

Jane Addams Peace Association



Kids as Agents of Social Change

The theme for this month's newsletter is kids as agents of social change. We selected two Jane Addams Children's Book Award winners that feature characters who engage in activism to promote social justice in their community. So many of the youth in our communities are engaging in collective activism to bring awareness to issues that impact our civil rights, the environment, our reproductive health, immigration, voting rights, and human rights across different marginalized populations. Their ethical commitments to create a safe, healthy, and inclusive community reflect the civic engagement we see in the characters from the books we selected. We hope you feel inspired and moved to action as you share these stories with children and adults in your community.

"Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics" -Jane Addams

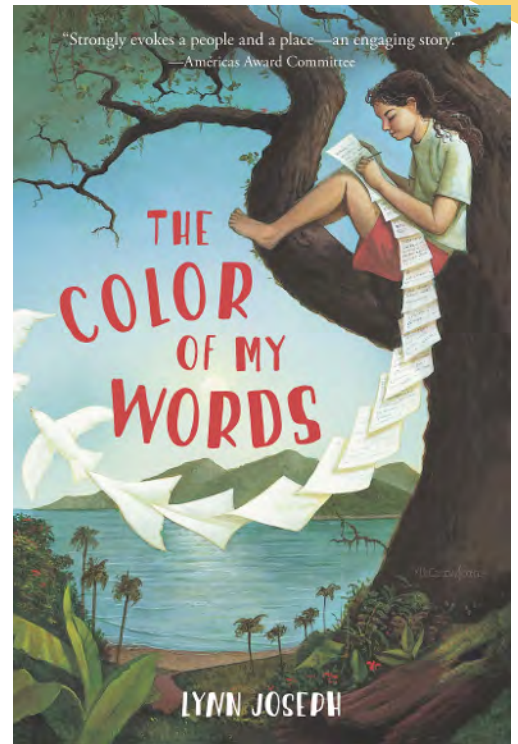


Older Reader

The Color of My Words by Lynn Joseph (2000) Scholastic

Twelve year old Ana Rosa lives with her family in a under-resourced seaside village in the Dominican Republic during the late 1900's. Ana Rosa is a blossoming young writer who is encouraged by her family to write and use her voice to make a difference in the world. The community is threatened when they receive word that the government intends to claim their and sell it to foreign investors. At the threat of losing their homes and entire village, the community decides they will not sell. Ana Rosa and her beloved older brother take on roles as advocates for the community in both triumph and tragedy.

*Adapted from Jane Addams Peace Association



Classroom Connection

Exploring issues of social change in children's literature with students can provide opportunities for them to identify with characters who are working to make their communities a more equitable place to live. In this book, Ana Rosa uses her talents as a writer and passion for her community to expose injustice and bring about change for her community. Her story highlights the power of youth leveraging their talents to work for social change. The beautiful poems in the book capture Ana Rosa's journey and are a great entrance into thinking about the craft of writing and activism.

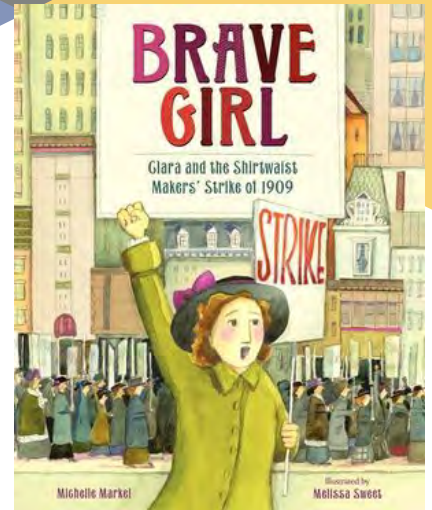
One way to engage students with these ideas is to have them create blackout poems. A blackout poem is created by a marker to redact words from a text in order to make a poem. Blackout poets often create a design that carries symbolic meaning about the text that was used or created.

[Click here](#) for a few more examples from educators on Twitter.



Younger Reader Book Review

***Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*, written by Michelle Markel and illustrated by Melissa Sweet (2013) Harper Collins**



Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909 is about a young garment worker named Clara Lemlich in New York City. She and her family immigrated from Ukraine, and she began to work in a factory making clothes during the day and attending school late at night. The book highlights an important young activist resisting lack of labor regulations and the lack of workers' rights, particularly for girls and women in clothing factories. Workers were overly policed and under supported, but she and her family did not have other options to make money. Disgusted with the working conditions, and despite male union leaders' lack of inclusion of women, Clara led other workers to demonstrate their collective power through striking, walk-outs, picket lines, and protests. She led one of the largest women's labor walk-outs in 1909 after an impassioned speech at Cooper Union, and was known as a leader in workers' rights.

Classroom Connection

Educators interested in exploring themes in this book have a plethora of connections they can explore. Brave Girl can be read and analyzed with children to inspire conversations about youth activism, civic engagement, protesting, labor laws, working conditions, as well as biases, racism, sexism, and ableism that impact some activist efforts. Clara was a very young, effective activist and learning about her story can lead students to think about areas of their own lives where they can be agents of social change. One third grade class, in parallel to this book, learned more about Mari Copeny, the young activist known as Little Miss Flint. She is an 11-year-old advocating for clean water in her community of Flint, Michigan. Students thought about the actions Clara took and the actions Mari is taking. They considered how far the world has come in some areas of injustice and how far we have yet to go, and they felt inspired to work towards social change in their own communities.



Theme Resources & Connections

[Interview with Lynn Joseph](#)

[UNICEF - Making children the change agents](#)

[TED - Activism isn't just for adults](#)

[Complex - 20 Young Activists Who are Changing the World](#)

[Vox - Meet the young activists of color who are leading the charge against climate disaster](#)

[Insider - These 10 young activists are trying to move the needle on climate change, gun control, and other global issues](#)

[Art as Activism: Graphic Art from the Merrill C. Berman Collection](#) - Throughout much of the twentieth century, political protests and calls for action reached the public on posters and broadsides. Long before electronic technology made worldwide communication possible, graphic artists used the powerful tools of modernist art to inform communities, stir up audiences and call attention to injustice.

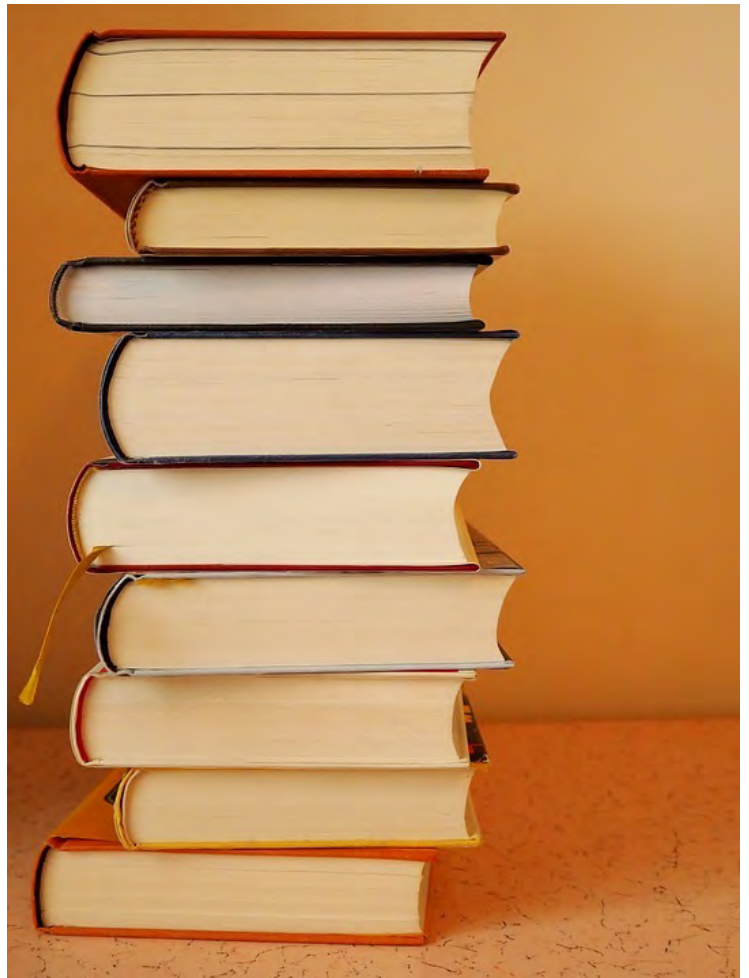
[The Tenement Museum](#) - Explore what it was like to be an immigrant living in New York's Lower East side during the 19th and 20th centuries. This site ties nicely with *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*.

In the News

[American Library Association Midwinter Meeting](#), Philadelphia, PA: January 24-28, 2020

[American Booksellers Association Winter Institute](#), Albuquerque, N.Mex., Jan. 22-25

[The Color of Children's Literature Conference](#), Barnard College, NYC, NY: April 3-4, 2020



We would love to know how you are engaging students with these titles in your classrooms and schools. Please share artifacts using the hashtag #JACBA

Upcoming Themes

January 2020: Environmental Justice

Younger Reader : *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families* written by Susan L. Roth, Cindy Trumbore and Illustrated by Susan L. Roth

Older Reader: *Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal* written by Margarita Engle

February 2020: Movements for Social Change

Younger Reader: *Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers*, written by Sarah Warren and illustrated by Robert Casilla

Older Reader: *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March* by Lynda Blackmon Lowery as told to Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley and illustrated by PJ Loughran,

Submit your curriculum connections for one of the books in the upcoming themed issues. Send materials with brief 1 paragraph explanation to price-dennis@tc.edu

Contributing Editors

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