

# Tolerance

Character... It starts with me!

## Vs. Prejudice

### ROBIN'S READING LIST

MARCH 2014

#### I WILL

- not confuse what is right with what is popular
- expect the same of myself as I expect of others
- look for ways to help others mature
- accept my own unchangeables and the unchangeables of others
- listen before I form an opinion

*Robin Casterter is a Retired Elementary Teacher from, Loveland City Schools*

*P.O. Box 33144  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
45233*

*Mary Andres Russell,  
Executive Director*

*Phone: 513.467.0170*

The 49 Character Qualities are adapted from Character First materials and are used with permission.

## Realizing that everyone is at varying levels of character development

### Pre K – Grade 3:

#### Getting to Know Ruben Plotnick by Roz Rosenbluth

An engaging story about family, friendship, and the challenges of dementia. Ruben Plotnick is the cool kid everyone at school wants to know. He's funny and a little wacky, but he always knows the right answers. He's smart. For some unexplained reason, he decides to befriend David, asking to go to his house to do schoolwork. David is thrilled—and worried. His Grandma Rosie has become so unpredictable. Will she do something to embarrass him? What will The Plotnick think? David need not have worried. The Plotnick proves himself to be much more than a smart clown. He has grace and he has heart. He relates immediately to someone who dances to her own beat, displaying maturity and confidence far beyond his age. And he shows David how to be compassionate and remain true to himself. This is an excellent choice for a group read-aloud or to help a child deal with fears of family embarrassment.

#### Tolerance by Jordan Postlewait

Tolerance towards others is one of the most important lessons we can teach our children, and who better to teach it than Tolerance herself? Come join her in this intriguing story about a little girl and her quest to meet and make friends with all different types of people. The story is told completely in verse and delivers an important and contemporary message while remaining lighthearted and humorous. The text is complimented by beautiful illustrations that perfectly capture the mood and the essence of the little girl named Tolerance. The book is appropriate for all ages, including beginning readers as well as adults.

#### The Only Boy in the Ballet Class by Denise Gruska

Tucker loves ballet—even though some people don't understand his passion for dancing.



# Robin's Reading List

Taunted by the boys on the football field, tortured by dorky twin sisters, and teased by his Uncle Frank, Tucker doesn't know how to help people see how ballet makes him feel . . . until one day, when an unexpected invitation to join the football game comes, and Tucker Dohr gets the chance to prove just what ballet dancing can do!

**My Brother Doesn't Want to Play: Autism From a Siblings Perspective** by Tisha Campbell Martin

This book is a heartwarming story about a mother who teaches love, patience and understanding to her youngest child whose older sibling is autistic. The story is based on Tisha's son who was diagnosed with autism at 18 months. "Do you love him more than me?!" "He needs my extra time for sure... It doesn't mean I love you any less or that I love him more." When actress Tisha Campbell Martin, learned of her son, Xen's diagnosis, one of her biggest concerns was how others would receive him. So she wrote this book with the intention to help children have tolerance of their peers who have special needs. From the author this book is an offering to ALL children, not only those who may have a family member who has autism but also for those who may know of or meet a peer with autism. "My Brother Doesn't Want To Play," is a book, I hope, will make it easier for adults to help typical children look past what they see and find a deeper understanding and tolerance for people who are different

## Grades 4-8:

**Wonder** by R. J. Palacio

August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school - until now. He's about to start 5th grade at Beecher Prep, and if you've ever been the new kid then you know how hard that can be. The thing is Auggie's just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, despite appearances?

**The Boy in the Wooden Box: How The Impossible Became Possible** by Leon Leyson

Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. With incredible luck, perseverance, and grit, Leyson was able to survive the sadism of the Nazis, including that of the demonic Amon Goeth, commandant of Plaszow, the concentration camp outside Krakow. Ultimately, it was the generosity and cunning of one man, a man named Oskar Schindler, who saved Leon Leyson's life, and the lives of his mother, his father, and two of his four siblings, by adding their names to his list of workers in his factory—a list that became world renowned: Schindler's List.



# Robin's Reading List

## **Number the Stars** by Lois Lowry

Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen often think of life before the war. It's now 1943 and their life in Copenhagen is filled with school, food shortages, and the Nazi soldiers marching through town. When the Jews of Denmark are "relocated," Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be one of the family. Soon Annemarie is asked to go on a dangerous mission to save Ellen's life.

## **Paperboy** by Vince Vawter

Readers meet an eleven-year-old narrator who has a substantial vocabulary and can consider many sides of an issue but who, because of his stuttering, seldom speaks. When he takes over his best friend's paper route for the summer, the task is Herculean. He can withstand the July heat, fold the papers extra tight, and throw them with precision. But he must collect payment every week, compelling him to talk to strangers. He describes his difficulties, how he uses the "Gentle Air" method of blowing out a few breaths before certain consonants, or shouts certain words, or tosses an object in the air before uttering a sound. The only name readers know him by is Little Man, the one given him by Mam, his family's black maid. Her presence accurately reflects the times, and, to some extent, Vawter sidesteps the stereotype by combining Mam's need for personal justice with her protection of Little Man. Still, it is the paper route that Little Man must conquer on his own, and the people he meets during his journey he must understand.

## **Unspoken: A Story From the Underground Railroad** by Henry Cole

A young girl's courage is tested in this haunting, wordless story. When a farm girl discovers a runaway slave hiding in the barn, she is at once startled and frightened. But the stranger's fearful eyes weigh upon her conscience, and she must make a difficult choice. Will she have the courage to help him? Unspoken gifts of humanity unite the girl and the runaway as they each face a journey: one following the North Star, the other following her heart.

## **Grades 9-12:**

## **The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them** by The Freedom Writers, and Erin Gruwell

Shocked by the teenage violence she witnessed during the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, Erin Gruwell became a teacher at a high school rampant with hostility and racial intolerance. For many of these students—whose ranks included substance abusers, gang members, the homeless, and victims of abuse—Gruwell was the first person to treat them with dignity, to believe in their potential and help them see it themselves. Soon, their loyalty towards their teacher and burning enthusiasm to help end violence and intolerance became a force of its own. Inspired by reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* and meeting Zlata Filipovic (the eleven-year old girl who wrote of her life in Sarajevo during the civil war), the



# Robin's Reading List

students began a joint diary of their inner-city upbringings. Told through anonymous entries to protect their identities and allow for complete candor, *The Freedom Writers Diary* is filled with astounding vignettes from 150 students who, like civil rights activist Rosa Parks and the Freedom Riders, heard society tell them where to go—and refused to listen.

## **I'm Only Human After All** by Alex Rogers

What do you do if you find yourself suddenly, and without provocation, the target of high school aggression, relentless insults, and painful isolation? Such is the dilemma of teenager Alex Rogers, the main character in *I'm Only Human After All*, the thought-provoking, absorbing novel inspired by the real-life trials of the author by the same name. In this penetrating story, Rogers draws from his personal experiences to offer invaluable insight to students, teachers, and parents everywhere on today's increasingly common, and highly damaging, instances of bullying and cyber-bullying. The novel's poignant, reflective first-person narrative details all that bullied young adults confront, casting crucial new light on this timely topic to enable individuals to cope with this pervasive problem. *I'm Only Human After All* also represents the debut work of fiction in the ongoing "Empowerment" series based on the author's life that surrounds topics relevant today.

## **I Wrote on all Four Walls: Teens Speak Out on Violence** by Fran Fearnley

*Nine teens share their experiences with violence.*

The explosive teenage years can make young people more prone to violence...and more vulnerable. The accounts in **I Wrote on all Four Walls** are authentic and riveting. Sixteen-year-old Janice finds herself the target of cyber-bullying and physical intimidation at school. Allan remembers coming out at age fourteen and learning that safety can be as much about who you know as who you are. Don at age eight terrorized his younger brother, an aggression that escalated into the torture of another boy at fifteen.

**I Wrote on all Four Walls** collects the harrowing stories of nine contemporary teenagers who have witnessed, been the victim of, or instigated acts of violence... sometimes all three. In their own words, these teens offer thoughtful testimony on how such experiences have impacted on their lives, and their choices in dealing with those repercussions. Each experience is as unique and complex as the teens themselves. But one common element is clear: violence builds walls, and these teens want to speak up and break out.

