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.

December 2023 Inclusive Literature

Hair Love ABCs
By Cherry, Matthew A.
Illustrator Harrison, Vashti
2023-08 - Kokila
9780593695647 Check Our Catalog

An alphabet board book inspired by the bestselling HAIR LOVE, from the original award-winning author and illustrator duo--and perfect for baby gift baskets.

A is for Afro, N is for Natural, and W is for Waves. Letter by letter, follow Zuri and her father in their joy-filled journey through the kinks and curls of Black hair.

This 7x7 board book is perfect as a baby gift, for …More
ABC Black History & Me: An Inspirational Journey Through Black History, from A to Z
By Monyei, Queenbe
2023-03 - Walter Foster Jr.
9780760380239 Check Our Catalog

*ABC Black History and Me* presents 26 historical concepts, events, and people--from A to Z--that are important in Black American history.

From *A is for Advocate* to *Z is for Zest*, each letter of the alphabet is paired with inspirational historical concepts in this 9x9-inch board book. Along with the upbeat, rhyming text covering both well-known and more obscure...More

My Hair Is Like the Sun
By Detrick-Jules, St Clair
Illustrator Brown, Tabitha
2023-09 - Chronicle Books
9781797221793 Check Our Catalog

From the creator of *My Beautiful Black Hair*, this joyful board book celebrates the natural beauty of Black hair in all its shapes, styles, and textures!

*My hair is like the sun . . . the stars . . . the ocean!* From curls that wind like rivers to coils that shimmer like stars, this book featuring photographs of real children and their natural hairstyles...More

My Dad Is a DJ
By Erskine, Kathryn
Author Brown, Keith Henry
Illustrator Brown, Keith Henry
2023-05 - Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Byr)
9780374307424 Check Our Catalog

National Book Award winner Kathryn Erskine teams up with Keith Henry Brown on this lyrical picture book that celebrates music and Black identity and gently discusses divorce. ...More

Salat in Secret
By Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah
Illustrator Aly, Hatem
2023-06 - Random House Studio
9781984848093 Check Our Catalog

From the critically acclaimed author of *Your Name Is a Song* and the bestselling illustrator of *The Proudest Blue* comes a story about a Muslim boy who receives a salat (prayer) rug on his seventh birthday and becomes empowered about his faith.
In this beautiful story of community, family, and acceptance, a boy named Muhammad receives a special salat rug on his seventh...More

Hide and Shh!: A Not-So-Sneaky Sister Story about Inclusion
By Dendy, Christina
Illustrator Takeyama, Nathalia
2023-04 - Cardinal Rule Press
9798985805130 Check Our Catalog

A Day with No Words
By Hammond, Tiffany
Illustrator Cosgrove, Kate
2023-05 - Wheat Penny Press
9781736949795 Check Our Catalog

An instant #1 New York Times bestselling picture book and national bestseller!! A Day With No Words invites readers into the life of an Autism Family who communicates just as the child does, without spoken language.

The American Library Association Booklist starred review boasts, "The story is written from the boy's first-person perspective, however--a clever choice...More

Dancing Hands: A Story of Friendship in Filipino Sign Language
By Que, Joanna
Author Marquez, Charina
Illustrator Alvarez, Fran
2023-07 - Chronicle Books
9781797213323 Check Our Catalog

The Pearl Hunter
By Beck, Miya T.
2023-02 - Balzer & Bray/Harperteen
9780063238190 Check Our Catalog

Set in a world inspired by pre-Shogun era Japan, this is a stunning debut fantasy in the vein of Grace Lin about how a young pearl diver goes to the ends of the earth to rescue her twin sister, who has been stolen by a ghost whale.

Kai and Kishi share the same futon, the same face, and the same talent for pearl diving. But Kishi is the obedient daughter, while Kai tries to push the...More
Contenders: Two Native Baseball Players, One World Series
By Sorell, Traci
Illustrator Starr, Arigon
2023-04 - Kokila
9780593406472 Check Our Catalog

The true story of John Meyers and Charles Bender, who in 1911 became the first two Native pro baseball players to face off in a World Series. This picture book teaches important lessons about resilience, doing what you love in the face of injustice, and the fight for Native American representation in sports.

Charles Bender grew up on the White Earth Reservation in Northwestern

Ari Arranges Everything
By Vernon, Katie
2023-02 - Running Press Kids
9780762481750 Check Our Catalog

Empower young children to let go of control and to embrace a little chaos in this delightful and humorous picture book.

Ari arranges absolutely everything.

For as long as anyone can remember, Ari has loved arranging things. From blocks to flowers to produce to unicorn toys, each arrangement feels perfect—though maybe not for everyone. But when Ari sets out to create the ultimate

Windrush Child
By Agard, John
Illustrator Bass, Sophie
2023-04 - Candlewick Press (MA)
9781536228533 Check Our Catalog

Mother of Sharks
By Marquez, Melissa Cristina
Illustrator Kurtz, Devin Elle
2023-05 - Penguin Workshop
9780593523582 Check Our Catalog

Forbes 30 Under 30 Honoree and globally renowned shark scientist Melissa Cristina Márquez teams up with award-winning illustrator Devin Elle Kurtz to create an informative, powerful picture book. With lyrical writing and gorgeous art, this moving story explores Melissa’s personal
journey from inquisitive ocean-loving child in Puerto Rico to becoming the Mother of Sharks.

As the …More

Martina Has Too Many Tías
By Otheguy, Emma
Illustrator Palacios, Sara
2023-06 - Atheneum Books for Young Readers
9781534445369 Check Our Catalog

…More

Naming Ceremony
By Wedlick, Seina
Illustrator Mohammed, Jenin
2023-04 - Harry N. Abrams
9781419756269 Check Our Catalog

A sweet sibling picture-book story all about making family traditions your own--perfect for fans of Alma and How She Got Her Name and Welcome to the Party.

Today's the day! It's Baby Sister's naming ceremony, and big sister Amira could not be more excited. She has the perfect name picked out . . . or, at least, she hopes it's the perfect name.

One by one, friends and …More

My Dog Is Not a Scientist
By Ellor, Betsy
Illustrator Vera, Luisa
2023-04 - Yeehoo Press
9781953458469 Check Our Catalog

A humorous, endearing story about a passionate, young scientist who is determined to achieve her goal--no matter what!

Yara is out to prove that she's the greatest scientist in town!

Her annoying neighbor Eddie always wins the Science Fair, but this year is going to be HER year. Like every good scientist, Yara starts with a question, makes observations, and comes up with a …More
Hope: A book to help children build resilience and assist those recovering from and/or living in family violence situations

By Sanders, Jayneen
Illustrator Mineker, Vivian
2021-08 - Educate2empower Publishing
9781761160295 Check Our Catalog

Jonathon's home was not a happy one. But hope soon arrived when Auntie Edie came to stay. This beautifully illustrated book was written to provide children in family violence homes with a sense of hope and to lessen the traumatic effects of their living situations. As Jonathon knows, there is always hope that things might change.

This book aims to help children voice …More

Nayra and the Djinn

By Omar Ata, Iasmin
Illustrator Omar Ata, Iasmin
2023-02 - Viking Books for Young Readers
9780593117118 Check Our Catalog

In this coming-of-age graphic novel with a fantastical twist, Nayra Mansour, a Muslim American girl, is helped on her journey to selfhood by a djinn.

Nothing is going right for Nayra Mansour. There's the constant pressure from her strict family, ruthless bullying from her classmates, and exhausting friendship demands from Rami -the only other Muslim girl at school. Nayra has had …More

The Princess and the Grilled Cheese Sandwich (a Graphic Novel)

By Muniz, Deya
2023-05 - Little, Brown Ink
9780316538725 Check Our Catalog

A nobleman with a secret and a princess on a mission find love--and lots of grilled cheese sandwiches--when they least expect it, in this funny, heartfelt graphic novel rom-com.

Lady Camembert wants to live life on her own terms, without marriage. Well, without marrying a man, that is. But the law of the land is that women cannot inherit. So when her father passes away, she does the …More

A Child's Introduction to Pride: The Inspirational History and Culture of the LGBTQIA+ Community

By Prager, Sarah
Illustrator O'Dwyer, Caitlin
The perfect primer for kids ages 8-12, this book celebrates love, hope, equality, and progress by taking an inspirational and essential look at the rich history and culture of the LGBTQIA+ community in the United States and around the world.

The history of the LGBTQIA+ community has often been overlooked, but it's one that is filled with heroes, struggles, triumph, and joy. A ...

Thunderboom
By Briglio, Jack
Illustrator Dávila, Claudia
2023-05 - Kids Can Press
9781525304965 Check Our Catalog

An action-packed superhero story about the power of imagination.

In this exciting graphic novel, Logan is thrilled when his parents tell him they're all taking the train to see the Santa Claus parade. But Logan isn't like most 11-year-olds - he can't speak, and he mostly lives in his head. On this adventure, Logan must face some of his greatest fears: masks, dogs and the unknown. ...

Buzzing (a Graphic Novel)
By Sattin, Samuel
Author Hickman, Rye
2023-07 - Little, Brown Ink
9780316628419 Check Our Catalog

No Matter the Distance
By Baldwin, Cindy
2023-02 - Quill Tree Books
9780063006447 Check Our Catalog

An unexpected animal companion helps a girl with cystic fibrosis learn to write her own story in this captivating novel in verse by award-winning author and disabled activist Cindy Baldwin.

Penny Rooney has cystic fibrosis, which means she has to do breathing treatments to help her lungs work. Some days, it seems like her CF is the only thing Penny knows about herself for ...

A heartbreaking, heart-mending novel of love, grief, friendship, and community.

March 1987. The FDA has just approved AZT as the first drug to treat AIDS. But it's too late for Iris's dad. He's dying, confined to a hospital bed in the apartment he shares with his boyfriend, J.R. (who Iris hates), four floors above Iris and her mom. Soon, all Iris has left of her kind, loving dad are ...

Two brothers fight to reunite amidst the turmoil of the Syrian War.

Since the passing of their father, Omar has tried--and in his little brother Sufyan's eyes, failed--to be the man of his family of Syrian refugees. As Omar waits in line for rations, longing for the books he left behind when his family fled their home, Sufyan explores more nontraditional methods to provide for ...

In her poignant debut graphic novel inspired by her own life, Emily Bowen Cohen embraces the complexity, meaning, and deep love that comes from being part of two vibrant tribes.

Mia is still getting used to living with her mom and stepfather, and to the new role their Jewish identity plays in their home. Feeling out of place at home and at her Jewish day school, Mia ...

"Susan Tan's writing is funny, fun, and hits straight to the heart."--Christina Soontorvat, two-time Newbery Honor recipient
From APALA Honor award-winning author Susan Tan, a middle-grade novel about a girl who must overcome her worries to find the truth behind her town’s urban legend.

Moving to a new town is never easy, but it’s even …More

**Something Like Home**

By *Arango, Andrea Beatriz*

2023-09 - Random House Books for Young Readers
9780593566183 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A moving novel in verse in which a lost dog helps a lonely girl find a way home to her family . . . only for them to find family in each other along the way. From the Newbery Honor Award-winning author of *Iveliz Explains It All*.


Titi Silvia leaves me by …More

**Buzzing**

By *Sattin, Samuel*

Author *Hickman, Rye*

2023-07 - Little, Brown Ink
9780316628433 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A moving middle grade graphic novel about friendship, belonging, and learning to love yourself despite the voices in your head.

Isaac Itkin can't get away from his thoughts.

As a lonely twelve-year-old kid with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), everything from studying to looking in the mirror becomes a battle between him and a swarm of unhelpful thoughts.

The strict …More

**Just Under the Clouds**

By *Sarno, Melissa*

2018-06 - Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers
9781524720087 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Can you still have a home if you don't have a house? In the spirit of *The Truth About Jellyfish* and *Fish in a Tree* comes a stunning debut about a family struggling to find something lasting when everything feels so fleeting.
Always think in threes and you'll never fall, Cora's father told her when she was a little girl. Two feet, one hand. Two hands, one foot. That was all …More

Speculation
By Shawl, Nisi
2023-02 - Tu Books
9781620149591 Check Our Catalog

A wonderful middle-grade fantasy debut about Black families, family history, family curses ... and a really marvelous pair of spectacles.

After Winna's little sister breaks her glasses, her grandfather gives her an old-timey pair of spectacles that belonged to her great-aunt Estelle. The specs are silver and perfectly circular, with tiny stars on the bridge and earpieces that curl …More