



NEWMARK

K-8 School

May 2026

Dear Parents,

As we head into summer break, we encourage all students to continue growing as readers by engaging with books that are both enjoyable and meaningful. Summer reading is a wonderful opportunity for students to explore personal interests through high-quality literature.

ALL students, regardless of ESY participation, are *required* to read at least one book by author Lisa Graff from the provided K-8 reading list available on our website

- **Students attending ESY will receive their selected books in advance, and these will be available in their classrooms on the first day of ESY.**
- **Students who are NOT attending ESY can purchase their own book from any preferred bookstore.**

Lisa Graff is the critically acclaimed and award-winning author of *Far Away*, *The Great Treehouse War*, *A Clatter of Jars*, *Lost in the Sun*, *Absolutely Almost*, *A Tangle of Knots*, *Double Dog Dare*, *Sophie Simon Solves Them All*, *The Life* and *The Thing About Georgie*. Lisa Graff's books have been named to more than seventy state award lists and have been touted as best books of the year by booksellers, teachers and librarians. *A Tangle of Knots* was long-listed for the National Book Award in 2013. Her latest novel released in 2026 is *A Scar Like a River*.

We are excited to welcome Ms. Graff to Newmark School on **Wednesday, October 28, 2026**, where she will lead a special workshop for all K8 students.

In the first few weeks of the school year, students will have the assignment to write a letter to Ms. Graff, reflecting on their personal connection with the book they chose to read over the summer.

Please make sure your child brings their summer reading book on the first day of school.

Your support and encouragement will help make this a rewarding and enjoyable experience for your child. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Gina M. Borea
Principal



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Picture Books

Mr. Walker Steps Out: Mr. Walker, the human-shaped figure who lives in the traffic signal box and tells pedestrians when it is safe to cross the street, decides to leave his post and experience all that he has been missing in this sweet and satisfying tale about finding one's place in the world.

Wonderful You: Before you were with us, we already knew that the thing most worth doing was waiting for you. So begins this warm and loving picture book all about the joy of waiting for a new baby to be born. Month by month, parents and families of all sorts watch the baby-to-be grow, from a sweet pea to a mango and eventually to a pumpkin--until finally, the babies are born as their wonderful little selves.

It is not Time for Sleeping: A charming bedtime story about a child with very specific ideas on the appropriate time for sleeping, now available in a soft padded board book edition.

As the day comes to an end, bedtime draws near. But the little boy in this book is quite sure it is not time for sleeping. As each piece of his evening routine is completed—helping with the dishes, playing with the dog, getting into pajamas, brushing teeth with Dad, being tucked in by Mom and listening to a story—he becomes a little more certain: it is definitely not time for sleeping. The question is, when will it be time for sleeping?

Chapter Books

Far Away: CJ's Aunt Nic is a psychic medium who tours the country speaking to spirits from Far Away, passing on messages from the dearly departed. And CJ knows firsthand how comforting those messages can be -- Aunt Nic's Gift is the only way CJ can talk to her mom, who died just hours after she was born.

So, when CJ learns that she won't be able to speak to her mother anymore, even with Aunt Nic's help, she's determined to find a work-around. She sets off on road trip with her new friend Jax to locate the one object that she believes will tether her mother's spirit back to Earth . . . but what she finds along the way challenges every truth she's ever known. Ultimately, CJ has to sort out the reality from the lies.

National Book Award nominee Lisa Graff has written a poignant, heartfelt novel that explores the lengths we go to protect those we love -- and the power secrets have to change our worlds.

The Great Treehouse War: Winnie's last day of fourth grade ended with a pretty life-changing surprise. That was the day Winnie's parents got divorced and decided that Winnie would live three days a week with each of them and spend Wednesdays by herself in a treehouse between



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their houses, to divide her time perfectly evenly. It was the day Winnie's seed of frustration with her parents was planted, a seed that grew until it felt like it was as big as a tree itself.

By the end of fifth grade, Winnie decides that the only way to change things is to barricade herself in her treehouse until her parents come to their senses—and her friends decide to join. It's kids vs. grown-ups, and no one wants to back down first. But with ten kids in one treehouse, all with their own demands, things get pretty complicated! Even if they are having the most epic slumber party ever.

A Clatter of Jars: It's summertime and everyone is heading off to camp. For kids with special talents, the place to be is Camp Atropos, to sing songs by the campfire, practice for the Talent show and take some nice long dips in the lake. But what the kids don't realize is that they've been gathered for a reason—one that the camp's director wants to keep hidden at all costs. Meanwhile, a jar filled with a mysterious talent has been dropped to the bottom of the lake, and strange things have begun to happen. Dozens of seemingly empty jars have been washing up on the shoreline, Talents are getting swapped, and memories are ripped from one camper's head and placed into another. Almost no one knows why.

Absolutely Almost: Albie has never been the smartest kid in his class. He has never been the tallest. Or the best at gym. Or the greatest artist. Or the most musical. In fact, Albie has a long list of the things he's not very good at. But then Albie gets a new babysitter, Calista, who helps him figure out all of the things he is good at and how he can take pride in himself.

A perfect companion to Lisa Graff's National Book Award-nominated *A Tangle of Knots*, this novel explores a similar theme in a realistic contemporary world where kids will easily be able to relate their own struggles to Albie's.

A Tangle of Knots: A National Book Award nominee!

Told in multiple viewpoints, *A Tangle of Knots* is a magnificent puzzle. In a slightly magical world where everyone has a Talent, eleven-year-old Cady is an orphan with a phenomenal Talent for cake baking. But little does she know that fate has set her on a journey from the moment she was born. And her destiny leads her to a mysterious address that houses a lost luggage emporium, an old recipe, a family of children searching for their own Talents, and a Talent Thief who will alter her life forever. However, these encounters hold the key to Cady's past and how she became an orphan. If she's lucky, fate may reunite her with her long-lost parent. Lisa Graff adds a pinch of magic to a sharply crafted plot to create a novel that will have readers wondering about fate and the way we're all connected.

Sophie Simon Solves Them All: For a third-grader, Sophie Simon is one smart cookie. She enjoys teaching herself advanced calculus and has performed successful heart surgery on an earthworm. She's also very clever when it comes to dealing with her clueless parents. But Sophie is no genius when it comes to calculating the high value of friendship—until, that is, she has to use her incredible IQ to help out some classmates with their own parental troubles.



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Double Dog Dare: What would you do to win a dare war?

In a humorous and insightful novel reminiscent of her award-winning titles *The Thing About Georgie* and *Umbrella Summer*, Lisa Graff tells the story of fourth-graders Kansas Bloom and Francine Halata, who start out as archenemies, until—in a battle of wits and willpower—they discover that they have a lot more in common than either would have guessed.

This dual-perspective novel will appeal to girls and boys alike—and to anyone who has ever wanted anything so badly that they'd lick a lizard to get it.

The Thing about Georgie:

As far as Georgie is concerned, everyone has a "thing." The thing about poodles is that Georgie Bishop hates to walk them.

The thing about Jeanie the Meanie is that she would rather write on her shoe than help Georgie with their Abraham Lincoln project. The thing about Andy's nonna is that she kisses Georgie's cheeks and doesn't speak one word of English. The thing about Georgie's mom is that she's having a baby—a baby who will probably be taller than Georgie very, very soon.

The thing about Georgie . . . well, what is the thing about Georgie?

Novels

A Scar Like a River: Thirteen-year-old Fallon has only ever told one person what really happened on the day she got her scar. Why would she? The truth is dark, and Fallon has much brighter things to focus on, like being cast as the lead in the school play and hanging out with her two best friends, Trent and Kaia. But when Fallon's uncle Geebie dies, his funeral ignites a wildfire of events that Fallon can't manage to tamp down. The school play is spiraling out of control, Fallon's impossible Aunt Lune comes to live with them, and Trent and Kaia might just be so into each other that there isn't room for Fallon in their friend group any more. And when secrets even worse than the one about Fallon's scar threaten to come to light, Fallon might not have the strength to keep them buried for much longer.

Rewind: As far as twelve-year-old McKinley O'Dair is concerned, the best thing about living in Gap Bend, Pennsylvania, is the Time Hop—the giant party the town throws every June to celebrate a single year in history. That one day is enough to make the few things that aren't so fantastic about McKinley's life—like her crabby homeroom teacher or her super-scheduled father—worth suffering through. And when McKinley learns that this year's theme is 1993, she can't wait to enter the Time Hop fashion show with a killer '90s outfit she's designed and sewn all on her own. But when the Time Hop rolls around, nothing goes as planned.

Before she knows what's hit her, McKinley somehow finds herself in the real 1993—and it's not all kitschy parachute pants and *Jurassic Park*. All McKinley wants is to return to the present, but before she can, she's going to have to make a big change—but which change is the right one?



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