



“Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign SY2021-2022 Diversity Celebration Toolkit

The Arc Maryland, in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Disabilities, and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, is pleased to announce its 2021-2022 “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign **in honor of National Inclusive Schools week (December 6th – 10th)**. National Inclusive Schools Week highlights and celebrates the progress schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to all students, including those with disabilities. This year’s theme is **“Rebuilding Our Inclusive Community Together”**.

We created a **Diversity Celebration Toolkit** at www.thearcmd.org/programs/twb/diversity-celebration-toolkit/ and activities (online or in-person) that align with Maryland State Curriculum Indicators for teachers, counselors, volunteers, and other staff in preparing lesson plans and activities for students to celebrate inclusive schools and diverse abilities of all students. Also, the Diversity Celebration Toolkit contains resources to plan activities and tools aimed to guide your **students in participating in our Artwork contest & Drawing contest (creating pages for a coloring book for younger children)**. (See flyer for full details or visit <http://www.thearcmd.org/programs/twb/>) We developed this toolkit for you to utilize with your students either in the classroom or virtually online. This toolkit embraces and celebrates the differences of every child while promoting awareness. Across the world, we are experiencing a “new normal” that is required in response to the coronavirus pandemic. We hope in the not too distant future, we will be able to celebrate our resilience in the face of difficulty and experience the joys of being *included* in a community that learns, plays, and works together as well as recognizing “*Rebuilding Our Inclusive Community Together*” happens now!

Inclusive Schools are characterized by:

- Making every student feel welcome and providing the supports they need to learn
- Embracing the understanding that every student is unique, and therefore, learns differently
- Respect for diversity creates a hospitable environment for all
- Understanding that all children learn better if teaching is tailored to their abilities and interests
- Collaborating with families and holding high expectations for student success

Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling book includes a long list of more than two dozen practical ways educators can make their classrooms more inclusive. Some of the practices include:



- LESS whole-class, teacher-directed instruction
- LESS classroom time devoted to fill-in-the-blank worksheets
- LESS tracking or leveling of students into "ability groups"
- MORE active learning in the classroom
- MORE emphasis on higher-order thinking and learning of key concepts and principles
- MORE responsibility transferred to students for their work
- MORE attention to affective needs and the varying cognitive styles for individual students
- MORE delivery of aid and help to students in general education classrooms

Updated Classroom Video Library

1. The Arc Maryland created video presentations featuring advocates, people with disabilities, discussing their experiences in school and talking about why school inclusion was important for them. The videos enhance positive attitudes and break down stereotypes of people with disabilities. Watch these educational videos about what it’s like growing up with a disability and inclusion at the links listed below. This video collection can be shown in the classroom, used at home during virtual class time, or assigned to view as homework.

<https://youtu.be/S3D45VkrIOM> - features Ken Capone, Public Policy Director for People on the Go of Maryland- Maryland’s statewide self-advocacy organization.

<https://youtu.be/E5nfYLtkqEI> – features Hannah Brammer, self-advocate and college student at Stevenson University in Maryland.

***Schedule free, in-person or e-learning virtual interactive discussions with people with disabilities for your virtual classrooms by contacting Sharon Dols, Director of Operations & Strategic Partnerships, at sdols@thearcmd.org.

2. The Arc US, located in Washington, DC, created additional educational videos in a “Watch & Learn” disability film series produced by Sproutflix, a non-profit organization dedicated to showing films featuring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). A website link and login information is below to view a sampling of videos for middle school and high school student audiences.

Website: https://sproutflix.org/sign_in

Login: teachers@thearcmd.org Password: Thearc2020

For questions about The Arc US video series, please contact Sharon Dols at sdols@thearcm.org.

RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES - Aligned with Maryland State Curriculum Indicators

Health Education

1. Mental and Emotional Health

Additional Subject Area Connections: Art

Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate ways to communicate respect for diversity, including mental and physical disabilities, culture, and race/ethnicity.
2. Students will communicate their understanding of what bullying is, and how using certain labels to describe people with disabilities is hurtful.

Art

- 3.2.a Identify sources for ideas and describe the processes used to create artworks based on those sources.

Unit Title: Disability Awareness

Unit Description: Students will participate in activities that promote disability awareness and celebrate diversity.

Experiences

- Students participate in disability awareness activities (e.g., online or in-person guest speakers and published sample activities in suggested resources)
- Students read books related to disability awareness and acceptance
- Students view videos (links shown below) to understand disabilities
- Students design and create artwork demonstrating knowledge and ideas gained
- Students complete one-page post-activity surveys to demonstrate attitudinal changes and increased knowledge following campaign activities

Presentations/Assemblies

- Sponsor a virtual or in-person Disability Awareness Day (or “Together We’re Better” day/week). Invite guest speakers to come to your school or classroom, through pre-recorded videos on YouTube or live online interactions with your students, or in-person that would include individuals with disabilities as well as representatives from nonprofit and community service agencies. **Contact Sharon Dols at The Arc Maryland to make arrangements at sdols@thearcmd.org.**

Resource Links & Websites for Teachers (i.e. - sample activities, lesson plans, virtual ideas, etc.)

<https://marylandlearninglinks.org/about/>

Maryland Learning Links is used in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education and Johns Hopkins School of Education to provide current information and resources about Special Education

<https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-field-trips>

Virtual field trip ideas & resources

<http://autism.sesamestreet.org/>

Sesame Workshop created Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children, a nationwide initiative aimed at communities with children ages 2 to 6. See Amazing in All Children offers families ways to manage common challenges, to simplify everyday activities, and to grow connections and support from family, friends, and community.

https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson115.shtml

Activities for teaching about disabilities

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/creating-inclusive-virtual-classroom>

Creating an Inclusive Virtual Classroom – help students feel a sense of connection and access academic material

<https://understandingourdifferences.org/enrichment/>

Disability awareness education lesson plans & programs for children to understand that people with disabilities should be respected & included

<https://imdetermined.org>

The I’m Determined project focuses on providing direct instruction & opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determined behavior. This project facilitates youth, especially those with disabilities to undertake a measure of control in their lives, helping to set & steer the course rather than remaining the silent passenger.

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<http://www.theinclusiveclass.com/2020/08/10-easy-ways-to-create-inclusive.html>

Using research-based teaching strategies and activities, teachers can build an online community that is inclusive of students with a wide variety of abilities and interests.

<https://ctl.columbia.edu/resources-and-technology/teaching-with-technology/teaching-online/inclusive-teaching/>

With the rapid shift to online learning, instructors can draw on principles of inclusive teaching to help students feel a sense of belonging, ensure they can access course materials, and support them in achieving learning goals.

<https://sbsk.org/>

Special Books by Special Kids - Educational resources Providing stories of self-advocating students with I/DD on YouTube and Facebook

<http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week/>

Inclusive Schools Week: Teacher Planning/Activity Tools

https://ed.ted.com/daily_newsletter

Sharing interactive video-based lessons during the Covid19 pandemic

<https://www.respectability.org/resources/education-resources-disability-issues/>

Virtual educational resources on disability issues

<https://www.embracingourdifferences.org/lesson-plans/>

Virtual lesson plans & videos regarding school inclusion

<https://eala.wpengine.com/>

Educating all learners during the Covid19 pandemic

<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/creating-an-inclusive-classroom/inclusion-online/>

Making Zoom sessions inclusive

<https://diversity.unl.edu/implementing-inclusive-excellence-virtual-learning-environments>

Implementing inclusive excellence into virtual learning environments

<https://fivemooreminutes.com/about/>

Videos dedicated to empowering schools & classrooms to support ALL learners

<http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/inclusion-and-special-education-resources.aspx>

ASCD empowers educators to achieve excellence in learning, teaching, and leading so that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Inclusion and Special Education Resources include books, lesson plans, webinars, online learning, and teacher leadership

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/virtual-activities>

Virtual activities/lessons for students

<https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/psa-campaigns/who-i-am-psa/>

Toolkit of videos & stories about people with disabilities

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<http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/community-building/youth-and-school/unified-champion-schools/Unified-Champion-Schools-High-School-Playbook.pdf>

Making high schools be socially inclusive

<https://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week/isw-activities-and-lessons/>

Inclusive Schools Week: Celebration Activities & Lesson Plans

<http://www.thearc.org/learn-about>

Learn about conditions of disability for better understanding & find various resources about inclusion & disabilities

http://ici.umn.edu/products/inclusive_schools.pdf

Inclusive School Communities for Students with Disabilities: 10 Reasons Why

<https://www.edutopia.org/video/why-inclusion-matters-playground>

Why inclusion matters on the playground

<https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2020/08/when-virtual-learning-barriers-collapse-inclusion-expands>

Inclusion expands – enacting changes to better serve all students

<https://www.ppmid.org/resources/>

Helpful Teacher Resources: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Amazing Me: Developmental Milestones Book for Children; Bullying; Bullying Among Children & Youth with Disabilities; Warning Signs a Child is Being Bullied; Epilepsy

<http://www.wholechildeducation.org/what-works/resources>

Inclusive Learning: Meeting Each Student's Special Needs... Creating an inclusive environment where each student feels safe and supported in an engaging and appropriately challenging environment is rarely an easy feat, yet it is essential to educating the whole child. Regardless of strengths and challenges, each student needs and is deserving of full membership within the classroom and school community.

<https://www.naeyc.org/>

Inclusion and Disability Awareness Training for Educators

<http://inclusiveschools.org/the-importance-of-inclusion-in-play-for-children-with-cerebral-palsy/>

The importance of inclusion in play for children with cerebral palsy: www.cerebralpalsyguidance.com

View a variety of experts providing families and individuals with cerebral palsy the resources they need. With medical experts, lawyers, and even people who live with this condition, the latest information is gathered about everything that impacts children with cerebral palsy, including the important topic of inclusion.

<https://inclusiveschools.org/the-nora-project/>

The Nora Project’s mission is to teach empathy by sparking friendships between students and their peers with disabilities. The program is laid out over the four quarters of a school year and delivered in general education classrooms in grades 2-12.

<https://inclusiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-Celebration-Activities-for-ISW.pdf>

Lessons and Plans for Educators

<https://www.thoughtco.com/an-inclusion-toolbox-3111034>

An Inclusion Toolbox – Resources to help special educators succeed in inclusive classrooms

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<https://www.nprinc.com/categories/special-education/inclusion.html>

NPR (National Professional Resources) - source for educators of an extensive variety of classroom and professional development resources

<https://www.embracingourdifferences.org/> and <https://www.embracingourdifferences.org/lesson-plans-listing/>

Embracing our Differences is a not-for-profit organization based in Florida that uses the power of art and education to expand consciousness and open the heart to celebrate the diversity of the human family. It accomplishes this through a comprehensive series of educational initiatives, programs and resources designed for teachers and students. Through the transformative power of the arts, we educate and inspire to create a better world.

<https://www.brighthubeducation.com>

Lesson plans, teaching units, classroom management techniques, student assessment tools, special education information, and more... ideas for kindergarten through senior high school

https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/lessons-units?search_api_views_fulltext_1=disability

Service-learning project ideas related to disability awareness

<https://hiehelpcenter.org/disability-awareness-class-lessons/>

Disability awareness class activities lesson plans

<https://educators4sc.org/topic-resources/teaching-about-disability/>

Teaching disability awareness to students

VIDEOS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL8GMxRW_5Y

Talk to Me-Physical Disability Awareness (Phoebe) – 3-minutes (grades 3 – 8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8>

Disability Sensitivity Training - 4-minutes (grades 7 – 12)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0fs9650Vz8>

Katie’s Disability Awareness Video (etiquette) – 3-minutes (grades K – 4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjqiU5FgsYc>

The Present – learn to accept yourself the way you are (grades 2 – 6)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4frsp-rR6c&list=PLAJFhAOG3SCd4XvNshmlvesc7i1sHlr55>

Tamara is a film about how a child’s dream will overcome all circumstances – 4-minutes (grades K – 3)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtRYKjucDHk&list=PLAJFhAOG3SCd4XvNshmlvesc7i1sHlr55&index=2>

What’s Up With Nick? In an effort to promote a more inclusive classroom environment, this short video uses animation and sound to teach students about their peers with autism – 3-minutes (grades 2 – 7)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz_d-cikWml

Academy Award-eligible, “Ian” tells the story of a boy with Cerebral Palsy whose fierce determination to be included on his local playground changes the beliefs and actions of his community – 9-minutes (grades 2 – 5)

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJnJ_fTYofQ

Inspiring man born without arms or legs - Nick Vujicic | 60 Minutes Australia – 14-minutes (grades 5 - 12)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EJqX9JbMPg>

General Disability Awareness: Using Person-First Language – 3-minutes (grades 5 – 9)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o&list=PLdERLjd8WMLzxnz5qYBrMinq-dyKvJoY>

Pep Talk from Kid President to You – 3-minutes (grades 4 – 8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gM96e0yWjhl&list=FLhr7RGyPqO6Rx-gRAnAJBRg&index=7>

Respect- 1-minute (grades 3 – 8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkdtEOrrkPs>

End the “R” word- 2-minutes (grades 1 – 5)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0fs9650Vz8>

Katie’s Disability Video – 3-minutes (grades 2 – 5)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brVxm8tqsC4>

Sometimes disabilities are inside of our bodies, not on the outside. Learn how to be a good friend to someone who has diabetes, an invisible disability – 5-minutes (grades 4 – 8)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTGo_dp_S-k

I am a person- 1-minute (grades 5 - 9)

<https://www.facebook.com/BittyandBeausCoffee/videos/be-the-one/1954113561378380/>

Step off the sidelines and be the one who makes a difference in someone's life – 4-minutes (grades 4 – 12)

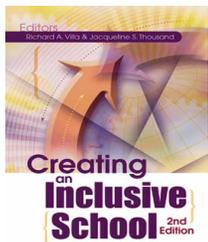
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwW6mYdJ7Xc>

Disability-How you see me – 3-minutes (grades 7 - 10)

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/this-pizzeria-serves-up-pies-all-while-catering-to-the-deaf-767614019704>

There's a pizzeria where you can order without saying a word all thanks to new technology that's made it possible for deaf owners and the staff to succeed – 2-minutes (grades 6 – 12)

BOOKS



Book Example

Edited by Richard A. Villa and Jacqueline S. Thousand

There is only one child in the world and that child's name is ALL children. —Carl Sandburg

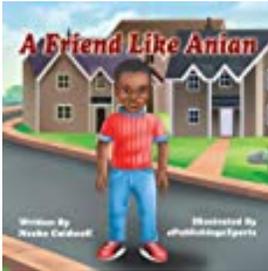
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We All Have Different Abilities - Melissa Higgins

(Grades K – 2)

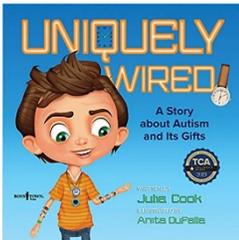
What can you do? Tie your shoes? Play piano? Everyone has different talents and abilities. Let's share and celebrate our many talents!



A Friend Like Anian – Meeka Caldwell

(Grades K – 3)

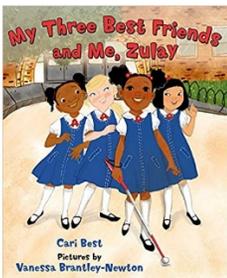
The sun is out and Anian and Mommy have things to do today! Full of energy and ready to go, they spend the day out in the community where everyone helps Anian as he goes place to place. Anian was born extra special, he was born with Down Syndrome. He loves to learn new things and show everyone what he can do! Enjoy this story as you get to know a friend like Anian!



Uniquely Wired: A Story About Autism and Its Gifts – Julia Cook

(Grades 1 – 5)

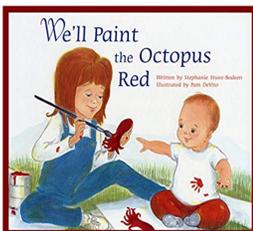
Zak is obsessed with watches. He owns hundreds of watches and is quick to tell everyone everything about them. Zak also has autism, so he sometimes responds to the world around him in unconventional ways. As Zak describes his point of view, young readers gain a better understanding of his behaviors and learn valuable lessons about patience, tolerance, and understanding.



My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay – Cari Best

(Grades K – 3)

Zulay and her three best friends are all in the same first grade class and study the same things, even though Zulay is blind. When their teacher asks her students what activity they want to do on Field Day, Zulay surprises everyone when she says she wants to run a race. With the help of a special aide and the support of her friends, Zulay does just that.

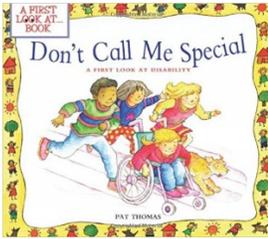


We'll Paint the Octopus Red – Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

(Grades K – 3)

As six-year-old Emma anticipates the birth of her new baby brother or sister, she vividly imagines all of the things they can do together. When the baby is born, her dad tells her that it's a boy and he has something called Down syndrome. She asks, "If Isaac has this Down thing, then what can't he do?" Her dad tells her that as long as they are patient with him, and help him when he needs it, there probably isn't anything Isaac can't do. Emma helps her father as much as he helps her to realize that Isaac is the baby they dreamed of.

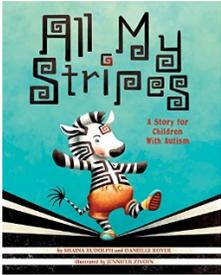
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Don't Call Me Special: A First Look at Disability – Pat Thomas

(Grades K – 2)

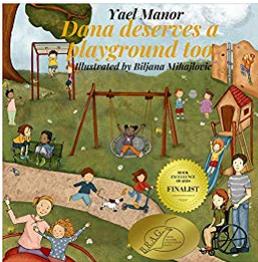
This delightful picture book explores questions and concerns about physical disabilities in a simple and reassuring way. Children can find out about individual disabilities, special equipment that is available to help their friends who have disabilities, and how people of all ages can live happy and full lives.



All My Stripes – Shaina Rudolph & Danielle Royer

(Grades K – 3)

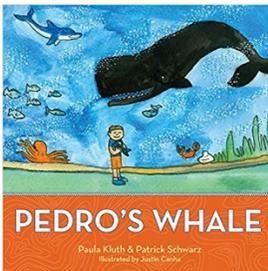
This is the story of Zane, a zebra with autism, who worries that his differences make him stand out from his peers. With careful guidance from his mother, Zane learns that autism is only one of many qualities that make him special.



Dana Deserves a Playground Too – Yael Manor

(Grades K – 3)

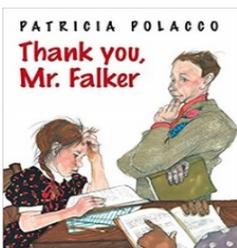
I couldn't imagine that this would happen... I heard about a woman who met a father and daughter at the playground. Due to a disability, the girl used a wheelchair and was unable to enjoy any of the playground facilities. All she could do was put her doll in the swing and push it, which caused great sorrow for her and her father. This story gave me a lot of inspiration to write this book.



Pedro's Whale – Paula Kluth and Patrick Schwarz, Ph.D.

(Grades 1-2)

This story introduces educators to one of the most effective inclusion strategies: using students' fascinations to help them learn. Pedro, is heartbroken when he's told to put away his favorite toy whale on the first day of school. But then Pedro's teacher discovers the secret to helping him do his best work: not only giving him his whale, but incorporating his special interest into the whole curriculum. Soon, Pedro's whale is helping all the children learn, as the teacher works whales into math lessons, science experiments, and more! Pedro's whale helps him make friends, as the other children start to share his special interest. This story helps teachers ensure that students with and without disabilities reach their full potential.



Thank You, Mr. Falker – Patricia Polacco

(Grades K – 3)

The real-life story of girl with dyslexia and the teacher who would not let her fail.

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Days With Dad
Nari Hong

Days With Dad - Nari Hong

(Grades K – 2)

A young girl comforts her father, who uses a wheelchair, as they talk about all the fun things they can still do together.



Rescue & Jessica - Jessica Kensky

(Grades 1 – 3)

Rescue; the service dog’s journey is brought into the life of Jessica, and how they have saved each other.



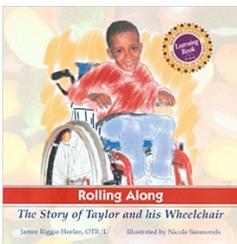
The Princess Panda Tea Party: A Cerebral Palsy Fairy Tale – Jewel Kats

(Grades 1-3)

An enchanting story which shows girls that grace and courage come from within.

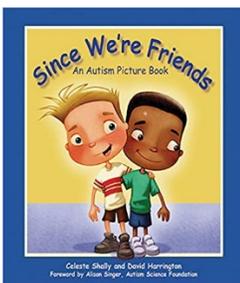
Readers of this story will:

- Gain an appreciation for people with disabilities
- Discover the courage to go after their dreams
- Learn how to treat guests with courtesy and warmth
- See how preparation and practice are the keys to success
- Learn the power of affirmations
- Understand how generosity can change the world



Rolling Along: The Story of Taylor and his Wheelchair - Jamee Heelan

Explains how having cerebral palsy affects Taylor, and how getting a wheelchair makes a big difference in helping him get around, do things by himself, and even play basketball with his twin Tyler.

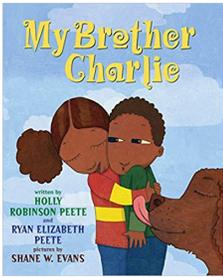


Since We’re Friends – Celeste Shally

(Grades K – 3)

Matt’s autism doesn’t keep him from having fun! Even when he struggles in social situations, his friend is there to help him out. The two boys love playing sports watching movies, reading books, and talking about animals. By working together, a best friend’s understanding and compassion change Matt’s frustration into excitement. This book is the perfect guide to better understand people with autism spectrum disorders.

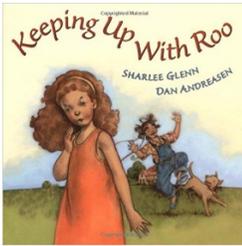
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My Brother Charlie – Holly Robinson Peete and Ryan Elizabeth Peete

(Grades K – 4)

Charlie has autism. His brain works in a special way. It's harder for him to make friends. Or show his true feelings. Or stay safe." But as his big sister tells us, for everything that Charlie can't do well, there are plenty more things that he's good at. Actress and national autism spokesperson Holly Robinson Peete collaborates with her daughter on this book based on Holly's 10-year-old son, who has autism.



Keeping Up With Roo – Sharlee Glenn

(Grades 1 – 3)

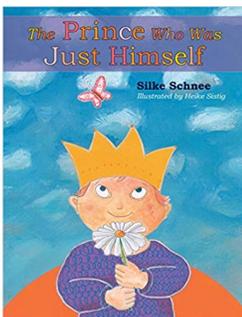
Having always been best friends with her Aunt Roo, who has disabilities, Gracie is suddenly experiencing a shift in their relationship. As Gracie gets older, she finds new friends, and discovers the differences between the two worlds in which they live.



The Big Umbrella – Amy June Bates and Juniper Bates

(Grades K – 3)

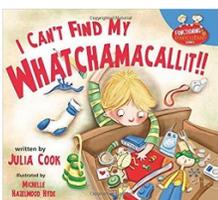
A simple book about inclusion, hospitality, and welcoming others. By the door there is an umbrella. It is big. It is so big that when it starts to rain there is room for *everyone* underneath. It doesn't matter if you are tall. Or plaid. Or hairy. It doesn't matter how many legs you have. There will always be enough room under the umbrella for everyone.



The Prince Who Was Just Himself (A Prince Noah Book) – Silke Schnee

(Grades K – 3)

The royal couple is looking forward to their third child. “He looks a little different,” muses the king at Prince Noah’s arrival. “He is not like the others,” agrees the queen. Soon they notice what a very special person he is. When the youngest prince disarms the cruel knight Scarface, the nation’s most dreaded enemy, with an act of compassion, everyone finally realizes how good it is that each person is unique. This book instills appreciation for children with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities, making it a valuable aid for teaching inclusion in the classroom.

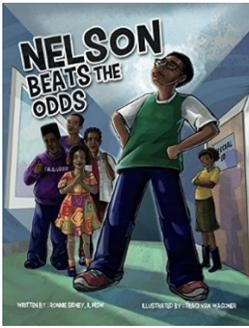


I Can't Find My Whatchamacallit – Julia Cook

(Grades 3 – 5)

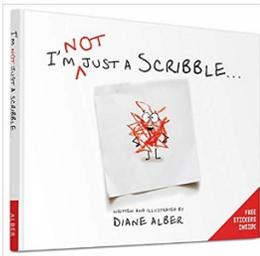
This book highlights the importance of being organized in a creative, applicable way. It also spotlights the unique differences and strengths that live in all of us and how we can all help each other.

“Together We’re Better” Diversity Celebration Toolkit



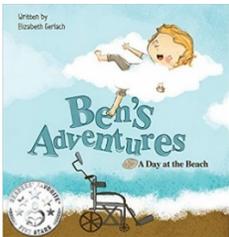
Nelson Beats the Odds – Ronnie Sidney, II (Grades 3 – 7)

Nelson used to think school was all about playing around and talking with his friends. When Nelson learns that he has been placed in Special Education, he fears being teased. Consequently, he keeps his learning disability and ADHD diagnosis a secret. With the encouragement of his parents and assistance from Mrs. T., his Special Education teacher, Nelson pushes the boundaries and discovers his potential. “Nelson Beats The Odds” is an inspiring story that celebrates friendship, resilience and empowerment.



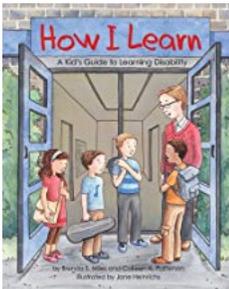
I'm NOT Just a Scribble – Diane Alber (Grades K – 3)

A story about kindness and inclusion. Scribble, the book's main character, never thought he was different until he met his first drawing. After being left out because he didn't look like everyone else. Scribble teaches the drawings how to accept each other for who they are, which enables them to create amazing art. This book not only has illustrations that any child can personally recognize but it also addresses inclusion without boundaries so that anyone can relate to it.



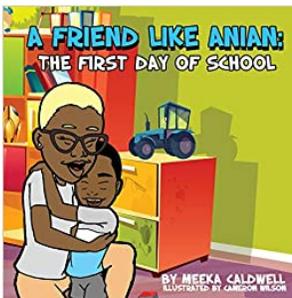
Ben's Adventures: Day at the Beach – Elizabeth Gerlach (Grades K – 3)

Ben loves to imagine some big adventures. He'll make you smile as you follow him to the beach for a fun day of sand, sun, castles, and crabs! It's a sweet story inspired by the author's son and has subtle themes of inclusion, friendship and joy. Ben shows us that ALL kids can play and dream.



How I Learn: Kid's Guide to Learning Disability – Brenda Miles/Colleen Patterson (Grades 1 – 4)

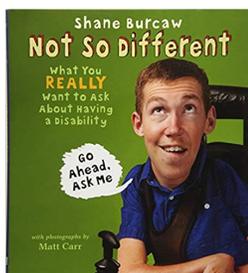
When a child struggles in school, it is difficult to find the words to help. Once a child is diagnosed with a learning disability, another journey begins. How do you explain learning difficulties to a child? *How I Learn* provides a simple explanation of why some children struggle. It introduces learning disability in concrete terms for younger students, emphasizing that they are capable of learning, but they may do so in a different way.



A Friend Like Anian: The First Day of School – Meeka Caldwell (Grades K – 3)

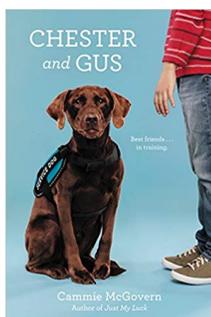
Anian is a little nervous about his first day of Kindergarten, but with the help of his teachers, aide and new friends, it's not so bad after all! Anian is a wonderful little boy who is loved by all in his community. He likes to play and make new friends, among other things. He also has Down Syndrome. Because he was born with a little extra, he needs a little extra help sometimes. Follow Anian as his friends help him learn and grow!

“Together We’re Better” Diversity Celebration Toolkit



Not So Different – Shane Burcaw (Grades 2-5)

Not So Different offers a humorous, relatable, and refreshingly honest glimpse into Shane Burcaw’s life. Shane tackles many of the mundane and quirky questions that he’s often asked about living with a disability, and shows readers that he’s just as approachable, friendly, and funny as anyone else.



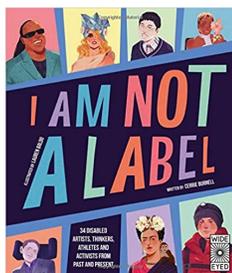
Chester and Gus – Cammie McGovern (Grades 4 - 8)

A heartwarming and humorous novel about the remarkable bond that forms between an aspiring service dog and a boy with autism who is in need of a friend. Chester always wanted to become a service dog. When he fails his certification test, it seems like that dream will never come true—until a family adopts him. They want him to be a companion for their ten-year-old son, Gus, who has autism. Gus never wants to pet Chester, and he doesn’t want Chester in the room. Chester’s not sure how to help Gus since this isn’t the job he trained for—but he’s determined to figure it out, since Gus is now *his* person.



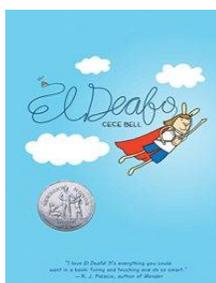
Wonder – R.J. Palacio (Grades 4 - 7)

I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse. August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can’t get past Auggie’s extraordinary face. It’s a portrait of one community’s struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance. In a world where bullying among young people is an epidemic, this is a refreshing new narrative full of heart and hope.



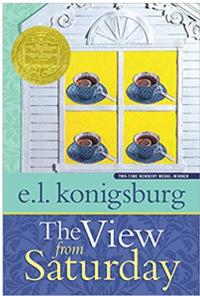
I am Not a Label – Carrie Burnell (Grades 3-7)

In this illustrated biography anthology, meet 30 artists, thinkers, athletes, and activists with disabilities, from past and present. These short biographies tell the stories of people who have faced unique challenges that have not stopped them from becoming trailblazers, innovators, advocates, and makers. Each person is a leading figure in their field, be it sports, science, math, art, breakdancing, or the world of pop.



El Deafo – Cece Bell (Grades 5 - 8)

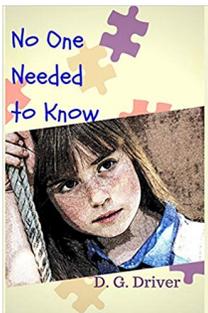
Reframing her bulky hearing aid as a superpower, Bell illustrates her desire to fit in with her classmates, losing her hearing, and trying to make friends. The result is a funny and touching story of living with a disability and embracing differences.



The View From Saturday – E. L. Konigsburd

(Grades 4 - 7)

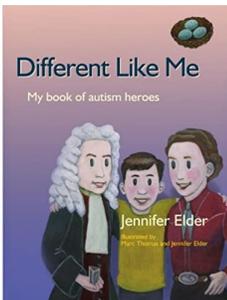
How had Mrs. Olinski chosen her sixth-grade Academic Bowl team? She had a number of answers. But were any of them true? Mrs. Olinski, returning to teaching after having been injured in an automobile accident, found that her Academic Bowl team became her answer to finding confidence and success. What she did not know, was that her team knew more than she did the answer to why they had been chosen. This is a tale about a team, a class, a school, a series of contests and, set in the midst of this, four jewel-like short stories--one for each of the team members-- that ask questions and demonstrates surprising answers.



No One Needed to Know – D. G. Driver

(Grades 4 - 7)

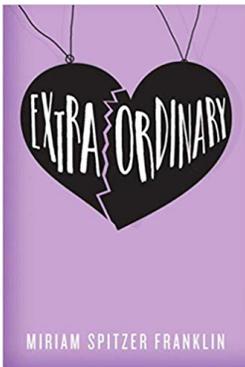
Heidi's older brother, Donald, is 16 and has autism. She has always loved playing with him, but now she's 11 and her life is changing. She's embarrassed to have her brother around and doesn't want her friends to know about him. High school boys bully him. When the kids at her school find out about him, she gets bullied too. It's not fair. No one seems to understand what she's going through. But Heidi also needs to learn some things. She can't change her brother, but she can change how she feels about him. And she can get people to see why her brother is special.



Different Like Me (My Book of Autism Heroes) – Jennifer Elder

(Grades 3 – 7)

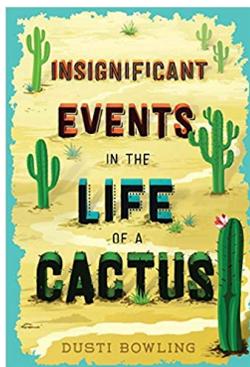
Different Like Me introduces students to famous, inspirational figures from the world of science, art, math, literature, philosophy and comedy. Eight-year-old Quinn, a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome, tells readers about the achievements and characteristics of his autism heroes, from Albert Einstein, Dian Fossey to Julia Bowman Robinson, among others. All excel in different fields, but are united by the fact that they often found it difficult to fit in--just like Quinn.



Extraordinary – Miriam Spitzer Franklin

(Grades 4 - 8)

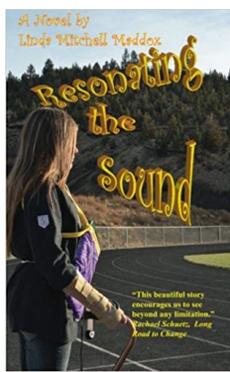
Pansy chickened out right before going to spring break camp, even though she'd promised her best friend, Anna, they'd go together. It was just like when they went to get their hair cut for Locks of Love, and only one of them walked out with a new hairstyle. But Pansy never got the chance to make it up to Anna. At camp, Anna contracted meningitis and a high fever, and she hasn't been the same since. Now all Pansy wants is her daring best friend back—not the silent girl in the wheelchair who now goes to a different school. What lies at the end of Pansy's journey might not be exactly what she had expected—or wanted.



Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus – Dusti Bowling

(Grades 5 - 8)

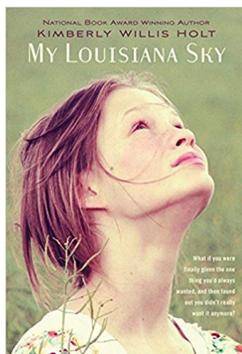
Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. When her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them. Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. It’s hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven’s about to discover she can do it all, even without arms.



Resonating the Sound – Linda Mitchell Maddox

(Grades 5 - 8)

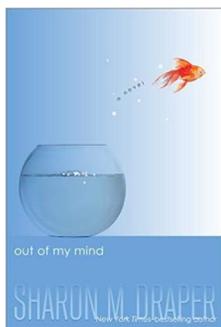
The novel that takes place during the eighth-grade year of a girl who has suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury during sixth grade and finally agrees to use an augmentative communication device after not regaining any of her vocal abilities. A special relationship develops between her and a boy in her class who has Gifted Asperger Syndrome. He plays a major role in altering the device, which gives the main character access to pieces of a dream she thought were lost forever.



My Louisiana Sky – Kimberly Willis Hols

(Grades 6 - 8)

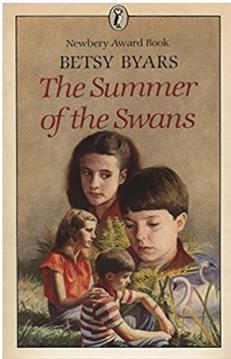
Tiger Ann Parker is smart in school and good at baseball, but she's forever teased about her family by the girls in class. Tiger Ann knows her folks are different from others in their small town of Saitter, Louisiana. They have intellectual disabilities, and Tiger Ann keeps her pain and embarrassment hidden as long as her strong and smart Granny runs the household. Then Granny dies suddenly and Aunt Dorie Kay arrives, offering Tiger Ann a way out. Now Tiger Ann must make the most important decision of her life.



Out of My Mind – Sharon M. Draper

(Grades 5 - 8)

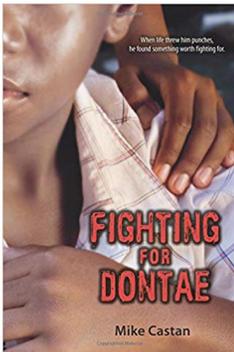
Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She doesn’t walk. She doesn’t talk. She can’t write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She’s the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as someone who has severe disabilities because she can’t tell them otherwise. But Melody is determined to show everyone just how much she does really know.



The Summer of the Swans – Betsy Byars

(Grades 6 - 8)

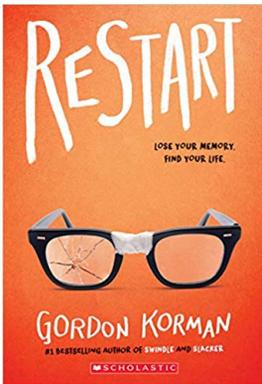
Sara Godfrey has fretted over herself, her impossible body, her terrible new haircut. One moment she's elated, the next, she's in tears. Maybe her wildly changing moods are tied to the sudden and unaccountable appearance of the swans, which hold the attention of Charlie, Sara's brother who has an intellectual disability, who she loves far more than herself. In fact, it will be the sudden disappearance of Charlie that will compel Sara to abandon her own small, annoying miseries, and lose herself in searching for him. In her anguish, Sara turns to Joe Melby, and together they search through the dense woods and rough fields to find him.



Fighting for Dontae – Mike Castan

(Grades 6 - 8)

Javier's life is going nowhere fast. He hates seventh grade, his father's locked up, and his mother can't be relied on. He and his friends are in a gang; but he doesn't even know why he joined the Playaz in the first place, since hanging with them is like asking for trouble from the police. When he is assigned to work with the special education class, Javier thinks that the one thing he had going for him in middle school--his social life--is over. Little by little, though, Javier realizes that he enjoys reading to Dontae, a boy his age, who has severe disabilities. When everything else around him is falling apart, working with Dontae becomes the one thing worth fighting for.



Restart – Gordon Korman

(Grades 4-8)

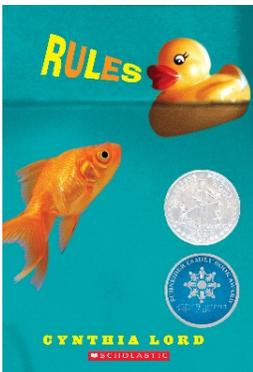
Chase's memory just went out the window. Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, remember *anything*. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again . . . starting with his own name. Who *is* Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return. Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him. One girl in particular is so angry with him that she pours her frozen yogurt on his head the first chance she gets. Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase is--it's a question of who he *was* . . . and who he's going to be.



The Running Dream – Wendelin Van Draanen

(Grades 7 - 12)

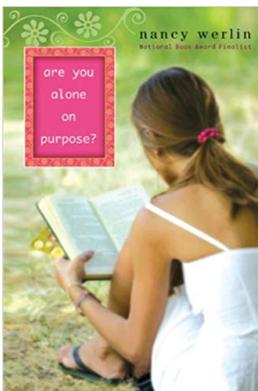
When Jessica is told she'll never run again, she puts herself back together—and learns to dream bigger than ever before. Jessica thinks her life is over when she loses a leg in a car accident. She's not comforted by the news that she'll be able to walk with the help of a prosthetic leg. Who cares about walking when you live to run? As she struggles to cope, Jessica feels that she's both in the spotlight and invisible. People who don't know what to say act like she's not there. Jessica's embarrassed to realize that she's done the same to a girl with cerebral palsy, named Rosa; a girl who is going to tutor her through all the math she's missed. A girl who sees right into the heart of her. With the support of family, friends, a coach, and her track teammates, Jessica may actually be able to run again. She doesn't just want to cross finish lines herself—she wants to take Rosa with her.



Rules – Cynthia Lord

(Grades 7 - 10)

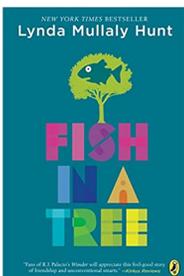
Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is nearly impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to others, in order to head off David's behaviors that embarrass her. The story follows a brother with autism and a sister who shares a lot of responsibility for teaching her brother the rules of getting along in a world that does not always have compassion and understanding for someone with autism. Catherine creates rules to help David understand how to live in the world. Catherine also learns a few lessons about other disabilities and herself.



Are You Alone on Purpose? – Nancy Werlin

(Grades 7 - 10)

Harry Roth is the bane of Alison Shandling's existence. He's obnoxious and rude, and thinks nothing of taunting brainy Alison or making comments about her twin brother who has autism. Alison tries to ignore him, but since she sees him at school, he's hard to avoid. Then Harry is injured in a diving accident and winds up using a wheelchair. Now Harry has a disability and Alison finds herself inexplicably drawn to him. Initially cautious, these unlikely companions begin to understand each other, and their relationship grows first into a friendship and then into something more...



Fish in a Tree – Lynda Mullaly Hunt

(Grades 5 – 9)

The author of the beloved *One for the Murphys* gives readers an emotionally-charged, uplifting novel that will speak to anyone who's ever thought there was something wrong with them because they didn't fit in. The main character discovers that there's a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.

“Together We’re Better”
Diversity Celebration Toolkit



Pinned – Sharon G. Flake
(Grades 7 - 12)

Autumn and Adonis have nothing in common and everything in common. Autumn is outgoing and has lots of friends. Adonis is shy and not so eager to connect with people. But even with their differences, the two have one thing in common--they're each dealing with a disability. For Autumn, who has a learning disability, reading is a painful struggle that makes it hard to focus in class. But as her school's most aggressive team wrestler, Autumn can take down any problem. Adonis doesn't have legs and he uses a wheelchair. He has no legs. He can't walk or dance. But he's a strong reader who loves books. Even so, Adonis has a secret he knows someone like Autumn can heal. In time, Autumn and Adonis are forced to see that our greatest weaknesses can turn into the assets that forever change us and those we love. Issues of self-discovery, friendship, and what it means to be different are explored.

The back cover of *Pinned*...



Samples from SY2020-2021 Art & Drawing Contests



For more information on the “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign, Artwork Contest for elementary and middle school students or Drawing Contest for high school students, please visit www.thearcmd.org or contact Sharon Dols, Director of Operations & Strategic Partnerships, The Arc Maryland, at sdols@thearcmd.org.