

## Public Achievement Resource List

This list is meant to present examples of what is available to assist in illuminating the Core Concepts of PA and specific issues students may choose. Although general grade levels have been suggested, teachers have often indicated that they use picture books through all grade levels because they are often sophisticated in concept, poetic in language and beautifully illustrated. They are also brief, allowing for a quick yet involving, introduction to the subject.

### **Abuse/Violence:**

Don't Hurt Laurie! by Willo Davis Roberts (1977) 166 pp.

Laurie is beaten by her mother, regularly, unexpectedly, and with increasing severity. Whenever people at Laurie's middle school, neighborhood, or local hospital begin to show suspicion about her injuries, the family moves. Finally, when she becomes fearful for her life, Laurie reaches out for help. Both she and her mother find the support they need to avoid tragedy and to become free of this abuse.

### **Action:**

Swimmy by Leo Lionni (1963) A Caldecott Honor Book, 28 pp.

Swimmy is the only survivor of a school of small fish swallowed by a large tuna. He is enchanted by the undersea world that he discovers as he seeks another school to join. He is dismayed to see how the fear of being eaten keeps the other small fish from exploring their world. His solution is to train the small fish to swim as one "like the biggest fish in the sea." This classic picture book tells, in a few words, how the weaker can gain strength by joining together.

### **Alternative Families:**

Aggie's Home: Orphan Train Children (Nixon, Joan Lowery. Orphan Train Children, Bk. 3.) by Joan Lowery Nixon

Grades 4-7: Twelve-year-old, Aggie, who was abandoned as an infant, is an unhappy resident of the Asylum for Homeless Waifs in New York City. Despite being told that no one will ever want her, Aggie dreams that one day her mother will come to reclaim her. Then she is sent west on an orphan train and adopted by the eccentric Bradon family. Although she initially misunderstands some of the subtleties of family life, she comes to love and appreciate her unusual new family.

David's Search (Orphan Train Children, #4.) by Joan Lowery Nixon

Grades 3-6: After leaving New York City in 1866 on an orphan train, David is "adopted" by the unlikable and childless Bauers of Missouri. His strongest connection is with the hired hand, an African American man. As David learns the ropes of farm life, he also worries about local prejudice against Amos and rumors that the Ku Klux Klan is in town. The 11 year-old child wonders what he can do to help his friend.

Going Home, Coming Home/Ve Nha, Tham Que Huong by Truong Tran, Ann Phong (2003)

Grades 1-3: This book tells a contemporary immigrant story, of a child of Vietnamese refugees visiting, for the first time, the country her parents still call home. Children will see that immigrant families often have two homes.

How my Parents Learned to Eat by Ina Friedman (1984), 32 pages.

Ages 4-8: A bi-racial child tells the story of how her Japanese mother and American father met, fell in love, struggled to understand each other's ways (particularly the way they eat), and finally married. It shows children that superficial differences in cultures don't really mean much and shouldn't get in the way of people appreciating each other.

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff

Ages 8-13: Artistically talented Hollis Woods, age 12, has made a habit of running away from foster homes, but she found a place on Long Island where she wants to stay for a while. She immediately bonds with Josie, her new guardian, who is a slightly eccentric, retired art teacher. She still misses her former foster family, however, and worries about Josie's health. She is growing more forgetful every day. If Social Services finds out, they'll take Hollis away and move Josie into a home.

### **Animal Rights:**

Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Ages 8-12: This is a 1992 Newbery Medal winner—providing good lessons for its readers to take away. When the 11-year-old main character finds a mistreated beagle pup in his hometown, he is unprepared for the ethical questions he has to face. Should he return the dog to its owner, only to have the animal abused again? Should he tell his parents? Should he steal food to help the poor creature?

Seal by Tudor Humphries (Illustrator), Judy Allen (Author)

Grade 2-4—This story about an endangered species focuses on the monk seal—it is beautifully illustrated. Young Jenny, while vacationing with her family on a Greek island, learns about our responsibilities to our fellow creatures when she finds a hidden beach where a rare monk seal hides her babies.

### **Censorship:**

The National Coalition Against Censorship

<http://www.ncac.org/action/suggestions.html>

NCAC has suggestions for how censorship can be addressed in the community.

### **Child Labor/Slavery:**

The Bobbin Girl by Emily Arnold McCully

Ages 6-9: At its core, this story addresses issues of feminism and fair labor practices (child labor). Ten-year-old Rebecca supplements her family's meager income by working as a "bobbin girl" in 1830s New England. She is one of the thousands of girls and women

who endure 13 1/2-hour days in the stuffy textile mills. Rebecca sees the illnesses, injuries and anxiety caused by the harsh conditions, and sees the courage of her co-workers at the same time. When a decrease in wages is announced, the mill workers rally to stage a “turn out” (strike) and protest their predicament.

The Drinking Gourd by F.N. Monjo (1970), picture book

PreSch-Grade 2: A quick-witted young boy helps an escaping slave family follow the “drinking gourd” (Big Dipper) along the Underground Railroad to freedom. This is an “I Can Read” book--an exciting and moving adventure story for beginning readers.

Free the Children: A Young Man Fights Against Child Labor and Proves that Children Can Change the World by Craig Kielburger, Kevin Major

Young Adult: Author Kielburger was 16 when this book was published (1999), detailing his experiences working to fight against child labor that began when he was 12. His grade school group “Free the Children” gathered information, wrote world leaders, and led conferences on the issue with other youth. When he returned to his home in Toronto, after a trip to South Asia, he posed this question: “If child labour is not acceptable for white, middle-class North American kids, then why is it acceptable for a girl in Thailand or a boy in Brazil?”

We Need to Go to School: Voices from the Rugmark Children by Tanya Roberts-Davis

Grades 5 and up: In 2001, Roberts-Davis traveled to Nepal to meet children who had been exploited child laborers working in the carpet industry. This book is her compilation of essays, drawings, and poems by children whom she met there. These children had been permitted to leave the factories and go to school, thanks to the “Rugmark” organization. This organization is supported by UNICEF, and its workers inspect carpet factories and allow them to put the Rugmark label on carpets “when they agree to follow strict labor standards.”

The American Anti-Slavery Group

<http://www.iAbolish.com>

This is a nonprofit organization dedicated to abolishing slavery worldwide. They monitor, document, and publicize the plight of slaves around the globe.

Christian Solidarity International: Redemption of Slaves in the Sudan

[http://www.csi-int.ch/csi/csi-redemp\\_prog.htm](http://www.csi-int.ch/csi/csi-redemp_prog.htm)

CSI, a Christian human rights organization, has bought about 6,000 Sudanese slaves out of slavery. This site features a "How You Can Help" section.

S.T.O.P.: Slavery That Oppresses People

<http://www.anti-slavery.org/stop>

A fifth-grade history class helps free Sudanese slaves by raising money in their community and around the country.

## **Democracy:**

Is Democracy Fair? The Mathematics of Voting and Apportionment by Leslie Johnson and Michael de Villiers, Key Curriculum Press (2004), Grades 7-12, available through [www.mindwareonline.com](http://www.mindwareonline.com).

Shiver, Gobble and Snore by Marie Winn (1972)

The major reason for the existence of rules and law in society is to provide a means for people to live together in a safe and just manner. Rules and laws can help deal with conflicting interests, and provide procedures for peaceful conflict resolution. This book provides a clear and delightful way of introducing this concept. The three characters named in the title leave their own tyrant-led country for a land where there are no laws. And then they discover why laws are needed.

This story also can be found in a “Readers Theater” format in Acting Together, Excerpts from Children’s Literature on Themes from the Constitution, by Arlene Gallagher, Editor, Social Science Education Consortium, Inc. (1991).

Woodrow for President: A Tail of Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

by Peter W. Barnes, Cheryl Shaw Barnes (1999) 32 pages

Ages 4-8: This is a great book about the Presidential election process. It goes through every step of the election process in a simple, yet clear and complete manner. Students will like the use of mice to present this type of material.

Kids Voting USA

[www.kidsvotingusa.org/](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/)

This is a Web site featuring ideas on how to get children involved in the democratic process.

## **Disabilities:**

Andy and his Yellow Frisbee by Mary Thompson (1996)

Grades 1-3: This is a sympathetic view of childhood autism from a child’s point of view. Sarah, a new girl at school, sees Andy by himself on the playground and is curious about his preoccupation with spinning a yellow frisbee. His sister Rosie watches Andy protectively from her soccer game and is fearful that the new girl will disturb his fragile composure. As Rosie thinks of Andy’s problem, she explains autism to readers. This is a book that will help students see how those with special needs may be different but deserve tolerance and kindness just like all children do.

Because of Anya by Margaret Peterson Haddix (2002)

Grades 3-6-Fourth grade Anya returns from winter break wearing a wig because she has lost her hair from alopecia areata--an immune disorder. Many students tease her, but one classmate supports her in facing this disease.

Dad and Me in the Morning by Pat Lakin (1994)

Ages 4-8: Early one morning, Jacob wakes to his special alarm clock. He puts on his hearing aid and his clothes, then goes to wake his father. Together they walk down to the beach. Jacob cannot hear, but he and his father have many ways of communicating: signing, lipreading or just squeezing each other's hands.

A Guide Dog Puppy Grows Up by Caroline Arnold (1991)

Grades K-4: This is a photo-essay about the training of a guide dog. Honey, a golden retriever, is born at Guide Dogs for the Blind in California. After initial screening at the school, she is sent to the home of a 4-H member, a little girl, where she stays for about 15 months. Once she is returned, Honey is introduced to and trained again with a new owner.

Knots on a Counting Rope by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault (1997), 32 pages

Kindergarten-Grade 4: Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses begs his grandfather to tell him again the story of the night he was born. Readers learn how the boy, who was born blind, teaches his horse to run the trails. The story unfolds naturally, exhibiting the love between the boy and his grandfather.

Maggie by My Side by Beverly Butler (1987)

Ages 9-12: This book is for older children than the Alexander books below. The author describes her experiences at Pilot Dogs, a facility in Ohio where she trained with a guide dog.

Mom's Best Friend by Sally Hobart Alexander (1992)

Grades 1-5: This book is written from the point of view of the author's daughter, Leslie, who describes what her mother must go through in training a new guide dog. The book also gives information on what a blind person and guide dog must do in training and the problems they face, such as dealing with low branches and other dogs.

Mom Can't See Me by Sally Hobart Alexander (1990)

Grades 1-5: This story is told from the point of view of the blind author's daughter. It is a warm picture of family life and explains how both mother and daughter have learned to cope with living with a disability. Leslie's mother participates in all the family activities: cooking, cleaning, taking the children to lessons, and volunteering at school. She includes some of the frustrations of blindness as well, such as the fear children express of "catching" blindness and the sadness Alexander feels in not seeing what her children are seeing.

Moses Goes to a Concert by Isaac Millman (1998)

Ages 5-9: This story shares a wonderful experience of Moses and his hearing impaired classmates enjoying an orchestral concert. They hold balloons that their teacher passes out to help them feel the music. Afterward, they talk to the deaf percussionist, who performs in stocking feet so she, too, can feel the beat. She lets the students play her instruments and, using American Sign Language (illustrated in the text), explains how she worked hard to achieve her career goal. Back home, Moses tells his parents about his day, signing a message of universal value: "When you set your mind to it, you can

become anything you want.” See also Moses Goes to School, Moses Goes to the Circus, Moses See a Play.

My Name is Brain/Brian by Jeanne Betancourt (1993)

Grade 3-7: Brian dreads starting sixth grade because of all of the problems he’s had in school so far. But on the first day, his new teacher recognizes his problem--tipped off by “Brain” v. “Brian” and has him tested. Brian has dyslexia. This story helps students relate to a classmate who may suffer from this same disorder.

Rolling Along: The Story of Taylor and his Wheelchair by Jamee Riggio Heelan (2000)  
K-Grade 3: This story provides a glimpse into the life of a young boy with cerebral palsy. Taylor describes his condition, aspects of his daily activities at home and at school, and his desire for independence. While he has been trained to use a walker, he prefers a wheelchair as it enables him to go faster and not tire as quickly.

Shelley the Hyperactive Turtle by Deborah Moss (1989), 20 pages.

Ages 4-8: Shelley the turtle has a very hard time sitting still, even for short periods of time. Shelley’s doctor tells him that he is hyperactive, and that he can take medicine every day to control his wiggly feeling. The doctor’s help and his family’s love make Shelley feel much better about himself.

Sosu's Call by Meshack Asare

Grade 1-4: When a great storm threatens, Sosu, an African boy who is unable to walk, joins his dog Fusa in helping save their village. In the end, Sosu receives a wheelchair for his heroic deed and the villagers change their expectation that he stay at home.

### **Elderly:**

How Does it Feel to be Old? by Norma Farber (1988)

Ages 4-8: A touching book in which a grandmother shares her feelings about aging with her granddaughter.

Now One Foot, Now the Other by Tomie De Paola (1981)

Ages 4-8: When his grandfather suffers a stroke, Bobby teaches him to walk, just as his grandfather had once taught him.

Old People, Frogs, and Albert by Nancy Hope Wilson

Ages 7-9: In this poignant story, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade boy overcomes his fear both of reading and of the old people in a nursing home he passes on his way home from school.

When I am Old with You by Anne Johnson (1993)

Ages 4-7 An African American girl and her Granddaddy imagine many shared activities yet to come.

## **Environmental Issues:**

### Earth Day--Hooray! (MathStart 3) by Stuart J. Murphy

Grades 1-3: The Maple Street School's Save the Planet Club decides to clean up Gilroy Park and plant some flowers to celebrate Earth Day. To raise the necessary funds to purchase plants, they hold an aluminum-can drive, with a goal of collecting 5,000 cans.

### The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest by Lynne Cherry

Ages 4 to 8: When a man comes into the Amazon rain forest one day to chop down a great kapok tree, many creatures' eyes watch him nervously. Soon he falls asleep under the tree, and one by one, snakes, bees, monkeys, birds, frogs, a jaguar, and others emerge from the jungle canopy to plead with the sleeping ax-man to spare their home. When he wakes up, he is startled by all the rare and marvelous animals surrounding him--although he picks up his ax as if to begin chopping again, he quickly drops it and walks away, presumably never to return. Its beautiful pictures and soft story make this a great introductory book to this issue.

### The Great Trash Bash by Loreen Leedy

K-Grade 2: The animals of Beaston realize something's wrong: litter ruins their view, landfills are filling up, and no one wants a new dump in their neighborhood. Declaring a "Trash Bash," the animals launch a comprehensive clean-up and recycling campaign. Their ideas for cutting down on trash are easy for young children to understand.

### The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

Ages 4-8: This ecological book published in 1971 is still relevant today. Dr. Seuss teaches readers not to fool with Mother Nature by telling a tale of greed and environmental destruction.

### Nature's Green Umbrella by Gail Gibbons

Grades 1-4: This is also a colorful and informative look at tropical rain forests. The author drew and identified about 50 animals and many plants and trees. This book also contains methods for protecting rainforest areas, such as creating selective cutting or extractive reserves.

### Recycle! : A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons

Grades 2-4: Discussing paper, plastic, glass, cans, and polystyrene, the author describes how to recycle, why it's necessary, and its benefits.

### River by Debby Atwell

The story focuses on a river and its role as the lifeblood of a community. The author relates the changes that occur through the centuries along a riverbank, from the arrival of the first humans to the coming of the first settlers, from the industrial revolution to the present day. As the river flows the country grows and progresses along its banks--sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. When overuse and carelessness finally take their toll, the river's natural beauty and resources are compromised. Can the river thrive permeated by pollution and waste?

A Walk in the Rainforest by Kristin Joy Pratt

Grades 2-4—This environmental alphabet book was written and illustrated by a 15-year-old student. Each letter portrays a plant or animal that lives in the rain forest with an explanatory paragraph. Factual material is interspersed with warnings about endangered species, deforestation, and the harm coming to native peoples. A Teacher's guide is published for this book too.

Water : Almost Enough for Everyone by Stephanie Ocko

Grade 7 and up: The story begins with the draught facing one small town in Iowa, showing how people learned to conserve water and how the town had to cooperate with others when the wells ran dry. It makes the concept of the Earth's finite water supply real for young people. The book continues with stories of parallel situations in other locations, including Antigua and the African Sahel. The author explains the complex relationships between air and ocean currents that result in shortages or excesses of rainfall, pointing out that water shortages are often exacerbated by human carelessness with the environment, such as the destruction of the rain forests. An epilogue lists ways in which individuals, including children, can conserve the earth's precious water supply.

Where Does the Garbage Go? : Revised Edition (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science 2) by Paul Showers

Grades 1-4: Follow that garbage truck!...to the landfill to see how trash keeps piling up...to the incinerator to see how trash can be turned into energy ... to the recycling center to see how a soda bottle can be turned into a flowerpot. Filled with graphs, charts, and diagrams, this book explains how we deal with the problem of too much trash and provides ideas for easy ways to be a part of the solution.

Earth Force

[www.earthforce.org](http://www.earthforce.org)

Encourages kids to help protect the environment.

Earth to Kids

[www.edf.org/Earth2Kids/](http://www.edf.org/Earth2Kids/)

The Environmental Defense Fund has a Web page for young people.

Ranger Rick's Kid's Zone

[www.nwf.org/kids](http://www.nwf.org/kids)

This is the National Wildlife Federation's homepage for children.

U.S. EPA's Explorers' Club

[www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)

A Web page for kids put out by the Environmental Protection Agency of the U.S. government.

20/20 Vision

[www.2020vision.org](http://www.2020vision.org)

20/20 Vision is a national non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the environment and promoting peace through grassroots action.

### **Equality Issues:**

Marshall, the Courthouse Mouse: A Tail of the U.S. Supreme Court by Peter W. Barnes, Cheryl Shaw Barnes (1998)

Grades K-5: The authors analogize a story of mouse equality in this tale of the Mouse Supreme Court and the Mouse Congress.

A Place at the Table: Struggles for Equality in America by Maria Fleming, Southern Poverty Law Center

Grade 7 and up—This is a collection of 12 essays—sharing stories of many of our citizens that have been marginalized. It raises issues of ethnic persecution, labor strife and advocates for rights for Native Americans, gays, lesbians, and people with disabilities, and includes information about lesser-known, often unsung heroes and heroines who fought for their rights. It was funded by the Teaching Tolerance project.

Stellaluna by Janelle Cannon (1993)

Ages 4-8: Baby bat Stellaluna's mom is attacked by an owl one night, which knocks her into a nest of baby birds. Stellaluna's adoptive bird mom accepts her into her nest, but only on the condition that Stellaluna will act like a bird, not a bat. Soon Stellaluna has learned to behave like a good bird should--she quits hanging by her feet and starts eating bugs. But when she shows her bird siblings what life as a bat is like, they wonder: "How can we be so different and feel so much alike?"; "How can we feel so different and be so much alike?"

### **Immigration:**

The Color of Home by Mary Hoffman, Karin Littlewood

PreSch-Grade 3: Hassan, a recent Muslim immigrant from Somalia, is homesick on his first day of school in America. Although his teacher is nice and his classmates are friendly, adjusting to a new culture and especially a different language, is a struggle. Hassan discovers, however, that he can communicate through art—he paints two pictures—one to share the story of his life in Somalia, and another that depicts his hope for a bright future in his new home. Students will gain a realistic child's perspective on what it is like to be forced to emigrate from a war-torn country.

Journey to America: Chantrea Conway's Story : A Voyage from Cambodia in 1975 (Journey to America) by Clare Pastore

In 1975, Cambodia was a country engulfed by a violent civil war. Thirteen-year-old Chantrea lives with her American father, who is a photographer, and her Cambodian mother. Her father goes away on an assignment and in the meantime, the Khmer Rouge regime takes control, ending the war. Her mother is killed, and Chantrea and her

grandparents are forced out of their homes and into a work camp. They escape across the border to Thailand, where they live as refugees. Chantrea gets the opportunity to travel to America to live with her father's family, but does not know whether she will ever see her father again.

### **Neighborhood Activism:**

The Big Orange Splot by Manus Pinkwater (1977). 32pp.

On a street where all the houses look alike, one person paints his home to reflect his fantasies, interests and creativity. At first his neighbors rebel at this unexpected nonconformity, and send representatives to convince him to return to "normalcy." The story provides a look at various ways the conflict could be managed. For example, the class could hold a neighborhood meeting or an arbitration or mediation session; the "neighbors" could ask their city government to pass an ordinance, the class could conduct a mock trial in which the neighbor is sued in court. This lovely, simple tale could provide a number of experiences that enhance student's citizenship knowledge and skills.

City Green by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan (1994)

Ages 5-8: Marcy feels sad every time she sees the neighborhood vacant lot because she thinks that it makes the area look like "a big smile with one tooth missing." While she and Miss Rosa start work on their windowsill gardens, Marcy decides to lease the vacant lot from the city as a community garden. One by one all her neighbors eagerly sign the petition and pitch in to clean the lot, except Mr. "Hard as Nails" Hammer, the local curmudgeon. One night Marcy sees him sprinkle some seeds in the back corner of the lot, drawing the diverse neighborhood together by a community project.

Grandpa's Corner Store by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan (2000)

Kindergarten-Grade 3: A new super-size grocery store is coming into town and Lucy worries that her grandfather will have to sell the local grocery store he owns. Filled with love and determination, she is able to pull the neighborhood together and save her Grandpa's store. The story shows how anger at a situation can be turned into something positive and emphasizes the importance of community in our lives. Children will empathize with Lucy and realize that they are not always powerless, that they can make a difference.

Mrs. Moscovitz's Last Stand by Arthur A. Levine (1993) 30 pp.

Mrs. Moscovitz has seen many changes in her neighborhood. They all required learning about new cultures and establishing new friendships. These friendships blossomed under the ginkgo tree in front of her house. Now the tree is threatened by a city order to cut it down. First Mrs. Moscovitz and her friends use their wiles to foil the city's plans. But when all else fails, she resorts to civil disobedience by chaining herself to the tree. The resultant publicity works. The tree is saved and the neighborhood celebrates. This deceptively simple story is as rich as its multicultural setting.

Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship by Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger  
Young Adult: This book is written for a student audience, focusing on assisting them in becoming active citizens within their communities. It includes many examples of positive things other kids have done to make a positive difference and provides tips and strategies for getting things done. It addresses writing letters, public speaking, planning fundraisers, preparing petitions, and working with the media, just to name a few.

### **Peace:**

I Dream of Peace, Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia  
Introduction by James P. Grant, Executive Director, UNICEF (1994) 78 pp. Pictures and short writings by children, ages 6 to 15, were gathered by UNICEF from refugee camps and schools. It serves as "a protest against the violation of [children's] fundamental right to be free of the torments of war," and calls for the people of the world to join with the children in saying "enough is enough." Extremely powerful, yet appropriate for upper elementary and middle school grades. The book raises the question of what individuals, groups, and other nations might do to respond to the children's plea for help.

Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco (1994) 52 pp.

"Mother, this war has to be won or this sickness that has taken this land will never stop." The "sickness" was slavery and two 15 year-olds, one black, one white, were caught in the middle of a war to end it. Both are Union soldiers, separated from their units, running from the Confederate army. This powerful picture book is for older children, those who can begin to understand the cruelty of this civil war as well as the strong bonds that were forged amid the horror. It raises the question of conflict between states around a policy that created a great moral dilemma. Yet it does so in the context of the lives of three people who become "family" through their common dedication and human concern.

Talking Peace, A Vision for the Next Generation by Jimmy Carter (1995) 198 pp.  
President Carter gives an historical and contemporary overview of war, and talks about the role that food, shelter, and health care play in building the foundations of peace. He examines the role environmental and human rights issues play in human conflict. He looks at peace-making methodologies such as mediation and democratic elections. He speaks of our cities "at war" and the need to seek peace in America. He highlights the status of young people around the world and what they can do around each of the issues discussed in his book.

### **Poverty:**

A Castle on Viola Street by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan (2001) 32 pp.  
Ages 5-8: Andy's family lives in a cramped apartment and owning a home seems like an impossible dream. Then Andy learns of a project where volunteers rehabilitate old houses for others, who eventually do the same for them. The whole family pitches in, and ultimately learns that they, too, are slated for a new home. Habitat for Humanity's founder-president wrote an introduction describing Habitat's program, raising awareness

of how volunteering and home ownership can make a difference, for communities and individuals.

Home is Where We Live: Life at a Shelter Through a Young Girl's Eyes

by B. L. Groth and Jane Hertensten (1995) 30 pp.

Grades K-5: A 10-year-old girl moves into a Chicago homeless shelter and talks about the crowding and dislocation ("I wish I could have a room of my own"). At school she's ashamed to say where she lives. As the months pass, she feels the support of the shelter community, like a big family. Part of the book's profits will support the Cornerstone Community Center where the story is set.

Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt by C. Coco De Young

Grades 3-6: This is a Depression-era story about first-generation Italian-Americans living in Johnstown, Pa., in 1933. Eleven-year-old Margo Bandini, her parents and young brother, Charlie, face losing their house if they do not find a way to pay back the bank loan used to cover hospital expenses for Charlie's emergency leg operation. In a letter, Margo appeals to Eleanor "Everywhere" Roosevelt, the person she admires most, for help. Her teacher (who moonlights as a reporter and knows the First Lady) provides a swift, personal delivery of the letter and soon Margo receives a reply that restores her faith in miracles and resolves the crisis. This historic novel conveys the "domino" effect of the steel mill cutting back workers' hours translating into failing businesses and the necessity of neighbors relying on one another for support during hard times.

Money Hungry by Sharon G. Flake

Ages 8-12: This story captures the life of 13-year-old Raspberry Hill who knows firsthand that living in the housing project is better than being out on the streets. But Raspberry and her mother are determined to move to a safer neighborhood, and that is why Raspberry is so "money hungry." She sells clearance holiday candy and pencils, and keeps her lunch money rather than eat. She hoards every dime she can gather and hides her cash in her room. Greed drives her and is more important than friends, boys, or her mother's love. The author directly discusses the difficulty in breaking the cycle of poverty. Ironically, it's not the heroine's stash of hard-earned cash that brings about positive change for the family, but rather her mother's ingenuity and the support offered by generous neighbors.

Scorpions by Walter Dean Myers, (1988). A Newbery Honor book. 216 pp.

Jamal is a twelve-year-old in New York City, caught in a web of loyalties: first to his family, including a hard-working mother, a brother in jail for drug dealing and a younger sister; then to his brother's gang, the Scorpions, who thrust leadership upon him; to his best friend Tito who pleads with him not to get involved; and finally to his own artistic talent and intelligence. Then there is the subtle pull of the power of a gun. This story manages to sensitize the reader to the pressures of urban, poor existence while showing choices that an individual has the responsibility to make.

A Shelter in Our Car by Monica Gunning (2004)

This touching story about homelessness shows a young girl and her mother living in their car when they move from Jamaica to the U.S. after her father dies.

A Song of the Trees by Mildred Taylor (1975)

Ages 9-12: When a lumber company wants to buy the trees that have surrounded their home for generations, young Cassie Logan and her family fight to save them. This is a gentle about a black family and its struggle against prejudice and poverty in Depression-era Mississippi.

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan (1991)

Ages 4-8: A boy spends the day with Uncle Willie in the soup kitchen where he works preparing and serving food for the hungry.

### **Race and Ethnicity:**

The Araboolies of Liberty Street by Sam Swope (1989), 32 pages.

Grades 1-5: (book flap states): “The General and Mrs. Pinch rule Liberty Street, prohibiting all laughter and games. Joy and the other youngsters who live there are unhappy but there is nothing they can do about it. Then the Araboolies, who speak no English and who change skin color daily, move in. Life becomes chaotic, exciting, and fun. This sure-fire plot, destined to woo readers, offers the welcome message of tolerance. The crisp text and autumn-muted paintings are a triumph of energy, enthusiasm, and design. Excellent to share with older readers, thought-provoking at any age.”

Crow Boy by Taro Yashimo (1955)

Ages 4-9: In a small Japanese village, Chibi, is an outcast at school because he is different from the other children. Daily, Chibi is faced with feelings of isolation and rejection. Students will learn to develop an awareness and acceptance for individual differences.

Mississippi Bridge by Mildred D. Taylor

Grades 5-10: This is a harsh, disturbing tale of racism in Mississippi during the 1930s. It is told from the viewpoint of Jeremy Simms, a ten-year-old white boy who aspires to be friends with the black children of the Logan family.

Remember my Name by Sara Banks (1993)

Grades 3-6: Eleven-year-old Annie Rising Fawn Stuart is sent to live with her uncle, a wealthy Cherokee plantation owner in Georgia, where she befriends a young slave girl and is caught up in the tragic events surrounding the forced Indian removal in 1838.

## **Rights:**

### American Civil Liberties Union

[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

The ACLU says it is our nation's guardian of liberty. They work in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to every person in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States. The American system of government is founded on two counterbalancing principles: 1) that the majority of the people governs, through democratically elected representatives; and 2) that the power even of a democratic majority must be limited, to ensure individual rights.

“The mission of the ACLU is to preserve all of these protections and guarantees: 1) Your First Amendment rights-freedom of speech, association and assembly. Freedom of the press, and freedom of religion supported by the strict separation of church and state; 2) Your right to equal protection under the law - equal treatment regardless of race, sex, religion or national origin; 3) Your right to due process - fair treatment by the government whenever the loss of your liberty or property is at stake; and 4) Your right to privacy - freedom from unwarranted government intrusion into your personal and private affairs.

We work also to extend rights to segments of our population that have traditionally been denied their rights, including Native Americans and other people of color; lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people; women; mental-health patients; prisoners; people with disabilities; and the poor. If the rights of society's most vulnerable members are denied, everybody's rights are imperiled.”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, An Adaptation for Children, by Ruth Rocha and Otavio Roth (1995) United Nations Publications.

All ages: This book adapts the original text of the Declaration into easier language, intending to make its ideas better known, respected, and accepted by everyone.

## **Teen Pregnancy:**

The Dear One by Jacqueline Woodson

Ages 12-up: This story raises issues the impact of a pregnant teenager on the 12-year-old daughter of a friend who takes her in. Feni (Swahili for “Dear One”) is determined to dislike Rebecca--until she realizes that the older girl's toughness is just a facade that hides a strong, nurturing young woman. The author addresses her concern for black women in society and introduces the reader to teenage pregnancy, alternate lifestyles and adoption in her moving, powerful story.