

# Heroes Ancient, Modern and Mythic: A Bibliography

**Nonfiction and Fiction Books  
to Promote Heroism in  
Children of All Ages**



This bibliography of books about heroes and heroism has been compiled with the help of many librarians and teachers across the country. It is presented in two sections—one for younger children and another for older children and young adults. It provides over two hundred nonfiction titles – as well as numerous fiction ones – to support teachers as they implement the ELA Common Core State Standards.

## Books to Promote Heroism in Young Children

This bibliography was compiled by Fran Wilson, second grade teacher and Elementary Language Arts Instructional Leader for Madeira City Schools and past chair of NCTE's Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children.

### Nonfiction for Young Children

- Barron, T. A. *The Hero's Trail: A Guide for a Heroic Life*. New York: Puffin Books, 2002.  
Excerpts of real and fictionalized heroes are interspersed among this unique guidebook. Children enjoy hearing and discussing these suspenseful heroic stories. Teachers will find this guide a valuable resource for instilling heroism within their students.
- Berne, J. *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2008.  
Society learned about the undersea world from the photos/movies done by Jacques. He raised society's awareness of the need to care for our oceans.
- Bolden, T. *George Washington Carver*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008.  
After overcoming personal challenges, Carver selflessly gives of himself to teach others to respect nature.
- Bouler, O. *Olivia's Birds Saving the Gulf*. New York: Sterling Children's Books, 2011.  
This eleven-year-old author tells of her mission to help save the birds of the Gulf Oil Spill. Her actions will inspire all readers to make a difference.
- Brown, D. *Henry and the Cannons*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2013.  
Henry Knox demonstrates perseverance and bravery hauling cannons almost 300 miles through mountains, snow, and over lakes to Boston for Washington to use during the Revolutionary War.
- Bryant, J. *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.  
Horace Pippin is a self-taught artist. When he returns home wounded after fighting in WWI, he perseveres to find a way to continue to create his paintings.
- Bryant, J. *Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016.  
After becoming blind at age 5, Louis is determined to find a way to read. He invents an alphabet to read by touch that is used by blind people today.
- Bryant, J. *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2014.  
Peter Mark Roget collects words and organizes them to have the just right word at the right time. He realizes that others might appreciate a source to quickly select the best word. The book reminds us that we all have treasures to share.
- Burleigh, R., & MacKenzie, R. *Fly, Cher Ami, Fly!: The Pigeon Who Saved the Lost Battalion*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008.  
A carrier pigeon helps a lost battalion of soldiers to be rescued during WWI.

- Burleigh, R. *One Giant Leap*. New York: Philomel Books, 2009.  
Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin demonstrate their bravery as they sacrifice their lives to land on the moon and even set foot upon it.
- Capaldi, G., & Pearce, Q.L. *Red Bird Sings: The Story of Zitkala-Sa, Native American Author, Musician, and Activist*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 2011.  
After Red Bird is sent away to boarding school, she feels caught between two cultures. She uses her developing talents to be a voice for her people.
- Churnin, N. *Manjhi Moves A Mountain*. Stevens Point, WI: Creston Books, LLC, 2017.  
Manjhi is determined to help the starving people of his village by digging a hole through the mountain that separates them from a village where food grows in abundance. This is based on a true story.
- Churnin, N. *Martin and Anne, the Kindred Spirits of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anne Frank*. Berkeley, CA: Creston Books, 2019.  
Although Martin and Anne grew up on opposite sides of the world and faced unfair treatment, each of them believed in the goodness of people. Their spoken and written words continue to inspire us today.
- Clickard, C. *Dumpling Dreams: How Joyce Chen Brought the Dumpling from Beijing to Cambridge*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017.  
Joyce Chen uses something she loves, cooking, to bring comfort during a time of transition. She then decides to share her talent with others and watches as her dreams come true.
- Cline-Ransome, L. *Before She Was Harriet*. New York: Holiday House, 2017.  
Harriet Tubman's roles as conductor of the underground railroad, suffragist, and spy are described in this picture book biography.
- Cline-Ransome, L. *Counting the Stars*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2019.  
This picture book biography of Katherine Johnson highlights her love for math from her childhood through her important work at NASA with the space missions. It shares the barriers she overcame.
- Cline-Ransome, L. *Helen Keller: The World in Her Heart*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008.  
Helen's teacher, Annie Sullivan, perseveres in finding a way to teach Helen to communicate.
- Clinton, C. *Phillis's Big Test*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008.  
Phillis Wheatley, a seventeen-year-old slave, demonstrates perseverance and courage while being questioned about the authorship of her own poems.
- Clinton, C. *She Persisted*. New York: Philomel Books, 2017.  
This book highlights thirteen American women in history who persisted through various obstacles in their lives.
- Coles, R. *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. New York: Scholastic, 1995.  
This story shows courage displayed by young Ruby Bridges, the first African American child to be sent to an all-white school.
- Corey, S. *Here Come the Girl Scouts!* New York: Scholastic, 2012.

This is the story of Juliette Gordon Low and her work to establish the Girl Scout organization in the United States.

Cousteau, P. & Hopkinson, D. *Follow the Moon Home: A Tale of One Idea, Twenty Kids, and a Hundred Sea Turtles*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2016.

Viv and her classmates find a way to save the sea turtles on the South Carolina coast.

Cowcher, H. *Desert Elephants*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011.

The people of Mali work together to continue the peaceful coexistence between the desert elephants and themselves.

Coy, J. *Game Changer: John McLendon and the Secret Game*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 2015.

Coach McLendon believes that basketball could diminish people's prejudices and so he arranges for a secret illegal game to be played in segregated North Carolina.

Davis, H. *The Journey of York: The Unsung Hero of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Editions, 2019.

York, a slave, was the only one among the crew of twenty-eight men that hadn't volunteered for the journey. His invaluable contributions led to the success of the expedition.

Davis, K. G. *Mr. Ferris and His Wheel*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.

George Ferris perseveres and makes what many view as an unlikely invention, a magical ride for all people to enjoy.

Deedy, C. A. *14 Cows For America*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers, 2009.

A young Maasai man returns to his village after 9-11. He asks the elders to bless his offering of a cow as a gift to the Americans. The elders, touched by his story, offer some of their cows as a gift. They are presented to the American Ambassador.

Demi. *Florence Nightingale*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014.

Florence Nightingale's work to make army hospitals safer resulted in transforming the world of medicine for all of us today.

Denise, A. *Planting stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré*. New York: HarperCollins, 2019.

After arriving in America, Pura Belpré became a librarian in New York City sharing Puerto Rican folktales at her bilingual story time. When she didn't find any books written in Spanish, she turned her stories into books.

Dennis, B., Larson, K., & Nethery, M. *Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine, & a Miracle*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

A marine keeps encountering a dog which he names Nubs while on duty in Iraq. The marine helps the malnourished dog and raises money to send Nubs to live in the U.S.

DiCicco, J. *The Unstoppable Garrett Morgan: Inventor, Entrepreneur, Hero*. New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc., 2019.

Growing up as a child in a sharecropping family, Garrett Morgan learned to be a problem solver. His determination helped him overcome barriers and make several inventions that still save the lives of people today.

Drummond, A. *Energy Island*. New York: Frances Foster Books, 2011.

The people of Samsø, an island in Denmark, work together and learn to use the energy of the wind and drastically reduce their carbon emissions.

Engle, M. *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

Millo Castro Zaldarriaga's courage to dream leads her to become a world famous musician and to forever break the taboo against female drummers in Cuba.

Farris, C. K. *March On!: The Day My Brother Martin Changed the World*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008.

Martin Luther King Jr. uses wisdom and courage to determine the right words to inspire the nation.

Frier, R. *Malala: Activist for Girls' Education*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2017.

Malala Yousafzai believed that girls deserved an education and stood up to the Taliban. Even when they tried to kill her, she would not stop fighting.

Gandhi, A. & Hegedus, B. *Grandfather Gandhi*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Arun experiences the gentle leadership from his loving grandfather. Gandhi shares with him words of wisdom for channeling his anger in positive ways.

Gholz, S. *The Boy Who Grew a Forest: The True Story of Jadav Payeng*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2019.

Jadav Payeng became concerned when he saw his island home in India eroding away. He took action and planted trees that over time became a forest providing homes for many animals.

Goldish, M. *Ground Zero Dogs*. New York: Bearport Publishing, 2013.

Dogs served as heroes after the deadly 9-11 attack. The many roles of the dogs in the rescue efforts are highlighted.

Goldish, M. *Smart Animals: Dogs*. New York: Bearport Publishing, 2007.

This book contains real examples of dogs as heroes. Readers learn of the dogs that call 911, help police officers, guide the disabled, and more.

Guglielmo, A. & Tourville, J. *Pocket Full of Colors*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2017.

Mary Blair grows up collecting colors and becomes one of the first women hired by Walt Disney. Although her colorful ideas are resisted by the men she works for, Disney himself asks her to create the Small World ride.

Harris, K. *Superheroes Are Everywhere*. New York: Philomel Books, 2019.

There are heroes in our neighborhood, our families, and everywhere. Readers are empowered to be the best they can be to make the world a better place and become heroes themselves.

Harvey, T., & Harvey, A. *Tiger Pups*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009.

Tom, Allie, and their golden retriever, Isabella, save three tiger pups after their mother abandons them.

Hatkoff, I., Hatkoff, C., & Kahumbu, P. *Owen and Mzee: The Language of Friendship*. New York:

Scholastic, 2007.

An old turtle, Mzee, befriends a hippo that is orphaned after a tsunami. The two animals become close friends and develop a way to communicate with one another.

Hatkoff, J., Hatkoff, I., & Hatkoff, C. *Winter's Tail: How One Little Dolphin Learned to Swim Again*. New York: Scholastic, 2009.

A young dolphin is rescued from a trap and taken to an aquarium. Although the dolphin learns to swim like a fish after her tail falls off, it is harmful to her spine. Engineers and scientists then create a special prosthetic tail for her.

Heiligman, D. *The Boy Who Loved Math: The Improbable Life of Paul Erdos*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2013.

As a young child Paul's talent and love to complete math problems is apparent. His frequent collaborations with others helped to advance the field of mathematics.

Herzog, B. *S is for Save the Planet: A How-to-Be Green Alphabet*. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2009.

Children are presented with many practical ways they can be heroes and help to care for our earth.

Hoffman, A. *The Brave Cyclist: The True Story of a Holocaust Hero*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Editions, 2019.

Gino Bartali worked hard to become a champion cyclist. When World War II broke out, he used these cycling skills to deliver needed documents to help many Jewish people escape the harm of the Nazis.

Hopkins, H. J. *The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever*. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2013.

Kate Olivia Sessions loved trees. She studies and discovers just the right trees to transform the desert town of San Diego into a lush leafy city with shade for all to enjoy.

Hopkinson, D. *Carter Reads the Newspaper*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers, 2019.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the son of slaves, grew up reading the newspaper to his father and later to illiterate miners. His curiosity drove him to earn his doctoral degree and become founder of Negro History Week, which later becomes Black History Month.

Johnson, J. *Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Peace*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2010.

Wangari Maathai uses her wisdom, faith, and compassion to promote the rights of the women of Kenya while planting trees to save the land of the country.

Kacer, K. *The Brave Princess and Me*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2019.

Princess Alice of Greece is deaf and knows how it feels to be discriminated against. When a Jewish mother and child seek help at her home, she risks her life to protect them.

Kalman, M. *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002.

An old fireboat is waiting to be sold for scrap when it is purchased by a group of friends for fun. The old fireboat is called back into action to help battle the fires of 9-11.

Kalman, M. *Looking at Lincoln*. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012.

This book shows a young girl's quest to learn more about our sixteenth president. Interesting facts are discovered along with the reasons why he was a hero.

Katz, J. *Meet the Dogs of Bedlam Farm*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011.

Three of the dogs living on the farm work daily as heroes at their jobs. The fourth dog is an everyday hero by doing her job of caring for all of the other dogs.

Krull, K. *A Boy Named FDR*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011.

Although FDR grew up in one of the wealthiest families in America, his heart was full of compassion for others. His battle with polio doesn't stop him from leading our country and helping to make a difference in the lives of others.

Krull, K. *Wilma Unlimited*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996.

This is the story of Wilma's perseverance and drive to overcome polio and discrimination in her life.

Larson, K., & Nethery M. *Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival*. New York: Walker & Company, 2008.

A dog leads a blind cat away from the dangers of Hurricane Katrina.

Lawlor, L. *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World*. New York: Holiday House, 2012.

Rachel's love of nature and her keen observation skills lead to her writing the book, *Silent Spring*, which has a profound impact upon preserving the environment.

Levinson, C. *The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2017.

Nine-year-old Audrey wants to do her part to help change unfair segregation laws in Birmingham. Audrey is brave even when she is arrested.

Levy, D. *Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Justice Ginsburg persistently fought for equal rights for women and became a member of the Supreme Court. Her belief that everyone should be treated without prejudice has brought about change.

Macy, S. *The Book Rescuer*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2019.

Aaron Lansky heard stories of his grandmother coming to America and being greeted by her brother who tossed her Yiddish books into the ocean. Aaron's interest in Jewish literature led him to study Yiddish, discover many books had been destroyed, and establish a library to preserve as many remaining Yiddish books as he could find.

Markel, M. *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*. New York: Balzer & Bray, 2013.

Clara Lemlich arrived in America as an immigrant and found herself working in a factory instead of attending school. She bravely stands up for her beliefs and fights for changed working conditions in the factories.

Markle, S. *Animal Heroes: True Rescue Stories*. Minneapolis, MN: Millbrook Press, 2009.

This book contains many short stories of animals helping people in danger. Children are especially intrigued by the story of the mother gorilla saving the toddler and the story of Frisky the dog saving George during Hurricane Katrina.

Markle, S. *How Many Baby Pandas?* New York: Walker & Company, 2009.

Baby pandas are raised at the Wolong Nature Center until they are strong enough to be released into the wild. These efforts will help this endangered species.

McCully, E. A. *My Heart Glow*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008.

Thomas Gallaudet changes the world for Alice Cogswell and many other deaf people with the creation of a new language, American Sign Language. He also establishes a school for deaf students.

McCutcheon, J. *Flowers for Sarajevo*. Atlanta: Peachtree, 2017.

Based on a true story of war in Bosnia, a son of a florist learns how kindness can promote healing from a cellist who plays each day to honor the lives of those lost.

Meltzer, B. *I am Helen Keller*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015.

Although Helen Keller loses her sight and hearing, she perseveres to find a way to communicate with the help of Annie Sullivan. She finds a voice to speak out for others.

Meltzer, B. *I am Jane Goodall*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Jane Goodall's curiosity leads her to uncover knowledge of the chimpanzee. Her determination and sense of responsibility guide her to help protect them.

Michelson, R. *Twice as Good*. North Mankato, MN: Sleeping Bear Press, 2012.

Willie works hard and perseveres, in spite of the discrimination he experiences, to become a professional golfer and build a golf course for people of all color to use.

Mortenson, G., & Roth, S. L. *Listen to the Wind*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009.

This story, written from a child's point of view, tells how Dr. Greg helped the people of Korphe, Pakistan build a school.

Moss, M. *Barbed Wire Baseball*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013.

Zeni dreamed of becoming a baseball player but after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he and his family are placed in an internment camp. Here he helps build a baseball field which provides those imprisoned with a sense of hope.

Moss, M. *The Bravest Woman in America*. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 2011.

Ida Lewis loved helping her father, the lighthouse keeper. When her father becomes sick, she must come to the rescue of four boys who are in danger out in the harbor.

Muntean, M. *Stay: The True Story of Ten Dogs*. New York: Scholastic, 2012.

After Luciano Anastasini's devastating fall as a circus performer on the high wire, he perseveres to find a way to continue to stay on with the circus. He successfully trains ten dogs in need of a home to become part of his circus act.

Myers, W. D. *Frederick Douglass: The Lion Who Wrote History*. New York: Harper Collins, 2017.

Frederick Douglass learned to read while a slave. After escaping to freedom in the north, he wrote and made speeches fighting for equality for all.



Nelson, K. *Nelson Mandela*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books, 2013.

This is the story of Nelson Mandela's determination to bring about change in South Africa and transform it into a country that believes in equality for all of its people.

Nelson, S.D. *Digging a Hole to Heaven: Coal Miner Boys*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Young Conall spends his days working in the coal mine with his mule, Angel. When an underground tunnel suddenly collapses, Conall must find a way to rescue his brother and other trapped miners.

Nivola, C. *Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai*. New York: Frances Foster Books, 2008.

Courage, perseverance, and determination are used by Wangari to lead a tree planting movement in Kenya to restore the land.

Paul, M. *Little Libraries, Big Heroes*. New York: Clarion Books, 2019.

This is the inspiring story of how Todd H. Bol started the Little Free Library Movement. The efforts of this literary hero have led to people around the world enjoying books and reading.

Peterson, B. *Leopard & Silkie*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2012.

A young boy named Miles volunteers as a Seal Sitter. He finds a way to help to keep a baby seal safe from harm.

Pinborough, J. *Miss Moore Thought Otherwise*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2013.

Long ago in America, libraries were not for children. Anne Carroll Moore wasn't afraid to act upon her beliefs to help to create libraries for children and encourage reading.

Pincus, M. *Miep and the Most Famous Diary*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2019.

Miep Gies hid Anne Frank and her family in the secret annex during the war. When the Nazis invaded, Miep bravely hid the diary that Anne had kept. It is because of Miep that we can read Anne's words today.

Prévot, F. *Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2015.

Wangari Maathai worked tirelessly and courageously to help the people and land of Kenya with her Greenbelt Movement.

Rabinowitz, A. *A Boy and a Jaguar*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2014.

Alan stutters uncontrollably but he promises the animals if he can overcome this, he will save them. He makes a speech that leads to the first jaguar preserve in Belize.

Ransome, J. *My Story, My Dance: Robert Battle's Journey to Alvin Ailey*. New York: Simon & Schuster's Books for Young Readers, 2015.

This is the story of how determination and passion enabled a young child, who once wore braces on his legs, to become a dancer and director of Alvin Ailey.

Rappaport, D. *Abe's Honest Words*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008.

Abraham Lincoln's compassion and honesty allow him to lead the nation through a bitter Civil War. His wisdom is apparent in actual quotes that supplement the text.

Rappaport, D. *Eleanor, Quiet No More: The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2009.

Eleanor is tolerant and quiet. When the time comes for her to make a difference in the lives of others, she perseveres and speaks the words from her heart.

Rappaport, D. *Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2012.

Despite being blind and deaf, Helen finds a way to learn and experience her world to the fullest with the help of her devoted teacher Annie Sullivan. Helen then used her strength and knowledge to impact the world.

Rappaport, D. *To Dare Mighty Things*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2013.

Sickly Teddy Roosevelt grows up to be a president who uses his leadership skills to help Americans and create national parks.

Respress-Churchwell, G. *Follow Chester: A College Football Team Fights Racism and Makes History*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc., 2019.

Chester Pierce broke racial barriers playing for Harvard in a football game against the University of Virginia. His teammates, seeing the discrimination, created a play called "Follow Chester" to support him.

Reynolds, P. *Say Something*. New York: Scholastic, 2019.

Different scenes are shared in which children see the impact of speaking up and taking action. Readers are empowered to use their own actions, words, and voices to make the world a better place.

Robbins, D. *Margaret and the Moon*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017.

Margaret loves math. When computers are introduced, Margaret discovers how they can be used to do math. Her work at NASA as a software programmer writing computer code leads to space missions to the moon.

Robbins, D. *Miss Paul and the President: The Creative Campaign for Women's Right to Vote*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016.

Alice Paul uses her determination and creativity as a suffragette. This leads to President Woodrow Wilson supporting women's right to vote.

Robinson, S. *Jackie Robinson: American Hero*. New York: Scholastic, 2013.

Jackie was a true American hero demonstrating perseverance and patience that led to the desegregation of Major League Baseball.

Rockliff, M. *Around America to Win the Vote*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2016.

Two brave suffragists trek across America in their car to spread the word about equal voting rights for women.

Rockwell, A. *A Spy Called James: The True Story of James Lafayette, Revolutionary War Double Agent*. Minneapolis, MN: Candlewick Press, 2016.

Dressed as a runaway slave, enlisted slave James learns information as a spy which leads to the American victory at the Battle of Yorktown.

Rose, D.L., & Veltkamp, J. *Beauty and the Beak*. Apex, NC: Persnickety Press, 2017.

After an eagle's beak is partially shot off, a biologist and an engineer work together to create a new beak to save the eagle.

Rosenstock, B. *Ben Franklin's Big Splash: The Mostly True Story of His First Invention*. Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek, 2014.

As a child Ben loved swimming and his first invention was gear to help him swim like a fish. Ben believed in perseverance and sharing of inventions to benefit others.

Rubin, S. G. *Maya Lin: Thinking With Her Hands*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2017.

Maya Lin entered and won the contest to design the Vietnam Memorial when she was a student at Yale. Her age and Chinese-American heritage caused some controversy but Maya endured and the memorial was created using her design.

Rucker, R.L., & Rucker, J. *Make a Change*. Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2017.

After Marvin and his mama experience discrimination at the new shopping store and the lunch counter, Marvin wants to do something to help bring about change.

Ruurs, M. *The Elephant Keeper*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2017.

Aaron saves a baby elephant that falls into a pool in Zambia. When he visits the elephant at the nursery after its rescue, he cares for the elephant which has refused to eat. This begins his career as an elephant keeper.

Schwartz, H. *Girls Rebel! Amazing Tales of Women Who Broke the Mold*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone, 2013.

This is a collection of profiles of women who have bravely fought for what they believed in. These rebellious women made powerful and lasting changes for our world.

Skead, R. *Something to Prove: The Great Satchel Paige vs. Rookie Joe DiMaggio*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 2013.

Joe DiMaggio must prove he is skilled enough to become a major league player by playing against Satchel Paige and a team of African American players. While Joe earns his place on the Yankees, the talented Satchel continues to face discrimination.

Slade, S. *A Computer Called Katherine*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2019.

Katherine Johnson was NASA's human computer completing calculations for the success of space missions. Katherine's love for math is shared in this biography along with the racial and gender barriers that she faced.

Slade, S. *Dangerous Jane*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree, 2017.

At an early age Jane Addams was inspired to help others. She established a settlement house to help the poor. Jane's work for peace during World War I earned her a Nobel Peace Prize.

Snyder, L. *Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2015.

After seeing a ballet with her mother, Anna overcomes challenges to become a ballerina. She then shared the beauty of the dance with the poor as well as the rich.

Standiford, N. *The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto*. New York: Random House, 1988.

Balto courageously leads the dog sled to deliver needed medicine to a remote town in Alaska. When his relief is not present to continue the sled run, exhausted Balto continues with the journey.

- Stauffacher, S. *Nothing but Trouble: The Story of Althea Gibson*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.  
Buddy Walker recognizes the talent in Althea, even though all the people of Harlem see a girl in trouble. Buddy invests in a tennis racquet for Althea as well as time and encouragement to help her on her way to become the first African American woman to play in and win the Wimbledon Cup.
- Stone, T. *Elizabeth Leads the Way*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008.  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton recognizes the inequalities between men and women. She realizes that if women had the right to vote, life could be much better for them. She uses perseverance to make her idea come true.
- Stone, T. *Who Says Women Can't be Doctors? The Story of Elizabeth Blackwell*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013.  
This book shows the power of one individual to inspire another to do great things. Elizabeth Blackwell faced challenges to become a doctor and she paved the way for women to make a difference in the world.
- Stone, T. L. *The House That Jane Built: A Story About Jane Addams*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015.  
Jane Addams, the first American woman to receive the Nobel Prize, carried out her vision for helping the poor by opening up her home as a community center.
- Thompson, L. & Qualls, S. *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2015.  
Emmanuel, who is born with only one strong leg, cycles across the country of Ghana to show that people with disabilities can do things, too.
- Tonatiuh, D. *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and her Family's Fight for Desegregation*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014.  
After Sylvia is denied entrance to a "whites only" school because she is Hispanic, her family takes action to end school segregation in California.
- Tripp Jurmain, S. *Nice Work, Franklin!* New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2016.  
Franklin develops polio and uses his determination to help himself and our country, which is suffering from the Great Depression.
- Trumbore, C. *Parrots Over Puerto Rico*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2013.  
Parrots lived in Puerto Rico for millions of years but then they almost vanish. Scientists work together to help save this species.
- Walters, E. *My Name is Blessing*. Plattsburgh, NY: Tundra Books, 2013.  
Baraka, a young Kenyan boy with a disability, lives with his grandmother and eight cousins. When food becomes scarce, his grandmother must make a difficult choice.
- Wargin, K. *Man Behind the Peace Prize: Alfred Nobel*. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2009.  
Alfred Nobel is saddened when his invention of dynamite is used in harmful ways against other people. Upon his death, he leaves his fortune to establish a special award for those making great contributions to mankind. One special prize to be awarded is the peace prize.

Weatherford, C.B. *The Legendary Miss Lena Horne*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2017.

Lena grew up a talented singer and performed on Broadway. As an actress she fought racism by refusing to perform in stereotypic roles.

Weatherford, C. Boston. *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hammer: The Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2015.

A series of poems tells of Fannie Lou's lifelong work for racial equality.

Winter, J. *JFK*. New York: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2013.

This biography tells of John F. Kennedy growing up from a sickly child to become the 35<sup>th</sup> president who handles the Cuban Missile Crisis and works for civil rights.

Winter, J. *Malala: A Brave Girl from Pakistan*. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2014.

Malala bravely speaks out for the rights of girls to attend school in Pakistan.

Winter, J. *Nasreen's Secret School*. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2009.

Nasreen's grandmother must save her granddaughter from her sadness. She takes a risk and finds a secret school to enroll Nasreen. The experience changes Nasreen.

Winter, J. *Our House Is on Fire: Greta Thunberg's Call to Save the Planet*. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2019.

After Greta Thunberg learns about climate change at school she decides to take action to save the planet by going on Friday school strikes. A worldwide student movement follows and readers inspired by this activist may choose to join her today in the fight to stop climate change.

Winter, J. *The Tale of Pale Male: A True Story*. New York: Harcourt, 2007.

Bird lovers speak out to save the home of the red-tailed hawks nesting in New York City.

Winter, J. *The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2011.

Jane loved to watch nature as a child. When she grows up, she studies chimpanzees in Africa and eventually must speak out to save them from becoming extinct.

Winter, J. *The World is Not a Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid*. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2017.

As a young girl Zaha dreamed of designing cities. Despite the rejection of her unique designs many times, Zaha becomes one of the world's most celebrated female architects.

Winter, J. & Widener, T. *You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!* New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2013.

Willie's determination to win the game changed the quality of the sport as well as how players were treated because of the color of their skin.

Wise, B. *Silent Star: The Story of Deaf Major Leaguer William Hoy*. New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc., 2012.

William Hoy dreamed of playing in the major leagues but he is deaf. He proved himself using determination and hard work to become a star—both on and off the baseball field.

Wittenstein, B. *A Place to Land: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech that Inspired the Nation*. New York: Holiday House, 2019.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. thought the hardest part of giving a speech was knowing where to end it or land. This is the story of how his famous “I Have a Dream” speech came to be and how these powerful words were delivered at a crucial time in the civil rights movement.

Yousafzai, M. *Malala’s Magic Pencil*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2017.

While living in an area where the Taliban forbid girls to go to school, Malala Yousafzai used her writing and her words to make people around the world aware of the injustice in her region.

## **Fiction for Young Children**

This list is necessarily incomplete, given the enormous number and variety of truly wonderful and timeless books featuring heroic characters. The books listed below are recently published titles that we have found to be especially effective in introducing young children to the concept of heroes.

Beaty, A. *Sofia Valdez, Future Prez*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2019.

After young Sofi’s abuelo hurts his ankle at the local landfill, she takes action to transform the dangerous trash site into a park. Sofi lets readers see that you’re never too young to act heroically.

Cohn, D. *Crane Boy*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2015.

Young Kinga learns that the black-necked cranes that migrate each year to Bhutan are endangered. He searches for a way to save them and remind the people to protect them.

De Kinder, J. *Red*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

At first Lisa finds it fun to tease Tommy and make him blush. As her friends join in, one of them takes it too far. Realizing her mistake, Lisa finds the courage to speak up to stop the bullying.

Draper, S. *Stella By Starlight*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2015.

After Stella witnesses the acts of the KKK and experiences the hatred of discrimination, she works hard to develop her writing skills and use them to try to bring about a change.

Fosberry, J. *My Name is Not Alexander*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2011.

Throughout the day young Isabella imagines that she is some of the amazing women who have changed history. She dreams about how she may use her qualities to become a hero herself.

Fosberry, J. *My Name is Not Isabella*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2010.

Young Alexander imagines that he is some of the world’s remarkable heroes and he dreams of the hero he might become.

Frazeo, M. *The Farmer and the Clown*. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2014.

In this wordless picture book, a farmer comes to the aid of a young clown who falls off the circus train. He cares for the clown until the train returns.

Graber, J. *Muktar and the Camels*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009.

An orphan boy makes sacrifices to care for an injured camel.

Henn, S. *Pass It On*. New York: Philomel Books, 2017.

This is a simple book with a big message of being kind and passing on the positive things in life.

- Hopkinson, D., & Hendrix, J. *Abe Lincoln Crosses A Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2008.  
Abe's childhood friend, Austin Gollaher, saves him from drowning in a rushing creek.
- Johnston, A. *What's My Superpower?* Toronto, Ontario: Inhabit Media, 2017.  
Nalvana notices all the special things her friends can do and wonders about her own superpower. Her mom helps her discover that her power is making others feel good about themselves.
- Long, L. *Otis and the Scarecrow*. New York: Philomel Books, 2014.  
Otis and his friends leave the frowning scarecrow alone when he makes no attempt to respond to their friendly smiles. One cold, rainy day Otis takes the first step to be a friend and include the lonely scarecrow in the friends' game.
- McDonnell, P. *Me...Jane*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2011.  
Jane imagines a career of helping animals in Africa and one day her dreams come true. The book contains a message from Jane that each of us has the potential to make a difference in the world.
- Murphy, C. R. *Marching With Aunt Susan*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers, 2011.  
A young girl learns the meaning of perseverance and fighting for a cause as she marches with "Aunt Susan" to promote women's right to vote.
- Nelson, S.D. *Digging a Hole to Heaven: Coal Miner Boys*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014.  
Young Conall spends his days working in the coal mine with his mule, Angel. When an underground tunnel suddenly collapses, Conall must find a way to rescue his brother and other trapped miners.
- Osborne, M. P. *New York's Bravest*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.  
This story is based upon real life firefighter Mose Humphreys who became a fictionalized character with incredible heroic acts. Mose continues to represent the courage and strength of firefighters throughout history.
- Palacio, R.J. *We're All Wonders*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017.  
Although Auggie may look different, he's just like every other kid. This book lets readers see the need to treat everyone with kindness.
- Park, L. *Nya's Long walk: A Step at a Time*. New York: Clarion Books, 2019.  
Nya takes her younger sister with her on the two-hour walk to get water. On the journey, her sister becomes ill and Nya bravely seeks needed help for her. The book prompts discussion on the need for clean water to be accessible for all people of the world.
- Peet, M. & Graham, E. *Night Sky Dragons*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2014.  
Yazul loves creating kites with his grandfather but his father disapproves. When their han along the Silk Road is attacked by bandits, Yazul's creative idea saves them all.
- Perkin, M. *Tiger Boy*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2015.  
Neel learns that a young tiger cub is missing on his island in the Sunderbans of West Bengal. He wants to find it before someone else captures and sells it on the black market.
- Polacco, P. *Tucky Jo and Little Heart*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015.

While stationed in the South Pacific, Johnnie befriends a young girl and helps the people of her village escape to safety. Years later he is surprised by her kindness that is returned to him.

Robbins, D. *Two Friends: Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass*. New York: Orchard Books, 2016. This is a fictional account of two heroes meeting for tea to share their efforts on working for the right to vote for women and African Americans.

Rocco, J. *Blizzard*. New York: Disney Hyperion, 2014. When the New England blizzard of 1978 strikes, families begin to run low on food while waiting for the plow to dig them out. Young John discovers a creative way to make snowshoes and bring groceries to those in need.

Spires, A. *The Most Magnificent Thing*. Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press, 2014. A young girl has a vision of exactly what she wants to create. Through perseverance, hard work, and some encouragement from her assistant, her dog, she succeeds.

Young, J. *Hu Wan and the Sleeping Dragon*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2018. This story of kindness is set in 1572 in Beijing, China. A nine-year old boy makes the emperor happy with his gift of a carved gourd cricket cage.

### **Books to Promote Heroism in Older Children and Young Adults**

This bibliography was compiled by Barbara Ann Richman, Executive Director of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, with help from librarians and teachers across the country.

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Axelrod, T. *Rescuers Defying the Nazis: Non-Jewish Teens Who Rescued Jews*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 1999.

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- Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.
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- Campbell, J. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949.
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### **Fiction for Older Children and Young Adults**

This list is necessarily incomplete, given the enormous number and variety of truly wonderful and timeless books featuring heroic characters. The books listed below are ones that we have found to be especially effective in engaging older children in a study of heroes.

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