



## KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge 2022 Fall Newsletter

Dear KSLA BVF Community,

The start of a new year presents the perfect opportunity to take inventory of our lives and to check in with ourselves, to double-check our intentions. Throughout my life, January was the time to get myself and my family grounded, set intentions, or in other words, to center myself and to listen to my daughter tell *me* what her dreams or ambitions were. Then, as I organized a strategy for my goals, I would guide my daughter to plan for her ambitions as well. In the classroom, I have tried to bring that January spirit —of growth and fresh, pure intentions— from home to my students. Over the years, thoughts would surface about how I could use my creativity to improve personally, professionally, but also to guide the children in my care to plan for their dreams too.

This January 2023, in the wake of the world's ongoing response to the pandemic, I have found myself yearning for the passion of the past and for reminders or at least some semblance of the reason why I began teaching in the first place.

Earlier this month, as I prepared to administer a standardized test to a small group of students, the weather was cold and a bit rainy. I wasn't familiar with the space where I'd be testing, and I didn't have my coffee; it was the picture of a difficult morning.

As I glanced over the assessment manual, the students were entering the room. The steady voice in my head kept repeating the classic "today's going to be a disaster" speech. I desperately hoped that despite my frazzled state of mind I could get the students seated and administer the exam with fidelity. I continued to prepare for our day when suddenly one of my students decided to start a conversation with me while I was counting pencils. I needed to give each student two pencils and well, without my coffee even this was a challenging task. I smiled because I knew the student needed to share his thoughts with someone that day, but I couldn't be truly available at the moment. Then, there was one sentence in particular that caught my attention.

“You know I’m going to be a doctor, right?”

And with those words from a student who had worked harder than many other students to overcome personal and academic difficulties, that semblance of reasoning I had been yearning for had returned, and I felt a sense of clarity.

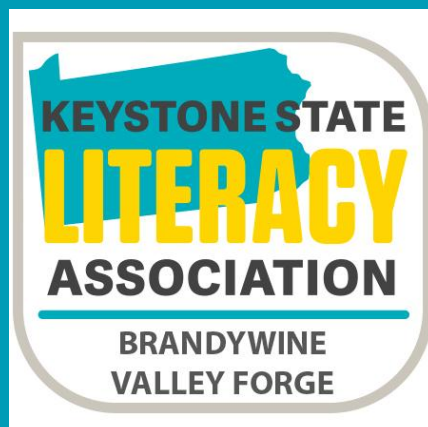
I still see him in my head so vividly. The student’s sense of agency concerning his future reminded me of my daughter at that age, two bright eyes musing about dreams, ambitions, and one day, if I do my job well, plans.

It was with my student’s words, that I understood. I had been so busy checking the formal boxes, immersed in insecurity about if I would be good enough at following steps in a test manual, that I wasn’t truly available. I almost missed the most important part of the learning for that day, showing up. I needed to look him in those bright eyes and validate his belief about his future profession as he reminded me of the value of my profession, and of my presence.

My work, this year, as we continue to emerge from varying degrees of isolation and face the world, pandemic, or no pandemic, is to make sure I show up beyond just attending class. I want to distance myself from being the distracted teacher we can all become when grades are due or when standardized testing season rolls around. Instead, I will try to draw nearer to the teacher within all of us who brings a whole person to class, every day. I invite my KSLA community to carry this philosophy with you into the new year as well. Keep your head up teacher, for at the end of the day there is nothing more important than the connections we make with our students.

To continued reading and wellness,

Renee Jacobs, Ed. D.  
President, KSLA-BVF  
ELD and Literacy Specialist



# **Science of Reading: Visible Language to Inform Instruction and Intervention**

## **Professional Development Presentation**

### **by Dr. Pam Kastner**

On Saturday, January 21, Dr. Pam Kastner presented Science of Reading, Part 2 via Zoom as part of KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge's schedule of programs for the 2022-2023 school year. Pam's presentation was explicit, detailed and full of valuable information for teachers. She took us through the explanations of the "what, why, and how of spelling," to identifying and explaining the 5 principles of English spelling, to utilizing a spelling inventory, and then to evaluating those inventories to inform instruction.

A substantial portion of the presentation centered on the five ways that spelling can be determined, which are sound/symbol correspondence, orthographic conventions, position in a word, meaning, and language of origin. Pam clearly explained those five aspects and gave some examples of how to teach them to students. She made a clear case for the teaching of spelling through structured literacy and for the importance of teaching spelling. As she repeatedly said, "When you're teaching spelling, you're teaching reading."

Pam provided the results for two students' spelling inventories which we then analyzed and discussed by looking through the lenses of phonology, orthography, and morphology. These are the linguistic features of language that contribute to spelling; Pam discussed the description and importance of each feature and then provided some instructional plans. We analyzed the sample results through each of those lenses which was beneficial practice for doing the same analysis in our own classrooms.

We thank Pam for sharing her knowledge and passion for spelling instruction. We thank Pam for the great job she did with answering questions from the participants. We thank Pam for the many resources she shared. She gave us a lot of information to take back to our classrooms in order to support our students. It was an important and valuable professional development session.



# November Book Fair Hosted by KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge at Wyomissing Barnes & Nobles

By Marsha Townsend & Lynne R. Dorfman

On Saturday, November 19, 2022 KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge members came together to hold a book fair at the Barnes & Noble at 2751 Paper Mill Road, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania. Activities for children included creating a caterpillar from cutouts and pages to color, all celebrating Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Children could also participate in a scavenger hunt to win a prize. Often, parents joined their children in various activities.

Tables offered choices from the Keystone to Reading Book Award lists. Rose Cappelli and Glendia Kennedy were present to talk with bookstore browsers about the books on the preschool, primary, and intermediate lists, and Lynne Dorfman manned a table with book choices for the middle and high school awards. Forms to participate in voting for winners were also available.

Marsha Townsend, chair of this fundraising committee, greeted shoppers at a front table and spoke with them about the work of KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge chapter. Marsha also offered pages for the scavenger hunts. Other KSLA BVF members helped at various tables and talked with parents, teens, and teachers who came to the book fair. A big thank you to Ro Batson, Renee Jacobs, and Jen Greene. Ralph Abbott took all the photos you see here and many more!





The fundraiser also hosted local author Pamela Tuck who brought her family and read her stories to young and old. Pamela received the 2007 New Voices Award from Lee & Low Books for her children's book, *As Fast As Words Could Fly*. She is also the author of *Mother of Many*, *Color Struck*, and *Sheldon, the Mushroom*. She sang for us while some of her family accompanied her on instruments. Thank you, Pamela Tuck, for all the wonderful time you spent with us! You can visit her personal web page at <http://www.pamelamtuck.com> and look for her books in libraries and bookstores.

The book fair started at nine a.m. and lasted all day. A portion of the proceeds from book sales were placed on a gift card from Barnes & Noble and will be used to purchase books for several of the charities KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge supports. Please visit <https://kslabvf.wixsite.com/bvf6/fundraising> to see all the ways you can support KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge reading chapter and the good work they do to advocate for children in Chester, Berks and Montgomery Counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania.



**Are you Tech Savvy?**

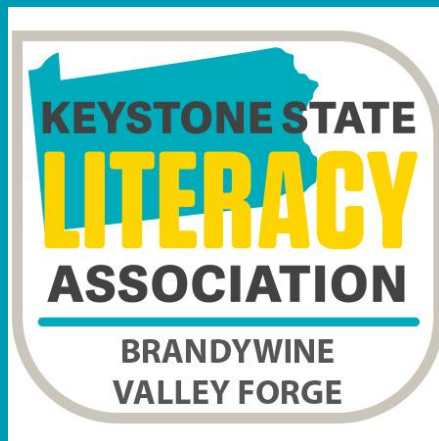


**Are you good with social media?**



## **KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge WANTS YOU!!!!**

Our council is looking for a volunteer who would like to be our social media chair. We are currently on Facebook and Instagram but need someone to post regularly on these platforms. Is that person you? Please contact KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge with your interest - [kslabvf@gmail.com](mailto:kslabvf@gmail.com).





## **How to Motivate Readers Through Booktalks & Book Clubs - Wed, March 8, 2023**

Virtual Workshop - 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

***Lynne Dorfman & Brenda Krupp***

Classroom communities are built through conversation where enthusiasm and struggle are shared. This presentation highlights read alouds, book chats, and book clubs to help students become the driving force of literary response and book choice in your classroom. See student-led book clubs, watch readers book talk books to their peers, and consider ways to use read alouds that can develop greater cognitive skills as they learn to engage with and critically evaluate the texts that they read through shared reading and writing experiences.

Facilitators will use a multi-media approach to share resources and effective classroom practice to build both classroom leadership and individual reader's identity in a Powerpoint presentation that highlights the use of book clubs, book talks, and interactive read alouds. This approach will help participants meet the following objectives: to be able to teach students strategies to actively participate in book talks, to initiate and sustain book club discussions and to examine ways to use interactive read alouds to foster rich classroom discussion, written reflection and social action .

## **Author Event: Social Emotional Challenges of Teens Wed, April 19, 2023**

Barnes & Noble in Exton in person - 6 pm - 7 pm

***YA Author Kate Walton***

Kate will share her process for writing—the why and the how. She'll discuss the teen social emotional challenges addressed in her contemporary YA novels CRACKED, EMPTY, and ULTIMATUM. The author will also highlight powerful yet practical ways to use her novels for class discussion/writing to open students' hearts and minds.

# KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge Chapter Winner Becomes KSLA State Winner

**By Marsha Townsend**

We are so excited to share the news that our chapter winner of the Celebrate Literacy Award was named the state winner of the 2022 Celebrate Literacy Award! Chrissy Casey of Sugartown Elementary School in Malvern won the chapter award in March 2022 for her efforts in launching a bookmobile for her school during the COVID pandemic. In March 2020, Chrissy raised money to stock a trailer with books which she then attached to her car and visited neighborhoods in her school district. At those visits children were allowed to view the books and check out three books each week. Chrissy and three of her colleagues have continued serving the community with the book mobile and still deliver books to neighborhoods in her school district (Great Valley) on a regular schedule.

Chrissy was then nominated by KSLABVF for and won the KSLA Celebrate Literacy Award in November 2022. Chrissy and her fellow “bookmobiler” Christina Jaffe were able to attend KSLA’s annual state conference in Hershey to receive the award. Chrissy was humbled and honored to receive the award, and she and Christina enjoyed the conference and all that it had to offer. They were also able to spend time talking with Glendia Kennedy and Rose Cappelli, and they are both looking forward to becoming involved in the Keystone to Reading Elementary Book Award Committee. Chrissy’s dedication to the students of her school district earned her an award, and her dedication to supporting literacy across the state is evidenced by her new involvement in the BVF chapter of KSLA. Congratulations, Chrissy, and welcome to our chapter!





# KSLA Membership

Encourage your colleagues to join today!

[Click here to print out the poster below & hang it in your faculty room!](#)

## Join the *Keystone State Literacy Association*

### Membership Benefits

- Wednesday Webinars on various literacy topics
- Teachers As Readers monthly book discussions
- Online literacy resources
- Subscription to Pennsylvania Reads (yearly publication)
- Opportunity to join statewide literacy task forces
- Professional networking
- Grant Opportunities
- Discounted registration to annual conference
- Local chapter membership with access to many more professional learning offerings and resources



Students  
\$15

Retirees  
\$20

Current Educators  
\$40



Providing leadership in literacy and  
education in the Commonwealth



[https://ksla.wildapricot.org/  
kslamembership@gmail.com](https://ksla.wildapricot.org/kslamembership@gmail.com)

[Click here to join or renew your membership](#)

## KSLA Conference 2022

# Literacy Lessons

By Rosemarie Batson

The KSLA Conference 2022 was held from November 27th to November 29th at Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey, PA. There were over 200 people in attendance! On Sunday, November 27th, the KSLA Social kicked off the event in the Great Lobby where attendees shared humorous stories from the classroom, while enjoying Hershey's hot chocolate and snacks. During the conference, participants enjoyed networking with colleagues, learning more about current literacy practices through keynote presentations, attended breakout sessions, and met authors over the next two days. Notable keynote speakers that shared their expertise included: Matthew Kay, Mark Weakland, ILA Board President, Kenneth Kunz, Colby Sharp, and Clare Landrigan.

On Monday, November 28th, local author, Matthew Landis, who hails from Bucks County, PA, presented his breakfast program with great humor at this special event. The Book and Author Luncheon was held on Monday as well. The Keystone to Reading Book Award Winners from PreK to high school level were awarded a plaque from the Keystone to Reading Book Award Co-chairs, Glendia Kennedy, Rose Cappelli, Emily Reed, and Aileen Hower at the luncheon. Students from across the state of PA, whose teachers participated in this program, voted on books that these authors had written. The winning authors who were present on site included: Todd Tarpley for his PreK book, *Library Books are Not for Eating* and Jennifer Donnelly, high school award recipient of the book, *Poisoned*. Many other talented and expert professionals, many of them members of KLSA and local chapters, also shared their knowledge in breakout presentations on Monday and Tuesday as well. Authors' Round Table brought authors Jennifer Donnelly, Alison Green Myers, Matthew Landis, Jerry Pallotta, Jordan Sonnenblick, Todd Tarpley, Alexandra Villasante, and Steven Grier Williams, and educators together to converse in a personal setting about their books and writing process. It was an informative and exciting event.



On Tuesday, November 29th, breakfast author, Jerry Pallotta, entertained participants by talking about his writing process, the many books he has written, among them the *Who Would Win?* series, and his travel experiences, which led to ideas for his children's books. Rounding out the conference were the array of exhibits of professional materials manned by many friendly and competent company representatives, books for sale, autograph sessions for authors, local chapter awards, and of course, we can't forget the plethora of themed baskets of items assembled by local reading chapters for many lucky winners who purchased tickets for a chance to win a basket. Finally, it was great to see so many teachers, librarians, reading specialists, students, retired educators, and others come out to Hershey in the name of literacy!

You are in store for another exciting KSLA Conference coming in November 2023, "Literacy Begins Here in Pennsylvania." Be on the lookout for further information in the future on KSLA'S website

<https://ksla.wildapricot.org/Conference>



**Save the Date**  
**KSLA Conference 2023**  
**November 26 - 28**  
**Hershey Lodge & Convention Center**

# COMMUNITY LITERACY PROJECTS

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge chapter conducts many and varied community projects which enhance the literacy of children and adults in Berks, Chester, and Montgomery counties. These projects are described below. Volunteers from among our chapter members, both actively teaching and retired, are the backbone of our projects. KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge welcomes your help with these projects. If interested in becoming active with one or more of these projects or wish to make book/monetary contributions, contact Jane Schultz, treasurer at [kslabvf@gmail.com](mailto:kslabvf@gmail.com)

## **BABY BOOK PROJECT** *(Montgomery County)*

Parents of newborns at Einstein Hospital receive a new book and parent brochure with tips about reading to their child.

## **COURT CHILD CARE CENTER** *(Montgomery County)*

Drop-in childcare provides an alternative to children living the experience of courtroom business first-hand. KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge supports the learning center with the donation of reading materials for children from infancy through school-age.

## **CHILDREN'S LITERACY OUTREACH** *(Chester County)*

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge supports two community service projects through distribution of books. Books are provided to children and mothers residing in a local shelter sponsored by Friends Association. Books are also distributed to CVIM (*Community Volunteers in Medicine*) for their waiting area. Donations of gently used books and monetary contributions to purchase new books are gratefully accepted.

## **PRESCHOOL LITERACY PROJECT** *(Berks, Chester County, and Montgomery)*

This ongoing project supports KSLA's "Keystone to Reading Book Award". This year, for the first time, the project is expanding into both Berks and Montgomery counties. Retired KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge members visit preschools and kindergartens to introduce books and collect children's votes.

## **YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM** *(Chester County)*

The Chester County Intermediate Unit's Young Parents program provides support services to pregnant and parenting students. One of the services includes instruction in child development. KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge is in the planning stages of developing a partnership with the CCIU's Young Parents Program to help highlight the benefits of literacy in early childhood through the distribution of baby board books and pamphlets on the importance of reading to your child.





# KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge Supports International Projects



## Arise Rwanda

Arise Rwanda is established as an organization to transform the Boneza community by bringing it out of extreme poverty with focuses on education, clean water, healthcare, Pastoral care, and economic development. Beginning in 2011 with a feeding program, they currently educate hundreds of students between seven preschools and Boneza's first high school, Kivu Hills Academy.



## Pearl S. Buck Foundation

Pearl S. Buck served over 88, 00 children in 2020 through their international programs. Welcome Workplace is a cross-cultural competency program designed to help schools, businesses, and organizations establish an environment embracing diversity and inclusion. They offer intercultural competency assessments and interventions and diversity and inclusion programming. There are programs to sponsor a child, attend cultural camps, and opportunities to be part of high school leadership programs.



**Pearl S. Buck International**

# Fundraising Projects 2022-2023

## Honey Baked Ham Year-Long Fundraiser

Brandywine Valley Forge continues to participate in the Honey Baked Ham gift card incentive through June 30, 2023. When you purchase a Honey Baked Ham plastic or e-card gift card online, through the link below, 20% of your sale will go directly to KSLA BVF to support its numerous literacy projects in the community. Honey Baked Ham gift cards make the perfect gift around the spring holidays or anytime, for that matter. The gift card is good for the purchase of any product online or in-store at Honey Baked Ham, and they never expire! Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this fundraiser. Use the link on our website's fundraising page to purchase Honey Baked Ham gift cards.

## Barnes & Noble In-Store Book Fair

New this year, is a spring Book Fair, which will take place in-store at the Exton Barnes & Noble store on April 19, 2023. There will also be an online purchasing opportunity for one week. Plan to join in the fun and welcome author K. M. Walton. More details will be sent to you electronically in Spring 2023!

## Community Yard Sale

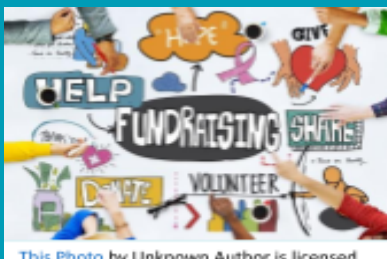
(at Bayard Rustin High School)

**SAVE THE DATE - Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>**

**8 AM – 1 PM**

**(Rain or Shine)**

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge has purchased a spot. Proceeds from this fundraiser will be used to support our community literacy projects. Small household and decorative items and gently-used books can be brought to our table the morning of the yard sale. Be on the lookout for more details as we draw closer to the event.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC

## Annette T. Rabin Scholarship

The KSLA BVF Annette T. Rabin Scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior from a high school in the Brandywine Valley Forge membership area (Chester, Western Montgomery, and Berks counties) who plans to study education at an institute of higher learning. The applicant must demonstrate an outstanding academic record, maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and complete an application that includes a written essay. Applications must be received by March 31, 2023 and can be accessed here:

<https://forms.gle/VcUR3fVE4Eipfbvs5>.

One scholarship in the amount of \$1000 will be awarded. Questions can be directed to Carolyn Kelly ([carolynkelly928@gmail.com](mailto:carolynkelly928@gmail.com)).



# Book Recommendations for Your Science of Reading Journey

As educators, we are all on a “learning journey”. To support you in both understanding the research and applying the science of reading to your instruction, here is a brief list of books that will deepen your knowledge and give insight into best practices in the classroom.

<a href="#"><u>Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain by Maryanne Wolf</u></a>	Maryanne Wolf, a researcher and neuroscientist, shares the history of reading and writing. In this amazing book, she helps us to understand how the brain has learned the relatively new tasks of reading and writing. Wolf draws on her expertise in dyslexia to detail what happens when the brain encounters difficulty reading.
<a href="#"><u>Language at the Speed of Sight: How We Read, Why So Many Can't, and What Can Be Done About It by Mark Seidenberg</u></a>	Seidenberg, a cognitive scientist, explores the disconnect between research and how we currently teach reading. He offers insight into the neuroscience of reading and linguistics to help us understand why so many children fail to learn to read and how we can change this.
<a href="#"><u>Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers by Louisa Cook Moats Ed.D., and Dr. Susan Brady Ph.D.</u></a>	Louisa Moats and Susan Brady write about the foundational skills that are needed to be able to read. This book covers the topics of phonemes, spelling, syntax, and semantics. This book is valuable for all educators but especially important for primary teachers. Moats helps us to understand why students are making common mistakes and how we can best support them.
<a href="#"><u>Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties by David Kilpatrick</u></a>	In this book, David Kilpatrick takes a deep dive into the research about reading, particularly looking at reading difficulties. As a psychologist, he explains assessments, strategies, and interventions for educators to support learners with reading difficulties.



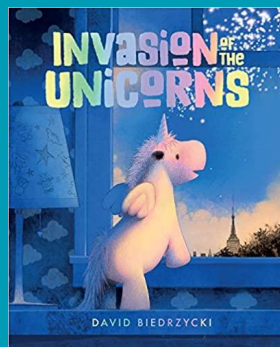
<p><a href="#"><u>Reading In the Brain: The New Science of How We Read by Stanislas Dehaene</u></a></p>	<p>We so easily forget how we learned to read and the amazing feat that occurs in our brains while reading. Stanislas Dehaene explains in depth the neuroscience behind how the brain actually reads. It is really amazing when we stop to think of all the complexities involved in reading. Plan to read (and reread) this informationally rich book with a highlighter and pen in hand.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Brain Words: How the Science of Reading Informs Teaching By J. Richard Gentry and Gene Oullette</u></a></p>	<p>In this book the authors (both prominent researchers) share a scientifically informed procedure for teaching children words. Educators will learn how words are stored and how to teach students so that they have “automatic recognition”. This book is designed to fill the gap between the science of reading and classroom application.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>The Art and Science of Teaching Primary Reading By Christopher Such</u></a></p>	<p>Christopher Such explores the history of reading and writing, explaining why learning to read and write in English can be so difficult. He continues to discuss the components that expert readers must master and how they can be taught in the classroom.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction By Sharon Walpole and Michael McKenna</u></a></p>	<p>This book was written with the classroom teacher in mind. Aligned to the science of reading, the authors present a road map for coordinating assessment and instruction for individual students. Lots of reproducibles including lesson plans, assessment forms, etc. are included as well as guidance for grouping students.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>The Reading Comprehension Blueprint By Nancy Lewis Hennessy</u></a></p>	<p>Nancy Hennessy, co-author of the LETRS training modules with Louisa Moats, shares the research about reading comprehension as well as a framework for organizing instruction. This book includes classroom activities, sample lesson plans, and other resources to help teach your students to construct meaning from challenging texts.</p>

# Book Recommendations

## Invasion of the Unicorns - by David Biedrzycki

He's just a cute little unicorn who wants to take over the world.

Special Agent Bubble 07 is undercover on planet Earth. His mission: to decide whether his team of alien unicorns should invade Earth. Posing as a stuffed animal, he infiltrates the home of Earthling Daughter, where he puts up with dog slobber, tea parties, and show and tell. Will the unicorn blow his cover and call for backup? Or will his alien heart be won over by story time, snow days, and snuggles?



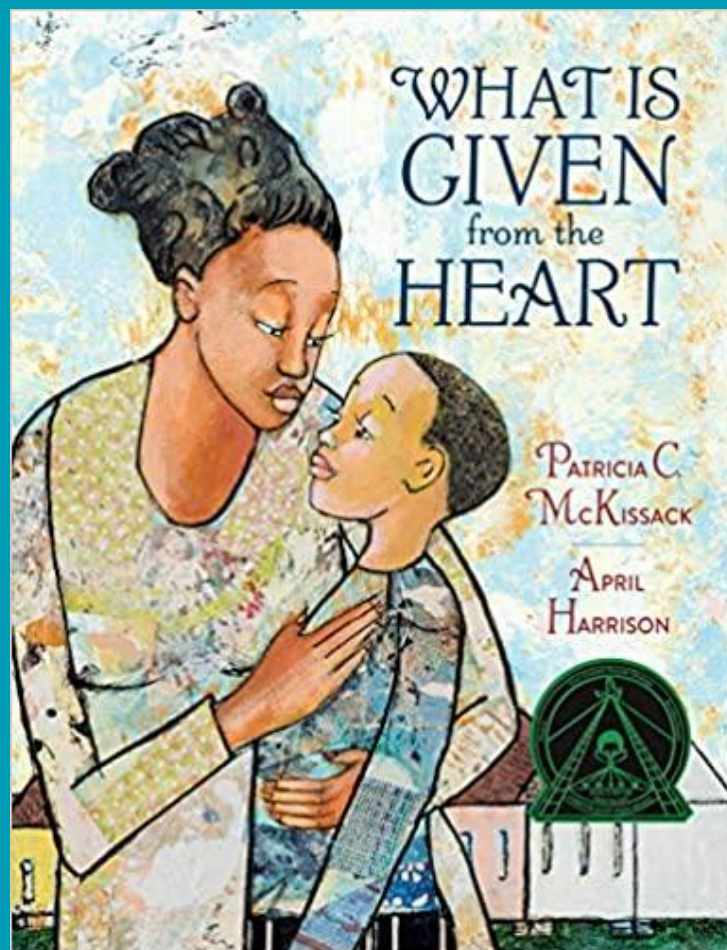
## It's Mine - by Leo Lionni

Another sweetly didactic picture book in Lionni's familiar, brightly colored collage style. Three frogs spend their time quarreling, mostly over territory (Mil. ton: "The water is mine"; Rupert: "The earth is mine"; Lydia: "The air is mine"; and so forth). Despite the warnings of a neighboring toad, they persist until a storm forces them to the one rock in the pond remaining above the flood waters. When the sun returns, they discover that the rock was, in fact, the toad who has thus taught them a lesson in cooperation. The three take it to heart, joyfully proclaiming the island "ours!" Like most of Lionni's work, this is not subtle, but its young-reader audience will find the language clear and precise, the illustrations cleanly done and full of action.



## What is Given from the Heart - by Patricia C. McKissack

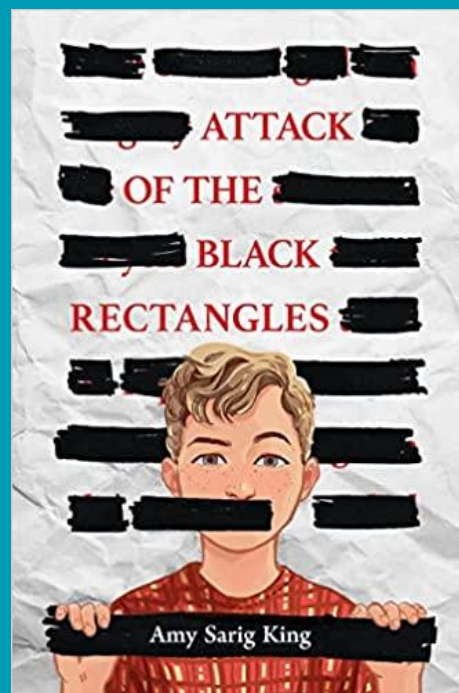
James Otis and his mama have fallen on hard times. His father died, and they had no suit in which to bury him; they lost their farm, their new “run-down shotgun house in the Bottoms” flooded, and his dog ran away. Though they have very little, his mama says, “Long as we have our health and strength, we are blessed.” As Valentine’s Day approaches, their pastor announces that “love boxes” will be delivered to the needy in the community, including a mother and daughter who have lost everything in a fire. He reminds them that “what is given from the heart reaches the heart.” Mama gets right to work sewing her best tablecloth—the one nice thing she owns—into an apron that she hopes will please the mother, Irene. But James Otis can’t think of anything he has that the little girl would want. Finally, he comes up with a plan, and what he gives from the heart, little Sarah cherishes. Debut illustrator Harrison’s heartfelt mixed-media illustrations, which include collage, acrylic, and found objects, emphasize the closeness between James Otis and his mother.



## Attack of the Black Rectangles - by Amy Sarig King

Sixth graders stand up against censorship and systemic bias.

Mac Delaney wants to recognize the unvarnished truth, whether he's wondering about how many Declaration of Independence signers owned slaves, embracing Indigenous land acknowledgments at the dinner table, or questioning blacked-out words in classroom copies of Jane Yolen's award-winning Holocaust novel, *The Devil's Arithmetic*. However, Mac's teacher defends censorship—as well as a bevy of school and town regulations and discriminatory attitudes surrounding LGBTQ+ pride, dress codes, curfews, and access to junk food. Mac lives with and is close to his single mother and grandfather; his disengaged father's dishonesty and explosive anger damage his feelings of self-worth. Mac has support from aromantic and asexual friend Denis and feminist classmate Marci. Mac exhibits real growth in his understanding of Marci's perspective and advocacy. Reading *The Devil's Arithmetic* also influences a Vietnamese American classmate to use her real given name, rather than the Anglicized form, something she felt pressured to do in their 97% White town. Though the school's administration resists the young people's challenges, the students' movement builds a promising following on the way to a cathartic showdown with the school board. The protagonists clarify the various issues for readers who may not be aware of them, and the story skillfully encourages keeping open minds and extending grace to the oblivious and hostile alike. An author's note addresses the real-world events that inspired the book.



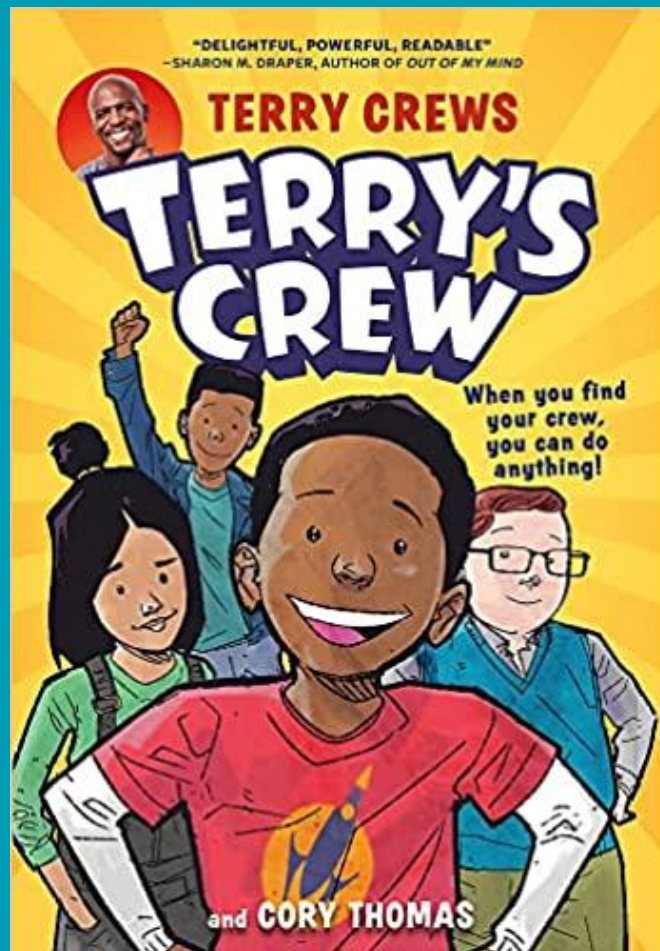


## Terry's Crew - by Terry Crews and Cory Thomas

Young Terry Crews has a Big Dream Plan: He wants to become a MULTIHYPHENATE. That means he wants to be an artist. And a football player. And a musician. And maybe a NASA scientist, too! OK, maybe it's ambitious, but his parents worked hard so he could go to a new school—Rock City Academy, a prestigious institution (read: rich kids go there) where he's sure he can make his mark at the talent show. He plans an elaborate performance with his new friends, Rani, a passionate engineer, and Xander, a shy kid with a head like an encyclopedia.

Along the way, Terry's plan is threatened by his grades, which slip below Mom-and-Dad-approved levels, as well as the schemes of the school's football star, Rick, who won't stop until Terry quits the talent show altogether. No matter what challenges he faces, though, Terry knows that he always has his crew to back him up.

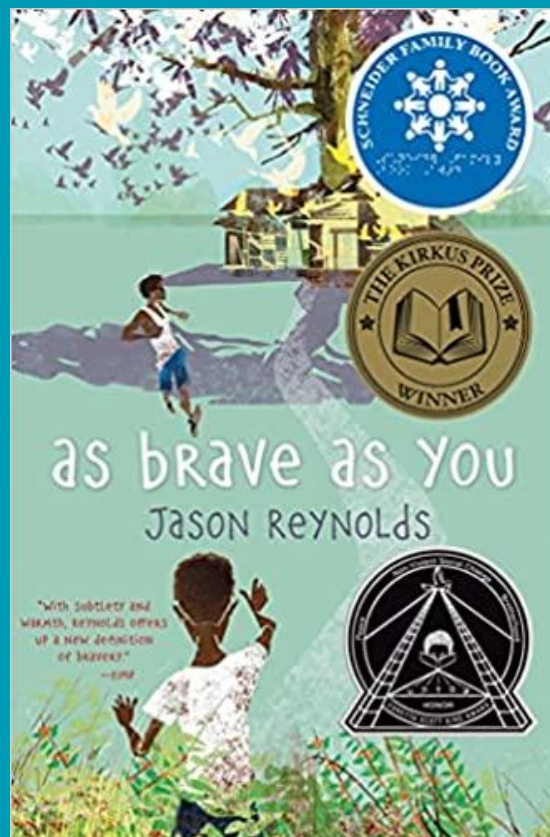
NOTE: This is expected to be the first of a series by Crews (actor, athlete, author. Grew up in Flint Michigan)



## As Brave as You - by Jason Reynolds

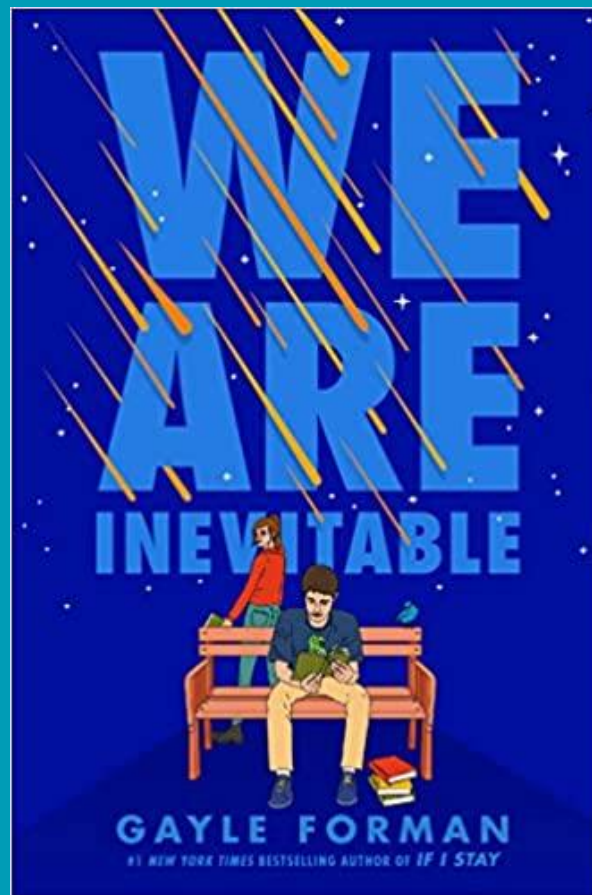
Eleven-year-old Brooklynite Genie has “worry issues,” so when he and his older brother, Ernie, are sent to Virginia to spend a month with their estranged grandparents while their parents “try to figure it all out,” he goes into overdrive.

First, he discovers that Grandpop is blind. Next, there’s no Internet, so the questions he keeps track of in his notebook (over 400 so far) will have to go un-Googled. Then, he breaks the model truck that’s one of the only things Grandma still has of his deceased uncle. And he and Ernie will have to do chores, like picking peas and scooping dog poop. What’s behind the “nunya bidness door”? And is that a gun sticking out from Grandpop’s waistband? Reynolds’ middle-grade debut meanders like the best kind of summer vacation but never loses sense of its throughline. The richly voiced third-person narrative, tightly focused through Genie’s point of view, introduces both brothers and readers to this rural African-American community and allows them to relax and explore even as it delves into the many mysteries that so bedevil Genie, ranging from “Grits? What exactly are they?” to, heartbreakingly, “Why am I so stupid?” Reynolds gives his readers uncommonly well-developed, complex characters, especially the completely believable Genie and Grandpop, whose stubborn self-sufficiency belies his vulnerability and whose flawed love both Genie and readers will cherish.



## We Are Inevitable - by Gayle Forman

When a shelf suddenly collapses, it triggers a domino effect: They can't afford a replacement, and Aaron discovers they're in dire financial straits and that his father's been relying on credit cards to cover expenses. Aaron has been struggling since his older brother's overdose death and his mother's subsequent departure. His brother's years of addiction and final hospitalization wiped the family out; transferring the bookstore's ownership to Aaron was supposed to offer a clean slate. Aaron can't bring himself to tell his father that he's sold the shop to a local business owner. Then party bro Chad, an old friend of his brother's who uses a wheelchair, shows up in their small town in the Cascade Mountains of Washington state and insists on helping build an accessibility ramp for the store. Soon more townspeople appear, eager to help renovate. Aaron tries to renege on the sale, but the buyer demands \$13,000, delivered in two weeks. While he's running out of time, he's drawn to a charismatic girl, the perfect distraction. As the community brings the store back to life, Aaron flees until he realizes he can't hide any longer. Aaron's reckoning with grief is slow-burning and real, and the cycle of addiction is rendered with care and precision.



## Unequal by Design: High Stakes Testing & Standardization of Inequality (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Wayne Au

This new edition of *Unequal By Design: High-Stakes Testing and the Standardization of Inequality* critically examines the deep and enduring problems within systems of education in the U.S., in order to illuminate what is really at stake for students, teachers, and communities negatively affected by such testing.

Updates to the new edition include new chapters that focus on: the role of schools and standardized testing in reproducing social, cultural, and economic inequalities; the way high-stakes testing is used to advance neoliberal, market-based educational schemes that ultimately concentrate wealth and power among elites; how standardized testing became the dominant tool within our educational systems; the numerous technical and ideological problems with using standardized tests to evaluate students, teachers, and schools; the role that high-stakes testing plays in the maintenance of white supremacy; and how school communities have resisted high-stakes testing and used better assessments of student learning.

Parents, teachers, university students, and scholars will find *Unequal By Design* useful for gaining a broad, critical understanding of the issues surrounding our over-reliance on high-stakes, standardized testing in the U.S. through up-to-date research on testing, historical and contemporary examples of the struggles over such tests, and information about how testing has fostered the privatization of public education in the U.S.

