

# Books for Young Readers about Hope, Courage and Resilience in Challenging Times

## An Annotated Bibliography

*Compiled and Written by*

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*Prepared for*

To Light the World  
Stories of Hope & Courage for Challenging Times

A Conference for Teachers of Grades 3–8 and School Librarians  
April 3, 2014

*Co-sponsored by*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site  
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

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*“We can’t change the whole world alone, but if I can teach people that  
if you put your hand in mine and little by little we join more hands,  
maybe we can construct a new world.”*

- Farlis Calle, 15  
Cofounder of the Columbian Children’s Movement for Peace  
in *One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists* by Janet Wilson

## Introduction

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Throughout history, young people have confronted troubling matters in their immediate lives, sought to right wrongs and addressed societal issues. In compiling this bibliography—which includes works of fiction and nonfiction, memoirs and poetry—we looked for books featuring children and young adults in challenging circumstances who, by their actions and examples, made a difference in the world. In telling their stories, and the stories of courageous adults in their families and communities, these books may provide hope and inspiration for young readers.

Teachers, librarians and parents concerned about the impact of disturbing news stories and frightening images on young minds and spirits may find these books useful for putting current events into context. It can also be reassuring to know that other people have experienced challenging times and have been able to find unexpected sources of strength and resilience within themselves.

The historical time period of the bibliography extends from the years just before World War II up to the present. Some of these stories are about facing the challenges of social, economic and cultural change, in particular economic hardship, racism, discrimination and the experience of immigration. Others tell of facing the challenges of war and conflict around the globe. Taking action on environmental issues provides the focus for another section of the bibliography. The criteria used for selecting books included strong and complex characters, significant literary and artistic merit, and, for the most part, publication dates within the last ten years.

We encourage teachers of all grades to use the titles that are in picture-book format with their students. Reading books aloud to a group creates shared background knowledge and a common reference point for class discussions, and the illustrations convey important historical context and emotional truth.

Assembling this bibliography proved rewarding, but we had to make some hard choices as there are many other excellent titles that address the conference theme. Those described here should be considered a representative sampling. Others have been listed in bibliographies that were created for previous conferences in this series; those titles can be found on the JFK Library website.

We hope that in reading these books young people and educators alike will discover much that is thought-provoking, reassuring and inspiring.

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## The Challenges of Social, Economic and Cultural Change, Racism and Discrimination

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**Note:** For a bibliography of children’s books about the civil rights struggle in America, see Literature on the Civil Rights Era for Young Readers, prepared for the 2013 conference, at [www.jfklibrary.org/bibliographies](http://www.jfklibrary.org/bibliographies)

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### Nonfiction

**Burgan, Michael. Breaker Boys: How a Photograph Helped End Child Labor.**

Mankato, MN: Compass Point Books, 2012. 64 pages

Grades 4 – 8. The photo on the cover shows a group of boys covered with coal dust after a day in the mines. Taken by investigative photographer Lewis Hine, this picture helped expose the plight of children working in dangerous jobs. The book focuses on how and why the American public changed its mind about child labor. Part of the Captured History series, which explores how a single image captured on film can influence society and change the course of history. Illustrated with period photographs on every page.

**Ellis, Deborah. Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids.**

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2013. 245 pages

Grades 7 and up. As with other books by the author in which children and teenagers tell their own stories, Ellis introduces each of the forty-five First American youth featured in this collection, providing contextual information. Gathered from interviews across the nation, the author discusses some of the common difficulties faced by this diverse group of young people, including the loss of traditional ways of life amidst the dominant culture. She also describes how many of them are able to thrive and overcome challenging circumstances. There are photographs of each young person who was interviewed and quotes from Native elders throughout.

**Greenfield, Eloise. The Great Migration: Journey to the North.**

Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist.

New York: Amistad, 2011. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 8. Between 1915 and 1930, more than a million African Americans left the South and moved to the North in a movement called the “Great Migration.” In this collection of poems and collage artwork, the author and illustrator depict the experiences of families, like their own, that found the courage to leave their home communities and make new lives far away. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations on every page. The introduction provides historical background. See also *This Is the Rope: A Story From the Great Migration* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by James Ransome.

**Milway, Katie Smith. One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference.**

Illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes.

Kids Can Press, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 3 - 6. This story is based on Kwebena Darko's childhood experience in the Ashanti region of Ghana. A young boy, Kojo, earns enough money from selling the eggs of a hen purchased with a small loan to increase his flock, go to school and college, and eventually to start his own farm and raise his family. Details of village life are woven into the text and the illustrations. With an afterword about how small loans enable families and communities to prosper. In picture-book format.

**Oelschlager, Vanita. Bonyo Bonyo: The True Story of a Brave Boy from Kenya.**

Illustrated by Kristin Blackwood and Mike Blanc.

Vanita Books, 2010. 40 pages

Grades 3 - 5. This uplifting story is based on the life of Dr. Bonyo Bonyo who traveled away from his family as a young boy to go to school, eventually attending college and medical school in the United States. As a boy, Bonyo Bonyo was inspired to become a doctor when his baby sister died due to lack of clean water to drink. The afterword includes a photograph of Dr. Bonyo and information about his Kenya Mission, which funds a health center and opportunities for children to attend school. Fully illustrated in picture-book format.

**Roth, Susan and Karen Leggett Abouraya. Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books.**

Illustrated by Susan Roth.

New York: Dial Books, 2012. 32 pages

Grades 2 - 5. This book recounts the successful protection of the Alexandria Library at the time of the Arab Spring demonstrations in Egypt. Many people joined hands, surrounded the library, and prevented vandals from damaging the building or its contents. The slightly fictionalized text is illustrated with collage in richly colored and textured papers. The back matter includes photographs and information about the library, its ancient predecessor, and the demonstrations that led to Mubarak's resignation.

**Sheinkin, Steve. The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights.**

New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 170 pages

Grades 6 - 9. This is a story about African-American sailors who were eager to serve their country during World War II despite a policy of segregation in the Navy and rampant racism. They were stationed near San Francisco at Port Chicago, from which ammunition and bombs were shipped. A massive explosion in 1944 left 320 dead, two-thirds of them black servicemen who had been loading the ammunition onto a ship. Fifty other African-American sailors, knowing they had been poorly trained to load munitions, were court-martialed after they refused to continue doing so. Thurgood Marshall defended the men, who were found guilty of mutiny. Ultimately freed from prison, they were never fully exonerated. Based on interviews and extensive research and told from the sailors' perspectives with quotes as well as invented dialogue. Includes photographs, primary documents and extensive notes and references for further study.

## Fiction

### **Blue, Rose. Ron's Big Mission.**

Illustrated by Don Tate.

Dutton Children's Books, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Based on the true story of nine-year-old Ron McNair, who walked into the Lake City, South Carolina public library one day in 1959 and insisted on checking out books despite the rule that only white people could have library cards. McNair grew up to be an astronaut, and he lost his life aboard the space shuttle Challenger. Fully illustrated in picture-book format.

### **Burg, Shana. A Thousand Never Evers.**

Delacourt Press, 2008. 301 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Life for African Americans in the small town of Kuckachoo, Mississippi in 1964 remains firmly in the grip of Jim Crow laws, shadowed by the threat of violence and pervasive racial discrimination. The lively voice of seventh-grader Addie Ann Pickett reveals both her curiosity about the growing civil rights movement and her keen insight into the personalities and motives of her family, friends and townspeople. This novel was inspired by conversations the author had with her father, who moved the family to Alabama to do legal work to change Jim Crow laws and help African Americans gain access to voting rights. The author's note, afterword, timeline, and weaving of actual historical events into the narrative make this novel especially useful for curriculum units on the civil rights movement. See also *Walking the Bus-Rider Blues* by Harriet Gillem Robinet.

### **Curtis, Christopher Paul. The Mighty Miss Malone.**

New York: Wendy Lamb Books, 2012. 307 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Twelve-year-old Deza Malone, her older brother Jimmie, and their parents are a loving African-American family facing tough times in Gary, Indiana during the Great Depression. After Deza's father leaves home to find work and her mother loses her job, they go looking for him but end up homeless in a Hooverville outside Flint, Michigan. Important events in African-American history are included in the book, which uses suspense and humor to tell the story of a family keeping its faith and hope alive as it struggles to overcome poverty and racism.

### **Edwardson, Debby Dahl. My Name Is Not Easy.**

Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011. 248 pages

Grades 7 and up. This novel is set at Sacred Heart, a Catholic boarding school 60 miles from Anchorage, Alaska, in the 1960s. It is based on actual events of the era and on stories told to the author about students who attended schools away from their families. Luke, an Inupiaq, is forbidden from speaking his own language, as are other Alaskan Native Americans. Luke's story and that of his friends Amiq, Chickie and Junior come together as they cope with the actions of the priests who run the school. See also *Fatty Legs: A True Story* by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton.

**Fusco, Kimberly Newton. *The Wonder of Charlie Anne.***

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. 266 pages

Grades 5 – 8. In a 1930s Massachusetts farm town, Charlie Anne must adjust to life after the death of her mother and her father's departure to look for a job. The painful poverty and bigotry of the Depression era set the stage for Charlie Anne's growing awareness of the impact of prejudice. She also recognizes her own ability to effect change as she and her African-American neighbor form a friendship that begins to transform their community.

**Fine, Edith Hope and Judith Pinkerton Josephson. *Armando and the Blue Tarp School.***

Illustrated by Hernán Sosa.

Lee & Low Books, 2007. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. This is based on the true story of a teacher from New York who taught children living in the Tijuana city dump. Armando and his father are trash-pickers, and when Señor David brings his "school"—a blue tarp set down near the dump—to their neighborhood, the boy's parents are at first reluctant to let him attend. Eventually they realize that this school could lead to a better life for their son. With an extensive author's note and actual photos of the teacher and his pupils at the school. With full-color illustrations in picture-book format.

**Joseph, Lynn. *The Color of My Words.***

New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000. 138 pages

Grades 3 – 6. An aspiring writer, 12-year-old Ana Rosa lives with her family, including her beloved brother Guarío, in a small village in the Dominican Republic. Through her poems, which begin each chapter, Ana Rosa captures slices of island life, family experiences and her own inner longings. When the villagers refuse to sell their property to would-be developers, who are backed by the oppressive government, tragedy strikes very close to home.

**Khan, Rukhsana. *Wanting Mor.***

Groundwood Books, 2009. 190 pages

Grades 6 – 8. In 2001, Jameela's mother, Mor, dies—and her father impulsively decides that they must leave their rural community and move to the city of Kabul. He remarries, but her new stepmother resents Jameela and she is abandoned in a busy marketplace. Making her way an orphanage, Jameela begins a new life and receives medical attention to repair her cleft lip. Based on a true story, with an author's note and glossary.

**Landowne, Youme. *Sélavi, That is Life: a Haitian Story of Hope.***

Illustrated by the author.

El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2004. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. After people with guns take his family, a homeless boy on the streets of Haiti joins other street children to create a new family, and, helped by a church, they build a shelter. After others set fire to the building, the house is rebuilt, and the children start a radio station to reach other young people. In the afterword, the author explains more about the story, which is based on the experience of homeless kids in Port-au-Prince. In picture-book format and illustrated with full-color drawings and documentary photos

**Liu, Na and Andrés Vera Martínez. *Little White Duck: A Childhood in China*.**

Minneapolis: Graphic Universe, 2012. 108 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This memoir is told in graphic novel format. Based on her childhood, Na Liu, with her co-author husband, have incorporated history, geography, language, culture and mythology into eight short stories which show life in China during the 1970s. Rural poverty, governmental policies and cultural practices (e.g., strict one-child laws, the mistreatment of animals) affect everyday life, as seen through the experience of one child and her family. With background information that includes a timeline and a glossary.

**Lyon, George Ella, *You and Me and Home Sweet Home*.**

Illustrated by Stephanie Anderson.

New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. Third-grader Sharonda and her mother are no longer welcome where they are living—in a relative’s back room—when their church decides to build them a house. Though Sharonda is initially disbelieving, people from the community do arrive at the empty lot, some with tools and skills, others with a willingness to work and learn. The crew leader gives Sharonda a job of her own that she can work on while the adults build the house. The story is a celebration of the power of community. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations.

**Malaspina, Ann. *Finding Lincoln*.**

Illustrated by Colin Bootman.

Albert Whitman & Company, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In segregated 1950s Alabama, Louis cannot use the public library to research a class assignment about Abraham Lincoln, but one of the librarians lets him in after hours and helps him find the book that he needs. Includes an author’s note with historical information about library segregation in the South and the court rulings that ended it. See also *Goin’ Someplace Special* by Pat McKissack.

**Malaspina, Ann. *Yasmin’s Hammer*.**

Illustrated by Doug Chayka.

Lee & Low Books, 2010. 40 pages

Grades 3 – 5. In Dhaka, two girls work hard all day to help support their family by chipping bricks into small pieces. The older sister, Yasmin, tries to find a way to attend school and learn to read so that she can have a better life one day. With the support of her close, loving family, she achieves her goal. Includes an author’s note about conditions in Bangladesh, child labor, and how to help. With two-page, full-color illustrations in picture-book format.

**Naidoo, Beverly. Out of Bounds: Seven Stories of Conflict and Hope.**

New York: HarperCollins, 2001. 175 pages

Grades 5 – 7. This collection of stories explores apartheid in South Africa, with each story set in a different decade from 1948 to 2000. The stories chronicle the experiences of young people from different races and ethnic groups as they try to cope with the restrictions placed on their lives by South Africa's apartheid laws. Includes a timeline of the apartheid era. See also the author's *The Other Side of Truth*, a story set in Nigeria about courage, family and the power of truth.

**Perkins, Mitali. Secret Keeper.**

Delacorte Press, 2009. 225 pages

Grades 6 – 8. In 1974, when her father leaves New Delhi to look for a job in New York, 16-year-old Asha, her older sister and her mother move to the home of their extended family in Calcutta. The new home is very traditional and life there is difficult. Asha must keep quiet about her dreams of attending college, rescue her sister from an arranged marriage, and make a decision about the secret friendship she has with the boy next door. With a glossary.

**Sepetys, Ruta. Between Shades of Gray.**

New York: Philomel Books, 2011. 344 pages

Grades 7 and up. Based on the author's family history, this is a moving novel about Stalin's forced relocation of countless Lithuanians after the Russian invasion of their country in 1939. In 1941, fifteen-year-old Lina, her mother, and brother are pulled from their home by Soviet guards and sent to Siberia, and her father is sentenced to death in a prison camp. Lina finds some comfort in her art, and, at great risk, documents events through her drawings, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. Includes historical background information.

**Sheth, Kashmira. Boys Without Names.**

Balzer & Bray, 2010. 316 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Eleven-year-old Gopal and his family leave their rural village to live with his uncle in Mumbai. After they arrive, his father goes missing, and Gopal ends up locked in a sweatshop where he is forced to work alongside other children for no money and little food. One night, he realizes that storytelling might be the way for the boys to strengthen themselves and regain hope for the future. With a glossary and an extensive author's note about child slavery. See also the author's *Keeping Corner* about a girl in India at the time of Gandhi and India's independence struggle.

**Skarmeta, Antonio. *The Composition*.**

Illustrated by Alfonso Ruano.

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2000. 32 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Despite its picture-book format, this book is more suited to middle-grade readers. The story deals with the serious subject of an oppressive dictatorship manipulating children into revealing their parents' stances towards the government. Nine-year-old Pedro witnesses a classmate's father being arrested for his political views. When a captain comes to Pedro's classroom offering rewards for writing compositions about what their families do in the evening, Pedro, whose parents oppose the dictatorship, writes about playing soccer and wanting a real soccer ball. The author, a Chilean, provides a frank explanation of this practice in an afterward titled "Dictatorship."

**Tingle, Tim. *Saltypie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness into Light*.**

Illustrated by Karen Clarkson.

El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2010. 40 pages

Grades 2 – 4. A young, contemporary Choctaw boy learns how his grandmother was blinded in one eye when she was struck by a rock thrown by an unknown, and never apprehended, assailant soon after moving to a small town in Texas. Moving back and forth in time, short family stories showing courage in the face of "saltypie" reveal the strength of this family. "Saltypie" is the family's word for misfortune, large or small, albeit something to move beyond. An extensive afterward provides background on the history of the Choctaw nation and contemporary Native American life.

**Winter, Jeanette. *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan*.**

Illustrated by the author.

Beach Lane Books, 2009. 36 pages

Grades 3 - 5. Based on a true story and set in the Afghan city of Herat. After her parents are taken away by the Taliban, Nasreen stops speaking. Her grandmother discovers a secret school for girls run by neighborhood women, and there Nasreen gradually begins to heal. Spare, simple words convey the loss of the once rich and thriving cultural life of the city under the harsh Taliban rule. With an author's note and with full-color illustrations in picture-book format. See also the author's *The Librarian of Basra* about Iraq in 2002.

**Yelchin, Eugene. *Breaking Stalin's Nose*.**

New York: Henry Holt, 2011. 144 pages

Grades 5 – 8. In the Soviet Union under Stalin, Sasha is the proud and loyal ten-year-old son of a member of the secret police, but he watches as his father is taken away to prison, turned in by a neighbor who wants their living quarters. Left homeless, Sasha is forced to examine his perceptions, values and beliefs. The story sheds light on the oppression, secrecy and atrocities of Stalin's regime. Illustrated with dramatic black-and-white drawings. An author's note explains the historical context.

## The Challenges of Immigration

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### Nonfiction

**Bausum, Ann. Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories from the Dark Side of American Immigration.**

Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2009. 110 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book examines the history of American immigration—particularly lesser-known stories of immigrants who were denied entrance into the US or detained for security reasons, sometimes because of racism, prejudice, politics and fear. The author’s hope is that these stories from history will help us learn from past mistakes and be better informed about one of the most important policy debates of our time. With large, historical photographs on nearly every page.

### Fiction

**Ada, Alma Flor. Yes! We Are Latinos.**

Illustrated by David Diaz.

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2013. 96 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This is a collection of fictional stories about young Latinos’ immigrant experiences in the United States. The first-person narrative poems provide portraits of thirteen young people who have diverse experiences and backgrounds but share a Latino heritage. Interspersed with the poems are informative nonfiction passages that address relevant subjects, such as immigration, the challenges migrant workers face, and Cuba-U.S. history. With black-and-white illustrations.

**Fleischman, Paul. The Matchbox Diary.**

Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline.

Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In this book, an Italian-American man shares his childhood memories with his great-granddaughter. As a poor boy who could neither read nor write, he found a way to preserve his memories by saving precious objects in matchboxes. The great-granddaughter’s questions lead to stories about his immigration from Italy to Ellis Island and the start of a new life. In picture-book format with alternating sepia and full-color illustrations.

**James, Helen Foster, Paper Son: Lee’s Journey to America.**

Illustrated by Wilson Ong. Tales of Young Americans series.

Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2013. 44 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Orphaned twelve-year-old Lee leaves his grandparents in China to become the “paper son” of a family already living in the United States. Lee must study the details of his new family’s life in order to pass the rigorous examinations at the Angel Island Immigration Station. Full-page illustrations capture the details of the journey and Angel Island, including the messages written with Chinese characters on the dormitory walls. The afterword explains the history of Angel Island and the practice of paper immigration “slots.”

**Johnston, Tony. Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio.**

New York: Scholastic, 2001. 125 pages

Grades 4 - 6. Eleven-year-old Arturo lives in East Los Angeles and through his story, the author captures details of daily life in the barrio, both humorous and serious. Arturo's Papi reminds him that "In life there is bueno and there is malo. If you do not find enough of the good, you must yourself create it. Remember this thing—any small goodness is of value."

**Lai, Thanhha. Inside Out & Back Again.**

New York: Harper, 2011. 260 pages

Grades 4 – 6. Written as a series of poems, this story is based on the author's own experiences emigrating from Vietnam in 1975, just before the fall of the South Vietnamese government. Ten-year-old Hà's sharp observations of her former life in Vietnam, her mother's and brothers' personalities, and the challenges of their new life in Alabama are subtly humorous and conveyed with vivid imagery. Her learning to negotiate American ways and coming to terms with her father's war-related disappearance lead to a satisfying conclusion.

**Lee, Milly. Landed.**

Illustrated by Yangsook Choi.

New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act, entering America from China is difficult for 12-year-old Sun. When he arrives on Angel Island, where Asian immigrants are held, he waits four weeks to be called and then is asked questions that seem impossible to answer correctly. Based on the experiences of the author's father-in-law, the book recounts a story from a shameful era in US history. An author's note gives readers more information about the story of Chinese immigration. The picture-book format has illustrations as well as a good deal of text on every page.

**Lupica, Mike. Heat.**

New York: Penguin Young Readers Group, 2006. 220 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Michael and his brother Carlos face separation in the foster care system or being sent back to Cuba if authorities discover that they have been recently orphaned by the death of their father. Michael, tall for his age and with no evidence of his exact birth date, is a gifted baseball pitcher. A rival coach questions his eligibility for Little League, but help comes from unexpected places.

**Manzano, Sonia. The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano.**

New York: Scholastic Press, 2012. 205 pages

Grades 6 – 9. Fourteen-year-old Evelyn's story is set in Spanish Harlem in 1969, where the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican youth gang, fight discrimination and encourage cultural pride. Evelyn is caught between her parents' efforts to assimilate and her activist grandmother, who left Evelyn's mother in the care of relatives in order to participate in the nationalist uprising in Puerto Rico in the late 1930s. Three strong Latina characters—Evelyn, her mother, and her grandmother—come to terms with one another's aspirations as Evelyn explores her own identity. See also *Finding Miracles* by Julia Alvarez.

**Ryan, Pam Muñoz. Esperanza Rising.**

New York: Scholastic Press, 2000. 253 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This novel is based on the life of the author’s grandmother who, like Esperanza, immigrated to the United States shortly before the Great Depression. Forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico, Esperanza and her mother face the challenges of adapting to farm labor and the harsh circumstances of the migrant camps in southern California. The Mexican dicho, “the rich person is richer when he becomes poor, than the poor person when he becomes rich,” captures those challenges as does the resolution of the story. See also Francisco Jimenez’s autobiographical trilogy of stories about life in a migrant family: *The Circuit, Breaking Through* and *Reaching Out*.

**Senzai, N. H. Shooting Kabul.**

New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2010. 262 pages

Grades 5 – 8. While desperately escaping from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan in the summer of 2001, eleven-year-old Fadi lets go of his little sister Mariam’s hand, and she is tragically left behind. He and his family immigrate to San Francisco, where they are too concerned about Mariam to enjoy their newfound safety and freedom. Fadi struggles with integrating himself into American middle school culture as he schemes to return to the refugee camp where his little sister was last seen. This is a touching story of family unity, and it provides information about Afghani history and Pukhtun culture. See also *Saving Kabul Corner*, the sequel to this book.

**Tafolla, Carmen and Sharyll Teneyuca. That’s Not Fair! Emma Tenayuca’s Struggle for Justice.**

Illustrated by Terry Ybañez.

San Antonio: Wings Press, 2008. 40 pages

Grades 3 – 5. This fictionalized picture-book biography tells the story of Emma Tenayuca’s childhood, during which she encountered impoverished migrant families. Witnessing unfair and unjust farm labor practices led to her work as an activist in the labor movement. Fully illustrated, with each page written in Spanish and English. Includes a short biographical sketch of Tenayuca’s life-long activism on behalf of farm workers.

## The Challenges of War and Conflict

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### World War II and the Holocaust (Nonfiction)

**Borden, Louise. His Name Was Raoul Wallenberg: Courage, Rescue, and Mystery During World War II.**

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 134 pages

Grades 6 and up. This is the biography of a “righteous Gentile” whose intelligence, courage and organizational talents saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from being sent to Nazi concentration camps. Wallenberg came from a wealthy and influential Swedish banking family, and his mysterious disappearance at the hands of the Soviets at the end of the war has never been solved. The story is told in verse and includes many period photographs.

**DeSaix, Deborah Durland and Karen Gray Ruelle. Hidden on the Mountain: Stories of Children Sheltered from the Nazis in Le Chambon.**

New York: Holiday House, 2007. 275 pages

Grades 6 and up. This photo-essay tells the story of the Nazi-occupied Protestant community in south-central France that saved several thousand Jewish children from the Holocaust. The inspiring stories of individual survivors and their saviors are based primarily on interviews with thirty people, who either helped shelter Jews or who were sheltered themselves at Le Chambon during World War II. The early chapters provide information about the war and the Vichy government. With many black-and-white photos.

**Hodge, Deborah. Rescuing the Children: The Story of the Kindertransport.**

Toronto: Tundra Books, 2012. 60 pages

Grades 5 and up. This is a history of the famous 1939 rescue of 10,000 Jewish children during the Holocaust, told in great part through the detailed memories of eight survivors. First-person voices tell the stories of young people who were sent away from home and across Europe to Britain to live with strangers. Illustrated with many historical photos and individual portraits, as well as color paintings by artist-survivor Hans Jackson.

**Judge, Lita. One Thousand Tracings: Healing the Wounds of World War II.**

New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. After World War II, a mother and her daughter organize a relief effort from their Midwest farm and send care packages to more than 3,000 starving and homeless people in Germany. Based on the author’s family history, with full-color illustrations and collages of photos, newspaper cuttings, letters Judge found in her grandparents’ attic, and the foot tracings sent by Europeans who were desperate for shoes.

**Levine, Ellen. Darkness over Denmark: The Danish Resistance and the Rescue of the Jews.**

New York: Holiday House, 2000. 164 pages

Grades 6 and up. During World War II, Danes and their king rejected the anti-Semitism of the Nazis and helped Jews hide and escape. This book relates the events of the Nazi

occupation, and the text is accompanied by eyewitness testimonies of those who were there, based on interviews with more than 20 Danish survivors, rescuers and resistance fighters. Illustrated with black-and-white photos. See also *The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark* by Carmen Agra Deedy.

**Rappaport, Doreen. *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During The Holocaust.***

Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2012. 228 pages

Grades 6 and up. This book focuses on Jewish resistance to the Holocaust across Europe. There are more than twenty stories of escape and resistance, but the ongoing horror of what was happening to others is always present: the ghettos, the camps, the transports, those who did not get away and those who did not survive. Illustrated with photos and historic prints on every page.

**Ruelle, Karen Gray and Deborah Durland DeSaix. *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Saved Jews During the Holocaust.***

New York: Holiday House, 2009. 40 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This fully-illustrated book tells the little-known story of how Muslims living in Paris at the time of the Nazi occupation gave Jewish people, children in particular, brief refuge in their Grand Mosque. They then helped the Jews to navigate the tunnels running between the mosque and the river, where they were hidden on barges headed toward the sea. The authors did extensive research in order to find the scarce evidence of these rescues. The book begins with a quote found in Islamic and Jewish traditions: “Save one life, and it is as if you’ve saved all of humanity.” An afterword describes the search for evidence, provides a glossary, and includes two pages of references and recommended books and films.

## **World War II and the Holocaust (Fiction)**

**Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Boy Who Dared.***

New York: Scholastic Press, 2008. 202 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This is a fictionalized biography of Helmuth Hübener, an actual German teenager executed for his resistance to the Nazis. As he sits in prison awaiting execution in 1942, he remembers his childhood in Hamburg during Hitler’s rise to power and how he was once an enthusiastic Nazi follower, who began to question his beliefs and then dared to write and distribute pamphlets calling for resistance. An author’s note distinguishes fact from fiction, with many black-and-white photos of Helmuth with friends, family and members of his Mormon church.

**Fleming, Candace. *Boxes for Katje*.**

Illustrated by Stacey Dressen-McQueen.

New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Katje lives in a Dutch town devastated by World War II. In May 1945, Rosie, a girl from Indiana, sends a goodwill package through the Children’s Aid Society. The two children exchange letters, and when Rosie and her family learn about the severe post-war deprivations in Holland, they enlist their neighbors in sending food and clothes to Katje, who generously shares the gifts with others in her community. Based on the author’s family’s experience. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations.

## The Relocation and Internment of Japanese Americans (Nonfiction)

**Moss, Marissa. *Barbed Wire Baseball*.**

Illustrated by Yuko Shimizu.

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013. 39 pages

Grade 3 – 5. This is the true story of Kenichi Zenimura (1900-68). Before World War II, he played exhibition games alongside Babe Ruth. When war broke out, Zenimura, his wife and teenage sons were sent to the Gila River internment camp in Arizona. In the barren desert environment, Zeni inspired others and built a baseball field. Text and illustrations mesh to create an admiring portrait of an exemplary individual. In picture-book format with powerful, full-color illustrations. See also *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki.

**Sandler, Martin W. *Imprisoned: The Betrayal of Japanese Americans during World War II*.**

New York: Walker Books for Young Readers, 2013. 176 pages

Grades 6 and up. In addition to placing this story within a broad context of the shameful internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, the author uses quotes to introduce readers to individual evacuees and their families, who maintained their dignity during their humiliating ordeals. The book also documents the loyal service of Japanese Americans in the U.S. military and examines the history of Japanese immigration in America. Illustrated with historic photographs and other documents. See also *Children of Manzanar* edited by Heather C. Lindquist.

## The Relocation and Internment of Japanese Americans (Fiction)

**Conkling, Winifred. *Sylvia & Aki*.**

Tricycle Press, 2011. 151 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This novel captures actual historical events that led ultimately to *Brown v. Board of Education*. Childhood friends Sylvia Mendez and Aki Minumitsu each face discrimination due respectively to lack of access to schools and to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The Mendez family takes over the Minumitsu’s farm when Aki and her family are sent to live in the internment camp at Poston, Arizona. Sylvia’s being denied enrollment in the neighborhood school leads to *Gonzalo Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County*. Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP files a friend-of-the-court brief in this early school discrimination case. Each chapter in the book begins with a relevant Mexican or Japanese proverb.

**Kadohata, Cynthia. *Weedflower*.**

New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006. 260 pages

Grades 5 and up. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Sumiko, 12, is moved with her Japanese American extended family from their Southern California flower farm to a desert internment camp on an Indian reservation in Poston, Arizona. The experience is itself traumatic, but there's also conflict with the Mohave residents. Sumiko manages to create a garden, befriend a Mohave boy, and find a sense of community. The author based her story on extensive interviews with camp survivors and news accounts of the time. See also *A Diamond in the Desert* by Kathryn Fitzmaurice.

**Lee-Tai, Amy. *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow*.**

Illustrated by Felicia Hoshino.

San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2006. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Inspired by the experiences of the author's Japanese American grandparents at Utah's Topaz Relocation Center during World War II, this picture book, in English and Japanese, celebrates the sense of purpose and peace that the act of creation can bring. Everything seems grim about Mari's life in the desert camp, where the mountains, the vast sky, and the blazing sun made her feel as small as a sunflower seed. However, with gentle encouragement from her parents and art teacher, Mari creates colorful pictures that lift her spirits, paralleling the sprouting of sunflower seeds in her mother's parched garden. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations. See also *Fish for Jimmy: Inspired by One Family's Experience in a Japanese American Internment Camp* by Katie Yamasaki.

## **Arab-Israeli Conflict (Nonfiction)**

**Barakat, Ibtisam. *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*.**

New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2007. 172 pages

Grades 6 and up. In this often-riveting memoir of her early childhood experiences as a Palestinian refugee from the Six-Day War, Barakat speaks to the power of literature for promoting greater understanding of those on opposing sides. The written word became Barakat's refuge, and this portrait of family life is filled with vivid and sometimes haunting images. With a historical note on the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and a bibliography of resources for learning more.

**Ellis, Deborah. *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak*.**

Groundwood Books, 2004. 112 pages

Grades 5 – 8. In this nonfiction book, Israeli and Palestinian teenagers respond to the author's invitation to talk about their everyday lives amidst the ongoing threat of violence. Many speak of not knowing, respectively, Palestinians or Israelis. Each profile is preceded by passages about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its impact on young people. Photographs of the teenagers are included, along with their neighborhoods and evidence of the continued violence. The afterword offers suggestions for further reading and a list of organizations that are working to make a difference in this conflict. See also Ellis's *Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees*.

## Arab-Israeli Conflict (Fiction)

### **Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Where the Streets Had a Name*.**

New York: Scholastic, 2008. 307 pages

Grades 4 – 8. Living on the Palestinian side of the West Bank, with the restrictions of curfews and checkpoints, thirteen-year-old Hayaat and her best friend Samy attempt to go to Jerusalem to retrieve a handful of soil that she hopes will save her aged grandmother's life. They complete their harrowing journey with the help of an Israeli couple who sympathize with their cause. This story is told with humor and even-handedness.

### **Carter, Anne Laurel. *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*.**

Groundwood Books, 2008. 224 pages

Grades 6 – 8. In this novel, Amani, a Palestinian girl, wants to follow in the tradition of her grandfather and become a shepherd. While protecting the family's sheep from a wolf attack, Amani meets and forms a cautious friendship with Jonathan, the son of an Israeli settler. Tension rises when building settlements encroach on the land on which Amani's family grazes their sheep and grows vegetables. The Palestinian perspective is balanced by the help provided by a rabbi and an Israeli lawyer, who are involved in the peace movement.

### **Kass, Pnina. *Real Time*.**

New York: Clarion Books, 2004. 186 pages

Grades 7 and up. In this novel, sixteen-year-old Tomas persuades his mother to let him leave Germany to volunteer at a kibbutz in Israel and uncover secrets in his family's past. A suicide bomber blows up the bus on which he and many others are riding toward the kibbutz. The story unfolds over five days, as the hour-by-hour experiences of the individual survivors, before and after the explosion, intertwine, each from their own perspective. See also *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea* by Valérie Zenatti, told as an email exchange between an Israeli teenage girl and a Palestinian teenage boy.

### **McKay, Sharon E. *Enemy Territory*.**

Toronto: Annick Press, 2012. 184 pages

Grades 6 and up. In this novel set in Jerusalem, two teenage boys, Yusuf, a Palestinian, and Sam, an Israeli, meet as roommates in a hospital. Each has sustained a serious injury as the result of accidentally being in the way of violence. Despite the loss of a leg and an eye respectively, Sam and Yusuf decide to leave the hospital to explore the Old City, and they end up getting lost. The two boys move past their considerable cultural differences to become friends. See also McKay's *Thunder Over Kandahar*, in which two Afghani teenage girls flee the Taliban who are terrorizing their rural village.

## Conflicts Around the Globe (Nonfiction)

**Halls, Kelly Milner and William Sumner. Saving the Baghdad Zoo: A True Story of Hope and Heroes.**

Greenwillow Books, 2010. 64 pages

Grades 3 - 8. After the war in Iraq began in 2003, Baghdad faced widespread destruction. U. S. Army Captain William Sumner was asked to check out the state of the zoo, and he found that it, too, was devastated. This photo essay explains how an international team of animal specialists and Iraqis worked together to save the animals and to re-open the zoo. With extensive text and full-color photographs.

**O'Brien, Tony and Mike Sullivan. Afghan Dreams: Young Voices of Afghanistan.**

New York: Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2008. 69 pages

Grades 4 - 8. Afghanistan. This photo-essay features thirty contemporary Afghani children ranging in age from 8 to 18 years. In the midst of the ongoing war, the authors ask the children about their families, lives and hopes for the future. Their responses tell much about the devastating effects of decades of war, and the accompanying photos are powerful. Includes an authors' note with background information about the history of the area.

## Conflicts Around the Globe (Fiction)

**Ellis, Deborah. My Name is Parvana.**

Toronto: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2012. 176 pages

Grades 5 - 8. Captured as a suspected terrorist by American soldiers in Afghanistan, fifteen-year-old Parvana keeps silent and concentrates on her memories, even when she is accused of being connected to the bombing of the school where she was found. Throughout the long days of her imprisonment, Parvana remembers scenes from her past—both joyful and tragic. The author's note provides background on the Taliban in Afghanistan and on the war there. This is a sequel to the author's *The Breadwinner*; *Mud City* is the last in the trilogy.

**Marsden, Carolyn. The White Zone.**

Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 2012. 184 pages

Grades 5 - 8. Ten-year-old cousins—Nouri, a Shiite, and Talib, who is half-Sunni—live in the hazardous area surrounding the US-occupied Green Zone. Nouri blames Talib for the death of his uncle in a Sunni suicide bombing. Conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis worsen, but when snow falls for the first time in living memory all weapons are silenced as everyone views the white flakes as a miraculous message from Allah to cease fighting. Based on actual events, the focus of this novel is on the conflicts between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. An author's note briefly explains the differences between these two sects.

**Naidoo, Beverley. *Burn My Heart*.**

New York: HarperCollins, 2007. 209 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Set in the 1950s in the Kenyan highlands at the time when the Mau Mau rebellion challenged British colonial rule, two boys, one Kikuyu and the other British, are friends. Matthew betrays Mugo's family when he does not accept his responsibility for a fire that Mugo's father is accused of starting. The afterword explains the history of the conflict. Includes a glossary and translations for Kikuyu and Swahili names.

**Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water*.**

Boston: Clarion Books, 2010. 120 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Salva is an eleven-year-old Dinka boy forced to flee his village when the Sudanese civil war breaks out. He sets out on a harrowing journey across southern Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya seeking a safe haven. Salva's story is interspersed with the story of Nya, a young Nuer girl who must walk daily to retrieve water for her family. This novel is based on the life of Salva Dut who returned to Sudan after immigrating to America with his foundation, Water for Sudan, to dig wells and relieve villagers like Nya from hauling water great distances.

**Pellegrino, Marge. *Journey of Dreams*.**

Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2009. 250 pages

Grades 5 - 8. In 1984, during the violent conflict between indigenous Guatemalans and the government, thirteen-year old Tomasa's mother and brother have to flee for their lives. After their village is destroyed, Tomasa, her younger siblings, and her father set off on a terrifying journey to the capital and then north to Mexico City. Crossing another border to Arizona, they reunite with her mother and brother, who are safe thanks to members of the Sanctuary Movement. With an extensive author's note and glossary.

**Perkins, Mitali. *Bamboo People*.**

Charlesbridge, 2010. 272 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Set in present-day Burma and narrated by two teenage boys on opposing sides of the conflict between the Burmese government and the Karenni, an ethnic minority. Fifteen-year-old Chiko has been forced into the army, while Tu Reh lives in a refugee camp on the Thai border. Each is sent on his first mission into the jungle where they discover that in order to survive they must learn to trust each other. The novel explores the nature of violence, power, and cultural, political and religious differences. The author's notes provide background information on Burmese history and the current military regime's repression of minorities.

**Rumford, James. *Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad.***

Illustrated by the author.

New York, NY: Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. As bombs and missiles fall on Baghdad in 2003, a young boy uses the art of calligraphy to distance himself from the horror of war. Ali describes how he loves forming the Arabic letters like his hero Yakut, a 13th-century calligrapher, who, when the Mongols invaded Baghdad in 1258, fled to a high tower to shut out the violence by writing letters of rhythm and grace. In picture-book format with illustrations that capture the beauty of Arabic writing.

**Williams, Karen Lynn and Khadra Mohammed. *Four Feet, Two Sandals.***

Illustrated by Doug Chayka.

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. A ten-year-old Afghani girl living in a refugee camp in Peshawar, on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, rushes to claim what she can when relief workers bring used clothing. She finds one sandal and then discovers that another girl has the matching shoe. Together they learn to solve the problem of having four feet and two sandals; they share their harsh experiences of war, and they develop a touching friendship. With a short author's note that gives information about refugee camps and with lush, full-color illustrations in picture-book format.

**Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan.***

Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie.

New York: Lee & Low Books, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. This book is based on the real-life experiences of a band of approximately 30,000 Southern Sudanese boys between the ages of 8 and 15, who walked nearly 1000 miles searching for a safe refuge during Sudan's civil war in the 1980s. Eight-year-old Garang Deng tells the story of this journey, during which he and others encounter violence, hunger, illness and death. An American named Tom helps them, and they are eventually offered homes in the U.S. Vividly illustrated in picture-book format and with an afterword that tells what happened once 3,800 of the boys resettled in America.

## Environmental Challenges

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**Note:** For more books about environmental challenges and people who have made a difference, see Children's Books on Science, Technology and Environmental Protection, an annotated bibliography prepared for the 2012 conference, at [www.jfklibrary.org/bibliographies](http://www.jfklibrary.org/bibliographies)

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### Nonfiction

#### **Brown, Don. *The Great American Dust Bowl.***

Illustrated by the author.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013. 80 pages

Grades 4 – 8. Told in graphic format, this is the story of the decade-long drought that brought disaster to the American plains, starting with the wild dust storm on April 14, 1935. The book's layout includes panels with graphs, text boxes and quotations from people who experienced the Dust Bowl. The colors of the artwork are brown and yellow until a blaze of blue that comes with the long-sought rain. See also *The Dust Bowl Through the Lens: How Photography Revealed and Helped Remedy a National Disaster* by Martin W. Sandler.

#### **Cherry, Lynne and Gary Braasch. *How We Know What We Know About Our Changing Climate: Scientists and Kids Explore Global Warming.***

Nevada City, CA: Dawn Publications, 2008. 66 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This book describes how scientists find evidence of climate change and what can be done to counteract global warming. Each section highlights school children's participation, under the guidance of scientists, in collecting data in the field. The explanations of the scientific principles are clearly written. Illustrated with photographs, data charts and diagrams. The final section includes what children can do to contribute to efforts to preserve the earth's environment.

#### **George, Jean Craighead. *The Eagles are Back.***

Illustrated by Wendell Minor.

New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2013. 30 pages

Grades 3 – 5. The American bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States, was once dangerously close to extinction. This is the story of its dramatic comeback with the help of dedicated volunteers and years of hard work. Factual explanations and one boy's compassionate efforts are woven into the story. In picture-book format with vividly detailed paintings on every page. See also *The Wolves Are Back* and *The Buffalo are Back* by the same author and illustrator.

**Kamkwamba, William and Bryan Mealer. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.**

Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon.

New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2012. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. When 14-year-old William Kamkwamba’s Malawi village was hit by a drought in 2001, everyone’s crops began to fail. His family didn’t have enough money for food or schooling, so William spent his days in the library, where he came across a book on windmills. He decided to build a windmill that could bring electricity to his village.

Everyone thought he was crazy, but William persevered and managed to create a functioning windmill out of junkyard scraps, and he brought electricity to his home and, eventually, life-saving water to his village. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations throughout, plus additional information about Kamkwamba’s life and achievements.

**Lawlor, Laurie. *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World*.**

Illustrated by Laura Beingessner.

New York: Holiday House, 2012. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. This biography tells the story of the pioneering environmentalist and author of *Silent Spring*, the revolutionary book that pointed out the dangerous effects of chemicals on the natural world. Rachel Carson’s development as a scientist and writer, her educational achievements, her family responsibilities and the powerful effect of her work are included.

In picture-book format with full-color illustrations on every page.

**Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*.**

Illustrated by Eric-Shabazz Larkin.

Bellevue, WA: Readers to Eaters, 2013. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. This is the story of Will Allen, former basketball star, urban farmer and activist, and recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Grant. After playing basketball professionally in Europe, Allen bought a Milwaukee city lot. With the help of friends and neighbors, he improved the soil through composting and began growing food for the community.

Through his organization, Growing Power, Allen has taken his message of growing and serving food locally across the United States and around the world. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations on every page, with additional information about the Growing Power organization.

**Montgomery, Sy. *Kakapo Rescue: Saving the World’s Strangest Parrot*.**

Illustrated with photographs by Nic Bishop.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2010. 74 pages

Grades 3 – 8. The author and photographer traveled to New Zealand, where they joined a local government-sponsored research team that is working to save the Kakapo parrot from extinction. On remote Codfish Island live the last 91 kakapo parrots on earth. Originally this bird numbered in the millions before humans brought predators to the islands. Illustrated with dramatic color photos on every page. See also *Saving the Ghost of the Mountain: An Expedition Among Snow Leopards in Mongolia*, and other books by the same author and photographer.

**Nivola, Claire A. *Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai.***

Illustrated by the author.

New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. This biography is about the environmental and human rights activist from Kenya who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Beginning with information about her childhood, the text and illustrations show Wangari Maathai's deep connection with nature. Founder of the Green Belt Movement, she encouraged people to care for the land and their health with simple, environmentally friendly acts, such as planting more trees. The message here is that each person can make a difference. In picture-book format with full-color illustrations on every page. See also *Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa* by Jeanette Winter and *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya* by Donna Jo Napoli.

**Rohmer, Harriet. *Heroes of the Environment: True Stories of People Who Are Helping to Protect Our Planet.***

San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2009. 109 pages

Grades 3 – 8. This book profiles the accomplishments of twelve environmentalists from the US, Canada, and Mexico who are working to fight pollution in cities, oceans and wetlands. The personal stories are combined with information about environmental and social issues. Readers are encouraged to get involved, and there is a section on how to get started. Black-and-white photos show the individuals at work in their communities.

**Roth, Susan L. and Cindy Trumbore. *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families.***

Illustrated by Susan L. Roth.

New York: Lee & Low Books, 2011. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. With alternating verse and prose passages, this book describes the work of Dr. Gordon Sato, a Japanese-American cell biologist, who made saltwater and desert land productive through the planting of mangrove trees in the African country of Eritrea. This ecological and social project transformed an impoverished village into a self-sufficient community. In picture-book format with mixed-media collage illustrations on every page, and with additional information and photographs of the project. See also the author's *Parrots Over Puerto Rico* about current efforts to save the endangered Puerto Rican parrot.

## Fiction

**French, Susannah T. *Operation Redwood.***

New York: Amulet Books, 2009. 353 pages

Grades 4 – 8. In northern California, Julian learns that his new friend lives next to a grove of redwood trees that his own uncle's company plans to cut down. Embarking on a campaign to save the trees, Julian and his friends face down his bullying uncle to save the forest. With humor and a fast pace, the story captures the excitement and satisfaction of individuals challenging big, powerful interests—and winning!

**Hiaasen, Carl. *Flush*.**

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. 263 pages

Grades 4 – 8. With their father jailed for sinking a river boat, Noah and his younger sister, Abbey, must gather evidence that the owner of this floating casino is emptying his bilge tanks into the protected waters around their Florida Keys home. This action-packed mystery includes a lively group of dastardly villains and eccentric heroes, along with important environmental themes. See also the author's *Hoot* and *Scat*.

**House, Silas and Neela Vaswani. *Same Sun Here*.**

Illustrated with drawings by Hilary Schenker.

Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2011. 297 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This novel is an exchange of letters between two twelve-year-old pen pals: River Dean Justice, who lives in a small town in Kentucky that is facing environmental challenges caused by the local coalmine, and Meena Joshi, whose family has immigrated to New York City from India. River writes about his school, family, and joining his grandmother as an environmental activist. Meena writes about her family facing the challenges of racism and discrimination, the wonders of living in the city, and ultimately the joy of becoming United States citizens.

**Milway, Katie Smith. *The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough*.**

Illustrated by Sylvie Daigneault.

Kids Can Press, 2010. 30 pages

Grades 3 – 8. Eleven-year-old Maria and her family have a small farm, but they may not have enough food to sustain them for the year. After her father leaves home to find work, a new teacher comes to town and shows her how to enrich and preserve the soil and how to bring her produce to market. Based on a real story, the book has an extensive author's note that describes projects dedicated to helping people grow gardens and to promoting food security. In picture-book format, with lots of text and full-color illustrations.

**Pennypacker, Sara. *Sparrow Girl*.**

Illustrated by Yoko Tanaka.

New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. In 1958 in China, Chairman Mao declared war on sparrows. They were among the “four pests” (along with mosquitos, flies and rats) that he called on citizens to eradicate. As part of this campaign, people armed themselves with pots, pans and firecrackers and literally scared the birds to death. The decimation of the sparrow population helped to cause a plague of locusts, leading to a famine that resulted in the deaths of millions of Chinese. That environmental and human disaster is the basis for this fable about a girl who defies the government's orders and rescues birds as they fall from the sky. With full-color illustrations and a note from the author explaining historical events.

**Rhodes, Jewell Parker. Ninth Ward.**

New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2010. 217 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This story takes place during the week that Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005. Lanessa, a strong, feisty and resilient twelve-year-old, lives in the Ninth Ward with her wise and prescient Mama Ya-Ya, who foresees that the hurricane will hit New Orleans with full force. Unable to evacuate, Lanessa marshals her considerable inner resources to survive the high winds and subsequent floods that devastate her beloved neighborhood. See also *Saint Louis Armstrong Beach* by Brenda Woods.

## Collective Works about Activists and Social Justice Movements

**Alsenas, Linas. Gay America: Struggle for Equality.**

New York: Amulet Books, 2008. 150 pages

Grades 5 and up. In this book, the milestones of gay and lesbian life in the United States are organized by era from the 1920s to the present day. In addition, first-person accounts provide insights into how the gay community has lived, worked, played and fought to overcome prejudice and discrimination over the past 125 years. Illustrations on every page include many period photographs.

**Bollinger, Michele and Dao X. Tran, eds. 101 Changemakers: Rebels and Radicals Who Changed US History.**

Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012. 215 pages

Grades 4 and up. This is a collection of short biographies of men and women who have helped change history in the United States, including those who courageously fought for social justice. Though there are many familiar names here, the focus is much more on lesser-known people who were active in the abolition of slavery, the labor union and environmental movements, and the struggles for civil rights for African Americans, women, immigrants and the LGBT community. The entries are arranged chronologically and each includes a large picture, a brief account of experiences or achievements, a biographical timeline, study questions and suggested activities.

**Myers, Walter Dean. We Are America: A Tribute from the Heart.**

Illustrated by Christopher Myers.

New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 38 pages

Grades 3 and up. In the author's note, Walter Dean Myers writes, "I began the writing process by making myself learn more about my country, in order to understand why so many millions chose to come to our shores or, if they did not arrive by choice, how they still prevailed." In the artist's note, Christopher Myers concludes with his thoughts about the illustrations for the poems: "This is my way of asking the questions, because in some way the beauty of this country is in its open-endedness, the question mark of it. Where other places in the world end in periods, neat packets of sealed identities, we end in possibilities." Quotes of famous individuals are interspersed with the poems and paintings. The back matter contains explanations for each quote.

**Scandiffio, Laura. *People Who Said No: Courage Against Oppression*.**

Toronto: Annick Press, 2012. 168 pages

Grades 5 and up. This book profiles people who followed their moral compasses, speaking out and standing up for what was right. The author drew on factual accounts, biographies and memoirs to present each subject, while adapting some conversations and scenes to dramatize the person's struggle in taking action against oppression and governmental wrongdoing—which sometimes meant breaking laws. Seven people are profiled: Sophie Scholl, Hans Scholl, Rosa Parks, Helen Suzman, Andrei Sakharov, Oscar Romero, and Aung San Suu Kyi. Within each profile, a one- to three-page “confidential” file explains the wider context. Illustrated with photographs.

**Takaki, Ronald. *A Different Mirror for Young People: A History of Multicultural America*.** Adapted by Rebecca Stefoff.

New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012. 340 pages

Grades 6 and up. Takaki's book for adults about multiculturalism has been adapted for a younger audience. Through the stories and voices of people from diverse ethnic groups, this book presents an inclusive picture of US history, emphasizing the great difficulties and injustices that immigrants and minorities have faced while also giving a sense of hope for the opportunities that young people have to bring about change. At the end of each chapter, there are short stories about individuals who faced challenges in immigrating to the United States. Illustrated with period prints and photographs.

**Wilson, Janet. *One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists*.**

Illustrated by the author.

Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 2008. 46 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This book profiles young people from around the globe who have worked to promote peace, many of them having cofounded organizations or otherwise spoken out. Each double spread includes sidebars with children's poetry and drawings, quotes from well-known peace activists, photographs, the author's paintings, and relevant facts. Interspersed with text describing the young people's efforts on behalf of peace.