Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

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Association for Library Service to Children

SPECIAL DIVERSITY ISSUE!

What It Means to Be White

Milestones in Diversity

Día, Special Needs and More from Notable Authors on Diversity

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By Mary-Kate Sableski

Pondering Diversity

I heard a story on the radio recently about Misty Copeland and Brooklyn Mack, two African American ballet dancers who starred in a production of *Swan Lake* by the Washington Ballet. It was the first time ever two black dancers starred in the production, and its significance lay in the symbolism inherent in the story of the beautiful white swan that falls in love with the handsome prince.

Casting these roles with black dancers provided an overt challenge to the traditional, dominant interpretation of the tale, in which the swan and the prince are white. All I could think was—finally!—an interpretation of a classic story for today's black young people to relate to, to become carried away with, and to see themselves in.

I thought immediately of the book *Beautiful Ballerina* (2009) by Marilyn Nelson and Susan Kuklin, which highlights young black dancers from the Brooklyn Ballet, and how maybe, just maybe, diversity was becoming no longer just a "buzzword," but truly part of the stories we share.

Diversity in children's literature and in library programming matters if we want to hear more stories like these. When children read diverse literature, they see new possibilities for themselves, for their peers, and for society than they might have before. Copeland and Mack paved the trail for *Swan Lake*—there were no precedents to follow.

Did they see themselves in the literature they read as they grew up? Did they read about strong role models who had also challenged stereotypes and blazed a trail in their fields for people of diversity? If we are to develop young people who will challenge traditional casting for the roles they want to play, whether it is in *Swan Lake*, in the publishing house, the classroom, or the board room, they need to read literature that helps them to imagine these possibilities, and they need libraries to provide them with these rich resources for building strong personal identities.

Throughout this issue, you will find examples of how diversity is not just a buzzword, but an integral, critical element in our literature and in our conversations in our libraries. The iconic Kathleen T. Horning describes the historical trends in diverse literature, and Allie Jane Bruce provides us with a powerful and thought-provoking call to action concerning the need for diverse books.

Interviews with authors of diverse literature, examples of library programming highlighting diversity, and perspectives to consider as you integrate diverse literature into your collections and programming will challenge you to consider diverse literature in new ways. &

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On Being White

A Raw, Honest Conversation

ALLIE JANE BRUCE

I'm white. But I didn't start describing myself that way until adulthood. In fact, I doggedly avoided it. In high school, I once crossed out "white" and wrote "half Jewish" on a standardized test. I knew I was white, but I also knew that it was not good to *name* whiteness. Black history, we could talk about, in Social Studies (during certain units). Latino cultures were celebrated (or, at least, acknowledged) in my Spanish classes. But the whiteness that served as the foundation for the other 99 percent of my life was taboo. Nobody ever said "as a white girl, I think . . ." or "white people like us . . ." in my (totally white) circles.

It took me a long time and a lot of education to figure out that whiteness is taboo in large part because naming whiteness makes race—and therefore racism—something that includes and affects everyone. If white people decline to acknowledge or discuss whiteness, racism stays other people's problem. If I am white, I'm suddenly part of the equation.

But I am part of the equation. Because I am white, I have access to what Peggy McIntosh calls the "invisible knapsack" of white privilege,[1] and one of those is that I see my culture reflected everywhere; in the United States, I am "standard," I am "norm." And I've never lacked for books in which characters look, speak, and act like me.

The now-familiar statistics kept by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) confirm the truth that white culture is extremely prominent and well-represented in the world of children's literature. Though there was a jump in the number of books by and about people of color in 2014, the percentage is still small (14 percent)[2] and does not reflect the US population, which is 37 percent nonwhite,[3] or 50.3 percent—a majority—when you're talking about nonwhite children in US public schools (by contrast, 82 percent of public school teachers are white).[4] Clearly, white culture still dominates in children's literature, despite a population of children that is becoming rapidly less white.

Why should white people care (beyond a desire to assuage vague feelings of guilt) about something like the We Need Diverse Books organization (for which I am a librarian)? Why do white people, like me, need diverse books? Because "white" has its own culture and cultural beats, and those are too often considered "universal" or conflated with "American." White people have not graduated into some advanced form of humanity in which color does not matter, and being white does not render us raceless. We are all racial. And white people, like me, have access to privileges that are uniquely afforded to us because of our whiteness. White privilege shows itself in our government, our banks, our housing, our health care, our schools, and yes, our libraries.

I should mention here that while they are linked, white privilege is different from economic privilege. It is true that most

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of the wealth in the United States is, and historically has been, in the hands of white people,[5] but it is also true that white people are the largest group of recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or what used to be called "food stamps").[6] We do ourselves a disservice if we try to paint the situation simply as "white people have more money." We also do ourselves a disservice if we take the opposite approach and constantly dismiss the correspondence between race and wealth with "but really, aren't you talking about class?" White privilege is tied to, but not the same as, access to wealth. And white privilege as distinct from economic privilege can be hard to pin down.

The now-familiar statistics kept by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) confirm the truth that white culture is extremely prominent and well-represented in the world of children's literature.

Just as it is essential to name whiteness to render privilege visible, it is equally important to specifically name the privileges afforded by whiteness. Here, then, is a starter list (inspired by McIntosh's "Invisible Knapsack") of the privileges afforded by whiteness in libraries and the world of children's literature.

Privileges Afforded to Me, a White Librarian and Reader

- I have a wide variety of books from all genres to choose from in which characters look and speak like me.
- When browsing in most libraries or bookstores, I can be pretty sure I will see white people who look like me featured on book covers without having to search for them.
- When I go to library conferences, publisher previews, or other events aimed at readers and librarians, I walk into a room in which most people look and speak like me.
- Those who work in publishing often share my cultural background and understand my cultural beats, which is conducive to forming friendships, which in turn makes it easier for me to request and access resources such as class sets of galleys or visits from authors.
- When I visit other libraries, the librarians I meet often look and speak like me, which makes it easier for us to form partnerships and share resources.
- When invited to speak on panels or at events, I am not asked to speak on behalf of all white people or offer the "white perspective."
- When I bring up issues of racial justice, I am generally praised and lauded as an "ally" and "changemaker" by children's literature colleagues. I am rarely, if ever, dismissed as someone who is complaining, attention-seeking, or "can't let go of the past."
- I can bring up issues of racial inequity in my work without fear of being demoted or fired.
- Should I ever wish to publish a book I've written, I can be fairly certain that my race will either play a neutral or positive role in determining whether an editor reads my draft or decides to work with me.

Privileges Afforded to the White Children I Teach

- My whiteness will be either a neutral or positive factor in whether white children view the library as a place where they can relax and feel at home.
- White children can enter my library knowing that decisions about which books to buy and what materials to teach have been determined by people who share their racial history and background, and that those books and materials testify to the existence of, and do not contain dehumanizing stereotypes of, their race.
- When white children read historical fiction or nonfiction as part of a class assignment, they need not worry that people in the book who look like them will be enslaved or subservient to people in the book who look like their nonwhite classmates.
- White children can be confident that their race will not work against the appearance of their ability to be responsible with books they check out.
- If white children are asked to account for overdue or lost books, they can be sure they have not been singled out because of their race.
- White children can return books late without having that lateness reflect on their race.
- When a white child asks me to recommend a book, she does not have to worry that I will assume she wants a book about "issues" that relate to her race.
- White children do not have to teach me about the holidays they celebrate in order to enlist my help in finding books about those holidays.
- If a white child is labeled a "reluctant" or "struggling" reader, she and her family need not worry that such a label will be attributed to poor parenting, poverty, or the lower intelligence of her race.

- Even if a white child is not in the racial majority at her school, it is likely that the majority of her teachers are white. She can therefore be fairly certain that she will have teachers who look like her, and who understand and preserve her cultural norms and beats.[7]

So what can we white people do? The following is, once again, a starter list.

Nine Suggestions for White People Seeking to Counter Racism

1. **Attend a training.** It is *hard* to lead conversations about race in the classroom; often well-intentioned white people do the most harm to children's psyches. Do not assume that you can do this without training and practice. I highly recommend the People's Institute's Undoing Racism workshop (pisab.org), Border Crossers' trainings (bordercrossers.org), and SEED trainings (nationalseedproject.org). You may be able to obtain funds from your school or library system to attend; if you play your cards right, you may be able to advocate for staff-wide trainings.

2. **Practice saying "I'm white."** It's harder than it should be, but it's important. If we fail to acknowledge whiteness, white privilege becomes invisible. Try dropping it in during a read-aloud, e.g., "So, most of Anna Hibiscus' family is black, and her mother is white, like me." Say it matter-of-factly; it's an observation.

3. **Don't ask your friends of color to teach you everything.** Take responsibility for your own education. See numbers 1, 6, and 7 for places to begin that education.

4. **Recognize when you're having a racist thought, and don't brush it off.** It is impossible to exist in our current society without having internalized notions of racial superiority and inferiority. Studies have shown that white people are less moved by the pain of black people than by the pain of white people, that teachers are more likely to respond to queries from students they believe are white males, that white people are likely to see black children as older and less innocent than white children, and that the lighter a person's skin, the more likely white people are to view them as intelligent, competent, trustworthy, and reliable.[8]

5. **Try not to dodge talking about racism and whiteness in the United States today.** It is so tempting, and easy, to turn a conversation about racism into a conversation about something—anything, anywhere—else. There are a lot of "isms" in the world, and all are important—but many are easier to talk about than racism. Similarly, when we do talk about race as it currently stands in the United States, it is tempting to talk about anything other than whiteness. Have conversations about whiteness, and when you do, don't escape into talking about how people of color experience racism; speak from your own racial experiences.

A panel of diverse authors at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Chicago.

6. **Read books. Read articles. Watch videos.** A starter list:

   - *What White Children Need to Know About Race* by Ali Michael and Eleanora Bartoli, available via www.nais.org
   - *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (pbs.org/race)
   - "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" by Peggy McIntosh[9]
   - *The Whiteness Project* (whitenessproject.org)
   - *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving (Elephant Room Press, 2014, 288p)
   - *White Like Me* by Tim Wise (Soft Skull Press, 2008; reissued, 2011, 208p)

7. **Mix up your news sources.** Try foregoing your regular newspaper for a month, and read *The Root* (theroot.com) instead. Add in *Colorlines* (colorlines.com), *Latina Lista* (latinalista.com), *Indian Country Today* (indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com), *Hyphen* magazine (hyphenmagazine.com), and *The Aerogram* (theaerogram.com).

8. **Do a headcount** the next time you're at a lunch, dinner, preview, conference, meeting, whatever. Notice who has been invited "inside" and who hasn't.

9. **Educate children.** There are many ways to go about this, but children deserve to learn about racial justice and white privilege in developmentally appropriate but overt ways. I coteach a unit in which sixth graders explore different aspects of identity using book covers as a starting point (bankstreet.edu/library/about/book-cover-project).

Peggy McIntosh asks white people to "get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance."[10] I have found this charge supremely difficult because everything in our white-dominated society is designed to make us oblivious to white privilege. Doing the things listed above helps me maintain my outrage and my drive to effect change.

Clearly, white culture still dominates in children's literature, despite a population of children that is becoming rapidly less white.

"I wasn't always comfortable with naming my whiteness so openly, and I once thought good or bad intentions alone determined racism," says author Miranda Paul, vice president of outreach for We Need Diverse Books. "Saying I was 'colorblind' was really an excuse to avoid uncomfortable conversations and face reality. But I need to get past the feelings of guilt, taboo, or sensitivity and acknowledge my privileges. This discussion isn't about excluding people or pointing a finger—it's about children and their future. The kids we serve are forming their personalities and sense of self-worth, as well as their ideas about each other. The books we recommend or read to them, the authors we introduce them to, and the way we talk about diversity, all have a profound influence."

Please tweet other suggestions for what white people in the world of children's literature can do to counter racism to #WhitenessInKidLit. If you don't have a Twitter account, e-mail your suggestions to me at alliejanebruce@diversebooks.org.

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Milestones for Diversity in Children's Literature and Library Services

KATHLEEN T. HORNING

Many people seem to think that the discussion of diversity started in 1964 with Nancy Larrick's seminal article, "The All-White World of Children's Books," published in the *Saturday Review* on September 11, 1965. This time line shows, however, that a lot happened prior to that. Influential library leaders such as Pura Belpré, Charlemae Hill Rollins, Augusta Baker, and Clara Breed championed diversity long before the 1960s.

In the children's book world, awards matter a great deal. They can reflect social mores and the critical mind-set of children's librarians, both historically and currently. And they have always had a big impact on what gets published next. Success breeds imitation, so when authors and illustrators of color win book awards, particularly the Newbery and Caldecott Medals, it can lead to greater diversity in literature overall. We saw this happen in the mid-1970s with African American literature after big wins by Virginia Hamilton, Leo and Diane Dillon, and Mildred D. Taylor. We saw it again in the early 2000s with Newbery Medals going to Linda Sue Park and Cynthia Kadohata, after which we noted a marked increase in the number of novels being published by Asian American authors.

Progress is often measured by firsts—the first Newbery Medal given to an author of color, first African American president of ALA's Children's Services Division (now the Association for Library Service to Children/ALSC), and so forth. Each of these firsts represents a breakdown of barriers.

Sometimes these barriers seem to have been broken easily; we can't know, for example, how much discussion there was back in 1928 about awarding the Newbery to a book set in India by an author of East Indian descent. Other times, they clearly represent the work of tireless advocates. We can appreciate the effort that must have gone into the launching of *The Brownies' Book* in 1920 and the heartbreak that must have followed two years later when they had to close the venture down.

Reading this time line, it should become clear that, as a group, children's librarians have been on the forefront for diversity from the beginning, striving to serve all children. If anything, our predecessors in the library field had a much better track record for it than we ourselves have had over the last forty years. Ultimately this time line shows that we still have a long way to go.

1916—Children's Book Week is established.

1919—Macmillan establishes the first department devoted exclusively to children's books and hires Louise Seaman (later Bechtel) as the first children's book editor.

Kathleen T. Horning *is the Director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center, a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.*

Charlemae Hill Rollins

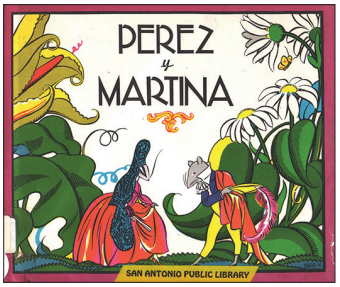
1920—A new monthly magazine, *The Brownies' Book,* is founded. Created for African American children, it was the brainchild of W. E. B. Du Bois. Unfortunately, it never got enough subscribers to sustain itself and ceased publication after just twenty-four issues.

1921—Pura Belpré is hired by the New York Public Library. Originally from Puerto Rico, she would pioneer bilingual storytelling and library services to Spanish-speaking children in New York City.

1922—The Newbery Medal is established to encourage distinguished writing for children.

1927—Charlemae Hill Rollins is hired as a children's librarian by Chicago Public Library. In succeeding decades, she would lead the charge against the stereotypical portrayal of African Americans in children's books.

1928—Dhan Gopal Mukerji becomes the first person of color to win the Newbery Medal for *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon,* a book set in his native India.



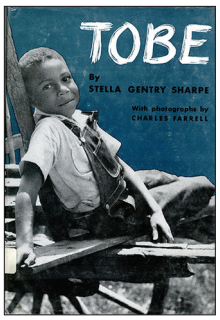
1932—*Perez and Martina* by Pura Belpré, a picture-book folktale retelling, is the first book published in the United States by a Puerto Rican author.

1932—*Popo and Fifina: Children of Haiti* by Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes is the first children's novel by and about blacks. It was illustrated by E. Simms Campbell, an African American artist.

1937—Augusta Baker is hired by New York Public Library. She spent the early years of her career at the 135th Street Branch in Harlem and became nationally known for her storytelling and leadership in children's librarian services.

1938—The James Weldon Johnson Collection is established at the Countee Cullen Branch of the New York Public Library. Under the direction of Augusta Baker, forty books representing positive portrayals of blacks were selected for the initial collection.

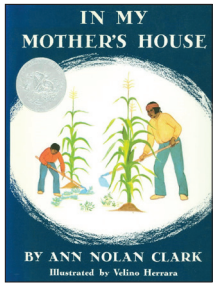
1939—One year after the establishment of the Caldecott Award for distinguished picture-book illustration, the Medal goes to Thomas Handforth for his portrayal of a contemporary Chinese girl in *Mei Li.*



1939—*Tobe*, a 121-page picturebook by Stella Gentry Sharpe, is published by the University of North Carolina Press. Written in response to a student's question about why there were no books with kids that looked like him, the story details the life of a seven-year-old African American farm boy, documenting it with black-and-white photos by Charles Farrell.

1940—A young artist named Ezra Jack Keats cuts a series of four photos out of the June 14 issue of *Life* magazine. They show an African American toddler before and after a blood test from a public health nurse, and nearly twenty years later, they inspire the creation of his character Peter.

1941—Charlemae Hill Rollins publishes *We Build Together: A Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use*, a list of recommended books that countered the negative images prevalent in children's books.



1942—Velino Herrera, a Zia Pueblo artist, wins a Caldecott Honor for *In My Mother's House* by Ann Nolan Clark, becoming the first illustrator of color recognized by the Caldecott Committee, and so far, the only Native book creator to be recognized by either the Newbery or Caldecott committees.

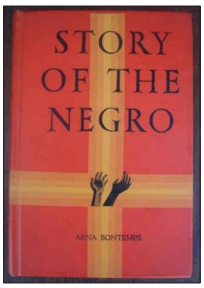
1942—Clara Breed, president of the ALA's Children's Services Division, becomes a vocal opponent of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 ordering Japanese American citizens into internment camps. Breed corresponded with her young patrons from the San Diego Public Library throughout their imprisonment, and those letters today are part of the Japanese American National Museum.

1944—Plato Chan, a twelve-year-old Chinese American boy, wins a Caldecott Honor for *The Good-Luck Horse* by Chih-Yi Chan; he still holds the record for youngest illustrator ever to be awarded.

1945—African American author Jesse Jackson publishes *Call Me Charley*, the first contemporary children's novel with an African American protagonist.

1945—*Two Is a Team* by Lorraine and Jerrold Beim, illustrated by Ernest Crichlow, is the first picturebook illustrated by an African American artist.

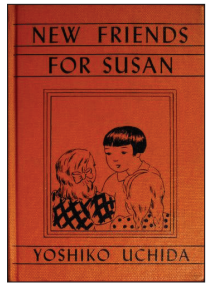
1946—*My Dog Rinty* by Ellen Tarry and Marie Hall Ets is published by Viking. The contemporary story about an African



American boy in Harlem was illustrated with black-and-white photographs to avoid bias and distortion.

1949—*Story of the Negro* by Arna Bontemps wins a Newbery Honor, making him the first African American to win a major ALA award.

1951—Yoshiko Uchida's first novel *New Friends for Susan* deals with a Japanese American girl. It represents an early example of Asian American children's literature.



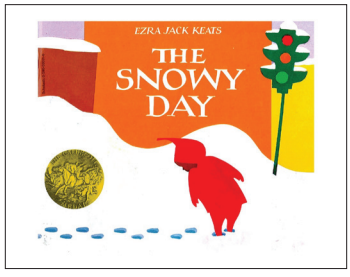
1955—Augusta Baker publishes "The Changing Librarian in a Changing Neighborhood" in the ALA Children's Services Division's journal *Top of the News*. In this article, she offers advice on how to make children of color feel welcome at the public library.

1957—Charlemae Hill Rollins is elected as president of ALA's Children's Services Division, becoming the first African American to hold that position.

1958—*Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith wins the Newbery Medal on the understanding that some stereotypical language about African Americans will be changed in the second printing. The changes were quietly made without the author's knowledge or consent. The original text was restored in the third printing at the author's request.

1961—Augusta Baker becomes head of New York Public Library's children's department.

1963—Charlemae Hill Rollins retires from her position as head of children's services at Chicago Public Library.



1963—*The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats wins the Caldecott Medal. Although the book's author/illustrator was white, it was notable as the first picturebook about a modern African American child to win the Caldecott. Today, it is considered a children's classic.

1964—"The All-White World of Children's Books" by Nancy Larrick is published in *Saturday Review*. In her report, Larrick looked at the 5,206 children's books published by sixty-three publishers from 1962 through 1964 and found that only four-fifths of one percent of the children's trade books published in the United States during that time period were about contemporary African Americans.

1964—The Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) is established in response to a dearth of books available to Mississippi's Freedom Schools. The coalition of authors, illustrators, and educators advocated for more diverse books and for the eradication of stereotypical images in books for children.

Walter Dean Myers

1966—The first issue of *Interracial Books for Children* is published by the CIBC. The influential newsletter published critical reviews of books past and present and ran contests for unpublished authors of color.

1967—Augusta Baker is elected president of the Children's Services Division.

1968—Pura Belpré retires from New York Public Library.

1968—Walter Dean Myers wins the CIBC's first contest for his picturebook text, *Where Does the Day Go?* Charlemae Hill Rollins was a member of the selection committee, along with adult authors Leronne Bennett Jr. and Paule Marshall. In the teen category, they awarded Kristin Hunter for *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*.

1969—Augusta Baker addresses children's book editors directly in "Guidelines for Black Books: An Open Letter to Juvenile Editors," published in *Publishers Weekly*. She laid out what they should do and what they should not do when publishing books about African Americans.

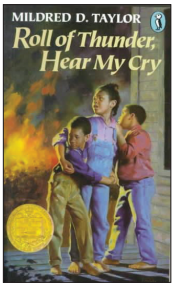
Virginia Hamilton

1969—The Coretta Scott King Award is established. The award encouraged African American authors and illustrators to create outstanding books for children. The first award in 1970 went to Lillie Patterson for *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace.*

1974—Augusta Baker retires from the New York Public Library.

1974—Barbara Rollock is elected as the Children's Services Division's President, making her the third African American librarian to hold the office.

1975—Virginia Hamilton becomes the first African American to win the Newbery Medal, for *M.C. Higgins, the Great.* The book also won the National Book Award and the Boston Globe-Horn



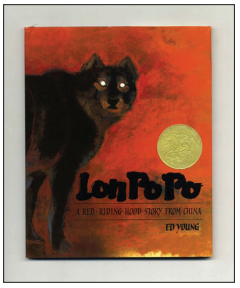
Book Award. Louis Sachar's *Holes* is the only other book that has won all three awards.

1975—Spencer Shaw becomes the Children's Services Division's fourth African American and first male president. No person of color has been elected to this position since.

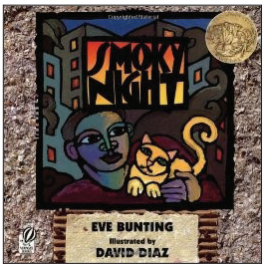
1976—Leo and Diane Dillon win the first of two back-to-back Caldecott Medals, representing the first time an African American artist (Leo) had been awarded.

1977—Mildred D. Taylor wins the Newbery Medal for *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, becoming the second African American winner. She had won the CIBC's award for unpublished authors of color just four years earlier for *Song of the Trees*, the first book in the Logan family saga.

1984—Jamake Highwater, who claimed Native ancestry, is exposed as a fraud by an investigative report published in a Native newspaper, *Akwesasne Notes*. Highwater had written several children's books on Native subjects, including 1978 Newbery Honor Book *Anpao.*



1985—The Cooperative Children's Book Center in Madison, Wisconsin, begins to document the number of books published each year that are written and/or illustrated by blacks. In that year, there were just eighteen books by black authors and artists, out of about 2,500 published. Nine years later, they expanded the count to all authors and illustrators of color.



1989—Walter Dean Myers publishes an editorial in the *New York Times* called, "I Actually Thought We'd Revolutionize the Industry." He wrote of his disappointment with the fact that all the progress made in the late 1960s and 1970s seemed to have been lost.

1990—Ed Young wins the Caldecott Medal for *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*. Although several Asian American artists had won Caldecott Honors in the past, he was the first to win the gold.

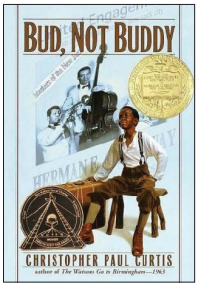
1995—David Diaz becomes the first (and so far, only) Latino artist to win the Caldecott Medal, for *Smoky Night*, a picturebook about the Los Angeles riots.

1995—Virginia Hamilton becomes the first person of color to win the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for her lifetime contributions to children's literature.

1996—The Pura Belpré Award is jointly established by ALSC and REFORMA to encourage books by Latino/a authors and illustrators about Latino experiences in the United States. The inaugural awards went to Judith Ortiz Cofer for *An Island Like You: Stories of the Barrio*, and Susan Guevara for *Chato's Kitchen*.

1997—Pat Mora founds *Día de los niños/Día de los libros*. Based on a Mexican holiday, Children's Day, Mora added books to the equation to celebrate literacy and bilingualism. Celebrated on April 30 each year, today Día is administered by ALSC.

2000—*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis wins the Newbery Medal, becoming the first book to win both a Newbery and a Coretta Scott King Award.



2002—Linda Sue Park wins the Newbery Medal for *A Single Shard*, making her the second Asian American to win the award and the first since Dhan Gopal Mukerji won in 1928.

2003—The Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) confers its first awards for children's books portraying Asian/Pacific Americans, their history and culture. The awards went to Janet S. Wong for *Apple Pie Fourth of July* and An Na for *A Step from Heaven*, which had also won the Young Adult Library Services Association's Printz Award.

2005—Cynthia Kadohata becomes the third Asian American author to win the Newbery Medal, for her book *Kira-Kira*.

2006—The American Indian Library Association establishes a Youth Literature Award to honor the best writing and illustration by and about American Indians. The first awards went to Louise Erdrich for *The Birchbark House*, Joseph Bruchac for *Hidden Roots*, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for *Beaver Steals Fire: A Salish Coyote Story*.

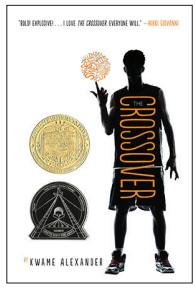
Cynthia Kadohata

Jerry Pinkney

2009—Margarita Engle wins a Newbery Honor for *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom*, becoming the first Latino/a to be recognized by the Newbery Committee.

2010—Jerry Pinkney becomes the second African American artist to win the Caldecott Medal. Prior to winning the award for *The Lion & the Mouse*, he had had five Caldecott Honor Books, tying with Maurice Sendak for the record number of honors before winning the gold.

2014—We Need Diverse Books is established. Much like the Council on Interracial Books fifty years earlier, it originated as a coalition of authors, illustrators, and librarians concerned about the lack of diversity in books for children and teens. A savvy use of social media has given the group wide visibility and has kept the discussion of diversity going on a national level.



2015—For the first time since 1977, both the Newbery and the Caldecott Awards go to people of color. African American Kwame Alexander wins the Newbery Medal for *The Crossover* and Asian American Dan Santat wins the Caldecott Medal for *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*.

San Francisco Snapshots

The 2015 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco was the site of numerous celebrations of diversity in children's literature. Here are photos from two of those events.

Pura Belpré Award winners and honorees were saluted at a celebration on Sunday afternoon, June 28. Along with heart-felt acceptance speeches by the authors and illustrators, highlights included a vibrant performance by Quenepas, a Bomba youth song and dance ensemble, and book signings. Civil rights activist Sylvia Mendez, subject of Duncan Tonatiuh's Belpré Honor Book, *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*, also spoke to attendees. (See below.)

Duncan Tonatiuh accepts an honor plaque for *Separate Is Never Equal* with (l to r) Silvia Cisneros, 2014–15 REFORMA president, Sylvia Mendez, and Ellen Riordan, 2014–15 ALSC president.

(front row l to r) Lauren Castillo, Caldecott Honoree; Mary GrandPré, Caldecott Honoree; Dan Santat, Caldecott Medalist; Jillian Tamaki, Caldecott Honoree; Yuyi Morales, Caldecott Honoree. (back row l to r) Cece Bell, Newbery Honoree; Kwame Alexander, Newbery Medalist; Donald Crews, Wilder Medalist; Mariko Tamaki, author of *This One Summer*; Melissa Sweet, Caldecott Honoree; Mac Barnett, author of *Sam & Dave Dig a Hole*; and Jon Klassen, Caldecott Honoree. (Not pictured: Jacqueline Woodson, Newbery Honoree.)

Librarians, children's book creators, fans, and publishers gathered again on Sunday evening for the 2015 Newbery-Caldecott-Wilder Banquet. Speeches by Newbery Medalist Kwame Alexander, Caldecott Medalist Dan Santat, and Wilder Medalist Donald Crews highlighted the evening and did not disappoint. The night concluded with a reception line where attendees were able to chat with the winners and honorees. Before calling it a night, the honored guests posed for a photo together. (See above.)

The Insider Perspective

Insights on Diversity from Award-Winning Diverse Authors

by Jackie Marshall Arnold and Mary-Kate Sableski

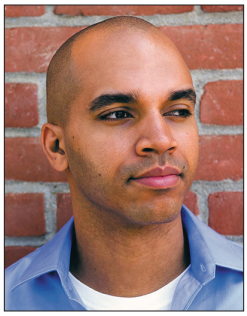
There is perhaps no better source to speak about diverse literature than the "insider" authors who have been writing it for years. We were fortunate to speak with three accomplished authors of diverse books for children who invite students into their books—Pat Mora, Kadir Nelson, and Janet Wong. Invited to participate in phone and e-mail interviews based on their reputation for publishing diverse books, each author shares his or her perspective on this timely topic.

Pat Mora

Mora, who is a second generation US Latina of Mexican descent, has written numerous books of poetry celebrating diversity and is the creator of Día, a celebration of the connection between children and books. Her book *Book Fiesta!* (2009) highlights this important initiative celebrating the diversity and stories of all children.

Nelson, an African American, is the distinguished illustrator of Caldecott Honor Books *Henry's Freedom Box* (2007) and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (2006), among many others. His books profile diverse historical figures but also speak to the present by inviting readers to see themselves in his stories.

The child of Chinese and Korean immigrants who was raised in California, poet Janet Wong has written many books of poetry for children. Her poetry is advocacy in action, in which she works to bring literature to all children. *Apple Pie 4th of July* (2002) challenges stereotypes and speaks to young readers.



Kadir Nelson

Each of these authors holds unique motivations for writing for children, the genres they favor, and the audiences they consider, yet their responses reveal a similar perspective that speaks to the unifying element of children's literature. Just as we seek diversity in children's literature to help children see the similarities between themselves and others who seem different from them, the responses of these authors reveal common thematic elements.

Janet Wong

Children Want Diverse Books

Conversations with children quickly identify their longing for diverse books with complex topics. Worthy, Moorman, and Turner's (1999) seminal work identifies that what students want to read, they often cannot find.[1] Children need and want to see

Jackie Marshall Arnold *and* ***Mary-Kate Sableski*** *are Assistant Professors in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, where they teach courses in literacy and reading methods at the undergraduate and graduate level. They work extensively with practicing teachers through job-embedded and long-term professional development experiences.*

themselves and others represented in the literature that they read.

Wong said, "We obviously need more books where kids see and hear themselves, whoever they are; where they learn that they, too, belong in the library." As librarians, it is of critical importance that we provide literature that represents everyone and that provides access to important topics that children want to explore.

Mora shared a story detailing an event at last year's #WeNeedDiverseBooks campaign, in which many participants held up a sign with the line, "When I was a child, I never found a book with someone like me in it." Nelson said he was not a passionate reader in his childhood because "I didn't relate so much with the characters in the books that I was reading . . . no one looked like the kids in my neighborhood in those books." Children want to read across and within different cultures and they want to wrestle with challenging topics.

As Wong said, "I want to help children celebrate 'everyday moments' and to see themselves, their friends, and their neighbors as worthy of being in books." These experienced authors and our experiences with children clearly identify and remind us of their passion to have diverse, complex books accessible. Making it a priority to incorporate diverse books throughout our selections will bring our reader back to those shelves, to find themselves and others, over and over again.

Diverse Books Are Resources

Diverse books provide rich and critical resources for our patrons. Teachers and families are looking for diverse books as resources to support curricular research areas. These are crucial for our children to have representation of all cultures. Literature can provide the firsthand account of a historic topic as well as the rich details that textbooks do not provide.

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As Wong said, "Teachers and librarians have so much to cover and so little time—and there are so many great books to share! I'm happy with my books being used as resources to illustrate a point in a five-minute mini-lesson. It's easy to integrate snippets of literature throughout the day. Poems make great snacks for the mind."

Supporting student learning and experiences with books as a resource provides an opportunity to read and learn about curricular topics through a different lens and from a voice that textbooks cannot provide. We can provide students curricular connections through quality diverse literature. These resources provide insights into important topics and historical events. Through books like Kadir Nelson's *Nelson Mandela* (2013) and *We Are the Ship* (2008), and Wong's *Apple Pie 4th of July*, students can build upon their knowledge, extend their schema, and have other worlds brought to them. Students who are lifelong self-reliant readers and critical thinkers need diverse books to develop alternative perspectives.

Diverse Books Have a Universal Audience

Just as all cultures need diverse books, so do all readers. Authors of diverse books write for a wide variety of reasons, but for Mora, Nelson, and Wong, their motivation is not limited to writing books for children.

Nelson said, "I don't necessarily feel I am writing for children. I am just trying to write a really good story." His books possess a beauty and a universal appeal that make them engaging to readers of all ages, while also worthy of decorative display in homes, schools, and libraries. *We Are the Ship*, for example, discusses the development of the Negro Leagues in baseball and is filled with information, facts, and stunning paintings depicting some of the most significant figures and moments that were part of this pivotal historical period in baseball. This universal appeal of both image and content of Nelson's books makes them accessible to children and adults alike.

Wong considers the perspective of teachers and librarians as she creates her books, accounting for the ways in which they will both select and share her books with children. She said, "Everyone needs to be interested in learning about everyone else." She feels that diverse books provide these opportunities. "Creating diverse literature—and sharing it—involves risks," and according to Wong, children need authors willing to write their stories of diversity and librarians willing to select and share these stories to engage all groups in the conversation about diversity in literature.

Mora, who has written books for both children and adults, uses this dual audience to share the story of diversity with as many readers as possible. Like Wong, she emphasizes the importance of librarians sharing the voices of diverse authors with children and considers the perspectives and interests of librarians, teachers, and parents as she writes her books for children.

Diverse Books Cultivate Learning about Others

The conversation on diverse books includes varied opinions on the role of author "insider" status in the culture of which he or she writes. As librarians and others who work with children continue to demand more diverse books to share, the need to publish an increasing amount of high-quality diverse books grows. This includes complex considerations by publishers and

It is also vitally important that diverse books are shared with children to provide "windows and mirrors" that become a kaleidoscope of perspectives and dispositions.

award committees, as well as authors concerning who is getting published and why.

Mora said, "If we had a diverse publishing system from publishers to award committees, this conversation would not be as intense." All three authors indicated the need for an increase in the recognition of diverse books to make them accessible to more people. As the title of the influential grassroots movement articulates so well, "We Need Diverse Books." All three authors were unequivocal in their support and enthusiasm for this movement.

Insider status can mean that an author is of a certain culture, but it can also mean that an author has experience or passion for a culture different from his or her own, enabling him or her to write with an informed voice. All three authors interviewed for this piece are of diverse backgrounds themselves, and they feel this insider status has influenced their ability to write about their cultures.

Nelson said he did not set out to write about diversity, but realized along the way that this was a story he could tell. Children who are given opportunities to read diverse books and engage in conversations surrounding diversity will be well-positioned to write books of diversity in the future.

Wong added, "If you consider yourself an insider of any particular group, whether biologically or because of your passion or research, go for it. We need *your* books."

Authors of diverse books of the future are made in today's libraries by reading diverse books, sharing in stories of diversity, and engaging in complex conversations about experiences of diversity in their lives. Diverse books create an opportunity for readers to find themselves in stories, but they also encourage a broadened perspective that can lead readers to becoming the insider authors who will be the future of diverse books.

It is clear from our discussions that the authors wish to encourage others to write and publish their unique stories. It is also vitally important that diverse books are shared with children to provide "windows and mirrors" that become a kaleidoscope of perspectives and dispositions. Children need diverse knowledge, experiences, and perspectives, and our libraries provide the physical and metaphorical space for these ideas to flourish. &

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Children's Day, Book Day

Embracing Cultures, Community, and Books through Día

BEATRIZ PASCUAL WALLACE

Children's Day, Book Day. *El día de los niños/El día de los libros. Día* for short. *Día* as an acronym for Diversity in Action. By either name, this commitment to and celebration of multicultural and multilingual literacy is a creative opportunity for libraries to help children build the awareness they need to get along in our increasingly global and diverse world. We will look at ways several libraries are successfully implementing this literacy initiative, which celebrates its twentieth anniversary next year.[1]

In 1996, author Pat Mora was inspired by Mexico's Day of the Child to begin a celebration of children that linked to books and literacy. She partnered with REFORMA to develop and promote the concept. Today the Día initiative is housed with the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), which hosts a website (http://dia.ala.org) of resources and inspiration for celebrating Día.[2]

Día is officially celebrated April 30, although libraries host celebrations throughout the spring. Most importantly, Día is a year-round commitment to multicultural and multilingual family literacy.

While Día celebrates twenty years next year, several library systems have long incorporated Día into their services and programming, including Multnomah County (OR) Library (seventeen years),[3] Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Library (eighteen years),[4] and Farmington (NM) Public Library (eighteen years).[5]

"Supporting diversity and our changing community is a priority for our library system," said Meryle A. Leonard, outreach manager at Charlotte-Mecklenburg. "We recognize 'diversity in action' through our staff, volunteers, collection, and programs."[6]

Centrally Planned and System-Wide

Día is as much a part of many libraries' program calendars as summer reading. Libraries such as King County (WA) Library System, Multnomah County, and Oakland (CA) Public Library have system-wide, centrally coordinated Día celebrations.

Oakland's Supervising Librarian Nina Lindsay said, "We centrally select one to three performers with high-interest programs. While we focus on cultural and language diversity in all our performers year-round, we make sure there is diversity reflected in our Día performers. Each library can then select the performer they feel will make the best community event for their location. We provide them with books to give away and a budget for refreshments."[7]

At Multnomah, bins are pre-packed with event supplies and delivered to branches, minimizing the amount of time staff spend preparing for their events, according to Outreach Specialist Ana Schmitt. "Last year we had two interns help coordinate the Día centralization and outreach as part of their final capstone project for their MLIS degree, and that was very

Beatriz Pascual Wallace *is a Children's Librarian with Seattle (WA) Public Library and a former chair of REFORMA's Mora Award committee.*

The Arabina Dance Company of San Diego entertained families at San Diego County Library.

helpful as well as a great opportunity for upcoming librarians to get acquainted with this important cultural celebration."[8]

Librarians at King County begin planning for Día as early as December. "We expand programs for an entire week of celebration, highlighting children's programs offered in multiple languages or with a multicultural theme," said Jo Anderson Cavinta, diversity coordinator.[9]

Affirming All Cultures

Día has been a way for libraries to reach their growing Latino communities but it's a perfect vehicle to share and affirm cultures and communities of any stripe. The El Cajon branch of the San Diego County Library serves the largest settlement of Iraqi immigrants in the United States. Librarian Kristin Ward describes her branch's Día celebration as "a mixture of Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and American," complete with a belly dance performance, chips with salsa and hummus, and giveaways of books in English, Spanish, and Arabic.[10]

Since 2012, the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature (CSMCL) has partnered with ALSC and Pat Mora to recognize Día celebrations with an African American focus. CSMCL grant winner Seminole County (FL) Public Library hosted Orisirisi African Folklore at its five branches for interactive performances of Dress, Drums, and Dance. Preschoolers at Rudisill Regional Library of Tulsa City-County (OK) Library made musical shakers and enjoyed stories and music with local storyteller Aneatra Hawkins.[11]

All communities, whether homogenous or diverse, benefit from Día. "Our community is not very diverse, but they do love learning about other cultures," said Theresa McArthur of Passaic County (NJ) Library System. For her 2015 Día, she planned a Paddington Bear storytime with a focus on aspects of Peruvian culture.[12]

Anecdotally, librarians report positive responses to their Día celebrations, with diverse audiences enjoying programs together and new families becoming regular library users. As celebrations grow and become established, community groups and businesses are taking note. "Each year we have more community agencies contact us to participate," said Leonard of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which this year welcomed a local museum as a partner.[13] Oakland's year-round focus on children's access to free books has attracted funders as the library looks to expand its Día.[14]

Be Creative and Include the Children

The beauty of celebrating cultures is that there are so many ways to do it. Music, dance, and food are traditional ways of introducing and affirming different cultures.

Elektra Greer of Longmont (CO) Public Library describes a program inspired by multicultural storytelling and the folktale *Stone Soup*; it was funded by a Dollar General Building STEAM with Día grant. "Each month we featured a different soup-themed dinner paired with stories from different areas of the world," said Greer. Longmont's Día celebration was the kickoff for the Souptelling series; children crafted bowls that they used to fill with soup at the programs.[15]

Some libraries have invited school groups to perform at events or partnered with teachers to display student artwork and writings. In 2014, Puyallup (WA) Public Library featured children's performances on marimba and drums, and hula and Native American dances. Girl Scouts led craft tables at Multnomah County's Día events.

Día can help reach older kids. Farmington Public Library worked with a middle school teacher and her students to present Young Author's Day, in which bookmaking teams presented their works and discussed the illustrations. Greer of Longmont said, "Our teen librarian is a big fan of the #WeNeedDiverseBooks campaign. One way our Día celebrations have been evolving is that we reach more tweens and teens."

Partnerships Strengthen Día

Partnerships and collaborations can strengthen a Día celebration and show community-wide support for diversity. The key to the success of Sioux Center (IA) Public Library's first ever Día was the Latina Health Coalition. The group helped publicize the event through its networks and assisted with the day's activities. Sioux Center Arts planned and provided culturally themed art activities, and local businesses donated refreshments. As a result, Sioux Center's Día drew more than two hundred

Children crafted soup bowls at Longmont (CO) Public Library's Día, a kickoff to their multicultural Souptelling series.

attendees on a $14 budget and won REFORMA's 2014 Mora Award for exemplary Día celebration.[16]

Schools and educators make natural partners. Members of the Puyallup (WA) School District joined Puyallup Public Library's 2014 Día planning committee. Their involvement helped publicize Día in the schools and provided children's performance groups. Teachers were a part of the event, introducing families to new curricular programs in the district.[17]

Keeping the Commitment

Día parties are always fun and highly visible. Ideally they should stand as a testament to a library's ongoing commitment to diversity. That can include

- consciously incorporating multicultural/diverse books in booktalks, book groups, storytimes, and readers' advisory;
- including diverse presenters and multicultural themes in year-round programming;
- ensuring that the books in a collection reflect a variety of cultures, realities, and perspectives, including those of a library's specific community; and
- reaching out to cultural agencies and learning more about the needs and interests of their communities.

As a library's Día commitment becomes second nature, the community will benefit. Cindy Frelick is bilingual programmer at Greenville County (SC) Library System, which serves one of the country's fastest-growing Hispanic populations. "I taught in Mexico for over twenty years, so I know the importance of Día," she said. "I was pleased to see that ALA/REFORMA encouraged libraries to celebrate the date any way they can."[18]

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Intentional Diversity

Program Ideas from the Field

COMPILED BY AFRICA HANDS

The year 2014 was a watershed one for bringing awareness to the issue of diversity in children's literature. The late author Walter Dean Myers wrote a stirring opinion piece for the *New York Times*[1] about the Cooperative Children's Book Center's (CCBC) report revealing that of the thirty-two-hundred children's books published in 2013, only ninety-three were about black people.[2]

Even fewer books were published about American Indians, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Latinos. Myers' son, author Christopher Myers, also penned a piece about what he called the "apartheid" of literature—the relegation of characters of color to historical texts rather than portraying characters as members of contemporary society facing real-world issues. In addition to books featuring diverse characters acting as mirrors through which readers see themselves, the younger Myers regards diverse books as maps that help readers navigate the world.[3] In today's publishing landscape, children of color; children with disabilities; and children with same-gender parents, single parents, or grandparents as parents have very few maps.

Also in 2014, we witnessed the birth of an energetic new initiative highlighting the lack of and need for diverse characters in youth literature—We Need Diverse Books. What began as hashtag advocacy on Twitter is now an incorporated nonprofit organization led by children and young adult authors and library professionals.[4] The organization has effected change at large book events like BookCon, making diversity in youth literature a conversation for the main stage at conferences.

Diversifying the books we recommend to young patrons is not a difficult task. There are quality books featuring diverse characters available today, though certainly not as many as books that feature white characters. Diversifying our collections and programs requires intentionality. It requires librarians and library staff intentionally taking the time, when designing programs and creating booklists, to ask: "Who is missing?," "Who haven't we seen in our library?," and "What other perspectives can we bring to this program?" If needed, create a diversity cheat sheet to help you remember the spectrum of patrons in your community. If all else fails, borrow ideas from other libraries.

The programs listed here, submitted by ALSC members, illustrate how diverse voices have been successfully incorporated. Admittedly, most of these programs deal with racial and ethnic diversity; however, your library's diversity efforts needn't

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Lewisville (TX) Public Library hosted a program called "In the Spirit of Harriet Tubman," presented by local historical reenactor, storyteller, and singer Hester Moore. Moore brought to life the inspiring story of Tubman, who escaped slavery and helped hundreds of others via the Underground Railroad. Submitted by Claudia Wayland, Lewisville Public Library.

be limited in this way. Children with disabilities, non-native English speakers, LGBT children and families, children with an incarcerated family member, and children in nontraditional school settings are also part of the diversity spectrum.

Author Panel

As part of its Big Read program, Reading (MA) Public Library hosted an author panel featuring multicultural contributors to the book *Open Mic: Riffs on Life Between Cultures in Ten Voices* (Candlewick Press, 2013). The panel, which took place at a local middle school, included a book signing and a question-and-answer session with the authors. Author Mitali Perkins also conducted writing workshops with students. The library, with support from Candlewick Press, the local high school, and the Big Read program, was able to purchase books for each ninth-grade classroom, along with discussion guides so the book can be used as part of the freshman curriculum. *Submitted by Andrea Fiorillo, Renee Smith, and Susan Beauregard, Reading Public Library.*

Book Discussion

Gold Coast Public Library in New York offers a book discussion program, Reader Artists, which incorporates literature and art to students in first through sixth grades. Children choose one book, from a selection of three, to read and discuss with the group. The young readers discuss characters and the issues faced in the book then create an art piece representative of the book. Librarian Dina Schuldner adds diversity to the program by including books with African American characters. For example, for the discussion on the Civil War, readers selected either *I Survived: The Battle of Gettysburg, 1863* (Scholastic, 2013) or *A New Beginning: My Journey with*

Addy (American Girl, 2014). Books with characters of color can be added to non-historical themes as well. *Submitted by Dina Schuldner, Gold Coast Public Library.*

School Visit

With funding from the LSTA Indigenous People's grant, librarians at Richfield (UT) Public Library visited the local Head Start to present a program on American Indian tribes in the state. Using props like bows, antlers, willow sticks, and cloaks, a reader's theatre was adapted from *Pushing Up the Sky* (Dial, 2000) giving the children an opportunity to be involved in the storytelling. The school visit was part of the library's effort to increase programming for American Indian families who live in the community. *Submitted by Robin Davis, Richfield Public Library.*

Local and National Tie-Ins

Local and national events portrayed in the news provide plenty of ideas for diverse programming and opportunities for discussion of contemporary issues. Following the defacing of a statue of African American baseball Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson, Julie Marie Frye (then school librarian at Spring Mill Elementary School in Indianapolis), posted pictures and questions about the incident throughout the library giving fourth and fifth grade students an opportunity to reflect on the crime. Frye received approximately sixty responses from students addressing why the defacing happened, how Robinson would have responded to the crime, and what should be done to the perpetrators. Later in the year, Robinson's daughter, Sharon, visited the school for more discussion.

In response to news about national immigration policies, Frye engaged fifth-grade students in a card sort activity wherein students prioritized factors that should be considered when evaluating immigration applications. The students' responses did not align with the nation's policies, so they created projects that "spoke back" to government immigration policies. Frye consulted with Ben Mikaelsen, author of *Red Midnight* (HarperCollins, 2002), to help shape the project. *Submitted by Julie Marie Frye, formerly at Spring Mill Elementary School.*

Celebrating a Holiday

Librarians are always looking for ways to commemorate holidays. These special days are perfect for adding diverse voices to programming. In celebration of Earth Day this year, Brown County (WI) Central Library hosted Miranda Paul, author of *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* (Lerner/Millbrook, 2015). Paul, a board member of We Need Diverse Books, appeared with Ceesay, the inspiration for her book, who traveled to the United States from Africa. Together, the women talked to about 150 elementary school children about creative ways to address environmental issues. They also offered a writing workshop and displayed Ceesay's purses made from

Additional Resources on Diversity

- A Cheat Sheet for Selling Diversity by Grace Lin, www.gracelin.com/media/press/diversitycheatsheet.pdf
- ALA Public Programs Office, ala.org/news/taxonomy/term/624
- Disability in Kidlit, http://disabilityinkidlit.com/
- Institute of Museum and Library Services grants, imls.gov/applicants/default.aspx
- Library Services to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers—ALSC blog posts, alsc.ala.org/blog/author/lsspcc
- Library Services to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers: A Toolkit for Librarians and Library Workers, ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/professional-tools/lsspcc-toolkit-2015.pdf
- National Endowment for the Arts: The Big Read, http://neabigread.org
- National Endowment for the Humanities grants, www.neh.gov/grants/match-your-project
- The Libri Foundation grants, www.librifoundation.org/apps.html
- We Need Diverse Books, http://weneeddiversebooks.org/

discarded plastic bags. *Submitted by Sharon Verbeten, Brown County Central Library.*

Using Staff Resources

While it is great to host diverse guest speakers and authors, sometimes library staff can participate in programs based on their personal experience and cultural background. After successfully organizing Native American heritage month and Chinese New Year celebrations, staff at Pasadena (TX) Public Library created an International Festival. Several staff members were raised outside the United States, so each month a staff member presented a cultural program on his or her home country. Programs included stories, crafts, and snacks from different countries. *Submitted by Hui Zhang, Pasadena Public Library.*

* * *

The time has long come for libraries to normalize diversity through intentionally inclusive programs, booklists, and displays. When children and families of diverse backgrounds see themselves and their experiences reflected in our programs, a new world opens—one that honors their experiences, one with a proper map, one that unabashedly says, "We see you." And, in the process, we help others see them as well.

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Day of Diversity

Extending the Dialogue, Encouraging the Action

SARAH PARK DAHLEN AND LESSA KANANI'OPUA PELAYO-LOZADA

In January, we participated in ALSC and the Children's Book Council's ALA 2015 Midwinter preconference, Day of Diversity: Dialogue and Action in Children's Literature and Programming in Chicago.[1] The goal of the event was to bring together leaders in children's literature and literacy to discuss strategies for ensuring that all children have access to diverse literature and library programming.

ALSC has been increasing its attention to issues of diversity, particularly with the release of Dr. Jamie Campbell Naidoo's white paper, "The Importance of Diversity in Library Programs and Material Collections for Children."[2] Naidoo highlights the importance of libraries as "trusted spaces that welcome children to explore, discover, and connect to the larger world . . . helping them develop understanding and respect for other people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds."[3]

As one of the major organizers of the Day of Diversity, Naidoo put his work into action for all of the invited participants. We are thankful and honored to be included among the seventy or so attendees who have been working toward equity in children's literature and library programming for years, and in many cases, decades, acting as inspiration and mentors to our own work in diversity.

The day included a keynote address, three panels with two related breakout sessions, and a lunch with lightning talks. Our invited role in the day was to facilitate breakout sessions—Sarah's task was to strategize with her group on how to increase diversity in print and digital materials and Lessa's task with her group was to identify partners to attract diverse people and families to publishing and the library. These tasks, and our discussions throughout the day, were guided by several key questions such as the following:

- How do we create mirrors and windows for our children in the books and media around us? Mirrors to our/their own experiences, and windows to experiences not our own?

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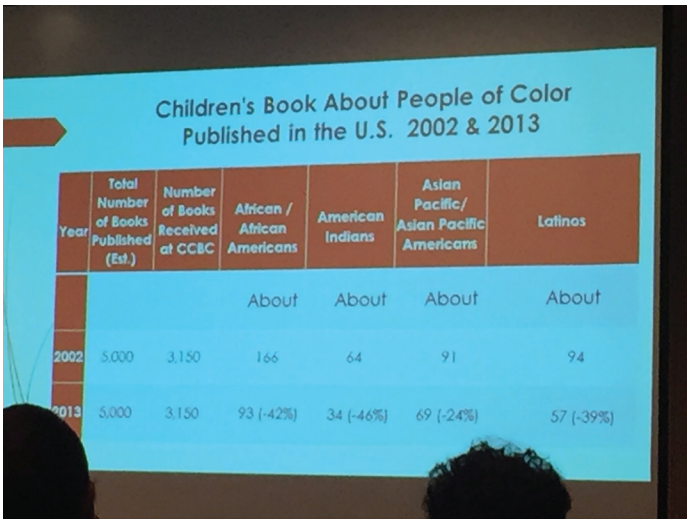
Photo of the Day of Diversity room from Sarah and Lessa's seats.



CCBC statistics on Dr. Alire's presentation slide.

- How do we help close the growing literacy gaps?
- How can we work together with publishers?
- How do we encourage writers of color to tell their stories?

To frame the larger context for the day, we started with a keynote address by Dr. Camila Alire (Dean Emerita of the University of New Mexico and Colorado State University and past president of ALA, ACRL, and REFORMA). Alire related some depressing, but not surprising, realities, such as the fact that children's books actually became less diverse between 2002 and 2013, according to statistics[4] compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. This decline occurred while minority populations in the U.S. increased 28.8 percent during nearly the same time period, a trend that will continue until minority populations eclipse the majority population in 2050.[5]

This raises the perennial question: Why are there still so few books about such a huge and growing portion of the population? We *need* diverse materials that reflect our diverse world. If young people don't have materials that reflect them visually and contextually, they may be less engaged and less likely to read, resulting in lower literacy and high school graduation rates. The cause and effect is not only on the children missing in these books, however, since children who are unable to read about experiences other than their own will not learn how to be empathetic and treat each other as equal lives that matter.

Continuing down the path of education and information, the mythbusters panel following the keynote debunked common false beliefs such as, "Diverse books don't sell"—they do, said agent Adriana Dominguez, agent at Full Circle Literary—or, "We're living in a post-racial society,"—we're clearly not, said Kathleen T. Horning, director of the CCBC. Horning also cited CCBC statistics and the #WeNeedDiverseBooks campaign to point out that race matters in both its presence and absence.

Pat Mora's proposed diverse publishing system.

During the first breakout session, which continued ideas from the mythbusters panel, participants brainstormed ways to increase diversity in youth materials and strategized how to get those materials into the hands of young people. Participants shared ideas on organizing out-of-the-box events, such as cooking classes and summer camps.[6] Wade Hudson, president of Just Us Books, discussed his success working with churches, community centers, and sororities, emphasizing the importance of getting out into the community, in locations where people actually gather.

After a packed morning, lunch provided the opportunity for three authors and an editorial director to deliver moving talks during which they shared very personal and often painful experiences that expose some of the micro—and macro—aggressions that non-majority people experience in publishing.

For example, Ellen C. Oh, author and co-founder of We Need Diverse Books, shared her childhood experiences with schoolyard racism. After talking about the absence of diverse stories in her youth, she said she writes for her Korean-American

Sarah Park Dahlen and Lesléa Newman (author of *Heather Has Two Mommies* and *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard*), at the reception.

Debbie Reese (scholar), Cynthia Leitich Smith (author of *Jingle Dancer, Rain Is Not My Indian Name,* and the *Feral* series), and Sarah Park Dahlen, at a We Need Diverse Books dinner after the Day of Diversity.

daughters because "[she] wanted them to know that they could grow up to be smart, powerful women who could dare to dream to be whatever they want . . . to find stories that they could embrace and that would help mold them."

Dial Books for Young Readers Editorial Director Namrata Tripathi talked about how people make assumptions regarding her role in publishing due to her ethnic background, how people make her feel as though she should apologize that they don't know how to pronounce her name, and how she learned to advocate for herself in the same way she advocates for diverse literature. She ended her talk beautifully—"Instead of saying goodbye, I'm saying hello, my name is Namrata Tripathi, and I'm very pleased to meet you."

The second panel, "Literacy Programming: Forming Partnerships and Sharing Resources," was moderated by the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature's Dr. Claudette McLinn. Hard-hitting and unapologetic, author

Maya Christina Gonzalez (author, illustrator, educator, and activist), Sarah Park Dahlen, and Zetta Elliott (author, educator, and activist), the morning after Day of Diversity

Pat Mora, founder of the successful Día initiative, suggested a new model of publishing that would make the publishing process more transparent and redistribute power among those involved.[7] Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello warned us not to assume that educators—mostly white females over the age of 50 who have been teaching for more than fifteen years—know how to match books with children or even talk about diverse topics.

The same can be said for librarians. We have no illusions that education and library science programs have sufficiently prepared educators to teach diverse topics; today, hopefully, that is changing. For example, Sarah teaches a course called Social Justice in Children's/YA Literature at St. Catherine University, and many of her colleagues teach similar courses in their LIS, English, and education programs. Sadly, the reality is that some librarians and teachers complain that they can't get their readers to read diverse books; in response to these kinds of comments, librarian and blogger Amy Koester writes, "I feel very strongly that if the excellent diverse books in your collection do not circulate, you are not doing your job of getting great books into the hands of readers."[8]

During the second breakout session, participants discussed the role of the librarian in creating partnerships and programming to help patrons build global citizenship, compassion, and empathy, as well as how to empower those librarians to care for the needs of their community and seek out resources. One important reminder from Lessa's group included the knowledge that review journals, which librarians rely heavily upon, don't include every published book. Books by smaller, diverse publishers, such as Cinco Punto Press, and those by self-published authors are less likely to be reviewed by publications that require a review fee or review only traditionally published works. Also, librarians and educators should read Malinda Lo's article series, "Perceptions of Diversity in Book Reviews,"[9] published only weeks after Day of Diversity, which reveals precisely why book reviews are not always fully reliable sources when evaluating

books that contain diverse content. For example, Lo writes, "I don't think it's a stretch to hypothesize that the majority of book reviewers are white, and when they encounter a character with an intersectional minority identity, they must make an extra effort to understand them. What I see . . . however, is majority reviewers deciding not to make that extra effort; instead, they are demanding that the books be simplified for readers who are not minorities."[10] To help rectify this issue, Lee & Low has partnered with Sarah to conduct a Diversity Baseline Survey to examine where we are in terms of our publisher and reviewing journal employee demographics, so we can figure out where we would like to be.[11]

Our final panel concluded with a call to action by Satia Orange, former director of the ALA Office for Literacy & Outreach Services. We were asked what we were going to do about the things we learned and discussed that day. How are we going to effect change in one week, six months, twelve months? Participants were invited to share their hopes and action steps for the future, with a consensus that while many of us are suffering advocacy fatigue, working together at the Day of Diversity renewed our spirits, pushing us toward each other to create the change we want to see.

Many agreed that one of the best parts of the event was being in the same room as like-minded colleagues—those we know in person and those we've read and respected through social media, creating a human connection beyond text. Because lives matter. Because we inspire each other to do great things. Because our young people *need* us to do these things.

Sadly, the reality is that some librarians and teachers complain that they can't get their readers to read diverse books.

These connections lead to the dialogue that needs to happen on a regular basis, and not just isolated to one day or one month or only on Twitter and Tumblr. We need to have the difficult conversations with each other, with our communities, and with the publishing, library, and education worlds on an ongoing basis.

To help us have these conversations and discussions, the first half of the day served as a Diversity 101 for the benefit of those who weren't already engaged in conversations surrounding problems of equity, diversity, and inclusion. As author and educator Zetta Elliott wrote, "The 100 invited guests shared a commitment to diversity in an abstract sense, but at times it felt like the discussions were only scratching the surface"[12] to some participants who have been engaged in the dialogue and work surrounding these topics for a while.

For those participants, the Diversity 101 section acted as a unity builder to look around the room and see nodding heads; not just in affirmation of the facts being brought forth, but also in a deep knowledge of our long and ongoing fight for equity. Now, hopefully, we are all on the same page and there is no excuse for ignoring issues of power and growth in our minority communities, especially as we strive to continue the conversation and expand on what we were unable to discuss.

Interestingly, because the Day was already quite full, explicit discussions of power, oppression, dominance, and privilege seemed absent. As well, participants respected the communications norms suggestions that, for example, asked us to "call each other *in* instead of calling each other *out*." There was a politeness that was encouraged and for the most part, observed. We don't feel that anyone should have been rude or made to feel out of place, but as Laura Thatcher Ulrich, history professor at Harvard University, said, "Well-behaved women seldom make history" and as Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will." Given that we've been making demands for years, now is the time to make those demands with a "roar that can't be ignored."[13]

Panel moderator and Language and Literacy Professor Violet Harris of the University of Illinois and others pointed out that we've been having this same conversation and making these same demands not for just a year or a few years but for decades (on her blog, Edith Campbell wrote, "Violet Harris reminded us, this fight has been going on since 1847 with the publication of *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet*,"[14] and Debbie Reese pointed out that as early as 1927, "Native parents in Chicago wrote letters, objecting to the ways Native peoples were portrayed in textbooks.")[15] Mora pointed out that the system needs to change; Alire showed us that the publishing numbers are getting worse.

The Day of Diversity ended on an intense note; when Orange exhorted us to put our words into action and DO SOMETHING because #BlackLivesMatter; because we are ingratiated into a system that is not interested in letting diverse voices speak; because, whether intentional or not, the system wants to keep us illiterate, voiceless, and powerless; because keeping our stories out of circulation is one way to do that—that the something that we can do now is to band together, to make our voices heard and stop policing each other, so that we can change the world into OUR world, where all of our voices participate loudly, clearly, and equitably.

As we went back to our hotels and homes, many participants took time to digest the day and reflect upon Orange's call to action, and the conversations that took place through their own writing. Several colleagues such as Elliott, Reese, and Campbell eloquently lent their own views on the event and added a number of perspectives to how we can move forward. We highly recommend you read their blog posts, as well as the comment sections (links are in the references of this article). We can all add to the dialogue by moving to action, and so can you.

Among the many ideas suggested by our colleagues, we recommend starting with these easy-to-implement actions:

1. Buy diverse books (for your library, for your school, for the children in your life)

2. Promote diverse books in traditional and creative ways, and not only during a "diversity" week or month, but all year round.

3. Read and support award-winning books (including awards given by diverse groups such as the ethnic caucuses), and also find other books not included on award lists.

4. Make your voice heard whether it be through a letter writing campaign (Sarah has a great one available on her website), commenting on blogs, or having one on one conversations with anyone willing (and unwilling) to listen.

The Day of Diversity is not The End. The Day of Diversity was also not The Beginning. It is a point along the continuum—hopefully a tipping point that, as the We Need Diverse Books campaign has pointed out, will encourage us "to raise our voices into a *roar that can't be ignored*." A roar of today. Of now. Of tomorrow.

The industry—indeed, the world—can't ignore the fact that the number of multicultural books has not increased in the past twenty years. It can't ignore the fact that our society continues to diversify. It can't ignore the fact that publishing does not. It can't ignore the fact that there are very talented, diverse authors and illustrators who make wonderful and amazing children's books. It can't ignore the fact that a lack of diverse books hurts ALL children. It can't ignore the fact that we need to have these conversations, that we need to address these issues, and we need to talk them out and DO SOMETHING to CHANGE the system. And we can't do it alone. None of us can do the work alone, as Debbie Reese so rightfully reminded us. None of us is a single representative. None of us can be a single voice. We all have a stake, and we should all work to dismantle racism and promote equity in children's literature and librarianship. Many of us—including those not mentioned here—are already at work, and now, more than ever, we need to STEP IT UP. Won't you join us?

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A Special Needs Approach

A Study of How Libraries Can Start Programs for Children with Disabilities

DENICE ADKINS AND BOBBIE BUSHMAN

The Census Bureau reports that 5.2 percent of school-age children (2.8 million) were reported to have a disability. The American Community Survey defines a person with a disability as a person having a "vision, hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulty."[1] Per the American Community Survey, the most common type of disability diagnosed in school-age children is cognitive disability, which they define as "serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions."[2]

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act uses a specific definition for a child with a disability, and entitles them to a "free and appropriate public school education" while they are aged three to twenty-one.

> Child with a disability means a child evaluated . . . as having intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance . . . , orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, and other health impairments, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.[3]

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students with disabilities accounted for 6,481,000 public school students in 2009–10, with the most common type of disability being a "specific learning disability" (4.9 percent), followed by "speech or language impairments" (2.9 percent), and "intellectual disability" (0.9 percent). The number of students with disabilities in US public schools has increased from 8.3 percent of total enrollment in 1976–77 to 13.1 percent of total enrollment in 2009–10.[4] However, while school libraries are legally obligated to serve children with disabilities, public library services to children with disabilities are less well-coordinated and more reliant upon individual choices. We wanted to see if there were any common reasons why libraries add programs for children with disabilities, and if there were common experiences from which other librarians could learn.

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Literature Review

Much of the literature on serving children with disabilities comes from school library–oriented sources. However, public libraries are also active and creative in providing programming, materials, and services for children with disabilities, including general programming, special needs storytimes, collection building, and technological and other assistive approaches.

Cynthia A. Robinson and Frances Smardo Dowd surveyed libraries about general services to children with disabilities in 1997. They found that 27 percent of libraries had programming aimed at children with disabilities, 25 percent of their library respondents offered summer reading clubs for children with disabilities, and 17 percent offered puppet shows using "Kids on the Block" puppets designed to specifically represent children with disabilities. Other programs included crafts, games, and storytelling for children with disabilities.[5]

More recent articles describe successful programs and implementations at individual libraries or systems. However, these articles have some commonalities. The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is a key source of funds for public libraries increasing their services to children with disabilities. Grant funds are used for program development, staff training, and purchasing materials, including books and computer workstations with adaptive technology.[6] Libraries are also partnering with volunteers for program staffing and advertising programs at local children's services agencies.[7]

Programming techniques used by public libraries have included adapted board games and video games, retelling stories with puppets, using sensory stimulation, and incorporating play into programming.[8] Staffing for programs is an issue: one library used volunteers to reach a 1:1 staff-child ratio, while others deliberately keep programs small and focused.[9] Accommodations have taken the form of having mats for defined individual space and having children hold weighted dolls to help with fidgeting, using large books with clear pictures, and converting digital texts into alternative formats for children's particular needs.[10]

Methodology

We used a survey distributed to a broad audience of public libraries to determine what services were being provided, and used phone interviews to hone in on the personal stories behind programming for children with disabilities. Surveys are a common method to obtain descriptive data from a relatively large population, and the survey method has previously been used to learn about library services for children with disabilities.[11]

Our survey was distributed to a sample of medium- and large-size public libraries in the United States. This library size was chosen to ensure both that libraries would have a reasonable chance of having children with disabilities in their service population and that they would have resources available to provide for those children's needs. We downloaded the data file for the 2010 Public Libraries Survey from the IMLS website and limited our choice to the 540 libraries in the fifty United States and the District of Columbia with service populations of one hundred thousand or more. We sent our survey to 185, or approximately one-third of those libraries.

We designed our survey based on other surveys and literature about library services to special needs children. We pretested the survey with some public librarians who were not in the sampling frame, refined the survey, and pretested again with a different children's librarian who was also not in the sample frame. Survey questions asked what types of disabilities were found in the library's child populations and which ones librarians were called upon most often to accommodate, whether the library offered separate or mainstreamed programs for children with disabilities, how the library's programming for children with disabilities was initiated, whether librarians had the opportunity to attend training to provide services to children with disabilities, and what challenges librarians had faced in implementing programs for children with disabilities.

Librarians who had more to say were invited to contact us, so that we could learn more about the process of providing accommodations to children in public library programming. We conducted five semi-structured qualitative interviews, each interview taking thirty to sixty minutes. We had some starter questions, but were interested in what the librarians had to tell us about the details of starting and maintaining a program with accommodations. All interviews took place approximately two months after the distribution of the survey, after which we coded for themes and commonalities.

Results

Four weeks after our survey request was sent out to 185 libraries, we had thirty-nine responses, plus an additional handful of e-mails from libraries indicating that they did not offer specialized services for children with disabilities. This 22 percent response rate was surprising because those who did answer the survey were very responsive and seemed eager to discuss the services they offered. Two months later, we interviewed six librarians from five different libraries about the services they provided to children with disabilities. These interviews put a personal face on the delivery of programs for children with disabilities.

What Disabilities Are Present in the Child Population?

Survey respondents reported disabilities in their child populations as speech or language impairments (35), autism (33), mental retardation (31), hearing impairment (28), orthopedic impairment (26), and visual impairment (26). Autism was the most prevalent disability and the disability librarians were most frequently asked to accommodate. The second-most common

accommodation request was for hearing impairment. Typically, though, multiple disabilities were present in the child population served, and our respondents were not able to specialize in programming designed to accommodate only one type of disability. Each of our interviewees talked about various kinds of disabilities present in their child communities, visible impairments such as blindness or wheelchair use, and invisible impairments such as autism or chemical dependency at birth.

Children's Programming

Thirty-seven of the thirty-nine respondents indicated that their library provides mainstreamed children's programming such as storytime, summer reading program, and crafts programs, open to children with and without disabilities. Fifteen respondents said their library offered separate programming for children with disabilities, and some respondents indicated that they would do programming "upon request" when a parent or caregiver for a group of children with disabilities requested it.

Our interviewees talked about what they did to adapt programs for children with special needs. Using music is a popular choice. Carla Kirby of Rapides Parish Library in Alexandria, Louisiana, said, "Music has never failed me. We do a lot of songs with movements and motions." Tammy DiBartolo, also of Rapides Parish Library, said, "We read a lot of books. Humor tends to be the most popular, and any repeating book that has a response that they repeat back to us."

Kirby noted that implementation was "trial and error. Sometimes I would read a book that didn't go over so well. But you know what? Sometimes that book does work for the next group. It's really about getting to know your groups, and that's a process."

The librarians indicated working with teachers and aides to customize programs for each specific audience. Sheila Dickinson of Richmond (CA) Public Library said, "If there was someone who couldn't use their hands, I would do a different kind of finger play, maybe a whole body activity." Adrienne Gardner of Hunterdon County (NJ) Library said, "Sometimes we have students who don't want clapping or don't want singing, and it all depends. If it's just one student, the teacher might take the student out and we'll still do the activity. Other times, if there's more, the teacher will tell me at the beginning and we just won't do those activities."

Elizabeth Zuelke of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (OH) told us about special programs their libraries were doing including Autism Night Out, which allows families of kids with autism to visit the library after hours, in a private situation without the pressure of feeling they might be distracting the library's traditional clientele. Their department was also developing sensory kits for Sensational Storytimes, to appeal to multiple senses during storytime. Zuelke said that sensory storytimes "are great for kids who have a lot of different types of special needs, and yet they're something that other kids can attend as well."

Sometimes programming doesn't go well, as Kirby shared. During a storytime, she began making growling noises as part of her storytelling. The growling noises got a child with special needs overly excited. Kirby recalled, "He lurched at me and bit me on the arm and wouldn't let go." She said it took the child more than a year to return to the library because of embarrassment.

Kirby said, "I've learned from that, I need to know . . . are voices going to be too intense for some of them? Is some of the music? Is clapping?"

Initiating Library Programs for Children with Disabilities

Twenty-five librarians responded on how their library started programs for children with disabilities. Fifteen said that the children's department and the librarians themselves had started offering these programs, while another nine indicated that these programs had been requested by parents or caregivers. Most respondents (25) indicated that their library had not done a community analysis, so it seems children's librarians are themselves seeing the needs in their communities.

Our interviewees gave us a more personal perspective on how their library services got started. Sometimes it was a personal connection. One of our interviewees noted that her library director had a child who is wheelchair-bound, and she had a son with Attention Deficit Disorder. These family circumstances made the issue of services for children with disabilities stand out for her. That led them to develop their children's programming and to expand it to developmentally disabled adult groups. Adrienne Gardner of Hunterdon County (NJ) Library noted the presence of a politically active teenager in the community who worked to make sure the library and the high school were doing all they could to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Frequently, however, the initial impetus came from a parent's or teacher's request. While Gardner's building had been remodeled to ensure compliance with ADA, programming started when the local school's autism program brought students over to the library for a visit. DiBartolo said, "We kept having special needs groups come in, and there was no real service for them, so we started doing a storytime." She also indicated that they made it a goal to increase outreach to special needs groups. Zuelke gave a different answer: "[The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County has] provided services for special needs kids for more than fifty years. Our administration is proud of the fact that we have such a long history in this area."

Marketing

In survey comments, two respondents mentioned a fear of low turnout for these programs, and two others mentioned that it was hard to get the word out about these programs. By contrast, interviewees indicated that they had attracted significant

audiences for their programs for children with disabilities. Zuelke noted that she had three outreach librarians who spent the school year doing nothing but programs for special needs children and teens. Their history of providing special needs services has worked in favor of that high service use; they have connections to multiple associations in the Cincinnati area that refer parents and teachers to the library's services. She named eight agencies off the top of her head that the library was working with, and indicated that there were others.

Several survey respondents worked with local public and private schools, including the special education departments of those schools, and preschools and Head Start schools in their communities. Some worked with schools dedicated to serving children with disabilities, such as state schools for the blind. Many worked with state or community agencies such as Autism Centers, Disability Alliances, and Deaf Services Centers. One person indicated working with a Diabetes Camp, while another worked with the YMCA camp. One librarian indicated working with a local college program in American Sign Language. Another reported making children's programs available at the hospital.

In interviews, DiBartolo and Kirby said their connections were primarily through care centers asking if the library could provide any services to their clients. Kirby said, "Once the word spread that we were doing special needs programs, they just started calling more and more. Now we rarely go a month without a new school or special needs facility calling us." They mentioned that they had expanded their programming to include developmentally disabled adults when they realized that audience was ignored by groups doing adult programming. Dickinson of Richmond Public Library said she started out doing storytimes for special needs kids at a Head Start daycare facility near a library branch, before encouraging the class to come to the library for storytime. She was also contacted by an early childhood school to speak to their special needs classes and parents, and now she does a special storytime or library visit for that school once or twice a year.

Another concern was the difficulty of advertising programming for children with disabilities in a sensitive fashion. One librarian commented, "It's tricky to promote programs for children with disabilities without stigmatizing it at the same time." Most of our interviewees indicated working directly with special needs classes or agencies serving children with disabilities. They advertised their programs through those connections.

Equipment

Thirty-three respondents provided specialized equipment for children with disabilities. Audiobooks, large print books, talking books, and Braille books were most commonly provided, and about half of the libraries provided computers with assistive technology. Three provided Kurzweil readers. The "other" category indicated the variety of needs seen in children's programming. Respondents mentioned videophones, American Sign Language software, headphones for children who need them, film captions and sign language interpreters, sensory and tactical items, and items to ensure the comfort of the children who participated in programs. However, one respondent noted that the high cost of adaptive resources meant they could not offer as much as they would like.

Two of our interviewees noted that they had special funds for programming for special needs children. Zuelke described a dedicated library trust fund specifically for providing services for children with disabilities. "Over the last several years, we've been buying special seating, special games and puzzles, things like switches so they can press to participate [instead of verbalizing], sound-deafening headphones, calming devices. We buy all these things in the Outreach Department, and they're available to our branch libraries if they have special needs children attending their programs," she said. "We used some of our money last year to put together sensory kits. We're unveiling those later in the year for Sensational Storytime."

Because they have that trust fund, they tend not to apply for grants for special needs children's services. Cheri Crow of Montgomery (MD) County Public Library had applied for and gotten grants to provide services for children with disabilities. The grant allowed her library to purchase specialized computer equipment as well as some American Sign Language interpretive services for programs. "Unfortunately, once the grant isn't around anymore, most of our libraries don't have the funds to continue those programs."

Challenges

Twenty-three respondents reported that a lack of library staff education was a challenge for implementing programs for children with disabilities; twenty-two said that they lacked money, time, or other resources. Two respondents reported resistance from library staff, but seven reported resistance from other patrons. However, two of our interviewees said parents and children appreciated the integrated experience, using mainstreamed programs as a way to learn about differences and acceptance. Of her mainstreamed programs, Dickinson said, "It was good, I think, for everyone [in the program] to be mixed in together. Sometimes kids would have crying fits, but you know, that happens with every toddler storytime."

Regarding library staff education, twenty-one survey respondents said they had attended some kind of training for services to special needs children, while fifteen had not. When we asked who had provided the training, the variety of responses suggested that there was no organized agency taking the lead on this. The most common answer was that training was given by school representatives, and two indicated that libraries for the visually impaired had provided some training. Others indicated that their municipality provided training or that they had participated in webinars on the subject.

Implications

Survey results suggested that children's librarians see the need for providing services to children with disabilities and are coming up with ways to fill that need. Our interviews strengthened that perception, with our interviewees telling us what they did and how they looked at their communities. Most of our survey respondents indicated that their libraries had not done a community analysis. This suggests that children's librarians themselves are instrumental in documenting the presence of children with special needs in their communities, and that children's librarians can serve as a conduit between parents and agencies for children with special needs.

Starting Library Programs for Children with Disabilities

For librarians who want to get started in offering programming for children with special needs, the first step might be to find community allies—schools, services, and parents who work with children with disabilities and who can support the library in its efforts. These community allies will provide attendees for programs, and may also provide training in working with special needs children and resources or materials for those groups. Support for outreach efforts is necessary. Many of our librarians mentioned that they provided these services in classrooms, hospitals, and various other agencies outside the library. A librarian who is unable to leave the building may have difficulty establishing these kinds of programs.

Library and administrative support greatly eased the burden for children's librarians. Two of our interviewees were district-wide coordinators: Crow (District Consultant, Montgomery County Public Library) and Zuelke (Outreach Services Manager for the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County). This district-wide oversight allowed them to provide programs and services across several libraries, and provided a general support structure for branch librarians who were faced with new populations and new challenges.

By contrast, some interviewees were responsible for the entirety of children's services in their libraries, without institutional support for working with children with disabilities and were limited in the services they could provide.

Flexibility, diplomacy, and an easygoing nature are also key elements to providing programs for children with disabilities. Our interviewees indicated that they often had to change program ideas on the fly. They had to be able to handle children's periodic outbursts without becoming distracted or flustered, while at the same time educating others about children's needs and limitations.

Education and Support

Autism is the disorder librarians are most frequently called upon to accommodate, and librarians may wish to focus their attention and their resources. However, a librarian who wishes to focus on children with special needs will also want to broaden her skills to accommodate the needs of children with other disabilities. Given increases in the population with disabilities, the LIS profession might use these results to develop a clearinghouse for programs and services for children with disabilities, documenting the trends in programs that are successful, and for which audience they succeed.

If our survey response rate is an indicator, it seems that few children's librarians are providing programs for children with disabilities, but those who do, provide those services with gusto. Children's librarians serve as the gatekeepers to the library for children with disabilities and their parents. Sometimes grant money or parental involvements were the impetus for program initiation. Sometimes it was a librarian having a child with special needs as part of her personal life. However, it was usually the library staff who kept the programs going. Their determination and creativity allowed the programs to thrive. Making community connections was extremely valuable for successful libraries. Many libraries did not advertise their programming for children with special needs to the wider public. Because of this choice, libraries had to locate and maintain positive relations with special needs classrooms, schools, group homes, and the like.

Our interviewees generally had a positive experience in serving children with special needs. Kirby advised librarians considering expanding their services to special needs populations, "I know it may be scary at first to start doing that kind of program. But just do it and you will not regret it. It's my favorite thing that we do at the library."

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Awards that Celebrate Diversity in Children's Literature

COMPILED BY LAURA SCHULTE-COOPER

So, you have just read "Day of Diversity: Extending the Dialogue, Encouraging the Action" (page 23) and you are eager to buy and promote diverse books, and read and support award-winning books given by diverse groups. But, where do you start? Right here! Below we've listed a sampling of book awards and recommended reading lists that highlight high-quality literature for young people about diverse peoples and triumphs of the human spirit.

The focus, given below for each award, was taken directly from descriptions at the award websites. Please visit individual sites for more information about the awards.

Jane Addams Children's Book Awards
Jane Addams Peace Association
http://bit.ly/cal-addams
First awarded: 1953
Focus: books that effectively promote the cause of peace, social justice, world community, and equality.

American Indian Youth Literature Awards
American Indian Library Association
http://bit.ly/cal-aiyla
First awarded: 2006
Focus: writing and illustrations by and about American Indians.

Américas Award
Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs
http://bit.ly/cal-aba
First awarded: 1993
Focus: books that authentically and engagingly portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the U.S.

Arab American Book Award
Arab American National Museum
http://bit.ly/cal-aaba
First awarded: 2007
Focus: books written by and about Arab Americans.

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature
Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association
http://bit.ly/cal-apaal
First awarded: 2003
Focus: books about Asian/Pacific Americans and their heritage.

Mildred L. Batchelder Award
ALSC
http://bit.ly/cal-mlba
First awarded: 1968
Focus: books originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the U.S., and subsequently translated into English for publication in the U.S.

Pura Belpré Awards
ALSC
http://bit.ly/cal-pba
First awarded: 1996
Focus: books that best portray, affirm, and celebrate the Latino cultural experience.

Amelia Bloomer Book List
ALA
http://bit.ly/cal-abbl
First released: 2002
Focus: books with significant feminist content.

The Christopher Awards
The Christophers
http://bit.ly/cal-ca
First awarded: 1949
Focus: media that affirm the highest values of the human spirit.

Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award
Council for Exceptional Children
http://bit.ly/cal-dga
First awarded: 2000
Focus: books that appropriately portray individuals with developmental disabilities.

Ezra Jack Keats Book Award
Ezra Jack Keats Foundation
http://bit.ly/cal-ejkba
First awarded: 1985
Focus: books that portray universal qualities of childhood, strong and supportive family, and multiculturalism.

Coretta Scott King Book Awards
ALA
http://bit.ly/cal-cska
First awarded: 1970
Focus: books that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values.

Walter Dean Myers Award
We Need Diverse Books
http://bit.ly/cal-wdma
First awarded: February 2016
Focus: books that best exemplify Myers's commitment to providing children with powerful mirrors and windows.

National Jewish Book Award
Jewish Book Council
http://bit.ly/cal-njba
First awarded: children's literature, 1952; picture book, 1983
Focus: books of Jewish interest.

Notable Books for a Global Society
International Reading Association
http://bit.ly/cal-nbgs
First awarded: 1996
Focus: books that enhance understanding of individuals and cultures throughout the world.

Once Upon a World Children's Book Award
Museum of Tolerance
http://bit.ly/cal-ouw
First awarded: 1996
Focus: books that deal with issues of tolerance, diversity, and social justice.

Rainbow Book List
ALA
http://bit.ly/cal-rbl
First released: 2008
Focus: books with significant and authentic GLBTQ content.

Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award
Texas State University
http://bit.ly/cal-trba
First awarded: 1996
Focus: literature that depicts the Mexican American experience.

Schneider Family Book Award
ALA
http://bit.ly/cal-sfba
First awarded: 2004
Focus: books that embody an artistic expression of the disability experience.

Skipping Stones Honor Awards
Skipping Stones Magazine
http://bit.ly/cal-ssha
First released: 1994
Focus: multicultural and nature books.

Stonewall Book Awards
ALA
http://bit.ly/cal-sba
First awarded: 1971
Focus: books relating to the GLBT experience.

Sydney Taylor Book Award
Association of Jewish Libraries
http://bit.ly/cal-stba
First awarded: 1968
Focus: books that authentically portray the Jewish experience.

Carter G. Woodson Book Awards
National Council for the Social Studies
http://bit.ly/cal-cwba
First awarded: 1974
Focus: social studies-related books that depict ethnicity and race relations sensitively and accurately.

"Verbing" Diversity

JENNA NEMEC-LOISE

The glorious Jacqueline Woodson has said, "Diversity is about all of us, and about us having to figure out how to walk through this world together."[1]

As someone who has struggled these many moons to pinpoint what "diversity" means for libraries, I'm blown away by this definition. Only Jackie could capture the essence of such a complex idea while at the same time drawing out its intentionality and purposefulness. Diversity isn't just something we think about. It's something we do.

Seriously, do you know what this means? Diversity is an action word!

I know, I know. "Diversity" isn't technically a verb. But you've met me, right? (Slightly irreverent. Bucks tradition. Rocks an elevator speech. But I digress.)

So nouns, *shmouns*. Let's give semantics a rest, shall we? If we're going to make a meaningful difference for the children and families we serve through libraries, we need to do more than just talk the diversity talk. We've got to follow Jackie's lead and walk the diversity walk together.

Everyday Advocates, it's time to "verb" diversity!

But a caveat lest we take leave of our senses: I'm not saying we don't need a clear sense of what diversity is and how we're defining it as a profession. Sometimes, though, you just need to get out of your own way and start doing. Are you ready? 'Cuz here we go!

Use the five tenets of Everyday Advocacy—Be Informed, Engage with Your Community, Speak Out, Get Inspired, and Share Your Advocacy Story—to take the first or next action steps toward diversity at your library.

Be Informed

If you're going to do only one thing, make sure it's this: Read "The Importance of Diversity in Library Programs and Material Collections for Children" (find the PDF at www.ala.org/alsc/importance-diversity). Written by Jamie Campbell Naidoo, this white paper asserts ALSC's position on diversity and outlines two key areas—programming and collections—for library staff to use in building bridges to children's cultural and global understanding.

Next, find out how diversity fits into your library's mission, vision, and strategic plan. Not sure? Go ahead and ask. A pointed

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conversation with your supervisor and/or library administrator can clarify expectations and help shape the direction of present and future diversity efforts at your library.

Engage with Your Community

With your newly minted knowledge-is-power approach, call upon your allies both within the library and beyond it to help move the diversity action forward. Whether you're part of a youth services team or the only children's staff member at your library, rally your coworkers to help you assess the strengths of your current programs and collections, highlighting areas for growth and improvement.

Now turn your eagle eye toward possible collaborations outside the library walls. That means getting out there and meeting with kids, parents, caregivers, teachers, principals, business owners, and other community leaders. Invite them to plan diversity programs and services *with* you, taking care to treat them as more than just intended audiences. Make them your diversity partners now, and they'll become your biggest advocates later.

Speak Out

Surprise! It's time for a diversity elevator speech. For a unified approach, craft a core message that everyone—library staff, board members, volunteers, and Friends groups—can feel confident sharing with community members. Be sure your speech puts the focus squarely on children and the ways in which diversity programs and collections impact them positively.

And don't forget about spreading the word at formal meetings (think library board, city council, and parent-teacher association and local school council; informal gatherings like Family Reading Nights or neighborhood festivals) and via print and digital media outlets. Sometimes a quick phone call or e-mail is all it takes to help get your library on the agenda or publication schedule.

Get Inspired

In search of fresh ideas for walking the diversity walk? Check out ALSC's award-winning Día initiative (http://dia.ala.org) for oodles of free resources, including downloadable booklists perfect for collection development, family book club resource guides, and a press kit for promoting your diverse programming.

And be sure to learn more about the fine folks at the We Need Diverse Books campaign (http://weneeddiversebooks.org), winners of a 2015 *Library Journal* Movers & Shakers award for their roles as change agents for children and teens. They're the epitome of Everyday Advocacy in action!

Share Your Advocacy Story

How are you verbing diversity in your library community? Let us know so we can share your successes with other ALSC members. Write a piece for an upcoming issue of *Everyday Advocacy Matters* (It'll be fun, I promise!) or e-mail the details to everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com so we can include them on the Everyday Advocacy website.

Remember, Jackie Woodson says diversity is about all of us—and that includes you!

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An Introduction to Open Source Journals

BETSY DIAMANT-COHEN AND TESS PRENDERGAST

Welcome to our fifth research column. Over the past four issues, we have aimed to provide readers with useful web links and information that support our practice and work with children and families in our communities. In tune with the theme of this issue, this column focuses on diversity.

Developed nations like the United States and Canada are home to an increasing populace that holds the same rights of access to library services, programs, and information as everyone else. For them and for us, there are open-source journals, accessible to all because they are available online for free and *without a subscription.* Most have articles that can be easily and quickly downloaded in PDF format. As practitioners, we recognize the need for research to be easily accessible, for library visitors and for ourselves. Proposals, articles, and budget requests often need support from research findings.

There are many open-source journals with content that aligns well with our interests in child development, literacy, and library services to children. Here we feature some of these, including some annotations of current studies that reflect the topic of diversity.

Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood, www.pecerajournal.com

This peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journal is published by the Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Association. It reports and shares results of studies by early childhood scholars in the Pacific area. Published three times per year, it includes research reviews, critiques, empirical studies, and studies relating research to practice in early childhood settings.

Sample article: "Evidence-Based Practice, Professionalism and Respect for Diversity: A Tense Relation." Originally delivered as a keynote address at an international early childhood conference, author Michel Vandenbroek contends that quality matters in early childhood education as do responses to diversity, which must necessarily differ from site to site while acknowledging the difficulties inherent in balancing respect for diversity with professionalism.

Link: www.pecerajournal.com/?page=5&a=26922

Early Childhood Research and Practice, http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/

This peer-reviewed resource sponsored by the Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign publishes research reports, literature reviews, essays, interviews, reflections, and commentary on emerging trends and issues by early childhood scholars and

practitioners from around the world. Areas emphasized are classroom practice, curriculum, ethics, teacher preparation, higher education, policy, and parent participation. This journal has been published in both English and Spanish since 2004 and now has several articles available in Chinese.

Sample article: "Hispanic Families' Perspectives on Using a Bilingual Vocabulary Kit to Enhance Their Prekindergarten Children's Vocabulary Development." In this qualitative research study, three Spanish-speaking families of preschoolers were given literacy kits with English and Spanish language materials. In face-to-face interviews conducted both before and after receiving the kits, the researchers explored participants' home literacy practices. All of the families found the kits to be at least somewhat useful, all participants appreciated having the opportunity to choose the language in which they conducted the activities, and the kits were found to positively impact family literacy activities overall.

Link: http://ecrp.illinois.edu/v13n2/query.html

School Library Research: Research Journal of the American Association of School Librarians, www.ala.org/aasl/slr

This is a scholarly, refereed research journal that promotes and publishes original research about the management, implementation, and evaluation of school library programs. Although the material may be read and downloaded for free, it is subject to copyright by the American Library Association and may be reproduced only for noncommercial purposes.

Sample article: "U.S. Students, Poverty, and School Libraries: What Results of the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment Tell Us." Author Denise Adkins describes research regarding school libraries. While her study indicates that adequate school libraries are essential for leveling the playing field between poor and wealthy students, she also states that overall policy needs to shift in order to effect necessary changes in schooling.

Link: www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol17/SLR_USStudentsPoverty_V17.pdf

Language and Literacy, http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/langandlit

Hosted by the University of Alberta, this is the peer-reviewed journal of the Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada of the Canadian Society for Studies in Education. Published twice a year, this journal emphasizes research relating to the nature, function, and use of language and literacy in schools and communities across the lifespan.

The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children's Literature, www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/ojs/index.php/tlg

This electronic journal about children's literature combines an interest in the traditional with an eye to the modern. In addition to academic peer-reviewed pieces, articles also include general analysis and commentary as well as light and quirky observations. Readers and contributors include librarians, academics, teachers, parents, and anyone else interested in the children's literature. Since July 2007, it has been hosted at the La Trobe University in Australia.

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THE LAST WORD

Join the Diversity Discussion

Debbie Reese

The darling baby pictured here is Amelia, the youngest child in my family at Nambe Pueblo, a federally recognized tribal nation, located in northern New Mexico. Nana Kaa—and children like her—are the future. Nana Kaa is Amelia's Tewa name. She is going to grow up knowing three languages: Tewa, Spanish, and English (Tewa is the language we speak at Nambe).

For her baby shower, her parents asked friends and family to buy books for her. I wanted to give her books that reflect who she is, but I didn't have much to choose from. There are, unfortunately, more picturebooks that stereotype American Indians and Mexican Americans than there are ones that accurately reflect who we are in today's increasingly diverse society.

"Diverse" is the word people are currently using to address the whiteness that characterizes children's literature. Prior to that, the buzzword was "multicultural." In the 1960s, the Council on Interracial Books for Children drew attention to that whiteness and to misrepresentations of marginalized populations, but we can go all the way back to the 1700s and the experience of William Apess, a Pequot man raised by a white family. In his autobiography, he wrote of being afraid of Indians because of the sensational one-sided stories he heard about them!

My point in sharing this history is that a lot of people have been pushing against stereotypes, as well as calling for better books, for more than three hundred years. Sadly, little progress has been made.

So here, my Last Word is a call to action.

Speaking up about stereotypes is uncomfortable, but it is necessary. People have to unlearn what they think they know, in order to look for, and then embrace, the reality of who Native people were, and who we are, too. Asking your bookseller or library for books by writers who belong to marginalized populations is also important because it raises everyone's awareness.

Join me. Let's work together so that children like Nana Kaa and her classmates—be they Native, Mexican American, or white—will have lots and lots of choices in the books they read.

Debbie Reese *is Publisher of* American Indians in Children's Literature. *A former professor and schoolteacher, her articles and book chapters have been published in journals and books used in education, library science, and English courses in universities in the United States and Canada.*

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com.

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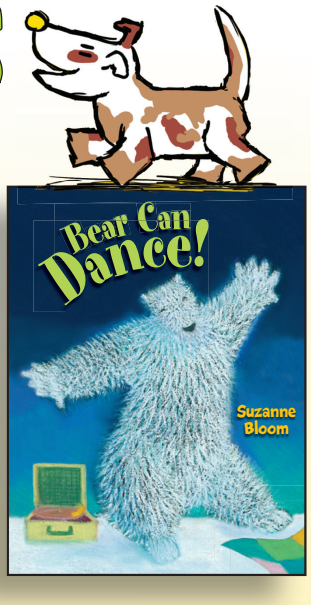

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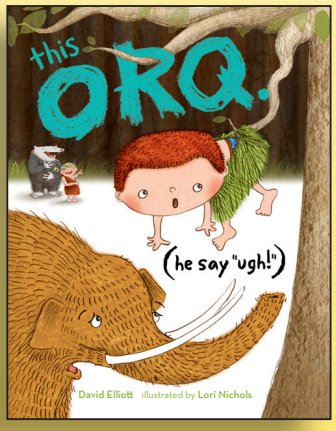

THIS ORQ. (HE SAY "UGH!")

Written by David Elliott • Illustrated in full color by Lori Nichols

Cave boy Orq and his pet woolly mammoth, Woma, return in a new stone-age adventure. This time, they have a problem: Dorq. Dorq is big, strong, and mean. And his pet cave bear? He's even worse! Orq and Woma are fast, but it's going to take more than speed to put these bullies in their place. It's going to take . . . science. Filled with warmth and humor, this enchanting picture book is an ode to the power of standing up for oneself.

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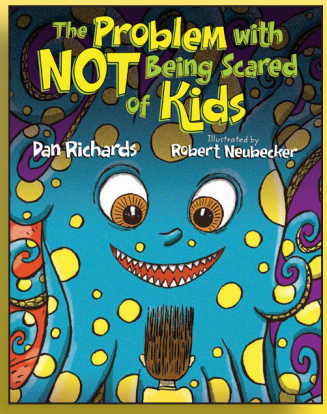

THE PROBLEM WITH NOT BEING SCARED OF KIDS

Written by Dan Richards • Illustrated in full color by Robert Neubecker

The problem with not being scared of kids is, of course, that they're still scared of you. So how can a monster become friends with a kid when being helpful is hazardous, sharing is startling, and claws mixed with crafts is a calamity? Good thing these monsters won't give up! Featuring an understated text, hilarious illustrations, and a cast of friendly monsters, here's a monster of a book about facing fears and making friends.

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