



# EQUITY NEWSLETTER

December 2020

## ESSENTIAL NUTRITION HEROES

I once asked my team to answer this question, “Why are you here?” The responses reflect their hearts, “I love the kids”, “This may be the only meal some of our kids get”, “Kids need good nutrition to learn”, or “I love to get them to smile”. This team is loving and passionate about what they do. Good nutrition and food that kids want to eat is only a part of what we do. We have a true heart for our students.

When COVID-19 hit and we all had to change how we serve kids meals, my staff met on a Sunday and rolled out a plan, so we were able to serve curbside almost immediately. Many nutrition staff had to change schools, work with different teams, and drive a van for meal deliveries. We had to learn different ways to prepare and serve. When there is a holiday, they prepare double meals, so kids do not miss meals over the holiday. We looked at the 2 weeks off for Winter Break and came together with a plan to feed our kids. The Nutrition Services team are true heroes. At the end of November, our team will have stood at the curb in all types of weather for 165 days. They will have served 217,213 breakfasts and 217,575 lunches. It is a privilege to know and work with these amazing nutrition heroes, who love your kids.



*Pam Milleson, Nutrition Services Director*

**Equity Department Hotline: 509-526-6787**

**Hotline Hours: Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.**

Please call our hotline if you have any questions or concerns regarding your student’s online learning experience or have questions about school and community resources.



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## WINTER BREAK FREE MEALS PROGRAM

Pick up for pre-ordered meals is **Saturday, December 19 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Support Services Building**, 1174 Entley St. in Walla Walla. Please wear a mask and stay in your vehicle.

If you have questions or need assistance, please call **509-527-3016**.



## >> Staff Spotlight <<

My name is **Gonzalo Fernández**, I come from Spain, and I am a Spanish and Dual teacher at Garrison Middle School. This is my first year in Walla Walla and my first year as a teacher, it is a dream come true! The main reason for accepting this job at Walla Walla was the Dual program. Being able to educate my son in a program that fosters the values of bilingualism, cultural diversity and respect is something really important to me, and I feel deeply fortunate to be able to be a part of the program.

We are living in a time that is a great challenge for our community, schools, students and families. Therefore, every day, we work hard to offer an interesting, engaging and modern educational experience that maintains the connection of students with teachers, peers and school. I am very proud of each and every one of my students. It is impressive to see all the things they are capable of and their ability to adapt to the current situation. I hope to meet them soon in person, it will be a really nice experience, and I am sure that many of the things that they have learned during these last months will help them for the rest of their lives.

*Gonzalo Fernández, Spanish and Dual Teacher  
Garrison Middle School*



## #DiversifyOurNarrative

**#DiversifyOurNarrative** is a student-led national initiative that encourages students across the country to petition their school boards to expand curriculum with diverse and anti-racist texts. A local chapter, started by several Wa-Hi students, appealed to our school board in August for local action. As a result of that appeal, WWPS created a local committee powered by students and supported by English teachers, school and district administrators and school board members. The team has been meeting over Zoom and has identified goals for the 2020-2021 school year that focus on adding books by people of color and about people of color to all of our 6-12 English classes.

The group is laying the groundwork that will lead to the inclusion of more books that educate students on the systemic injustices that exist in our society. If you are interested in supporting this important work please consider reading [books from our list](#) and filling out the [feedback form](#). Your input will be taken into consideration in the process of selecting which books to purchase and include in each grade level.

*Casey Mohanan, Curriculum Coordinator  
Teaching and Learning*



## BOOK SUGGESTIONS BY JAMI EGGART

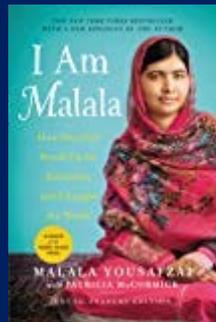
(Garrison Middle School, Library Media Specialist/Math Teacher)

### I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban (Young Readers Edition)

By Malala Yousafzai

Grade: 5+

Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 17, Malala Yousafzai shares her experiences first hand in this gripping autobiography. Born in Pakistan, Malala depicts her fight for education for girls under Taliban rule and the challenges she faced just for the right to go to school. Valuing education and not understanding the reason that girls should be treated differently, Malala encourages the reader to know her story, her world, and why change is needed now for women and others like her.

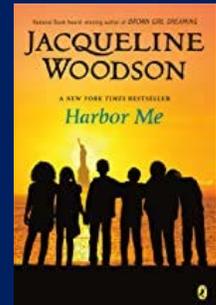


### Harbor Me

By Jacqueline Woodson

Grade 4+

Award-winning author, Woodson, spins a story of community and identity as six students are given the opportunity to meet each week in a room, without adult supervision. Through this gift of space, these six young people begin to unveil their unique experiences in life to each other. They discover the challenges they have experienced with immigration, racism, incarceration, grief and loss. As young as they are, the six students find that they each have a lot to share and learn from each other.



### Refugee

By Alan Gratz

Grade: 5+

Three different experiences, three different parts of the world, three different periods of time...Refugee interweaves the journey of escape for Josef, a Jewish boy living in Nazi Germany in 1930, Isabel living in riot-filled Cuba during the 90s, and Mahmoud a Syrian boy in 2015 experiencing violence and destruction of his homeland. This story engages the reader in the world these children lived in and the reasons for the escape to a promised better future elsewhere. While experiencing challenges, these children face survival, courage and a quest to find a better future.



### Home of the Brave

By Katherine Applegate

Grade: 5+

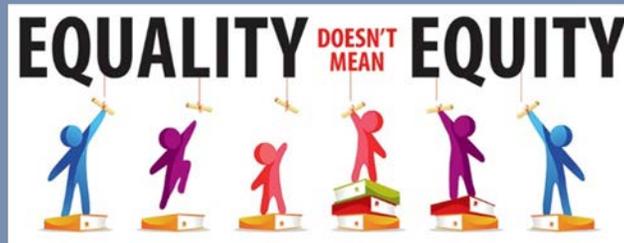
Kek, an African refugee, is confronted by many strange things at the Minneapolis home of his aunt and cousin, as well as in his fifth-grade classroom, and longs for his missing mother, but finds comfort in the company of a cow and her owner. As Kek experiences life in America, the reader catches glimpses of his life in Africa and his story as a refugee. Kek shares his joy of friendships found in sometimes strange places, strength in his memories and belief in his new country.



# EESE Update: Identifying and Removing Barriers

**EESE (Equitably Engaging Strategies for Everyone)** continues to focus on the identification and removal of barriers that impede the progress of all students. To celebrate and include all students, to remain committed to an equity filter, and to be voices in areas where advocacy is lacking and yet critical, our task force is relentless and energized. Last year's EESE work established our framework for equity work, and how to support students and staff at the building level with engagement strategies and tabletop discussions related to issues of race, class, ability and language. This year, we continue our work, with a laser like focus on building bridges and safety nets not only in times of distance learning, but with an emphasis on creating and sustaining environments of belonging in any setting. Currently, our topics include white privilege, microaggressions, white fragility, and on-going reflection and action. Our purpose is not to "check" the box on areas of equity; that would simply be "chequity." Rather, we are committed to these efforts because they are the only way to ensure fairness, respect and belonging. I am reminded of a quote that helps center my role every day. Activist, author and academic, Angela Davis, is credited with a powerful and suitable quote for today's times when she states, "I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change... I'm changing the things I cannot accept." Truly, change for all students' success is our top priority, and there is so much more to build for their sake.

*Dr. Julie Perrón, Director of Equity and Dual Programs*



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## EQUITY & ACCESS COMMITTEE: BOOK STUDY

Members of the district's Equity and Access Committee decided to do a book study on a topic relevant to the conversation on race. It was agreed that 30 minutes before each committee meeting, those interested would meet and discuss Ijeoma Oluo's book titled, *So You Want To Talk About Race*. At the December 3, 2020 meeting, Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith led us in a dialogue on the first five chapters. If you are interested in participating in this book study or joining the district's Equity and Access Committee, please contact Sergio Hernandez at [sahernandez@wwps.org](mailto:sahernandez@wwps.org).

