

Fifty Award-Worthy Authors

Although we may realize that we need to increase diversity in our library media centers, the busy library media specialist may not have time to locate a wide variety of high-quality literature reflecting the cultures of our society. Consider award-winning books as an alternative.

The Américas (Latino and Caribbean), Asian Pacific American, Coretta Scott King (African American), Pura Belpré (Latino), Sydney Taylor (Jewish), and Tomás Rivera (Mexican American) awards are culture-specific. The Carter G. Woodson awards recognize excellence in portraying cultures. Books that receive these awards have been judged for accurate portrayal of a specific culture as well as literary excellence. Therefore, library media specialists can usually expect exceptionally high quality when purchasing books that have received one of these awards.

Although not all ethnic groups are represented by these awards, such awards are a good starting place for acquisitions to increase diversity. The following 50 authors (in alphabetical order) and accompanying awarded titles were selected from *Ethnic Books Awards: A Directory of Multicultural Literature for Young Readers* (Linworth Publishing Inc., 2005). Numbers indicate reading level/interest level (RL/IL).

1. Julia Alvarez

Before We Were Free. Knopf, 2002. 5.6/7–12, 8.0/7–12. 0375815449



By Sherry York

In 1960s Dominican Republic, Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of General

Trujillo.

Américas Winner 2002

Pura Belpré Winner, Narrative 2004

2. Rudolfo Anaya

The Farolitos of Christmas.

Edward Gonzáles, ill. Hyperion Books for Children/Disney Publishing Worldwide, 1995. 2.0/K–3. 0786800607

With her father fighting in World War II and her grandfather too sick to create traditional luminarias, Luz helps create little lanterns for their Christmas celebration.

Américas Award Commended 1995

Tomás Rivera Winner 1995

3. Jorge Argüeta

A Movie in My Pillow/Una película en mi almohada. Elizabeth

Gómez, ill. Children's Book Press, 2001. 3.2/3–6. 0892391650

Jorgito lives in San Francisco but remembers his native El Salvador.

Américas Winner 2001

4. Esther Silverstein Blanc

Berchick. Tennessee Dixon, ill.

Volcano Press, 1989. 3.0/K–3, 3.0/3–6. 0912078812

Homesteading in Wyoming in the early 1900s, a Jewish mother develops an unusual relationship with a colt she adopts.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Younger 1989

5. Lucille Clifton Everett

Anderson's Goodbye. Ann

Grifalconi, ill. Henry Holt & Company, 1988. 2.0/K–3, 3.0/K–3. 0805008004

Everett has a difficult time coming to terms with grief after his father dies.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 1984

6. Bárbara C. Cruz

Multiethnic Teens and Cultural

Identity. Enslow Publishers Inc., 2001. 7.0/7–12. 0766012018

Issues facing teens of multiethnic descent, including discrimination and the search for ethnic identity in an unsympathetic culture.

Carter G. Woodson Winner, Secondary 2002

7. Christopher Paul Curtis

Bud, Not Buddy. Yearling Books (Random House), 2002. 4.0/3–6, 5.0/5–8. 0440413281

Bud, a motherless boy during the Great Depression, escapes a foster home and sets out in search of his father.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 2000

8. Edwidge Danticat

Behind the Mountains. Scholastic Inc., 2002. 5.6/5–8, 8.0/7–12. 0439372992

Writing in the notebook her teacher gave her, Celiane describes life in Haiti and experiences in Brooklyn after the family immigrates.

Américas Honorable Mention 2002

9. Tanjuna Desai Hidier

Born Confused. Scholastic Inc., 2003. 5.9/7–12, 8.0/7–12. 0439510112

Dimple, whose family is from India, discovers that she is not Indian enough for Indians and not American enough for Americans.

Asian Pacific American Honor, Text 2004

10. Lise Erdrich

Sacagawea. Julie Buffalohead, ill. Carolrhoda Books (Lerner Publishing Group), 2003. 4.0/3–6. 0876146469

Biography of the Shoshone girl who accompanied Lewis and Clark.

Carter G. Woodson Winner, Elementary 2004

11. Sharon G. Flake

Money Hungry. Hyperion Books for Children/Disney Publishing Worldwide, 2001. 4.0/3–6, 6.0/5–8. 0786815035

All Raspberry can think of is making money so that she and her mother will never have to live on the streets again.

Coretta Scott King Honor, Author 2002

12. Carmen Lomas Garza

In My Family: Paintings and Stories / En mi familia: Cuadros y relatos. Children's Book Press, 2000. 2.0/K-3. 0892391634
The author uses art to portray her experiences growing up in south Texas.

Américas Winner 1996

Pura Belpré Honor, Illustration 1998

Tomás Rivera Winner 1996

13. Suhaib Hamid Ghazi

Ramadan. Omar Rayyan, ill. Holiday House, 1996. 2.0/K-3. 082341275X

Describes the celebration of the month of Ramadan by an Islamic family and the meaning and importance of this Islamic religious holiday.

Carter G. Woodson Winner, Elementary 1997

14. Barbara Diamond Goldin

Cakes and Miracles: A Purim Tale. Erika Weihs, ill. Viking Children's Books (Penguin Putnam), 1991. oop. 3.0/K-3. 067083047X

Young, blind Hershel finds that he has special gifts he can use to help his mother during the Jewish holiday of Purim.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Younger 1991

15. Nikki Grimes

Bronx Masquerade. Puffin, 2003. 4.5/7-12. 0142501891

While studying the Harlem Renaissance, students at a Bronx high school read poems they've written, revealing their innermost thoughts and fears to their classmates.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 2003

16. Richard Griswold del Castillo

César Chávez: The Struggle for Justice / César Chávez: la lucha por la justicia. Piñata Books, 2002. 2.0/K-3. 1558853243

Biography of Mexican-American labor leader of the United Farm Workers.

Carter G. Woodson Winner, Elementary 2003.

17. Esther Hautzig

The Endless Steppe: Growing Up in Siberia. HarperTrophy, 1987.

6.3/7-12, 8.0/7-12. 006447027X
During World War II, the author and her family were arrested by Russians and exiled to Siberia for five years.

Sydney Taylor Winner 1968

18. Karen Hesse

Letters from Rifka. Hyperion Books for Children/Disney Publishing Worldwide, 1993. 4.2/3-6. 0140363912

In letters to her cousin, a Jewish girl chronicles her family's flight from Russia in 1919 and her experiences when she is left in Belgium while the others go to America.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Older 1992

19. Francisco Jiménez

Breaking Through. Houghton Mifflin, 2002. 5.3/7-12. 0618342486

Having come from Mexico to California ten years ago, Francisco is fighting to improve his life and complete his education.

Américas Winner 2001

Pura Belpré Honor, Narrative 2002

Tomás Rivera Winner 2001

20. Angela Johnson

The First Part Last. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003. 4.7/7-12, 8.0/7-12. 0689849222

Bobby's carefree teenage life changes when he becomes a father and must care for his baby daughter.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 2004

21. Lynn Joseph

The Color of My Words. HarperTrophy, 2002. 4.0/3-6, 5.1/3-6. 0064472043

When life in the Dominican Republic gets difficult, Ana Rosa, a would-be writer, depends on her brother to make her feel better until the events on her 13th birthday.

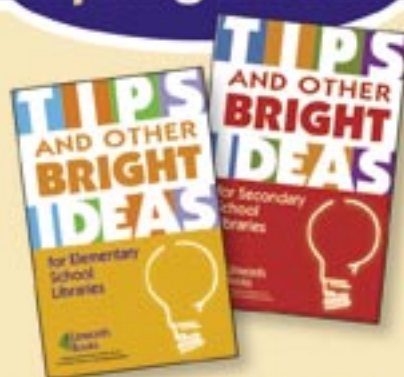
Américas Winner 2000

22. Eric Kimmel

The Chanukkah Guest. Giora Carmi, ill. Holiday House, 1992. 3.0/K-3. 0823409783

On the first night of Chanukkah, Old Bear wanders into Bubba Brayna's house and receives a

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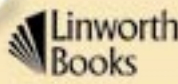
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helping of potato latkes when she mistakes him for the rabbi.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Younger 1990

23. Sonia Levitin

The Return. Fawcett, 1988. 7.0/7-12. 0449702804

Desta and members of her Falasha family, Jews suffering from discrimination in Ethiopia, flee the country and attempt the dangerous journey to Israel.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Older 1987

24. Frederic C. McKissack and

25. Patricia L. McKissack

Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters. Scholastic Inc., 2002. 4.0/3-6. 0590430289

Customs, recipes, poems, and songs to celebrate Christmas in plantation houses and in the slave quarters before the Civil War.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 1995

26. Ken Mochizuki

Beacon Hill Boys. Scholastic Inc., 2004. 5.1/7-12, 7.1/7-12. 0439249066

In 1972 Seattle, a Japanese-American teenager struggles for his own identity, along with a group

of friends who share his anger and confusion.

Asian Pacific American Honor, Text 2004

27. Pat Mora

A Library for Juana: The World of Sor Juana Inés. Beatriz Vidal, ill. Knopf, 2002. 2.0/K-3, 3.7/K-3. 0375806431

Biography of the 17th-century Mexican poet, learned in many subjects, who became a nun later in life.

Américas Commended 2002

Tomás Rivera Winner 2002

28. Yuji Morales

Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book. Chronicle Books, 2003. 2.0/K-3. 0811837580

Señor Calavera arrives at Grandma Beetle's door to take her to the next life, but after helping her count as she makes birthday preparations, he changes his mind.

Américas Winner 2003

Pura Belpré Winner, Illustration 2004

Tomás Rivera Winner 2003

29. Walter Dean Myers

Slam! Scholastic Inc., 1998. 4.5/7-12. 0590486683

"Slam" Harris is counting on his basketball talents to get him out

of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 1997

30. An Na

A Step from Heaven. Front Street, 2001. 4.2/7-12, 8.0/7-12. 0142500275

A Korean girl and her family find it difficult to adjust to life in the United States.

Asian Pacific American Winner, Text 2004

31. Judith Ortiz Cofer

The Meaning of Consuelo. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003. 6.8/7-12. 0374205094

In 1950s Puerto Rico, Consuelo, the serious daughter, watches her younger sister Mili's tragic disintegration while the family falls apart.

Américas Winner 2004

32. Nancy Osa

Cuba 15. Delacorte Press (Random House), 2003. 8-0/7-12. 0385730217

Violet, a Chicago high school student, reluctantly prepares for her upcoming quince, the celebration of a Latina's 15th birthday.

Américas Honorable Mention 2003

Pura Belpré Honor, Narrative 2004

33. Linda Sue Park

A Single Shard. Yearling Books (Random House), 2003. 4.0/3-6, 6.0/5-8, 6.6/5-8. 0440418518

Tree-ear, an orphan in medieval Korea, lives under a bridge in a potters' village and longs to learn how to make delicate celadon ceramics.

Asian Pacific American Honor, Text 2004

34. Nancy Patz

Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat? Dutton Children's Books (Penguin Putnam), 2003. 3.0/3-6. 0525469990

Meditation on a woman's hat on display in the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Older 2003

35. Amada Irma Pérez

My Very Own Room/Mi propio cuartito. Maya Christina González,

ill. Children's Book Press, 2000.
3.9/3-6. 0892391642

With the help of her family, a Mexican-American girl realizes her dream of having a space of her own.

Américas Honorable Mention 2000
Tomás Rivera Winner 2000

36. Andrea Davis Pinkney

Let It Shine! Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters. Stephen Alcorn, ill. Gulliver Books, 2000.
7.2/3-6. 015201005X

Biographical sketches of ten African-American civil rights activists.

Carter G. Woodson Winner, Middle Level 2001

Coretta Scott King Honor, Author 2001

37. Elsa Okon Rael

Rivka's First Thanksgiving. Maryann Kovalski, ill. Margaret K. McElderry Books (Simon & Schuster), 2001. 3.9/P-2.
0689839014

Having heard about Thanksgiving in school, Rivka tries to convince her immigrant family and rabbi that it is a holiday for all, Jews and non-Jews alike.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Younger 2001

38. Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza Rising. Blue Sky Press (Scholastic Inc.), 2002. 4.0/3-6, 5.3/5-8. 043912042X

Esperanza and her mother leave a life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to work in the labor camps of Southern California on the eve of the Great Depression.

Américas Honorable Mention 2000
Pura Belpré Winner, Narrative 2002

39. Marilyn Sachs

Call Me Ruth. HarperTrophy, 1995. oop. 5.1/3-6. 0688137377

Daughter of a Russian immigrant family in 1908 Manhattan has conflicting feelings about her mother's increasingly radical union involvement.

Sydney Taylor Winner 1982

40. Gary Soto

Chato's Kitchen. Susan Guevara, ill. Putnam's, 1995. 2.0/K-3.
0698116003

To get the ratoncitos (mice) who

have moved into the barrio to come to his house, Chato the cat prepares all kinds of good food: fajitas, frijoles, salsa, enchiladas, and more.

Américas Honorable Mention 1995

Pura Belpré Winner, Illustration 1996

Tomás Rivera Winner 1995

41. Marci Stillerman

Nine Spoons. Pesach Gerber, ill. HaChai Publishing, 1998. 2.0/K-3.
0922613842

Brave souls in a Nazi camp are determined to gather nine spoons to make a menorah for Chanukah.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Younger 1998

42. Yuri Suhl

Uncle Misha's Partisans. Atheneum (Simon & Schuster), 1973. oop. na/ya. 0590072951

During World War II in the Ukraine, an orphaned Jewish boy joins a band of partisans who give him an important assignment against the Nazis.

Sydney Taylor Winner 1973

43. Ida Vos

The Key Is Lost. HarperCollins, 2000. 5.5/5-8. 0688162835

In 1940 when the Germans occupy Holland and persecute the Jews, Eva and her family assume false names and move from one hiding place to another.

Sydney Taylor Winner, Older 2000

44. Mildred Pitts Walter

Mississippi Challenge. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1992. 7.0/7-12. 0027923010

The struggle for civil rights for the blacks in Mississippi from slavery to the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Coretta Scott King Honor, Author 1993

Carter G. Woodson Winner, Secondary 1993

45. Natasha Wing

Jalapeño Bagels. Robert Casilla, ill. Atheneum (Simon & Schuster), 1996. 2.0/K-3. 0689805306

For International Day at school, Pablo wants to bring something that reflects the cultures of both his parents.

Américas Commended 1996

46. Janet S. Wong

The Trip Back Home. Bo Jia, ill. Harcourt, 2000. 4.5/K-3.
0152007849

A girl and her mother travel to Korea to visit their extended family.

Asian Pacific American Winner 2000

47. Brenda Woods

The Red Rose Box. Grosset & Dunlap, 2002. 4.9/3-6.
039923702X

In 1953 Leah dreams of leaving the poverty and segregation of Louisiana, so when her aunt sends tickets to Los Angeles for her birthday, she gets a taste of freedom.

Coretta Scott King Honor 2003

48. Jacqueline Woodson

Miracle's Boys. Putnam's, 2000. 4.3/5-8. 0698119169

Lafayette's close relationship with his brother Charlie changes after Charlie is released from a detention home and blames Lafayette for their mother's death.

Coretta Scott King Winner, Author 2001

49. Lawrence Yep

Dragonwings. Crowell, 1975; Cornerstone, 1990. 5.3/5-8, 6.0/5-8. 0064400859

In the early 20th century, a Chinese boy joins his father in San Francisco and helps him realize a dream, making a flying machine.

Carter G. Woodson Winner 1976

50. Yin

Coolies. Chris Soentpiet, ill. Puffin, 2003. 4.8/3-6. 0142500550

A boy hears the story of his great-great-great-grandfather and brother who came to the United States to make a better life while helping to build the transcontinental railroad.

Asian Pacific American Honor, Illustration 2004 ■

Sherry York is a retired library media specialist, reviewer, and the author of four books including *Ethnic Book Awards: A Directory of Multicultural Literature for Young Readers* (Linworth Publishing Inc., 2005).

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