



williambutlerms

FOLLOW

WILLIAM H.G. BUTLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

a graphic novella about
mass school shootings

Created by Literary Safari Media

With a
discussion guide
for students,
parents, and
educators





 Faruq Kareem	 Alyce Kim	 Stephen Lane	 Danielle Le Grange
 Sara Leibowitz	 Molly Lewis	 Kevin Liang	 Jon Logan
 Isabella Lopez	 Dominique Lucas	 Ethan Marshall	 Elijah Matthews

8TH
GRADE

79 WHGB Middle School Class of 2018





williambutlerms Congratulations to the 8th grade graduating #classof2018! #butlerstrong #goWarriors! #lastdayofschool #yearbook #gonebutneverforgotten



Kevin Liang

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." – Wayne Gretzky



Jon Logan

"Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today." – James Dean



Ethan Marshall

October 8, 2004 - March 15, 2018



Elijah Matthews

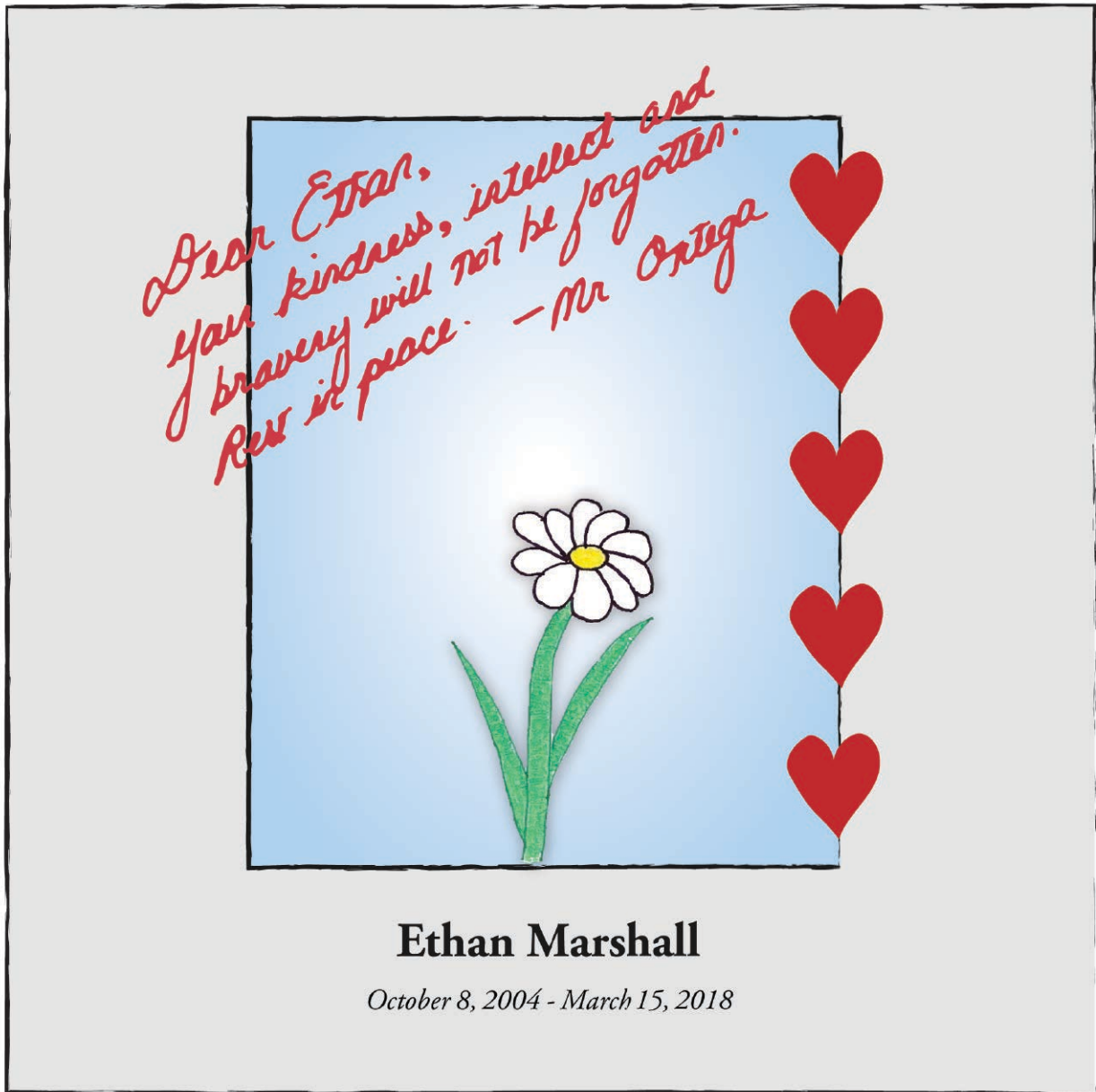
"Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons." – Malala Yousafzai



williambutlerms Thanks to our Yearbook Club for their thoughtful tribute to the innocent lives we lost in the tragic shooting at our school on 3/15/18. #🌻 #NeverAgain



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williambutlerms Mr. Ortega's message is a tribute to every child we lost on 3/15: Faith Abbot (G7), Jordan Carpenter (G6), Alyce Kim (G8), Ethan Marshall (G8), Sofia Perez (G7), Charley Tasso (G7), Hakeem Zia (G6). [#EnoughIsEnough](#)

June 28



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It was only when a student asked me if I would be willing to give my life for him—the way Janusz Korczak walked into the gas chambers with his children during the Holocaust—that I realized I needed to take action. Over and over again, history teaches us that change begins with the individual. The time has come for me to bring the insights I've gained as an educator into the political sphere.

Goodbye Mr. Ortega

Retiring History Teacher, 7th and 8th grade

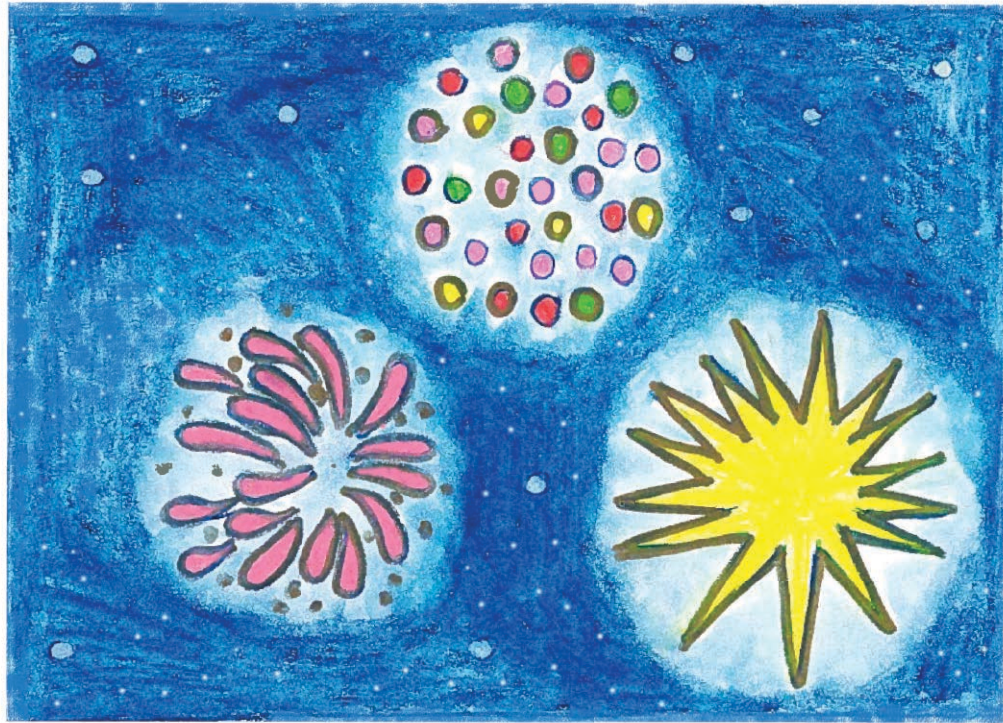


williambutlerms Change is in the air. We wish Mr. Ortega good luck on his run for state legislature & in his new job as National Coordinator at Rock the Polls. [#armmewith](#) [#teachersmatter](#) [#honorthemwithaction](#)

July 3



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WHAT, TO A SURVIVOR, IS THE FOURTH OF JULY? THE SOUND OF FIREWORKS, THE BLAST OF GUNSHOTS, THE SILENCE OF LOSS.



williambutlerms In solidarity with those who continue to cope with the trauma of the tragic event at our school this year, we are cancelling tonight's town-wide fireworks show.
[#fireworks](#) [#MyStoryMyWay](#) [#PTSD](#) [#mentalhealth](#)

July 4



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Goodbye Ms. Tan

Retiring 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Math Teacher



Q: You're retiring from teaching. What's next for you?

A: I really just feel it's time for a change. I will be joining the Greenleaf Zoo and Wildlife Preserve as an Assistant Animal Handler for endangered reptiles while pursuing my Master's in Zoology, so that I can one day become a zookeeper.



williambutlerms Brave teachers like Ms. Tan were the 1st line of defense in the active shooter attack at our school. She will be dearly missed, but we know that she will thrive in her new job. (Field trip, anyone?!) [#safeschools](#) [#teacherlife](#)

July 5



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williambutlerms Our Summer Teacher Training Institute is on! This year, all our district K-8 teachers will be certified in The MELISSA™ Method, which prepares schools for the threat of an aggressive intruder event. #ALICEmeetMELISSA

July 10



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williambutlerms Part of the MELISSA™ Method is implementing #socialemotionallearning in all subjects including math. If the impact of empathy and kindness can be measured, could we prevent future tragedies and change our school culture for the better?

July 12



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williambutlerms Kendo will be part of all our Phys Ed classes this fall. Today, Ms. Taylor will introduce ALL teachers to the mindfulness benefits of this traditional martial art of Japanese fencing. #butlerstrong #kendo #futurereadyschools

July 13



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TARGETED SCHOOL SUPPLIES

SAVE 25%

Wound Lock

Stops bleeding in <15 secs.

Single Pack: \$100

Pack of 20: \$1500

Gunshot Proof



williambutlerms Thanks to our generous PTA, each classroom's first aid kit will now include six Wound Lock syringes so that our teachers can stop bleeding from gunshot wounds on the spot. [#classroomsupplies](#) [#teacherwishlist](#)

July 18



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TARGETED SCHOOL SUPPLIES

SALE
3GB BUCKET AT + ROOM
School Intruder Defense Kit

One 5-Gallon Bucket of River Rocks

30 Mini Baseball Bats

Classroom Weapons Kit

Two Industrial Broom with Metal Dust Pan

Back to School Special \$99!



williambutlerms Turning off the lights, shutting the door, and hiding is no longer enough. Now we can fight back.
[#armmewith](#) [#safeschools](#) [#gokit](#) [#thankyouPTA](#)
[#notonemore](#)

July 19



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TARGETED SCHOOL SUPPLIES

\$8,000

BEAST BUNKER
Bulletproof
A Tank on Land

Safety Tree
Model # 031518

- Protects against active-shooters & mother nature
- Fits 25 students
- Includes 911 Emergency satellite phone

Available in customizable kid-friendly models:
Yurt, Rocket Ship, Castle, and more!



williambutlerms We are grateful to Ms. Marie Marshall, CEO of Shop & Drop, for donating 35 shelters to our school in memory of her son Ethan Marshall (10/8/04—3/5/18).

[#schoolsafety](#) [#butlerstrong](#)

July 20

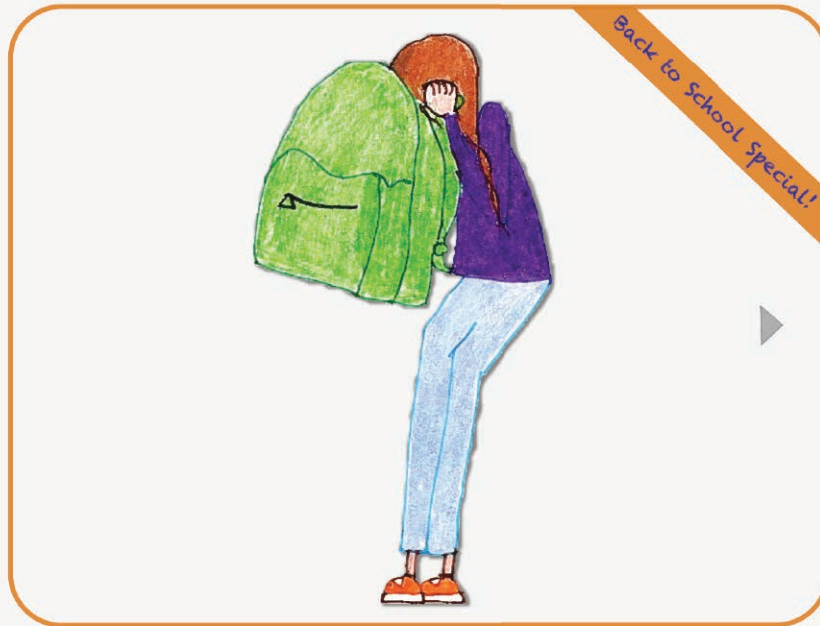


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SERENGETI.KOM

Securables
Bulletproof Backpack
★★★★☆ 243 \$114.29



Securables Bulletproof Backpack, Reinforced Lumbar support, Built-in solar powered phone charger

Color (4) Green ▼	QTY. - 1 +	Purchase
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williambutlerms We've updated our K-12 Back to School Supply List. Our first new addition—a bulletproof backpack. #safetyfirst #backtoschoolshopping #safeandstylish

July 24



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SERENGETI.KOM

Securables
Bulletproof Sweater Vest
★★★★☆ 146 \$159⁹⁹



Securables Bulletproof Sweater Vest, Fleece-Lined, Waterproof, Looks and feels Scottish wool

Color (7) Ruby ▾	Size XS -	QTY. - 1 +	Purchase 
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williambutlerms Our updated 2018–2019 School Supply List recommends having your child covered with this bulletproof sweater vest. [#butlerstrong](#) [#schoolsupplies](#) [#safeandstylish](#)

July 26



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 SERENGETI.COM

Securaboos
Bulletproof Nap Blanket
★★★★★ 197 \$119⁹⁹



Securaboos Bulletproof Nap Blanket, One size, Woolly comfort for your little one. Pillow not included

Color (2)
Mint ▾

QTY.
- 1 +

Purchase 

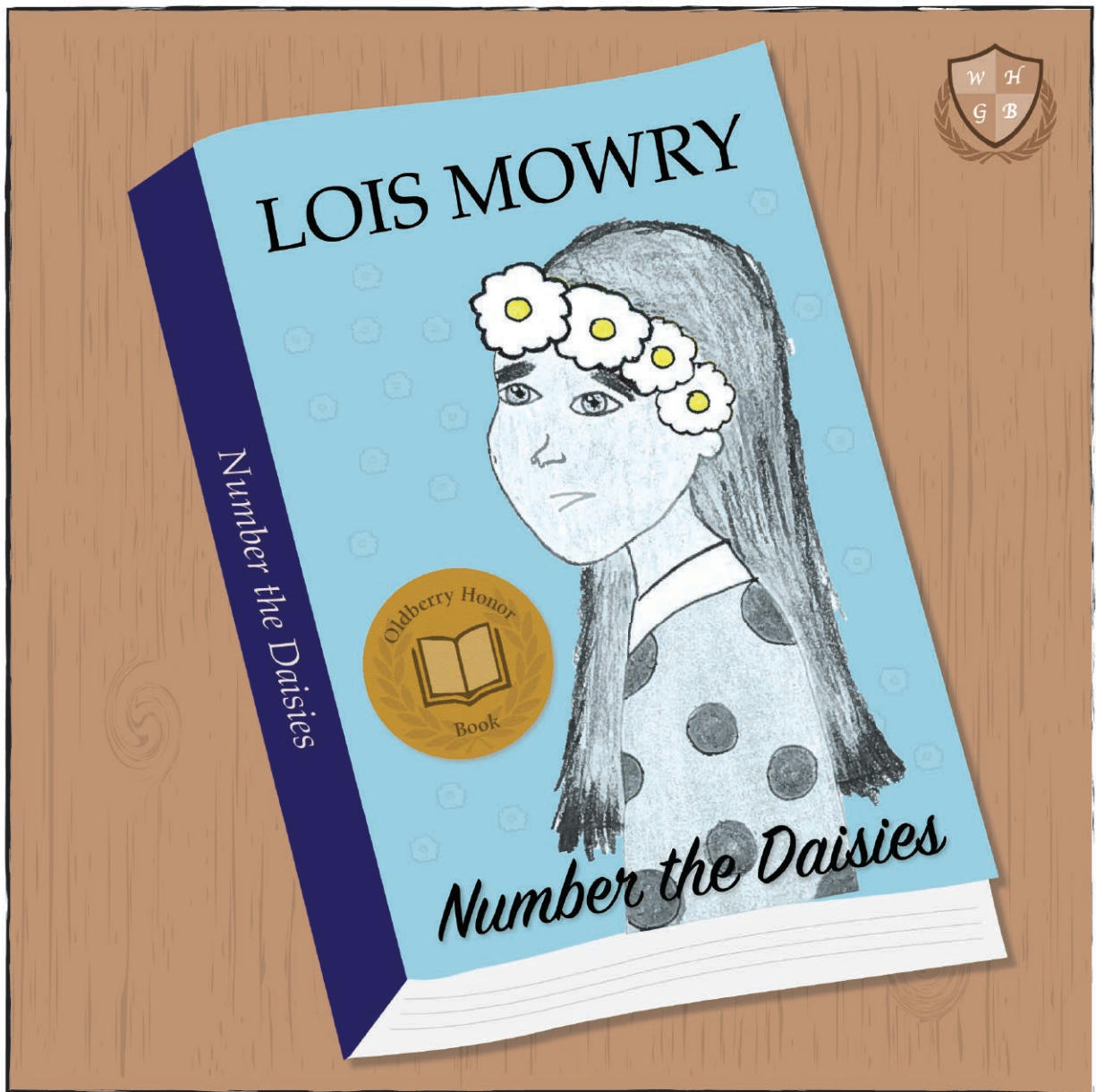


williambutlerms Every child has a right to sleep safe & sound during nap-time. Check your email for 20% off at Serengeti.com on all the items featured on our feed this week. [#backtoschoolshopping](#) [#protectourchildren](#)

July 27



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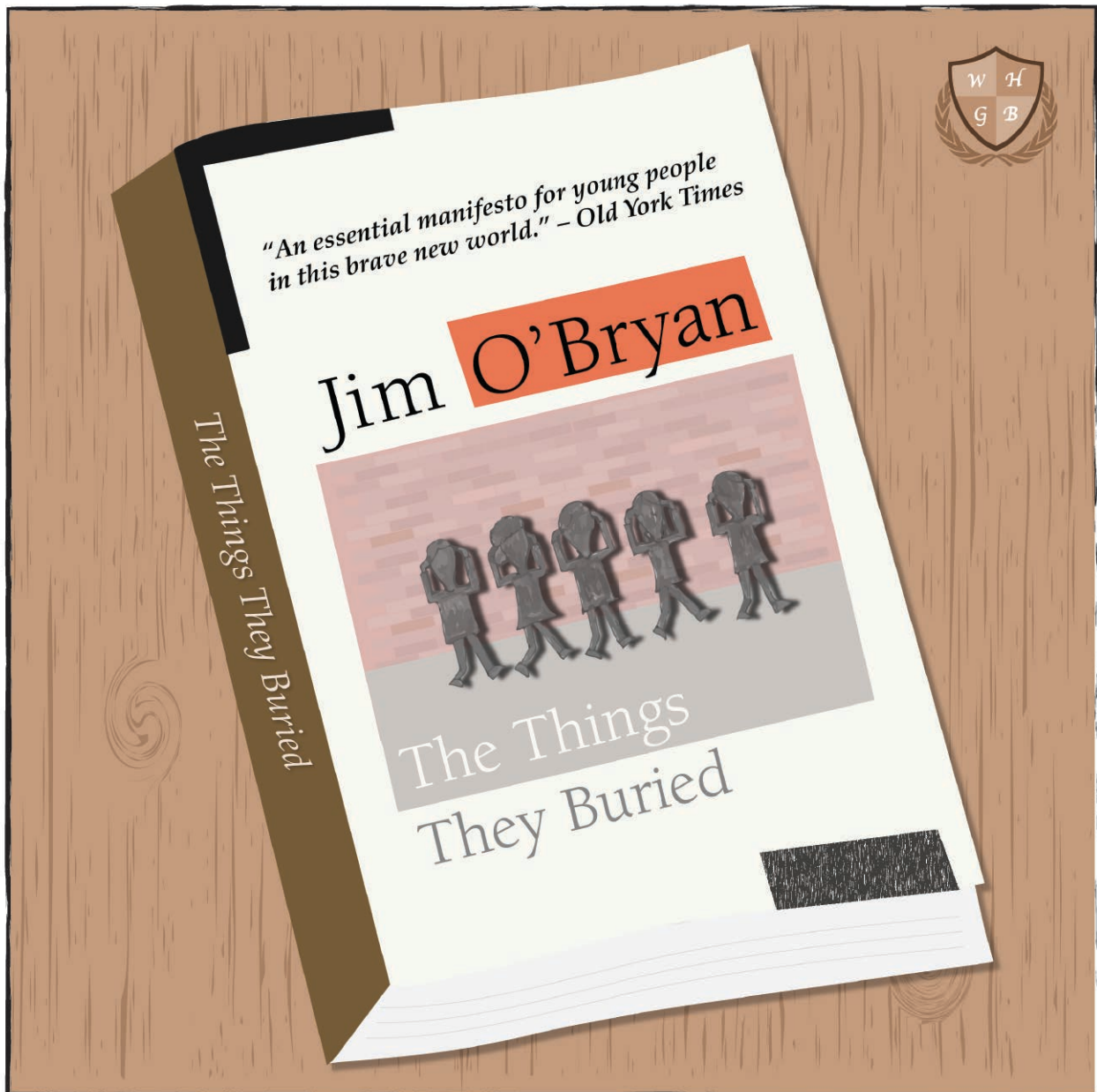


williambutlerms We are launching an All-School Read program. Our first pick introduces us to ten-year-old AnnMarie whose favorite teacher resists the State and stands up for the right to create weapon-free schools. [#booksforchange](#)

July 31



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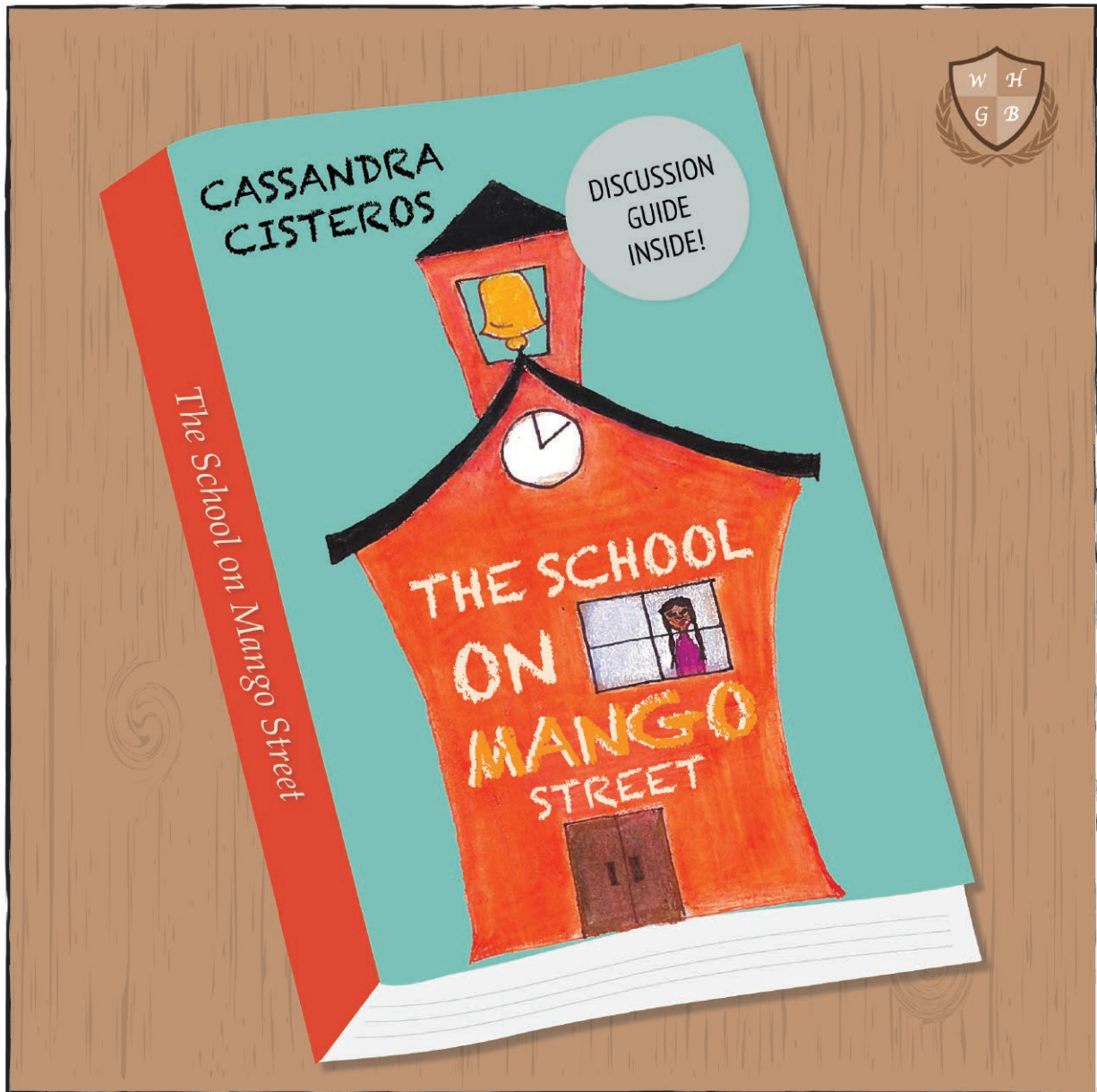


williambutlerms Our 2nd pick, THE THINGS THEY BURIED, is a collection of short stories based on the author's experiences as a student at Holumbine, the site of one of the deadliest school shootings in American history. [#oneschoolonebook](#)

August 1



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williambutlerms Our final book is THE SCHOOL ON MANGO STREET. In it, we meet Desperanza Moderno, a girl who uses poetry to express her emotions about coming of age in a school plagued by bullying and violence. [#booksforchange](#)

August 2



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Day 1 - Survival Bootcamp

WHGB Orientation 2018



williambutlerms We are launching an All-School Read program. Our first pick introduces us to ten-year-old AnnMarie whose favorite teacher resists the State and stands up for the right to create weapon-free schools. [#booksforchange](#)

August 7



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Day 2 - Hide and Peek

WHGB Orientation 2018

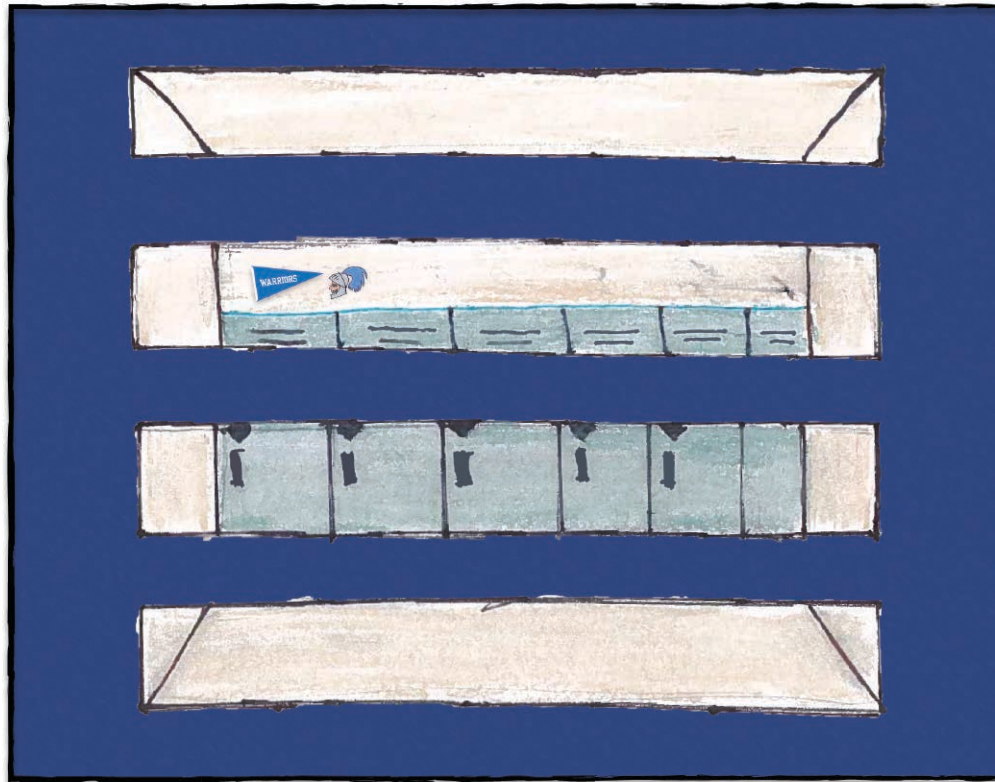


williambutlerms Day 2 of our Survival Bootcamp featured a school-wide game of Hide and Peek designed to test each student's endurance and creativity through playful simulations of an active shooter event. [#gamebasedlearning](#)

August 8



williambutlerms



Day 2 - Peek

WHGB Orientation 2018

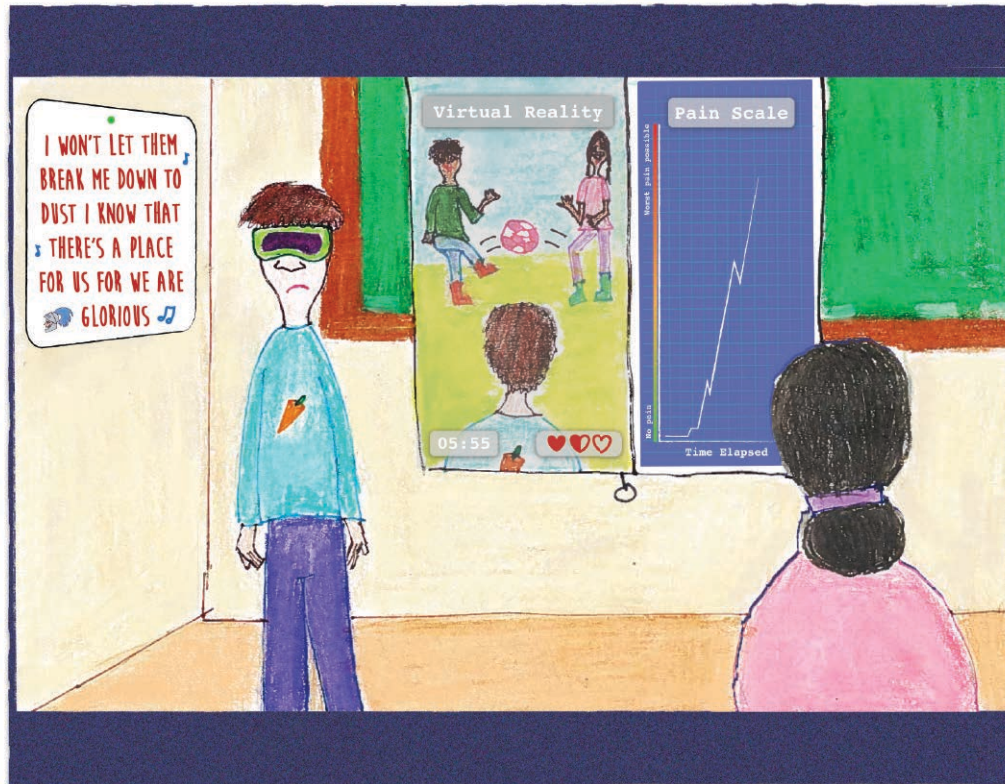


williambutlerms Day 2 of our Survival Bootcamp featured a school-wide game of Hide and Peek designed to test each student's endurance and creativity through playful simulations of an active shooter event. [#gamebasedlearning](#)

August 8



williambutlerms



Day 3 - VR Ball

WHGB Orientation 2018



williambutlerms Survival Bootcamp ended with a game of VR Ball. This [#virtualreality](#) game of soccer quantifies the pain of social exclusion and is designed to build empathy. [#gamebasedlearning](#)

August 9



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WILLIAM H.G. BUTLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Discussion Guide for
Students, Parents and Educators



A NOTE TO READERS FROM TOBY MURPHY

When I first started teaching, I was afraid to be vulnerable. I kept many of my thoughts, opinions, and even failures to myself. I wanted my students to see me as a source of strength during uneasy times. Although this wasn't a message that was given to me by school districts, communities, or federal mandates, it felt implied in the job description of a teacher.

Over the past 12 years as a middle school teacher, I have learned that students respect us more when we are vulnerable; when we share our hopes and fears with them; when we show them our human side; when we discuss difficult topics with them.

When it comes to mass school shootings, I believe the same rules apply. Although I admit I am hesitant after a tragedy occurs in discussing this topic with my students. I often wonder if it's my job to do so.

William H.G. Butler Middle School was created by Literary Safari in the Summer of 2018 in the format of Instagram posts from a fictional middle school. It was inspired by research and news articles on mass school shootings in America over the past decade. By crossing various genres and mediums, this short work of illustrated fiction challenges the very definition of what a text is, raising poignant questions about today's climate in schools and shedding light on the impact of mass school shootings in our culture and society.

I created this companion discussion guide to offer ideas for how to use this story as a tool to foster dialogue in classrooms across the country between students and teachers, in homes across the country between children and parents, and even, in schools across the country between teachers and school administrators.

Change may take time, but it starts with one conversation at a time.



Toby Murphy has taught middle school language arts in New Jersey for the past 12 years. He received his Masters in Teaching English through the University of New Hampshire and his Supervisory Certificate through New Jersey City University. He has served as a Master Teacher through the National Education Association and BetterLesson Master Teacher Project and conducted numerous professional development workshops. [🐦 @tobymurphy](https://twitter.com/tobymurphy)



A Discussion Guide for Students

MAKING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Read the story (shouldn't take more than 30-45 minutes) and use these questions to invite middle school and high school students to make connections between the text, their own experiences, and the world outside their community.

- What is the overall message of this story?
- Which Instagram posts did you find most effective in communicating the overall message of the story? Why?
- Why could this work of fiction be considered dystopian? What aspects fit the genre?
- How would you classify the tone of the piece? Does it match with your feelings on these issues?
- What are your overall feelings and reactions to school safety as presented in the story? Are they accurate or similar to your experience? How would you react to the types of drills and procedures in the story?
- Do any sections of the story compare to your own experience? How would you feel or react if your school had these procedures in place?
- How does the story being told through the perspective of the school affect the overall message? Would the story be different if it were told through individual student, teacher, administration accounts?
- Do you have people in your life that you can talk to about issues surrounding school safety?
- What does empathy mean to you? Do you feel students, and teachers and parents, in your life are empathetic?

MAKING TEXT CONNECTIONS

The 21 Instagram-style installments of William H.G. Butler Middle School are divided into seven weeks. Reflect upon the key themes that emerge in each week, using the questions below.

Week 1: June 26 - June 28

- Should the students who have died be mentioned in the William H.G. Butler Middle School yearbook? How does this help the school cope or not cope? What messages does this send?
- What's appropriate and not appropriate to include in a yearbook?
- Butler Middle School's social media hashtags are #GoWarriors and #ButlerStrong. What hashtags could be used to represent your experience at school?

Week 2: July 3 - July 5

- How do you think Mr. Ortega should respond to the student who asked him about giving up his life? Is it fair for students to expect teachers to do such a thing? How would you define the role of teacher?
- Was cancelling the Fourth of July show the right decision? If so, what would be other ways those with PTSD could experience the holiday?
- Should teachers and schools publicly discuss their stance on political issues like gun control?





A Discussion Guide for Students

MAKING TEXT CONNECTIONS (Cont.)

Week 3: July 10 - July 13

- The MELISSA Method stands for Mindfulness, Empowerment, Leadership, Instinct, Simulation, Support, and Agency. What do these qualities mean to you and how do you think they could change your experience in school?
- What is mindfulness? Why is mindfulness important in daily life? How can mindfulness help in traumatic situations? How could the students at Butler Middle School use mindfulness to help cope with living in the aftermath of this tragedy?

Week 4: July 18 - July 20

- How would you react to having school supplies such as a wound lock, a classroom weapons kit, and a safety tree in your classroom? Would they make you feel less or more safe?
- Are there any additional items you would like to see included or anything else that would make you feel safer in school?

Week 5: July 24 - July 27

- What message, whether explicit or implicit, is being sent with items like bulletproof backpacks and vests?
- How could these items change the feelings of starting a new school year? Would items like these be considered proactive or reactive?

Week 6: July 31 - August 2

- The books included have been inspired by actual titles. What books could you use to create new titles related to these issues?
- Which books would you use as a school wide read and why?

Week 7: August 7 - August 9

- The creators of *William H.G. Butler Middle School* were inspired by the Holocaust when creating this part of the story. Why do you think that might be the case?
- Would challenges like “Make Your Own Stretcher” or a game like “Hide and Peek” make you feel less or more safe? More or less comfortable in your school?

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

1. Create a character of a student, parent, or teacher from William H.G. Butler Middle School, and write 2-3 posts from their personal Instagram feeds. How would the content change as the perspective changes from the school to a specific person?
2. Imagine a student who could be bullied in your school. Create an empathy map for this person, and think about how your school community can make this individual feel safe and belonged.
3. *The President Sang Amazing Grace* was written by singer-songwriter Zoe Mulford in response to gun violence. If this story were to have a soundtrack, what songs would you include and why?





A Discussion Guide for Parents

Host a book club discussion around *William H.G. Butler Middle School* with your spouse, partner, or a group of parents and caregivers. You might also consider organizing a Town Hall type program through your local PTO, and inviting teachers and district administrators to attend.

MAKING TEXT CONNECTIONS

- What does the word tragedy mean to you? Share your thoughts on what makes a tragedy and what is tragic about the story *William H.G. Butler Middle School*.
- Teachers are the frontline of defense for students in the story. How did their stories make you think differently about school's role and challenges around safety in these times?
- What should the role, if any, of teachers be to teach about topics such as school shootings, lockdown drills, school safety, and gun violence?
- Safety becomes a priority for William H.G. Butler Middle School after its tragedy. What feelings does the story evoke for you in the sections about school safety and school supplies?
- How do items like bulletproof backpacks and vests change the tone of back to school shopping? How could they change the discussions you have with children? How did reading that part of the story make you feel?
- Students engage in safety drills in the last section of the story. What safety drills do your own children engage in, and how do you talk to the school administration, teachers, and your own child about them? What questions do you have, or does the story raise?
- Empathy is a repeated theme in the story, whether it is through the MELISSA Training, or the video game that children play in the last installment of the story. What are ways you work to develop empathy in your children?
- What ways should or could students be allowed to express their feelings on bullying, gun violence, mass school shootings, and lockdown drills?
- William H.G. Butler uses Instagram as a way to communicate with parents, and the community at large. Is this similar to how you receive information regarding school safety? What type of information would you like to receive that you have not? If your school district were to use a medium like that, how would it help, or hurt, the relationship with parents? What is dystopian about using social media to communicate?
- How can you, as a parent, work with your school to create a safe environment for the discussion of school shootings with your children?
- How can parents work with schools to continue the dialogue around these issues? What is missing from conversations you have had with schools?

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Many parents have hopes and fears about school. Using specific types of caregivers, including yourself, list as many hopes and fears as they may have. Working with a partner, discover commonalities among their hopes and fears. Based on these, what actions can we take to continue fostering their hopes and what actions can we take to diminish their fears?



A Discussion Guide for Educators



Storytelling is a helpful doorway through which difficult subjects can be discussed. The questions below can frame a discussion that takes place between teachers and administrators over a luncheon or professional development of *William H.G. Butler Middle School*.

MAKING TEXT CONNECTIONS

- How do you approach the topics of school safety, mass school shootings, and lockdown drills in your classroom? With your colleagues? With your family?
- Do you feel as though you have the ability and freedom to discuss these topics with your students?
- Should teachers and schools discuss their stance on political issues like gun control?
- How did reading the story make you feel? What sections most resonated for you? What feelings did it evoke for you?
- The characters of Mr. Ortega and Ms. Tan (July 3 - July 5) were based on research about real-life teachers. Do you think they should be commended for their decisions? Did they make a good decision? Would you make a similar decision?
- What are the expectations you feel are placed upon you in these times as an educator?
- What could the MELISSA method (July 10 - July 13) look like in your classroom or school?
- School supplies appear in the July 18 - July 20 posts of the story. How did this part of the story make you feel?
- Would game based learning, such as “Hide And Peek” (August 7- August 9) help or have emotional consequences?
- What challenges would arise were the procedures, drills, etc. implemented in the story to become reality for you? How would you react if you were to asked to do these?
- How could you use this story as a teaching tool in your classroom? Which dystopian works of literature could you pair it with?
- What hashtags or posts from the story stand out to you as the most powerful and why?
- What additional tools, resources, etc. are needed to continue the dialogue? Which books and games from the #ArmMeWith Campaign can be used in your classroom and how?

HANDS-ON-ACTIVITY

Many students (and parents, teachers, administration, etc) have hopes and fears about school. Using specific types of people, including yourself, list as many hopes and fears each may have. Working with a partner, discover commonalities among their hopes and fears. Based on these, work as a group to identify what actions can we take to continue fostering their hopes and what actions can we take to diminish their fears?





#ARMEWITH BOOKS

a book list for young people
in the age of school shootings

Featuring
recommendations
from more than 50
award-winning
authors



LITERARY
SAFARI

What is a must-read for children growing up in the age of lockdown drills and mass shootings?

Educators, parents, and librarians are struggling with the new reality in schools in America today—one where active shooter exercises are accepted as ‘normal’ and where children as young as nursery school are expected to learn the protocol of lockdown drills.

Instead of focusing on common sense gun reform, many politicians and legislators continue to put forth the idea of arming teachers with guns and policing schools with increased security.

The grassroots #ArmMeWith movement that went viral in 2018 inspired our studio, Literary Safari, to create this **#ARMMEWITHBOOKS** list as a companion resource to our graphic novella, *William H.G. Butler Middle School*.

We believe that literature is a powerful tool for change. So we asked writers whose work we admire to answer this question: *What is a must-read for children growing up in these challenging times of lockdown drills and mass shootings?* The response was resounding. Coretta Scott King award winner, Nikki Grimes, responded with an original poem, and over 50 award-winning authors, illustrators, and librarians sent us their top picks.

Here is a book list that waves a flag for resilience, empathy and compassion. We invite you to use it, share it, and add to it using the #armmewithbooks hashtag on social media. Don't forget to tag us on Twitter at @litsafarimedia. You can also find our list on [Amazon](#).

Reading the right novel at the right time in your life can help you see things differently—and even be therapeutic ... That children's books can do the same for children won't surprise anyone at all. Parents, godparents, grandparents, and kindly uncles—not to mention librarians, English teachers and booksellers—have long been aware that the best way to help a child through a challenging moment is to give them a story about it. The best children's books have a way of confronting big issues and big emotions with fearless delight, their instinct to thrill but also, ultimately to reassure.

—*Story Cure: An A-Z of Books to Keep Kids Happy, Healthy, and Wise* by Ella Berthoud and Susan Elderkin

RELUCTANT SAGE

By Nikki Grimes

Bullet-dodging,
a warped sport I once
managed to master
in the ancient ago,
certain it belonged to
the dark days of my twisted childhood.
But now, I'm asked to offer sage advice
to young ones trading their innocence
for lessons in safety
during math-class interruptions
by gunfire within the school walls.
Is this why I survived?
Please tell me,
my sole purpose now,
in serving children,
is not to yell ""Duck!""

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NIKKI GRIMES

Nikki is the author of the Coretta Scott King Award winning *Bronx Masquerade*. Her contributions to children's literature have been widely recognized. She is the recipient of the 2018 Arnold Adoff Poetry Award for Middle Readers, 2017 Children's Literature Legacy Award, the 2016 Virginia Hamilton Literary Award, and the 2006 NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children.



William H.C. Butler Middle School, Week 7

WHGB Orientation - Hide and Peek



Picture Book

RECOMMENDATIONS



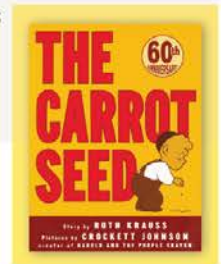
KATHERINE APPEGATE, *The One and Only Ivan*, 2013 Newbery Award Winner

Katherine's pick is **Malala's Magic Pencil by Malala Yousafzai**. "This book is the ray of hope we all need these days, beautifully written and illustrated," she says. As a child in Pakistan, Malala wished for a magic pencil to fix the world.



CARMEN AGRA DEEDY, Golden Kite Award and Pura Belpré Honor Award winner

Carmen's pick is **The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss**. "This delightful story packs a surprising punch as it gently teaches constancy, trust, hope, and the assurance that these will some day grow into something real and glorious," she says.



BETSY BIRD, librarian, author and blogger at A Fuse #8 Production (School Library Journal)

Betsy's pick is **Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness by Anastasia Higginbotham**. "This book does a marvelous job of making it clear that white people have a responsibility not just to people of other races but to their own children," she says.



F. ISABEL CAMPOY, bilingual author and educator, recipient of 2017 Tomás Rivera Book Award

Isabel recommends her own book, **Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood**. "I have heard from many readers of the importance of the message of solidarity," she says. "This book explores how our communities can collaborate to build a society free of hate."



Also available in Spanish:
"Quizás algo hermoso"



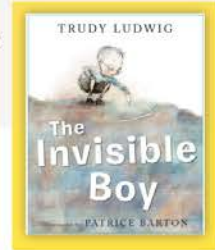
OLIVER CHIN, *9 of 1: A Window to the World*, Gustavus Myers Award Honorable Mention

Oliver's pick is **Farewell to Shady Glade by Bill Peet**. It's a story about how a raccoon and his friends rebuild their lives after they are pushed out of their home by bulldozers. "This book can be used to explore the topic of how a community copes with catastrophic disruption," he says. "It is by one of my favorite authors."



REEM FARUQI, *Lailah's Lunchbox*, an ADL Book of the Month Selection

Reem's pick is **The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig**. This beautiful book is about Brian, an invisible boy who nobody ever seems to notice or think to include in their group, game, or birthday party. It shows how small acts of kindness go a long way.



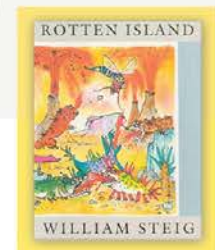
MAYA CHRISTINA GONZALEZ, *My Colors, My World*, a Pura Belpré Award Honor book

Maya's pick is one of her own books, **When A Bully is President: Truth and Creativity for Oppressive Times**. This book looks at bullying in the founding history of the US and offers ways to use creativity in the face of negative messages for all marginalized communities. Maya is the co-founder of Reflection Press.



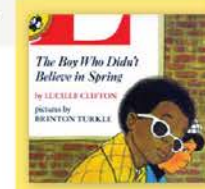
ANASTASIA HIGGINBOTHAM, author/illustrator, PEOPLE's 25 Women Changing the World 2018

Anastasia's pick is **Rotten Island by William Steig**, which explores what would happen if every creature on land and sea were free to be as rotten as possible. "I go to Rotten Island to remember that what inflames us may engulf us," she says.



GWENDOLYN HOOKS, author of *Tiny Stitches*, NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work

Gwendolyn's pick is **The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring by Lucille Clifton** in which two skeptical city boys set out to find spring. She also suggests **We Came to America by Faith Ringgold** (Caldecott Medal author and artist), a story about America's rich history of diversity and immigration.





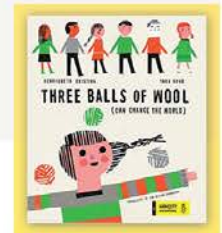
SUPRIYA KELKAR, author of *Ahimsa*, a 2018 Amelia Bloomer Top Ten List Selection

Supriya's pick is **Can I Touch Your Hair?: Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship** by **Irene Latham and Charles Waters**. This is "a beautiful book that shows readers the importance of talking about race and learning about what we all have in common," she says.



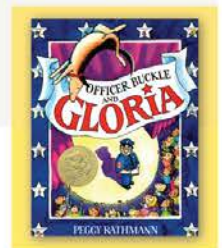
LYN MILLER-LACHMANN, *Gringolandia*, Bank Street Best Children's Books of 2016

Lyn's pick is **Three Balls of Wool (Can Change the World)** by **Henriqueta Cristina**. "This book depicts a family's struggle to adjust after they flee their country," she says. "Through knitting, the family members transform their new home into a brighter place." (She translated this book from Portuguese to English.)



RICH LO, author/illustrator, *Father's Chinese Opera*, an APALA Award Picture Book Honor

Rich's pick is **Officer Buckle and Gloria** by **Peggy Rathmann**. "A story about the partnership between a policeman and his dog, it brings home the point that it's better to stick with your buddy and be a team than to be alone," he says. "It is a sure bet this book will bring smiles to the readers' faces. It did to me."



INNOSANTO NAGARA, *A is for Activist*, NPR's 2017 Summer Reading for Your Woke Kid

Innosanto's pick is **We March** by **Shane W. Evans**. "This is one of my favorite books about the role of putting on your walking shoes and engaging in collective action," he says. (For older readers, he also recommends **Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second Amendment** by **Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz**.)



MITALI PERKINS, award-winning author, *Rickshaw Girl* (2008), *Tiger Boy* (2017), *You Bring the Distant Near* (2017)

"I recommend the winners and honorees of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, which 'recognizes children's books of literary and aesthetic excellence that effectively engage children in thinking about peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people.'" —Mitali Perkins, 2018 National Book Award Judge

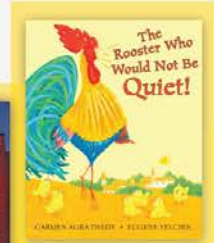
The Jane Addams Children's Book Awards have been presented annually since 1953 in the categories of Books for Older Children and Books for Younger Children. See winners at www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org





ANTONIO SACRE, *The Barking Mouse*, an IRA Notable Book for a Global Society

Antonio's picks are **The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet!** by **Carmen Agra Deedy** and **América is Her Name** by **Luis J. Rodriguez**. "The first title shows the power of one small voice in creating big change and the second shows how one child's poetry transforms her family's life," he says.



Both books are available in Spanish



TRACI SORELL, *We are Grateful: Otsaliheliga*, a 2018 School Library Journal Best Picture Book

Traci's pick is **Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers: Celebrating Animal Underdogs** by **Melissa Stewart**. "Analogous to making judgments about people, this book examines the 'unsung underdogs of the animal world' and how perceived weaknesses can be strengths," she says. Traci is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.



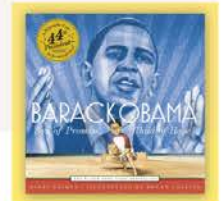
JERRY SPINELLI, *Maniac Magee*, 1990 Newbery Medal

Jerry's pick is **When You are Happy** by **Eileen Spinelli** a story about a young girl who gets help from her family members as she experiences different childhood feelings and fear. "More humanity is packed into its 32 pages than any other book I know," he says. "Not surprisingly, my wife wrote it!"



HEIDI E.Y. STEMPLER, *Counting Birds*, a 2018 NSTA Outstanding Science Trade Book

Heidi's pick is **Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope** by **Nikki Grimes**. Like her mother, Jane Yolen, she also chose **I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsberg Makes her Mark** by **Debbie Levy**. "Both books are about an ordinary child who grew up to do extraordinary things," she says.



MIA WENJEN, blogger, and book reviewer, PragmaticMom.com

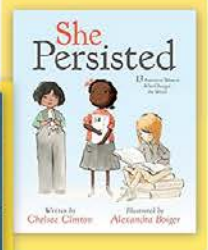
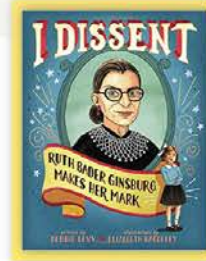
Mia's pick is **Never Say a Mean Word Again: A Tale from Medieval Spain** by **Jacqueline Jules**. "This picture book turns bullying upside down with an effective counter measure: kindness and friendship," she says. "Imagine if kids used this strategy to combat conflicts!" Mia is co-founder of Multicultural Children's Book Day.





JANEYOLEN, *Owl Moon*, 1988 Caldecott Medal Winner

Jane's picks are **She Persisted** by Chelsea Clinton and **I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsberg** by Debbie Levy. Both these books highlight fearless American women who have changed the world. (For older readers, she also recommends **Monster** by Walter Dean Myers.)



THE BEAST WITHIN

By Lynn Joseph

I say I don't be needing any comfort
But Mama counters that.
She holds my hand and tells me,
"Mickey's gone, you're not."
And then she pushes up my chin
and says,
"The first sharp pains
don't block out more to come.
But pain don't have to be
the beast
that wears the battle crown.
Your Beast within has many names—
Courage, Strength, and Hope,
and it will carry you to glory
when the beast of blood goes broke."



LYNN JOSEPH

Lynn is a Trinidadian author of books set mostly in the Caribbean. Her young adult novel, *The Color of My Words*, has received an Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature and was recognized as an IRA Notable Book for a Global Society. "I wrote this poem for young people during the horrible drug wars of the Summer of 1990 in New York City when many innocent people, including kids, were shot and killed by stray bullets, many of them on playgrounds. The same fears permeate the schools today as did the playgrounds back then," she says.



William H.C. Butler Middle School, West I

8TH
GRADE



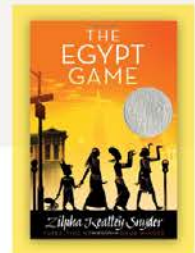
Middle Grade

RECOMMENDATIONS



NADIA AGUIAR, *The Book of Tamarind* adventure series

Nadia's pick is **The Egypt Game** by **Zilpha Keatley Snyder**. "This is one of my favorite middle-grade books," she says. "The children in it are in genuine peril from a predator, but it's also a story of friendship and solidarity between children."



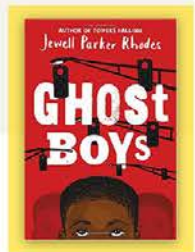
JOSEPH BRUCHAC, author and storyteller, 2005 Virginia Hamilton Literary Award

Joseph recommends his 2008 novel **The Way**, which focuses on an Abenaki boy who is a student of martial arts seeking out a non-violent solution when confronted with a possible school shooting situation in his school. Joseph is a citizen of the Abenaki tribe.



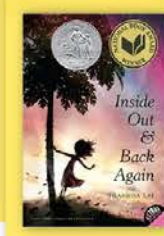
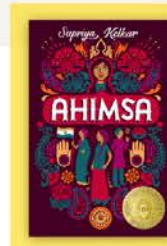
STEVEN FRANK, *Armstrong and Charlie*, a 2017 Junior Library Guild Selection

Steven's pick is **Ghost Boys** by **Jewell Parker Rhodes**. "This raw and relatable book is about a young black boy trying to understand his own death at the hands of a white cop." As a companion read on empathy for all living things, he suggests the folktale **Zlateh the Goat** by **Isaac Bashevis Singer**.



VEERA HIRANANDANI, *The Night Diary*, NPR's Best Books of 2018

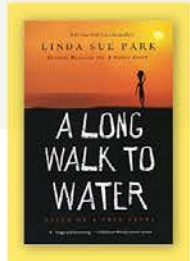
Veera's picks are **If You Come Softly** by **Jacqueline Woodson**, **Inside Out and Back Again** by **Thanhha Lai**, and **Ahimsa** by **Supriya Kelkar**. "These books all have to do with how prejudice, be it in war, political movements, or simply in everyday life, hurt marginalized young people the most," she says.





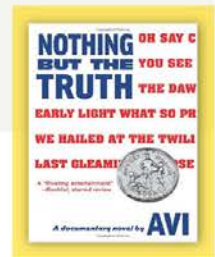
HENA KHAN, *Amina's Voice*, a Kirkus Best Book of 2017

Hena's pick is **A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park** which explores the devastation of war and the resilience of two young Sudanese refugees. "I gave it to my sons to read," she says. "My older son who was 13 at the time actually thanked me and declared, 'I feel like a better person' when he finished."



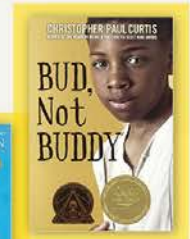
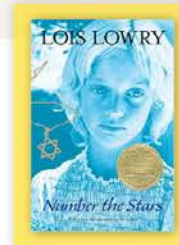
GORDON KORMAN, *Restart*, New York Times best-selling author

Gordon's pick is **And Nothing But the Truth by Avi**. "Avi's book is a fascinating thought experiment about how political agendas and preconceptions can take an event at a school and spin it a thousand different ways," he says. (For older readers, he also recommends **Give a Boy a Gun by Todd Strasser**.)



CAROLYN MACKLER, *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* (a Printz Honor Book)

Carolyn's picks are **Bud Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis**, **Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan**, and **Number the Stars by Lois Lowry**. "These books show young protagonists displaying determination and spunk in the face of adversity," she says.



AN ACTIVIST'S ANTHOLOGY: *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices*

- Floyd Cooper, author and Coretta Scott King Award winning illustrator, *The Blacker the Berry*
- Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, *Two Naomis*, NAACP Image Award
- Charles R. Smith Jr., poet and Coretta Scott King Award winning illustrator, *My People*

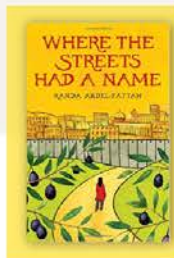
Charles, Floyd, and Olugbemisola pick **We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices**, an anthology of poems, letters, essays, and art edited by Cheryl and Wade Hudson. Fifty diverse children's authors and illustrators—including Jason Reynolds, Jacqueline Woodson, and Kwame Alexander—share answers to the question, "In this divisive world, what shall we tell our children?"





LISA SUHAIR MAJAJ, *Geographies of Light*, 2008 Del Sol Press Poetry Prize

Lisa's pick is **Where the Streets Had a Name** by Randa Abdel-Fattah. The book is about a 13-year-old girl and her friend who sneak into Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory to get a handful of soil from her ancestral home in Jerusalem. (Lisa is a Palestinian-American poet and scholar who is currently living in Cyprus.)



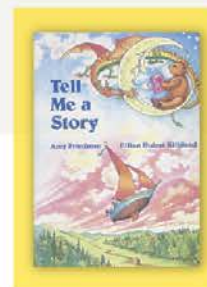
KRISTI WIENTGE, *Karma Khullar's Mustache*, 2018 Georgia Children's Book Award Nominee

Kristi's pick is **The Seventh Wish** by Kate Messner. After she catches a magical wishing fish, 12-year-old Charlie realizes that she can't wish away life's complications. "Poignant and so accessible, this book deals with addiction and the effects on the family," she says.



SARI WILSON, *Girl Through Glass*, an Amazon Book of the Month

Sari's pick is **Conquering Fear**, an Ethiopian folktale about a young boy who sets out on a journey to conquer the monster of fear retold by Amy Friedman in **Tell Me a Story**. She suggests pairing it with the classic poem *If* by Rudyard Kipling. (Sari is an editor at Scholastic Magazines.)



EDITH CAMPBELL, Assistant Education Librarian at Indiana State University and blogger, CrazyQuiltEd

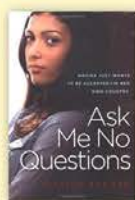
Edith, who served on the 2018 Michael L. Printz Award committee and is the Indiana State Ambassador for the United States Board on Books for Young People, recommends the following young adult books. "All of these titles examine violence, mostly from the victim's perspective," she says.



Long Way Down
Jason Reynolds



House of Purple Cedar
Tim Tingle



Ask Me No Questions
Marina Budhos



Getting Away with Murder
Chris Crowe



Fist Stick Knife Gun
Geoffrey Canada



Monster
Walter Dean Myers

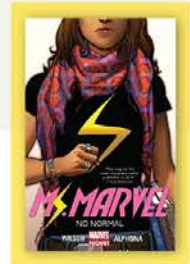
Young Adult

RECOMMENDATIONS



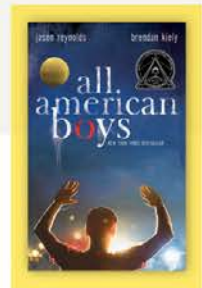
SEAN ADELMAN, *Sam's Top Secret Journal* series

Sean's pick is **Ms. Marvel Vol. 1** by **G. Willow Wilson**. "This is a great graphic novel about a Muslim girl, Kamala Khan, with super powers," he says. "Ms. Marvel comicsexplore friendship, religion, and race perceptions in a fun, readable format." Sean is a surgeon whose books represent children with developmental disabilities.



TRACEY BAPTISTE, New York Times best-selling author of *The Jumbies* series

Tracey's pick is **All American Boys** by **Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely**, a 2016 Coretta Scott King Honor Book about two boys whose lives are changed by police assault, seen through the alternating perspectives of the abused and a teen witness to his beating.



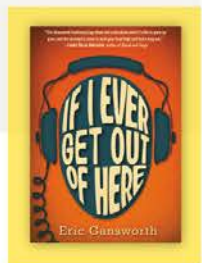
DAVID BOWLES, *They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems*, an NCTE 2019 Notable Verse Novel

David's pick is **Shame the Stars** by **Guadalupe Garcia McCall** which explores a dark moment of violence against Mexican Americans in the early 20th century. The book "provides young people with a powerful lens to examine their role in the struggle for dignity, freedom, and peace in modern America," he says.



ART COULSON, *The Creator's Game: A Story of Baaga'adowe/Lacrosse*

Art's pick is **If I Ever Get Out of Here** by **Eric Gansworth**. "This book about a Tuscarora boy growing up in the 1970s near Buffalo, NY spoke to me with its realistic portrayal of native life, generational racism, bullying, and the enduring power of friendship," he says. Art is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.





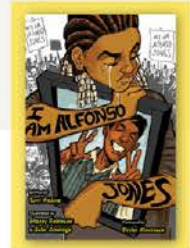
JERRY CRAFT, award-winning cartoonist and author; *New Kid*, a forthcoming graphic novel

Jerry's pick is **Piecing Me Together by Renee Watson**, a Newbery Honor. "This book touches on the nuances of growing up in today's world," he says. (For younger readers, he recommends **Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library by Carole Boston-Weatherford**, which shows what we can accomplish with determination.)



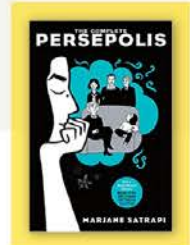
JOEL CHRISTIAN GILL, graphic novelist and Comic Arts Chair, New Hampshire Institute of Art

Joel recommends **I am Alfonso Jones by Tony Media**, a graphic novel about a young African-American boy who is shot and killed while buying his first suit. "This is a book about how we see young people who are involved in police shootings," he says.



CHUCK GONZALES, graphic novelist and illustrator, *Worst Case Scenario Junior* series

Chuck's picks are the graphic novels **Persepolis 1 and 2 by Marjane Satrapi**. "This true story of a girl growing up in Iran in the 80's is great for teenage readers," he says.



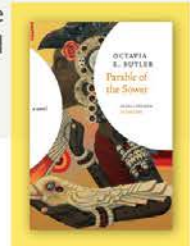
NIKI DALY, Molteno Gold Medal for major contribution to South African children's literature

Niki's pick is **On the Wings of Peace, an anthology edited by Sheila Hamanaka** where authors and illustrators reflect on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "I contributed with a poem called 'Soldier Jim and the Bird of Peace' about disarmament to this very good collection of stories and poems," he says.



ZETTA ELLIOTT, *Dragons in a Bag*, a Kirkus Reviews Best 2018 Middle Grade Book

Zetta's pick is **Parable of the Sower by Octavia E. Butler**. "This is the kind of title that I think would help kids deal with school shootings," she says. This dystopian novel tells the story of an African American teenage girl trying to survive in an all-too-real future.





MMARGARITA ENGLE, 2017-2019 Poetry Foundation's Young People's Poet Laureate

Margarita's picks are **The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo**, an "inspiring" novel in verse about a young girl in Harlem who discovers slam poetry as a way to understand her mother's religion and her own relationship to the world. This book won the 2018 National Book Award for Young People's Literature. She also recommends **#NeverAgain: A New Generation Draws the Line by David Hogg and Lauren Hogg**. "This is a definite must-read for young adults because it's written by teens who are Parkland survivors," she says. For younger readers, she also recommends **Dreamers by Yuyi Morales**, a picture book which was selected as the Best Illustrated Picture Book of 2018 by the New York Times Book Review and New York Public Library. (Margarita was recently awarded the 2019 NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature.)



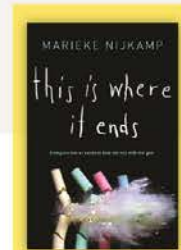
CHERYL KLEIN, *The Magic Words*, Editorial Director of Lee & Low Books

Cheryl's pick is the poem **To the Young Who Want to Die by Gwendolyn Brooks**. *Sit down. Inhale. Exhale. The gun will wait... You need not die today...* "This is a poem that has meant a lot to me in dark moments," she says.



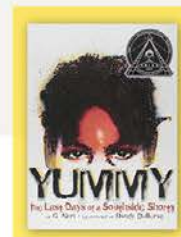
FONDA LEE, *Jade City (The Green Bone Saga)*, a NPR Best Book of 2017

Fonda's pick is **This Is Where It Ends by Marieke Nijkamp**. "This novel tackles the terrifying experience of a school shooting head on," she says. "It is an excellent book for teen book clubs to discuss." This book follows four teens during the fifty-four minutes of a school shooting.



ROBERT LUI-TRUJILLO, author/illustrator, *Furqan's First Flat Top*, Latinos in Kid Lit Best of 2016

Robert's pick is **Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty by Greg Neri**. This graphic novel, with art by Randy DuBurke, takes a look at youth gang life. It won a Coretta Scott King Author Award Honor and is an ALA Top Ten Great Graphic Novels for Teens.





MARIEKE NIJKAMP, *This Is Where It Ends*, #1 New York Times bestselling debut novel

Marieke recommends Harvey Milk's 1978 **Hope** speech. "For all that it was a relevant speech when first spoken, it's all the more relevant now," she says. "There's a reason why I referenced it in my book, *This is Where it Ends*. Because you have to give people hope. You have to give them hope."



NAOMI SHIHAB NYE, poet/author, *Habibi*, 1998 Jane Addams Children's Book award

Naomi's picks are **Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood** and its sequel **A Balcony on the Moon: Coming of Age in Palestine** by **Ibtisam Barakat**. "These beautiful memoirs give an important perspective on what has really been going on in the region all these years," she says. Naomi's father's family were refugees from the 1948 displacement out of Jerusalem.



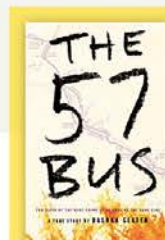
DANIEL JOSÉ OLDER, author of award winning *Shadowshaper Cypher* series

Daniel's pick is **The Beauty that Remains** by **Ashley Woodfolk**. "This novel is about healing and the power of friendship and music," he says. "So many books don't let teens be the messy, complicated fully formed people they are. Woodfolk gives us flesh and blood humans even in the most sidebar of side characters."



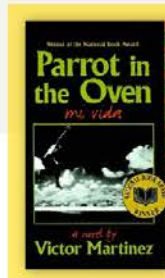
KATIA NOVET SAINT-LOT, *Amadi's Snowman: A Story of Reading*

Katia's pick is **The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives** by **Dashka Slater**. This nonfiction narrative is about a 2013 assault in Oakland, California following an encounter between two teens on a bus. The book peels back issues of race, class, and gender in a subtle, empathic way.



RENÉ SALDAÑA, JR., *The Jumping Tree*, 2001 Américas Award Collection

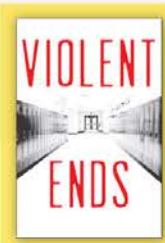
René's pick is **Parrot in the Oven: Mi vida** by **Victor Martinez** which won the 1996 National Book Award for Young People's Literature. "Though not about school shooting specifically, Martinez's novel tells of hardships that contemporary teens are similarly struggling with," he says. "It's a story of beating the odds."





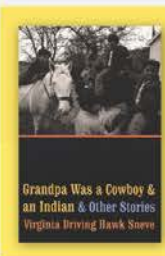
CYNTHIA LEITCH SMITH, *Hearts Unbroken*, New York Times & Publishers Weekly best-selling author

Cynthia's pick is **Violent Ends** edited by **Shaun David Hutchinson** and written by 17 authors (including her). The story centers on a 16-year-old school shooter named Kirby Matheson. Each chapter is told by characters trying to answer one question: *Why?* Cynthia is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.



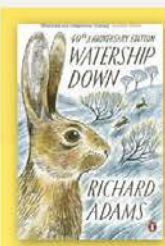
VIRGINIA DRIVING HAWK SNEVE, 2000 National Humanities Medal Winner

Virginia's pick is her collection of short stories, **Grandpa Was a Cowboy and an Indian and Other Stories**. "These works deal with what youth can learn from their elders; respect for the earth, and youth coming of age adapting to changing times," she says. Virginia is a citizen of the Rosebud Sioux tribe.



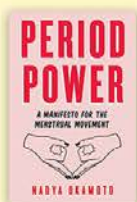
GWENDOLYN ZEPEDA, author and Poet Laureate of Houston, Texas 2013-2015

Gwendolyn recommends **Watership Down** by **Richard Adams**, the classic tale of a group of wild rabbits struggling to hold onto their place in the world. "I found the characters' plight frightening and their bravery inspiring," she says.



ELISE MARTINEZ, Teen Librarian, Zion-Benton Public Library, Illinois

Elise, who moderated a 2018 School Library Journal webinar on Social Activism in YA Lit, recommends the following books. "These titles introduce social activism, resilience, and the idea of demanding social/political change in America," she says.



Period Power
Nadya Okamoto



How I Resist
Maureen Johnson



How It Went Down
Kekla Magoon



Exit, Pursued by a Bear
E.K. Johnston



March: Book One
John Lewis
Andrew Aydin



New message from: LINDA SUE PARK

From: Linda Sue Park
To: Literary Safari
Subject: Re: Inviting you to recommend a title for an #ArmMeWithBooks List for Young People



Dear young readers:

Reading good books helps us develop empathy. With empathy for others, there's nothing we can't achieve.

A great way to start is by choosing books outside your usual zone. Former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature has helpful guidelines here: www.geneyang.com/the-reading-without-walls-challenge Everywhere you look these days, adults without empathy are doing terrible things to other people, and to the planet itself. No pressure, but I'm counting on you young people to develop empathy so you can help save the world.

Sincerely,
Linda Sue Park
#ArmMeWithBooks



Since publishing her first novel, *Seesaw Girl*, in 1999, Linda Sue Park has written six children's novels and five picture books. In 2002, she received the Newbery Medal for her novel *A Single Shard*, which is about an orphan boy in a 12th-century Korean potters' village who embarks on a difficult and dangerous journey that will change his life forever. Linda was born and raised in Illinois.



#ARMMEWITH GAMES

20 empathy games for young people
in the age of school shootings

Featuring
recommendations
from leading
game designers
and educators



LITERARY
SAFARI

Can games help young people growing up in an age of lockdown drills and mass shootings?

We live in an age where the media is dominated by two distinct tropes around the discussion of video games. One narrative depicts politicians who decry video games as a cause of aggression amongst young people. The other narrative represents research on the potential of screen-time (including gaming) as a positive force in the lives of young people, and argues that the moral panic around video games—think of all the *Fortnite* articles you’ve read recently—is overstated.

At our studio, Literary Safari, we repeatedly encountered this dialectic while creating *William H.G. Butler Middle School*, our illustrated story on Instagram which explores the impact of mass school shootings. We were also struck by the research studies we came across which show no evidence of the link between video games and aggressive behavior. These studies cite video games as a medium that can be designed to build empathy and social-emotional learning skills.

Inspired by the #ArmMeWith movement on social media—in which teachers asked to be armed with everything from more books to bullying prevention programs to prevent school shootings—we asked leading game designers and educators for recommendations of games that can build empathy and social-emotional skills in these strange times of mass shootings.

Our **#ArmMeWithGames** list includes adventure, puzzle, battle, narrative, and live action role play games. We invite you to share your own game recommendations with us on Twitter @litsafarimedia using the #ArmMeWithGames hashtag.

“Video games can engage players with more than just action. Impactful games are about serious topics and can create conditions for deeper learning. Some can even be used in classrooms to help children develop an awareness of both their own and their peers’ emotions. This list curates some of the best and most innovative game experiences that can help foster social emotional learning in children.”



Matthew Farber, Ed.D.

Assistant Professor of Technology, Innovation and Pedagogy at the University of Northern Colorado, and author of *Gamify Your Classroom*

A NOTE TO PARENTS FROM DR. KAREN SCHRIER

As an educator and a mom of young children, I often hear fears about games and the need to “protect our kids” from them. But, as a games researcher and designer, I also know that games are not simply all bad or all good—it’s much more nuanced than that. Like all forms of media, games may help kids connect, feel, express, and learn about each other. Some games have even been designed to foster empathy and share perspectives, such as *That Dragon, Cancer*, which explores grief over a son’s cancer diagnosis or *Revolution 1979: Black Friday*, which re-enacts historical points-of-view on the Iranian Revolution. Even popular games may help players grapple with complex emotions, such as how to manage loss. Though it is meant for more mature players, *Red Dead Redemption II* explores themes such as losing family, identity, trust, and one’s role in society. Likewise, *Fortnite* players may have to

cope with losing games against strangers, friends, or family. Games are yet another way for us to explore who we are and what it means to be human.

I invite you to read through the games on this list, and to consider whether they may be appropriate to share with the young people in your lives. Many are award-winners and were mindfully designed with engaging game mechanics that also support social-emotional learning. I hope you can play some of these games together!



Dr. Karen Schrier

Associate Professor and Founding Director of the Games & Emerging Media program at Marist College, and author of *Knowledge Games*

DID YOU KNOW

A recent University of Wisconsin-Madison study published in the *npj Science of Learning (a Nature Partner Journal)* found that video games can boost empathy by changing neural connections in the brain.

A NOTE TO TEACHERS FROM JOEL LEVIN

In recent years, there have been countless articles posted online extolling the virtues of using video games as an educational tool. Games are often presented as a panacea that can teach any subject and engage the most reluctant student. But when I talk to real teachers and parents about using games in the classroom, their views are more nuanced. Some express skepticism, saying that game-based learning is a gimmick that takes away from other valuable instructional time. Some worry that excessive gaming may lead to addictive or violent behavior. Other people enthusiastically support the idea and tell me about personal stories of the children in their lives and what they have accomplished with games—but they also tell me how much work was involved.

Games have the potential to transport our students to other realities and let them have valuable learning experiences. They can teach both traditional academic subjects and can be used to bolster empathy and social-emotional

intelligence. But games are not a silver bullet. Just by booting up a game in a classroom, you will not automatically reap the benefits. Like anything else that’s worth doing in education, there is serious work to be done. Teachers must learn what is possible with the games and they must decide how to map their existing lesson plans to a game-based model. They must develop new classroom management strategies and be able to troubleshoot on the fly, and probably the first few times they try using games, they will encounter some setbacks. But if they persevere, amazing experiences are indeed possible.

There is an art to teaching games in the classroom. But it is one that is worth learning because the potential is there and—when it all works—the benefits are real.



Joel Levin


Founder of MinecraftEdu and technology teacher at the Stephen Gaynor School, New York City

Recommendations



80 DAYS

80 Days is an interactive, choose-your-own-adventure, narrative game based on Jules Verne's classic novel *Around the World in 80 Days*. Playing as Passepartout, the valet to the main character Phileas Fogg, players control every action and must find the quickest path from city to city, all the while balancing Fogg's health and finances. This award-winning game teaches players accountability through the decisions they make which impacts the plot into success or disaster.

Available on:  




Single-player

High School



A NORMAL LOST PHONE

A Normal Lost Phone is an investigation game in which players search through a missing person's phone to solve the puzzle of what happened to them. Players read text messages and emails and look through photos and apps which reveal intimate details about the main character's life up until the evening they disappeared. The game touches on social media issues affecting teens today and is an opportunity to consider how devices and online activities can put our privacy and safety on the line.

Available on:   



Single-player

High School



AMONG THE SLEEP

Among the Sleep is an award-winning first-person narrative game played from the perspective of a two-year-old child experiencing parental neglect. The game begins with the player being awakened in the middle of the night by a mysterious sound and then setting out to find his/her mother in a nightmarish version of their home. This game assesses the effects an environment of alcohol abuse and domestic unrest can have on a young child.

Available on:  

Single-player

High School

Recommended grade levels are based on the complexity of game mechanics and topic/subject of game



DON'T STARVE TOGETHER

Don't Starve Together is a multi-player video game in which players have to gather supplies and assemble the tools they need to survive. Players navigate a mysterious land while trying to maintain their health, sanity, and hunger levels, keeping away from darkness and deadly creatures. This game is a well-rounded survival game that allows players to play individually or collaboratively and to experience the mental toll of loneliness and unhealthy environments on an individual.

Available on: 


Multi-player

Middle School & Up



ELUDE

Elude is an exploration game that aims to enhance the understanding of what people suffering from depression are going through. It was created by the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab. The game takes place in a forest—a metaphorical representation of varying moods—where players climb trees and resonate with passions that are represented by colorful birds. Ultimately and uncontrollably, players are dragged down, but through gameplay, are challenged to find their way back to the top, where true passions lie. **Free**

Available on: 


Single-player

Middle School & Up



MY CHILD LEBENSBOERN

My Child Lebensborn is a mobile tamagotchi game set in post-WWII Norway in which players assume the role of foster mother/father to a child experiencing hate based on their biological parents' Nazism. As caregivers, players must take care of the emotional and physical needs of a child who is ostracized by its surrounding society. The game is a portrait of exclusion and othering, but aims to change this narrative by demonstrating the power of social-emotional learning and care.

Available on: 


Single-player

Middle School & Up



NEVER ALONE

Never Alone is an adventure game based on Iñupiat (Alaskan native) traditions and characters. It follows the journey of a young girl, Nuna, and her fox as they try to uncover the source of the dangerous blizzards that threaten her village and restore balance to nature. Created with the guidance of nearly 40 Iñupiat elders and community members, the game is based on themes of togetherness, interconnectedness, respect for all things, and cooperation—essential components of social emotional skill building.

Available on: 

Multi-player


Middle School & Up

Recommended grade levels are based on the complexity of game mechanics and topic/subject of game



NIGHT IN THE WOODS

Night in the Woods is a narrative adventure game about the angst and confusion of being a young adult entering the real world. The game follows a cat named Mae, who recently dropped out of college and has returned to her hometown to find it isn't how she remembers it and that the people she once knew have moved on with their lives. Players experience a coming-of-age story through animal characters that reflects on relationships, financial stress, and personal responsibility.

Available on:  

Single-player

High School



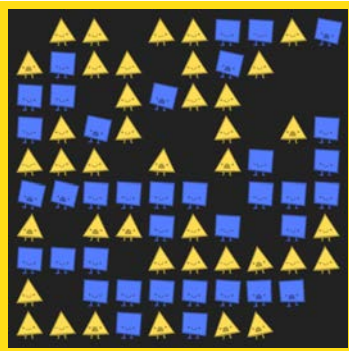
PAPERS, PLEASE

Papers, Please is an award-winning simulation puzzle game set in a fictional communist nation where players take on the role of an immigration official at a border crossing. Players have to choose which migrants get in and which must stay out through a developing plot of political unrest and nuanced social mini stories that assess moral choices and individual responsibility. Each decision made dictates the fate of the player, supporting characters, and outcome of the story.

Available on:   


Multi-player

High School



PARABLE OF THE POLYGONS

Parable of the Polygons is a playable blog post on how harmless choices can lead to a harmful world. The game is formatted like an article but contains mini-games that use cute and colorful geometric shapes to show how individual biases can lead to institutional biases such as segregation and marginalization. This game is based on the work of Nobel Prize winning game theorist Thomas Schelling. **Free**

Available on: 


Single-player

Middle School & Up



PLEASE KNOCK ON MY DOOR

Please Knock on My Door is a narrative game in which players attempt to help a person suffering from depression and social anxiety. Through mundane daily activities, players walk alongside the game's central character and watch as they try to cope through life, work, and friendship. The game aims to help players understand the fears and struggles of what it's like to live with depression and demonstrates the power of opening up to others.

Available on: 

Single-player

High School



Recommended grade levels are based on the complexity of game mechanics and topic/subject of game



PRISM

PRISM

Prism is a game for elementary school students where players assume the role of a nocturnal fox who seeks help from other animals to save their forest from an impending flood. Through the metaphor of the fox's struggle of navigating during the daytime and communicating with diurnal animals, players experience the feeling of sensory overload and the difficulty of social communication that their peers with autism may experience. The game promotes empathy and ultimately teaches children how to be better friends to those with autism spectrum disorder. **Free**

Available on:  


Single-player

Elementary School



SIGN

Sign is a live action role-play game (played with direction cards) that is based on the experience of 50 deaf children in 1970s Nicaragua. At that time, the country did not have a form of sign language—if you were deaf, you had no tools for expression. In Sign, players follow a piece of this journey and experience the frustrations of not being able to communicate. Through gameplay, participants create connections and develop tools to express themselves.

Available on: 


Multi-player

Middle School & Up

STARBOUND

STARBOUND

Starbound is an open-ended, multi-player, adventure sandbox game in which players explore a galaxy full of planets, spaceships, and unique alien civilizations. Players can build anything from a simple hut to towering fortresses. A game like this—similar to Roblox, Lego Worlds, Minecraft—provides opportunities to explore creativity, community building, and even social-emotional skills, as it takes a lot of interpersonal communication to build a thriving starfaring civilization!

Available on: 

Multi-player

Elementary School



THIS WAR OF MINE

This War of Mine is a simulation war game in which players assume the role of average citizens attempting to survive a conflict that's destroying their town. Inspired by the 1992-96 Siege of Sarajevo during the Bosnian War, the game asks players to make difficult decisions in desperate situations. Through gameplay, players also experience a socio-emotional connection with the game's supporting characters who may become depressed or disturbed as a result of their circumstances. A table top version of the game is available.

Available on:    

Single-player


High School

Recommended grade levels are based on the complexity of game mechanics and topic/subject of game



UNMANNED

Unmanned is an unconventional war simulator game. Players assume the role of a soldier who controls an unmanned attack drone in his office by day, and then goes home at night to lead a suburban life. Through gameplay that combines battle actions with everyday activities such as shaving, players learn that the conflict that grips the soldier is not on the battlefield, but in his mind. **Free**

Available on: 


Single-player

High School



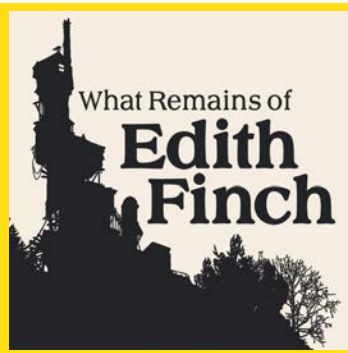
WAY

Way is a two-person game, where both players (who are anonymous strangers) play together using only nonverbal communication. The players are separated by a split screen and must work together to overcome obstacles that they can only do with the help of the other person. At the very end, once the players win the 20-minute game together, they are finally in the same screen and can write messages to each other atop a map of the world. **Free**

Available on: 


Multi-player

Middle School & Up



WHAT REMAINS OF EDITH FINCH

What Remains of Edith Finch is a narrative exploration game in which players assume the role of protagonist Edith, who returns to her childhood home to investigate her family's history. Players enter the elaborate Finch house and discover the eccentricities of Edith's family, how they lived, and how they died. The first-person perspective of the game promotes empathy-formation by making players experience the unknowable thoughts of various family-members, which also helps Edith better understand herself.

Available on: 


Single-player

High School



WONDER CITY

Wonder City is a web-based game that puts the player into the shoes of a high-school girl who discovers she has superpower abilities. Through decision-making gameplay, players express themselves and discover their style of heroism. The game realistically represents race and body image by empowering young girls to adopt their superhero identity and championing their own values. It is an extension of an independent documentary film, *Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines*. **Free**

Available on: 

Single-player


Middle School & Up

Recommended grade levels are based on the complexity of game mechanics and topic/subject of game



Zoo U

ZooU is a choice game set in a school for young zookeepers. The game was designed by psychologists and therapists for school and classroom use and features a teacher interface. The gameplay invites kids to navigate social situations in a familiar setting that correlates to their own real-life experiences at school. Faced with solving social problems, players are reminded to consider the perspectives of all parties in question, the goal being to build social emotional skills such as compassion, friendship, and confidence through adaptive gameplay.

Available on: 

Single-player

Elementary School

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Multimedia



Podcast: Funny As Tech
Karen Schrier Explains Empathy and Video Games



TV: Adam Ruins Everything
Behind the Myth that Video Games Cause Violence

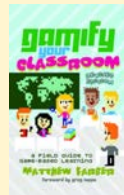


TED Talks
Talks on Gaming

Books



Power Play
Asi Burak & Laura Parker



Gamify Your Classroom
Matthew Farber



The Art of Screen Time
Anya Kamenetz



Reality is Broken
Jane McGonigal



Knowledge Games
Karen Schrier



The New Childhood
Jordan Shapiro

Game Lists



Click images to access

Recommended grade levels are based on the complexity of game mechanics and topic/subject of game

Contributors



Asi Burak is a veteran of the videogame and tech industries, an award-winning executive producer, and co-author of *Power Play: How Video Games Can Save the World*. Burak was named one of the “Digital 25: Leaders in Emerging Entertainment” by the Producers Guild of America and Variety Magazine. He has spoken at TEDTalks, Harvard Kennedy School, and Sundance, and is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts’ MFA in Design for Social Innovation.



Paul Darvasi is an educator, game designer, speaker, and writer. He teaches English and media studies in Toronto, Canada and is a doctoral candidate at York University. Paul has worked with the US Department of Education, and recently wrote a working paper for UNESCO on how commercial video games can be used for peace education and conflict resolution. Paul’s work has been featured on PBS, NPR, CBC, the Huffington Post, Edutopia, and MindShift.



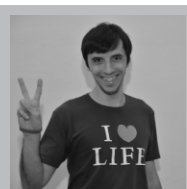
Nick Fortugno is a game designer and a founder of Playmatics, which has created a variety of digital and real-world games for organizations including Red Bull, Disney, American Museum of Natural History, and the Corporation of Public Broadcasting. He is co-founder of the Come Out and Play street games festival and has taught game design and interactive narrative design for 15 years at institutions such as Columbia University and the Parsons School of Design.



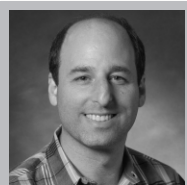
Aleksander Husøy is a teacher of English and Social Sciences in Norway. One of Scandinavia’s leading practitioners and educators in the use of games in learning, he was the 2015 recipient of the National Teacher Prize *The Golden Apple* for innovation in the use of technology in education. He has produced a series of teacher guides on games and learning for the Norwegian Directorate of Education and iThrive Games.



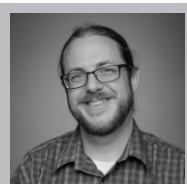
Steve Isaacs is a teacher at Bernards Township Public Schools in New Jersey, an edtech influencer, community builder, and leader in the area of teaching Game Design and Development. Steve is co-founder of #EdTechBridge, a monthly Twitter chat and community working to create better EdTech for students, a champion for esports in education, and lead content producer for Minefaire, a massive Minecraft fan experience. He was honored as the ISTE Outstanding Educator in 2016.



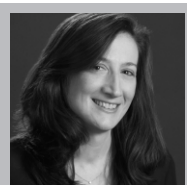
Alexandr Iscenco is a co-founder of MEGA, the Moldovan Environmental Governance Academy, a social entrepreneurial organization focused on delivering services of game development, gamified trainings, and e-learning. He organized the first innovation camp and hackathon for teachers on using gamification in education on conflict resolution and peace building in Moldova. This initiative, Operation P.E.A.C.E., resulted in board games and online games which were then distributed in six participating countries.



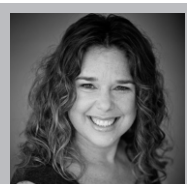
Barry Joseph is the VP of Digital Experience at Girl Scouts of the USA. Known as a changemaker who is passionately devoted to envisioning new ways digital media can "address significant personal and social issues," he is a driving force in both youth development and digital learning. Prior to Girl Scouts, he was Associate Director for Digital Learning at the American Museum of Natural History and founding Director of the Online Leadership Program at Global Kids.



Joel Levin is a teacher who collaborated with the creators of Minecraft to make MinecraftEdu, a custom remix of the original Minecraft designed for classroom use which he subsequently sold to Microsoft. Since then, he has co-founded TeacherGaming.com and created KerbalEdu and other games designed for teachers and students. He is now back teaching technology at a school in NYC and recently gave a TED Talk on Minecraft's potential to teach more than just academics.



Michelle Miller is the President and Co-Founder of Games and Learning. An early e-game producer, Michelle headed PBS KIDS Interactive during its initial start-up phase. She has also directed digital operations for Greenpeace International and the March of Dimes and consults for kids' media and education companies.



Susanna Pollack is the President of Games for Change, the leading global advocate for the power of games as drivers of social impact. In her role there, she produces the annual Games for Change Festival. She also developed the G4C Student Challenge to bring a games design challenge to middle and high school students across NYC and launched the Games for Learning Summit with collaboration from the US Department of Education and the Entertainment Software Association.



Robin Sharma is the Gaming Curriculum Developer at UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) in New Delhi, India. MGIEP's Games for Learning initiatives harness the power of play to transcend national boundaries, hone problem solving skills, and promote empathy. Robin is the lead implementer of the Gaming Programme, which supports research and develops products to integrate digital games for socio-emotional learning within and outside the classroom.

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

Educators Share How Video Games Can Help Kids Build SEL Skills by Tina Nazerian (*EdSurge*)

Digital Play for Global Citizens by Jordan Shapiro (Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop)

The Limits and Strengths of Using Digital Games as "Empathy Machines" by Matthew Farber and Karen Schrier (UNESCO MGIEP)

It Starts with a Flicker: How Games Can Bring Humanity Closer Together by Karen Schrier (*Variety Magazine*)

The format of William H.G. Butler Middle School is very clever, both in terms of subject matter and the Instagram “delivery system.” It’s rife with hashtags and feels connected to our techno-cultural moment ... and what makes the whole thing work is the deadpan satire of the piece, which is so cutting!

—Josh Neufeld, Eisner and Harvey Award
nominated comics journalist

William H.G. Butler Middle School is an Instagram-style graphic novella which explores the impact of mass school shootings on America's schools, children, and families. Pair it with **#ArmMeWithBooks** and **#ArmMeWithGames**, our lists of book and game recommendations from award-winning authors, librarians, game designers, researchers, and educators.



Literary Safari is a NYC-based studio that produces thoughtful and inclusive award-winning media for children and families everywhere. It is committed to using storytelling as a powerful tool of change. Its clients have included Sesame Learning, Unesco, Benchmark Education, Scholastic, E-Line Media, and Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and its literacy app HangArt was recognized as one of Common Sense Media's Best of EdTech in 2016.