

Jane Addams Peace Association



Navigating Identities in Schools & Communities

Over the last three years our social media feeds, newspapers, podcasts, and evening news programming have documented the impact of violent rhetoric and social injustices in our society. As an association that has peace and social justice at the heart of our mission, it is our duty to speak up about these issues and find actionable ways to address these topics through our programming. This issue of our monthly newsletter is a step in that direction. As children in our communities begin a new school year, we believe it is important to examine how kids across time and space negotiate their identities as they move between home and school in a society that creates and sustains barriers to their full participation. The theme for this month's newsletter is navigating identity, schooling, and community. Jane Addams once said "action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics". We selected two Jane Addams Children's Book Award titles that exemplify this quote and encourage us to consider what actions we can take to make schools and communities more ethical and welcoming spaces that support diversity and equity for children and adults.



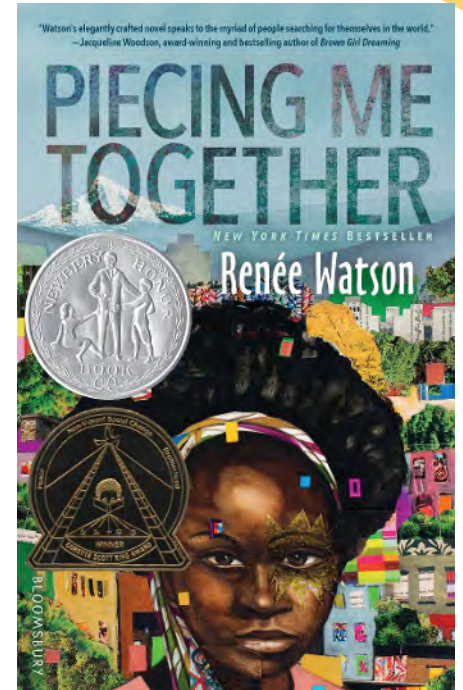
New Changes on the Horizon

Our newsletter format is going to shift to highlight the work of educators who are reading Jane Addams Children's Book Award (JACBA) winning and honor titles to engage in dialogue and social action with students and community members. The updated sections will include two book reviews, curriculum connections, resources, news about children's literature events and JACBA authors, and upcoming themes. We invite you to read this monthly newsletter with an eye toward enacting social change in your community. We also invite classroom teachers to submit their curriculum connections for any of the upcoming themes (more information listed below). Thank you for subscribing to the newsletter and being part of our journey towards peace and social justice in the world.

Older Reader Book Review

Piecing Me Together by Renée Watson (2017) Bloomsbury Publishing

In this poignant coming of age story author Renée Watson introduces us to an inquisitive, socially conscious, and creative character named Jade who is learning how to navigate the intersections of racism, sexism, and classism as she pieces together her identity moving between her elite private school and the under-resourced urban community where she lives. This book amplifies this month's theme by examining how a Black girl makes sense of her world to understand how she can make a difference.



Classroom Connection



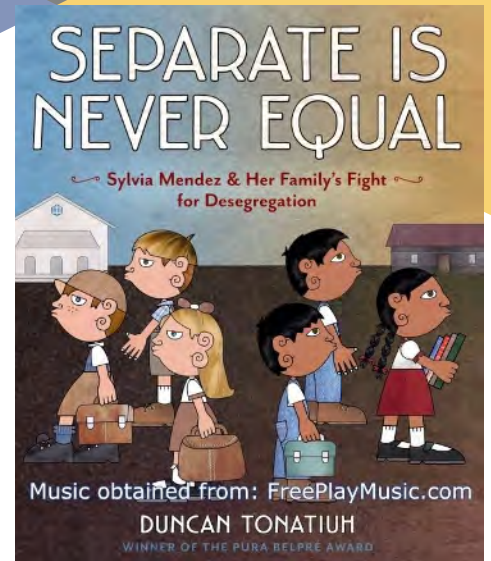
Jenice Mateo-Toledo, Director of Diversity in the Hastings-on-Hudson School District, and Detra Price-Dennis, Associate Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, had the opportunity to read *Piecing Me Together* with 6th grade students. To process the themes in the book and share emerging reactions to some of the situations the main character encountered, Jenice and Detra selected salient quotes and asked students to respond using post-it notes; discussed key scenes from the book; asked each student to create a collage that represented different facets of their identity; as well as created anchor charts that juxtaposed what it meant for the main character Jade to belong in her school community with what it means to belong in their own school community, with a focus on what gets in the way. During each rich discussion the children shared connections, questions, and quotes they felt were important and should be discussed as a group.

Younger Reader Book Review

Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation
by Duncan Tonatiuh

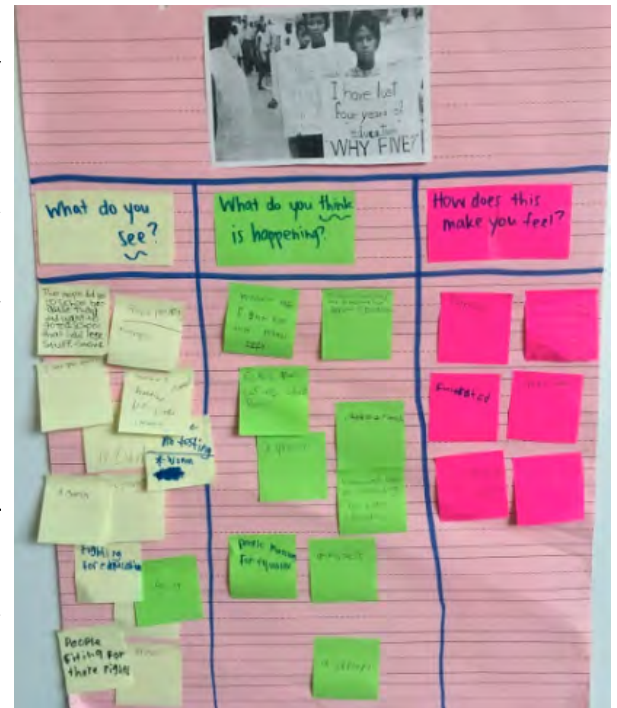
(2014) Abrams Books for Young Readers

In this biographical text Tonatiuh tells a little-known, but vital story about the fight to desegregate schools in post-World War II California by a Latino family. The Mendez's find themselves in a landmark segregation battle just for the right to access an equitable education. Tonatiuh's signature multimedia digital mosaic artwork helps young readers understand the stark differences segregation perpetuated across color lines. Readers will be riveted by the injustices faced by the Mendez family, including young Sylvia who sits at the center of this tale, and their unparalleled commitment to the cause of desegregation. Sylvia's character, a future Presidential Honor or Freedom recipient, allows children to feel inspired to make a positive change in the world. A must have for a unit on the civil rights era or Latino history.



Classroom Connection

Nolle Mapes, a second grade teacher at PS 142 in New York City, read this book to 2nd and 3rd graders for the past few years. Although each year the political climate varies for a class of diverse learners with different interests, her students are always entranced with this book and the story. When she incorporated this text into her non-fiction unit, her students' curiosity was piqued. They ask questions like, how could segregation happen? Does it still happen? Why is this happening? Each time she reads the book with kids, they create response charts based on historical photos that mirror some of Tonatiuh's beautiful illustrations. The students share their noticings, thoughts, and feelings about these images and the impact of segregation.



**Noelle offers an important caution to educators reading this book. As educators, we have to remind students that, although much has improved because of the activism of families like Sylvia Mendez', we remain a segregated country and our work is not done.

Additional Resources for *Separate is Never Equal*

Resources to use with Children:

[Book Trailer](#)

[NewsELA Article - Resegregation in Today's Schools](#)

Resources for Educators:

[Educator's Guide](#)

[Teen Vogue interview with Sylvia Mendez](#)

This article brings the story of Sylvia Mendez and school segregation into the present as she reflects on her experiences and what is happening in schools today.

[NYT Article - Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City](#)

This is a beautifully crafted and vulnerable piece about the tough decisions that parents of color still face when choosing a school for their children.

Additional Resources for *Piecing Me Together*

[Educator's Guide](#)

[Atlantic Article - When Minority Students Attend Elite Private Schools](#)

In The News

September 14
[Princeton's Children's Book Festival](#)

September 16
[Brooklyn Book Festival](#)

October 18
[Jane Addams Children's Book Award Ceremony](#)

October 19
[BookFest Bank Street](#)

October 25-27
[13th Regional IBBY Conference](#)

September 14
JACBA award-winning author Calvin Ramsey launches a new radio program called Green

Theme Resources & Connections

This month's focus on identity and school is complemented by the work of multimodal artists LaToya Frazier and Kia Dyson. Their artwork can be used to explore how Sylvia and Jade experienced school as well as to inspire students to think about their own multilayered identities and communities.

[LaToya Frazier's Art](#)

LaToya Frazier uses photography, video and performance art to tell the complex stories of her community. Her art can inspire us all to think about how we can use images to craft our own stories of ourselves and our communities.

"It became very important for me to start to photograph myself in order to get these depictions from the outside world out of my own mind and to be able to realize that I'm more than that." -LaToya Ruby Frazier

[Digital Artist, Kia Dyson- Black Identity](#)

Kia Dyson is a Brooklyn based artist who uses photography, digital art and collage to explore the complex nuances of Black identity.

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

October 2019: Supporting Indigenous Communities

Older Reader: *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich

Younger Reader: *Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship & Freedom* by Tim Tingle and Jeanne Rorex Bridges

November 2019: Exploring the History of Voting Rights

Older Reader: *Lillian's Right to Vote* by Jonah Winter

Younger Reader: *With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote* by Ann Bausum

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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