Mountain Laurel Book Award
formerly Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Award
c/o Melinda Bender
17 Wendy Rd.
Reading, PA 19601



# MOUNTAIN LAUREL BOOK AWARD

formerly Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award 2025 – 2026



Sponsored by
The Pennsylvania School Librarians
Association

# Purpose of the Award

The purpose of the Mountain Laurel Book Award formerly known as Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Awards Program is to promote reading of quality books by young people in the Commonwealth, to encourage teacher / librarian collaboration and involvement in YA and children's literature, and to honor authors whose works have been recognized by the students of Pennsylvania. The program is sponsored by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA).

### **Guidelines for Participation**

Participation in the Mountain Laurel Book Award Program is open to all students who are attending public or private schools or are enrolled in a certified home study program in grades K-12.

The school library/media specialist may be the sponsor of the award program in a school; however, any teacher or administrator may act as sponsor.

- 1. Obtain the support and authorization of the principal.
- 2. Provide information about participating in the award program to teachers, students and parents. See additional tips in the "Ideas for Promoting the Award" section.
- 3. Be familiar with the books included in the master list and check that they meet book selection criteria for your district or school.
- 4. Have as many of the titles available as possible. It is not necessary to purchase every book on the list to participate in the program. Purchasing multiple copies may encourage additional student involvement. Many books on the list are available in paperback.
- 5. Begin the program at the start of the school year, or plan ahead and include Mountain Laurel Book Award titles on summer reading lists.
- 6. In order to qualify to vote, students must either **read or have listened** to at least **3 books** from the list.
- 7. Provide ballots in early March so students may vote for their favorite book.
- 8. Participating libraries and schools should tally the votes and send the results to the Mountain Laurel Book Award Committee by MARCH 31. (This date may vary depending on the dates of the PSLA Annual Conference.) Please be sure to include the number of votes each book received, not just the winning book at your school,
- 9. Submit votes to THE ONLINE VOTING REPORT FORM at **tinyurl.com/MLBA-vote**.
- 10. A certificate is available to download for each participating school.

# **Criteria for Consideration**

Titles to be considered for the master reading list are generally suggested by the Mountain Laurel Book Award Program Committee, but suggestions may be submitted by students, teachers, librarians, parents or anyone who is interested in promoting reading.

Each book must meet the following criteria:

- 1. It must have an original copyright date within five years of the award's presentation.
- 2. It must be written by an author currently living in North America.
- 3. It must be appropriate to the interest, reading and grade level of those students in each grade strand: K-3, 3-6, 6-8, and 9-12.
- 4. It must receive positive reviews from recognized published sources.
- 5. It may be any genre: fiction, informational, or poetry, but not anthologies of collected works of multiple authors.

Post suggestions to the Mountain Laurel Book Award (formerly known as Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award) website: https://pyrcapsla.wixsite.com/pyrca \*

Send book suggestions to:

Mountain Laurel Book Award Program Committee c/o Melinda Bender 17 Wendy Rd. Reading, PA 19601

Please include your name, address, and professional position.

All suggestions should be submitted by **SEPTEMBER 1** in order to be considered for the following year.

<sup>\*</sup> Note: webpages, emails, and social media sites will retain the PYRCA designation for this year as we transition to the new Mountain Laurel Book Award name

# PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG READER'S CHOICE AWARDS

### 2021-2022

Dandy by Ame Dyckman (K-3) *Nubby's Story* by Aubre Andrus (3-6) When Stars Are Scattered by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed (6-8) The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes (YA)

### 2022-2023

Except Antarctica! by Todd Sturgell (K-3) The Eternal Soldier: The True Story of How a Dog Became a Civil War Hero by Allison Crotzer Kimmel (3-6) Ground Zero by Alan Gratz (6-8) Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley (YA)

### 2023-2024

The Yawns Are Coming by Christopher Eliopoulos (K-3) Cat Ninja by Matthew Cody and Yehudi Mercado (3-6) Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes (6-8) I Must Betray You by Ruta Sepetys (YA)

# **Useful Information**

- Award stickers are available for 25 cents each. Checks should be made out to PSLA. Send request with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Alice Cyphers, 134 Bisbing Rd., Henryville, PA 18332
- Visit the PSLA website for past winners, author thank-you letters, and more: https://www.psla.org/pennsylvania-young-reader-schoice-awards-program \*
- Visit the Mountain Laurel Book Award website (formerly PYRCA website) for copies of this booklet in PDF, book talk scripts, bookmarks, best practices, updates and so much more at https://pyrcapsla.wixsite.com/pyrca \*
- Check out our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/pyrca and follow us on Twitter @PA YRCA\*

For more information contact us at pvrca.psla@gmail.com \*

### WINNERS OF THE 2024-2025 PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG READER'S CHOICE AWARDS

Butt or Face?: Can You Tell Which End You're Looking At? by Kari Lavalle (K-3)

Destiny Finds Her Way: How a Rescued Baby Sloth Learned to Be Wild by Margarita Engle (3-6)

Invisible by Christina Diaz Gonzalez (6-8)

Check & Mate by Ali Hazelwood (YA)

# Mountain Laurel Book Award (formerly The PA Young Reader's Choice Award Program) is Sponsored by PSLA's Awards Committee

Shannon Resh (South Western School District) and Deborah Hoover (Northeastern School District), Co-Chairpersons

### Mountain Laurel Book Award (PYRCA) Committee Members

Alice Cyphers\* East Stroudsburg Area School District Ellen Stolarski\* Saint Marys Area School District Conestoga Valley School District Melinda Bender School District of Philadelphia Bernadette Cooke Radnor Township School District Sue Dahlstrom Hempfield School District Tiffany Emerick Aimee Emerson Bradford Area School District Brooke Hauer Tredyffrin/Easttown School District Beth Heuchert Crawford Central School District Northeastern School District Deb Hoover Lori Jordan Saint Marvs Area School District Manheim Township School District Karen Leisev **Heather Montgomery** Keystone Central School District

Amy O'Hare Harrisburg Academy

Conestoga Valley School District Christina Peterson

Amy Pickett Ridley School District

Nadine Poper Schuylkill Valley School District Monica Reinnagel Harrisburg School District Shannon Resh South Western School District Angela Tarr Fort LeBoeuf School District Michelle Wells Central Columbia School District Jennifer Wentling Sharpsville Area School District Summer Wilson State College Area School District

Please contact the committee if you need more information.

pyrca.psla@gmail.com

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# Ideas for Promoting the Mountain Laurel Book Award

## **Librarian-Teacher Activities**

- Promote books in the program! Book talk scripts, bookmarks and online presentations for you to copy and use are available at https://pyrcapsla.wixsite.com/pyrca \*
- Look at the PSLA webpage for more information and links to authors.
- Have students do author studies.
- Read the books aloud to students and encourage teachers and parents to do the same.
- If your school has a book fair, include the books in the program.
- Suggest these books to students and teachers as possible book reports and/or summer reading lists. Perhaps teachers could require students to read one title from the list.
- Collaborate with public librarians to promote the program.

### **Student Activities**

- Have students help promote Mountain Laurel Book Award books by creating Public Service Announcements (PSAs), QR codes, Prezis or PowerPoints.
- Combine the program with other commercial reading programs, Reading Olympics, Battle of the Books or your summer reading program.
- Have students write reviews for the school newspaper, your Web site or blog.
- See the website for additional ideas and student handouts.

# PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG READER'S CHOICE AWARDS

### 2007-2008

Good Dog by Maya Gottfried (K-3) Aliens Are Coming! by Meghan McCarthy (3-6) The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan (6-8) Dairy Queen by Catherine Murdock (YA)

### 2008-2009

The Great Fuzz Frenzy by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel (K-3) No Talking by Andrew Clements (3-6) Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie by Jordan Sonnenblick (6-8) Twilight by Stephenie Meyer (YA)

### 2009-2010

Scaredy Squirrel by Melanie Watt (K-3) Henry's Freedom Box by Ellen Levine (3-6) Found by Margaret Peterson Haddix (6-8) The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins (YA)

### 2010-2011

Chester by Melanie Watt (K-3)
Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina,
Friendship and Survival by Kirby Larson and
Mary Nethery (3-6)
The Name of This Book Is Secret by
Pseudonymous Bosch (6-8)
Perfect Chemistry by Simone Elkeles (YA)

### 2011-2012

Shark vs. Train by Chris Barton (K-3)
Pop! The Invention of Bubble Gum by Meghan
McCarthy (3-6)
The Red Pyramid by Rick Riordan (6-8)
Matched by Ally Condie (YA)

### 2012-2013

Memoirs of a Goldfish by Devin Scillian (K-3) Belly Up by Stuart Gibbs (3-6) Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper (6-8) The Fault in Our Stars by John Green (YA)

### 2013-2014

Creepy Carrots by Aaron Reynolds (K-3)
The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate
(3-6)
Chomp by Carl Hiaasen (6-8)
Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by
Ransom Riggs (YA)

### 2014-2015

Dragons Love Tacos by Adam Rubin (K-3) Jake and Lily by Jerry Spinelli (3-6) Prisoner B-3087 by Alan Gratz (6-8) Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell (YA)

### 2015-2016

The Monkey Goes Bananas by C. P. Bloom (K-3) El Deafo by Cece Bell (3-6)
The Fourteenth Goldfish by Jennifer L. Holm (6-8)
Those Who Wish Me Dead by Michael Koryta (YA)

### 2016-2017

A Friend for Lakota: The Incredible True Story of a Wolf Who Braved Bullying by Jim Dutcher & Jamie Dutcher (K-3)
Sunny Side Up by Jennifer L. Holm & Matther Holm (3-6)
Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullay Hunt (6-8)
Everything, Everything by Nicola Yoon (YA)

### 2017-2018

Mother Goose Bruce by Ryan T. Higgins (K-3) Ghosts by Raina Telgemeier (3-6) Awkward by Svetlana Chmakova (6-8) The Sun is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon (YA)

### 2018-2019

Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea by Ben Clanton (K-3)
The Wild Robot by Peter Brown (3-6)
Refugee by Alan Gratz (6-8)
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas (YA)

### 2019-2020

We Don't Eat Our Classmates! by Ryan T. Higgins (K-3) Saving Winslow by Sharon Creech (3-6) Float by Laura Martin (6-8) Truly Devious by Maureen Johnson (YA)

### 2020-2021

Can I Be Your Dog by Troy Cummings (K-3) Wedgie & Gizmo by Suzanne Selfors (3-6) New Kid by Jerry Craft (6-8) Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay(YA)

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# PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG READER'S CHOICE AWARDS

### 1991-1992

My Teacher Is an Alien by Bruce Coville (3-5) Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli (6-8)

### 1992-1993

Fudge-A-Mania by Judy Blume (3-5) Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (6-8)

### 1993-1994

The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (3-8)

### 1994-1995

Martha Speaks by Susan Meddaugh (K-3) The Giver by Lois Lowry (3-8)

### 1995-1996

The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas (K-3)
The Sweetest Fig by Chris Van Allsburg (3-8)

### 1996-1997

Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann (K-3)

Swamp Angel by Anne Isaacs (3-6) Heart of a Champion by Carl Deuker (6-8)

### 1997-1998

Buz by Richard Egielski (K-3)
The Best School Year Ever by Barbara Robinson
(3-6)

Spying on Miss Müller by Eve Bunting (6-8)

### 1998-1999

No More Water in the Tub by Ted Arnold (K-3) Shiloh Season by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (3-6) Crash by Jerry Spinelli (6-8)

### 1999-2000

The Adventures of Captain Underpants by Dav Pilkey (K-3) Frindle by Andrew Clements (3-6) Holes by Louis Sachar (6-8)

#### 2000-2001

No David! by David Shannon (K-3)
The Scrambled States of America by Laurie
Keller (3-6)
Bud, not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis (6-8)

### 2001-2002

A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon (K-3) So You Want to Be President by Judith St. George (3-6) Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddi. (6-8)

### 2002-2003

Humpty-Dumpty Egg-Splodes by Kevin O'Malley (K-3) The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco (3-6) The Two Princesses of Bamarre by Gail Carson Levine (6-8)

### 2003-2004

Widget by Lyn Rossiter McFarland (K-3) Lewis and Clark and Me by Laurie Myers (3-6) Hoot by Carl Hiaasen (6-8)

#### 2004-2005

Substitute Teacher Plans by Doug Johnson (K-3) Double Fudge by Judy Blume (3-6) Eragon by Christopher Paolini (6-8)

### 2005-2006

Super Dog: The Heart of a Hero by Caralyn Buehner(K-3) Scarnimals by Jack Prelutsky (3-6) Gregor the Overlander by Suzanne Collins (6-8) The Second Summer of the Sisterhood by Ann Brashares (YA)

### 2006-2007

Skippyjon Jones by Judith Schachner (K-3)
Hachiko by Pamela Turner (3-6)
Peter and the Starcatchers by Dave Barry and
Ridley Pearson (6-8)
My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult (YA)

# Ideas for Promoting the Mountain Laurel Book Award (formerly Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award)

### **General Activities**

- Create a bulletin board or display promoting our state award.
- Link book trailers for Mountain Laurel Book Award books to your online catalog.
- Send information home about the program through the parent newsletter and be sure to post the appropriate grade level lists on the library or classroom webpages.
- Suggest these books as presents for birthdays, the holidays or any time.
- Include these titles on your library or classroom wish list.
- Use masters included on the Mountain Laurel Book Award (formerly PYRCA) website to make bookmarks with nominated titles.
- Write a mini-grant to help fund the Mountain Laurel Book Award program at your school.
- Create a display by copying/scanning the book jackets. Include a QR code that links to a website about the book or the author next to the jackets.
- Consider shelving the books in a special area and/or marking the spines with colored stickers.

Visit the program website for even more ideas at https://pyrcapsla.wixsite.com/pyrca \*

Check out the Mountain Laurel Book Award Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/pyrca \*

Follow us on twitter: (a)PA YRCA \*

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# PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG READER'S CHOICE AWARDS PROGRAM MASTER LIST

# 2025-2026

# Kindergarten – Grade 3

	1	
Ashman, Linda; Aparna	Champion Chompers, Super Stinkers and Other	Kids Can Press
Varma, illustrator	Poems by Extraordinary Animals	
Balouch, Kristen	One Million Trees: A True Story	Holiday House
Barrows, Annie; Sophie	Stella & Marigold	Chronicle Books
Blackall, illustrator		
Herman, Debbie; Sheila	Carla's Glasses	Flashlight Press
Bailey, illustrator		
Kulekjian, Jessica; Zoe	Kahoom! : A Volcano Erupts	Kids Can Press
Si, illustrator		
Lanan, Jessica	Jumper: A Day in the Life of a	Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of
	Backyard Jumping Spider	Macmillan
LaRochelle, David; Mike	Mr. Fox's Game of "No!"	Candlewick Press
Wohnoutka, illustrator		
Matheson, Christie	A Mischief of Mice	Sourcebooks Jabberwocky
Oliveira, Jen de	Reggie: Kid Penguin	LB Ink, an imprint of Little, Brown Books
-		for Young Readers, a division of Hachette
		Publishing
Rajan, Rekha S.; Courtney	Wildfire Rescue (Disaster Squad)	Scholastic
Lovett, illustrator		
Spires, Ashley	The Most Magnificent Maker's A to Z	Kids Can Press
Spires, Ashley	Burt the Beetle Lives Here!	Kids Can Press
Unger, David; Marta Álvarez	José Feeds the World: How a Famous Chef Feeds	Duopress, an imprint of Sourcebooks
Miguéns, illustrator	Millions of People in Need Around the World	
Wicker, Valeria	The Knight Snacker	Little, Brown and Company
Zier-Vogel, Lindsay; Caroline	Dear Street	Kids Can Press
Bonne Müller, illustrator		

# **Grades 3-6**

	0144000	
Applegate, Katherine	Odder	Feiwel and Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Books
Axelrod-Contrada, Joan and Ann Malaspina	Zeke the Weather Geek: There's a Lizard in My Blizzard!	Kids Can Press
Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss	Sisterhood of Sleuths	Christy Ottaviano Books, Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Books
Boxer, Elisa	Hidden Hope: How a Toy and a Hero Saved Lives During the Holocaust	Abrams Books for Young Readers
Brunelle, Lynn	Haiku, Ew!: Celebrating the Disgusting Side of Nature	Millbrook Press, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group
Connor, Leslie	Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?	Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers
Derr, Aaron	Baseball Buddies: Building a Team	Red Chair Press
Hopkinson, Deborah	Evidence!: How Dr. John Snow Solved the Mystery of Cholera	Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Lapati, JoAnna	Guts for Glory: The Story of Civil War Soldier Rosetta Wakeman	Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Miller, Chanel	Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All	Sourcebooks Young Readers
Shepard, Sara	Penny Draws a Best Friend	G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Skye, Evelyn	Princess Private Eye	Disney, Hyperion
Van Draanen, Wendelin	Mr. Whiskers and the Shenanigan Sisters	Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Walsh, Jenni L.	Operation: Нарру	Zonderkidz, an imprint of HarperCollins
Winter, Jonah	It Happened in Salem	Creative Editions, an imprint of the Creative Company

# Grades 6-8

	Graues 0-0	
Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker	The Night War	Dial Books, an impring of Penguin Young Readers
Day, Nicholas	The Mona Lisa Vanishes: A Legendary Painter, a Shocking Heist, and the Birth of a Global Celebrity	Random House Studio
Fipps, Lisa	And Then, Boom!	Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers
Gerber, Alyson	The Liars Society	Scholastic Press
Kelly, Erin Entrada	The First State of Being	Greenwillow Books, an imprint of Harper Collins
Lackey, Lindsay	Farther Than the Moon	Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Books
Marsh, Katherine	The Lost Year	Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Books
Millington, Allie	Olivetti	Feiwel & Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Books
Schmidt, Gary D.	The Labors of Hercules Beal	Scholastic Press
Shang, Wendy Wan-Long	The Secret Battle of Evan Pao	Aladdin, and imprint of Simon and Schuster Children's Books
Stone, Nic	Fast Pitch	Crown Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Tang, Betty C.	Parachute Kids	Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic
Thomas, Angie	Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy	Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers
Warga, Jasmine	Warga, Jasmine	Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers
Zarr, Sara	Kyra, Just for Today	Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

# Young Adult

Cobell, K. A.	Looking for Smoke	Heartdrum, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
Deuker, Carl	Shadowed	Clarion Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
Follmuth, Alexene Farol	Twelfth Knight	Tor Publishing Group, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group
Lyle, Jennifer D.	Swarm	SourceBooks Fire
Mann, J. Albert	Shift Happens: The History of Labor in the United States	Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
McCauley, Kyrie	Bad Graces	Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
McDowell, Kara	The Prince & the Apocalypse: A Novel	Wednesday Books, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group
McManus, Karen M	Such Charming Liars	Delacorte Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Nelson, Jandy	When the World Tips Over	Dial Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Reynolds, Jason	Twenty-Four Seconds from Now:A Love Story	Atheneum, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division
Ross, Rebecca	Divine Rivals: A Novel	Wednesday Book, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group
Sepetys, Ruta and Steve Sheinkin	The Bletchley Riddle	Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House
Yang, Gene Luen and LeUyen Pham	Lunar New Year Love Story	First Second, an imprint of Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group
Yoo, Paula	Rising from the Ashes: Los Angeles, 1992. Edward Jae Song Lee, Latasha Harlins, Rodney King, and a City on Fire	Norton Young Readers, an imprint of W.W. Norton & Company
Zentner, Jeff and Brittany Cavallaro	Sunrise Nights	Quill Tree Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers