

# The Review Crew



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

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

Volume 10 Number 1

September 2013

## Fiction

### I Love Ewe: An Ode to Animal Moms

Written and illus. by: Aaron Zenz

Bloomsbury Kids, 2013

ISBN: 9780802728265

*Curriculum: Animals; Animal moms; Stories in rhyme*

Did you know animal mommies have special names too? Animal moms can be cows, hens, nannies, vixens, mares, and many more. This book highlights all the various names animals have for their moms. There are many familiar animals, such as a cow or hen, but more unknown moms are shown as well, like a jenny and peahen.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



### Jasper John Dooley: Left Behind

By: Caroline Adderson

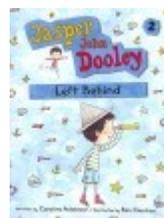
Illus. by: Ben Clanton

Kids Can Press, 2013

ISBN: 9781554535798

*Curriculum: Grandmothers; Family relationships; School*

Jasper John Dooley's beloved grandmother



Nan is going on a cruise, leaving him feeling bereft. To fill up the time, he and his neighbor Ori make their own cruise ship, get into big trouble at school doing Very Dangerous Things, and try to keep track of the class pet, Hammy. The relationship between Jasper and Nan is wonderfully tender, and his adventures are typical of an active, curious seven-year-old. Simple black and white illustrations add to a humorous book that would be a great read-aloud.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8

## Nonfiction

### New Year Traditions around the World

By: Ann Malaspina

Illus. by: Elisa Chavarri

Child's World, 2013

ISBN: 9781614734291

*Curriculum: Traditions and customs; Multicultural studies; New Year's Day*

This title explores the New Year's customs of countries around the world including Thailand where people celebrate *Songkran* with big water fights to cleanse their soul. In Haiti, New Year's Day is also their country's independence day so their



### Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

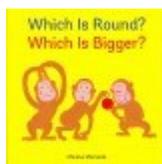
### What we do!

- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

celebration has extra meaning. Traditions of seven other countries are also discussed. Titles in the *World Traditions* series provide basic but interesting insight for young students. An activity is included at the end of each book (some rather involved). A small list of books and a publisher-sponsored website is provided.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**Which Is Round?**  
**Which is Bigger?**



Written and illus. by:  
Mineko Mamada

Kids Can Press, 2013

ISBN: 9781554539734

*Curriculum: Perspective; Observation; Critical thinking*

Which one is round, an apple or an armadillo? Why an apple of course! Or is it? With playful illustrations, this book helps readers get a new perspective, make observations, and push critical thinking skills when dealing with what seems like the obvious answer.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



**The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!**

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

**Fiction**

**A Dash of Magic**

By: Kathryn Littlewood

Katherine Tegen Books, 2013

ISBN: 97810062084293

*Curriculum: Baking; Family; Magic; Contests; France*

In this second *Bliss* novel Rosemary Bliss is desperate to regain possession of the family's magical *Cookery Booke* from her wicked Aunt Lily. To do this, Rose must beat her aunt at a week-long baking contest in France. How can she defeat her aunt who cheats using a magical ingredient? Join Rose and her family as they try to attain their special ingredients, beat Aunt Lily, and win back the family *Cookery Booke*. With talking cats, spying mice, and a delightful family, upper elementary/MS Bliss family fans will eagerly await the next installment.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.



**The Granddaughter Necklace**

By: Sharon Dennis Wyeth

Illus. by: Bagram Ibatoulline

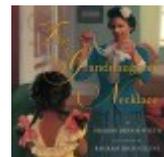
Arthur A. Levine Books, 2013

ISBN: 9780545081252

*Curriculum: Mothers and daughters; Necklaces; Storytelling*

As a girl, Sharon would admire the way a necklace of crystal beads shone in the lamplight as it hung around her mother's neck. While beautiful, the real value of the necklace lay in the stories that were handed down along with the necklace to each girl in the family. Sharon traces her lineage through the stories as she learns the history of each successive ancestress dating back to her great-great-great grandmother, who came to America from Ireland in 1861. This fascinating title with its emphasis on storytelling is enhanced by the beautiful, warm, detailed illustrations that capture the closeness and sense of familial pride and bonding.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.



**Discovered**

By: Wendy Orr

Illus. By: Patricia Castelao

Holt, 2013

ISBN: 9780805095050

*Curriculum: Pet rescue; Working dogs*

Kate and Julian are sure that they need a puppy to complete their lives. The beagle puppies in the ad are the cutest things ever and so they adopt Bella, the most energetic of the litter. Kate and Julian put up with Bella for over a year but she is just too



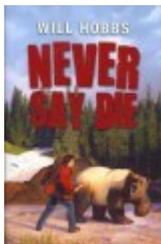
much for them and in the end they give her to the Rainbow Street Shelter. At the same time Matt and his dog Sherlock have been working at airport security for nine years and now Sherlock is retiring. Matt is sad.

But his son has a friend at Rainbow Street Shelter who tells him about Bella, the very smart, very energetic pup who just might make a perfect sniffer dog.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Early College

### **Never Say Die**

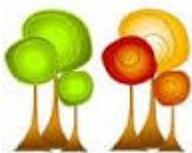
By: Will Hobbs  
Harper, 2013  
ISBN:  
9780061708787



*Curriculum: Global warming; Inuit hunters; Adventure*

Will is out to get a caribou so his grandfather can have some of the easily digested organ meat to help him combat the sickness that has overtaken him. He is almost to the river when he is attacked by a monstrous "Grolar Bear"; part grizzly bear, part polar bear. He loses the meat but makes it home to receive a letter from a half-brother he has never met. Ryan is coming north and wants Will to run the famous Firth River with him, looking for the huge herds of caribou. This is a great adventure as well as an interesting treatise on the issue of global warming from the view of the native hunters of the far north.

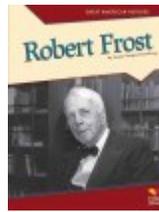
Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Early College



## **Nonfiction**

### **Robert Frost**

By: Susan Temple  
Kesselring  
Abdo, 2013  
ISBN:  
9781617837173



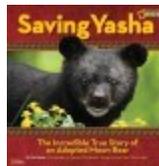
*Curriculum: Robert Frost; Poetry; American authors*

Robert Frost's life is explored beginning with his childhood in California. Additional chapters focus on his adult life and detail his various jobs and his writing. Highlighted is Frost's 1961 reading at JFK's inauguration. Sidebars, illustrations, a chart, and a timeline add additional support to the text. Addressing the need for CCSS-focused nonfiction books, titles in the *Core Library* series provide 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders primary source material as well as activity and writing prompts which ask them to think critically about what they've learned. A list of books and publisher-sponsored websites are provided for additional resources.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### **Saving Yasha: The Incredible True Story of an Adopted Moon Bear**

By: Lia Kvatum  
National Geographic,  
2012  
ISBN: 9781426310515



*Curriculum: Black Bear; Animal Rescue*

When a young moon bear is captured by poachers, he and two siblings are rescued, raised and finally released back into the wild by two

Russian scientists. This delightful photo-rich offering documents their habitat, growth and release. Notes from the scientists provide background on the story. Websites include a video of the cubs and details about why this species is endangered.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Alumni

### **Beyond the Solar System: Exploring Galaxies, Black Holes, Alien Planets, and More**



By: Mary Kay Carson  
Chicago Review Press, 2013  
ISBN: 9781613745441

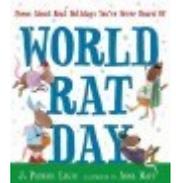
*Curriculum: Astronomy*

The history of the exploration of the universe is told here, from early constellations to today's exoplanets. As the book moves through time, it examines significant discoveries and their discoverers. Copernicus, Sir Isaac Newton, Einstein, and Edwin Hubble are just a few of the highlighted scientists. Ideas for activities and models include how to use your hand to locate objects in the sky and splitting white light with a CD. This is a fascinating, comprehensive survey for the upper elementary student of the stars.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Waller K-8

### **World Rat Day: Poems About Real Holidays You've Never Heard of**

By: J. Patrick Lewis  
Illus. by: Anna Raff  
Candlewick, 2013  
ISBN: 9780763654023



*Curriculum: Holidays; Poetry*

Twenty-two new holidays featuring ani-

imals are presented in this funny book. A concrete poem for May 29 displays the flamingo as a "long coooool pink drink", while "Dragon Appreciation Day" explains table manners dragons should exhibit, including not talking with people in your mouth. Illustrations in watercolor wash give the animals wonderful expressions with silly details. Use this hilarious book to inspire students to come up with their own holiday poems.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Waller K-8

### Louisa May's Battle

By: Kathleen Krull  
Illus. by: Carlyn Beccia  
Walker Books, 2013



*Curriculum: Louisa May  
Alcott; Civil War*

When Louisa May was thirty and a not very successful writer, she answered an advertisement for Civil War nurses. The ad said that those who applied had to be thirty, very plain and unmarried. The work was hard and after three weeks Louisa became so ill she had to be taken home by her family. Because her family was so poor Louisa still tried to make some money. Once again she began to write. This time she wrote the stories of the men and boys she had nursed. At last she had found her style and her books were in high demand. Readers old and young can find something of importance in this picture book.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Early College



## Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

## Fiction

### The Cydonian Pyramid

By: Pete Hautman  
Candlewick Press, 2013  
ISBN: 9780763654047



*Curriculum: Time travel;  
Relationships; Survival*

Lah Lia has been raised as a Pure Girl whose purpose is to be sacrificed for the sins of their society. The world of disco allows people to travel through time and space. Tuck arrives in Lia's world just in time to save her life. The two continue to travel in an attempt to understand their futures. This is book two in a series, and one must read *The Obsidian Blade* in order to understand this one. Science fiction readers will enjoy this series.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### Fyre

By: Angie Sage  
Katherine Tecen  
Books, 2013  
ISBN: 9780061242458



*Curriculum: Magic; Alchemy; Loyalty;  
Relationships*

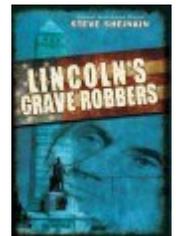
The story of Septimus, Jenna and Beetle come to a satisfying conclusion in the Magykal series. Jenna is soon to be crowned queen. Septimus continues his wizard apprentice training and must spend a month with the Alchemist. Beetle is the Chief Hermetic scribe for the kingdom. The three are still fast friends as they try to discover how to relight the Alchemic Fyre in order to destroy the evil that wants to take over the land. There are adventures, trickery, magic and some humor that readers have come to expect with this series. One must read the Magykal series from the beginning in order to understand everything that takes place in this last book.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

## Nonfiction

### Lincoln's Grave Robbers

By: Steve Sheinkin  
Scholastic, 2012  
ISBN:  
9780545405720



*Curriculum: Abraham  
Lincoln; True crime; Counterfeiting;  
Grave robbers*

Set in 1875, this true-crime story tells of a notorious gang of counterfeiters who hatch a bizarre plan to secure the release of their imprisoned leader by stealing the body of Abraham Lincoln and holding it ransom. This face-paced, action-packed thriller will keep readers in suspense right up to the climactic ending at Lincoln's tomb where grave robbers and secret service agents battle it out. Offer to readers who enjoyed

Swanson's (2009) *Chasing Lincoln's Killer*.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco  
Skinner M.S.

**Wild Boy - The Real  
Life of the Savage  
of Aveyron**

By: Mary Losure  
Illus. by: Timothy  
Basil Ering  
Candlewick Press,  
2013



ISBN: 9780763656690

*Curriculum: Abandoned children*  
Losure (The Fairy Ring, 2012) has done it again with this intriguing tale of a boy of about twelve who was discovered living naked and wild in a forest near Aveyron, France in the late 1700's. Woodsmen brought him to town and put him on display as a curiosity. Over the years, various professionals studied him, and tried to educate him. Although he never learned to speak, he did develop strong attachments to certain people - notably the widowed housekeeper, Madame Guérin, with whom he lived out his days. Beautiful charcoal drawings hauntingly depict the struggles and joys of the boy with the mysterious past. This is an excellent choice for young readers.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco  
Skinner M.S.



## Young Adults Deserve the Best!

## Fiction

**Maggot Moon**

By: Sally Gardner  
Candlewick Press, 2012  
ISBN: 9780763665531

*Curriculum: Oppression  
(Psychology); Friendship;  
Courage; Dystopias*



Unlike most of the "train-track thinkers", adolescent Standish Treadwell sees things differently. Failing in school, targeted by a sadistic teacher and classmates, he struggles with his grandfather to survive the Fascist regime of "the motherland". Uncovering an insidious plot to fake a moon landing that will cement the motherland's prominence on the world stage, he infiltrates the organization to expose the ruse. Seen through the eyes of an unlikely hero, fans of dystopia will find this dark vision a compelling read.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Alumni

## Review Crew Staff

**Committee Chair:**

**Nancy Lucas**  
JFK High School

**Secretary:**

**Sudi Stodola**  
Ed. Tech

**Editor:**

**Chris Coble**  
CEC Early College

**Reviewers:**

**Karen Burns**  
Place Bridge Academy

**Michelle Jensen**  
TJ High School

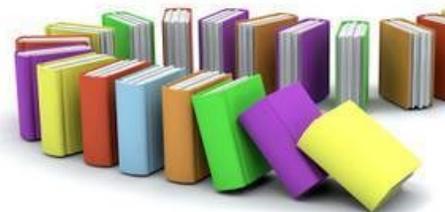
**Peggy Obert**  
Waller ECE—8

**Janice Pacheco**  
Skinner Middle School

**Leah Rounds**  
Alumni

**From ETLs:**

**Dave Sanger**  
**Karen Shannon**  
**Antonio Nicotera**



### Being Henry David

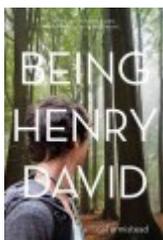
By: Cal Armistead

Albert Whitman & Company, 2013

ISBN:

9780807506158

*Curriculum: Amnesia; Street children; Henry David Thoreau; Runaways; Family problems; Guilt; New York; Massachusetts*



Awaking in Penn Station with nothing but the clothes on his back, a worn copy of *Walden* by Thoreau, and no memories, a teen realizes he must be on the run. Taking a cue from the book, he christens himself Henry David. For his own safety, Henry knows he must get out of the city. Walden Pond seems like a logical refuge. Henry camps in the woods and hides in the local high school as he tries to sort out his identity. As memories slowly return, Henry realizes he must either face his past or continue running. *Being Henry David* is an introspective coming of age look at finding oneself and confronting one's mistakes.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.

## Nonfiction

### Relish: My life in the kitchen

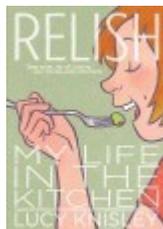
By: Lucy Knisley

First Second, 2013

ISBN:

9781596436237

*Curriculum: Gourmets; Cartoonist; Cooking; Eating cus-*



*toms; Food*

Cartoonist Lucy Knisley writes about the major events of her life as they are marked by the impact of food and cooking. Good food has always played an essential part in her life. From Manhattan and Paris to a farm in Upstate New York, from the finest restaurants to McDonald's, Knisley leads her audience on a culinary journey that will leave them culling their memories for similar experiences. Mouthwateringly delightful, this humorous look into the life of a 'foodie' is difficult to resist. Knisley notes, "When we eat, we take in more than just sustenance."

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.

"The best thing for being sad," replied Merlin, beginning to puff and blow, "is to learn something. That's the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about

you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then — to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the only thing for you. Look what a lot of things there are to learn."

T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*