



Office of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

UCNJ Inclusive Books Program -- Books for All Elementary Libraries

FORM FOR DONATED BOOKS

This is a formal request for donated library books procured through grants or donations to be included in the school library for circulation. If there is only one donated book, the lines below will be completed. Otherwise, attachments will be provided to this form.

Note for Librarians: If purchased from a vendor, print out the detailed list with reviews, annotations, etc. If not purchased through a vendor, the librarian will make a spreadsheet with the following information if there is more than one book..

- 1. Grade Level(s): _____ or See Attached List
- 2. Title(s)/ Author(s): _____ or See Attached List
- 3. Genre: _____ or See Attached List
- 4. Format (e.g., graphic novels, chapter bks, etc.): _____ or See Attached List

- 5. Content/Summary (below): _____ or See Attached

* * * * *

The librarian signing the form below certifies that the books meet the criteria listed in Board Policy 2530.and that the book/books have been reviewed using professional resources endorsed by AASL, SLJ, and NJASL including but not limited to the following:

- Mackin Curator
- Junior Library Guild
- School Library Journal
- Various book awards, e.g., Newberry, Caldecott, JLG Gold Standard, etc.
- Horn Book
- Kirkus Review
- We Need Diverse Books

Melissa Antolovich	<i>M. Antolovich</i>	4/30/2024
_____ Librarian	_____ Signature	_____ Date
<i>Sandra Paul</i>	<i>Sandra Paul</i>	<i>4/30/24</i>
_____ Supervisor/Director*	_____ Signature	_____ Date

*The Director will inform the building administration of the book(s) being added to the school's library once s/he has approved the form.

The book(s) on this form may not be added until they have received Board of Education approval.

Available Titles

Title	Series Title	Author	ISBN	Publisher	DOP	Dewey	Genre	RL	Gr/IL	Product	Edition	Price	Qty	Ext Price	Priority
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THE 47 PEOPLE
YOU'LL MEET IN
MIDDLE SCHOOL

MAHONEY,
KRISTIN

9781524765163

YEARLING

2020 FIC

Realistic

4.9

4-7

MackinBound

\$17.12

1

\$17.12

A

Tags: Diverse Family Structure

Annotation: Middle grader Augustus, who just started sixth grade, decides to write a letter to her little sister Lou telling her what to expect in middle school. She has been so wrapped up with school, she hasn't spent much time with Lou and doesn't realize Lou is struggling with their parents' divorce. Augusta describes the ups and downs of middle school, her experiences with teachers, friends, and bullies, the transition to a new building, and most important, how to find a tribe of friends who truly get you.

Review Sources: Kirkus Review - 06/01/2019, Publishers Weekly Starred - 06/10/2019, Booklist - 07/01/2019, School Library Journal - August 2019

Full Text Reviews:

- School Library Journal August 2019 Gr 4-6—An insightful and humorous tale of transitioning from elementary to middle school. Gus, short for Augusta, is a brand-new sixth grader at Meridian Middle School. Not only does she have to start her new school with glasses even though her parents promised she could have contacts, but her BFF has to go to a completely different school. The book is written as a letter to Gus's fourth grader sister who keeps asking about middle school but is ignored while Gus deals with her own issues. As readers follow Gus in her journey navigating the ins and outs of middle school and her parents' divorce, they are introduced to people, both friends and enemies, she meets along the way. Old acquaintances turn into good friends, bad and good teachers' classrooms are navigated, and Mahoney explores physical assault and consent through the inclusion of an older student who likes to "goose" girls' behinds. The book never really mentions any character's physical traits beyond their hair color and style. VERDICT Smart, funny, and well paced, this is a solid purchase for any older elementary or middle school collection.—Sara Brunkhorst, Glenview Public Library, IL Copyright 2019 Reed Business Information.
- Booklist July 2019 Grades 4-7 - Middle school is a strange time, and Augusta (or Gus) isn't sure how to handle it all. Her parents are getting divorced, her best friend is going to a different school, a group of mean girls is teasing her, and she's not sure who would make a good new friend. Through chapters conceptualized as a list of letters to a younger sister, Gus tells about all the people she's met in school, chronicling her journey of awkward moments, new friendships, emotional turmoil, and that middle-grade feeling of wondering what others think of you and not being sure who you are. Mahoney writes with painful accuracy of what it's like to experience the tween years, and her description of middle school will have kids nodding their heads in agreement. As Gus finds her voice and her village, the story reminds readers that they aren't alone in navigating the wild waters of middle school. A pitch-perfect must-read for tweens seeking comfort about growing up.
- Publishers Weekly Starred June 2019 On the last day of school before Thanksgiving break, sixth-grader Augusta begins a letter to her younger sister, Louisa, whose curiosity about middle school life usually receives an "it's fine, whatever." The missive tells Lou what to expect ("Lockers are not as exciting as everyone thinks they'll be"), and subsequent chapters detail the people one meets in middle school via Gus's experience during her first months. (Entries include "the huggers," "the scary teacher," and "the friend you don't recognize because she turned into a whole new person over the summer.") Gus's best friend is loving life at a different school, but Gus struggles to find pals who truly get her, deal with a group of bullying girls, and adjust to her parents' divorce. The narrative reveals Gus to be a sympathetically flawed character whose growth is realistically wrought as she seeks to find herself and her village, and secondary characters are fully fleshed out as well. Mahoney authentically captures the universal indignities of middle school, the challenges of self-discovery, and the joy of making true friends. Ages 8-12. (Aug.)
- Kirkus Review June 2019 Augusta is starting middle school—and dealing with her parents' recent divorce as well. Gus tells the story as a letter for her younger sister, Louisa, to read later. This useful narrative tool also enables her to gradually discover and reveal that Lou is having lots of trouble coping with the parental breakup too even though Gus is initially too wrapped up in herself to notice. Gus encounters lots of new people in middle school, as well as some whom she previously knew but who have remade themselves in not-always-pleasant ways. Among these are her former BFF, Layla, who's attending a different school, and the previously annoyingly clingy Marcy, who has now attached herself to a couple of unkind and remarkably condescending other girls. From the Binaca breath spray-addicted Mr. Smeed to Nick, whom Gus has known for years but who is now becoming interesting in a novel, unexpected way, characters are believably well drawn, as are the humiliations and the ultimate redemption that Gus discovers. Some of the episodes, like Gus' Binaca-based gambling pool, are laugh-out-loud funny. While Mahoney's road map to middle school won't become required reading, it's a fine and

highly recommended travelogue for those just entering that uncharted territory. Gus presents white on the cover; though she's surrounded by a multiracial cast there, descriptors within are few. Amusing, enlightening, and ideal for a final read just before middle school. (Fiction. 9-12)

★AVEN GREEN
SLEUTHING MACHINE

AVEN BOWLING, GREEN : 1 DUSTI
STERLING CHILDRENS BOOKS
9781454941804
2021 FIC
Realistic 4.4 1-4 MackinBound
\$15.39 1 \$15.39 A

Tags: Adoption/Foster Care, Diverse Family Structure, High Interest, People with Disabilities

Annotation: Aven Green, a girl who has missing arms, doesn't let her disability stop her from being a sleuth. Her latest case, though, may be bigger than even she can handle, because it is not just one case but two—first, her teacher's lunch bag has gone missing, and then her great-grandma's dog goes missing, too. Includes a glossary of sleuthing words.

Review Sources: Publishers Weekly - 03/01/2021, School Library Journal Starred - March 2021, Kirkus Review - 03/15/2021, Booklist - 03/15/2021

Full Text Reviews:

- Kirkus Review March 2021 Bowling introduces the outspoken, armless narrator of her life as a Cactus series to younger readers. Eight-year-old Aven Green doesn't need arms to be a good private investigator; her feet work just fine. In fact, all those extra arm cells went to her brain instead—at least, that's her hypothesis. So when somebody starts stealing food at school, she's on the case. But then her great-grandma's dog, Smitty, goes missing, and then new student Sujata arrives—looking mysteriously sad. Can Aven's super-powered brain solve three cases at the same time? The simple plot, peppered with humorous malapropisms and leaps of kid logic, is primarily a showcase for Aven's precocious personality. Witty, stubborn, and self-confident (Aven was shy once. It was on a Wednesday afternoon in kindergarten), Aven takes her disability in stride; her classmates are also accepting. She and her friends share rowdy and gleefully gross activities, complete with chopsticks, flatulence, and acrobatic stunts. Her (adoptive) parents are warmly supportive, but her long-suffering teacher is perhaps too much so; her remarkable tolerance for Aven's occasionally disruptive antics may raise some eyebrows. Perry's black-and-white cartoon illustrations energetically depict Aven's agile feet and mischievous grin. The tidy ending sets up another adventure; a list of Aven's sleuthing words is appended. Most characters, including Aven, appear to be White; Sujata is Indian American. A fun series opener with a feisty protagonist who'll keep readers on their toes. (Mystery. 6-9)
- Booklist March 2021 Grades 1-3 - "In this prequel featuring Bowling's armless sleuth, Aven (Momentous Events in the Life of a Cactus, 2017), who is navigating third grade while pursuing detective work on the side, finds herself tackling two perplexing problems at once, with her grandmother's dear dog going missing just as a lunch thief strikes her school. It's a lot to take on, but Aven, armed—or "footed," as she would say—with detecting tools and endless enthusiasm, is determined to crack the cases and bring the perpetrators to justice. She is an irrepressible and irresistible narrator, whether reflecting on life as someone born without arms or amicably interacting with her funny friends and family. Unapologetically smart and refreshingly confident in her abilities, this super-sleuth extraordinaire is a joy to tag along with."
- Publishers Weekly March 2021 In this prequel to Bowling's middle grade Life of a Cactus novels, eight-year-old Aven Green, who was born without arms, doesn't "solve mysteries like any old detective." When a mysterious culprit starts stealing lunches and cafeteria food at her Kansas elementary school, Aven eagerly decides to solve the case. But the mysteries continue piling up: her great-grandmother's dog, King Smith of Kansas City, or Smitty for short, goes missing, and a new girl named Sujata joins Aven's third grade class and inexplicably appears unhappy. As the food crimes persist and Smitty remains absent, Aven begins to feel overwhelmed. But with the help of her family and a new friend, Aven discovers that the cases just might be connected. Bowling centers earnest Aven's quirky wit, determination, and earnestness ("But you know one thing I've never read as being necessary to be a good P.I.? Having arms. That's what"), introducing an exuberant adoptee whose disability does not exist to serve the plot. Perry's b&w line illustrations feature supple-limbed, cartoon-style characters, including portrayals of Aven doing activities with her feet. Aven's candid voice ensures that this chapter book series starter will draw a young audience. Ages 6–9. Agent: Shannon Hassan, Marsal Lyon Literary. (Apr.)
- School Library Journal Starred March 2021 Gr 1–4—Bowling's beloved "Life of a Cactus" protagonist returns in a new series of chapter books that capture her life as third grader. Aven Green is a smart, lively, confident white girl who happened to be born without arms, a congenital condition called amelia. For Aven, having no arms hasn't stopped her from living life to the absolute max! Young readers will laugh aloud at Aven's funny reactions to queries about what happened to her arms (they were not scrubbed off in the car wash, eaten by iguanas in the Galapagos, pulled off in a game of tug of war, or flattened by a steamroller). They will be intrigued by the practical skills she has perfected, using her feet to brush her teeth, comb her hair, eat mint chocolate chip ice cream, and write about all of the mysteries she has solved with her trusty magnifying glass and sleuthing kit. With no arms, Aven says all those extra cells went straight to her brain, making her extra smart and, in her own words, "a sleuthing machine" who has been solving cases for a really long time—practically a whole month! Bowling's book features Perry's engaging pencil illustrations, short five- to seven-page chapters, explanations of potentially unfamiliar terms such as brain cell and acronyms, and a list of Aven's sleuthing words: culprit, alleged, hypothesis, and more. The author holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in education and infuses her writing with humor and empathy. VERDICT This chapter book companion to Bowling's well-loved middle grade series is a recommended purchase.—Cheryl Blevens, Cunningham Mem. Lib., Indiana State Univ. Copyright 2021 Reed Business Information.

BRILLIANT BEA RUDOLPH, SHAINA 9781433837418 MAGINATION 2021 E 3.5 PS-3 \$16.99 1 \$16.99 A Hardcover Trade

Tags: African/Black/African-American, Neurodiverse

Annotation: With help from Ms. Bloom and some new friends, Beatrice discovers that learning differently is not something to be afraid of, and that dyslexia does not define who she is.
Review Sources: Kirkus Review - 07/15/2021, School Library Journal - November 2021, Booklist - 12/01/2021, School Library Connection - November 2021

Full Text Reviews:

- Booklist December 2021 Grades K-3 - "Authors Vukadinovich and Rudolph are educators who have worked with students with language-based learning disabilities and with students with unique learning needs. Their experience comes through in this story of Beatrice, a smart, biracial girl with brown skin, dark curls, and round glasses, who feels left out because her dyslexia causes her to take longer than other kids to figure out her schoolwork. This makes her feel lonely and "stuckier than stuck." When a writing assignment looms, Bea's teacher gives her a tape recorder so the girl can record her story and more easily share it. Sweet illustrations offer glimpses into Bea's classroom and whimsical splashes of her imagination at work. The teacher's supportive actions are wonderful to see, but even better is how the tape recorder helps Bea connect with her classmates. Printed in a dyslexia-friendly font, this affirming story about finding your feet and your voice is a lovely confidence booster for young readers, especially those who may learn differently. Back matter includes an explanation of dyslexia, information for parents, and conversation starters."
- School Library Connection November 2021 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, dyslexia is defined as "a general term for disorders that involve difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters, and other symbols, but that do not affect general intelligence." Bea is dyslexic, but that doesn't mean she is not smart. She's an excellent storyteller, can speak well, and knows how to captivate an audience. She does face challenges with reading and writing, but thanks to a sensitive, caring teacher, she is not going to let dyslexia define who she is and what she can or can't do. This title tells a captivating and inspiring story of a brilliant individual who is ready to share who she is. A Reader's Note from Ellen B. Braaten, executive director of the Learning and Emotional Assessment Program at Massachusetts General Hospital and co-author of *Straight Talk About Psychological Testing for Kids* (Guilford Press 2003) and *Bright Kids Who Can't Keep Up* (Guilford Press 2014), provides some additional information about dyslexia at the end of the book. This is a wonderful picture book with a great message that could be used to talk about learning at the elementary level. It would also be a great book to use with middle school students to pair with any book about a character who faces day-to-day challenges with dyslexia, such as Lynda Mullaly Hunt's *Fish in a Tree* (Nancy Paulsen Books 2015) and Joan Bauer's *Close To Famous* (Puf­fin Books 2012). Overall this is an inspiring, hopeful, and relatable book for young readers. Constance Pappas RECOMMENDED
- School Library Journal November 2021 PreS-Gr 3—Dyslexia is hard for children and adults to understand. Do children with dyslexia have trouble reading fluently? Do they reverse their letters? Do they struggle with writing? The answer is "Sometimes." This book succeeds as a story about dyslexia not because the characters spout definitions of dyslexia, but rather because the story opens a window into the mind of one dyslexic child, Bea, and shows readers how adults can make a significant impact on the emotional state, and therefore the education, of children with learning differences. Although she is a great storyteller at home (a "real word slinger"), at school Bea usually feels stuck and finds reading and writing difficult because the words jump around the page. Her school experience is altered forever when her teacher, Ms. Bloom, tells her she has a "brilliant brain" and gives her a tape recorder for her stories. With that device, her imagination soars, the words flow, and she makes friends. The last, tacked-on page shows us that she grows up to be an author. The illustrations are wonderful, with a warm, brown tone throughout, and the characters have simple yet expressive faces. The back matter includes a note that defines dyslexia, provides symptoms to look for, and describes treatment possibilities. VERDICT A heartwarming story that will expand the understanding of dyslexia for children and adults.—Sally James, South Hillsborough Elem. Sch., CA Copyright 2021 Reed Business Information.
- Kirkus Review July 2021 A child with dyslexia gains confidence in herself. First-person text reveals at the outset that the narrator, Bea, is dyslexic. Appropriately, said text is set in a readable, sans-serif type to support dyslexic readers who might encounter her story, and she presents as a Black girl with big, red glasses, brown skin, and tightly curled black hair in Lee's bright and engaging cartoon-style illustrations. Bea struggles to complete her work, drifts into daydreams, and finds ways to avoid reading aloud. She's also fortunate to have a compassionate teacher, Ms. Bloom (who presents as White with lighter skin and cropped light-brown hair), who sees her challenges and offers accommodations. Rather than presenting Bea with common voice-to-text technological supports, Ms. Bloom gives her "some sort of ancient device" (a tape recorder), and Bea uses it to record stories that she tells aloud. Other kids become interested in her storytelling, and classmate Rudy (who presents as a White boy and who's shown interest in Bea in prior spreads) offers to illustrate her words. Bea's confidence gets a boost from this artistic collaboration and from others' responses to the comic book she and Rudy create. A flash-forward closing scene shows Bea as an adult reading a book she's authored to Ms. Bloom's newest crop of students. Backmatter offers further information about dyslexia for adult readers. (This book was reviewed digitally.) Affirming and helpful. (Picture book. 5-7)

THE CHANCE TO FLY TO FLY: 1 CHANCE STROKER, ALI 9781419743931 AMULET BOOKS 2021 FIC Realistic 4.7 4-8 \$15.80 1 \$15.80 A Hardcover Trade

Tags: People with Disabilities

Annotation: Theater-obsessed teen Nat Beacon pushes aside her fears and her family's overprotective warnings to audition for a community theater youth production of "Wicked" after her family moves from California to New Jersey. In spite of the fact that she uses a wheelchair, she makes it into the production and quickly forms a close-knit group of friends that includes handsome Malik Young, the male lead in the play. But navigating her new environment proves challenging and her worry about growing apart from her best friend Chloe, whom she left behind, leaves her with self-doubt that she'll need to overcome by opening night.

Review Sources: Kirkus Review - 03/01/2021, Publishers Weekly Starred - 04/19/2021, School Library Journal - May 2021

Full Text Reviews:

- School Library Journal May 2021 Gr 3-7—Thirteen-year-old Natalie Beacon, who is white and has used a wheelchair since she was little, isn't happy to be leaving behind her best friend and moving across the country for her mom's new job. Nat's parents are eager for her to adjust; her father has already found her a wheelchair-racing team, a sport she enjoyed in California. She spots a poster during practice announcing auditions for a young performer's version of the musical *Wicked*. Musicals are Nat's passion and performing is her professional dream. When she can't convince her parents to let her audition, Nat decides to secretly audition anyway and is thrilled to get a part, ultimately convincing her parents to let her participate. She instantly falls in with a group of theater geeks who become her best friends. But she experiences alienating challenges in the production: She is asked to only sing and not dance, which leaves her feeling "half cast," and then the bus for their weekend retreat doesn't have a wheelchair lift. When a theater fire cancels the production, it's up to Nat to convince her new friends that the show must go on. Written by Tony Award—winner Stroker, who uses a wheelchair, and Davidowitz, this fast-paced novel features an extensive and diverse cast of characters. The descriptive third-person narrative helps readers visualize the characters and the production, though the sheer number of characters may require some backtracking, and the depth of character development can be inconsistent. Seeing the obstacles Nat faces daily and watching her learn to advocate for herself may inspire readers to do the same. Serious scenes, like Nat's crush Malik discussing his experience as the only Black student in school, and learning why Nat uses a wheelchair, are poignant, as is Nat's evolving relationship with her parents. **VERDICT** Though the novel leans heavily on musical history and theatre terminology, young readers do not need a knowledge of musicals and theatre to enjoy this #OwnVoices novel. Young disabled performers will be excited to see representation, and all readers will be rooting for Nat.—Juliet Morefield, Multnomah County Lib., Portland, OR Copyright 2021 Reed Business Information.
- Publishers Weekly Starred April 2021. Tony Award-winning Broadway star Stroker and veteran author Davidowitz (Freefall) combine their talents in this resonant middle grade debut. White musical theater aficionado Nat Beacon, 13, has just moved from San Francisco to Saddle Stream, N.J., with her parents, leaving behind her lifelong best friend, Chloe Suarez. While wheelchair racer Nat misses the camaraderie of her former team, her soul-deep dream of performing onstage, in a role epitomizing acceptance and friendship, drives her to audition for a community theater youth production of *Wicked*. Despite initial reserve—due in part to her burgeoning independence and past accessibility issues—she's quickly absorbed into the cast, which includes handsome Malik Young, who has dark skin and locs, and whom she quickly develops feelings for; nurturing white dance captain Hudson, who is gay; outrageous white starlet Savannah Alexis; and sweet, multitalented Indian American athlete Rey Joshi. Navigating being onstage for the first time, Nat works with her new friends to translate obstacles into opportunities. Bolstered by realistic dialogue and Nat's engaging internal narrative, this endearing novel will entrance a new generation of theater lovers and charm older ones with its allusions to beloved shows. Ages 12–up. Agents (for Stroker): KMR Agency; (for Davidowitz) Hannah Mann, Writers House. (Apr.)
- Kirkus Review March 2021 An aspiring actor who uses a manual wheelchair is determined to land a part in a community theater production. Moving cross-country from California to New Jersey and leaving her best friend, Chloe, behind is hard enough for Nat. Even worse, the new house doesn't feel like home, and her parents are as overprotective as ever. When Nat, an avid fan of musicals, spots an advertisement for the local theater's production of *Wicked*, she's sure that nabbing a part will make her feel at home. But her father wants her to focus on wheelchair racing, and her mother doubts her ability to fit in; it's up to Nat to prove she can take the stage. The authors know their stuff! Tony Award-winning Stroker was the first wheelchair user to be cast in a Broadway play, and Davidowitz is a playwright and it shows. Nat's relationship with her loving but overbearing parents rings perceptively and painfully true, as does her frustration with inaccessible venues and patronizing attitudes. Her enthusiasm for the theater is infectious, but readers needn't be theater buffs to relate to her fear of growing apart from Chloe and her desire for independence. A quirky cast of secondary characters lends humor, support, and a little romance as they illustrate the fun and rigor of acting. Nat defaults to White; the secondary cast is somewhat diverse. Fun, honest, and uplifting: applause! (authors' note) (Fiction. 9-12)

CIRCLE OF LOVE SMITH,
MONIQUE
GRAY

2024 E

HEARTDRUM

9780063078703

PS-3
Trade

\$19.39

1

\$19.39 A

Review Sources: Kirkus Review - 02/15/2024

Full Text Reviews:

- Kirkus Review February 2024 A young Indigenous girl feels deeply connected to her community. In the foreword, Cree/Lakota/Scottish author Smith discusses tawâw, a nêhiyawêwin (Cree) word meaning “there is always room.” This value is at the heart of her story, told from the perspective of young Molly. Molly describes the various emotions she feels as she interacts with those around her: “When Kôhkôm and her wife, Kôhkôm Raven, sing a welcome song, I feel connected.” “When my uncles and I play peekaboo with their baby, I feel love.” Molly and family, friends, and elders gather at an intertribal community center for a feast. Together, they prepare for a ceremony, make a food offering, and share bannock and soup. Queer and gender-nonconforming relatives figure prominently in Neidhardt’s (Diné) vibrant images; Molly’s community is lovingly portrayed as one that includes people with many gender expressions, skin tones, and styles of dress, and the words “love is love” appear throughout the book’s colorful spreads. This is a beautiful and moving glimpse into the rich intersections of Indigenous cultures and the Native queer and trans people who co-create them. Backmatter includes an author’s note in which Smith reflects on her own identity as a two-spirit person, a glossary, and information on the importance of Native community centers and Indigenous LGBTQ+ people. A celebration of community, queer Native families, and Indigenous joy. (note from Heartdrum author-curator Cynthia Leitich Smith) (Picture book. 5-10)

DIABETES DOESN'T STOP MADDIE! MARSH, SARAH GLENN 9780807547038 ALBERT WHITTMAN & COMPANY 2020 E K-3 Hardcover Trade \$16.48 1 \$16.48 A

Tags: Own Voices

Annotation: Maddie learns she has type one diabetes but is nervous about going back to school with her insulin pump. Gradually, she learns that she's not the only one with the condition and that she has friends to help her when she's feeling shy.

Review Sources: Kirkus Review - 02/01/2020, Booklist - 04/01/2020

Full Text Reviews:

- Booklist April 2020 Grades K-3 - Finding out you have diabetes can be hard. In this picture book, Maddie has recently found out that she has type 1 diabetes, and she's anxious about going back to school and performing her new diabetes-care routine. How is she going to explain about low blood sugar, insulin pumps, glucose meters, and testing strips? All she wants is to be treated like everyone else, but she's sure there will be stares and questions. Though her school day is initially stressful, by the end—and with support from a few good friends—Maddie is able to overcome her fears and educate her classmates on type 1 diabetes. Ultimately, she learns that even with diabetes, she is “just like everyone else.” Cheery colors fill the pages of this story, providing some lift for its tough topic. Marsh infuses the narrative with her own experience and emotional understanding as a diabetic, making Maddie's character all the more relatable. A good purchase for any library.
- Kirkus Review February 2020 Follow along on Maddie's first day back at school after a diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes. Maddie is understandably nervous; she's had a lot to learn and process. The very first page explains Type 1 diabetes: “Her body stopped making insulin, which turns sugar in food into energy.” And on the next spread, readers see Maddie using her insulin pump and continuous glucose monitor and explaining them (in fairly adult language) to her younger brother. Packing for school is a bit complicated, what with the extra snacks and juice and backups for her monitor. Being prepared for her classmates' questions is another matter. Her friend Brianna's sister has diabetes, so she can answer many of the kids' questions, much to Maddie's relief. And Luis, whose grandfather has the disease, stands up for her when she needs a juice in art class and prompts her to cover up her CGM at a soccer game to avoid more questions. Di Gravio's illustrations capture emotions clearly, from Maddie's uncertainty and Brianna's matter-of-fact support to the curiosity, jealousy, and tendency to think the worst displayed by some of Maddie's diverse classmates. Maddie and her family are light skinned, Brianna has dark skin, and Luis is Latinx. Marsh's note describes her own connection to diabetes and her wish that no one should feel as though they are dealing with it alone. Both reassuring for those with diabetes and educational for those around them. (Picture book. 4-8)

★HOME LIPPERT, TONYA 9781433836862 MAGINATION PRESS 2022 E K-3 Hardcover Trade \$16.99 1 \$16.99 A

Tags: Poverty/Homelessness

Annotation: When Claire and Wes were little, they lived in the brown home that had lots of nice hiding places and space to draw. But then, they didn't live in the brown home anymore and they went somewhere, which led to nowhere and somewhere again, and then finally to the blue house. Claire and Wes experience a wide variety of emotions as they move from place to place, but know that in the end, they always have each other.

Review Sources: Booklist Starred Reviews - 02/15/2022, School Library Journal - April 2022

Full Text Reviews:

- School Library Journal April 2022 Gr 1-4—From a writer who is a social worker and who experienced homelessness as a child, this is an affecting story of lost and found. Clare and Wes, both redheads, live in the Brown House with their mother, who looks like them, and their father, who has dark hair and brown skin. Clare makes flower wreaths to beautify the house and Wes draws pictures for its walls. Then one day they experience a "big change" and say good-bye to Brown House, but with "nowhere of their own to arrive," they stay in various places. Ultimately, they end up at a shelter while awaiting permanent housing: "Somewhere was better than Nowhere. And Anywhere." Meanwhile the kids attend school, finding comfort in their friends and the routine despite the anxiety about where they live and the questions it elicits. Finally, they move into Blue House, but "They never forgot what it was like to be Nowhere, Somewhere or Anywhere." Without needing to name every single emotion, Lippert covers a lot of territory in the text including happiness, confusion, anger, sadness, and hope. Her occasionally ambiguous text, unexpected word order, and punctuation slow the story, allowing readers to decipher what is happening. But if the deliberately vague language softens what is unfolding, the book remains a good starting point for empathy, representation, and discussion. Precisely rendered illustrations, of people, paths, and home after home, capture the changing landscape and give the text an assist. Stegmaier effectively renders the family and specific items (luggage, pictures, etc.) in color against a black-and-white palette for focus. Includes an author's note and additional resources. VERDICT This book covers an important topic on which few picture books are written, and may help children, those experiencing homelessness or not, make sense of this economic and emotional hardship.—Catherine Callegari Copyright 2022 Reed Business Information.
- Booklist Starred Reviews February 2022 Grades K-2 - "★Starred Review* Lippert, who herself often experienced homelessness as a child, here shines a light on the hidden problem of unhoused children. She focuses on two kids, Wes and Clare, who live with their mother and father in a cozy house with a white picket fence. Homelessness isn't on their radar—a remarkable early illustration shows the kids and their mother, all in color, walking past an old woman, rendered in black and gray, who is begging on the sidewalk outside her tent home. Then suddenly, the family starts on a downward spiral, with scenes changing from their house to someone's apartment to a motel to a shelter, with the word nowhere repeated in big black lettering. The text and illustrations (with the children remaining in color while everything around them is black and gray) brilliantly represent their fear and disorientation. At book's end, the family moves into a new house with the knowledge that it's love and family that make a home. In a note at the end, Lippert tells her own story and urges caregivers to talk to children about homelessness, which, according to one of Lippert's sources, the National Center on Child Homelessness, affects 1 out of every 30 U.S. children. A compassion- and-action-awakening book."

I AM A

MASTERPIECE! : AN
EMPOWERING
STORY ABOUT
INCLUSIVITY

RANDOM
HOUSE BOOKS
FOR YOUNG
READER

ARMSTRONG,
MIA

2024 E

PS-3
Hardcover
Trade

\$19.39 1 \$19.39 A

Tags: Own Voices, People with Disabilities, Self-Awareness

Annotation: Mia, who has Down's Syndrome, explains that though she may be different than other people, she likes and does many of the same things that other people do. In fact, she considers her differences her superpower.

Review Sources: Publishers Weekly - 11/06/2023, Kirkus Review - 11/15/2023, School Library Journal - February 2024

Full Text Reviews:

- School Library Journal February 2024 PreS-Gr 4—Mia Armstrong boldly asserts her self-confidence with a compelling opening line: "I have Down syndrome, and I like myself exactly as I am." In first-person narrative, she reflects on being patient when other people forget their manners. She emphasizes the beauty in uniqueness and says it "would be boring if we were all the same!" Armstrong illustrates this by recounting a school project where she and her classmates are tasked with creating self-portraits. While her classmates draw pictures of their physical appearances, Armstrong expresses how she feels and how she sees the world with shades of blue. Despite initial confusion from her classmates, Armstrong explains why she drew it that way and they understand right away because "kids are faster than grown-ups about these kinds of things. Which is lucky for me." A concluding Q&A about Down syndrome culminates in a whimsical cartoon-style conversation among children. The vibrant gouache and colored pencil illustrations not only breathe life into the scenes, which come off as lived experience, but also showcase a diverse array of background characters. A touching and unique story about accepting oneself and others. VERDICT A great first purchase for libraries.—Kirsten Caldwell Copyright 2024 Reed Business Information.
- Kirkus Review November 2023 Child actor and activist Armstrong, who has Down syndrome, embraces her uniqueness. Mia likes herself just fine, but sometimes people "forget their manners" or act like she's invisible—a shoe store clerk, for instance, addresses Mom instead of Mia until the child politely asserts herself. At school, though, everybody knows her. As her class draws self-portraits for Back-to-School Night, Mia knows exactly how to express "how happy I feel being me." But her classmates criticize her work, and Mia feels invisible again. Then, remembering Mom's reminders to be patient, Mia explains it's a "double self-portrait," a work that illustrates both how she feels and how she sees the world. Fortunately, "kids are faster than grown-ups at these kinds of things," and her classmates understand. With candor and wry humor, Mia reminds kids and adults

alike not to patronize people with Down syndrome. In a gently pointed scene, she wonders if others would be equally rude to very old, tall, or scaly people, and she imagines droll comebacks to nosy questions and blunt remarks. Asked if they're "some kind of alien," a reptilian, green-skinned plane passenger deadpans, "Is that a problem?" Mia's enthusiasm and self-confidence radiate from Thompson's energetic cartoon illustrations. The backmatter includes cartoon-style panels of Mia fielding frequently asked questions about Down syndrome. Mia and her family present white; background characters are diverse. A celebration of self-advocacy, self-expression, and self-acceptance. (Picture book. 4-8)

- Publishers Weekly November 2023 Opening lines establish Armstrong's direct tone in this affirming autobiographical debut: "I have Down syndrome, and I like myself exactly as I am. I just want people to be nice to me and to like me for who I am, too." Noting that "sometimes people forget their manners," the speaker details a challenging episode at a shoe store, where "grown-ups act like I'm invisible." At school, the protagonist and classmates, depicted with varying abilities and skin tones, draw self-portraits. When Mia's, a portrait of "how I feel, not how I look" as well as "how I see the world," proves different from the others, she proudly asserts, "I think that makes it the best of all," modeling a confidence later supported by her family's praise. Appearing frequently as multiple vignettes on a page, Thompson's delicate pencil and gouache renderings amplify the emotion that infuses the text's vision of external patience and self-love. An author's note opens, and a q&a about Down syndrome concludes. Ages 4-8. (Jan.)

★ I IS FOR
IMMIGRANTS

ALKO, SELINA 9781250237866 HENRY HOLT & COMPANY (BYR) 2021 305.9

PS-2 Hardcover
Library

\$18.42 1 \$18.42 A

Tags: General Diversity, Immigration/Emigration

Annotation: While this children's book introduces letters of the alphabet to young readers, it also tells an important story about the contributions immigrants have made to the diverse culture, traditions, and heritage of the United States. Just like i stands for immigrants, page spreads with crowded images give readers the opportunity to explore the many things other letters represent, such as b for bagpipes and bodegas and e for empanadas.

Review Sources: Publishers Weekly - 04/12/2021, Kirkus Reviews Starred - 05/15/2021, School Library Journal Starred - July 2021, Horn Book Guide - October 2021

Full Text Reviews:

- Horn Book Guide October 2021 A is for ancestors, abuelita, and African dance; B is for bodega, braids, and bubble tea. In this alphabet book, Alko (One Golden Rule at School, rev. 7/20) highlights some of the myriad ways immigrants have contributed to this country's rich diversity with her bright, friendly, and festive illustrations. The art -- mixed-media collage with wide strokes of paint on newsprint, tickets, lined notebook paper, and musical scores -- is the standout here. The pages are as varied and textured as the images she has chosen to represent immigration. Readers will find things both familiar and new, but all are matter-of-factly part of the mix. Maybe you knew that Turkish delight and kimchi were brought to this country by immigrants from other parts of the world, but Alko's at-a-glance representation reminds us that bananas and yogurt were as well. Scattered among the foods and cultural offerings (martial arts, yoga, samba dance) are concepts foundational to the American -- and universal human -- dream (ambition, endurance, belonging). Each word is hand-lettered, and the diversity of fonts celebrates and mirrors the diversity of ideas and contributions. With immigration a constant political flashpoint, Alko takes a warm, celebratory approach to enumerate the dimensionality that has come from around the world to become part of the fabric of America. Maeve Visser Knoth
- School Library Journal Starred July 2021 PreS-Gr 2—A beautifully illustrated book that uses the alphabet to weave together different cultural elements of society. Alko begins the story with the letter A for ancestors, showing portraits of people of many races atop a background of news articles and letters written in cursive. It's followed by the words abuelita, African dance, and art, then moves to motivational language such as ambition and aspire, accompanied by evocative illustrations. As the alphabet rolls along, the author continues to include colorful vocabulary that is inclusive of many different cultures and communities. In support conversations about immigration and the reasons behind why people from all around the world may come to the United States, the author uses inviting language that would be conducive to conversations about values, people, and things that are important to different cultures. VERDICT A great book, one that would be welcome in every collection.—Katie Callahan, Montgomery County Public Sch., MD
Copyright 2021 Reed Business Information.
- Kirkus Reviews Starred May 2021 An alphabet book that celebrates everything that immigrants have brought to the United States, from ambition to Zen. Each letter of this exuberant and poignant alphabet book is represented by a montage of words and images that include feelings, ideas, and things that people from all over the world have brought with them to their new home. D is for Dreamers (and dreamers), dumplings, diversity, and Day of the Dead. H is for holidays, heritage, hijabs, Holi, Hanukkah, and hope. Y is for yucca, yoga, yogurt, Yiddish, yearning—and “you.” By including both the tangible and the intangible, Alko reinforces the idea that the U.S. is more than just a conglomeration of cultures; it's a quilt of shared values. The text is hand-lettered in varying sizes, incorporated into the overall compositions, and the accompanying images are painted and collaged with verve, emphasizing a folk-art-like artistic sensibility with saturated colors, bold brush strokes, and found objects. In the concluding author's note, Alko shares her own immigration story and reiterates that “America isn't any one thing”—that it is both magnificent and complex. Readers from all backgrounds with have a blast looking for references to their own heritages and finding commonalities. (This book was reviewed digitally.) Vibrant, vigorous, and multifaceted—just like America. (Picture book. 3-7)

- Publishers Weekly April 2021 Author-illustrator Alko, a Canadian emigrant to the U.S., presents an abecedarian companion to her B Is for Brooklyn that celebrates multicultural elements found within the U.S., including food (bubble tea, falafel, guacamole), instruments (drums, xylophone, zither), buildings (mosques, restaurants, temples), and qualities (ambition, creativity, optimism). Some words present clearer cultural connections than others; the page on P, for example, features a diverse potluck of pierogies, pupusas, pizza, and more alongside the word “pets,” showcasing a cat, dog, mouse, and rabbit sitting beneath the blue feast table. Though some seemingly East Asian figures are portrayed with yellow skin, Alko’s multilayered gouache and collage art is otherwise engaging, with snippets of newsprint, patterned paper, stamps, sheet music, and more overlaid with washes of paint, colorful hand lettering, and depictions of people of different abilities and religions and with a range of skin tones and backgrounds. Readers may not come away with context for the images—particularly regarding cultural and historical explanations behind the words—but this visual amalgam succeeds in highlighting “so much that is wonderful about our diverse American culture.” Back matter includes an author’s note. Ages 4–8. Agent: Marietta B. Zacker, Galt & Zacker Literary. (June)

JUDE SAVES THE WORLD RILEY, RONNIE 9781338855876 SCHOLASTIC 2023 FIC Realistic 4.1 5-8 Hardcover Trade \$18.42 1 \$18.42 A

Tags: LGBTQIA+, Neurodiverse, Own Voices, Transgender/Nonbinary

Annotation: Twelve-year-old Jude struggles keeping their identity of being nonbinary a secret from their old-fashioned grandparents, but luckily they have their best friend, Dallas, by their side. When they learn that Stevie, a popular girl in their class, has been kicked out of her friend group, Jude decides to reach out to Stevie. The three become friends, and when Jude comes out to Stevie, they start thinking about trust and how everyone deserves a safe space where they can truly be themselves. Jude sets out to create the first Diversity Club in their town and make a difference in their community.

Review Sources: Kirkus Review - 02/15/2023, Publishers Weekly - 03/06/2023

Full Text Reviews:

- Publishers Weekly March 2023 Jude Winters, a white 12-year-old who’s nonbinary and bisexual, feels completely safe only with best friend Dallas Knight, who is gay and Black. Even so, when white-cued schoolmate Stevie Morgan, a former soccer star, is ousted from a popular clique, and rumors swirl that she’s queer, Jude and Dallas offer their friendship. Having a second pal, especially one as fun as Stevie, changes Jude’s life for the better and inspires Jude to create a safe space for marginalized people in their hometown. At the same time, Jude’s ADHD makes it difficult to concentrate in the classroom, and they’re frustrated with their worried mom’s request that they not come out to her parents, leading to misgendering and deadnaming by their grandparents. How can Jude make a difference when so many things are out of their control? Jude is an endearingly earnest narrator, and their supportive bond with Dallas—which debut author Riley contrasts against a toxic former friendship of Stevie’s—models healthy, consensual, enthusiastic camaraderie. Though the novel’s many elements never completely coalesce, the kids eventually find a broader LGBTQ support network, learning more about queer history and identities along the way. It’s a gently inclusive, relationally positive read that touches on symbiotic associations. An author’s note and queer glossary conclude. Ages 8–12. Agent: Andrea Walker and Jennifer Azantian, Azantian Literary Agency. (Apr.)
- Kirkus Review February 2023 Middle schoolers navigate friendship and identity. Twelve-year-old Jude Winters is out as nonbinary to their mom and gay best friend, Dallas, and changed their name at school, but they aren’t out more widely, and this is most distressing when they visit their old-fashioned grandparents. When former soccer star Stevie is friend-dumped by the popular and malicious Tessa, rumors spread that it’s because she has a crush on another girl, and Jude and Dallas invite her into their friendship. Underrepresented identities are given a welcome highlight; unfortunately, the story is undermined by thin plotting and limited character development. Jude often needs support for their ADHD and muses that their fatness makes them less legible as nonbinary. Dallas seamlessly fits the trope of the angelic Black best friend, and his race is only mentioned when it feels convenient for the story. The treacly dialogue involves middle-aged-sounding middle schoolers patting each other on the hand, affirming each other’s identities through dialogue that feels unrealistic for the age group, and saying that they love each other, while most characters’ growth journeys feel unearned and contrived. Although the author’s note indicates the intention not to reveal Jude’s gender assigned at birth, readers will be able to infer it from an early scene; as a result, there is a missed opportunity to explore the ways their gender assignment has impacted how Jude moves through the world. Well intentioned but forgettable. (glossary, resources) (Fiction. 9-13)

★MY THREE BEST FRIENDS AND ME, ZULAY BEST, CARI 9780374388195 FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX (BYR) 2015 E 3.5 K-3 Hardcover Library \$19.39 1 \$19.39 A

Tags: African/Black/African-American, Determination/Perseverance, Friendship, People with Disabilities

Annotation: Zulay, a blind first-grader, is just learning to master her cane, but when her teacher announces an upcoming field day, Zulay surprises everyone by declaring that she would like to run in the race. Luckily, Zulay’s three best friends Chyng, Nancy, and Maya are there to offer support and cheer her on. Bright, expressive Zulay may not be able to see the

track with her eyes, but she discovers another way to get around using her sense of touch. Running around the track, climbing trees, swimming, and reading Braille are all activities Zulay is determined to do successfully. "This story is inspiring and inclusive.... Young readers will understand the challenges that Zulay faces ... but also [understand] that all students face unique challenges" (SLJ).

Review Sources: School Library Journal - November 2014, Kirkus Review - 11/01/2014, Publishers Weekly - 12/08/2014, Horn Book Guide - October 2015, School Library Connection - September 2015

Full Text Reviews:

- Horn Book Guide October 2015 Zulay, who's blind, is determined to race at Field Day. The straightforward depiction of spunky Zulay and her diverse group of girlfriends--"four best friends who help each other, four best friends who help themselves"--helps this story shine. Brantley-Newton's bright illustrations showcase expressive faces, welcoming readers into a world where the successes and frustrations of being disabled are noted and respected.
- School Library Connection September 2015 <p>What begins as a nice school story of a little girl and her three friends becomes a story of inclusion and persistence in face of challenges. Zulay is a little girl who loves going to her multiracial school. What she doesn't like is being singled out to work with a special teacher and what she really doesn't like is the cane that the teacher is helping her to use. For you see, Zulay is blind. She uses a Braille and her other senses, but has a hard time with the cane. With the help of the cane and the teacher, Zulay is able to run in a race and continue on her voyage to independence. This is a good story about children with disabilities and a nice addition to the easy collection.</p> Beverly Combs RECOMMENDED
- Publishers Weekly December 2014 A blind, African-American first grader named Zulay candidly shares her aspirations and frustrations in this frank, encouraging story. Best adeptly portrays Zulay as a rounded, complex character, not just a spokesperson—she's good at math; loves to sing, dance, and be silly with her friends; and enjoys typing on her Braille. Zulay is honest about feeling self-conscious ("I don't like when I hear my name sticking out there by itself," she says when she has to work with an aide, instead of joining her classmates for gym) and annoyed about learning to use the fold-up white cane, something she feels makes her stick out. Best's prose and Brantley-Newton's digital images exude warmth and empathy as they build to a triumphant conclusion that has Zulay working hard to prepare for a Field Day race. Ages 4–8. Illustrator's agent: Lori Nowicki, Painted Words. (Jan.)
- School Library Journal November 2014 K-Gr 3—Best friends Maya, Nancy, Chyng, and Zulay laugh and help one another with homework. When their first-grade teacher, Ms. Seeger, surprises them with an announcement about an upcoming field day, excitement fills the air. The 22 students each announces the events they want to compete in, and Zulay surprises everyone when she says she would like to run in the race. Zulay is blind and just learning to use her cane. She does not like to stick out among her peers but is determined to accomplish her goal. With the help of a teacher, Zulay works hard to overcome the odds and achieve success. This story is inspiring and inclusive. Zulay is portrayed as a happy, well-rounded first grader, and the author pays the perfect amount of attention to her special needs. Young readers will understand the challenges that Zulay faces in getting around but also that all students face unique challenges. Bright, colorful illustrations on a clean white backdrop are crisp and clear and mesh seamlessly with the text. This story is a great read-aloud for younger students due to the length of the text, but just right as independent reading for second and third graders. This picture book is a great way to continue building diverse library collections for all readers.—Amy Shepherd, St. Anne's Episcopal School, Middleton, DE Copyright 2014 Reed Business Information.

Key



Best of Mackin

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