

December 2023 Newsletter



A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER:

2023 was EVENTful to say the least, having booked hundreds of EVENTS for our speakers - keynotes, conferences, school visits, festivals and panels, all over the world! Here's hoping that 2024 will bring with it, an opportunity for our speakers to inspire, encourage, and empower YOUR STUDENTS!

If you've never hosted an author visit, or have questions about what it might look like, [click here](#), for a four-minute sample of our very own **Chris Barton** in action! *Note - the recording of Chris' "Write What You'd Love to Learn" presentation for 3-5 grade students, was approved by his host*

In this issue:

- Awards
 - Reviews
 - New and upcoming book releases
 - Where you can find our speakers in real life
 - Tips for amazing author visits
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AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

[NPR's favorite books of 2023](#)

Glitter Everywhere! by **Chris Barton**

Mascot by **Charles Waters** and Traci Sorell

[NYPL Best Books of 2023](#)

Calling the Moon by 16 BIOPIIC authors, including our very own **Yamile Saied Mendez & Guadalupe Garcia McCall**

Glitter Everywhere! By **Chris Barton**

The Lost Year by **Katherine Marsh**

Mascot by **Charles Waters** & Traci Sorell

Total Garbage: A Messy Dive Into Trash, Waste, and our World by **Rebecca Donnelly**

A Work in Progress by **Jarrett Lerner**

Worm and Caterpillar Are Friends by **Kaz Windness**

Secret of the Moon Conch by **Guadalupe Garcia McCall** and David Bowles

[Chicago Public Libraries Best Books of 2023](#)

Friends Beyond Measure by **Lalena Fisher**

Ode to a Bad Day by **Chelsea Lin Wallace**

The Lost Year by **Katherine Marsh**

Mascot by **Charles Waters** & Traci Sorell

Not an Easy Win by **Chrystal D. Giles**

A Work in Progress by **Jarrett Lerner**

Total Garbage: A Messy Dive Into Trash, Waste, and our World by **Rebecca Donnelly**

Worm and Caterpillar Are Friends by **Kaz Windness**

[ALA - Notable Children's Books of 2023](#)

The Notebook Keeper by **Steven Briseno**

The Road to After by **Rebekah Lowell**

[2024 - 2025 Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List](#)

Caves by **Nell Cross Beckerman**

Shermy & Shake, The Not-So-Nice Neighbor by **Kirby Larson**

[2024 Little Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List](#)

Worm and Caterpillar are Friends by **Kaz Windness**

Yeti's Are the Worst! By **Alex Willan**

Play Like a Girl by **Misty Wilson**

[Spirit of Texas \(SPOT\) 2024 List](#)

Shine on, Luz Veliz! by **Rebecca Balcárcel**

The Great Texas Dragon Race by **Kacy Ritter**

[Lone Star Reading List for grades 6-8](#)

Mascot by **Charles Waters** & Traci Sorell

[2024 Read Aloud Indiana](#)

Cuba in my Pocket by **Adrianna Cuevas**

Some Kind of Hate by **Sarah Darer Littman**

The Road to After by **Rebekah Lowell**

Silver Eureka Award for nonfiction: *Buildings That Breathe* by **Nancy Castaldo**

Best Fiction award (3rd place) from the Missouri Writers Guild: *No Way Home* by **Polly Holyoke**

[Ohio Buckeye Children's Teen Book Award:](#)

Play Like a Girl by **Misty Wilson**

[Gateway Readers \(MO\) Nominee](#)

Fadeaway by **E.B. Vickers**

[Show Me \(MO\) Nominee](#)

Thankful by **E.B. Vickers**

[School Library Journal Best Books of 2023](#)

Nat the Cat Takes a Bath by **Jarrett Lerner**

The Lost Year by **Katherine Marsh**

Total Garbage: A Messy Dive Into Trash, Waste, and our World by **Rebecca Donnelly**

[Kirkus Reviews Best of 2023](#)

Glitter Everywhere! by **Chris Barton**

Friends Beyond Measure by **Lalena Fisher**

Not an Easy Win by **Chrystal D. Giles**

The Lost Year by **Katherine Marsh**

Calling the Moon by 16 BIOPIC authors, including our very own **Yamile Saied Mendez & Guadalupe Garcia McCall**

Mascot by **Charles Waters** & Traci Sorrell

Worm and Caterpillar Are Friends by **Kaz Windness**

[ALA Booklist Top 10](#)

Indigo and Ida by **Heather Murphy Capps**

[2024 Sakura Medal Nominees](#)

Niki Nakayama: A Chef's Tale in 13 Bites by **Debbi Michiko Florence & Jamie Michalak**

Thirst by **Varsha Bajaj**



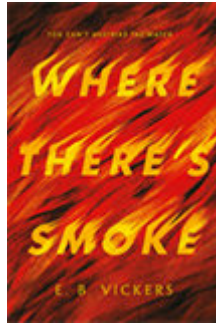
THE REVIEWS ARE IN

[The Night Fox](#) by **Ashley Wilda** “All the components of the story work, from the fantastical setting to the poignant scenes of Eli grappling with distressing feelings...[A] great fit for younger and older teens looking for a comforting read with high emotional stakes and a gratifying bit of magic.” – The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books “In an emotional and whimsical debut, Wilda weaves the present and past together to paint a story of pain and healing...Readers who enjoy stories of angst and introspection in liminal environments, such as in Meg Wolitzer’s *Belzhar* and Jenny Hubbard’s *And We Stay*, will appreciate Eli’s narrative.” – Booklist

[Jack Mathias and the Boonetown Bandits](#) by **G.M. Savage** was mentioned in Kirkus Reviews magazine as a “must read!” Kirkus went on to say, “It’s a story that will allow young readers to grasp valuable lessons while enjoying an escapist journey... A fine outdoor adventure that skillfully balances humor and realism.”



NEW AND UPCOMING BOOK RELEASES



Young adult novel

[Where There's Smoke](#) by **E.B. Vickers**



Picture book

[The Boo-Boos of Bluebell Elementary](#) by **Chelsea Wallace**



WHERE IN THE WORLD

November was a busy travel month for many of our speakers - here's some evidence of that!



Kari Lavelle and Kaz Windness at NCTE in Columbus



Danielle Joseph, Don Tate, Chris Barton and Guadalupe Garcia McCall presenting at NCTE - Picture Book Biographies Panel



Jarrett Lerner and Rebekah Lowell at NCTE



Nadia Salomon, Jennifer Ziegler and Chris Barton at NCTE



Lisa Fipps, K.A. Holt, Rebekah Lowell, librarian extraordinaire Liz Blye & Alicia D. Williams at NCTE



Rebecca Balcárcel presenting at NCTE



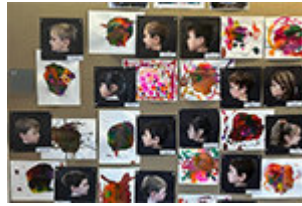
Nell Cross Beckerman at NCTE



Ashley Hope Pérez at NCTE with Angelina Meng, youth advocate. Both received an honorable mention NCTE Intellectual Freedom Award



Daria Peoples presenting at a school in New York. They read *This Is It* and *I Got Next*.



After talking about our shadow self, they made self-portraits with watercolor and coffee filters.



Heather Murphy Capps signing at NCTE



Vera Ahiyya & Nadia Salomon at NCTE



Katherine Marsh receiving her National Book Finalist award for *The Lost Year*



Ashley Wilda signing copies at their launch event for *The Night Fox*



LET'S TALK – SCHOOL VISIT MAGIC

Kari Lavelle's and **Lindsay Leslie's** dual school presentation BATTLE OF THE GENRES: FICTION VS. NONFICTION was a hit at their recent round of visits to numerous elementary schools within Frisco ISD. Librarian Julie Ratliff at Pink Elementary had this to say: "Outstanding presentation! Our students enjoy both fiction and nonfiction, so a battle of the genres was both fun and engaging! Many teachers loved that the presentation reinforced exactly what they are learning in class and encouraged young writers." Kari and Lindsay are booking visits for Spring 2024.

"I had a couple of great visits recently -- both in Louisiana -- that underscored just how valuable it is to have a school's top administrator visibly present for and engaged in my sessions. It sets a terrific example and establishes high expectations for students and faculty alike, and nothing could more clearly send the message that it's a special opportunity and an important occasion." - **Chris Barton**

"Yesterday, I was visiting a school to talk about healthy friendships. I shared some "friendship truths" from my book BFF or NRF (Not Really Friends), the Friendship Pyramid and how to cultivate positive relationships. Towards the end of the conversation, a student raised her hand and asked how she can heal from losing a friendship. This beautiful, honest question opened the door to talk about recognizing and navigating big emotions in healthy ways and the importance of self-care and healing. Relationships are wonderful and hard and worth it. My hope is to equip kids and teens with the skills and awareness to cultivate supportive, healthy relationships now and in the future." - **Jessica Speer**

"I love it when a school thinks outside the box to engage students in the book I'm presenting. I had a fabulous time visiting a Westchester County, New York school when they added a canine officer to my program about my book SNIFFER DOGS: HOW DOGS (and Their) NOSES SAVE THE WORLD. After my discussion about how dogs use their sense to smell and the research that went into writing my book, students had the chance to meet a real-life sniffer dog. The event, for parents and students, was a raging success." - **Nancy Castaldo**



DID YOU KNOW...?

Looking to send your students home with a fun, holiday themed activity? Well look no further! [Click here](#) to download coloring & activity pages tied to **Lalena Fisher's** book *Friends Beyond Measure!*