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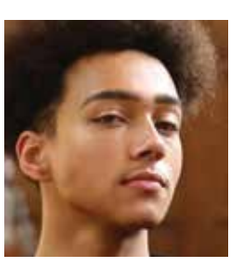
December 2023 · Volume 26, Issue 11

Reading Opens a World of Wonders

(STORY & PHOTOS ON PAGES 8–10)

Community Arts Awards for Youth go to three KPS students.

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Gifting + Books = Joy Shared
KPS librarian holiday book recommendations

pg. 12



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A Season of Gifts, Opportunities and Responsibilities

A Message from the Superintendent



Dr. Darrin Slade

DURING the holidays many of us turn our attention to giving thanks and expressing gratitude.

One thing that is very apparent to anyone who moves to Kalamazoo is that this is a community rich with resources.

Examples of the generosity of time, resources and spirit can be found throughout the district on a daily basis. This includes the Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College students volunteering as tutors in our schools, the Stuart Avenue Neighborhood taking Woodward School under its wing to support back-to-school activities, and the dozens of community groups that provide holiday food baskets for our families in need. KPS can count on the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP and El Concilio to work with our students and to present enriching programs, and the district is fortunate to partner with Gryphon place on services such as restorative practices and SEL support.

This is a community that rallies to support KPS and its endeavors. There are two organizations that I would like to highlight this season.

The first is Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo, or as it is affectionately know, CIS. CIS operates in 22 of our schools. This is its 20th year of helping coordinate effective and efficient delivery of community resources to KPS students.

At a school like Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary, CIS site coordinator Angela VanHeest does everything from coordinating the delivery of medical, dental and mental health services for students to making sure the CIS office is stocked with winter coats and boots for kids who come to school underdressed for a Michigan winter.

Through her efforts, volunteers provide tutoring or social engagement for students. She serves on the school attendance committee, coordinates a team of social work interns, and helps kids that deal with food insecurity get food packs for the weekends.

You can see how CIS wraps its arms around children to provide them with the things they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities that await them in school.

That leads us to a discussion of how taking advantage of the educational opportunities in KPS is necessary for them to take advantage of another amazing Kalamazoo opportunity — The Kalamazoo Promise.

For a student who graduates from KPS, after having attended the district from kindergarten through 12th grade and met attendance requirements, The Kalamazoo Promise will pay all mandatory tuition and fees at any state college or university — and at any Michigan College Alliance private school. In addition, students can use their Promise funds to cover fees for trade schools and learning opportunities.

The Kalamazoo Promise has been doing this for 17 years, and it shows no signs of stopping. It has provided more than $180 million to more than 7,000 KPS Promise scholars to pursue their post-secondary goals. For a student attending a four-year university, that can easily mean a $60,000 to $70,000 gift.

As a school district we cannot only be grateful for this gift for our students, we have to pour all of our efforts into preparing students for future academic challenges, providing them with career exploration opportunities so they can envision their future selves, and equipping them with the socialemotional skills that will make them resilient, flexible and creative people.

Kalamazoo, this holiday season, there is much to be grateful for — and there is much work to be done.



Author Visits Provide Reading Enrichment for KPS Students

KALAMAZOO Public School students benefit from the opportunity to meet with authors throughout the school year. KPS library staff coordinate these vists with the help of groups such as the Kalamazoo Public Library.

This fall students across the district had the chance to visit with authors, including Mark Oshiro, author of the award-winning "Anger Is a Gift" and the latest Percy Jackson title, which he co-authored with Rick Riordan, "The Sun and the Star: A Nico Di Angelo Adventure;" Emmy Kastner, a Kalamazoo author who shared her latest book and led students in interactive writing activities tied to her latest title "A Very Big Fall;" and Julie Buchholtz, author of "Who Am I?," a meditative interaction between a mother and daughter that takes inspiration from indigenous North American peoples.

Oshiro visited with Kalamazoo Central High School students on Oct. 13 telling the students about their early beginnings as a writer, their career as a music journalist, and how their books combine a love of horror and fantasy with very real themes drawn from their own life.

Oshiro is the author of six novels, including the middle grade books "The Insiders" and "You Only Live Once," and "Star Wars Hunters: Battle for the Arena."



Author Mark Oshiro shows his Star Wars sleeve to Kalamazoo Central senior Javon Wilson before he autographs a book for Wilson.

They started reading at age 4 and by age 8, they had started on Stephen King's "It," which "terrified" them. They also loved anything by Beverly Cleary, the "Chronicles of Narnia" by C.S. Lewis, and the "Goosebumps" series, of which they still have 60-70 first editions.

"'Goosebumps' inspired my love of all things spooky and scary," Oshiro said. "Horror is my favorite genre to read and write. They also taught me how you could write something fast-paced, and have plot twists, and keep someone's attention."

Real-life events have also inspired their books. Oshiro is a transracial adoptee. And, when they were 16, their parents kicked them out of the house for being gay. Their last two years of high school they were homeless and working to support themselves.

After college and a career in music journalism, they began writing novels, including their most personal story: "Into the Light." "I ended up writing really, truly about what I felt was important to me, what I always wanted to avoid talking about in a book: What happens when you are rejected by your adopted parents because of who you are?'"

They now have six novels out in the world, including two with impressive pop culture lineages: the "Star Wars Hunters: Battle for the Arena," based on characters and settings from the "Star Wars Hunters" game, and the Rick Riordan collaboration from the world of Percy Jackson.

"This is what I've always wanted to do," they said. "There are all of these books with my name on the cover."



ARTISTS' CORNER

Spring Valley Center for Exploration second graders created butterfly watercolor paintings, under the guidance of art teacher Emma Cunningham. Students first learned about the life cycle of a butterfly and discussed the insects' different stages of development. Students learned about different types of butterflies and how they have various colors and patterns on their wings. This inspired students in the creation of their own butterflies. First, students drew their butterflies in pencil, then they used oil pastels to outline the shapes. Lastly, students painted their butterflies using watercolor paints.



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Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells



Kirsten Strong, registered dietician **Samuel Dunn, executive chef**

Butter Board

HERE COME the holidays, which usually means you will be attending one or more get-togethers where you may be expected to bring a dish to pass. Below you will find the perfect answer to your "what should I bring?" question.

Well, have you ever tried a butter board? Think bread and butter meets charcuterie. Who doesn't love bread and butter? A butter board consists of a layer of butter topped with spices, herbs, meat, cheese, oils, fruit, or honey that you spread atop your choice of bread or cracker.

The great thing about a butter board is that there is no exact recipe. You can build one with ingredients you have on hand. A simple butter board might only include salt, pepper, and garlic. Or, a more involved combination might include salt, pepper, feta cheese, caramelized onions, dried apricot, honey, and lemon zest.

The possibilities are truly endless and let's not forget to mention how visually pleasing they are. You can create a butter board that suits the guests at any social gathering. Below is the method of building a butter board with several different topping combinations, but do not be afraid to make it your own!



INGREDIENTS:

½ cup (1 stick) of butter (you can also use a ½ cup of plant-based butter like Earth Balance)
1 cutting board (you can also use a plate if you do not have a cutting board)
Bread, crackers, pita, pretzels, etc.

Fall Fest – Butter is topped with chopped walnuts, dried cranberries, fresh thyme, honey, salt, olive oil.

Fiesta Mix Ins – Cumin, cilantro, cotija cheese, minced jalapeno, salt, and roasted pumpkin seeds add a spicy flair.

Greek Lemon – Top the butter with a savory blend of caramelized onions, lemon zest, honey, fresh mint, and salt.

Sweet Berry – Take a turn toward dessert with dark chocolate shavings, salt, fresh raspberries, toasted pistachios, and fresh mint.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Bring your butter to room temperature so that it is easier to spread.
- Once the butter is softened, use a small knife or spoon to spread the butter onto any cutting board, flat platter, or plate. It's nice to create small swirls in the butter to allow toppings like honey or jam to collect into little pools.
- Sprinkle chosen toppings evenly over the butter. Pay attention to what you want to be most visible. For example, if you want to add color, add the most colorful ingredients last, so the colors pop and are not hidden under other ingredients. Use variety, but be sure not to overload the butter board. You want to make sure you can still see the butter underneath the toppings.
- If your board is big enough, place the bread/crackers/pretzels next to, or around the butter. Or, you can use an additional serving dish for these items. Serve at room temperature.

Serves: 10-20 people

If You Seek a Pleasant Book, Look About You

KPS Libraries Support the District's Literacy Goals

THE LIBRARY staff may be in the quietest corner of the school building, but they have a message that they hope students hear loud and clear: Let us help you get excited about reading.

"We try to reach out to students who either may struggle with reading or may not be engaged in school. I think libraries are constantly looking for ways to work with teachers and work with students to bring them back in to find whatever it is they're excited about and to connect them to resources that help them take that next step," said Patsy Richardson, the acquisitions and cataloging librarian for Kalamazoo Public Schools.

She works with a staff of 17 librarians and library assistants, who cover almost all of the school buildings in KPS. Together they manage a collection of more than 200,000 books and circulate more than 10,000 titles a month.

In addition to Richardson, the district employs four other certified librarians, who are considered part of the professional teaching staff: Terri Luzenske, who serves King-Westwood and Indian Prairie elementary schools; Jill Franz, who works at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts; and Tonya Colvin and Michelle Coash, who are the librarians at Kalamazoo Central and Loy Norrix high schools, respectively. All other positions in the department are filled by library assistants.

All library staff work together to help build libraries that provide a robust learning and reading environment and support the district's literacy goals. They also help coordinate the district's summer reading program, coordinate with Kalamazoo Public Library to host author visits, and provide other supports to the students.



King-Westwood students visited with author Julie Buchholtz, author of "Who Am I?" Julie Buchholtz is a member of the Bay Mills Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She lives in Brimley along the shores of Lake Superior.

The librarians are able to coordinate and co-teach with teachers, leading projects such as one at Loy Norrix where the former librarian was able to help students choose books that they then delved into for economic and political themes. Another was the "book cafe" that Colvin created at Kalamazoo Central, which helped students get a "taste" of different titles, genres and authors.

In both instances — and even in the weekly visit to the school library that elementary school students make — that ability to go into the expanse of the library shelves and choose something that appeals to them is so important for student engagement.

(continued on page 7)

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KPS Libraries *(continued from page 6)*

"Being able to choose what they read is really important if they're going to be motivated to read something," Richardson said.

The schools have been lucky enough to benefit from almost all of the recent bond issues approved by voters in recent years. It has resulted in stable budgets that allow the library staff to create current and relevant collections that appeal to students.

It also helps ensure the libraries have resources beyond books, such as online encyclopedias and databases made available through the Michigan Electronic Library.

Even in a world where ebooks and audiobooks abound, there is something about the printed page that appeals to children, Richardson said. It feels like students really like books, she said.

"It's a pleasant surprise," she admitted. "I think at the elementary level, at a time when students are learning to read, a book is so tactile. There's a beautiful book and you open it up to these beautiful pictures. I wonder if that's more satisfying than swiping through your device."



Library assistant Wendy Sikkengawa reads to students in the beautiful Milwood Elementary School library.

Interest falls off a bit in middle school and high school, but there are still those students who "just want a book," she said.

"It's right there. It's not like you have to search for it and weave through a gazillion things you don't want. Here's a book and it's in your hand," Richardson said. "You open it and it doesn't matter if the internet is working or if you have a connection."

Even though Kalamazoo has a robust public library system, not every family can easily make a weekly trip to the public library, she said. For the children in those families, the school library is even more important.

"They still get to go and choose whatever they want," she said.

Sometimes it's difficult for parents to see the value in the book choice a child might make, but Richardson said we should all remember that building enthusiasm is half the battle in building reading skills. "We forget that reading is reading."

"Find what they're interested in and let them read that as much as possible," she said. "Then, reading is exciting and enjoyable. That's what we try to do in libraries — connect kids with what they're interested in. That is key to everything else they're going to need to read about in their lives.

"If it is bringing joy, that's good for our brains too."





Reading Opens a World of Wonders

Literacy Skills Start at Home, Grow at School

READING is a multi-layered skill. And Kalamazoo Public Schools district teaches literacy through a multi-layered approach.

A new curriculum, dedicated teachers, support for students who are struggling and the involvement of parents at home are all key to helping students develop this essential life skill, Dr. Angela Justice told the KPS Board of Education in October. Justice is the district's interim director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development.



Dream Primer thinks hard about which word fills the next blank on her reading worksheet at Northeastern Elementary School.

Justice presented an overview of the Wonders elementary reading program, which is in its first full year of implementation. The program was adopted in February.

In making the selection of the program for students in kindergarten through fifth grade, "we were intentional about ensuring we have a core curriculum reading program that helped our students grow in literacy skills and strategies," she said. "We were intentional in ensuring we had a core curriculum reading program that had stories that represent our children in a variety of ways, and we were intentional in having a core curriculum reading program that was aligned with best practices for literacy instruction and application."

In his introduction for Justice, KPS Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade emphasized the district's commitment to improving reading skills for students across every grade level.

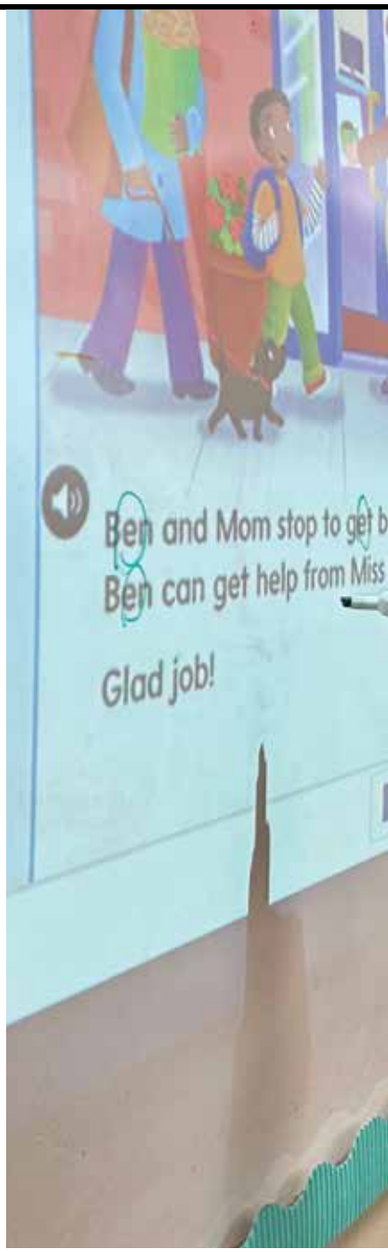
"We are going to take an aggressive approach to make sure all of our students are reading at grade level," Slade said. "Our goal is to ensure our students are reading at grade level before they go to middle school, but it surely is a goal that every student is reading at grade level before they walk across the stage at graduation."



Jordan McCall-Jackson listens intently as first grade teacher Suzanna Friedman explains a strategy for figuring out the correct answer on his reading worksheet.

It is an essential skill for every student, Slade said, "because, I don't know any job where you don't have to be able to read and to comprehend."

He encouraged parents to contact their schools if they have concerns about their child's reading skills and he reiterated his commitment to providing summer school and Saturday learning opportunities for students who are struggling to comprehend their academic material or to fully engage positively with the learning process.



Northeastern Elementary first grader Bailey Black works on recognizing short "e" vowel sounds in a reading lesson with teacher Suzanna Friedman.

ON THE COVER:
Koda Vargas practices his reading and writing skills at Northeastern Elementary School.





Harvey Fluellen fills in a worksheet as part of his English Language Arts studies in Suzanna Friedman's first-grade class.

WONDERS CURRICULUM

Wonders, Justice said, is aligned with Science of Reading LETRS, Common Core state standards and Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy.

"It allows teachers to depend on instructional practices in literacy while engaging students with resources and strategies that allow them to become skilled readers," she said.

Learning reading comes down to two main components: word recognition and language comprehension.

"We often say word recognition times language comprehension equals skilled reading," Justice said.

Wonders addresses both of those areas and the entire literacy team including the interim English Language Arts coordinator, classroom teachers, literacy coaches, interventionists and administrators have been working to understand the Wonders components and analyzing assessment data.

Teachers have reported, being impressed with specific Wonders components including:

- Its focus on literary genres
- A reading-writing companion piece that requires students to journal about their reading and respond to writing prompts.
- Flexibility within the program to address the needs of students who might be struggling — as well as providing research and inquiry enrichment for students who require more challenge.

Also, "Wonders has SEL (Social Emotional Learning) embedded throughout the program," Justice said. "A key component is related to student goal setting, which is available to all students. They rate how well they believe they are doing at understanding the concepts at the beginning and end of each set of lessons.

"These highlights allow all students to have a rich experience with all of the components of reading."

READING BEGINS AT HOME

Justice said that the Wonders curriculum will provide a broad range of learning opportunities for students, but that in no way diminishes the importance that guardians play in a child's language skills and ability to develop strong reading skills.

"We all know it takes a village to raise a child," she said. "There are some things caregivers can do at home to make sure their young people are engaging in reading experiences every day outside of school."

"People think literacy starts with a book," Justice said, "but it starts with us hearing and speaking and I don't think people think about that.

"Helping students hear language, use language and understand the nuances of language in their culture. That whole experience of communicating, of figuring

(continued on page 10)

Reading Opens a World of Wonders *(continued from page 9)*

out how do I ask for something that I want, how does my parent respond based on how I asked. All of that encompasses literacy if you will."

She offered these suggestions for how adults can encourage reading skills in fun and engaging ways with their children:

- Be a strong role model. "Let your child see you reading a book or a magazine or notes — not on a screen. Read with your child every day. Listen to your child read every day."
- Make books at home. When the children are retelling their favorite stories, have them write down the beginning, middle and end of the stories and their favorite parts of the story. "This helps them think about events in order, and they hear and record sounds and words."
- Play word games. Ask children to make rhyming words, identify the beginning, middle or end sounds of words. Ask kids about the meaning of words. Kids love to learn new words.
- Monitor screen time.
- Establish a reading routine that works for your family. Reading to a child 20 minutes a day exposes them to 1.8 million words a year. "That is a lot of words at just 20 minutes a day."
- When reading with a younger child, explain the parts of a book — the cover, the back of the book, the way to hold a book, point crisply under the first letter of each word. This will help a child entering kindergarten be prepared to start the actual work of learning to read.

In the early years of reading, the emphasis is on acquisition of basic skills, letter recognition, sound manipulation, and knowing how to decode longer words.

By around third grade, the emphasis begins to shift from word recognition and decoding to comprehension skills, building vocabulary, and using your background knowledge to analyze information.

"As students get older and more sophisticated with their reading," Justice said, "they are not just learning new things, but they are applying all of these foundational pieces to make well-crafted summaries adding their own knowledge base to take positions. They can now use a source or sources that they've used previously to add to their arguments. Once you've broken the code, it all deepens your ability to articulate what you've read."

But it starts with breaking the code — that idea of word recognition times language comprehension equals skilled reading.

Mastery depends on those foundational skills, Justice said, but it also depends on something even more basic.

She wants students to "come in excited about learning. If they're excited about learning, they're more willing to share what they currently know and they're more able to take risks to explore areas that they don't know.

"I want students to come in wanting to learn."

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

SLD Read

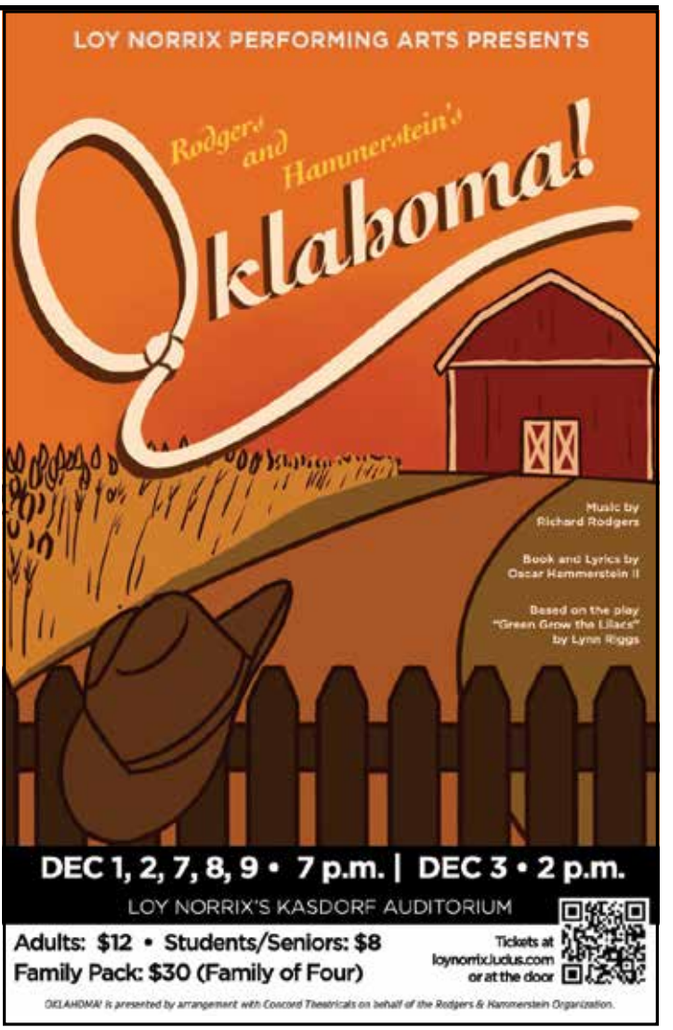
Dorothy J. McGinnis Reading Clinic at Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo Literacy Council

BOOKS

"Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons" by Siegfried Engelmann, Phyllis Haddox, and Elain Bruner

"Rewards: Multisyllabic Word Reading," from Stenhouse Publishers





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by Tonya Colvin, Michele Coash, Jill Franz, Terri Luzenske, and Patsy Richardson


Tonya Colvin


Michele Coash


Jill Franz


Terri Luzenske


Patsy Richardson

PICTURE BOOKS

Ten Ways to Hear Snow



by Cathy Camper, illustrated by Kenard Pak

A snowy day, a trip to Grandma's, time spent cooking with one another, and space to pause and discover the world around you come together in this perfect book for reading and sharing on a cozy winter day. With stunning illustrations and thoughtful representation of a modern Arab-American family, "Ten Ways to Hear Snow" is a layered exploration of mindfulness, empathy, and what we realize when the world gets quiet.



Who Am I?
by Julie Buchholtz, illustrated by Aliya Ghare

"Who am I?" a young girl asks her mom as she snuggles close. "You are the fire that burns and the eagle that soars. You are the oak tree and the wild rose," says Momma. Written from an indigenous perspective, "Who Am I?" tells the story of how we are all connected to our ancestors, our past and future, and to the Earth — and how it is everyone's duty to fend off darkness, connect to the past, and color the world with beauty.



Wintergarden
by Janet Fox, illustrated by Jasu Hu

Winter in the city can feel gray and lifeless. But with a little bit of love and care, a few seeds nestled in pots, and a good windowsill, there's no better time to make an herb garden with mom. A young girl and her mother grow everything you find in a spring herb garden, from oregano to parsley and baby greens. They tend their plants and watch them thrive while frigid snow falls outside. When spring finally arrives, there's one thing on the girl's mind: more seeds!



Oh No, the Aunts Are Here
by Adam Rex, illustrated by Lian Cho

Loud. Boisterous. Perfumed. It doesn't take long for a young girl to realize her aunts have arrived. Sporting fanny packs, hand sanitizer, and "Best Aunt" T-shirts, a loving group of aunts arrives at their young relative's home for a visit. Doling out hugs, pinched cheeks, and advice, the aunts at first overwhelm their niece, but that quickly changes when she realizes their undying support for her. It's a high-spirited, high-comedy portrait of intrusive and effusive relatives.

MIDDLE GRADE FICTION



Dogtown
by Kathrine Applegate and Gennifer Choldenko

Dogtown is a shelter for stray dogs, misbehaving dogs, and discarded robot dogs, whose owners have outgrown them. Chance, a real dog, has been in Dogtown since her owners unwittingly left her with irresponsible dog-sitters who skipped town. Metal Head is a robot dog who dreams of being back in a real home. And Mouse is a mouse who has the run of Dogtown and protects the dogs he loves. When Chance and Metal Head embark on an adventure to find their forever homes, there is danger, cheese sandwiches, and some unexpected kindnesses along the way.

Lasagna Means I Love You



by Kate O'Shaughnessy

After 11-year-old Mo loses her caregiver grandmother and her uncle won't take her in, she struggles to find a place she belongs in foster care. The discovery of a handmade cookbook with stories leads Mo to develop a passion for cooking and the ways it brings people together. She begins building a website with recipes, as well as relationships with friends and adults around her that help her weather the difficulties that arise when her foster family encounters a setback.



Hummingbird
by Natalie Lloyd

When 12-year-old Olive, who suffers from brittle bone disease and has been home-schooled all her life, finally attends school in person, she discovers fitting in is not easy. Overhearing stories about a magic wish-granting hummingbird that supposedly lives nearby, Olive is determined to find it and make her wish come true. With a group of unlikely allies-turned-friends, Olive learns she isn't the only one who has deep desires, and that her differences may be her biggest asset.



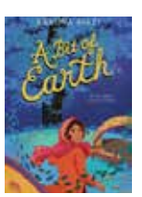
The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels
by Beth Lincoln

Meet Shenanigan Swift: Little sister. Risk-taker. Mischief-maker. Shenanigan is getting ready for the Swift Family Reunion and plotting to hunt for Grand-Uncle Vile's long-lost treasure. She's excited to meet her arriving relatives — until one of them gives Arch-Aunt Schadenfreude a deadly shove down the stairs. Determined to prove that she is more than the definition of her name, Shenanigan decides to follow all of the twisty clues and catch the killer.



The Labors of Hercules Beal
by Gary Schmidt

Herc Beal knows he's named after a mythical hero, but he's no superhero. He's the smallest kid in his class. When his homeroom teacher gives him the assignment to duplicate Hercules' feats, he's skeptical. After all, there is not a single Hydra in sight. Missing his parents and wishing his older brother wasn't working all the time, Herc figures out how to take his first steps along the road that Hercules himself once walked. Soon, new friends are helping him, and he begins to see that he may not have to go it alone.



A Bit of Earth
by Karuna Riazi

A prickly main character, a sullen boy, two friendly allies, and a locked garden. Difficult child Maria Latif arrives in Long Island from Pakistan to live with the strange Clayborne family. She discovers an off-limits garden that becomes a place where she finally feels at home. This reimagining of "The Secret Garden" will captivate fans of the original — and widen the appeal for a modern audience.



Eb & Flow
by Kelly J. Baptist

Ebony and De'Kari (aka Flow) do not get along in this novel in verse. How could they when their cafeteria scuffle ended with De'Kari's ruined shoes, Ebony on the ground, and both of them suspended from school for 10 days? Now Eb and Flow have two weeks to think about and explain their behavior — to their families, to each other, and ultimately to themselves, in this story from award-winning Michigan author Kelly J. Baptist.

MAKING AND DOING







Getting Crafty
by Dana Meachen Rau

Explore your creative side and get crafty with this series! Discover new skills from sewing to printmaking to making art from duct tape, recyclables, and nature. Each book includes an introduction to the subject and several projects with easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions and illustrations. Titles include "Duct Tape", "Knot Projects", "Nature Projects", "Printing and Stamping", "Recyclables", and "Sewing".

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Holiday Book Gift Guide *(continued from page 12)*

The Best Ever Cake Book: 20 Step-by-Step Cake Recipes from Around the World



You don't need to travel to enjoy the variety of cakes the world has to offer. Bring classic recipes to life in the comfort of your own home with this delicious baking book for children and their grown-ups. It isn't just a beautiful recipe book. This book will take children on a fascinating journey of discovery to find out how eggs are farmed, how butter is churned, and how sugar is grown and processed, as well as the spectacular science behind what makes your cakes rise.

MIDDLE GRADE GRAPHIC NOVELS

Garvey's Choice
by Nikki Grimes and Theodore Taylor III

In this graphic adaptation of Grimes' novel in verse, Garvey's father has always wanted him to be athletic, but Garvey is interested in astronomy, science fiction, reading — anything but sports, and he feels like a failure. Garvey is kind and loyal, but he is also overweight, teased by bullies, and lonely. When his only friend encourages him to join the school chorus, Garvey's life changes. He finds a way to accept himself and a way to finally reach his distant father.





Squished
by Megan Wagner Lloyd and Michelle Mee Nutter

Eleven-year-old Avery Lee loves her neighborhood, school, and the end-of-summer fair. But she's tired of being squished by her six siblings. They're noisy and chaotic and the younger kids love her a little too much. All Avery wants is her own room — to be alone and make art. She's furious when Theo, her older brother, gets his own room instead, and her baby brother, Max, moves into the room she shares with her clinging sister Pearl. Avery hatches a plan to finally get her own room, all while trying to get Max to sleep at night.

A First Time for Everything
by Dan Santat



Based on the author's personal experiences going abroad for the first time, this graphic novel/memoir takes place at the end of Dan's eighth grade year. Middle school was tough, and he'd rather forget it and try to remain invisible. When his parents suggest he join a three-week study abroad trip to Europe, he cringes at the thought of traveling with a group of girls who bullied him. However, as the trip unfolds, Dan finds friends, has a variety of first-time experiences — including his first kiss, and grows up in ways he could not have foreseen.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION



Rhythm and Muse
by India Brown

Cinderella meets Cyrano in this pitch-perfect YA rom-com that is a celebration of Black joy, first crushes, and putting your heart on the line for love. Darren Armstrong has a huge crush on transfer student Delia Dawson, but he doesn't have the confidence to tell her how he feels. Delia announces a theme song contest for her podcast, and Darren's friends submit one of his secret side projects without his knowledge. When the song goes viral, Delia wants to identify the mystery singer behind the track, and Darren must decide if he's ready to step into the spotlight.



Actually Super
by Adi Alsaid

Isabel feels like there's more evil than good in the world until she stumbles across Actually Super, an online forum whose members believe that superhumans exist, living quietly among ordinary people and performing impossible acts of heroism. Isabel sets out on a mission to find a real-life super and restore her faith in humanity. She makes a deal with her best friends to meet in Mexico during their last spring break, but when Mabel doesn't show, Isabel races to find her.

(continued on page 14)

The Kalamazoo Promise transforms the community and stimulates the economy through a new generation of learners.

Register your Promise Account and Complete your Application here:



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BWILSON@KALAMAZOOPROMISE.COM
269-312-3675

Pathway Coaches are stationed inside of each KPS high school, stop in, call, text or email them to schedule an appointment!

Holiday Book Gift Guide *(continued from page 13)*



Take a Bow, Noah Mitchell
by Tobias Madden
Seventeen-year-old "gaymer" Noah Mitchell longs to meet his longtime, online-only friend and gaming partner "MagePants69" believing him to be his gay soulmate. When he learns information that suggests MagePants69 actually lives near him and is performing in a community theater musical, Noah leaves his gaming chair to join the cast and meet him at last, hoping to somehow make him fall in love.



Give Me a Sign
by Anna Sortino
Seventeen-year-old Lilah, who wears hearing aids but struggles to communicate in the hearing world, decides to take a job as a counselor at a summer camp for the deaf and blind, so she can improve her ASL and reacquaint herself with the deaf community. While she expected to be overwhelmed at being in charge of rowdy campers, she didn't expect her ASL tutor to be handsome Isaac, who makes her heart soar. Lilah wanted change in her life, and now she just needs to be brave enough to embrace it.

YOUNG ADULT GRAPHIC NOVELS

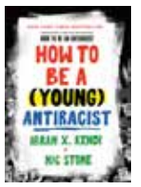


Ay, Mija! My Bilingual Summer in Mexico
by Christine Suggs
In this autobiographical graphic novel, 16-year-old Christine travels to Mexico for the first time to spend the summer with their grandparents and extended family. Besides the language barrier, Christine struggles with aspects of the culture, the unfamiliar surroundings, and homesickness. However, eventually Christine finds a way to embrace their surroundings and discovers they have a place in both worlds.



The Girl from the Sea
by Molly Knox Ostertag
Sixteen-year-old Morgan Kwon spends her time hanging out with her friends on her Wilneff Island home, avoiding her depressing home life, and hiding the fact that she's gay. When she slips on a rock and falls into the water, a female selkie named Keltie rescues her. She kisses Keltie, which transforms Keltie into a land dweller. Keltie's strange speech and mannerisms immediately peg her as strange among Morgan's friends, but Keltie is determined to change a cruise ship's route near a seal habitat, and she needs Morgan's help to make it happen.

YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION



How to Be a (Young) Antiracist
by Ibram X. Kendi and Nic Stone
Aimed at readers 12 and up and co-authored by award-winning children's book author Nic Stone, this book empowers teen readers to help create a more just society. Antiracism is a journey, and now young adults will have a map to carve their own path. Kendi and Stone have revised this work to provide anecdotes and data that speaks directly to the experiences and concerns of younger readers, encouraging them to think critically and build a more equitable world in doing so.



You: The Story: A Writer's Guide to Craft Through Memory
by Ruta Sepetys
This is a powerful how-to book for aspiring writers that encourages you to look inward and excavate your own memories to discover the authentic voices and compelling details that are waiting to be put on the page. Masterfully weaving in humorous and heartfelt stories from her own life that illustrate an aspect of the craft of writing (such as plot, character development, or dialogue), Sepetys inspires readers with a series of writing prompts and exercises.



Burn the Page: A True Story of Torching Doubts, Blazing Trails, and Igniting Change
by Danica Roem
An inspirational memoir-meets-manifesto by Danica Roem, the nation's first openly trans state legislator. Before Danica made history, she had to change her vision of what was possible in her own life. In wildly entertaining prose, Danica dismantles all the stories her opponents tried to hedge against her, showing how through brutal honesty and loving authenticity, it's possible to embrace the low points and transform them into your greatest strengths.





Community Arts Awards for Youth Go to Three KPS Students

THREE Kalamazoo Public Schools high school seniors will be honored at the Community Arts Awards ceremony being held Dec. 5 at the Gull Lake Center for the Fine Arts.

The three KPS students are being awarded the Adam F. Carter Youth Arts Award as part of the evening, which also includes the Community Medal of Arts, and honors for arts volunteers, organizations, and leaders in the community.

The three KPS honorees are Kalamazoo Central High School's Isaac Byler, and Loy Norrix High School students Braeden Davis and Jaykwon Noble.



Isaac Byler



Braeden Davis



Jaykwon Noble

Isaac Byler is a senior at Kalamazoo Central High School. He discovered his love of theater at a young age through the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre's Academy of Theatre Arts. While he has performed in several community and school productions, his true passion is backstage. He has been on the crew of several productions at Center Stage Theatre and many at the Kalamazoo Civic, including as an assistant stage manager and stage manager.

His first experience stage managing was as an assistant stage manager for the Civic Youth Theatre's production of "Ramona Quimby." His first role as a stage manaer was the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre's production of "Frozen Jr." He is stage managing the Civic's large-scale, multi-generational holiday mainstage production of "The Sound of Music."

As a Kalamazoo Central student, he is in the Hawthorne Singers and was the stage manager of the school musical "Once On This Island." After high school, he plans to study stage management in college and pursue a career in theatre.

Braeden Davis, a senior at Loy Norrix High School, plans to pursue a college degree in musical theatre beginning next year. He is starring as Curly in Norrix's production of "Oklahoma," and previously played Emmett Forrest in "Legally Blonde," and Shakespeare in "Something Rotten" at his school.

Throughout his high school career, he captained and coached his school's speech team, spending countless hours helping his teammates practice and continually improve their pieces. Alongside that, he served as assistant director and performed in Norrix's production of "Almost Maine," helping create blocking and characterization for the performers.

Audience members also may have seen him perform at the Kalamazoo Civic, Center Stage Theater, and the Barn Theatre, in shows such as "Newsies," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Disaster."

His hobbies include listening to music, building computers, and playing with his dog, Hobbes. He thanks his parents, Julie and Asa Davis, his brothers, Reed and Oscar Davis, his best friend, Mae Ryness, and the many mentors who have guided him along the way, including Dan Lafferty, Corlyn Longer-Schreck, Denene Mulay Koch, and Ken Holda.

Jaykwon Noble is a senior at Loy Norrix High School. He is principal violist of the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestra, where he is also a member of the KJSO String Quartet. He toured Spain with the KJSO in the summer of 2022. His private teachers have included violist Jenna Love, and KSO Artist in Residence Nicholas Jeffrey, and Western Michigan University Professor Igor Fedotov.

Noble was selected by competitive audition to join the 2023 Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) National Festival. He traveled to Los Angeles for 10 days of study with outstanding young musicians from across the country and performed under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel.

Formerly a member of Kalamazoo Kids in Tune, Noble now serves on staff as a program assistant, providing mentorship to elementary school musicians. As a composer, Jaykwon had his fully orchestrated work performed by the Kalamazoo Kids In Tune orchestra in 2022. Jaykwon also plays saxophone in the Loy Norrix band and is captain of the Loy Norrix color guard team. In the off-season, he performs with the Allegan County Ensemble, a competitive winter guard team. In his spare time, he plays guitar, writes his own songs, and is always on the lookout for a new instrument to pick up. He plans to major in viola performance.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE Kalamazoo VALLEY Museum KV

LAST CHANCE TO SEE **NOW - DEC. 30 | FREE**

Wonder Media: Ask the Questions! Exhibit



EXHIBIT **FREE**

OCT. 31, 2023 - JAN. 21, 2024

OFF THE SHELVES: Exploring the Kalamazoo Valley Museum's Furniture Collection

Explore the KVM's furniture collection that spans over 200 years of history, from one-of-a-kind items to mass-produced pieces created by local manufacturers.

DEC. 27 - 30 & JAN. 2 - 7 | FREE

WINTER BREAK: Stories We Tell

Fun family activities explore the many ways people share stories. Experience storytellers, music, dance, hands-on crafts and much more. More details at **kalamazoomuseum.org**.

PROGRAM **$3 PER PERSON**

TUESDAY, DEC. 11 | 2 p.m.



Adult Discovery Series and Retro Café

Experience an enriching journey through time and space during this immersive adult program with new themes every second Tuesday of the month. Register in advance at **kalamazoomuseum.org**.



CONCERT **FRIDAY, DEC. 1 | FREE**

Art Hop: Kalamazoo Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra

The KMGO will perform festive songs to start the season off with merriment. Concerts begin at 6 and 7:15 p.m.

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE

DECEMBER SHOWS | $3 PER PERSON

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS

Magic Globe | 11 a.m. | 28 min. | Grades K & up
Go on a journey with a young girl, Mia, to learn about the importance of the changing seasons on Earth's delicate ecosystem.

Black Hole | 2 p.m. | 40 min. | Grades 6 & up
Supercomputing technology takes you on a hunt for the ultimate cosmic monster — to the center of a black hole, a place humans can never venture.

SUNDAYS

One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure | 1 p.m. | Pre-K - Grade 1
Join Big Bird, Elmo and their Chinese friend, Hu Hu Zhu, exploring the sky they share. Discover the Big Dipper and North Star and take an imaginary trip to the moon.

The Sky Above Us | 2 p.m. | 40 min. | Grades 4 & up
Learn about some of the "celestial wonders" that can be seen overhead in Michigan.

HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday | Noon - 4 p.m.

SPECIAL NOTICE: Museum closed Dec. 23 - 26 & Dec. 31 - Jan. 1.
On Jan. 4, the museum will open at 1 p.m.

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

Note: Some areas of the museum may be closed due to exhibit changes, staffing needs, special programs or collections care. We thank you for your patience.

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.

Kalamazoo VALLEY Museum KV

230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo
kalamazoomuseum.org | 269.373.7990