isabella is still nursing her own puppies when the tiger cubs are introduced. She accepts them as her own and even her puppies play with them. This is a delightful, feel-good book about a wonderfully quirky relationship.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.

Fiction

The Hat that Wore Clara B.

By: Melanie Turner-Denstaedt

Illus. Frank Morrison
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009
ISBN: 9780374327941

Curriculum: History; Religion; Easy Readers

For Clara B. church on Sunday usually means spending her time coloring and eating the "be-patient mints". Except for the third Sunday of each month, on those days, the custom of her African-American Baptist Church is to hold 'Mother's Sunday', honoring the older women of the congregation. On 'Mother's Sunday' all the women dress in their best, crispest white dresses and white gloves. The women all gather and sit in the first pews at church. But the best part for Clara is all those big, colorful hats that the women wear.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark
Greenwood Elementary



Georgia Rises : a Day in the Life of Georgia O'Keeffe

By: Kathryn Lasky

Illus. by: Ora Eitan
Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2009
ISBN: 9780374325299

Curriculum: Georgia O'Keeffe, 1887-1986; Painting; Deserts; Artists

"Hurry up, the lavender is coming." Waking before dawn, artist Georgia O'Keeffe rises to fill her senses with the colors and fragrance of her desert home. The black wings of a raven, a silver slice of moon, a gleaming bone, shifting shadows and hues catch



and capture her artist's eye setting her imagination to work.

The minimalist color-infused paintings reflect the simplicity and focus of O'Keeffe's later life. O'Keeffe's ideas about several paintings done in different years are condensed into one day imagining how she incorporated her experiences into her unique artistic expressions. A great introduction to this important American artist.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Emma Dilemma and the Camping Nanny

By: Patricia Hermes

Marshall Cavendish, 2009
ISBN: 9780761455349

Curriculum: Families; Nannies; Jealousy; Friendship

In the middle of the night Emma comes up with a plan to get the attention of Annie back from her boyfriend, Bo. Since it is the middle of the night she doesn't have time to check in with her older brother Tim who always thinks of the consequences of Emma's plans for her. When the plan goes awry, as most of Emma's plans do, she starts to see that Annie has room to love both Emma and Bo and at school, Luisa can be friends with both Emma, her best friend since forever, and Kate, her new dance school friend.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Nonfiction

Introducing Dinosaurs: Maisasaura

By: Susan N. Grey
Illus. by: Robert



Squier
Child's World, 2009
ISBN: 9781602532397
Curriculum: Science; Dinosaurs

This is an excellent introduction to one type of Midwestern omnivore dinosaur. It is an easy read, clear and functional; a solid source for a fourth grader's non-fiction book report or research paper. It reads like a 'A day in the life of...' type book; comprising of where *Maiasaura* lived, what it looked like, what it ate, how it was raised and how it reproduced. Each page is comprised of 4-5 sentences that are direct and to the point. New vocabulary is highlighted and clearly defined and each page includes clarifying points or bibliographic information. The over-all feel of the context is 'concise'.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark
Greenwood Elem.

Racecars

By: Sean McCollum

Capstone Press, 2010
ISBN: 9781429634298

Curriculum: Automobiles; Racing

Since the day the second car was built, people have been racing each other. Stock cars, dragsters, and open-wheelers each have their own distinctive features, fan following, and history. This action-packed and informative volume in the *Velocity* series is filled with descriptions of many facets of the sport. It also utilizes attractive photos and interesting charts that will draw in both racing enthusiasts and those just starting to learn about it. Get ready for some high speed learning and fun!

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.



Awesome Animal Science Projects

By: Ann Benbow and
Colin Mably

Enslow Publishers,
2009

ISBN: 9780766031487

*Curriculum: Animals - experiments;
Zoology projects*

Ever wanted to know if earthworms are attracted to light or what body parts all insects have? With a few simple supplies, patience, and time to observe, budding scientists can try to find the answers to these questions and more. This volume in the *Real Life Science Experiments* series takes readers step by step through various investigations of animals' features and behaviors. In addition to the experiment, other facts and explanations for possible results, as well as questions for further thought are provided. Young scientists will enjoy the independence they can have learning about the natural world around them through these fun science projects.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.

A Kid's Guide to Latino History.

By: Valerie Petrillo

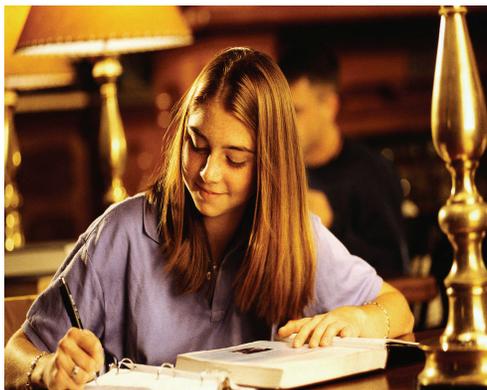
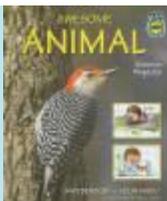
Illus by: Gail Rat-
tray

Chicago Review Press, 2009

ISBN: 9781556527715

*Curriculum: Hispanic Americans His-
tory and Culture; Juvenile Litera-
ture; Social Studies; Folktales; Arts
and Crafts*

With more than 50 fun, hands-on activities, this book covers the history and culture of several Latin American and Caribbean countries, such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba,

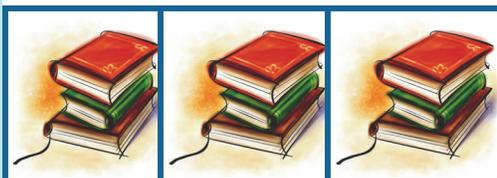


Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Dominican Republic, among others. It also mentions how immigrants from Latin American countries have brought their culture and have made significant contributions to American culture and society. The book, although written for kids, is also an excellent resource for teachers to use when studying and celebrating the contributions of Latinos throughout the year.

Reviewed by: Dr. Carmen Sanjurjo
Alumni



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Fiction

Boy Trouble the Complicated Life of Claudia Cristina Cortez

By: Diana G Gallagher

Illus. by Brann Garvey
Stone Arch Books, 2010
ISBN: 9781434215765

Curriculum: Middle School; Dating; Friendships

In another book in this series of humorous first-person narratives Claudia continues to give us glimpses into her life as a 7th grader. We learn about her 'crazy mad secret crush on Brad Turino, gorgeous sports star and super nice guy'. Claudia is excited, but nervous when Brad asks her for help on a writing assignment. But, to cloudy up life, the cute new boy Rusty Alvarez asks her out on her first date, she doesn't know what to do.

With the small border illustrations and bouncing fonts this book will hook young readers. The added glossary and discussion questions make it easy for teachers to use for reading assignments.

Reviewed by: Megan McQuinn
Howell K-8

Brushing Mom's Hair

By: Andrea Cheng
Wordsong, 2009
ISBN: 9781590785997

Curriculum: Novels in verse; Cancer; School; Mothers and daughters

Coping with the news that her



mother has breast cancer, 15 year-old Ann struggles with the physical, emotional and social changes that take place for both her and her mom. The slightest house repair overlooked, the manipulation of chores to be done by other family members and who to look towards for support leave Ann wondering if she too will have the cancer gene, if it will be one day her life in disrepair all over again. Closing with a hope filled view of the future, this Andrea Chang read will inspire readers who face the disease within their family or know someone who is struggling with it. Created in a series of poems accentuated with beautiful woodblock artwork it is a beautiful, gentle read.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow

By: James Rollins
HarperCollins, 2009
ISBN: 9780061473807

Curriculum: Time Travel; Mayans; Romans; Pyramids

Jake's parents were archaeologists who were lost on an expedition. Jack and his sister are determined to find out what happened to them. They go to a museum with artifacts that their parents discovered. Through their two magic necklaces they travel back in time to an earlier world. They meet a Mayan girl and a Roman boy whose families adopt them and try to help. The siblings use their knowledge of modern science to help figure out the mystery of the Skull King and help to save the village of their new friends. They don't find any answers about their parents, but do find new clues. As they find themselves back in the present; the mystery continues.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns



Place Bridge Academy

Into the Volcano

By: Don Wood
Blue Sky Press, 2008
ISBN: 0439726719

Curriculum: Graphic Novel; Adventure; Family; Volcanoes

Duffy and Sumo are brothers. They are sent on an unexpected vacation by their father to visit their Aunt Lulu. They think something is up, and they are sure of it when they are told they will be going on an expedition into a live volcano. There is a mystery regarding their mother and why Aunt Lulu really wants them there. The pictures in this graphic novel take the reader into the heart of the volcano. There are unusual characters and dangerous situations. When Duffy is injured it's up to the timid Sumo to gather his courage and save him. This story is a wild ride from beginning to end.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Wild Things

By: Clay Carmichael
Illus. by: Clay Carmichael
Front Street, 2009
ISBN: 978159786277

Curriculum: Family life; Self-reliance; Trust; Orphans; Uncles; Sculptors; Cats; Human-animal relationships

Having grown up with no father and an irresponsible mother, when eleven-year-old Zoë goes to live with her reclusive Uncle Henry, she figures it's just another short stop along the road. Surprisingly, Sugar Hill, North Carolina, proves to be full of adventure, mystery, and family secrets. Told through Zoë's eyes with alter-



nating chapters from a feral cat's perspective of the events, this heart-warming story investigates themes of trust, family, friendship and heroism.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Baseball Great

By: Tim Green
HarperCollins, 2009

ISBN:
9780061626869

Curriculum: Sports; Baseball; Steroids; Conduct of life

Josh loves to play baseball and not only that, he is very good at it. He is planning on playing for his middle school team until he is recruited by Rocky Valentine's youth championship team, the Titans. The Titans play a different brand of ball and Josh isn't sure he really likes what he sees. But the middle school team isn't speaking to him since he quit and his dad is pushing hard for him to have the opportunities he never had. Tim Green writes some of the best sports books for middle school kids on the market today.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Spanish!

En busca del río sagrado - Las fuentes del Nilo
(Searching For the Sacred River - Nile River Sources)



By: Philippe Nessmann
Bambú, 2008

ISBN: 9788483430491

Curriculum: Adventure; Exploration; Nile River sources

This is a historical novel partly based on diaries from two British explorers, Burton and Speke, where they re-recorded their struggles, conflicts and adventures while searching for the sources of the Nile River around the mid 19th century. While Burton and Speke started as a team, as their first attempt to meet their objective fails, Speke is determined and leads a successful second expedition. Burton challenges him in an attempt to discredit him, but his efforts are frustrated by Speke's sudden death.

A documentary section provides helpful geographical and biographical information that gives historical perspective to the action. The excellent narration depicting extraordinary adventures makes this book a page turner while informing about European exploration of Africa.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

Nonfiction

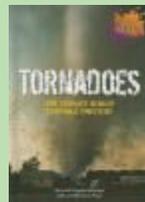
Tornadoes: the science behind terrible twisters

By: Alvin and Virginia Silverstein and Laura Silverstein Nunn

Enslow, 2010

ISBN: 9780766029767

Curriculum: Weather; Tornadoes; Water cycle; Safety



Readers are propelled into the science of tornadoes starting with the devastating 2007 storm that destroyed nearly all of Greensburg, Kansas. In addition to weather, the water cycle and the components that can result in a tornado, students will learn the etymology of the word tornado, why storm clouds are dark and why tornadoes are more common in tornado alley. Colorful inserts, diagrams and photos add to the appeal of the informative text.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

A Native American Thought of it: Amazing Inventions and Innovations

By: Rocky Landon

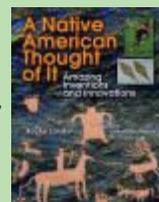
Annick Press, 2008

ISBN: 9781554511556

Curriculum: Indians of North America; Science; Inventions

A first person introduction by an Ojibwa band member invites readers to "explore this book of innovations developed by Native peoples in North America." Innovations in shelter, hunting, fishing, foods, clothing, medicine and healing, transportation, communication, games and sports, and war and peace are outlined. Copious photos and drawings support the text. The format is easy to follow, utilizing various text backgrounds and inserts. This is an excellent introduction to the myriad inventions developed by Native peoples.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8



Fiction

Touch

By: Francine Prose

HarperCollins, 2009.

ISBN: 9780061375170

Curriculum: Coming of age, Friendships, Family problems

Maise Willard didn't have enough to handle in adapting to two new step-parents; she now faces the fact that her psychotherapist step-mom is suing her three best friends. Being away for a year at her mom's house, Maise experienced immediate and robust pubescent development. She returns to find these three friends, who happen to be boys, amazed and enthralled with her development as well. In overcoming this new strangeness between them, Maise finds comfort with Shakes, who is willing to work at continuing the friendship that they have always had. Friendship quickly grows into the first experiences of love but once rumors spread that Maise is open to having these same experiences with anyone for a little money on the side every aspect of her life becomes chaotic. She becomes unclear about what really happened one day in the back of the school bus that she now needs to recount in court. *Touch* is a quick read that will interest most HS readers, especially girls, trying to understand the crudeness of love and the rumor mill.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton

South H.S.

Immortal

By: Gillian Shields

Katherine Tegen Books:
2009

ISBN: 978-0061375804



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Curriculum: Boarding school; Supernatural; Witches; Love

When Evie is accepted on scholarship to Wyldcliffe Abbey School for Girls, she soon finds that the halls are cloaked in mystery. Evie discovers eventually that her ancestors were more than just neighboring farm dwellers; Sebastian, the boy she sneaks out to meet every night, holds a dark secret in his heart; and the necklace her grandmother gave her is more than just a unique trinket. This gothic romance offers a romantic interest who is immortal but NOT because he's a vampire. The mystery and romance keep the reader completely absorbed. These pages contain some real magic!

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola

TJ H.S.

Love You Hate You Miss You

By: Elizabeth Scott

HarperTeen, 2009

ISBN: 9780061122835

Curriculum: Guilt; Death; Self-esteem; Friendship; Binge drinking

The story begins with Amy being released from rehab after the death of her best friend, Julia. Through letters to Julia and narrative, the reader is drawn into Amy's guilt, loneliness, and anger. As she re-enters her home, where she has always felt like an intruder, and school, where she sees blame and accusation in her peers' eyes, we learn the details of the tragic event. This story, both painful and hopeful, will appeal to HS girls but the message deals with emotional issues rather than dangerous behaviors.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.

The Real Real

By: Emma McLaughlin & Nicola Kraus



HarperTeen, 2009

ISBN: 9780061720406

Curriculum: High school; Reality television; Friendship; Conduct

Reality TV hits the Hamptons as Jesse, an average teen, gets chosen with 5 other teens from her school to participate in this documented and staged look at the "everyday life" of glamorous teens. Trouble ensues when Jesse gets caught up in the gossip and backstabbing associated with the show. Although Jesse is the cause of most of her troubles, she is a realistic and mostly likeable and sympathetic character who will appeal to the young HS girl. Teens who enjoy reality shows will appreciate the back-stage look.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.

Marcelo in the Real World

By: Francisco X. Stork

Arthur A. Levine, 2009

ISBN: 9780545054744

Curriculum: Autism; Asperger's syndrome; Interpersonal relationships

Seventeen-year-old Marcelo, a young man with Asperger's syndrome, functions on the high end of the autistic spectrum. Challenged to enter the "real world" by working in the mailroom of his father's corporate law firm, he is dismissed by most of his co-workers because of his unusual affect. However, Marcelo's first person account reveals a degree of sensitivity and intelligence that belies his critics. Seeking the truth behind a photograph of a disfigured young girl propels him into a world of injustice, betrayal, romance, competition and redemption. This is a compelling read with a refreshing, rare perspective.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

