

Implementing a Community-Wide Read Program for Youth

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About GRPL

- Main Library plus seven branches and seasonal mobile library
- Service area: city of Grand Rapids
 - Separate from Kent District Library!
 - Population of approx. 200,000
- One school district for city: Grand Rapids Public Schools
 - Enrollment: 13,800 across 45 schools, including 25 elementary schools
 - Around half of school-age children/teens in city attend GRPS
 - 39% Hispanic/Latino, 31% Black, 22% white, 1% AAPI
 - 63% free/reduced lunch
 - In 2024, 22% of third graders proficient in reading on M-STEP
 - 82% graduation rate



About One Book, One City for Kids

- Annual program that encourages all fifth graders in Grand Rapids to read and discuss the same book
- Conducted in partnership with GRPS
- Every GRPS fifth grader gets copy of book and studies in class
- Teacher's guide created
- Author visit: author talks to every GRPS fifth grader as well as public non-GRPS session hosted by GRPL
 - 1,250 fifth graders in GRPS across 62 classes!
 - Public talk attendees: 118 in 2025, 223 in 2024
- Tried lead-up programs at GRPL with mixed results
- Entirely grant-funded, funding managed by GRPL Foundation, budget of \$30k
- Staff: primarily myself with support from YS manager, Communications department

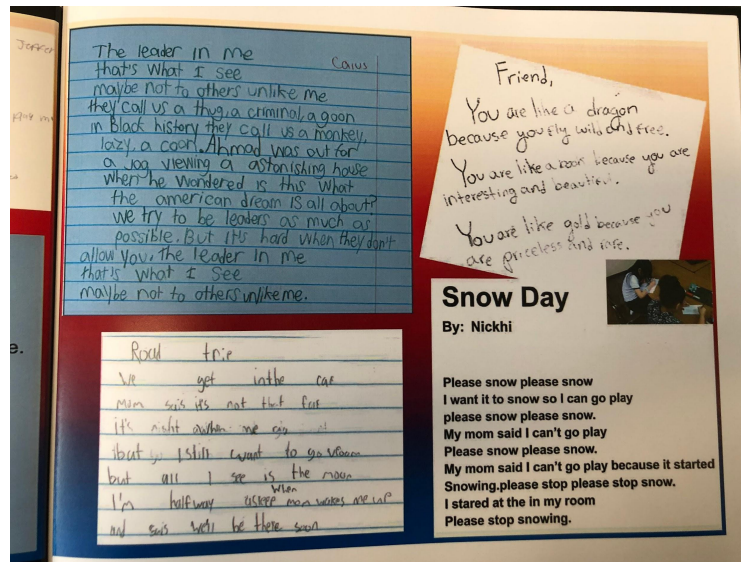
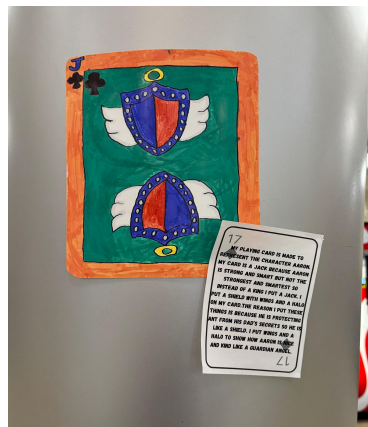
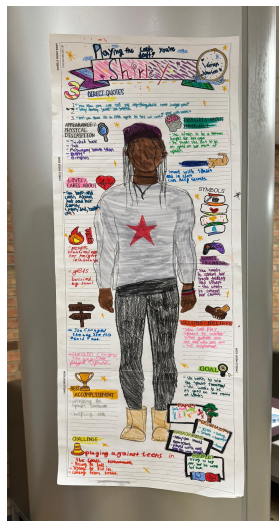
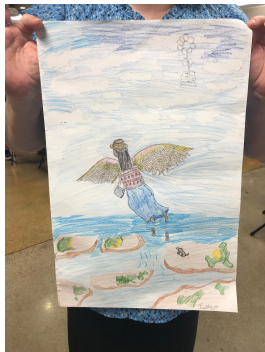


Author talks

- GRPS talks on morning and afternoon for two days, morning of third day
 - Activity beforehand: robotics demo, card design contest
- Lunch provided for author
- Public talk afternoon of third day
 - Rent out auditorium across the street from Main Library
 - Q&A: never enough time for everyone, try to get at least one from each school
- No signing/meet and greet–author provides bookplates

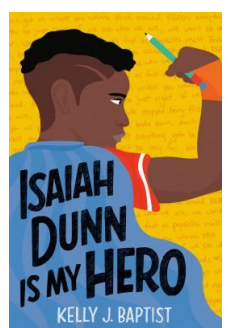
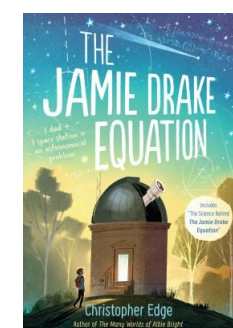
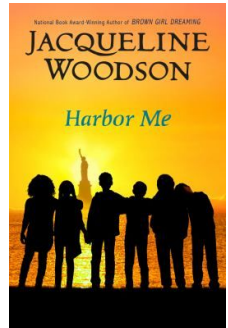
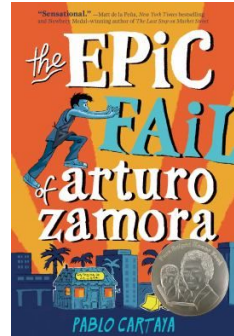
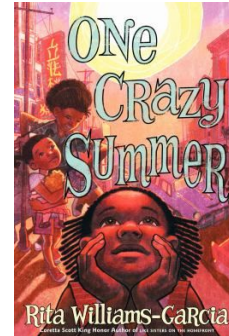
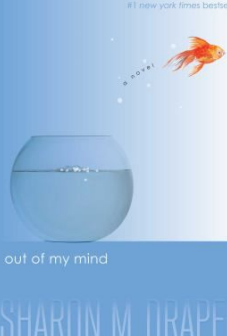
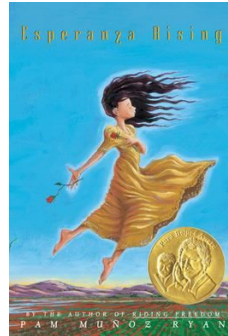
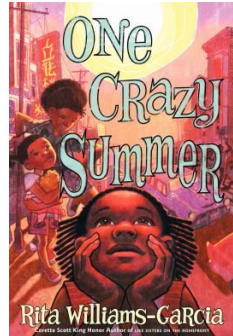
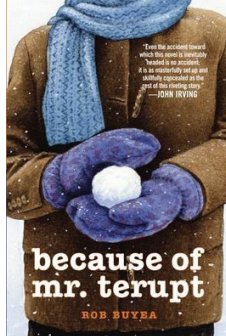
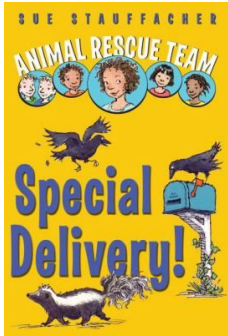
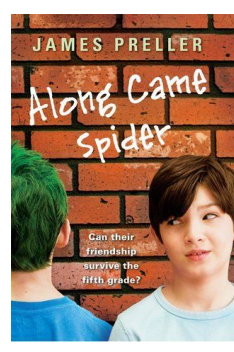
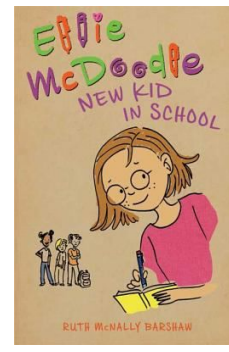
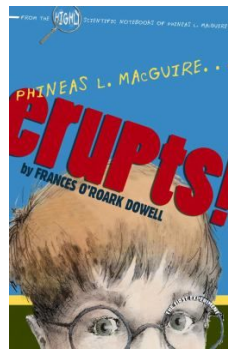
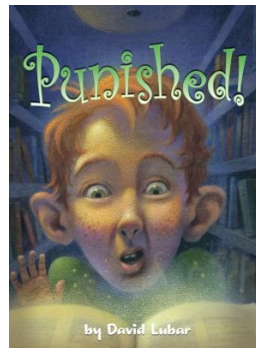
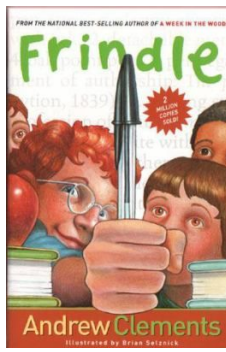
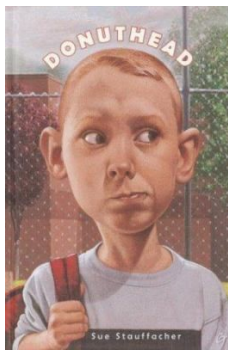


The impact



OBOC History

- One County, One Book for adults in Kent County in 2003
- Kids' version added in 2006
 - In partnership with other area libraries
 - Author spoke at Main Library, bookstore
- Became One Book, One City in 2008
 - One school randomly chosen for visit from author—teachers applied
- Originally for 4th–6th grade, then 4th, then 5th since 2015
- GRPS partnership began in 2013 as part of larger partnership
 - All students got copy of book, five schools randomly chosen for visit
- # of GRPS schools attending increased each year until it was all schools!
- Initially had other community partners as well like GRCC, later simplified to just GRPS



OBOC
selections,
2006-2025

GRPS partnership

- Work with ELA Curriculum Supervisor and Library Media and Video Technician
- GRPS's role:
 - Feedback on book possibilities
 - Distributing materials
 - Leading classroom reading/discussion
 - Compiling student work
 - Coordinating busses, lunches, etc. during author talks
- GRPL and GRPS staff speak together at school board each year
- Importance of clear expectations, deadlines



Book selection

- Ask if GRPS has specific theme/topic in mind
- Solicit suggestions from GRPL staff
- Send top three to GRPS
- Criteria:
 - Ideally 300 pages or fewer and not too dense
 - Paperback availability (it's much cheaper!)
 - Deals with important issues without being heavy
 - Reflects diversity of GRPS student population
 - Does not have to be a new book!
 - Probably wouldn't choose a graphic novel
 - Author availability



Timeline

- July: initial meeting with GRPS
- August: grant request due to Foundation
- Late September: book chosen
- October: Communications begins designing materials
- Early December: books sent to GRPS
- January: information sent to non-GRPS schools
- February: lead-up event
- **March: the main event!**
- April: speak at GRPS school board meeting
- June: grant evaluation due

Budget

Expense	Estimate	Actual	Notes
Speaking fee	10,000	10,200	(3400/day)
Hotel and transportation	2,000	1,843.39	1,035 travel fee (flight + rental car) 206.95 credit card for meals, hotel 601.44
St. Cecilia rental	1,000	720	
Books	15,000	12,945.60	Staff copies (57.18) ended up being paid for from YS budget
Lunches	500	455.33	363.96 Mon and Tues, 91.37 on Wed
Lead-up event	500	80.01	
Misc.	1000	1087.42	222.46 for bookplates, 864.96 for playing cards
Total:	30,000	27,332	

Questions?



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