

The Sousa Notes

Home and School Association Newsletter – March 2019

Note from Dr. Meoli

If you have not already been reminded, you will surely be hearing more and more about Apollo 11 over the next few months. First Man, the Hollywood version of the 1969 lunar mission which brought the first two human beings to the surface of the moon and returned them safely to earth, marks the beginning of a celebration of the 50th anniversary of that historic space flight. I vividly remember that July afternoon when everything else in the world seemed to stop as we awaited news of the successful landing; the event would accomplish President Kennedy's challenge to do so before the end of the decade.

Neil Armstrong, in the odd looking Lunar Excursion Module that had settled on "Tranquility Base," took several hours longer than expected to prepare for exiting the craft; my brothers and I had all gone to bed when news came that he was about to exit the LEM. Luckily, mom and dad woke the three of us up just before 11:00 pm that night to gather in the family room in front of a small, square, black and white television to watch the first human set foot on a heavenly body. Less than a decade after mankind had ventured into space, and less than a dozen years after the Russians had launched the first artificial satellite into orbit, we watched as first Armstrong, and eventually Buzz Aldrin, cavorted about on the lifeless, dusty surface a quarter of a million miles away. Although Russia had sent the first man (and the first woman) into space, was the first to have a man orbit the earth, and the first to have a human "walk" outside of his/her craft in outer space, America had won the "space race." In the follow up press conferences, the Apollo 11 astronauts were already talking about planning a manned mission to Mars.

Concurrent with that race during the 1960's, was the questioning of the quality of education in general, and science education in particular, in the United States. When Russia successfully launched the beach ball sized "Sputnik" in 1957, many saw this as a threat to our national security and blamed the public school systems for failing to adequately prepare American students for careers in science and engineering. One year later, the National Defense Education Act provided hundreds of millions of dollars to boost science education in the US, including the doubling the funds for the National Foundation of Science, a federal agency tasked with supporting research, teacher training, and curriculum development in the sciences. The establishment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which tests student knowledge in science and other subjects and publishes comparisons of "achievement" by country, cemented the now rather regular cycle of criticizing, and coming up with "fixes" for, public education (not to mention the pairing of educational reform with the very survival of our country and/or economy).

A half a century later, we seem to be more obsessed with earthly barriers than building upon our exploration of space. And, an unnamed number of state and national initiatives later, our schools have landed on the (dusty? lifeless?) surfaces of the 2016 New York State Science Learning Standards (a twist on the 2013 Next Generation Science Standards) as well as ESSA--the Every Student Succeeds Act (a reinvention of Race to the Top/No Child Left Behind/Improving America's Schools Act/America 2000/ etcetera, etcetera, etcetera).



It seems to me I've heard that song before!

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Note from Dr. Meoli (continued)

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for the improvement of, and innovation in, education—I've built a career around both. But neither legislation nor testing makes for quality teaching. Programs and standards are helpful, but not particularly useful for teachers whose daily bread involves motivating a specific group of students (likely different from the group the same teacher had last year as well as different from the group down the hall in the same grade level) to want to know more about the phenomena around them and to master the skills, concepts, and content knowledge necessary to understand and explain them.

We are working hard to embrace the new, mandated science standards at Sousa; they have potential for providing exciting, meaningful instruction at all grade levels. And, whether we label them STEM, STEAM, or ESTEAM (stay tuned...), I am grateful that a commitment has been made to add science labs to every school in Port Washington under the current bond. Well done! I can only hope that the tremendous amount of resources that we are expending, in terms of both funding and time, won't be shelved when a new president, a new commissioner of education, or even a new central office administrator comes along. Here, history is not kind.

We know what good teaching looks like, in science and elsewhere. It is more about making personal connections with students than "covering" material (which is why focusing on social and emotional learning has been such a game changer); it is more about picking at threads of understanding as they appear than producing a constant warp and weave of information in a uniform (standard!) manner. Teaching, and learning, are rarely straightforward, linear and pretty—they are often more complicated, lurching, and unsightly.

Shortly after the Apollo11 astronauts returned to Earth, an advertisement appeared in several major publications that has gone on to be among the most famous in media history. The ad made a simple, humorous connection to a culture very much in love with its automobiles and, especially, its very affordable, ubiquitous, and unique looking Volkswagen Beetle. It consisted of a full page picture of the Lunar Excursion Module with only two items below it: the VW logo, and the phrase,

"It's ugly, but it gets you there."

Dave Meoli

American Ballet Theater

Spanning five weeks from January through February, second graders participated in workshops conducted by the American Ballet Theater, through funding provided by the Sousa HSA. This program integrated an introduction of ballet and ABT's repertoire, aspects of the RULER program, and elements of literature. Children were taught dances and expressive movement based on the book, *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings*, by Jo Witek.



Let's Make Business!

The fifth-grade students went to Commerce Plaza located on Long Island where students can learn about the basics of business and finance. Each student plays a specific role in the business community that allows them to apply life skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication and teamwork. Everyone took their jobs very seriously and had a great time!



The Sousa Green Committee Introduces the Reduce Challenge

This school year, Sousa's Green Committee asks you to take the REDUCE CHALLENGE!

The choices we make every day make a big difference to the environment. People (and animals!) need clean water, fresh air and wholesome food to live healthy lives.

The REDUCE CHALLENGE is a list of things we can do to help save the Earth. We've all been recycling, but that is no longer enough. We need to do all three R's - reduce, reuse and recycle.

To protect our environment and keep our planet clean and safe for all living things, we will focus our efforts on ways to REDUCE the trash we throw away, the pollution we create, and how much food, water, and energy we use. As part of the REDUCE Challenge, students will keep track of the ways they REDUCE each month, and students will be awarded prizes and a chance to be featured as a star environmentalist on the Green Committee bulletin board. Thank you to new Green Committee chairs Francine Furtado and Hildur Della-Iacono for spearheading this initiative!



Students Learn Taekwondo

In connection with our Sousa Strong and RULER initiative, third graders had Taekwondo lessons which focused on teaching the "Super Six" character traits: focus, cooperation, self-control, respect, responsibility, and perseverance. Learning these disciplines throughout the lessons can help students in their daily lives. A special thank you to both the Ed Foundation and our Sousa HSA for their help in funding this program.



Valentines for Vets

Sousa students shared their words of kindness and notes of love to our local veterans. Students in all grades made cards that were collected and delivered to veterans around our community. Happy Valentine's Day!



Winter Concert

Sousa showed off its musical gifts when the fourth and fifth grade band, orchestra and chorus students sang and played their way through pieces of classical and holiday music at the annual Winter Concert. It was a morning filled with the sounds of many months of practicing and learning instruments. The audience was also treated to a guest musician/comedian on triangle... our very own Dr. Meoli! Thanks to Ms. Berberabe, Ms. Brunetto and Mr. Viavattine for all their hard work and patience. Looking forward to the Spring Concert on May 6th at 7:30 PM.



Meet Peco!

Peco was one of many dogs and cats from the North Hempstead Animal Shelter that Mrs. Lucie's fourth grade class helped in the month of February. They collected old towels and sheets, toys, food and treats and donated them all to the shelter. They also put up signs around the school describing different dogs that were up for adoption. This class truly made an impact in the lives of these animals and learned the lesson of compassion on the way.



The Native American Artifact Museum Opens Its Doors at Sousa

Fourth graders learned all about the Native Americans: how they settled here, how they lived, what they ate and so much more. To delve a bit deeper, the entire grade took a trip to the Garvies Point Museum and Preserve nestled on the shoreline of Hempstead Harbor (www.garviespointmuseum.com). After visiting the archeological exhibits, students got to see how the Native Americans used the clay from the earth to make useful pots for cooking and learned about a variety of "tools" used for both hunting and cooking. Back at school, the students enhanced their learning of Native American cultures by creating a selection of Native American items (Wigwams, moccasins, bow & arrows, etc.). The classrooms were transformed into a Museum to proudly present their creations.



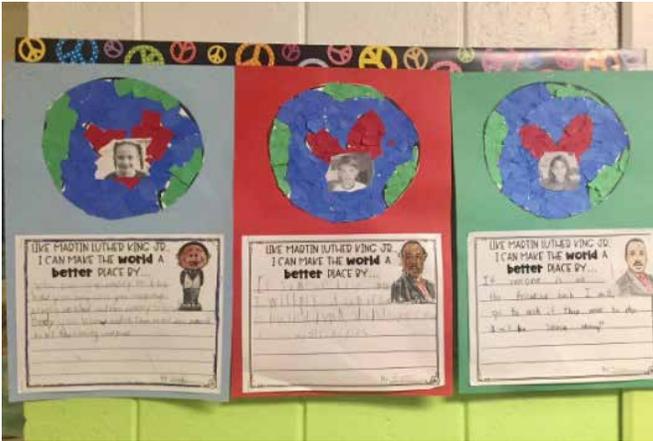
Celebrating Lunar New Year

It is always fun to embrace another culture. Ms. Anzalone's students read a book about this Asian holiday. Lunar New Year is the beginning of a calendar year whose months are coordinated by the cycles of the moon. The children made beautiful red lanterns to celebrate the Year of the Pig and brought home lucky red envelopes filled with candy money! Thank you to Sousa parent Lisa Yeung-Ng for sharing this special celebration with the students.



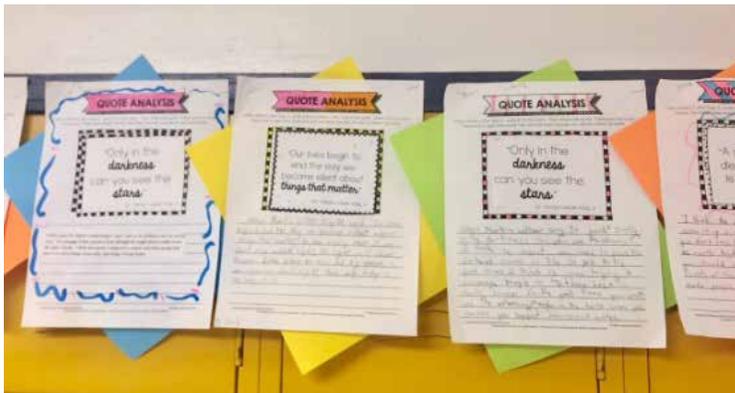
Teachers Update:

Kindergarteners wrote an opinion piece inspired by the work of Todd Parr. As growing writers, students understand the difference between opinion and narrative writing, and discuss the difference between fact and opinion. They also drew and wrote like Todd Parr using the visual features of Todd Parr's books (pictures outlined in black, bold colors/shapes, letters in dark bold/black).



First graders are working on making connections while they read-text to self, text to text, text to world and text to technology. They worked on their opinion writing unit. In science, students also started learning about sound and light.

Second graders worked with the American Ballet Theater thanks to the generosity of the HSA. Students have begun their 2nd writing unit on opinion writing. Also, they have started learning about the different types of communities, while incorporating technology.



Third graders are learning their multiplication facts and many different ways of multiplying numbers to gain a solid understanding of multiplication. They have traveled across the United States in social studies. Students researched individual states and created projects as a way to organize and present their research.



Fourth grade finished their unit on division and worked on their water cycle unit in science. They were busy learning about the Native Americans of New York and Long Island and created their own wampum belts and false face society masks. They also created Native American artifacts.



The fifth graders had Health workshops to help them understand their changing bodies. They met with teachers and students from Weber to help them choose the language and music they will take in Middle School. Academically, students learned about explorers and ecosystems. The students have been working on memoir writing, reading responses, and delving into social justice read alouds. Students also explored the idea of economics to help them get ready for their trip to Commerce Plaza in which they run stores, shop and buy items.

Fifth Grade Basketball Unit

Everyone cheered as the fifth grade teams made their way on the court, holding up their mascots and cheering for themselves with their own songs and team names. First they lined up, then did exercises and drills run by student instructors. They handed in their weekly reports written by a student publicist. Then they were ready for their games. They took turns playing three on three, passing and dribbling to each other and giving each other equal chances to play and score. It was a win-win for all! Thanks to Mr. Dooley and Mr. Robilotto for an awesome learning experience for all the students!



Library Update

Kindergarten is wrapping up folklore with fairy tales. They will begin learning about and reading Caldecott award winners.

First grade had fun identifying story elements in fractured fairy tales and will now be sharing past award books in preparation for the 2019 winners.

Second grade learned about literary genres. They honed their skills by taking part in "Name That Genre." They just began lessons on using our online catalog, Destiny, to explore Sousa library books.

Third graders are evaluating potential Caldecott winners and will share their decision in a grade-wide vote.

Fourth grade has begun animal research with a twist. Partners will research their animal and share that information with another set of partners. The four students will then create a hybrid creature from useful characteristics of each. We hope to conclude this project with a 3-D printed model of this new animal!

Fifth grade has begun creating a book guessing game using Google slides and the 3-D printer. When completed, the presentations will be posted on the Sousa Library website.



Pizza Workshop and Toy Swap

The Sousa cafeteria was filled with budding chefs last month for Sousa's annual Pizza Workshop. Former Sousa parent Mariann Dalimonte taught participants how to make the perfect pizza and calzone with ingredients from Frank's Pizza. After assembling their tasty treats, children had the opportunity to get a "new" toy at the Toy Swap, organized by the Green Committee. Comprised of donated, gently used toys, this green initiative encourages us all to reduce our own personal waste by recycling and reusing toys within our community. Toys that were not "swapped" were donated to local organizations in Port Washington. Thanks to committee co-chairs Mara Sarchese and Ginny Zirpola for organizing the Pizza Workshop and Melissa Steeves and Sima Vasa of the Green Committee.



Book Fair

Students had a blast picking out new books during the annual Scholastic Book Fair. The Book Fair was a big success, in large part due to the tireless efforts of the Book Fair Committee Co-Chairs Halona Gropper Jaffe, Candace Sciortino and Lisa Penha. A big thank you to them and to all of the parent volunteers. Happy Reading!

No Name Calling Week

In celebration of No Name Calling Week during the last week of January, Ms. Moser and Ms. Biblowitz taught as a team in the library. This year, No Name Calling Week coincided with National Kindness Challenge Week. Children explored literature and videos and discussed ways to promote kindness and compassion for all people, how to break stereotypes, and promote positivity. Students also made posters with positive and kind messages that were displayed throughout the hallways. The unique recipe for Kindness is simple. Ingredients include hugs, sharing, nice words, love, honesty and kind gestures. Pour all ingredients into a pot, blend and enjoy!



Parents as Reading Partners (PARP)

This year, the Literacy Committee joined the Cultural Arts Committee to kick off this year's PARP theme of "Reading Takes You Places." On opening day of the two-week PARP program, Literacy Committee parent volunteers decorated the lobby and the children's lockers while the children enjoyed an assembly by storyteller Queen Nur. Along with her accompanist playing a variety of African instruments, Queen Nur presented interactive stories, songs and dances that celebrated African heritage, including the Lion and the Mouse for the younger grades, and the Lion King for the older students. In keeping with the PARP theme, students received a reading passport where they were encouraged to record the settings in books they read with their parents each night. Teachers and fifth grade Sousa Helpers stamped the passports each day, and the places visited were noted on the map of the world on the lobby bulletin board. PARP closed with pajama day for all students and a school-wide reading by Ms. Moser of Dr. Seuss's classic, *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*



Sousa's Got Talent

The many talents of our students were on display in this annual showcase. Almost 50 students in grades 2-5 delighted the audience with acts of dancing, singing, comedy, piano, ukulele and drums. It is always heartwarming to see students brave the big stage and bright lights to shine in front of an enthusiastic audience of their family and peers. Special thanks to first time Sousa's Got Talent Committee Co-chairs Karyn Alevy and Orly Dotan for all their work in putting together a fun and entertaining show.



Dancing Classrooms

Fifth graders treated their family and friends to a throwback night of ballroom dancing. They showcased all they had learned in their 10-week ballroom dancing course led by their wonderful teacher Ms. Jana. Not only did they learn five new dances but also the art of respect, courtesy, turn taking, listening, confidence and bravery. Although the students were not thrilled to have to link arms with each other and hold hands in the beginning of the year, it became second nature by the end of the program. In fact, many of the students did not want it to end. Thanks to a grant made possible by our Sousa HSA, the Ed Foundation and HEARTS, students danced away learning new skills and learning something new about themselves.



And, Sousa Takes Bronze... No, Wait... Sousa Takes Gold, Again!

The yearly Dancing Classroom Rainbow competition was held at Sousa. Our other neighborhood elementary schools were there as well as two other Nassau County schools. Sousa put on a seemingly flawless performance and at the end of the night was awarded the bronze medal. That would have been a great end to the competition, but when they returned to school the next day, there was some very different news. Over the loud speaker an announcement was made that there was an error in the calculations and the winner of the gold medal was actually... SOUSA! There was screaming in the hallways, not only from the fifth graders but all the way down to the kindergartners, as the whole school celebrated their well-deserved victory. Congratulations to our Turquoise Team who won gold for four years in a row!



Award-Winning Children's Books

The following books received critical acclaim this year. Enjoy reading them!

The Newbery Medal

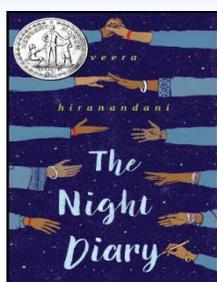
The Newbery Medal is awarded to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

2019 Newbery Medal Winner:

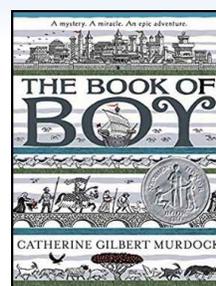


Merci Suárez Changes Gears,
written by Meg Medina

2019 Newbery Honor Books:



The Night Diary,
written by Veera Hiranandani,

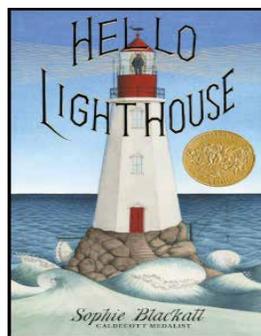


The Book of Boy,
written by Catherine Gilbert Murdock

The Caldecott Medal

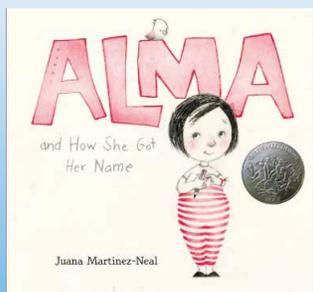
The Caldecott Medal is awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

2019 Caldecott Medal Winner:

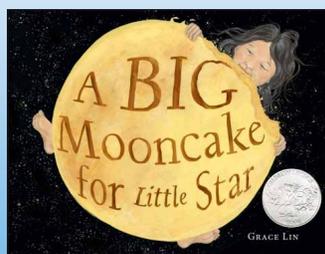


Hello Lighthouse,
illustrated and written by Sophie Blackall

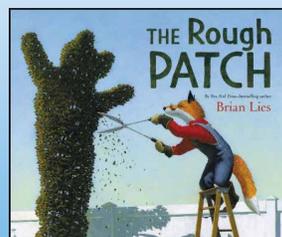
2019 Caldecott Medal Honor Books



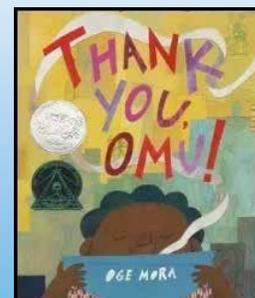
Alma and How She Got Her Name,
illustrated and written



A Big Mooncake for Little Star,
illustrated and written
by Grace Lin



The Rough Patch
illustrated and written
by Brian Lies

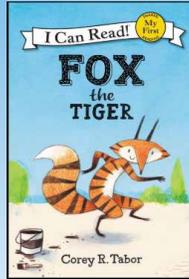


Thank You, Omu!
illustrated and written by Oge Mora

The (Theodor Seuss) Geisel Award

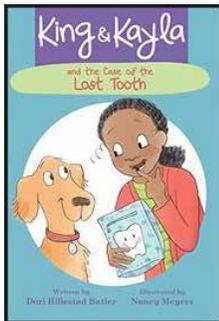
The Geisel Award is given annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year.

2019 Geisel Medal Winner:

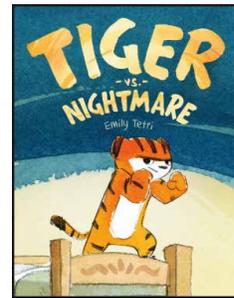


Fox the Tiger,
written and illustrated by
Corey R. Tabor

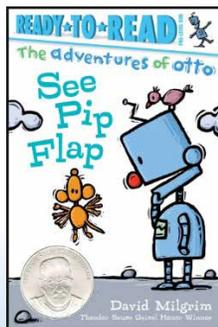
2019 Geisel Honor Books:



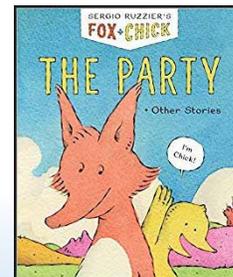
King & Kayla and the Case of the Lost Tooth,
written by Dori Hillestad Butler, illustrated by
Nancy Meyers



Tiger vs. Nightmare,
written and illustrated by
Emily Tetri



The Adventures of Otto: See Pip Flap,
written and illustrated by David Milgrim

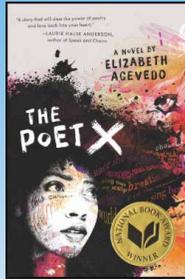


**Fox + Chick: The Party
and Other Stories,**
written and illustrated by
Sergio Ruzzier

The Pura Belpré Award

The Pura Belpré Award is presented annually to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

2019 Pura Belpré Author Award Winner:



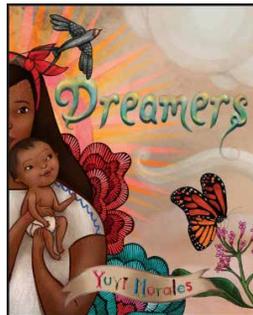
The Poet X,
by Elizabeth Acevedo

2019 Pura Belpré Author Honor Book:



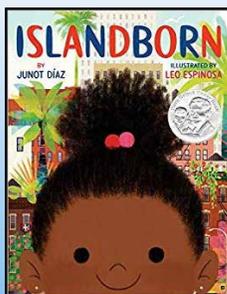
They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems,
by David Bowles

2019 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Winner:

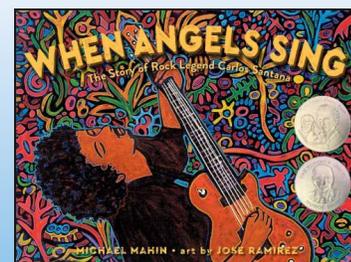


Dreamers,
illustrated and written by Yuyi Morales

2019 Pura Belpré Illustrator Honor Books:



Islandborn,
*illustrated by Leo Espinosa,
written by Junot Díaz*

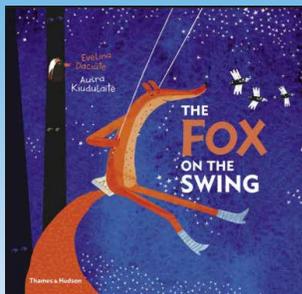


When Angels Sing:
The Story of Rock Legend Carlos Santana,
*illustrated by Jose Ramirez,
written by Michael Mahin*

The (Mildred L.) Batchelder Award

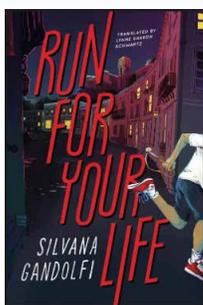
The Batchelder Award is given to the most outstanding children's book originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States, and subsequently translated into English for publication in the United States.

2019 Batchelder Award Winner:

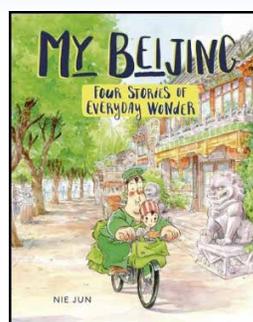


The Fox on the Swing,
written by Evelina Daciūtė, illustrated by Aušra Kiudulaitė

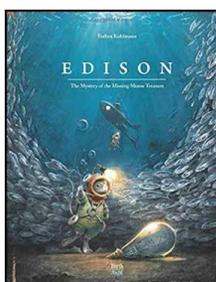
2019 Batchelder Honor Books:



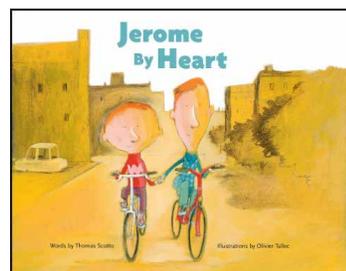
Run for Your Life,
written by Silvana Gandolfi



My Beijing: Four Stories of Everyday Wonder,
written and illustrated by Nie Jun



Edison: The Mystery of the Missing Mouse Treasure,
written and illustrated by Torben Kuhlmann

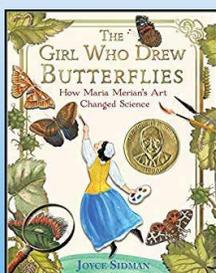


Jerome By Heart,
written by Thomas Scotto, illustrated by Olivier Tallec

The (Robert F.) Sibert Informational Book Award

The Sibert Award is given to the most distinguished informational book for children.

2019 Sibert Award Winner:



The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science,
by Joyce Sidman

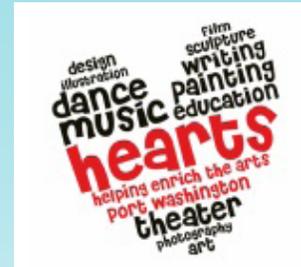
Sousa Helpers Deliver Gifts to the Bus Drivers

Our fifth grade Sousa Helpers painted rocks red with yellow school buses on them. They wrapped them up and gave them to each bus driver on the last day of school before the December break. If the Sousa Helpers weren't delivering a gift, they were welcoming all the students with cheerful holiday songs. It was a great way to start the day!



HEARTS Grant Application for 2019-2020

HEARTS is thrilled to announce that grant applications are now available for 2019-20. Eligible applicants may apply for funding for visual and performing arts initiatives in the Port Washington School District and the greater community. Applicants should request funding for programs that will be completed between September 2019 and June 2020. All applications are due March 25, 2019. For more info: <https://www.heartspw.org/grant-application1.html>



Ed Foundation Grant Application for 2019-2020

The Ed. Foundation is pleased to announce that the 2019-2020 grant application is now available. For more info: <http://theedfoundation.org/grants-programs/grant-application>



Do you have any photos from Sousa class trips or activities? Show off your child's artwork, accomplishments, prizes won, etc. in The Sousa Notes. Please send any photos and articles to Rod at rodn29@gmail.com or Mat at lanfant@msn.com

Calendar of Events

MARCH 2019

3/4-8 Free Breakfast Week
3/5-7 Book Exchange
3/5 HSA Meeting 7:30 PM
3/8 Parent/Teacher Conference-NO SCHOOL
3/8 Ice Skate with Sousa 9-11, Port Washington Skating Center
3/14 Parent/ Teacher Conference Evening
3/14 Blood Drive, 2-8pm, MPR
3/15 Early Dismissal - 11:45am
3/16 Family Yoga day
3/18-22 Nutrition Week

APRIL 2019

4/2-3 NYS English Language Arts Test (grades 3-5)
4/9 Conversations with Dr. Meoli 8:15
4/13 Sousa Social, 7:30pm, Manhasset Bay Yacht Club
4/18-26 Spring Recess - No School



SAVE THE DATE

SOUSA SOCIAL

Manhasset Bay Yacht Club

Saturday, April 13th @7:30pm

