



Celebrating Black History Month

February is Black History Month. This month-long observance in the US and Canada is a chance to celebrate Black achievement and provide a fresh reminder to take stock of where systemic racism persists and give visibility to the people and organizations creating change.

During this month and throughout the year, the Jane Addams Peace Association honors and celebrates the history, heritage, and accomplishments of the Black community, both past and present. In this newsletter, we will be sharing our 2025 award winning and finalist books from members of the Black community that exemplify literary, visual and aesthetic excellence and invite dialogue, passionate response, purposeful reflection and deep questioning related to social justice themes.

Books to Read in Honor of Black History Month

2025 Winner Books



***They Call Me Teach*, by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James Ransome**

They Call Me Teach: Lessons in Freedom, follows a young man affectionately called Teach, who secretly learns to read, write, and perform arithmetic alongside his enslaver's son Thomas. The story takes readers through a week in Teach's life, and explores not only the liberation of a person, but also the freedom literacy brings to a people legally denied the right to read.

[Learn More](#)

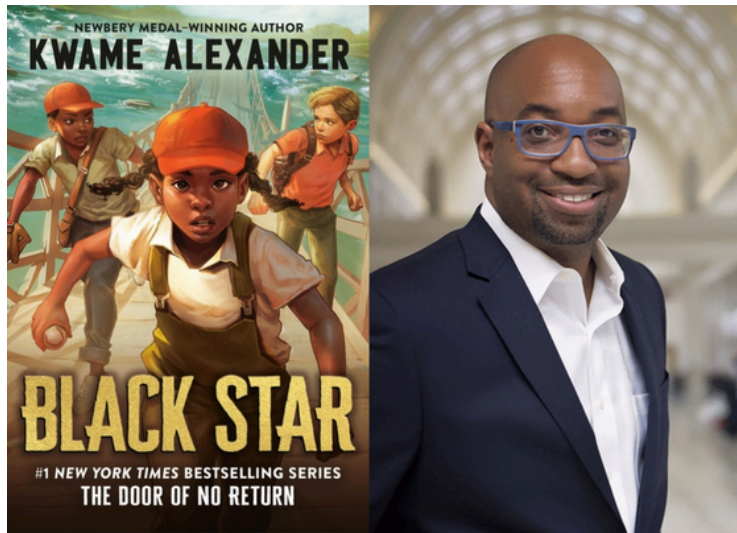
2025 Honor Books



***Small Shoes, Great Strides: How Three Brave Girls Opened Doors to School Equality*, by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by Alex Bostic**

Small Shoes, Great Strides tells the story of Leona Tate, Tessie Prevost and Gail Etienne. Better known as the McDonogh Three, these girls were at the forefront of school desegregation in New Orleans, alongside Ruby Bridges. Readers follow them from their first day of first grade through the remainder of their first year at McDonogh No. 19 Public School, and the weeks and years following.

[Learn More](#)



***Black Star*, by Kwame Alexander**

Black Star is an emotionally rich and beautifully crafted middle-grade novel-in-verse that immerses readers in the life of Charley Cuffey, a gifted young baseball player growing up in the segregated South of 1920s Virginia. With its lyrical prose, vibrant characters, and powerful themes of resilience and hope, *Black Star* exemplifies literary excellence and serves as a compelling exploration of justice, identity, and perseverance.

[Learn More](#)

2025 Finalist Books



***Barracoon*, by Zora Neale Hurston, adapted by Ibram X. Kendi and illustrated by Jazzmen Lee-Johnson**

Of the millions of men, women, and children transported from Africa to America to be enslaved, eighty-six-year-old Cudjo Lewis was then the only person alive to tell the story of his capture and bondage—fifty years after the Atlantic human trade was outlawed in the United States. Cudjo shared his firsthand account with legendary folklorist, anthropologist, and writer Zora Neale Hurston.

[Learn More](#)



***Dear You, Dream Big!*, by Baptiste Paul, illustrated by Toni D. Chambers**

Perhaps you want to become an artist, or a scientist, or maybe even president. Even when--*especially* when--the path is hard, Dear YOU: Dream BIG. A personal, poetic, and uplifting affirmation from Caribbean-born author Baptiste Paul encouraging today's Black youth to reject those who wish to silence them, exclude them, and reject their talents with one powerful refrain.

[Learn More](#)



***Freedom Braids*, by Monique Duncan, illustrated by Oboh Moses**

Day after day, Nemy sows seeds, pulls weeds, and strips leaves in the sugarcane plantation where she is enslaved. But one night, she follows a woman called Big Mother to a hidden shack. There, she finds a group of women braiding each other's hair. Hidden in each elaborate pattern is a secret--a message signaling their intent to flee and a map to guide them in their escape. Will the paths these courageous women weave bring Nemy to a new home where she can be free?

[Learn More](#)



***I Heard: An American Journey*, by Jaha Nailah Avery and Steffi Walthall**

With stunning lyricism reminiscent of traditional African spirituals and today's rhythm and flow of hip-hop, a teacher shares the history of being Black in the US, while continuing to march into present day--undeterred and proud to be Black. Author Jaha Nailah Avery shows you have to understand the past to shape the future, and knowing who you are gives you the strength to do just that.

[Learn More](#)



Let Us March On!

***James Weldon Johnson and the Silent Protest Parade*, by Yohuru Williams and Michael G. Long, illustrated by Xia Gordon**

James Weldon Johnson was a man of words. He wrote “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” a poem so uplifting and inspiring it became known as the Black national anthem. In July 1917, James helped lead thousands of people in the Silent Protest Parade as they marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City. Today, the parade stands as an inspiring reminder of the power of protest in all forms, and the power of young people in the face of ongoing racial hatred.

[Learn More](#)



***The Last Stand*, by Antwan Eady, illustrated by Jarrett and Jerome Pumphrey**

Saturday is for harvesting. And one little boy is excited to work alongside his Papa as they collect eggs, plums, peppers and pumpkins to sell at their stand in the farmer's market. Papa knows each customer's order, from Ms. Rosa's pumpkins to Mr. Johnny's peppers. And when Papa can't make it to the stand, his community gathers around him, with dishes made of his own produce.

[Learn More](#)

Use the link below to find all the Jane Addams awarded books that honor African American voices!

Booklist

*Some book summaries are adapted from Teaching Books or Google Books.

Community Highlight

Hakim's Bookstore



210 S 52nd St, Philadelphia, PA 19139

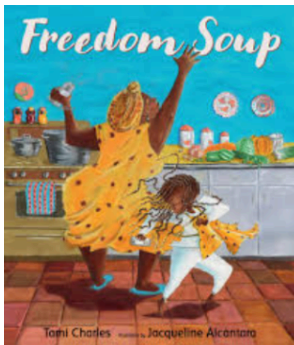
Hakim's Bookstore is the oldest Black-owned bookstore in Pennsylvania. It has been family owned and operated for 64 years, and was founded by a man named Dawud Hakim. Unfortunately, Hakim died in 1997, but his daughters and granddaughter

continue the legacy of the store. According to the website "In the 1970s, Dawud Hakim's thirst for knowledge and his dedication to educating others led him to stock books that exclusively addressed African American history and culture—a rarity at the time."

[Check Out Their Website!](#)

Upcoming Events

Author visit with Tami Charles



On Thursday, February 13th at 4:00 pm, author of 2020 Jane Addams Children's Book Award finalist, *Freedom Soup*, will be coming to the North Miami Public Library to share the stories behind her work. This event is open to the public, and there will be free books handed out and samples of the famous "freedom soup!"

[Learn More](#)

2025 Jane Addams Children's Book Award Ceremony

COME CELEBRATE THE



2025 Jane Addams Children's Book Award Ceremony

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Main
Library Location, 4400 Forbes Avenue,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Thursday
24 APRIL, 2025



5:30 PM EST

[RSVP HERE](#)

JOIN US FOR BOOK
GIVEAWAYS,
REFRESHMENTS,
AND RAFFLES



[RSVP Here](#)

Support Our Work



The Jane Addams Peace Association perpetuates the spirit of activist and pacifist Jane Addams, her love for children and humanity, her commitment to freedom and democracy, and her devotion to the cause of world peace.

Your donation to the Jane Addams Peace Association, a 501(c)(3) organization, is tax-deductible and helps us support authors, illustrators, parents, teachers, and librarians as they “deepen understanding of peace and justice for children and their adults through reflection, dialogue, and social action.”

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