



# River Valley Current

October 4, 2016 No. 454

"The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you, the better you will hear what is sounding outside."  
~ Dag Hammarskjöld

## School Calendar

### This Week

**Monday, October 3 – Friday, October 7**

3<sup>rd</sup> grade Hawthorne Valley Farm Trip

**Wednesday, October 5**

School Tour 9:00 am

6<sup>th</sup> grade class trip to New York City

**Wednesday, Oct. 5 – Monday, Oct. 10**

Teaching Sensible Science

**Thursday, October 6**

An Evening with Michael D'Aleo 6:30 pm

### Looking Ahead

**Thursday, October 13**

PC Meeting at the Ship Inn 6:30 pm

**Wednesday, October 19**

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class Play 9:00 am

**Thursday, October 20**

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class Play 9:00 am

Board Meeting 6:30 pm

**Friday, October 21**

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Field Trip to Solebury Orchards

**Saturday, October 22**

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Workday  
BoT Halloween Costume Ball 7:00 pm

**Thursday, October 27**

Fall Assembly 6:30 pm

**Friday, October 28**

No School – Faculty In-Service

**Monday, October 31**

In-School Ancestors' Day/Harvest Celebration

### How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleysschool.org

lc@rivervalleysschool.org

bot@rivervalleysschool.org

pc@rivervalleysschool.org

## An Evening with Michael D'Aleo

### The Development of Self-Motivation and Its Relationship to Independent Thought

Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:00 PM

"How do we create compassionate human beings while simultaneously developing the tenacious attitudes necessary for today's rapidly changing culture?"

"Can one really do one's own independent thinking without being self-motivated?"

Michael D'Aleo lectures nationally and internationally on the topics of science, education and environmental issues and is a founding member of the Saratoga Experiential Natural Science Research Institute (SENSRI) in Keene Valley, New York.

As the Director of Research. He was a co-founder of the high school at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs where he taught physical science and astronomy. Mr. D'Aleo is also an instructor of Waldorf School physical science teachers at The Center for Anthroposophy in Wilton New Hampshire as well as a guest teacher at various teacher training institutions and Waldorf Schools.

He is the cofounder of, and leads the successful 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher training, *Teaching Sensible Science*.

## Board of Trustees 80s Halloween Costume Ball

7.00 pm, Saturday, October 22

Come Grave-Dance the Night Away With All of Your Favorite Fiends!  
Costume and Dance Prizes! Food, Drink & DJ Andrew McIntosh!

Join Us for a Devil of a Good Time!

\$30/person \$50/couple/Faculty Free!

For tickets, please visit

<https://rvws.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2016RiverValleyWaldorfSchoolAutumnGala/JointheFun/tabid/809084/Default.aspx>  
or email Ron Ferguson at [rsferg@gmail.com](mailto:rsferg@gmail.com)

## Parent Council

### Please join our new initiative: the RVWS Welcoming Committee

PC is seeking members for this committee to meet and brainstorm ideas for fun, creative and effective ways to welcome new members into the RVWS community. Do you have a great idea for how our community can connect? Then please email [pc@rivervalleysschool.org](mailto:pc@rivervalleysschool.org) and let me know about your idea or whether you would be willing to meet up and brainstorm with us.

Your help and experience would be very much appreciated by PC and the school!

**Next Parent Council Meeting: Thursday October 13<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm at The Ship Inn, Milford, NJ**

## From Administration

### Teaching Sensible Science

From this Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> until Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup> a group of Waldorf teachers from around the country (including our very own Christina Hummel and Euclides Santiago) will be participating in a class taught by Michael D'Aleo entitled "Teaching Sensible Science." This is the final meeting of the course that began last February. During that time **the hallway next to the All-Purpose Room will be closed in the mornings** because the teachers will be using the room for eurythmy. We apologize for any inconvenience.

### Birth Announcements

A warm welcome to two babies who were born to River Valley families earlier this month.

**Solomon LaRosa** (brother of Sam, grade 4, and Sebastian, grade 1, and son of Ellen and Greg LaRosa) was born on September 2<sup>nd</sup> weighing 7 lbs. 10 oz.

**Ottilie Gustavson** (sister of Adelaide, grade 2, and Freya and daughter of Ericka and Pete Gustavson) was born on September 5<sup>th</sup> weighing in at 7 lbs. 13 oz.

Congratulations to all!

### RVWS Ski Club

Come join us this winter for a great time on the slopes at Blue Mountain Ski Resort. The Ski (and Snowboard) Club is an inexpensive way to enjoy 6 weekend night visits to the mountain (Fri, Sat or Sun 4 pm to 10 pm). There are packages that include rentals and/or lessons if you are just getting started.

Children any age can sign up but they must be at least 8 years old to participate in the group lessons. Parents are responsible for their children's transportation to and from the mountain and supervision while at the mountain.

Ski Club will start January 6, 2017 and end February 17, 2017 (no Ski Club January 27 due to middle school play).

Pricing is as follows:

Lift ticket only \$145

Lift ticket & Rental (board or ski) \$200

Lift ticket/Rental/6 Lessons \$240

Lift ticket /6 Lessons \$200

More detailed information will be on the bulletin board at school and in next week's Current. All paperwork and payments will need to be submitted by October 24th. Questions? Please contact Christine Aherne, [cmaherne@epix.net](mailto:cmaherne@epix.net), 267-614-5021

### Vendors Wanted for the 2016 Holiday Bazaar and Café

We are seeking vendors of hand-made items for our 2016 Holiday Bazaar and Café. Our festive event offers indoor display spaces, optional table rental, delicious food offerings and entertainment. We would like to show hand-made items such as jewelry, ceramics, fabric arts, visual arts, etc...

The sale will be held at the school on November 12th from 10:00 to 5:00. We extended the sale by 2 hours to allow for more shopping time!

If you are interested in vending, please fill out the vendor agreement available in the rack next to the office. You may leave it in my mailbox in the office or mail it to school to my attention. If you sign-up by October 10th, your name will appear on the event advertisement.

Stephanie Spencer

Development Coordinator ([sspencer@rivervalleysschool.org](mailto:sspencer@rivervalleysschool.org))

### High School Open Houses

Beginning in October many high schools in our area and beyond are holding Open Houses. Here is a list for parents and students who are interested.

**Gwynedd Mercy Academy** Open House: Sunday, October 9. 12-3 pm.

**Princeton Learning Cooperative** - Open House: Monday, October 10, 8:30-10:00am, Princeton, NJ Experience a self-directed learning cooperative while in session. Talk with teen members and staff mentor/teachers. [info@PrincetonLearningCooperative.org](mailto:info@PrincetonLearningCooperative.org) 609-851-2522

**Solebury School** - Main open house: Sun. Oct. 16 - 1-4 pm. Register online. Mini open house: Thur. Dec. 1 2:30-4

## High School Open House List Continued

**High Mowing Waldorf School** Open House: October 17

**Bucks Learning Cooperative** - Open House: Wednesday, October 19th, 7:00-8:30pm, Langhorne, PA Hear from teen members, parents and staff mentor/teachers what it is like to be part of a self-directed learning cooperative. Tour our center. [info@BucksLearningCooperative.org](mailto:info@BucksLearningCooperative.org) 215-512-0707

**Abington Friends School** - Open House: Saturday, October 22, beginning at 12:30

**Kimberton Waldorf School** Open House: October 23, at 1 pm.

**George School** Open House: Sunday, October 23, 2016

Registration and refreshments 1:30 p.m. The program will begin promptly at 2:00 p.m.

Registration is required. Please allow time to register at the George School Meetinghouse; registration will open at 1:30 p.m. You may also register for the event through the website at <http://www.georgeschool.org/admission/meet-us-in-person/admission-events/> Parking is available at the Fitness and Athletics Center on Farm Drive, across from the Meetinghouse. If you have any questions, please call us at 215.579.6547.

**Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts** Open House: Tuesdays, Oct. 25, Nov. 15, and Jan. 5 at 5:45 pm. The program begins promptly at 6:30 pm.

**Mercersburg Academy** Admission Office cordially invites you to attend one of our Open House events on Monday, October 10 or Monday, December 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Moravian Academy** Open House: Saturday, October, 22, 9-12 pm at the Athletic and Wellness Center on the Merlse-Smith Campus.

**Bethlehem Catholic High School** Open house Sunday, Nov. 6. email [Jpetruzelli@becahi.org](mailto:Jpetruzelli@becahi.org)

## From the Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Arithmetic

Second Grade – Language Arts

Third Grade – Farm Trip

Fourth Grade – Fractions

Fifth Grade – Ancient India & Persia

Sixth Grade – Rome

Seventh Grade – Algebra

Eighth Grade – History

## From the Students

### The Waldorfian

The first issue of this year's Waldorfian is underway. If any students have articles, artwork, puzzles, games, etc. to contribute, please give them to 7<sup>th</sup> graders Mary Aherne or Dylan Smith.

## From Leadership Council

### Leadership Council Open Visit Time

Leadership Council would like to announce Open Visit time at 3:30 – 4:00 every Tuesday. If there is a concern, conversation or suggestion that you would like to bring to the LC, this time is available each week. LC prefers that you make your intention to visit known beforehand, but it is not necessary.

Who is the LC? Annie Porter, Christina Hummel, Kathy Bernhardt and Cindy Schretlen. The LC works in the classroom/pedagogical side of RVWS governance.

## From the Parent Council

### Save the Date! Winter Fair is Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 11-4

Winter Fair is a beautiful festival celebrating the coming of King Winter. It is a time of magic and celebration for children of all ages - a time to get together with friends and loved ones before the deep freeze and great snows of King Winter set in and we turn towards the coziness and warmth of our hearth and homes.

The success of the festival depends on the creativity and cooperation of River Valley's parent body. Each class hosts an activity and works to make the magic of Winter Fair happen for our children. Your Festival Coordinator will shortly let you know your activity so that you may begin preparations.

Secret Garden is one of the most magical places at the festival and one the children look forward to with anticipation. Many count on this beautifully prepared activity for the gifts they present their loved ones. Each family at RVWS is asked to make 20 Secret Garden items to aid this feeling of awe and wonder. These items can be small and homemade. A list of potential items can be found in the Parent Handbook. Also Mary K Till, our handwork teacher, usually has craft workshops for parents to come and make some treasures for Secret Garden (dates and times will be found in the Current).

In addition, parents will be asked to bake one batch of gingerbread cookies for our Gingerbread Tea House, which greets our children with warm tea and a sweet snack after visiting King Winter. Recipe and instructions will be forthcoming.

Please contact this year's Winter Fair committee with any questions you may have. Brenda Schaufele, Stephanie Smith, Paul Smith and Ron Ferguson.

### Torin Finser Books

There are still a few copies of Torin Finser's two books: *A Second Classroom: Parent-Teacher Relationships in a Waldorf School* (\$25) and *Leadership Development: Change from the Inside Out* (\$27). Come to the office if you would like to purchase one. Remaining books will be mailed back on Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

## From the Community

### Help Wanted

"Dirty Girl Gardening, based in Pipersville, PA & working all throughout Bucks County & beyond, is looking for full or part-time Gardening help (for the remainder of the Fall season & hopefully into next Spring)!

Must love the outdoors, enjoy hard (satisfying) work, & possess the stamina, strength & physique to work long, full days. Ideally, looking for someone with prior horticultural or landscaping experience or education, but willing to train the right candidate.

Contact Leslie Guli for more information: 267-372-4884 or email: [lulucat1474@gmail.com](mailto:lulucat1474@gmail.com)

### Seeking:Hand-me-down rain pants

Do you have a pair of rain pants that no longer fit your child and that you would like to go to a good home? Alice Bowers, grade 3, could use a pair. If you would like to pass a pair along, just leave them in her cubby or hand them to Tara, her mom. If we get extras we will donate them or return them. Feel free to leave a note attached if you like so we can thank you properly. Advance appreciation, Tara Bowers [bowersbetara@gmail.com](mailto:bowersbetara@gmail.com)

### Singing Workshop with Mia Bertelli

Wednesday October 5 and October 12  
6:00 - 7:30 Singing - 7:30 - Song and Tune Jam  
Ottsville Traditional Arts Center, 250 Durham Road,  
Ottsville, PA

Mia Bertelli is a New Mexican-born singer, fiddler, and dancer with a love for satisfying harmonies and a penchant for playful nuance. With roots in traditional American folk music and many years spent singing traditional polyphonic world music with Village Harmony and Northern Harmony, she brings a wealth of experience in diverse styles to her teaching and performing. From ballads to country harmony, or lullabies to shape note, Mia brings an attentive ear, a joyful sense of playfulness, and a library full of songs you can't help but want to sing. Everyone who wants to sing is welcome!!!

### VAXXED Screening in Easton,PA

The movie, VAXXED, will be shown in Easton on Monday, October 24, 2016 at 7:30 pm. Go on the website: <http://gathr.us/screening/17840> to reserve tickets. If they do not get enough reservations, the movie will not be shown. You can also order the movie on Amazon or the website: [vaxxedthemovie.com](http://vaxxedthemovie.com).



## Myeong Shim Gum Do 明心劍道

Zen sword - meditation - mind training - clear mind, clear action

Shim Gum Do is an original Zen Art that integrates the practice and principles of Zen Buddhist meditation with the "action meditation" of martial art practice. The sword practice of Shim Gum Do comprises 330 forms, choreographed sequences of blocking and attacking movements. Each form is unique and generates a specific energy and a beautiful, athletic physical expression. The practice of Shim Gum Do emphasizes attaining a clear mind, clear thinking, and clear action.

Classes: Tuesday 4:30-6 pm 85 Sherman Rd, Ottsville, PA 610-297-1175 and Sunday 4:30-6 Dig! Yoga Lambertville, NJ  
Very affordable! Fees vary slightly with location

Peter J. Ryan, Sabom Nim, M.Sc. is a certified instructor in this remarkable martial art who has deep experience with all ages and all types of learners. Group and individual instruction. 12 years study with Great Zen Master Chang Sik Kim. Each class will consist of individual and group instruction in Zen Sword and meditation, as well as guidance for creating a strong spiritual practice at home and at work.

Peter is a third degree black belt in Zen Sword and one of three certified American teachers of the martial art Shim Gum Do. This remarkable practice is the fruit of the Great Zen Master Chang Sik Kim's enlightenment more than fifty years ago, an extensive and fully integrated program of sword forms as well as moving and sitting meditation techniques that bring the student to "clear mind and clear action." Shim Gum Do helps bring body, mind, and spirit together in unique and surprising ways.

Peter is a psychotherapist and an experienced and well-regarded teacher, who studies closely with the master. In 1998, he co-founded Tinicum Art and Science, the very first high school in the United States based upon the practice of mindfulness, and has served as principal and lead teacher there for many years. TAS closed this past June, and Peter launched a more ambitious successor, The Lotus School of Liberal Arts, which opened in September.

### Bed for Sale!

Twin size with cabinet style headboard and trundle storage. All wood, warm brown stain. Sturdy construction. Pottery Barn. Dimensions - 77" (h) x41" (w) x91" (l) Mattress not included. Pictures available upon request. \$250 obo call or text Annie - 203-556-2162

### Yoga Loka

*Introduction to Yoga Level 2 with Deb*

Mondays 7pm-8:15pm. Begins Monday 10/17-11/14  
Learn as much as you can in this workshop format.

*Family Yoga 4 week session with Alli*

Fridays 11:15am-12:15pm. Begins 10/14

When we practice with our family we get to share our super powers with the people we love.

*Sound Meditation with John Muraco*

Saturdays 6:30pm-7:45pm. Begins 10/22/2016

A guided breathing practice will be followed by the sounds of crystal singing bowls.

*TRE and Meditation*

Sunday 11:45-12:45, 10/16/2016 and 10/30/2016.

Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm 10/19/2016

Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises de-stresses your body and quiets your mind.

For more information please visit [www.Yoga-Loka.com](http://www.Yoga-Loka.com)

### Kundalini Yoga Beginner Series, with Felicia Holtz

Begins Tuesday 9/27 at Quantum Light Community Center in Pipersville PA.

Kundalini Yoga is considered "The Yoga of Awakening." Each class will provide meditations and kriyas (a series of poses and breathwork to provide a certain result). Handouts for each class will support the class theme. "Normally when you do a good set of Kundalini Yoga, it extends you. It is very good to get extended because you can use that energy for days and days." Yogi Bhajan

Eight Tuesdays from 9:30 AM -10:45 AM beginning 9/27 - 11/15 Series fee: \$88, drop in \$16

Quantum Light Community Center, 7137 Old Easton Road, Pipersville, PA, Suite 102, Pipersville, PA

Week 1: Connecting to Breath to Relieve Stress and Build Vitality

Week 2: Form and Alignment- Navel Intelligence and an Open Heart

Week 3: Strengthen the Nervous System

Week 4: Meditation and the Mind

Week 5: Yogic Anatomy 1-Chakra System and Human Talent

Week 6: Yogic Anatomy 2-The Ten Bodies

Week 7: Glandular Function-Activate the Inner Pharmacy

Week 8: Release Unhealthy Habits and Develop Discipline

## Afterschool Art Classes

This fall at The Paperboat and Bird Art Studio we will use a variety of media and techniques to explore art making in our after school classes. Starting with an idea or concept and getting lost in the process of making is the intent. I want to create an environment where artists can make mistakes, take chances, and wander off course to find their way into their own creativity.

*Classes will be held on Wednesdays*

Sept. 21 – Dec. 7 (10 weeks) (No Class 10/12 & 11/23)

Ages (8-11) 4:00 - 5:30. Ages (12-15) 6:00 - 7:30. \$200

21 Risler Street (Rte. 29), Stockton, NJ 08559

609-397-2121

To Register: email Kelley Roberts at [paperboatandbird@comcast.net](mailto:paperboatandbird@comcast.net)

[www.paperboatandbird.com](http://www.paperboatandbird.com), [www.facebook.com/paperboatbird](http://www.facebook.com/paperboatbird)

## A Weekend Retreat

Let Your Life Speak, Listen to the Sound of Other Lives

October 14, 2016 6:30 PM until October 16, 2016

Location: Kirkridge Retreat Center. Contact: Kirkridge <http://www.kirkridge.org/>

The weekend will inspire us toward embracing important life transitions and deepening dialogue with friends, colleagues and family. The work of Rudolf Steiner and Parker Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, are bridged this weekend. Human beings experience life cycles, reflecting nature's rhythms of day, week, month, year, decade, and century. Tune into seven year phases to get a deeper understanding of your destiny, mapping the encounters of your life, seminal meetings, transformative experiences, and important, perhaps forgotten stories from childhood, adolescence, early and late adulthood. At the same time, learn about creating Circles of Trust, by practicing the art to listen to others. Artistic exercises will engage us in conversation in new ways, growing meaningful relationships in a short time. Listening to what your life tells you is filled with surprises. Treat yourself! Get closer to nature, how it walks inside you and how you walk in nature's woods. Join us, you will not regret it!

Kirkridge Retreat Center in the Pocono Mountains, Bangor PA, provides a beautiful setting for study, great food, and as it located on the Appalachian Trail, walking paths are plentiful. <http://www.kirkridge.org/>

Patti Smith, Ed. D., *Courage and Renewal* Facilitator, Center for Biography and Social Art, Board Trustee where she develops programs for using biography as a source of meditation and self-discovery. She is the co-editor of *More Lifeways: Changes in Family Life in the '90's* and *Service Learning: Students at the Heart of Learning*, as well as the documentary, *Taking a Risk in Education:Waldorf Education in Public Schools*. She is a devotee of walking and hikes in nature every day to restore her sense of humor.

Jennifer Brooks-Quinn is an adult educator and a biographical counselor with a private practice in Spring Valley, NY and New York City. She is also a Waldorf teacher. She has been the director and co-director of Foundation Studies in Anthroposophy at Sunbridge College, in NY and the Brooklyn Waldorf School. She offers courses workshops and retreats in Latin America, China and the US.

See more at:

<http://www.kirkridge.org/index.cfm?e=event&eventId=24745&rDate=1476424549#sthash.X7u9JlqZ.dpuf>

## Move-Making!

### An Introduction to the world of creative theater for 8-12 year olds

Join Muck and Gold and discover how our clever, funny, thinking body leads us to new worlds of creativity as we explore the elements of dance and theater improvisation to create our own mini works of art.

10 Tuesdays, October 11th - December 13th

4:30-6pm, Stockton, NJ at Paperboat and Bird studio

for details and registration, visit [muckandgold.com](http://muckandgold.com)



Early Childhood Children Enjoying the Playground



2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Knighting Ceremony



## From the *Race-Related* newsletter at NYTimes.com

"Most people have peach skin," my daughter said. We were standing in line at an ice cream shop in a beach town that's far whiter than her first grade class, or our Brooklyn neighborhood. And skin-color was on her mind.

Looking at her own brown arms, matching those of my Cuban-American wife, Amelia went on to say that she wished her skin was not so dark. She wished she was whiter. My wife did not know what to say. I only heard a snippet of the conversation, and was equally stunned. How did this happen? What should we do?

Many parents struggle with these kinds of questions. Last week we asked for your own experiences at home and at school, and we received an array of emotional responses. Some parents and educators described conversations about race that started with toddlers. Many others wrote about wanting to have these difficult discussions, but not knowing how or when.

With our shared experiences in mind, I met this week with a group of Mocha Moms, a support group for mothers of color. Just about every one there had a tale to tell, of microaggressions against their kids, of slights or solidarity involving other parents. They praised schools that prioritized conversations about race before incidents happened, and shook their heads at schools that shut down conversations about race, preferring silence or apology. They also told me that with their own children, they started talking about race early with an emphasis on the positive: telling them that their brown skin was beautiful, sharing with them the stories of black and brown accomplishment and talent.

Donyell Thompson, the mother of a four-year-old son, emphasized that all parents need to understand "the importance of not being colorblind." She said that talking about race doesn't have to mean diving straight into police brutality. "You can go to a Japanese restaurant and talk about difference," she said. "Start there." She also pointed me to Dr. Howard Stevenson, a clinical psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, who she invited to speak at her own school. Dr. Stevenson is a leader in racial literacy, and after he guided me through some very depressing research – showing that even before they start school, children absorb cultural messages about race, gender and privilege – he laid out three pieces of advice for parents trying to help their children navigate our oft-cruel world.

Affection: "You want to make statements that affirm who the child is; embrace your child's difference, and explain how his or her difference is a gift, not a liability even though not everyone will see it as a positive."

Protection: "Emotional protection is: Let me teach you about the world. Hurtful statements may come at you, and I want you to tell me when that happens, but let me be clear: those are problems with the people saying those things, not with you. It's their issue, not yours."

Correction: "You've got to counter the narrative. Look for opportunities around you. It could be cartoons. Do you notice that all the people making the decisions in this cartoon are male?"

That night, I asked my daughter why she said she wanted to be whiter than she is, reminding her that some of her favorite role models, from gymnastics to music, also had brown skin. She seemed more comfortable talking about it than I was; she told me about an incident in kindergarten where a Brazilian girl she knew told a black friend of hers that he couldn't play with them because he was black. It wasn't a perfect conversation, but it was a start. "I think of it as a skill," Dr. Stevenson had told me. "You wouldn't do one night of algebra homework and expect to know all of algebra. It's the same with race. Practice, practice practice."

### **A Diverse Reading List**

By Maria Russo, children's books editor, The New York Times Book Review

The movement calling for more diversity in children's books has been gaining momentum in the last couple of years, and publishers are responding. There is still a big gap – now as in the past, the vast majority of American children's books published feature white protagonists – but we're seeing a greater number of books by diverse authors and featuring children of different races, ethnicities and abilities. We Need Diverse Books is the unofficial home of the movement, and their web site is a good resource for reading lists and other useful news and information.

*(Continued on next page.)*



Here is my own list of some great kids books with diverse characters – some classics and personal favorites, along with some new titles generating excitement.

### **Picture books: Ages 3 - 8**

**The Snowy Day**, by Ezra Jack Keats. This timeless 1962 Caldecott Medal winner – a simple, elegant celebration of a small child's first experience of snowfall – was the first full color picture book with an African-American child at its center.

**A Poem for Peter**, by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Lou Fancher. Set to be published November 1, this book tells the story of how Keats came up with the idea for "The Snowy Day" after seeing striking photographs of an African-American boy in Life magazine years earlier.

**Last Stop on Market Street**, by Matt de la Pena, illustrated by Christian Robinson. This emotional and thought-provoking picture book won the Newbery Award last year – only the second time a picture book has won that prestigious prize for the best overall children's book. It's the story of an African-American boy named CJ who rides the bus every week with his grandmother, who makes him turn his complaints into gratitude and positivity.

**This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration**, by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by James Ransome. This beautifully written and illustrated book uses the image of a rope passed from generation to generation to convey the experiences and connections of African-Americans through the generations.

**Freedom Over Me**, by Ashley Bryan. Just published, this heart-rending book is the answer to the question of whether and how the subject of slavery can be presented to young children. Bryan tells the personal stories of 11 real-life enslaved people who were about to be sold, each in the form of a simple and direct poem accompanied by a portrait.

**Thunder Boy Junior**, by Sherman Alexie, illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Alexie, the much-heralded author of adult and children's books about Native American life, wrote this book because he couldn't find picture books about Native children that were set in the present. It's the story of a boy who doesn't like sharing his name with his father, so in the Native American tradition, he sets out picking a new one for himself based on his accomplishments and passions. The Mexican illustrator, Yuyi Morales, adds lively, captivating illustrations that reveal more about Thunder Boy's family.

**Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote**, by Duncan Tonatiuh. A riveting modern fable by the talented young Mexican artist Tonatiuh, this book won the Pura Belpre award in 2013. It tells the story of a rabbit family who face hardships when they try to migrate to the north after their lettuce fields dry up.

**A Piece of Home**, by Jeri Watts, illustrated by Hyewon Yum. Published this year, this is an elegant, sweet example of a contemporary immigration story. It's about a boy named Hee Jun who faces daunting challenges when he has to move with his family from Korea to West Virginia, becoming suddenly a "different" kid instead of just one of the crowd.

### **Middle grade: ages 8 to 12**

**The Birchbark House series**, by Louise Erdrich. Among the many amazements of the brilliant Louise Erdrich's body of work is this series of novels for middle graders – but perfectly wonderful for adult readers as well – set in the 1800s among the Ojibwe people of Minnesota. We follow a girl named Omakayas as she and her community must adapt their traditional ways of living after the arrival of white people onto their lands.

**The Crossover**, by Kwame Alexander. This 2015 Newbery Medal winner is a novel in verse about two African-American, basketball-playing twin brothers who face a year of changes when they begin to drift apart. Among its many charms is Alexander's smooth infusion of hip-hop energy and love of language into a story about sports, family and racial identity.

**American Born Chinese**, by Gene Luen Yang. The first graphic novel to be a finalist for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, this 2006 book is really three cleverly interwoven tales: a classic Chinese folk tale of the Monkey King, the story of a Chinese-American boy named Danny, growing up in San Francisco, and a white boy who tries to disavow his embarrassing Chinese cousin, but turns out to be the alter-ego of Danny himself as he struggles to accept his identity.

**One Crazy Summer**, by Rita Williams-Garcia. This witty and original 2010 novel won many awards including a Newbery Honor. Set in 1968, it's the story of three sisters from Brooklyn who travel to Oakland, California to visit their estranged mother, who has joined the Black Panthers.

**The Year of the Dog and The Year of the Rat**, by Grace Lin. These gentle, affecting books are about the everyday life of a Taiwanese-American girl named Pacy, who must navigate her Asian family's traditions and expectations with the complications and demands of an American childhood. Lin's own lovely drawings are scattered throughout the books.

*(Continued on next page.)*

**Ghost**, by Jason Reynolds. This just-published book about a troubled boy called Ghost who joins a track team and discovers his inner strength was recently named to the shortlist for this year's National Book Awards. Reynolds tells a story of about African-American life in a struggling neighborhood with grace, humor and an addictively readable voice. It's the start of a series that will feature other members of Ghost's track team.

**The Thing About Luck**, by Cynthia Kadohata. This National Book Award winner is about a 12-year old Japanese-American girl who's forced to live with her old-fashioned, demanding grandparents for a long, hot summer of wheat harvesting in the Midwest. As generations and cultures clash, it's funny and touching in equal measure.

**Brown Girl Dreaming**, by Jacqueline Woodson. This hypnotic memoir in free verse renders Woodson's childhood and family history as a gorgeous hybrid of migration tale, coming of age story, and meditation on African-American history. Winner of the 2014 Newbery and other awards, this is a book that readers of any age, from elementary school to adult, will relate to and treasure.

**Ambassador**, by William Alexander. This book artfully blends a realistic take on the life of an undocumented family with a fantasy story set in outer space. It hinges on the multiple meanings of the loaded word "alien," which many authors have played around with, none better than the Cuban-American Alexander.

### **Young Adult – ages 12 and up**

**Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass**, by Meg Medina. This multiple award-winning 2013 book has been challenged in some schools because of its language (and its title), but it remains an essential novel about teen bullying and the lingering effects of abuse in families. Medina's Piddy Sanchez is a high school sophomore who faces cruel treatment by Yaqui, who thinks the ambitious Piddy doesn't act Latina enough.

**Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**, by Benjamin Alire Saenz. Two Mexican-American high school boys explore life's big questions and their own multiple identities in this moving novel. It was published in 2012 but has a beautiful, timeless feel.

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**, by Sherman Alexie. This wonderfully gritty, revved-up semi-autobiographical novel by Alexie, who grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation and traces his ancestry to several tribes, won a 2007 National Book Award. It has gone on to become pretty much essential reading about the high school experience and contemporary Native American life.

**Darius & Twig**, by Walter Dean Myers. The late Myers, one of the greats and a champion of diversity in children's books well before the cause got mainstream attention, is at his elegant, heartfelt best in this 2013 novel. It's about two friends growing up in Harlem, one a writer, one an athlete, facing daily challenges and trying to dream of a brighter future.

**Tyrell**, by Coe Booth. This 2006 novel gained mainstream attention for the kind of characters the literary establishment has rarely seen -- yearning African-American teenagers whose lives unfolded in housing projects, shelters and the streets. Coe's patient, lyrical narration reveals their emotional depths as they try to get by and forge meaningful bonds with each other.

**Saving Montgomery Sole**, by Mariko Tamaki. Tamaki's slim, satisfying story about an "outsider" teenager drawn to the supernatural unfolds in an effortlessly diverse California landscape, featuring lesbian moms and a racial and ethnic mash-up that will be familiar to young readers in much of the country.

For reader comments on this article go to: <http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/2016/09/18/race-related?nlid=59080177>

For More from the NY Times *Race-Related Newsletter* go to: [http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2016/race-related/?te=1&nl=race-related&emc=edit\\_rr\\_20161002](http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2016/race-related/?te=1&nl=race-related&emc=edit_rr_20161002)