

## Summer Reading 2023

The summer reading list, created with the help of our FMS Librarians, includes some recommended reading for middle grade students. These books are not assigned reading, just suggested titles for students to continue developing their reading skills over the summer. We also encourage students to use the Guilderland Public Library and the SORA reading app.

### **Fiction**

**Barnes, Jennifer Lynn.** *The Inheritance Games.* 374 p.

When a Connecticut teenager inherits vast wealth and an eccentric estate from the richest man in Texas, she must also live with his surviving family and solve a series of puzzles to discover how she earned her inheritance.

**Glaser, Karina Yan.** *A Duet for Home.* 368 p.

Told from the perspective of biracial sixth-graders June and Tyrell, two children living in a homeless shelter. As their friendship grows over a shared love of classical music, June and Tyrell confront a new housing policy that puts homeless families in danger.

**Gratz, Alan.** *Two Degrees.* 365 p.

Fire. Ice. Flood. Three climate disasters. Four kids fighting for their lives. Akira is riding her horse in the California woods when a wildfire sparks--and grows scarily fast. How can she make it to safety when there are flames everywhere? Owen and his best friend, George, are used to seeing polar bears on the snowy Canadian tundra. But when one bear gets way too close for comfort, do the boys have any chance of surviving? Natalie hunkers down at home as a massive hurricane barrels toward Miami. When the floodwaters crash into her house, Natalie is dragged out into the storm--with nowhere to hide. Akira, Owen, George, and Natalie are all swept up in the devastating effects of climate change. They are also connected in ways that will shock them--and could alter their destinies forever.

**Green, Tim.** *Final Season.* 304 p.

With two all-star college football players for brothers and a former Atlanta Falcons defensive lineman for a father, it is only natural for sixth-grade quarterback Benjamin Redd to follow in their footsteps. However, after his dad receives a heartbreaking ALS diagnosis -- connected to all those hard hits and tackles he took on the field -- Ben's mom becomes more determined than ever to get Ben to quit football. Ben isn't playing just for himself, though. This might be his dad's last chance to coach. And his teammates need a quarterback that can lead them to the championships. But as Ben watches the heavy toll ALS takes on his dad's body, he begins to question if this should be his final season after all.

**Korman, Gordon.** *The Fort.* 239 p.

When a tight-knit group of middle school friends discover a trap door in the woods that leads to a completely intact bomb shelter, they vow to keep the place a secret while sharing their individual secrets to build the safest space possible.

Leali, Michael. *The Civil War of Amos Abernathy*. 290 p.

Through letters he writes in his journal, thirteen-year-old Amos finds a confidant in a queer historical figure from the Civil War.

Lloyd, Natalie. *Hummingbird*. 348 p.

When twelve-year-old Olive, who suffers from brittle bone disease and has been homeschooled all her life, finally attends school in person she soon discovers fitting in is not that easy, but if she can find the magical wish-granting hummingbird that supposedly lives nearby, and prove herself worthy, maybe her deepest wish will be granted

Lukoff, Kyle. *Different Kinds of Fruit*. 313 p.

When Annabelle learns that her father shares something big--and surprising--in common with her new nonbinary friend, she begins to see herself, and her family, in a whole new light.

Luqman-Dawson, Amina. *Freewater*. 403 p. Newbery Award.

After they flee the plantation where they were enslaved, twelve-year-old Homer and his sister Ada find a home with the people of Freewater, a group of escaped slaves who secretly live in the Great Dismal Swamp. There he finds a new community of friends who support one another to ensure they remain free. When their community is threatened, Homer hatches a plan to rescue his enslaved mother and ensure the safety of Freewater residents.

Marks, Janae. *On Air with Zoe Washington*. 293 p. (sequel to *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*)

Follows fourteen-year-old Zoe and her recently exonerated father as they build their new relationship and work to open a restaurant together.

Nielsen, Jennifer. *Iceberg*. 339 p.

Twelve-year-old Hazel Rothbury stows away aboard the Titanic and, with the help of a porter named Charlie and a first-class passenger named Sylvia, she sets out to explore the great ship, uncovering a haunting mystery--until the ship hits an iceberg and she must fight to save herself and her friends.

O'Shaughnessy, Kate. *Lasagna Means I Love You*. 360 p.

When eleven-year-old foster kid Mo finds a handmade cookbook filled with someone else's family recipes, she collects the stories behind them and builds a website to share them, secretly hoping a long-lost relative will find her and give her a family recipe all her own.

Soontornvat, Christina. *The Last Mapmaker*. 359 p. Newbery Honor.

Joining an expedition to chart the southern seas, twelve-year-old mapmaker's assistant Sai, posing as a well-bred young lady with a glittering future, realizes she's not the only one on board harboring secrets when she discovers the ship's true destination.

Warga, Jasmine. *A Rover's Story*. 294 p.

Built to explore Mars, Resilience begins to develop human-like feelings as he learns from the NASA scientists who assembled him, and as he blasts off and explores Mars, Resilience must overcome different obstacles as he explores the red planet.

Yang, Kelly. *Finally Seen*. 298 p.

When ten-year-old Lina Gao leaves China to live with her parents and sister, after five years apart, she must reckon with her hurt, anger, and curiosity and find a way to get her bearings in this new country--and the almost-new family that comes along with it.

## **Nonfiction**

Aguilar, David. *Piece by Piece: how I built my life (no instructions required)*. 282p.

The heartfelt and funny memoir of a boy who built himself a prosthetic arm out of the world-famous toy bricks. David Aguilar was born missing part of one arm, a small detail that seemed to define his life and limit people's ideas of who he was and who he could be. But in his funny and heartfelt memoir, David proves that he can throw out the rulebook and people's expectations and maybe even make a difference in the world--and all with a sense of humor. At only nine years old, David built his first prosthesis from LEGO bricks, and since then he hasn't stopped creating and thinking about how his inventions, born from a passion for building things, could fuel change and help others.

Barone, Rebecca. *Unbreakable: the spies that cracked the Nazis' secret code*. 260p.

Complete with more than sixty historical photos, *Unbreakable* tells the true story of one of the most dangerous war-time code breaking efforts ever. While Hitler marched his troops across newly conquered lands and deadly "wolfpacks" of German U-Boats prowled the open seas, a team of codebreakers, spies, and navy men raced against the clock to uncover the secrets that hid German messages in plain sight. Victory--or defeat--in World War II would hinge on their desperate attempts to crack the code.

Fleming, Candace. *The Curse of the Mummy : uncovering Tutankhamun's tomb*. 285 p.

During the reign of the New Kingdom of Egypt, the boy pharaoh Tutankhamun ruled and died tragically young. In order to send him on his way into the afterlife, his tomb was filled with every treasure he would need after death. And then, it was lost to time, buried in the sands of the Valley of the Kings. His tomb was also said to be cursed. Centuries later, as Egypt-mania gripped Europe, two Brits--a rich earl with a habit for gambling and a disreputable, determined archeologist--worked for years to rediscover and open Tutankhamun's tomb. But once it was uncovered, would ancient powers take their revenge for disturbing and even looting the pharaoh's resting place? What else could explain the mysterious illnesses, accidents, and deaths that began once it was found

Hood, Susan. *Alias Anna*. 339 p.

Written in verse, this biography chronicles Zhanna Arshanskaya, a young Ukrainian Jewish girl using the alias Anna, whose phenomenal piano-playing skills saved her life and the life of her sister, Frina, during the Holocaust.

Ogle, Rex. *Free Lunch* 208 p. (also sequels *Punching Bag* 207 p. and *Abuela, Don't Leave Me* 198 p.)

Rex Ogle recounts his first semester in sixth grade in which he and his younger brother often went hungry, wore secondhand clothes, and were short of school supplies and he was on his school's free lunch program. Grounded in the immediacy of physical hunger and the humiliation of having to announce it every day in the school lunch line, Rex's is a compelling story of a more profound hunger -- that of a child for his parents' love and care.

## Graphic Novels

Case, Jonathan. *Little Monarchs*. 255 p.

In the twenty-second century, a sun shift has made it impossible for mammals to survive in the daylight, and ten-year-old Elvie and her caretaker, Flora, are studying the migration route of monarch butterflies along what used to be the western coast of the United States, hoping that something in the butterflies wing scales can be used to protect people from the sun and save humanity from extinction.

Christmas, Johnnie. *Swim Team*. 245 p.

Bree can't wait for her first day at her new middle school, Enith Brigitha, home to the Mighty Manatees--until she's stuck with the only elective that fits her schedule, the dreaded Swim 101. The thought of swimming makes Bree more than a little queasy, yet she's forced to dive headfirst into one of her greatest fears. Lucky for her, Etta, an elderly occupant of her apartment building and former swim team captain, is willing to help.

Gratz, Alan. *Captain America. The ghost army*. 165 p.

In this . . . adventure set during World War II, Steve Rogers (AKA Captain America) and his young sidekick, Bucky Barnes, encounter threats like none they've ever seen--a Ghost Army. The dead of this war and wars past are coming back to life, impervious to bullets, flames, or anything else the Allies can throw at them. The armies rise from the ground in the night and seem to disappear without a trace. How can Cap and Buck fight something that's already dead? And just what does the mysterious Baron Mordo--sitting in his castle atop nearby Wundagore Mountain--have to do with this?

Krosoczka, Jarrett. *Sunshine: how one camp taught me about life, death, and hope*. 226 p.

When Jarrett J. Krosoczka was in high school, he was part of a program that sent students to be counselors at a camp for seriously ill kids and their families. Going into it, Jarrett was worried: Wouldn't it be depressing, to be around kids facing such a serious struggle? Wouldn't it be grim? But instead of the shadow of death, Jarrett found something else at Camp Sunshine: the hope and determination that gets people through the most troubled of times. Not only was he subject to some of the usual rituals that come with being a camp counselor (wilderness challenges, spooky campfire stories, an extremely stinky mascot

costume), but he also got a chance to meet some extraordinary kids facing extraordinary circumstances. He learned about the captivity of illness, for sure but he also learned about the freedom a safe space can bring.

**Ogle, Rex. *Four Eyes*. 224 p.**

A humorous and heartwarming middle-grade graphic memoir about fitting in, facing bullies, and finding the right pair of glasses.

**Santat, Dan. *A First Time for Everything*. 308 p.**

In this feel-good coming-of-age memoir, the best-selling author and Caldecott Medalist shares his life-changing middle school trip to Europe during which he experiences a series of firsts, including first love.

**Sheinkin, Steve. *Bomb, graphic novel : the race to build--and steal--the world's most dangerous weapon*. 253 p.**

This graphic adaptation examines the history of the atomic bomb, discussing the discovery of the behavior of uranium when placed next to radioactive material, the race to build a bomb, and the impact of the weapon on societies around the world.

**Smith, Tommie. *Victory. Stand!* 200 p.**

A groundbreaking and timely graphic memoir from one of the most iconic figures in American sports--and a tribute to his fight for civil rights. On October 16, 1968, during the medal ceremony at the Mexico City Olympics, Tommie Smith, the gold medal winner in the 200-meter sprint, and John Carlos, the bronze medal winner, stood on the podium in black socks and raised their black-gloved fists to protest racial injustice inflicted upon African Americans. Both men were forced to leave the Olympics, received death threats, and faced ostracism and continuing economic hardships. In his first-ever memoir for young readers, Tommie Smith looks back on his childhood growing up in rural Texas through to his stellar athletic career, culminating in his historic victory and Olympic podium protest.