Inclusive Literature Lists

The Billings Public Library supports and values and celebrates diversity and inclusion. We strive to curate a collection of resources that represents all demographics in our community’s tapestry. We believe an inclusive and welcoming community is a stronger community.

This list of inclusive and diverse literature that the youth of our community can see themselves in as well as use as a conduit to build compassion for others is brought to you on behalf of collaboration between the Human Relations Commission of the City of Billings, the Billings Public Library, and a children’s literature assistant professor from Montana State University Billings.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and any recommendations for this list. We will take these into consideration as we continue to develop these lists.

Please, Baby, Please
By Lee, Spike
Author Lee, Tonya Lewis
Illustrator Nelson, Kadir
2007-09 - Little Simon
9781416949114 Check Our Catalog

Now in a board book edition, this exuberant bestseller by the Academy Award-nominated director and his wife explodes with all the energy of childhood and concludes with the patience, understanding, and unconditional love of a parent. ...More

Homemade Love [Board Book]
By Hooks, Bell
Illustrator Evans, Shane W.
2017-11 - Jump at the Sun
9781484799352 Check Our Catalog

Her Mama calls her Girlpie--a sweet treat, homemade with love. Evans’ resplendent artwork teems with "homemade love," one of the tender nicknames award-winning author hooks gives her young heroine. Full color. ...More
Girl of Mine
By Asim, Jabari
Illustrator Pham, Leuyen
2010-04 - LB Kids
9780316735780 Check Our Catalog

This companion to "Boy of Mine" shows a dazzling little girl enjoying playtime in the Moon's soft glow. As Daddy cradles his baby girl, she is suddenly whisked away on a fantastical adventure. Full color. ...More

Hey Black Child
By Perkins, Useni Eugene
Illustrator Collier, Bryan
2019-12 - LB Kids
9780316360296 Check Our Catalog

Six-time Coretta Scott King Award winner and four-time Caldecott Honor recipient Bryan Collier brings this classic, inspirational poem to life, written by acclaimed poet Useni Eugene Perkins, now available in a board book format

Hey black child, Do you know who you are? Who really are?
Do you know you can be What ...More

Grandma's Purse
By Brantley-Newton, Vanessa
2019-04 - Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers
9781984849762 Check Our Catalog

Spend the day with a grandma and granddaughter in this charming picture book about the magic found in their favorite accessory, perfect for readers who love How to Babysit a Grandma The perfect gift for grandma this Mother's Day

When Grandma Mimi comes to visit, she always brings warm hugs, sweet treats...and her purse. You never know what she'll have in there--fancy jewelry, ...More

Bitty Brown Babe
By Lefalle, Deborah
Illustrator Morris, Keisha
2019-09 - Beaming Books
9781506448534 Check Our Catalog

...More

Chocolate Me!
By Diggs, Taye
Illustrator Evans, Shane W.
2019-05 - Feiwel & Friends
9781250207852 Check Our Catalog

Now available as a board book, this tender story of self-acceptance will resonate with readers of all ages. When a boy is teased for looking different than the other kids--his
skin is darker, his hair curlier—he tells his mother he wishes he could be more like everyone else. And she helps him to see how beautiful he really, truly is.

Here is a much-needed picture book that encourages all...More

A is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book
By Hindley, Anna Forgerson
Author Nat’l Mus Afr Am Hist Culture
Illustrator Bobo, Keturah A.
2019-04 - Smithsonian Books
9781588346506 Check Our Catalog

An ABC book celebrating and inspiring diversity

A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book is an alphabet board book developed by the National Museum of African American History and Culture that celebrates what makes us unique as individuals and connects us as humans. This lively and colorful book introduces young readers, from infants to age seven, to twenty-six key ...More

Baby Says Board Book
By Steptoe, John
Illustrator Steptoe, John
2018-12 - HarperFestival
9780062847539 Check Our Catalog

The legendary Caldecott Honor and Coretta Scott King Award-winning author and illustrator John Steptoe shares the story of a baby who desperately wants to get his older brother’s attention. Now in board book

Spare text and lively illustrations tell the story of two brothers at opposite ends of a room. The older brother plays with blocks on the floor, while a curious baby ...More

Dream Big, Little Leader
By Harrison, Vashti
2018-10 - LB Kids
9780316475099 Check Our Catalog

This beautifully illustrated board book edition of instant bestseller Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History showcases women who changed the world and is the perfect goodnight book to inspire big dreams.

Featuring 18 trailblazing black women in American history, Dream Big, Little One is the irresistible board book adaptation of Little Leaders: Bold ...More

Hair Love
By Cherry, Matthew A.
Illustrator Harrison, Vashti
2019-05 - Kokila
9780525553366 Check Our Catalog

"I love that Hair Love is highlighting the relationship between a Black father and daughter. Matthew leads the ranks of new creatives who are telling unique stories of the Black experience. We need this."
- Jordan Peele, Actor & Filmmaker

It's up to Daddy to give his daughter an extra-special hair style in this ode to self-confidence and the love between fathers and …More

What Is Given from the Heart
By McKissack, Patricia C.
Illustrator Harrison, April
2019-01 - Schwartz & Wade Books
9780375836152 Check Our Catalog

This final, magnificent picture book from three-time Coretta Scott King Award winner and Newbery Honoree McKissack is a poignant and uplifting celebration of the joy of giving. Full color. …More

Buzzing with Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner
By Harrington, Janice N.
Illustrator Taylor, Theodore
2019-11 - Calkins Creek Books
9781629795584 Check Our Catalog

A 2020 NSTA/CBC Best STEM Book

The curiosity of the first African American entomologist Charles Henry Turner—a scientist who studied bugs—shines in this nonfiction picture book, which showcases his ideas and discoveries about ants, bees, and other insects.

Charles Henry Turner's mind itched with questions. Fascinated by animals, bugs, and crustaceans, Turner studied their …More

Counting the Stars: The Story of Katherine Johnson, Amazing NASA Mathematician
By Cline-Ransome, Lesa
Illustrator Colon, Raul
2019-10 - Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books
9781534404755 Check Our Catalog

"A detail-rich picture book." --Kirkus Reviews

"Straightforward and inviting." --School Library Journal

From award-winning author Lesa Cline-Ransome and acclaimed illustrator Raul Colon comes the sensitive, informative, and inspiring picture book biography of the remarkable mathematician Katherine Johnson, one of the NASA "human computers" whose work …More

Sing a Song
By Lyons, Kelly Starling
Illustrator Mallett, Keith
2019-08 - Nancy Paulsen Books
9780525516095 Check Our Catalog
Just in time for the 120th anniversary of the song "Lift Every Voice and Sing"--this stirring book celebrates the Black National Anthem and how it inspired five generations of a family.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.

In Jacksonville, Florida, two brothers, ...More

Juneteenth for Mazie
By Cooper, Floyd
Illustrator Cooper, Floyd
2015-02 - Picture Window Books
9781623701703 Check Our Catalog

Mazie is ready to celebrate liberty. She is ready to celebrate freedom. She is ready to celebrate a great day in American history -- the day her ancestors were no longer slaves. Mazie remembers the struggles and the triumph, as she gets ready to celebrate Juneteenth. This beautiful story by award-winning author and illustrator Floyd Cooper will captivate both children and adults. ...More

When Aidan Became a Brother
By Lukoff, Kyle
Illustrator Juanita, Kaylani
2019-06 - Lee & Low Books
9781620148372 Check Our Catalog

When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl. His parents gave him a pretty name, his room looked like a girl's room, and he wore clothes that other girls liked wearing. After he realized he was a trans boy, Aidan and his parents fixed the parts of life that didn't fit anymore, and he settled happily into his new life. Then Mom and Dad announce that they're going to have another baby, ...More

The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth, & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore
By Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux
Illustrator Christie, R. Gregory
2015-11 - Carolrhoda Books (R)
9780761339434 Check Our Catalog

Awards:
Coretta Scott King Award (2016)

In the 1930s, Lewis's dad, Lewis Michaux Sr., had an itch he needed to scratch--a book itch. How to scratch it? He started a bookstore in Harlem and named it the National Memorial African Bookstore.

And as far as Lewis Michaux Jr. could tell, his father's bookstore was one of a kind. People from all over came to visit the store, even famous people--Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, and ...More
Double Bass Blues
By Loney, Andrea
Illustrator Gutierrez, Rudy
2019-10 - Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers
9781524718534 Check Our Catalog

A joyous celebration of family, community, and the unifying power of music, perfect for fans of Last Stop on Market Street.

Nic is an aspiring musician whose life spans two different worlds--his suburban school where he wows his friends in orchestra, and the busy city streets of his home where he's jostled by the crowd. Nic makes his way home from a busy day at school with a …More

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut
By Barnes, Derrick
Illustrator James, Gordon C.
2017-10 - Agate Bolden
9781572842243 Check Our Catalog

Awards:
Caldecott Medal (2018), Coretta Scott King Award (2018), Newbery Medal (2018)

Barnes' smooth, fresh words and James' lush, vibrant illustrations capture the confidence, pride, and magic black and brown boys feel the moment they get a new haircut and admire their own beautiful reflections in the mirror. Full color. 8 1/2 x 11. …More

The Undefeated
By Alexander, Kwame
Illustrator Nelson, Kadir
2019-04 - Versify
9781328780966 Check Our Catalog

The Newbery Award-winning author of “The Crossover” pens an ode to Black American triumph and tribulation, with art from a two-time Caldecott Honoree. Full color. …More

Just South of Home
By Strong, Karen
2019-05 - Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
9781534419384 Check Our Catalog

A Kirkus Reviews Best Middle Grade Book of 2019

"A stirring Southern middle grade book that burns brighter than fireworks on the Fourth." --Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

"A must for readers who appreciate a heartfelt mystery." --Booklist (starred review)

"An intricate mix of Southern mystery, history, and a ghost story that …More"
Genesis Begins Again
By Williams, Alicia
2019-01 - Atheneum Books
9781481465809 Check Our Catalog

An NPR Favorite Book of 2019
A School Library Journal Best Middle Grade Book of 2019
A Kirkus Reviews Best Middle Grade Book of 2019

This deeply sensitive and powerful debut novel tells the story of a thirteen-year-old who must overcome internalized racism and a verbally abusive family to finally learn to love herself.

Some Places More Than Others
By Watson, Renee
2019-09 - Bloomsbury Publishing PLC
9781681191089 Check Our Catalog

From Newbery Honor- and Coretta Scott King Author Award-winning, New York Times bestselling author Renée Watson comes a heartwarming and inspiring middle-grade novel about finding deep roots and exploring the past, the present, and the places that make us who we are.

All Amara wants for her birthday is to visit her father’s family in New York City--Harlem, to be exact. She

The Season of Styx Malone
By Magoon, Kekla
2018-10 - Wendy Lamb Books
9781524715953 Check Our Catalog

Awards:
Coretta Scott King Award (2019)

A CORETTA SCOTT KING HONOR BOOK AND THE WINNER OF THE BOSTON GLOBE HORN BOOK AWARD FOR FICTION

"Extraordinary friendships . . . extraordinary storytelling." --Rita Williams-Garcia, Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Award-Winning author of One Crazy Summer

Meet Caleb and Bobby Gene, two brothers
Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky
By Mbalia, Kwame
2019-10 - Rick Riordan Presents
9781368039932 Check Our Catalog

Best-selling author Rick Riordan presents Kwame Mbalia's epic fantasy, a middle grade American Gods set in a richly-imagined world populated with African American folk heroes and West African gods.

Seventh grader Tristan Strong feels anything but strong ever since he failed to save his best friend when they were in a bus accident together. All he has left of Eddie is the journal...

New Kid
By Craft, Jerry
Illustrator Craft, Jerry
2019-02 - Quill Tree Books
9780062691194 Check Our Catalog

A New York Times bestseller Winner of the 2019 Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature

Perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier and Gene Luen Yang, New Kid is a timely, honest graphic novel about starting over at a new school where diversity is low and the struggle to fit in is real, from award-winning author-illustrator Jerry Craft.

Ghost Boys
By Rhodes, Jewell Parker
2019-09 - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
9780316262262 Check Our Catalog

A heartbreaking and powerful story about a black boy killed by a police officer, drawing connections through history, from award-winning author Jewell Parker Rhodes.

An instant New York Times bestseller An instant IndieBound bestseller The #1 Kids' Indie Next Pick A Walter Award winner

Only the living can make the world...

Dragons in a Bag
By Elliott, Zetta
Illustrator Geneva B.
2019-08 - Yearling Books
9781524770488 Check Our Catalog

1st book in Dragons in a bag series

The dragon's out of the bag in this diverse, young urban fantasy from an award-winning author--with two starred reviews
When Jaxon is sent to spend the day with a mean old lady his mother calls Ma, he finds out she’s not his grandmother--but she is a witch. She needs his help delivering baby dragons to a magical world where they’ll be safe. There are two rules when it …More

For Black Girls Like Me
By Lockington, Mariama J.
2019-07 - Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Byr)
9780374308049 Check Our Catalog

In this lyrical coming-of-age story about family, sisterhood, music, race, and identity, Mariama J. Lockington draws on some of the emotional truths from her own experiences growing up with an adoptive white family.

I am a girl but most days I feel like a question mark.

Makeda June Kirkland is eleven years old, adopted, and black. Her parents and big sister are white, …More