

Respect Starts Here Summer Reading 2017 (Year 3)

Theme: Immigration

This is inscribed on the Statue of Liberty:

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

From "The New Colossus"

Emma Lazarus, November 2, 1883

As a nation of immigrants, we all have a shared past where someone, recently or decades earlier, has traveled to this country to start a new life. Today's divisive talk about immigration, emphasizing status, legality, profiling, and deportation prevents us from seeing the individual. We can fall victim to fear, thus ignoring the power of listening to each other's stories to find common ground, appreciating our connections AND our differences.

Respect Starts Here has the development and growth of empathy as a fundamental pillar, knowing that we can dispel fear and hate when we shed stereotypes. We live in a world where we must intentionally cultivate empathy. This year's novels all focus on the immigrant's story, although countries and cultures vary from book to book. Among the books, there are common themes of crises that force departure from a homeland, terrifying journeys to an unknown destination, rejection from the new culture, and the desperate desire to fit in.

It is hoped that classes will want to create oral histories, slideshows, videos, etc. of their own family stories during the 2017-18 school year, as a result of conversations and RSH lessons about these books. We always encourage Rangel students to share these books with parents so that a conversation can also happen at home.

Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School
Dallas, TX
Diana O'Connor, MLS – Rangel Teacher Librarian

Thank you to the Young Women's Preparatory Network, whose support for Respect Starts here and summer reading, has allowed us to purchase over 600 novels for each student and their grade level advisory teachers every summer for the past 13 years!

ENJOY!!

6th The Weight of Water, Crossan

"In this taut portrayal of the immigrant experience, 12-year-old Kasienka moves with Mama from Gdansk, Poland, to Coventry, England, to find Tata, her father. The adjustment is difficult. At school, Kasienka is ostracized. At home, she questions why they are searching for a man who ran from them. When Kasienka complains, Mama questions her love. Kasienka feels powerful only when she swims at the pool--something Tata taught her to do. That is also where William, a schoolmate, first notices her. Narrating in image-rich free verse that packs an emotional punch, Kasienka describes what life is like for a new arrival while also exploring universal themes of abandonment, loyalty, bullying and first love. Concise lines and brief poems--two to three pages at most--mirror her tentative steps in an alien world, offering snapshots of her experiences and thoughts. Her story is broken into three parts, emphasizing the stages Kasienka goes through, with the last providing "starting blocks," as it were. Sweetheart William encourages her to swim; through swimming, Kasienka reconnects with her father; she and Mama make peace; and the school bully is rendered powerless in the face of Kasienka's hard-won happiness. It is fitting that some of the last poems are entitled "Metamorphosis" and "Forgiveness." The Epilogue, "Butterfly," offers good advice for living: "[P]ull, / Push, / Recover." Memorable. (Verse fiction . 10-14)(Kirkus Reviews, June 1 , 2013)

7th The Only Road, Diaz

Grades 3-6 /* Starred Review */ When his cousin Miguel is killed for refusing to join the Alphas, Jaime and his cousin Ángela are targeted as the next recruits. With no other way out, their family decides to risk sending them to El Norte to live with Jaime's brother, Tomás. The journey from Guatemala is not easy; Jaime and Ángela face agonizingly real horrors: the fear of being discovered and deported—or worse—by la migra; being locked in the sweltering heat of a rail car; running out of food and water; crossing paths with other even more dangerous gangs; and everything they might face in an unknown country. Readers will find themselves immersed in the fast-paced narrative as the cousins struggle to find a moment of safety on a dangerous route to an uncertain future. Diaz, herself a child of immigrants, laces Jaime and Ángela's tale with plenty of Spanish words, and a glossary offers definitions, as well as pronunciation tips, for non-Spanish speakers. Diaz's closing author's note reminds readers that immigrants still endure journeys like Jaime and Ángela's every day. Told with heartbreaking honesty, this story will bring readers face to face with the harsh realities immigrants go through in the hope of finding a better, safer life, and it will likely cause them to reflect on what it is to be human. Powerful and timely. -- Paz, Selenia (Reviewed 9/1 /2016) (Booklist, vol 113, number 1 , p112)

8th Ask Me No Questions, Budhos

/*Starred Review*/ Gr. 7-10. What is it like to be an illegal alien in New York now? In a moving first-person, present-tense narrative, Nadira, 14, relates how her family left Bangladesh, came to the U. S. on a tourist visa, and stayed long after the visa expired (Everyone does it. You buy a fake social security number for a few hundred dollars and then you can work.). Their illegal status is discovered, however, following 9/11, when immigration regulations are tightened. When the family hurriedly seeks asylum in Canada, they are turned

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back, and Nadiras father, Abba, is detained because his passport is no longer valid. The secrets are dramatic (Go to school. Never let anyone know. Never.), and so are the family dynamics, especially Nadiras furious envy of her gifted older sister, Aisha. But Aisha breaks down, and Nadira must take over the struggle to get Abba out of detention and prevent the familys deportation. The teen voice is wonderfully immediate, revealing Nadiras mixed-up feelings as well as the diversity in her family and in the Muslim community. Theres also a real drama that builds to a tense climax: Did Abba give funds to a political organization? Where has the money gone? Will Immigration hear his appeal? The answer is a surprise that grows organically from the familys story. Readers will feel the heartbreak, prejudice, kindness, and fear. Add this to the titles in New Immigration Materials in the August 2005 issue's Spotlight on Immigration. -- Hazel Rochman (Reviewed 12-15-2005) (Booklist, vol 102, number 8, p46)

9th The Sun Is Also a Star, Yoon

/ Starred Review */* Natasha and Daniel meet, get existential, and fall in love during 12 intense hours in New York City .Natasha believes in science and facts, things she can quantify. Fact: undocumented immigrants in the U.S., her family is being deported to Jamaica in a matter of hours. Daniels a poet who believes in love, something that can't be explained. Fact: his parents, Korean immigrants, expect him to attend an Ivy League school and become an M.D. When Natasha and Daniel meet, Natasha is understandably distracted and doesn't want to be distracted by Daniel. Daniel feels what in Japanese is called koi no yokan, the feeling when you meet someone that you're going to fall in love with them. The narrative alternates between the pair, their first-person accounts punctuated by musings that include compelling character histories. Daniel is sure they're meant to be and is determined to get Natasha to fall in love with him (using a scientific list). Meanwhile, Natasha desperately attempts to forestall her family's deportation and, despite herself, begins to fall for sweet, disarmingly earnest Daniel. This could be a sappy, saccharine story of love conquering all, but Yoon's lush prose chronicles an authentic romance that's also a meditation on family, immigration, and fate. With appeal to cynics and romantics alike, this profound exploration of life and love tempers harsh realities with the beauty of hope in a way that is both deeply moving and satisfying. (Fiction . 14 & up) (Kirkus Reviews, January 1 , 1900)

Awards:

[Booklist Editors' Choice - Books for Youth - Older Readers Category : 2016](#)
[Coretta Scott King Award: John Steptoe Award for New Talent \(Authors\)](#)
[YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2017](#)

10th Illegal, Restrepo **BONUS – Author lives in Dallas area!**

When Nora's dad left their small Mexican town, Cedula, to make money for the family in the United States, he promised to be back for her 15th birthday quincenara celebration. Now three years later, Cedula, without "even a stinking drug dealer in this town to spread the cash around," has closed its schools, families are moving away and 14-year-old Nora worries her father won't return in time. When his money stops arriving, her family risks losing its land and she hears a voice telling her to flee, Nora convinces her mother to use their savings to be smuggled across the border to look for him. With searing realism, debut author Restrepo describes Nora's anger, desperation and loss of faith when she and her mother arrive, barely alive in the back of a fruit truck, in Houston to a barrio that's characterized by racial division, gangs, violence and filthy living conditions. Giving up her dreams about her father's promise and American prosperity, Nora simply wants to find the truth and survive in her foreign surroundings. Newfound friends, struggling with their own poverty and gang threats, and community, made up of all kinds of outsiders, combine with her own indomitable spirit to give her the courage to fight to belong. This memorable coming-of-age story will awaken readers to the overlooked struggles of immigrants. (glossary) (Fiction . YA)(Kirkus Reviews, February 15, 2011)

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11th The Tyrant's Daughter, Carleson

*Starred Review */ A teenage girl from an unnamed Middle Eastern country attempts to come to terms with her dictator father's bloody legacy in this absorbing character-driven novel authored by a former CIA official. Fifteen-year-old Laila lives in a shabby apartment outside of Washington, D.C., with her mother and little brother. She misses her homeland, but return is impossible since her uncle had her father assassinated and took control of the government. "I'm half Here. I'm half There. I'm a girl divided, which is to say I'm no one at all." While her mother schemes with both American officials and rebels from their country to remedy their untenable situation, Laila reluctantly begins to enjoy the simple freedoms of school and friendships. But worrisome thoughts of her mother's secretive phone calls and the mysterious CIA agent who lurks around their apartment are never far from her mind. And how will she ever reconcile what she now knows about her father the dictator with the loving man who raised her? Carleson shrewdly makes what has become a sadly familiar story on the evening news accessible by focusing on the experiences of one innocent girl at the center of it. Laila is a complex and layered character whose nuanced observations will help readers better understand the divide between American and Middle Eastern cultures. Smart, relevant, required reading. (author's note, commentary, further reading) (Fiction . 13 & up)(Kirkus Reviews, December 15, 2013)

12th American Street, Zoboi

Zoboi's stunning debut intertwines mysticism and love with grit and violence to tell the story of Fabiola Toussaint, a Haitian teen adjusting to her new life in Detroit. Fabiola's dream of a better life with her aunt and cousins in America snags when her mother is detained at the U.S. border. Forced to continue alone, she must also confront the reality that her new neighborhood is every bit as dangerous as the one she left behind in Port-au-Prince. Drugs, gangs, and violence pervade the status quo, but thanks to her cousins' tough reputations, Fabiola can find her footing. Zoboi, who emigrated to the U.S. from Haiti, brings a nuanced portrayal of that culture to the narrative. Evocative prose, where Fabiola calls on voodoo spirits, informs and enriches her character, while standing in counterpoint to her hard-as-nails cousins. Zoboi pulls no punches when describing the dangerous realities of the girls' lives, but tender moments are carefully tucked into the plot as well. This story is many things. It is a struggle for survival. It is the uncovering of one's bravest self. And, most significant, it is the coming together of a family. One or two scenarios strain credibility, but the characters' complexities ultimately smooth over any bumps. Fierce and beautiful.— *Julia Smith*, Booklist Review, December 15, 2016