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Volume 31, Issue 3

THE

# Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association  
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## School Library Joy

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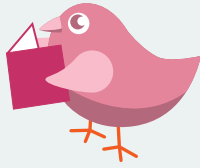
## Glimmers in the LLC

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## *The power of books*

and the role they play in our lives

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# THE Teaching Librarian

Volume 31, Issue 3 May 2024 ISSN 1188679X

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**joy @ your library**

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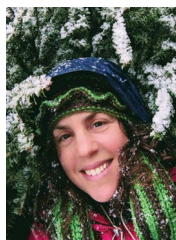
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Volume 31, Issue 3



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TingL Mission

The Teaching Librarian

The Teaching Librarian (TingL) is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA). It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. The Teaching Librarian promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

TingL References

The Teaching Librarian is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> edition) or APA Style.

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TingL Submission Guidelines

Please Note: Themes are subject to change.

September 2024 V. 32, Issue 1	“Community @ Your Library” Deadline: May 1, 2024
January 2025 V. 32, Issue 2	“Mystery @ Your Library” Deadline: October 11, 2024

Articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by high quality images and/or graphics whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a Microsoft Word (or compatible) file. Images or graphics must be sent separately in a digital format, such as .jpeg, .png, .tiff, or .ai. The minimum resolution must be 1000 px at 150 dpi. With photos that contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual’s permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, content, and style. Journalistic style is preferred. The Teaching Librarian adheres to Canadian Press Style. Articles must include the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing.

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# The Editor's Notebook



Danny Neville

Recently, a friend's daughter came home with a school library book that filled her with excitement. *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* is a picture book about a little girl who wants to make the perfect bao buns. It's also a story about determination, perseverance and tradition... all concepts that many of us hope our students and children will connect with and apply in their own lives.

My friend's daughter was inspired to take her enjoyment of the book to a new level. She asked her parents to help her make her very own buns, so they used the recipe from the book and spent an evening making bao from scratch. Her mom posted some photos on social media, and when I saw the joy on this little girl's face with her platefuls of homemade bao, I knew I'd found a perfect example of #SchoolLibraryJoy.



This is an experience that she will cherish for a long time. She has learned that ideas from books, with a little perseverance, can become a reality. She experienced a hands-on example of tradition from another culture, fostering a sense of curiosity and understanding. She learned a new skill, made memories with her family and shared her excitement with her younger sister, who also got to experience the bao-making extravaganza.

All of this was possible because the right book landed in the right hands at the right moment. All of this happened, dear reader, because of you. You, the school library professional who takes the time to get to know your readers, who carefully selects books for your school community, who seizes opportunities to inspire your students and ignite a love of reading every day.

This little girl is *lucky* to have access to a fully staffed library where her class regularly learns about different authors, upcoming releases and the joy of reading.

She is *fortunate* to have a school librarian who spends time sourcing great books that represent different cultures, experiences and voices.

She is *blessed* to have a professional library worker to guide her, to inspire her and to show her the power of a great book. But why should she have to be lucky to experience this profound #SchoolLibraryJoy? Why doesn't every student in our province have the same opportunity?

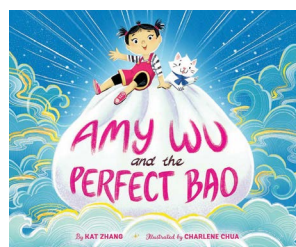
Although the focus of this issue is about the joy our school libraries bring to our students, we can't forget about the reality of our landscape. Students shouldn't have to be lucky to experience #SchoolLibraryJoy. Fully funded and staffed school libraries should be something that every student in Ontario has access to, not just those with the right postal code.

But, dear reader, it's not all dreary news. In fact, it's quite the opposite. As you'll see in this issue, there is plenty of #SchoolLibraryJoy happening across our province. Check out Melissa Bulgutch's outdoor connections to school libraries or Shelagh Strachan's *Book It* reading marathon and you'll see school libraries bursting at the seams with excitement and happiness.

We also have lots of reading recommendations for you. From Lisa Noble's hot tips for YA readers, to Rabia Khokhar's picture book suggestions, or our dynamic mother-daughter duo, Diana and Mary Maliszewski, who have reincarnated a former TingL feature about graphic novels, *Drawn to the Form*, there is sure to be a great read for you and your library patrons in this issue.

I leave you with a challenge; to share your #SchoolLibraryJoy far and wide. Tell people what's happening in your library. Send information home to families. Take over a bulletin board outside your library. Meet with your admin team and tell them the amazing things you do. If you're a social media user, post your joy using our #SchoolLibraryJoy hashtag and repost the joy from other school library professionals. Do whatever you can to share your #SchoolLibraryJoy with the world. I can't wait to hear your stories. ■

Danny



*Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* written by Amy Wu, written by Kat Zhang, illustrated by Charlene Chua, published by Simon & Schuster.

# President's Report

“**The very act of being a school library professional is an act of advocacy.**”

**W**here do I see joy @ my library learning commons?

- 📖 When I catch a reader's eyes lighting up when recommending a title they've just finished to a classmate - that's #SchoolLibraryJoy.
- 📖 When one of my shyest Grade 7 students is animatedly reading a childhood book they've rediscovered to their equally shy Kindergarten Reading Buddy who has leaned in with interest and is eagerly turning the pages - that's #SchoolLibraryJoy.
- 📖 When I am able to find the just-right book for a reluctant reader and put it in their hands at the just-right time, and the stars align and they get hooked onto a new genre, author, or series - that's #SchoolLibraryJoy.

As Cicely Lewis, creator of the Read Woke Challenge, noted at her OSLA Spotlight Series address, “it's the little things that matter the most.” And she's absolutely right. With everything happening in the school library sector these days, it can be easy to get discouraged. Boards are cutting library staffing and programming at an alarming rate. Many school library staff are finding that their staffing allocations are only functional “on paper” and what plays out in their timetable is a whole other scenario. Then, there are book challenges and outright book bans or shadow bans with which to contend. It's. A. Lot.

Yet there is much to celebrate. As the 2024 President of the OSLA, I am excited to echo the challenge that Cicely made when she suggested that, “everyone is part of the movement.” Your voice matters. The very act of being a school library professional is an act of advocacy. Every collaboration with a colleague, every conversation with an administrator, every time you recommend an #OwnVoices book to a student, this is all advocacy. And it all matters. We don't all have to be out protesting with placards or speaking in front of Board meetings, but as Cicely suggested, “we

all have to Get Loud!” It can start at home, raising your family to be empathetic citizens who care about others. It can start in your library learning commons, ensuring you take the time to curate a collection with an equity lens that reflects your school community. It can start in your ETFO or your union local, volunteering with your Library Committee (or starting one if you don't yet have one). The trick is to remember this: it all counts. It's all advocacy.



As our Past-President, Johanna Gibson-Lawler, always says, “the school library sector in Ontario is on fire” and we cannot afford to sit on the sidelines and be quiet. We need to stand up and be heard: our roles and our libraries are literally on the line. We need to work together as a collective voice to ensure that all the good work we do isn't forgotten. We know how vital it is that every school in Ontario has a fully funded, fully staffed school library. As school library professionals, we need to work together to spread the #SchoolLibraryJoy so that everyone else knows it, too. Especially those folks in the Board offices around the province and down at Queen's Park.

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Wendy Burch Jones

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Before Super Conference, OSLA Council was part of a one-day OLA Board Retreat and the energy in the room was phenomenal. We were able to welcome Jennifer Angle, our incoming OSLA Vice-President to the team, who brought fantastic ideas and passion to the table. We also watched in awe as Richard Reid and Kate Johnson-McGregor walked through their last-minute Super Conference Co-Planner duties all while looking perfectly calm, cool and collected and perfectly unruffled, no matter what arose. Our deep gratitude to this dynamic duo for their time, energy and commitment to helping achieve an incredible conference experience for so many people in what I like to call, “three magical days in LibraryLand.” Whether it was their first time at Super Conference or their ump-teenth time in attendance, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The stroke of genius for having Cicely Lewis as our Spotlight Speaker is going to be hard to top! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



We also want to give our heartfelt thanks to two outgoing members of our OSLA Council: Shelley Merton, our Central East Region Councilor, and Beth Lyons, our outgoing Past-President. Both of these incredible leaders have been strong advocates for the school library sector and we will very much miss their voices (and faces!) on Council. While life has taken them in a different direction for now, I am sure that their passion for libraries and advocacy is not done. As many of you know, once you’ve stepped into a library role, you don’t ever really leave. So please know, Beth and Shelley, you’ll always have a place here.

For anyone else wondering where their place is...consider this: your place is exactly where you are doing exactly the work you are already doing. School library professionals are an incredibly creative and innovative bunch. Why not take the first step in your advocacy (or maybe step up your advocacy game) and share what you’re doing in your LLC? GET LOUD! Post a picture! Send a tweet! Get on Blue Sky! Make a Tik Tok or Instagram post! Post something in your Board’s chat room/sharing site. And every single time (*this is important*) - use the hashtag **#SchoolLibraryJoy**.

Remember:

1. it’s all advocacy, and
2. your voice matters. 🗣️

Yours in advocacy always,

*Wendy B Jones*

Wendy Burch Jones  
2024 OSLA President

Wendy Burch Jones

# Origin Stories: Who We Are

In this issue, we are highlighting members from the Central West Region. Your OSLA councillor for the region is Ruth Gretsinger, a teacher-librarian from the District School Board of Niagara and steadfast OLA and Forest of Reading volunteer. You'll also hear from Amy Johnston, a library technician from the region, as well as Jenn Angle, a teacher-librarian from the Halton Wentworth District School Board and your incoming OSLA Vice President.

## **My Path to the Library** **Amy Johnston, Library Technician**

I have found that a common theme for people who work in libraries is that they love to read and were always surrounded by people who loved to read while they grew up. I remember trips to the library and there were always books all over our house. One of my earliest memories is of being allowed to leave the light on and read a little by myself before bed - a habit that has been a part of my life ever since!



My journey to school libraries took a bit of discovery. I chose an open-ended undergrad at the University of Waterloo called Social

Development Studies (mix of psychology, sociology and social work). I wasn't sure what I wanted to do but I figured I would want to work with people. I discovered that I didn't feel drawn to a traditional teaching role. After graduating I still didn't have a career plan in mind, but I had been working at Chapters. Sitting with my partner (later husband), we came up with a list of things that I loved and was interested in. No surprise, books and reading came to the top. This led me to Mohawk College and the Library and Information Technician program. I took many classes related to children and youth services and school libraries. This is how I discovered that even though I didn't want to work in a traditional teaching role, I felt I **would** like to work in schools. I have since worked for private schools (Kingsway College School and Hillfield Strathallan College) and in public school boards (WRDSB and HCDSB). Each role has deepened my understanding of the importance of school libraries and the professionals who work so hard to keep them relevant for students.

When I share that I work in libraries people often comment that I must love being able to read all day. I often reply that I would love to be able to do that but rarely have time to read! Starting this journey had to do with a love of reading, and that is certainly something I love to share with students, but I've learned and discovered that there is so much more that goes into this job!

I'm excited to continue my journey as I work toward a MLIS degree through San José State University. As a library technician, I strive to build relationships and support the learning and growth of students, peers and myself. I aim to foster a love of reading, information, digital literacy and learning anchored in collaboration, social justice and environmental responsibility. I'm excited to see how I can learn and grow with the goal of serving

students and staff in the best way possible.

## **GROWING, Learning, Unlearning and Finding our Reading JOY Together** **Jenn Angle, Teacher-Librarian**

I have always been a reader. Some of my earliest memories as a child were with books. I would get completely lost in books, sneaking away in our family home - sometimes hidden in a closet or underneath the stairs in our basement. Even when my parents called for me, I would often ignore them to be able to finish the chapter in my book. This was my great escape. I loved books so much that I would often venture downtown, in Hamilton, to our public library. I'd find the librarian and ask for book recommendations based on my latest interests, and they were always so eager to help with my requests. It makes sense that today I am now doing this for others - helping students find books they'll LOVE and fostering their JOY for reading as so many other book lovers did for me.



My journey as a teacher-librarian began 13 years ago when I became the teacher-librarian at a K-8 school, in a small rural community with a little more than 300 students. Today, our school has grown to over 1000 students and with this growth,

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we have also grown our collection and the opportunities in our school library learning commons. I am truly grateful to also be growing in my learning and unlearning as an educator, curator and a school library advocate. My learning journey has brought with it many opportunities to learn, lead and grow with other educators as we focus on building capacity in our students and celebrating the joy that happens *every* day in our school library learning commons. With the support of an incredible administrator, this past year has brought with it *many* opportunities to curate a rich and diverse collection that reflects our students. We also focused on new opportunities to integrate innovative and dynamic learning experiences and technologies, like our recent student-led school podcast, *PODmoore: Voices at Bellmoore* - an opportunity to celebrate diversity, amplify student voice and focus on 21st century fluencies. The work of this student-led initiative and many others, led by our school's Student Voice & Leadership Team, happens because of our school library learning commons - this is where the magic happens; it *truly is* the hub of our school. My focus, as an educator, today and everyday moving forward is *on* students, always - their needs, their voices, their learning and unlearning. I *really* believe that our students deserve this from us - to be reflective in our practice and pedagogy and to provide equitable, inclusive learning opportunities for *every* student. I strongly believe in creating inclusive, positive spaces where *every* student knows they belong because they do!

I am a passionate believer that *every* student in Ontario deserves access to opportunities like these, and I will continue to promote, develop and advocate for strong, equitable school library programs throughout the province for our students and school communities. I am grateful for the work of our school library professionals in Ontario, and I look forward to championing the

creative and innovative work being done across the province, filling our communities with abundant #SchoolLibraryJoy.

### **My Library Origin Story** **Ruth Gretsinger, Teacher-Librarian**

The school librarian in me was forged back in Grade 1. I was an early reader and already reading chapter books, but our school librarian forbade Grade 1s from taking out anything but picture books. I think this early experience cemented the value of access for everyone. By Grade 7 and 8 I was a library helper in that same library (for that same teacher-librarian). My first job at 16 was as a page in the local public library. As formative as these experiences were, I don't really think I was planning a future in libraries at that point. I went off to University at Mount Allison in New Brunswick and finished a B.A. in History and Political Science.



With a brand-new baby daughter in tow, and no real plans, I enrolled at Niagara College in the Library Technician program. I got a job offer at an engineering library the same day I got an offer to pursue an MLS and opted for the paycheck. While

the technician job made good use of my technician skills, I realized that I really wanted to work with kids. Off I went to Teacher's College in Thunder Bay and I began my teaching career in 1989. The Library AQ Part 1 was one of the first qualifications I got, but I did not have an opportunity to use it until 10 years later.

In the upheaval of the late 90's Harris era, there was a lot of concern that school libraries would go by the wayside - and as it turns out many did. My principal, who knew my background, tapped me to be the teacher-librarian to more or less, "whip the library into shape before the staffing for it disappeared." I have been a proud teacher-librarian (WITH an actual library) ever since.

It doesn't stop there though. Once I became immersed in my library, I began to look for professional opportunities to keep up to date. I attended my first Super Conference in 2001, and from then on OLA and OSLA have become a growing commitment for me. I joined the Silver Birch selection committee in 2004, then became Selection Co-Chair and eventually Co-Chair of the Forest. I have presented at Super Conference and been a volunteer planner. I picked up a one-year term as OSLA Central West councilor which morphed into a three-year term thanks to the pandemic, and then ran again. OLA and OSLA have given me so much. I love giving back and keeping my learning current.

I also serve as a Trustee for Lincoln Pelham Public Library, currently in my second term. You might say libraries are my life! Remember that baby daughter? She's all grown up now and - you guessed it - she is a librarian too! 📖

# Meet the Author Debbie Ridpath Ohi



**O**ur theme for this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* is Joy @ Your Library, and our featured author provides joy wherever she goes. Debbie Ridpath Ohi is an inspiration – she writes, illustrates, has a diverse and generous relationship with social media, supports educators and other creatives by offering advice and materials free of charge, and manages to make even the darkest day brighter with her creations (and her infectious smile and laugh!) She also worked in libraries as a teenager, so she knows firsthand about “library joy.”

**TingL: Thanks for chatting with me, Debbie!**

Debbie Ridpath Ohi: Thanks for inviting me, Martha! It’s an honour.

**You and I met at Super Conference years ago, but where I feel I really got to know you was when you started posting your Broken Crayon and your Found Objects artwork on social media. Were those sketches as joy-filled as they appeared?**

YES! It’s so much fun creating these pieces.

I was motivated to start doing more of these when I had my first feedback from my editor and art director at Simon & Schuster for my first book sketches. They were very nice about it, but the basic

message was, “We hired you because your art style was so fresh and spontaneous-looking, and these sketches are too tight and lacking the fun energy in your portfolio.” I realized that as soon as I started being paid for my art, I became too focused on trying to make everything technically perfect.



I needed to find the JOY in creating art again! Working with found objects, especially objects that are ephemeral (like ice or slices of lemon, etc.) takes the pressure off. There’s no way to preserve the art except by taking a photo, so I usually end up throwing the bits and pieces into the trash or recycling them, or even EATING them (e.g., banana, nuts, other food) afterward.



**You are well-known for providing examples of your creative work, like posters and lesson plans, free to educators and library professionals. Your Broken Crayon Resource is one of many. What made you start offering resources?**

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## Martha Brack Martin

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When K-5 librarian Rhonda Jenkins sent me a photo of her new Art Center for students, I was thrilled. I asked for Rhonda's permission to share the photo in case it helped inspire others. Then I started hearing from other educators and librarians who were using my broken crayon art activities with students, especially after reading *Gurple and Preen: A Broken Crayon Cosmic Adventure* by Linda Sue Park and me. I collaborated with librarians and educators to provide more free, print-ready resources, and now there's a whole collection of them! You can find them all on my website under Resources. Oh, and to any librarian or educator out there who has posted something nice on social media about a children's book: DO tag the author and illustrator. We always appreciate it!



Photo: Annie Truvert - Annet.net - Instagram: @annietruvert

**Another way you inspire joy is through your work as a cheerleader, using social media to share inspiring work that others have done. And you aren't just dabbling in social media; you have an extensive presence on various platforms that must take up a lot of your time. In your opinion, how important is it for authors and illustrators to participate in social media these days?**

Thank you for the kind words about my social media. I've actually been pulling back somewhat, since I've been feeling spread too thin. These days, I'm mainly on Bluesky and Substack.

I strongly feel that there is no ONE right way to use social media, and I do know some children's book creators stay off social media completely. Every person needs to decide what works best for their own situation.

Having said that, I always encourage authors and illustrators to find 1-2 social platforms they enjoy. I find it a great way to connect with educators and librarians, learning more about how they are encouraging the next generation of readers as well as sharing my own work.

**You've collaborated with Ian Michael Black on a number of picture books that focus on feelings, including *I'm Bored* and *I'm Worried*. With mental health now being discussed more openly, those books are great additions to library collections. Did you know, illustrating the first one, how well they would do?**

I've been thrilled to see the *I'm...* picture book series being added to so many libraries! When I was invited to illustrate the first one, *I'm Bored*, I had no idea. Back then, there was no mention of a series. Then it became a Junior Library Guild selection as well as a *New York Times* Notable Children's Book, and word spread.

I will always remain grateful to Justin Chanda for jumpstarting my career. He discovered my portfolio at the SCBWI Summer

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Conference in Los Angeles back in 2010 and approached me about illustrating *I'm Bored*. I'm also very grateful to Michael Ian Black for approving Justin's suggestion for an illustrator, since he could have pushed for someone with more (any!) experience.

Since then, I've been deeply moved by stories I've heard from people on how the books have helped them....not just students but adults as well. One person told me she gave *I'm Sad* to a friend who had just lost a baby, and how the friend kept the book by her bedside. Another told me how she had used the book to start a difficult conversation with her daughter after a suicide attempt.

I usually start my illustration process by analysing the author's text. But I confess, when I first received Michael's manuscript for *I'm Sad*, I had to read it over and over again until I could analyze it without crying. While the story itself is *not* sad, the expression of how sadness feels really hit home for me because of what was happening in my life at the time.

Michael's author dedication at the front of *I'm Worried* was also a much-needed reminder, especially during the pandemic: "For the worriers. Take a breath. Right now, in this moment, you are fine. And this moment is all that matters."

**That's a great dedication. I need that reminder all the time! Now let's talk about *Where Are My Books?* This was the first picture book where you took on both the author and illustrator roles yourself. It received some wonderful buzz, which had to be exciting.**

Absolutely! I was SO nervous about how the book was going to be received, since it was my first solo children's book project. When *School Library Journal* said it was "a perfect introduction to the concept of libraries for the youngest readers" and Kirkus gave the book a starred review, I was over the moon.

I owe a great deal to my editor (again Justin at Simon & Schuster), who helped me develop and polish my story, and to my art director, Laurent Linn. One thing I've learned over the years: while the author and illustrator tend to get most of the limelight in picture books, there are SO many people behind-the-scenes who are equally important in the success of the project.

And not just publishing industry people. I've also learned to

appreciate the importance of LIBRARIANS in the process. Librarians are key gate-keepers when it comes to introducing books to young readers as well as deciding which books are added to library collections.

**You continued doing both roles with *Sam and Eva*, where you introduced your readers to the concepts of cooperation and collaboration in a fun way. You are clearly a successful queen of collaborating as an illustrator, but is the process easier and smoother when you are the sole creator in a project?**

Ha, an excellent question! I have found pros and cons to being a sole creator.

I love the creative freedom of being able to do whatever I'd like when I'm the solo creator. However, it also means that the responsibility weighs more heavily on my shoulders. I think, *If this book flops, it's all MY FAULT*.

Illustrating an already-written manuscript is also a different kind of creative challenge, and I've become more picky over the years. If my agent sends me a picture book story text where it's obvious what the art should be, or that has a ton of art direction notes, I'm more prone to decline. One reason I love illustrating Michael Ian Black's story texts is because he purposely leaves a TON of room for the illustrator.

**Picture books aren't the only medium where we can find your illustrations. We can see your handiwork on reissues of Judy Blume's classics, which I can imagine must have been thrilling to tackle.**

I \*still\* have to pinch myself sometimes when I see my art on Judy Blume classics in libraries and bookstores! Especially when I remember how this nearly *didn't happen*. My editor had approached me just before the Christmas holidays back in 2013, and asked if I'd be interested in auditioning for a project "of great proportions." Just as actors sometimes have to audition, so do illustrators.

Even though it meant having to work through the Christmas holidays AND I had been warned that at least one other illustrator had been rejected, I jumped at the chance. I mean...JUDY BLUME! My husband, Jeff, was supportive, so after getting the

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information, I started sending the editor sketches. We exchanged many emails through the holidays, even on New Year's Day.

Early in the process, a major ice storm hit Toronto. It left 230,000 residents without power, and our house was one of them. I didn't want to tell my editor because I was worried he'd approach another illustrator! Instead, a dear friend whose house DID still have power invited me to use her condo apartment while she was visiting family. Jeff helped me move over all my gear and also brought over food and other essentials while I worked, meanwhile also trying to keep the temperature in our house above freezing.

Then it was just WAITING to see what Judy Blume thought. I remember when the phone call came mid-January. I don't remember exactly what my editor said because as soon I found out that Judy had approved me as an illustrator, I started screaming. At one point, though, I remember him saying, "Yes, this is really happening."

What I learned: Sometimes we have to take big chances in order to pursue the JOY, and to enjoy the journey as much as possible.

**I know you like to push yourself in creative new ways, and online you've shared your experiences exploring new media and technology. What's next for you in the future?**

My next solo picture book, *I WANT TO READ ALL THE BOOKS*, launches Sept. 17, 2024. It was inspired by my own childhood memory of desperately wanting to read all the books in the world but then realizing this was an impossibility. The story is about a young Japanese-Canadian girl who has a growing list of questions and decides that if she can read ALL THE BOOKS, then she will have answers to all her questions. I based my illustrations of indie bookstores, small libraries and big libraries on real-life bookstores and libraries in Toronto. For libraries, I used the Toronto Metro Reference Library (they gave me an official Press badge so I could take photos!) and the Palmerston Library branch where I worked as a Page years ago.

I'm also excited to be illustrating a new picture book written by Michael Ian Black for Simon & Schuster.

In 2024, depending on my picture book schedule, I am also aiming to carve out more time to work on two middle grade projects close

to my heart: a spooky middle grade fiction novel involving Japanese yokai, and a semi-autobiographical middle grade graphic novel. Many familiar with my picture books don't realize that I actually began as an aspiring middle grade writer.

**Your career has been quite a journey. You've experienced some extremely challenging events in your life, yet you've managed to flourish and still find joy in even the smallest things, like a broken crayon or a melting ice cube. What advice do you have to help others find their joy – in libraries and everywhere else?**

**Be grateful.** I find that whenever I'm feeling down about something that's happened or feeling sorry for myself for one reason or another, it helps to make a list of people and things in my life for whom/which I'm grateful.

**Look more closely.** As grown-ups, we are so busy that we tend to take a lot for granted. We'll look at someone and make a sweeping assumption based on shallow observation. Or we'll barely notice objects around us because we're so focused on stressing about stuff that isn't that important in the grand scheme of things.

**Remember that in order to recognize and embrace moments of joy, you need to recognize and accept sadness.** Don't let anyone tell you how you SHOULD be feeling. Talk to trusted family or friends who care about you.

**Seek out the many opportunities for JOY in your local library.** Check out upcoming events, exhibits, and opportunities for different ages. Browse featured lists and staff recommendations. If you haven't been to your public library branch for a while, be aware that many have added more online resources.

**What great advice, Debbie. Thanks so much for joining me!**

Thank you for inviting me, Martha! ■

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To learn more about Debbie, check out these resources:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/debbieohi>  
<https://debbieohi.com/>  
<https://debbieohi.com/resources/printready/>  
<https://debbieohi.com/2022/06/perseverance/>

# Shelf Awareness

Oh, readers, it's May. With luck, that means this finds you thinking about a cool drink, enjoying the way the light stretches its time with you every single day and figuring out how you're going to keep your student readers engaged over the next two months. I'm recommending some titles that will hopefully have your YA readers popping a book into their backpack or onto their phone as they head outside to sit in the sun. Joy @ Your Library is this month's theme, which seems to fit with thinking about reading on the deck (or maybe even the dock).

## Relit: 16 Latinx remixes of classic stories

**Sandra Proudman, editor**  
**Inkyard Press, February 2024**

One look at the beautiful cover of this book and I knew it had to go into the joy category. This is an absolute stunner of a book, featuring writing by remarkable Latine writers, including the amazing David Bowles, who was the most familiar name to me when I picked up this anthology.



The anthology form is one that I think works particularly well for YA readers. The reader can pick and choose which stories they want to engage with. These stories are quick treats, like Forrest Gump's fabled "box of chocolates." You never know quite what you're going to get. That is the magic and the joy of this collection.

The opening story, *Shame and Social Media* (a twist on *Pride and Prejudice*) is one of the stronger entries in the collection. It takes that fabulous Lizzie Bennett spirit, and pulls it thoroughly and unexpectedly into the future, with Isabel Bernal building a social media campaign around housing inequity on a spaceship. The tone that Anna Meriano builds in Isabel's posts is just snarky enough, and the Darcy character actually gets to have some personality, which has always been one of the flaws of the original story for me.

Another standout from the collection is Sariciea J. Fennell's *Goldi and the Three Bodies*, if only for its audacity. Pull Alessia Cara's "Here" up on your playlist while you read this one. Let's just say that you don't

want to be the one that Goldi thinks is "just right." For your readers who want a little creep with their joy, this story might be a great fit.

## What will your students enjoy?

Students will appreciate being able to pick and choose from this collection. Because there are stories like *The Great Gatsby* being riffed on here, this would also be a terrific companion for high school English classes. You could have a lot of fun with a display - pairing Uzma Jalaluddin's *Ayesha at Last* with *Pride and Prejudice* and the first story in this collection. If your students (or colleagues) are looking for Bishop's "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors," there are lots of openings into the Latine community here.

## Charming as a Verb

**Ben Philippe**

Harper Collins Canada, October 2020



I'm going to admit that when I started brainstorming ideas for this issue's column, I got a little stumped. It is not always easy to find YA books that reflect a variety of audiences that are not steeped in angst. Being a teenager is angsty! I was also hunting for Canadian content and a male protagonist. This one (as well as Philippe's previous novel *Field Guide to the North American Teenager*) happily fit the bill, even if it's not brand new.

Henri Haltiwanger (Halti to those who know him well) is a charmer. He attends a high-end school in New York City and is a popular student and star debater. He single-handedly (and with sleight of hand) runs a dog-walking business while convincing his wealthy clients it is a multi-employee set up. He has a great relationship with his Haitian immigrant parents. He really, really, REALLY wants to be accepted to Columbia University.

And then, into his well-crafted (but not necessarily terribly honest) identity comes his academically focused, buzzkill (in his opinion) neighbour, Corinne. She seems to be equipped with x-ray vision and can see right through Halti's charm. She also happens to have a parent who holds the keys to Halti's dream school.

I am not a fan of the enemies to lovers trope. However, in this book, Philippe manages to add enough layers of complexity that

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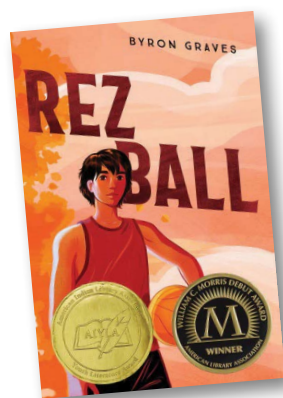
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the evolving relationship between Corinne and Halti actually makes sense. She helps him grow up and he helps her loosen up. It becomes, eventually, a relationship of equals - another element of character development that doesn't always happen in YA fiction. I listened to this novel as an audiobook, often while driving, and I admit that Philippe captures the utter chaos of a driven 18-year-old so well that I occasionally yelled at Halti as I drove. There was a point in the book where I almost didn't want to keep listening because I couldn't believe that he was going to do something. Spoiler: he does....but it's okay, because Philippe avoids the easy way out, and that makes the book richer.

Philippe is currently a screenwriter on *Only Murders in The Building*, which may explain why we're waiting for the next novel.

### What will your students enjoy?

Well-written relationships between the characters - Corinne's snark is freaking amazing; an accurate capturing of the misery of waiting for acceptance emails ("refresh, refresh, refresh") from universities; a story with BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ characters that is not centred in trauma.



**Rez Ball**  
**Byron Graves**  
**Heartdrum/HarperCollins,**  
**September 2023**

For many of our students, joy is not found in a book. For some of our students, joy is found on a tarmac court or a shining gymnasium floor. Joy is shooting hoops at twilight with your best friends or playing shirts and skins at the local community gym. *Rez Ball* is your hook for those readers. Byron Graves' debut novel scooped up a major win with the

2024 American Indian Youth Literature Award in the YA category (even beating *Warrior Girl Unearthed*).

Tre is a Grade 10 student who loves basketball, and he's good at it. He's also the younger brother of his team's star player who died in a car accident a few months before the story opens. That means

that he's got a lot to live up to as he tries to make the varsity team, not worry his parents too much, work his way through the growing relationship between his best friend and the very cute new girl who he's crushing on, and navigate the social pressure around party culture. Can he hold it together well enough to get his team to the state championships, and honour his brother's memory, while building his Indigenous community's pride? Did I mention that teenage stories come with angst?

This book goes into a column about joy at the library because there is a lot of joy here. The scenes on the court, when Tre is running plays and making the magic happen, are beautifully conveyed. You can see the crowd, feel the thunder of feet as teams go rushing downcourt (and feel the drumbeat that Tre's community members play) and hear that particular reverberation that comes after a dunk. There is genuine joy here in the love of the game. There is joy in the relationships that are built through the book. They are not perfect, but there is a lot of love between Tre and his parents, Tre's dad and his buddies and Tre and his closest friends. It comes through loud and clear. This is not a book without trauma, but it is also a book about resilience and joy.

### What will your students enjoy?

The basketball! Seriously, if you have basketball players, get this book into their hands. If you have students, like Tre, who have maybe just grown into their basketball-playing body and are trying to navigate a shift into sports culture, this would be a much-appreciated book. This would also be a book that would work in literature circles, maybe paired with something like Gordon Korman's *Pop*, and could provoke some conversations around who we perceive as athletes and why.

I wanted to close by reminding all of us that many students find their reading joy in non-fiction. Some teacher-candidates I work with have been finding joy lately in hand-stitching and embroidery, so "how-to" texts have been a big hit. What might your students want to learn how to do to help them find their joy?

And with that, I'll leave you. I hope you find time for your own reading for joy between now and the September issue. Thank you for the amazing work you do helping your students find the Joy @ Your Library. ■

# Ethical Foundations for School Library Joy

Anita Brooks Kirkland

**H**ow do kids experience school library joy? Is it the joy of finding just the right book? Is it seeing themselves represented in that book? Is it the space itself, open and welcoming? Is it the empowerment of being able and encouraged to explore interests and ideas freely? Is it because the library is where they feel safe, free from judgement or discrimination?

It is all of this and more, and these experiences do not happen by accident. Teacher-Librarians and library technicians have worked with intention to create welcoming spaces and inclusive collections, programs and learning experiences.

Yet alarmingly, we find ourselves caught up in the wave of moral panic sweeping across North America, with an unprecedented level of book challenges and attacks on the very foundations of library practice. In libraries, we have a professional, ethical responsibility to support, defend and promote universal principles of intellectual freedom and to protect the privacy of library users. This has been implicitly understood in school librarianship, but the ethical foundations of librarianship have rarely been interpreted for school libraries in Canada. In these turbulent times we have become more aware of the need to defend our students' right to freedom of expression.

Canadian School Libraries' guideline, *Foundations for School Library Learning Commons in Canada: A Framework for Success* provides both principled and practical advice to guide ethical decisions, and also prepare you to defend your students' rights, in the event that you receive a challenge.

## FRAMEWORK



### Ethical Standards

The framework for ethical standards clearly states that protecting freedom of expression and privacy are fundamental to the ethics of librarianship, including school librarianship. It makes connections to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries* and its *Code of Ethics*, and finally to the International Federation of Library Association's *School Library Standards*. The CSL guideline advises, "Everyone who works in the school library, including volunteers, must be aware of and honour the ethical standards of librarianship in their dealings with each other and with all members of the school community."

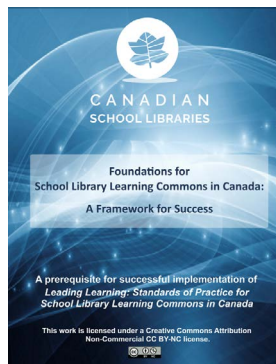
## FRAMEWORK



### LLC Management

The framework for library learning commons management outlines what these ethical responsibilities mean in practical terms. "Library management is deeply entwined with ethics. Schools should ensure that the expectations they set for students around things such as overdue or the choices they make about collection management do not create inequities or violate students' right to privacy."

The framework advises that libraries and educational institutions should always have guidelines for the selection and deselection of resources, and reconsideration procedures for managing challenges. "Well-written guidelines defend universal principles of protecting intellectual freedom. They provide the foundation for developing diverse collections, based on sound criteria."



The framework provides ethical guidelines for managing circulation, establishing procedures that provide equity of access, and protect privacy and therefore students' freedom to explore ideas. Appendix F provides detailed practical advice for ethical library routines.

Every child deserves the opportunity to experience school library joy. There is a movement

afoot that threatens that experience for many with book challenges and calls for censorship. We, as school library professionals, must remember that it is our ethical responsibility to stand up for all our students' freedom of expression rights, the very foundation of school library joy. ■

***Foundations for School Library Learning Commons in Canada: A Framework for Success* is available at:**  
**<https://www.canadianschoollibraries.ca/foundations-frameworks/>**

# A Forest of Joy

“Joy @ Your Library” can be found in many ways. I have the honour of being a teacher-librarian in an elementary school library learning commons. I love seeing the impact that books can have on students and the joy that they can bring. When I started thinking about this article, I reflected on the concept of joy and how it is different from happiness. Although the feelings are similar, joy goes beyond an emotion to also impacting one’s mind and body. I have seen firsthand the joy a book brings and after reading it, the impact that it has on a student’s mind.

The Forest of Reading is a program that brings joy to many students at my school. We run 5 programs (Blue Spruce, Silver Birch Express, Silver Birch, Red Maple, and Yellow Cedar) so there is something for every grade and interest level. It all starts with Blue Spruce for primary students. This program is near and dear to my heart as I have had the privilege of being on the Blue Spruce Selection Committee since 2020. It brings me joy to be on the committee and then my joy and passion for this program transfers to the excitement that is created for students.



When we start the Blue Spruce program, I explain that they have a very special job to do. There are 10 amazing books they are going

to hear and once we have read all ten, they get to vote for their favourite. I emphasize that they, the students, decide the winner. When they hear that their teachers, parents, and teacher-librarian don’t get to vote, but it is the kids that decide, you can see their eyes light up. They sit up a little straighter and they realize the importance of what lies ahead. You can see the joy start to spark in them. The primary classes love coming to the library each week to hear me read the next Blue Spruce book. After reading the story to them, the students complete a page in their Blue Spruce booklet which they take home after we complete the program. Sharing the stories and activities with their families allows the students to talk about their favourites, relive the joy that the program brought to them, and review the connections they made through the work they completed.

During voting week, the feeling in the library is one of heightened excitement. We review all 10 books, then each student gets to come up and place their vote into the bag for their favourite book. Putting the power in the students’ hands to decide the winner and truly celebrating their role in this program has created such joy for them! I can see that joy continue to ripple out in many ways: when they look forward to the Forest of Reading each year, when the Grade 3 and 4 students choose to independently participate in the program, when students seek out past-nominated books to borrow and take home to share with their families and when students are driven to read at least 5 books to be able to vote. In the past few years, I have had intermediate students celebrate joy at the library by reading all 10 books in both the fiction and the non-fiction category. They are so proud of their efforts and we celebrate them!



Forest of Reading programs at our school truly bring joy to our library. That joy is not only felt in the library, but also spreads into the classrooms and homes of our students as they share the books and activities with others, helping to promote the concept and importance of the program. It is so rewarding and fulfilling to see that library joy spread. It not only makes a difference for the students who participate, but positively impacts their communities as well. ■

# School Libraries and Curriculum Under Attack: A Panel Discussion

**O**n November 29, 2023, the Centre for Free Expression (CFE) hosted a virtual panel bringing together active members of the school library community to discuss the sharp rise in book challenges and related events across Canada. Jim Turk, Director of the CFE, sat down with Anita Brooks Kirkland, Chair of Canadian School Libraries (CSL) and past president of the Ontario Library Association (OLA), Tammy Le, Teacher Librarian and President of the British Columbia's Teacher Librarians' Association, James Saunders, CEO of Saunders Publishing, and Graham Shantz, Associate Director of the Waterloo Region District School Board. The panelists spoke about recent events in their respective settings, why challenges are on the rise, the impact, and how to respond.

## **Specific books and resources disproportionately targeted in recent challenges**

While book challenges have been on a steady rise over the past decade, an alarming spike in recent years, as well as the way in which school materials are being challenged, has school library professionals and book publishers troubled. Instead of individual parents or community members raising these concerns, organized groups are challenging books and curriculum resources in new and various ways. The focus of these challenges has been in three areas in particular: books that include the positive representation of 2SLGBTQAI+ identities and experiences; sex education resources and books; and books that feature BIPOC main characters and/or address racism, particularly anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism. This surge in book challenges has been characterized in the press as “a proxy culture war” (Alphonso, 2023).

## **What is happening and why?**

Tammy Le, a BC teacher-librarian of ten years, described the increase in book challenges in her district, with a particular focus on books connected to British Columbia's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity curriculum (SOGI 123). These challenges often did not undergo the proper procedure of reconsideration. Le also recounted how last year, Action4Canada, one of the largest of these organized groups, served public and school library staff a form letter threatening personal liability in connection to materials in their collections. The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) responded by issuing a memo to all members reassuring recipients that the letter had no legal value and did not replace processes that libraries already have in place to facilitate challenges to library materials (CFLA, 2022).

Kirkland outlined the many different tactics being used by organized groups in BC, Manitoba and Ontario, including disrupting school board meetings, staging protests, circulating

petitions, challenging lists of hundreds of books at once and demanding that parent or trustee committees be created to approve school library selections. Kirkland pointed out that while these tactics are from the same playbook used by political groups in the US, she has noticed an alarming shift. In previous challenges, the books of concern were American (often books on lists originating in the US and circulating on the Internet), however, Kirkland noted that several books on the OLA's Forest of Reading nominees' lists, announced in October 2023, were targeted and reclassified as parent resources despite the fact that these books are specifically selected to be read by students for the annual reading program.

Saunders, CEO of Saunders Publishing, a publisher of educational resources and books, has observed an increased scrutiny in what is purchased for school libraries and spoke to the rising concern of “age-appropriateness” of books and curriculum resources. In response to this concern, he described the environment in which books are created and published: in co-operation and collaboration with many different groups and people including provincial library associations, various content experts and proofreaders, in addition to the various data used when writing, editing and publishing these texts. Indeed, published books are not created in a vacuum. Kirkland asserted that “age-appropriateness” has been weaponized by groups and used as a tactic to raise concern. Another strategy used by organized groups is to deliberately misrepresent books reflecting 2SLGBTQAI+ and Black experiences as sexually explicit. Le pointed out that excerpts from challenged books have been presented out of context, misleading parents and provoking a reaction.

Shantz confirmed similar incidents in his school board and described how organized groups wish to create “moral panic” in order to elicit a response and change perception or create misperception of a situation. Shantz believes that's what we are seeing now.

## **Why is this happening now?**

Ministries of Education have explicitly directed school boards to diversify their school library collections. Enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code, is the right to freedom of expression which includes the freedom to seek information. Simply put, this means the freedom to read. Indeed, Shantz brought this up, stating,

“[Our Human Rights Code] has spoken very clearly to the rights that individuals and children have to see themselves and be able to interact with the communities in which they are a part of and as an extension of that our Ministry of Education has provided school boards with clear direction, very specific direction, to diversify

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our library collections and ensure that all students see themselves in that collection but also to give the opportunity for individuals that aren't part of that community to understand and to grow their awareness of other community members in our school and in our communities."

Turk, the panel moderator, asked "Why now?" Shantz spoke of a fear of change. School library professionals are answering their school boards' calls to diversify and as a result, school library collections are undergoing major change, reflecting their communities and the world beyond their schoolyards.

## What is the impact?

Saunders spoke of the possibility of more Canadian books being challenged and excluded from collections though he maintained that he hasn't seen that trend in purchases yet. School library professionals are very interested in purchasing diverse books for their collections and he is very interested in continuing to meet that demand. Le described the worry colleagues have now, thinking twice about what they choose to read in their classrooms. Le noted that new school library professionals or those who are isolated may feel "it's better not to rock the boat." Shantz reported that library staff and trustees who support ministry direction and voice support for the Human Rights Code are personally attacked.

## What can we do about it?

Kirkland shared specific recommendations to respond to this concerted effort. First, all school boards must develop and enact a sound selection policy of school materials that supports the freedom of expression as supported by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. To support this practice, the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) published *A Guide to the Selection and Deselection of School Library Resources* (2023) that school library professionals and boards can use if their districts do not yet have a selection policy in place. Second, that school boards maintain, in tandem with a selection policy, a sound reconsideration policy that stakeholders (librarians, school administrations, senior administration) are aware of and can utilize when responding to book challenges from the public.

Educating and supporting school library staff to respond to these challenges, as they are so often the frontline in these "points of friction," is part of the response, Shantz asserted, as well as educating the school community so they can feel confident about what is in their school collections.

Kirkland urged for the re-investment in school libraries, which are radically underfunded, pointing to a crisis that includes the deprofessionalization of school library staff. British Columbia's teacher union is the sole teacher's union across the country that won language in their collective agreement ensuring one full-time teacher-librarian for every 702 students. Kirkland maintains that placing teacher-librarians in school libraries "to defend the right

to read and provide those rich and diverse collections" is crucial in responding to the attack on school libraries and curriculum resources.

~

The duration of panel discussion was approximately 45 minutes with another 45 minutes devoted to a Q&A session. To watch the full recording, follow this link:

<https://cfe.torontomu.ca/events/school-libraries-and-curriculum-under-attack-why-and-what-do>

This event was cosponsored by BC Teacher Librarians' Association, Canadian School Libraries, Manitoba School Library Association, and Ontario Library Association/Ontario School Library Association. ■

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## Additional Resources

Centre for Free Expression Library Challenges Database, <https://cfe.torontomu.ca/databases/library-challenges-database>

Centre for Free Expression Library Policies Database, <https://cfe.torontomu.ca/databases/library-policies-database>

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# Help Me Help You! How to Work with Regional Programs in Your Library Learning Commons

**R**egional programs offer specialty pathways at the secondary level to enhance learning and meet the needs of diverse learners. It is likely that your school offers at least one of these programs including French Immersion, Regional Arts or Sports programs, Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced Placement (AP), just to name a few. There are many opportunities for you to promote your library learning commons and increase its use by becoming familiar with the regional programs offered at your school. When we introduced the IB Diploma Programme and SHSM: Health and Wellness, I took the opportunity to show how the LLC can support these programs in our school.

These are some of the ways regional programming can be used to help build a vibrant, healthy and joyful library space for our students.

## **Consider regional programs in collection curation and library space design.**

Regional programs will often require specialty resources (usually with an additional budget). Why not add French novels for French Immersion or IB, or additional databases and subscriptions for AP or SHSM programs? If you have a maker space, you could add additional materials specific to a program.

In some of the more academic regional programs, such as IB or AP, students are challenging themselves and may feel stressed or overwhelmed at times. Creating a calm space in the library where students are able to study quietly or find some rest and relaxation can have a huge impact on mental health and well-being.

## **Help teachers help their students.**

If you're not sure where to start, ask your teachers. They may request specific resources or have expertise in locating available supports for students. They can also help you with curation to determine what would be appropriate for your LLC.

This is another opportunity for collaboration! Regional programs will be new to teachers as well, and they will be looking for support to deliver curriculum. As teacher-librarians, we can work with classroom teachers on instructional design. For example, *Leading Learning* (Canadian School Libraries, 2020), demonstrates that the growth indicators tend to align well with many specialty programs.

When new programs are introduced, many teachers feel overwhelmed with the change. Our colleagues often welcome the support of a teacher-librarian as they navigate a new curriculum. It is a reminder that we not only support students, but staff as well.

## **Promote library services.**

Always use regional programming as a chance to remind teachers of the workshops and presentations available through your library. You might

also offer to develop new sessions specific to their needs. For example, students may require assistance with more unique research, accessing specific databases or creating citations and references. I recently developed a three-part writing workshop for our IB students who are required to write an extended 4000-word essay over two years. These sessions guide students through the process of developing a research question, using research tools and applying effective and efficient research techniques.

## **Make space for student voice.**

Many regional programs require a student showcase or community outreach component and the LLC is an excellent space to offer these events. Junior grades are often invited to these showcases, sometimes including students from feeder schools, drawing many new library visitors into your space. We also welcome students wishing to use the LLC space for community events such as tutoring programs, clubs, special events and workshops. Following this, students may create a display to promote their regional programs in collaboration with the library. I have seen how proud students are to see their work or experience on display for others to enjoy!

## **Work with your administration.**

Your administration likely has a goal and vision for the school and the success of regional programs. Access your school's learning plan and see what has been identified as important. In some cases, certain programs may have standards or practices specific to the library that are required for accreditation. Aligning the LLC's goals with the school learning plan is one way to show administration you are a team player and that the library is a space that can support students in these regional programs. Make a point of highlighting regional programs in your annual library report, social media or school newsletters.

## **Look for professional development and networking opportunities.**

Regional programs often provide professional development opportunities. It may be in the form of self-paced learning or more formal training and qualifications. PD can help explain more about your specific regional program and what the expectations of the teacher-librarian are in supporting students. You can increase your professional learning network and meet other school library professionals who help you learn more about these programs and share their own resources and tips. Since regional programs are only offered to a handful of schools in a board, it is easy to feel like an island. Connecting with library people from other boards can help you create your own support community.

Working with your school's regional programs to create meaningful library spaces helps students feel welcome. Knowing they have a place in the school for support (whether it be academic or wellness) means students will enjoy their library learning commons that much more. ■

Tina Zita

# Visual Essay



# Bookit Is My Favourite Day of the Year!

**J**anuary 2024 was the 18<sup>th</sup> time we have hosted Grade 9-12 readers for our annual twelve-hour reading marathon. This year, we invited Junior School (Grade 5-8) students to take part for the first few hours: at the end of the day, we had 80+ readers participate, with 38 remaining until midnight, and more than 17,000 pages read collectively.

## **What students say makes the event joyful for them:**

*Being with other readers, and with a LOT of other readers, can be comforting and validating. Many large-group activities revolve around sports and arts; avid readers don't often have the chance to gather en masse, so being together to read on a cold day in January is always enjoyable and meaningful.*



*Having extra cozy furniture makes it extra special, and the kids are welcome to move it wherever they want. Administration is on board with us borrowing couches from common areas, staff are generous about sharing comfortable chairs from their offices and our Junior School Library kindly loans us their bean bag chairs. Our Property Department is the star of the show by doing the heavy lifting, moving everything in for the main event (and taking it back the day after).*

*Drinks & snacks in the library also make it extra special. We've relaxed our stance in recent years as students have been very respectful of the space, however, we still discourage anything messy. We put a hold on that rule for Bookit; readers are welcome to bring what they like, adults often contribute treats and we have 2 kettles going for tea and hot chocolate. Yes - this could prove nightmarish...but it hasn't to date. We ask people to use travel mugs to prevent spills, do a "10 Second Tidy" (#bigcomfyouch shoutout) during the last break, and plan a thorough vacuuming the morning after.*

The *two draws* generate a lot of joy! One is for prizes; I pull 3 to 4 names during each hourly break, and winners can choose whatever they want off the prize display (everyone wins something by the end of the night). Prizes are mostly books (advanced reading copies, donations) with some book related paraphernalia: bookmarks, stickers, journals. The other draw is for banging the gong - stay with me :) Hourly breaks are marked with music from a playlist we make up for the occasion. The end of each break is marked by the striking of a gong borrowed from our music department; over the years, being one of the strikers has become a very coveted position. Hence the draw.



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## Shelagh Straughan

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*Just Dance* is a perennial favourite. Started as a way to energize sleepy readers in the evening, we feature this activity on the big screen around 9pm and the crowd goes wild. We offer a treat at 11 p.m. for those committed to reading until midnight; this year, it was a well-received *hot chocolate bar*.

### What makes the event joyful for me:

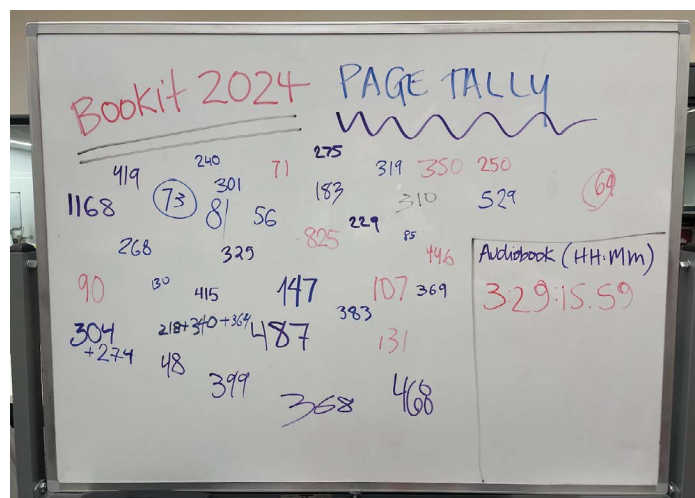
*The sight of a library filled with students reading by choice* is pretty high on the joy meter. At the staff meeting preceding the event, I encourage all staff to stop by because the sight is truly something to see (and the silence immediately following the gong is truly something to hear). For those of us who spend a fair amount of time holding kids accountable and encouraging reluctant readers, it is such a pleasure to be with so many young people reading on their own time, by choice.

*Friendly support.* I ran the show solo during the first few years and it was exhausting. I finally got over myself and asked for help. Now, library team members set up all the prizes and signage the day before. A wonderful colleague provides backup for the whole 12 hours (and says she loves the time to read!) and other amazing colleagues stop by for a few hours of reading throughout the day. And of course all of those who help with furniture.

*Seeing what we can accomplish together* is pretty amazing. Watching students enjoy time with friends while making connections with other readers and welcoming those who are new to Bookit is delightful. Realizing how much we read collectively is awesome!

*Aiming for inclusivity* brings me joy: celebrating reading in all formats (print, audio, ebook, comic, etc) and purposes (the only request is that they're reading, even if it's for homework), and having students from all grades and most of our 10 houses makes me happy.

If any of this sounds appealing, I encourage you to find time for some joyful marathon reading in your library. It need not be 12 hours, or require extra furniture or prizes, it need only be what works for you and your students. ■



Kasey Whalley

# OLA Super Conference Recap



Together at the 2024 OLA Super Conference we reconnected with our founding mission with determination and a resounding voice.

**Photography by Laurel McLeod  
and Deborah Vert**

*Top: Johanna Gibson-Lawler, Wendy Burch Jones; Richard Reid, Deborah Vert, and Sarah Keys  
Middle: Conference attendees; Wendy Burch Jones, Richard Reid, Kate Johnson-McGregor, Ruth Gretsinger, and Diana Maliszewski*

*Bottom: (From left) Kate Johnson-McGregor and Richard Reid; Fred Horler, Stephanie Wells, Karen Li; Johanna Gibson-Lawler and Cicely Lewis*



# Congratulations To Our Award Winners!



## **OSLA Administrator of the Year Award**

### **Peter Rewega**

Principal, Toronto District School Board

This award is given to honour a school administrator who has brought his or her influence to bear on the development of effective school library information centres and of school library program both in a school board and among his or her peers.

*Photo: Peter Rewega and Johanna Gibson-Lawler*



## **OSLA School Library Professional of the Year Award**

### **Victoria Riddle**

Library Technician, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

This award is given to honour a School Library Professional (School Library Technician) who has demonstrated leadership in the facilitation and management of a school library collection.

*Photo: Victoria Riddle and Johanna Gibson-Lawler*



## **OSLA Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award**

### **Aimee Barber**

Teacher-Librarian, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

This award is given to honour a teacher-librarian who has demonstrated leadership in the implementation of school library programs through Collaboration and Inquiry – based learning. Projects, programs and activities cited should exemplify the vision of Together for Learning in their School Library/Learning Commons.

*Photo: Aimee Barber and Johanna Gibson-Lawler*



# GET LOUD

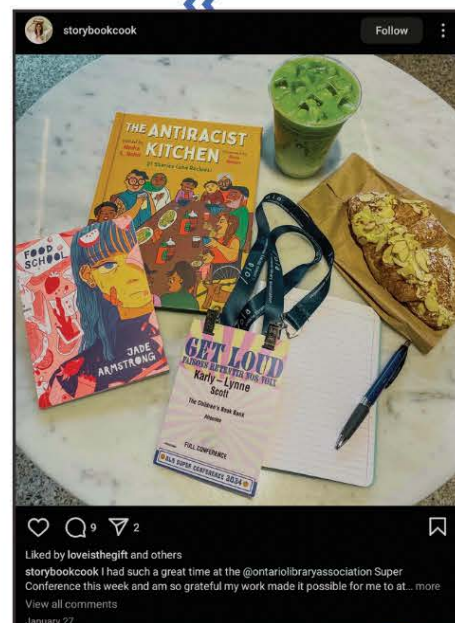
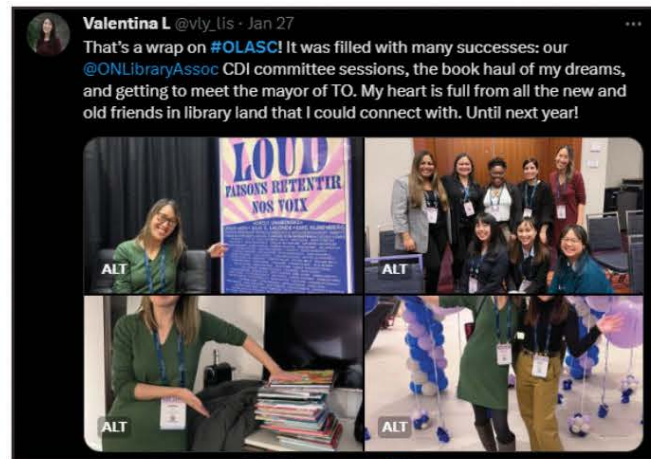
OLA SUPER CONFERENCE JAN 24-27, 2024

Live from #OLASC

GET LOUD symbolizes our commitment to civic engagement, recognizing the significance of libraries in promoting equity, diversity, and truth.



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# The Four Seasons of Outdoor Library Joy



If you ask a young student if a library can have trees and maple syrup and French toast, they'd think you were being silly. In fact, my library always had those things.

For many joyful years, I was the teacher-librarian at Cresthaven Public School, a small K-5 school in the Toronto District School Board. For me, it wasn't enough for the library to be the hub of our school; the library also had to expand our physical boundaries. Through the library program, "school" came to mean everything within a two-kilometre radius of the building. Learning happened on the sidewalks, at parks, in neighbours' vegetable gardens and backyards, at our Toronto Public Library branch and at the grocery store. Taking an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to the curriculum resulted in meaningful, authentic and memorable moments with students and colleagues. Pairing fun and novel outdoor experiences with just the right books quickly became my preferred way to teach and learn. What follows is a season-by-season account of my favourite days as a teacher-librarian.

## FALL

While some lessons require intricate planning, others come about in a more spontaneous way, like the day a Grade 5 class saw a neighbour's beautiful apple tree laden with red fruit. Operating from the premise that it can't hurt to ask, we raced back to school, wrote a letter offering to harvest the apples and then delivered it. We didn't have to wait long for the positive reply. Within the week, every student in the school had a turn climbing up a ladder and picking an apple. In the library, older students watched the documentary Food Waste: What Some Supermarkets Throw Out (CBC, 2016), and younger classes read Fall Apples: Crisp and Juicy (Rustad, 2012). We were motivated to take the time to trim away the blemishes, cook the apples and make delicious juice.

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Fortunately, there's a magnificent park only 500 metres from our library. One of the plants that grow there in abundance is staghorn sumac. It's a shrub that produces bright fuzzy fruit with a zingy, lemony flavour. Following the practice of the "Honourable Harvest" as explained in Braiding Sweetgrass (Wall Kimmerer, 2022), students took just enough seeds to make a cool, refreshing lemonade-like drink. Students who commonly use ground sumac seeds when cooking were especially delighted with this lesson. The Yellow Cedar nominated book Arab Fairy Tale Feasts: A Literary Cookbook (Alrawi, 2021) was our library book connection.

Reading the picture book Maybe Something Beautiful (Campoy, 2016) about murals in San Diego, inspired us to enhance a small part of our neighbourhood using the husk of black walnuts as sidewalk chalk. Black walnut trees can't be counted on to produce fruit every year, but when they do, the crop is often plentiful, meaning there are enough walnuts for both squirrels and artists alike. Students were asked to create a message or image on the sidewalk that might elicit a smile from a neighbour walking by. The walnut tannins are potent enough to be visible for several weeks. Think of all the potential smiles!



Another art material we collected while outside is buckthorn berries. We squished, stirred and squeezed these berries through cheesecloth to make sparkly ink. Since buckthorn is an invasive species, its seeds are put in the garbage. Students are accustomed to working with a wide pallet and can find the lack of colour options limiting when using this ink. The emotionally moving book Secret Path (Downie, 2016) is mostly monochromatic, offering us an example of how effectively a mood can be expressed using only one colour.



## WINTER

One of our favourite winter activities was playing and building with Christmas trees. Every December, we brought notes to our neighbours asking if we could have their trees when the holidays were over. With many positive replies, students mapped out walking routes and collected the trees. Although most students are very good at figuring out how to enjoy the trees, it's still beneficial to read A Tree Is Just a Tree? (Silsbe, 2001) to encourage imaginative and cooperative play. Younger students enjoyed building a shelter with the trees and using it to retell the Blue Spruce nominated book Owl and the Lemming (Akulukjuk, 2016).

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Other wonderful winter book connections had us following animal tracks around the neighbourhood, including Footprints in the Snow (Benjamin, 1994) and The Snow Knows (McGrath, 2020). We also formed small structures with the top crusty layer of snow after reading Igloo (Diemer, 2011). When the snow isn't as fresh, it can be an excellent canvas for watercolour paints. The story Rosie's Glasses (Whamond, 2018) asks us what it means to see the world through rose-coloured glasses and how this positive attitude impacts our lives. Then we added literal colour to our small part of the world with our paints.

The journey from maple sap to syrup is always our last winter hoorah. Once again, our neighbours played a starring role in our learning by allowing us to tap their trees and collect sap for about 5 weeks. We followed the process outlined in A Day at the Sugar Bush, (Faulkner, 2004) appreciating the maple's gifts in our residential area instead of a forest. The whole school was involved by identifying maple trees, writing letters asking for permission to tap, collecting sap (and plenty of data for our math bulletin board), boiling the sap, cooking the syrup until it becomes candy, competing in our game-show "Maple Tree-via" and making thank you cards to deliver to the neighbours along with some sweet treats. Wanting to cook with our syrup, we read through recipe books to find the perfect maple syrup granola and French toast recipes. It's a very special day when the library smells like maple syrup and cinnamon!

## SPRING

In Wildflower, (Brown, 2022) some flowers are valued more highly than others. This spurred a discussion on inner and outer beauty and added a layer of thoughtfulness to our wildflower neighbourhood walk.

The most prevalent spring flower is easy to find! Dandelions: Stars In the Grass (Posada, 2000) explains the plant's life cycle, which we took as an invitation to recreate it through body movements. Because they are ubiquitous, we picked dandelion flowers to use as crayons, colouring yellow circles onto paper. When details such as eyes and hats were added with pencil, students made very cute emojis.

A final food-themed lesson started with a sing-a-long of Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush (Fatus, 2007) and ended with students' bellies full of sweet mulberries, and fingers stained with purple juice.

## SUMMER

I've noticed great progress in self-awareness and interpersonal relationships with some junior students when we've spent ten months learning with A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles (Nhat, 2012). The book's lessons are grounded in the natural world and ask us to be more alert to our feelings. Many thoughtful and open-hearted class discussions occurred because of this book and our time together outside. And by the end of the school year every student knows that a library is the perfect place for trees, maple syrup and French toast. ■



# Picture Books as a Source of Joy

Rabia Khokhar

## The power of picture books.

Recently while reading a picture book to my niece, she excitedly pointed to one of the characters within the book and said with a spark in her eyes, “that looks like dadi” (grandma in Urdu). While we often read many books together, she is drawn to books that represent her identities like her culture, family, religion and interests. She now says, “hey that’s like a book about us.” These small moments remind me of the power of picture books and the role they play in our lives. Picture books are beautiful texts that can help all children feel represented and seen for who they are while also giving them examples of all they can strive to be.

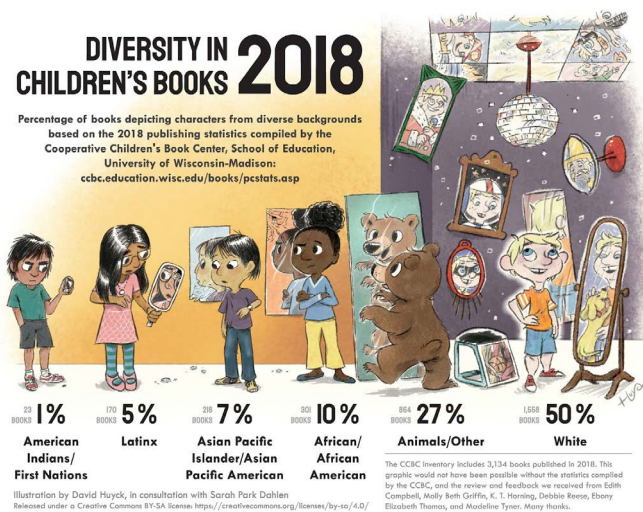
I firmly believe that “every child has a place in books, because every child has a palace in the world” (Jacob Sager Weinstein). When readers are represented in picture books, they feel a sense of joy because “their existence is validated, and they feel they are part of the world” (Eric Velasquez). Picture books help us find our place within the world and affirm our experiences. They also teach us about people who may be different from us and remind us that “the shortest distance between two people is a story” (Patti Digh). It is through the stories that picture books share that we can build bridges of knowledge, understanding, respect, empathy and compassion for each other. Picture books plant seeds of hope that have the potential to blossom.

Furthermore, picture books are powerful because they can spark joy in reader’s hearts and minds, but they can also be used as intentional tools in the classroom. They have many positive attributes that make them tangible tools for the classroom as picture books are multimodal, dynamic and diverse in their format and presentation. Their highly visual nature makes them beautiful, inviting and captivating, which supports the unpacking of complex concepts and themes. Picture books are interesting and cover many themes that are relevant, important and engaging for readers. In doing so, they share rich and sophisticated language that supports reader’s literacy and emotional development.

## Picture books and mental health and well-being.

Picture books that represent students authentically and those that share and teach them about other identities and experiences can spark joy. Feeling a sense of joy, happiness, comfort, confidence and belonging can positively influence and impact one’s identity development and mental health

and wellness. I recently took a closer look at the very popular Diversity in Children’s Literature 2018 Infographic (Huyck, David and Sarah Park Dahlen, 2019) and what stood out to me was the facial and body expressions of the children who did not have mirrors that represented and reflected them accurately. These children seemed sad, surprised, shocked, angry, uncomfortable and disheartened. Although, it is important to recognize that all feelings are normal and we can not assume one’s mental well being only based on these expressions, in this situation it is important to consider how not being represented can impact one’s positive sense of self and mental wellbeing. We need to build joyful learning spaces by centering books that celebrate our students in multifaceted ways.



Link: <https://readingspark.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/picture-this-diversity-in-childrens-books-2018-infographic/>

## Picture books are for all ages.

One of the ways we can build joyful learning spaces is by using picture books with students of all ages. A few years ago, I was teaching students in a junior grade and we were engaged in a read aloud when a student raised his hand. He said “Ms.Khokhar, why are you always reading kid’s books to us? We are big and these books are too easy.” This comment was very powerful and important for me because it made me reflect on the reasons I was using picture books with this age group. It also helped me consider how I

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would explain some of this thinking to students. I was able to share with students that picture books are for students of all ages because they are accessible tools that help us build knowledge and understanding around various themes and experiences. They can also help us build empathy by learning about each other in visual ways.

My students' comment reminded me of the quote "picture books seem simple...it's a trick. They are often profound" (Marlee Frazee). Although on the surface, picture books may stereotypically seem 'simple and easy', the reality is that they are complex and have many different elements that can be explored. Therefore, picture books *can* and *should* be used with all age groups and in all classrooms because they help "readers build background knowledge and visual literacy, and they are also deeply engaging. The range of topics presented in picture books, in the hands of skilled storytellers and artists, provides many opportunities to explore different paths for learning and getting excited about reading and information" (Deborah Taylor and Kathie Weinberg). Picture books can be connected to curriculum topics and themes. They can be used to launch different units of study or throughout the learning offer new ways of thinking and seeing to build students' holistic understanding of a topic. They can also be read to foster a love of reading as most people enjoy the act of listening to stories. In my own practice, I use picture books to introduce and reinforce messages, provide examples on how change is taking place and model the learning experiences that can stem from them to elementary students all the way to student teachers. Picture books are 'profound' in many ways, and they can be a tangible way to build and foster joyful, hopeful and connected learning spaces.

### 10 picture books that spark joy.

1. ***The Only Way to Make Bread*** written by Cristina Quintero and illustrated by Sarah Gonzales

**Themes:** Family, Community, Joy, Friendship, Celebration



A tender story focused on a common and shared experience of making some form of bread. In the story, there are many moments of joy as families, community members, friends and loved ones gather to share that love is the special ingredient to make any form of tasty

bread. There are many opportunities to discuss experiences that make one joyful, explore the similarities and differences within the illustrations, write and share recipes.

2. ***People Are My Favourite Places*** written and illustrated by Ani Castillo

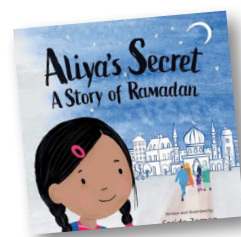
**Themes:** Friendship, Connection, Community, Caring

This is an energetic book that celebrates human connections. Written with the background of when the main character is not able to leave her home, she reflects on all the people she misses. This book has vibrant and heartwarming illustrations that create many opportunities for students to consider and discuss the important people and places in their own lives that bring them joy. Students can also consider, plan, design and make the characteristics needed for places that will make them feel happy and comfortable.

3. ***Aliya's Secret: A Story of Ramadan*** written and illustrated by Farida Zaman

**Themes:** Community, Family, Ramadan, Traditions, Kindness

Aliya wants to be just like her parents and decides to secretly fast for the whole day without telling anyone. She tries to stay determined during the school day but when she is making baklava with her mom in the evening, she accidentally eats a piece! It is then that her mother reminds her that there are many different ways to take part in the joy of Ramadan such as donating food, visiting the mosque and being kind. Students can consider different traditions they may have with their families and loved ones that bring them connection and joy.



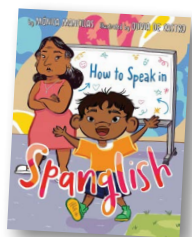
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4. ***How to Speak in Spanglish*** written by Monica Mancillas and illustrated by Olivia De Castro

**Themes:** Identity, Language, Community, Family

Sami loves to speak a mixture of English and Spanish, *Spanglish*. This is when he combines the two languages together in sentences or makes new words. People around Sami continue to remind him that he should only speak English at school and Spanish at home, so no one gets confused. But when he takes this advice, Sami does not feel like himself. It is when an opportunity arises that Sami has to teach his class and community Spanglish that others also see the joy Sami feels. Students can be inspired from this book to explore the languages spoken in their local and global communities.



5. ***We Need Everyone*** written by Michael Redhead Champagne and illustrated by Tiff Bartel

**Themes:** Community, Empowerment, Self-Esteem, Talent, Positivity

An empowering book that reinforces the idea that everyone has a special talent and gift. The book goes into step-by-step instructions of how people can find their gifts and all the amazing things they can do with them. One of the ways people can use their gifts is to contribute to building a more peaceful, kind and fair community. This is a beautiful book that can help students consider all the amazing things they are good at and the impact they can have on their communities.



6. ***When I Wrap My Hair*** written by Shantay Grant and Illustrated by Jenin Mohammed

**Themes:** Identity, Culture, Family, Tradition, Self-Esteem

A deeply inspiring story that celebrates the tradition of wrapping one's hair. The breathing illustrations connect the past and the present with a lyrical tone. The bright colours bring the story to life and show the importance of tradition. There are so many different aspects for students to explore through the intricate details such as the shapes, patterns, emotions, fabrics, etc. This book can be a way for students to affirm, expand and learn about important traditions in their local and global communities.



7. ***Dragon's Dilemma*** written by Catherine Little and illustrated by Sae Kimura

**Themes:** Teamwork, Competition, Community, Caring for others

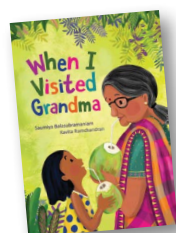
This is a fun book about a race with many different animals taking part including a dragon, a sheep, a dog and an ox. Dragon thinks that he will win the race because he is the biggest, fastest and the only one who can fly. He decides to take his time and explores different places during the race. When he is about to reach the finish line, he notices a village that needs his help, as it is parched. Dragon decides to help them, and even though he does not win, he learns that there are other things that can bring joy to one's heart beyond winning! There are so many elements for students to explore within this book, including the importance of teamwork, helping and caring for others and the role dragons play in different cultures, traditions and communities.



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8. ***When I Visited Grandma*** written by Saumiya Balasubramaniam and illustrated by Kavita Ramchandran

**Themes:** Family, Intergenerational Connections, Travel, Community



Maya goes to visit her grandma in India. She soon learns that her grandma is very busy as she knows all her neighbors and her friends visit often. At first Maya feels a bit overwhelmed with all the hustle and bustle but when her grandma has a heart attack, Maya is reminded of the power of community. This story is a powerful one that reminds readers to think about the special people in their lives, how they can find calm in chaos and foster intergenerational relationships. The love and bond that Maya and her grandmother have is one based on love, understanding and joy.

9. ***More than Words: So Many Ways to Say What We Mean*** written and illustrated by Roz Maclean

**Themes:** Communication, School, Community, Friendship, Inclusion

A beautiful story that shows readers that there are so many different ways to communicate and share your thoughts, feelings and ideas beyond verbal communication. This book celebrates all the different ways people communicate with those around them. It also shows us the importance of building relationships so that we can try to understand each other in inclusive ways. There are so many intricate, inviting and bright illustrations that readers can explore. This book is a way for students to think about how they communicate as well as those of their peers. Students can also consider the different actions that can be taken to build inclusive communities.



10. ***One Little Word*** written by Joseph Coelho and illustrated by Allison Colpoys

**Themes:** Community, Conflict Resolution, Peace, Friendship, School

This is a powerful book that focuses on how a school community works together to resolve a conflict. An argument erupts between two friends and it takes over the playground, impacting all the other students. The book visually shows the impact of an argument that keeps getting bigger and bigger. It also models how people can come together to resolve their conflicts in peaceful ways. Students can be inspired by this book and understand that although conflict is a 'normal' part of our lives, it is the 'way' that we handle it that matters. Working through conflicts in peaceful ways can lead to building a welcoming, safe and supportive community. ■



Diana and Mary Maliszewski

# Drawn to the Form: The Joy of Reading Comic Books Aloud



In school libraries, there are a lot of joyful moments related to comics and graphic novels. When the latest Dav Pilkey book has been barcoded and is available for borrowing, the squeals of glee can reverberate throughout the space. When students realize that they can produce comics as well as consume them and see the results of their efforts, that is a delight that has few equivalents. In our home and at school, few pleasures can compare to the joy of reading comics out loud to and with other people.



My brother and I have been reading comics together since we were children. And though it's quite obvious that we aren't children anymore, we still manage to find joy in this "childish" pastime. Sometimes one of us will take charge, turning the text into a one-man show. More often, we'll take turns reading, dividing up the roles for a more natural sounding back-and-forth.

"Do you want to be this guy?" "How do you think he should sound?" "Your voice suits her better." I've used variations on all these phrases while reading manga with my brother. There's something truly magical about this collaborative storytelling experience, especially when it comes to newer comics.

That's not to say that reading older comics is boring. Eiichiro Oda's *One Piece* has been around for over 25 years and it's still one of my favourite series to read out loud. But there's something incredibly satisfying about watching a story unfold while participating in it as an "actor."

As Mary has described above, graphic novels and comics can make excellent choices for read-aloud material. Speech bubbles lend themselves to "guest voices" with a shared reading experience. If read by a single person, it might lead to some voice actor aspirations when performed with gusto! As long as dialects aren't mimicked or appropriated in a disrespectful way, hearing a reader alter their volume, cadence, pitch and tone while delivering dialogue can be an inspiring and entertaining experience.

Seeing the visuals while reading a comic is incredibly important. Respect copyright by using a document camera to temporarily project the pages so the entire group can see, rather than scanning and saving pages in a slide deck. If you are unsure about the legalities of your read-aloud, consult the Fair Dealing Decision Tool at <https://www.fairdealingdecisiontool.ca/DecisionTool/>. Be wary when searching for comics being read online in their entirety; chances are that they have been pirated and violate copyright law.

Reading comics out loud is an auditory pleasure that should be experienced. If you want more tips, check out Emily Lauer's 2018 blog post on reading comics aloud to young children at <https://womenwriteaboutcomics.com/2018/06/comics-as-read-alouds/>. I

# I Read Canadian Day at Jockvale Elementary



**T**he Jockvale Jaguars love reading Canadian! We are a small elementary school in Ottawa with less than 500 students, but we love our library, reading and having fun together.

French Immersion teacher Diana McDonald wanted to make *I Read Canadian Day* a huge celebration for our school this year, so she rounded up a committee who planned some great activities that were well-received by our whole school.



First of all, as our library technician, I contacted the City of Ottawa and asked them to proclaim November 8th as I Read Canadian Day, which Mayor Mark Sutcliffe did.

As a school, we had different activities scheduled for each day from November 1-8, giving us a whole week of fun.

On day one, we had flashlight reading time in our classrooms. Each class set aside time to turn out the lights and read with flashlights, adding a fun twist to silent reading time. The students loved it!



On day two, classes paired up and met in the library for some reading buddy time. A selection of Canadian books were there for students to choose from and they loved meeting with different grades and reading together. Before this day, each class had coloured bookmarks which were distributed during reading buddy time.



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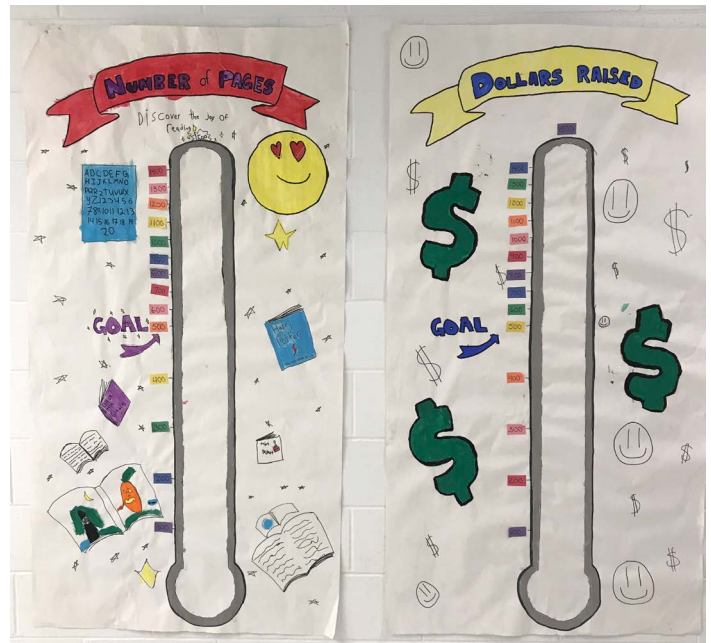
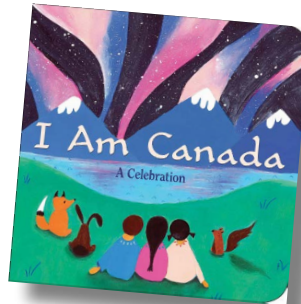
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Day three brought lots of excitement as we had a visit from Miss Amanda, a children's librarian at the Ottawa Public Library branch right next door to our school. Miss Amanda had prepared slide shows for all the different age groups which suggested some fantastic Canadian titles for our students to enjoy. Everyone loves a visit with Miss Amanda, so that was a highlight of the week for a lot of students. We also finished the day with one of our favourite school activities: BINGO! The classes competed against each other to find *I Read Canadian* words on their BINGO cards. It was a lot of fun with some yummy treats for the winning classes.

We got active on day four with a school-wide scavenger hunt. Each class was given clues which led them around the school and helped them find information about our mystery book.

We wrapped up our celebration on November 8th, *I Read Canadian Day*, with me leading a school-wide read aloud of our mystery book *I Am Canada* by Heather Patterson. Each page features a different Canadian illustrator and we loved comparing the different types of illustrations and media used in the book. The final event of the day was a Kahoot game about Canadian books. It was so fun, and it turned out we knew a lot about our amazing Canadian books.

During the week we collected money in our "Bucks for Books" collection. Over \$800 was raised, which helped us buy this year's Forest of Reading books, as well as some of the interesting books Miss Amanda had shown us.



Whether they had lived in Canada their whole lives, or were newer to Canada, our students loved learning about and listening to these fun Canadian books. We have so many talented writers and illustrators here, and everyone found stories they loved.

We hope this is the beginning of a fun tradition at Jockvale. This was definitely #SchoolLibraryJoy for us. 📖



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