

# PJA MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING 2013

## *Making My Voice Heard ~ Books about Taking Action*

*Descriptions are a compilation of information taken from various book review sites and personal recommendations.  
An asterisk indicates title is recommended for advanced readers due to mature content and/or challenging reading level.*

### **FICTION**

#### ***\*The Chocolate War*** by Robert Cormier

You wouldn't think that Jerry Renault's refusal to sell chocolates during his school's fundraiser would create such a stir, but it does; it's as if the whole school comes apart at the seams. To some, Jerry is a hero, but to others, he becomes a scapegoat--a target for their pent-up hatred. And Jerry? He's just trying to stand up for what he believes.

#### ***The Cruisers*** (first in the series) by Walter Dean Myers

Zander and his friends, Kambui, LaShonda, and Bobbi start their own newspaper, The Cruiser, as a means for speaking out, keeping the peace, and expressing what they believe. When the school launches a mock Civil War, Zander and his friends are forced to consider the true meaning of democracy and what it costs to stand up for a cause.

#### ***Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*** by J.K. Rowling

At the heart of the conclusion to this spellbinding series is a hero's mission, not just in Harry's quest for the Horcruxes, but in his journey from boy to man. Readers would do well to remember Dumbledore's warning about making the choice between "what is right and what is easy" in a book that is shot through with lessons about honor and contempt, love and loss, and right and wrong.

#### ***Hitler's Canary*** by Sandi Toksvig

In this novel based on the experiences of Toksvig's father, the Germans' 1940 invasion of Denmark sweeps a family into heartrending historical drama. Ten-year-old Bamse yearns to take a stand against the occupation like his daring older brother Orlando, despite their father's counsel of quiet cooperation. Gradually, though, the whole family sways to Orlando's position--refusing, along with thousands of other Danes, to be "Hitler's canary" and "just sit in a cage and sing any tune he wants."

#### ***Hoot*** by Carl Hiaasen

Carl Hiaasen plunges readers right into the middle of an ecological mystery filled with quirky characters and comic twists. The mystery itself is made up of endangered miniature owls, the Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House scheduled to be built over their burrows, and the owls' unlikely allies--three middle school kids determined to beat the system.

#### ***Iqbal*** by Francesco D'Adamo

Thirteen-year-old Iqbal Masih was murdered in his Pakistani village in April 1995, a few months after he had received an international prize and traveled to Sweden and the United States, speaking about his six years as a bonded child in Lahore carpet factories. The murderers--perhaps part of the "Carpet Mafia"--have never been caught. Translated from the Italian, D'Adamo retells the boy's story through the eyes of a fictional coworker.

#### ***\*The Jungle*** by Upton Sinclair

In this deeply moving story, Sinclair exposed the brutal conditions in the Chicago stockyards at the turn of the nineteenth century and brought into sharp moral focus the appalling odds against which immigrants and other working people struggled for their share of the American dream. Recognized for bringing about change in the meat-packing industry, *The Jungle* stands as a classic of twentieth-century American literature and social protest.

***Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins**

Against all odds, Katniss Everdeen has survived the Hunger Games twice. But now she has been adopted by rebel factions as their symbol for freedom and becomes the rallying point for the districts in a desperate bid to take down the Capitol. But being the Mockingjay comes with a price as Katniss must come to terms with how much of her own humanity she can willingly sacrifice for the cause, her friends, and her family.

***A Tugging String* by David Greenberg**

Combining truth and fiction, this novel features Duvy Greenberg, an ordinary twelve-year-old trying to fit in. He knows that his father, Jack, is a civil rights lawyer, but Duvy lives worlds away from Dorothy Milton, a black woman struggling to become a registered voter in Selma, Alabama. When Dorothy reaches out to Martin Luther King Jr. for help, she sets in motion a series of events that—with Jack Greenberg's help—will open Duvy's eyes to the reality of racial inequality and forever change the course of history.

***Uprising* by Margaret Peterson Haddix**

The disastrous fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City, which claimed the lives of 146 young immigrant workers, brought attention to the labor movement in America. This sweeping, forceful historical novel draws upon the experiences of three very different young female characters who find themselves working at the factory on March 25, 1911, the day of the fateful fire.

**NON-FICTION**

***\*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X and Alex Haley**

Malcolm X's memoir describes with blistering honesty his transformation from a bitter, self-destructive petty criminal into an articulate (and very controversial) political activist. At the core of this challenging and lengthy book is Malcolm X's emphasis on self-respect and self-help for African Americans.

***Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* by Phillip Hoose**

Nine months before Rosa Parks' history-making protest on a city bus, Claudette Colvin, a 15-year-old Montgomery, Alabama, high-school student, was arrested and jailed for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. Hoose draws from numerous personal interviews with Colvin in this exceptional title that is part historical account, part memoir.

***Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference* by Joanne Oppenheim**

In the early 1940's, Clara Breed was the children's librarian at the San Diego Public Library. But she was also friend to dozens of Japanese American children and teens when war broke out in December of 1941. The story of what happened to these American citizens is movingly told through letters that her young friends wrote to Miss Breed during their internment. This remarkable librarian and humanitarian served as a lifeline to these imprisoned young people and was brave enough to speak out against a shameful chapter in American history.

***Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and its Legacy* by Albert Marrin**

The story of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire is not the story of one accidental moment in time. It is a story of immigration and hard work to make it in a new country, as Italians and Jews and others traveled to America to find a better life. It is the story of poor working conditions and greedy bosses. And it the story of the unquenchable pride and activism of fearless immigrants and women who stood up to business, got America on their side, and finally changed working conditions for our entire nation.

***\*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression in to Opportunity for Women Worldwide* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn**

Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn show how a little help can transform the lives of women and girls abroad. The book takes readers through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there. Through these stories, the authors help readers see that the key to economic progress lies in unleashing women's potential.

***Kids on Strike!*** by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

This well-researched and well-illustrated account creates a vivid portrait of the working conditions of many American children in the 19th and early 20th centuries. After years and years of oppression, children began to organize and make demands for better wages, fairer housing costs, and safer working environments. Some strikes led by young people were successful; some were not. This book richly captures the strength of mind and spirit of the children who helped build American industry.

***\*Kids with Courage: True Stories about Young People Making a Difference*** by Barbara A. Lewis

Lewis relates the stories of 18 young people who responded resourcefully and heroically to what they perceived as crisis situations. The book is divided into four topics: crime, social action, heroism, and the environment. The young people featured are of varied ethnic and economic backgrounds and live in many parts of the country but share the determination to make a difference in the world.

***\*Lakota Woman*** by Mary Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes

Mary Brave Bird grew up fatherless in a one-room cabin, without running water or electricity, on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Rebelling against certain aspects of reservation life, she joined the new movement of tribal pride sweeping Native American communities in the sixties and seventies. A unique account of a way of life unknown to most Americans, the author pulls readers in with her honest portrayal of her experiences.

***Marching for Freedom: Walk Together Children and Don't Grow Weary*** by Elizabeth Partridge

Much has been written about the Civil Rights Movement, but what has not been documented as well is the role that children played in propelling the movement forward. This book does just that as the Selma, Alabama, voting rights protests are examined through the eyes of its youngest demonstrators whose spirit, humor, and grit are clearly exhibited.

***Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change: Courageous Actions Around the World*** by Garth Sundem

This book profiles thirty different real kids from around the world who used their skills and abilities to improve the world. Divided into five chapters, *Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change* presents inspirational stories of kids saving the environment, kids standing up for themselves, kids helping others, kids overcoming challenges, and kids using talents and creativity.

## **FILMS**

### **42 (PG-13)**

The life story of Jackie Robinson and his history-making signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers under the guidance of team executive Branch Rickey.

### ***The Blind Side* (PG-13)**

The story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatized boy who became an All American football player and first round NFL draft pick with the help of a caring woman and her family.

### ***Freedom Writers* (PG-13)**

A young teacher inspires her class of at-risk students to learn tolerance, apply themselves, and pursue education beyond high school.

### ***\*Gandhi* (PG)**

Biography of Mohandas Gandhi , the lawyer who became the famed leader of the Indian revolts against the British rule through his philosophy of non-violent protest.

### ***Gorillas in the Mist* (PG-13)**

The story of Dian Fossey, a scientist who came to Africa to study the vanishing mountain gorillas and later fought to protect them.

### ***Hotel Rwanda* (PG-13)**

The true-life story of Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager who housed over a thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia in Rwanda.

### ***Paper Clips* (G)**

This documentary focuses on the children of Whitwell, Tennessee, who as part of their study of the Holocaust tried to collect 6 million paper clips representing the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis. Their efforts ultimately educate, inspire, and unite the community.

### ***Sophie Scholl: The Final Days* (not rated)**

A dramatization of the final days of Sophie Scholl, one of the most famous members of the German World War II anti-Nazi resistance movement, The White Rose.

### ***Stand and Deliver* (PG)**

The story of Jaime Escalante, a high school teacher who successfully inspired his dropout prone students to learn calculus.

### ***\*The Times of Harvey Milk* (not rated)**

A documentary of the successful career and assassination of San Francisco's first elected gay councilor.