

Krista Kim-Bap by Angela Ahn

Krista Kim has always felt a little bit different. Her best friend, Jason, has always been right by her side, but it's hard to have a boy as your best friend in the fifth grade, especially when you have a judgemental grandmother who expects you to always look like a picture-perfect Korean-Canadian.

When Krista has a class project that bring her out of her comfort zone – like having to wear a traditional Korean dress to school and learn how to make *kimbap*, she learns what and who is important to her.

I wrote this book because I couldn't find any characters in books that reflected my life or the life of my kids. Even though Canada is a multi-cultural and diverse country, there just are not enough stories featuring kids from different backgrounds.

I think it's crucial for kids to read stories about other children from different cultural backgrounds. It's an amazing way to build empathy and understanding. I think what kids will learn is that we are all more the same than we are different.

Thematic links:

Diversity, self-acceptance, family, friendship, intergenerational relationships

Activity Ideas:

Ask students to share a recipe or cultural appropriate garments that reflects their cultural background.



Angela Ahn is a former high school Social Studies and English teacher. She worked in the Surrey School District for three years and also taught English as a Second Language in the public school system in Hong Kong for a few years. After teaching, she decided to go back to school to become a librarian.

Angela worked in all sorts of libraries until she had her kids. She has one son and one daughter and reports with great pride that they are both avid readers.

She is currently working on her second book and hopes to share it soon. *Krista Kim-Bap* was the first book she ever finished writing — growing up Angela didn't always want to be a writer. It took her forty-something years to figure out what she really wanted to do with her life.



Selected Awards:

OLA Best Bests Juvenile Fiction 2018

Sparks!

by Ian Boothby

Two cats want to be heroes but no one takes cats seriously, so the two disguise themselves as a dog and save the world from an evil alien baby who is trying to turn all the animals on Earth into their army.

Assisted by robot talking litter box and a very energetic squirrel, Charlie and August must learn to work together and overcome past traumas to become the greatest dog hero ever.

Thematic links:

Working together
Overcoming phobias
Not letting society's prejudices define you

Activity Ideas:

Draw animals disguising themselves as other animals.

Create stories about what your pet would be afraid of and how they could overcome those fears.

What superpowers would your pet have if they were a superhero?

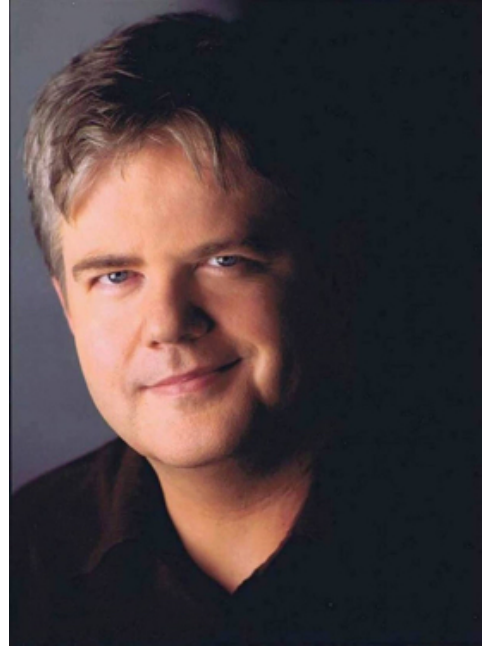


Ian Boothby and illustrator Nina Matsumoto both worked on comics they wrote and drew themselves then met while working on The Simpsons comic book.

They won the Eisner Award for a story they did for Bart Simpsons' Treehouse of Horror which is the industry's highest honor.

Selected Awards

Eisner Award for Best Short Story



Tournament Trouble (Cross Ups Series; Book 1) by Sylv Chiang

All twelve-year-old Jaden wants to do is be the best at *Cross Ups*, the video game he and his friends can't stop playing. He knows he could be—if only he didn't have to hide his gaming from his mom, who's convinced it will make him violent.

After an epic match leads to an invitation to play in a top tournament, Jaden and his friends Devesh and Hugh hatch a plan to get him there. But Jaden's strict parents and annoying siblings, not to mention a couple of bullies and his confusing feelings for his next-door neighbor Cali, keep getting in the way!



Tournament Trouble marks the first book in the Cross Ups series by Sylv Chiang. She wrote about a young gamer because playing video games was the favourite pastime of many of the kids in her grade five class at the time; especially those who weren't that interested in reading.

Thematic Links:

Friendship	Bullying	Honesty	Self-confidence
Video games	Immigrant parent	Violence in the media	Mother-son relationships

Activity Ideas:

Blackline activities are available at annickpress.com in the Lesson Plan for *Tournament Trouble*.

The video game Cross Ups has characters that transform into mythical creatures. Invent your own character and draw what your character looks like before and after it transforms. Describe its Super moves.

Cali's mom teaches her the alphabet game to calm her thoughts. To play, pick a topic and try to name something related for each letter of the alphabet (e.g. if the topic is School: A=apple B=blackboard C=crayons, etc.). Play the alphabet game by yourself or with a partner. Share some strategies you use to calm down when you are anxious or stressed.

In *Tournament Trouble*, many characters keep secrets from each other. Before you read the novel, make a T-chart listing Good Reasons and Bad Reasons to keep a secret. Then, as you read the novel, note the secrets people are keeping and decide where to place them on the chart.

Sylv Chiang grew up in Toronto. She loved reading and in grade one she said she wanted to be an author when she grew up.

As a teenager and young adult, she coached gymnastics and worked at a local museum giving tours to school groups. She also did tour guiding for class trips to Montreal and Quebec City. She studied French at the University of Toronto, and became a French teacher. She has taught French Immersion, Extended French, and Core French in the Toronto District School Board.



When her daughters were born, Sylv spent a lot of time reading to them and this reminded her of her childhood dream of becoming an author. She enrolled in writing classes and Jaden showed up in one of her first assignments, arguing with his sister. Sylv really liked the characters and kept playing with them until *Tournament Trouble* took shape.

Sylv's favourite part of being an author is when her characters surprise her by doing something she wasn't expecting. When she's not writing, you can find Sylv on her yoga mat or at the library helping her daughters discover more great books.

Selected Awards:

Voices of Youth Advocates (VOYA) Top Shelf Fiction Award for Middle Grade Readers

Other Books by Sylv Chiang:

Anyone's Game (Cross Ups Series; Book 2) (Annick Press, 2018)

Rising Star (Cross Ups Series; Book 3) (Annick Press, October 2019)

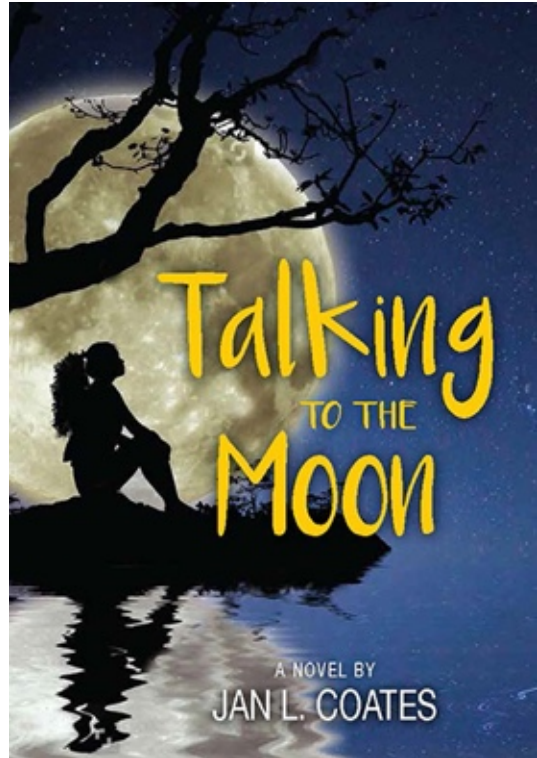
Talking to the Moon by Jan L. Coates

Katie Dupuis Pearson is living in foster care and has her own unique way of experiencing the world. She is looking for her birth mother who has been missing for eight years.

A summer trip to lovely Lunenburg turns out to be a major turning point in Katie's life, as she finds friends, both young and old, and a deeper connection to that community than she could have imagined.

I began writing this book because of an ancient clay jug I own that my ancestors brought from Montbéliard, France; they were part of the group of Foreign Protestants who settled Lunenburg in the 1750s.

I wanted to give the jug a story. Then Katie stepped into the story. I continued writing the book because Katie became my friend, and she needed me to help her tell her story, in tandem with the jug's story.



Thematic Links:

Acceptance/Differences/Empathy/Autism Spectrum Disorder
Foster Care/being left out/behind
Roots/Ancestry/Settlement of Nova Scotia
Friendship/Belonging
Determination

Activity Ideas:

Ancestry/Roots: Interview an experienced (older) person in your family about what life was like when they were a kid, or about your family roots. If you can, record your interview. Maybe something will inspire you to create a poem, story or piece of art to then share with that person.

Friendship: Discuss friendship and what characteristics people look for in a friend. You can have some fun by using a ball, and throwing it from student to student, with the catcher having to name a trait they look for in a friend before passing on the ball. Students could then design a “Want Ad for a Friend,” listing qualities they’re looking for in a friend.

Acceptance of Differences: “Build a Friend.” Chat about the meaning of the word “unique,” and how each of us is unique. Discuss tolerance and empathy, as well. Why do differences matter to people? Why are some people mean to those who are different? Isn’t everybody different? Working in groups of three, build a friend; one student draws the head, another student the torso, and the third student the legs/feet. In clouds around the funny, new friend, students can write traits that make their person different from other people. (ex. Likes only purple jellybeans, always wears two different socks, doesn’t like to make eye contact).

Determination/Positive Mindset: Katie doesn’t give up on her search for her birth mother. Design a poster with two columns. Label the left-hand column: “**What I usually say:**” and then write some negative things you often say (ex. It doesn’t matter; it’s good enough). Label the right-hand column: “**What I’ll try to say from now on:**” and then write something you could say to reflect a more positive mindset (ex. I wonder if I could do better... Is this my best work?)

Foster Care/being left out: Katie hasn’t seen her birth mother for years, and she doesn’t know why she was left behind. Write about a time that you felt left out. Maybe you didn’t get invited to a party, or maybe you weren’t invited to join in a playground game. How did that make you feel? Illustrate your feelings. How do you think you’d feel if you were Katie? Draw a spider web, and in each section, write something you couldn’t imagine living without (family, technology, food, etc.).

Settlement of Nova Scotia: Draw a map of the province, and research to find out the years each part of the province was settled. Colour in each section with the years of settlement, as well as where most of the new Canadians came from. Discuss how most of us are all “new” Canadians; some of us have just been here longer than others. Draw a new picture for the cover of the book.

Jan L. Coates: I'm a writer because I've always been a reader; stories are *the best*, whether you're reading them or writing them. I have two adult kids, Liam and Shannon, who, sadly, live in Ontario with their partners, Rachel and Peter. I miss them, but we visit back and forth whenever we can.

Other than writing and reading and visiting schools, I'm learning to illustrate (so much fun!), and I love to ride my bike, visit the library, shop at second-hand stores, hang out with my Golden Irish baby, Charlie (and my husband, Don).



Selected Awards:

A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk (Governor General's Literary Award Finalist; Ann Connor Brimer Finalist; IPPY Silver Medalist; SYRCA Shortlist; USBBY Honor List; Skipping Stones Honor List)
The Power of Harmony (Hackmatack Finalist; Ann Connor Brimer Finalist; OLA Best Bets List; Violet Downey Award Finalist)
Rocket Man (YALSA Quick Pick)
Sky Pig (Lillian Shepherd Award (illustrations); SYRCA Shortlist)

Other Books by Jan L. Coates:

The Hermit, (2020, Nimbus Publishing)
Say What You Mean, (2019, Nevermore Press)
Dancing with Daisy, (2019, Running the Goat Press)
Talking to the Moon, (2018, Red Deer Press)
A Halifax Time-Travelling Tune, (2018, Nimbus Publishing)
Lost in the Story (and 17 other books), ESL chapter book (2017, Caramel Tree)
Sky Pig (2016, Pajama Press)
The King of Keji, (2015, Nimbus Publishing)
Rocket Man, (2014, Red Deer Press)
The Power of Harmony (2013, Red Deer Press)
Five Children and It (a retelling of); (2013, Caramel Tree)
Fifteen-Minute Fillers, Volume 2 (2012, Editions de l'Envolee)
Quebec Stories, ESL Comprehension workbook (2011, Editions de l'Envolee)
A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk, (2010, Red Deer Press)
Rainbows in the Dark, (2005, Second Story Press)

The Ghost Road by Charis Cotter

Ghosts, a family curse, buried secrets — and two girls who have to figure it all out. *The Ghost Road* is about a lost community and the troubles a family carries from one generation to the next. It was inspired by the magical landscape where I live in Newfoundland, as well as the many stories I have heard about Newfoundland fairies and ghosts.

Ruth and Ruby are cousins who have never met before. They are spending the summer in Buckle, Newfoundland, where they discover that not only are they the same age, but they both lost their mothers when they were two years old.



When they start exploring an old cemetery, they learn that there are twins in every generation of their family, and they always die young. What's more, one of the twins always has The Sight and can see the Ghost Road that leads to the mysterious lost settlement of Slippers Cove. What happened there? What does it have to do with their family? And who is the ghostly presence that keeps visiting Ruth late at night? The answers lie somewhere along the Ghost Road . . . if they can only find it.

Thematic Links:

Friendship	Ghosts	Grief	Dreams
Twins	Genealogy	Physical abuse	Mother-daughter relationships
Newfoundland history and landscape			

Activity Ideas:

Family Tree: Start a family tree and see how many generations you can go back. Begin with your brothers and sisters, your mother and father, your uncles and aunts, your grandparents.

Visit a cemetery. Find the gravestone with the oldest date. Look at the different kinds of gravestones. Look at the epitaphs, which are the special words of remembrance on some gravestones. Write down the ones you like.

Secret passages and secret rooms. Have you got a secret passage or a hidden room in your house? Have you ever been to a house with a secret passage or a hidden room? Draw a floorplan of your house and include a place where you could imagine a secret passage or a hidden room.

Charis Cotter grew up beside a cemetery and has been living with ghosts ever since. She studied English in university and went to drama school in London, England. She writes spooky books about ghosts, friendship and family secrets.

Charis loves visiting schools and meeting new kids. She has worked in schools and libraries from coast to coast, using drama and storytelling to bring her books to life. Her performances of Newfoundland ghost stories have thrilled audiences of all ages, from Florida to Vancouver Island.

Charis lives at the end of a road beside the ocean, in one of the most haunted parts of Newfoundland. She likes to sit by the fire during a storm with the wind howling, knowing that the local ghosts are drifting by her house.



Selected Awards:

The Painting won the 2018 Ann Connor Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children's Literature and *The Swallow: A Ghost Story* won the 2015 IODE Violet Downey Award.

Charis has been shortlisted for a Hackmatack award for four other books: *The Painting* (2017), *The Swallow: A Ghost Story* (2016), *Born To Write: The Remarkable Lives of Six Famous Authors* (2010), and *Kids Who Rule: The Remarkable Lives of Five Child Monarchs* (2009).

Other Books by Charis Cotter:

The Painting (Tundra Books, 2017)

The Ghosts of Southwest Arm (Baccalieu Books, 2017)

The Ferryland Visitor: A Mysterious Tale (Running the Goat, Books & Broadsides, 2016)

The Swallow: A Ghost Story (Tundra Books, 2014)

The Ghosts of Baccalieu (Baccalieu Books, 2013)

A World Full of Ghosts (Annick Press, 2009)

Born to Write: The Remarkable Lives of Six Famous Authors (Annick Press, 2008)

Wonder Kids: The Remarkable Lives of Nine Child Prodigies (Annick Press, 2008)

Kids Who Rule: The Remarkable Lives of Five Child Monarchs (Annick Press, 2007)

Toronto Between the Wars: Life in the City 1919–1939 (Firefly Books, 2004)

Missing Mike

by Shari Green

Mike's a rescue, a mutt. He had a run-in with coyotes and he's missing an eye. But Mike is Cara's dog, and they love each other absolutely. When Cara's family smells smoke in the air, Mike becomes anxious. Pine Grove is in the path of a wildfire, and the family is ordered to evacuate. In the ensuing chaos, Mike runs off, and they're forced to leave him behind.

Cara watches helplessly as the family drives through a nightmare, with burning debris falling from the sky and wild animals fleeing for their lives. Once they reach the city, Cara and her family are safe, but Cara can only think about Mike. She'll do whatever it takes to find him, even if it means going back to Pine Grove alone.



I love dogs and knew I wanted to write a dog story someday. While I was thinking what that story might be, BC (my home province) was in the midst of its worst-ever wildfire season. Images of the fires and stories of people evacuating were on the news every day. It was scary and heartbreaking. My thoughts all ran together and eventually became the story of *Missing Mike*.

Thematic Links:

Natural disasters, kindness, family, pets, the meaning of home

Activity Ideas:

In the news. Collect news stories of recent/current natural disasters and pinpoint the locations on a national or world map, or print out a map of current wildfires or evacuation areas. Have students create a news story focusing on the “helpers” – the volunteers at evacuation centers, firefighters, rescue workers, medical personnel, staff at animal shelters, etc.

Just in case. Have students think about what they'd put in their own just-in-case backpack of necessities and treasures. Have them draw a backpack, then “fill it” by creating a collage of their items and gluing it onto the pack. Alternatively, have them create a crossword puzzle using their list of items.

The meaning of home. Before reading *Missing Mike*, brainstorm with students to create a list of words for home. After reading, see what words they can add to the list. Have students choose their own words for home and write either a personal journal entry or a poem for sharing.

Pets. Have students poll their classmates to collect data about the types of pets they have (or would like to have). Ask students to create a bar graph or pie chart to display the data.

Shari Green is an award-winning author of middle grade verse novels. Her books have been nominated for multiple provincial and state readers'-choice programs and included on international "best of" lists.

Shari spent most of her childhood reading stacks of library books, and things haven't changed much since then. When she's not reading stories or writing stories, she can often be found wandering on the beach near her home in Campbell River, BC.

In addition to being a writer, Shari also works as a Licensed Practical Nurse. She's married and has four grown children.



Selected Awards:

Missing Mike is a 2019 NCTE Notable Verse Novels selection, USBBY Outstanding International Books selection, OLA Best Bets selection, and Silver Birch Fiction Award nominee.

Macy McMillan and the Rainbow Goddess was an ALA Schneider Family Book Award winner, Violet Downey Book Award finalist, Junior Library Guild selection, and nominee for multiple readers' choice award programs.

Root Beer Candy and Other Miracles was a White Ravens selection and a nominee for the Chocolate Lily, Rocky Mountain, and MYRCA readers' choice award programs.

Other Books by Shari Green:

Macy McMillan and the Rainbow Goddess (Pajama Press, 2017)

Root Beer Candy and Other Miracles (Pajama Press, 2016)

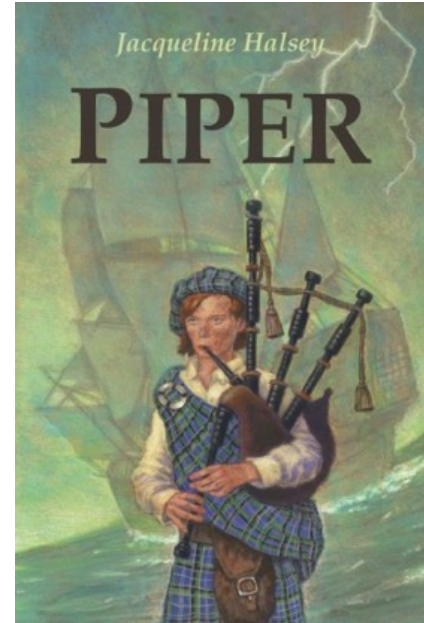
Piper

by Jacqueline Halsey

It's 1773, 12-year-old Dougal Cameron and his family leave their harsh, hardscrabble life in the highlands of Scotland, for their own farm in the New World. On board Dougal is drawn to the haunting sounds of bagpipes played by a young player.

As the disease ridden, overcrowded, immigrant ship plods slowly across the Atlantic, Johnny Piper teaches Dougal to play the bagpipes, a forbidden instrument at that time. But when a violent storm knocks the Hector two weeks off course, Dougal's dream of becoming a piper must be put on hold as he struggles to keep his three little sisters alive.

This story is about immigration. Although it is set hundreds of years ago there are so many similarities with today's newcomers. Many have escaped intolerable regimes, left family members behind, have undergone an arduous sea voyage, and found themselves in a strange place unlike anything they have ever known. They can never go home.



Thematic Links:

Scotland, immigration, Pictou

Activity Ideas:

Art - Look at some tartans then design your own tartan. Every colour must mean something to you. It could reflect where you live, the colours of your favourite sports team or your bedroom for example.

Story - The Earth has become too polluted, so you and your family move to a strange new planet. This planet has a very different climate to the one you are used to. The inhabitants are mostly friendly but they speak a different language with a different alphabet. They wear weird clothes and have strange customs. You know you can never go home. Write a story describing what life is like on this new planet. How do you go about fitting in and making a new life for yourself?

Geography - Look at a map and trace the route the Hector took from the Highlands of Scotland to Nova Scotia.

Research – Find out about traditional Scottish food. Bake some oatcakes. They will probably be much tastier than the ones the people on the Hector ate.

Jacqueline Halsey lives in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in an eighty-year-old house overlooking Halifax harbour. Swirling fogs, tug-boats and tall-ships provide a never-ending source of inspiration and she never knows when she might spot Bluenose or a rickety-rackerty pirate ship.

Before becoming a full-time writer, Jacqueline worked in the Youth Services department of Alderney Gate Library. Having fun with books and talking to kids about what they like to read was the best experience ever for a children's writer.

She has written five books – a piratical, picture book with former co-worker and friend Carrie Muller, and four historical fiction stories. Research for her books has involved climbing down long, steep, metal ladders into a submarine, helping shear an alpaca, and exploring the hold of Ship Hector.

When not writing she teaches English to newcomers, leads heritage tours on McNabs Island and usually has a messy art project on the go.



Selected Awards:

Piper, 2018, CCBC Best Books for Kids and Teens. *Woozles*, 2019 Battle of the Books.
Explosion Newsie, 2016, CCBC Best Book for Kids and Teens
Bluenose Adventure, Nominated 2013, APMA Best Atlantic-Published Book award
Peggy's Letters, 2006 Canadian Children's Book Center 'Our Choice' starred selection.
Nominated for the 2007 Hackmatack Children's Choice Award and the 2007 Rocky Mountain Children's Book Award. Voted an Honour Book in the 2007 Silver Birch Express Award.

Other Books by Jacqueline Halsey:

Explosion Newsie. Illustrated by Loretta Migani (Formac Publishing, 2015)
Bluenose Adventure, illustrated by Eric Orchard (Formac Publishing, 2013)
The Terrible Horrible Smelly Pirate, - co-authored with Carrie Muller, illustrated by Eric Orchard (Nimbus Publishing, 2008)
Peggy's Letters (Orca Books, 2005)

Ice Chips and the Haunted Hurricane (Ice Chips Series; Book 2) by Kerry MacGregor and Roy MacGregor

The Ice Chips just can't keep up. Their biggest hockey rivals, the Stars, have better gear and a state-of-the-art arena. Fortunately, the Chips have a secret weapon: a magical rink that allows them to travel through time and meet their hockey heroes.

Lucas and his teammates have been warned that time travel is dangerous, but they decide to leap again anyway for some extra training—only to find themselves in the middle of a Nova Scotia hurricane!

A young Cole Harbour kid saves them and soon has them running drills all over the Halifax Citadel. A few of the city's famous ghosts are also involved, giving the Chips a big story for their return home!

The real-life Cole Harbour player they meet values hard work and practice, even though he has loads of natural talent. He also knows that the skills that help us in hockey don't always come from the game itself.

The Chips are all different from each other; practicing together helps make them into a solid team.

In this series, we add our fictional story to a true one about a hockey player, giving readers both some history of the game and of the region we visit (Nova Scotia!).

Thematic Links:

Hard work, practice, teamwork, bullying, trying our best with what we have

Activity Ideas:

When we present this book, we have the students make a hurricane come to life by working together. This goes along with our teamwork theme. Read Chapter 3 aloud (we have a slightly



edited version that we can provide) and have your classmates make sounds to go along with it. Here are the sounds: snapping fingers, then rubbing hands, then patting palms on your thighs, then banging feet lightly on the ground (even while sitting). Have the students send these sounds, one after another, from one end of the room to the other like a wave going around a hockey rink. Every time the word “wave” comes up, have your classmates do the wave with just their arms and a *Whoosh* sound. If you want to add some thunder, have three kids hold Bristol board that they make rumble when you motion to them. Can everyone work together toward the same goal?

What unusual training ideas can you come up with? Draw a picture of the funny exercises you might include in your training program. If you have access to a gym or a yard, see if your teacher will help you and your classmates try some of them out.

Write your own ghost story. In this book, the ghosts our kids meet help them learn about the history of Halifax, the area in which they’ve landed. The history is true, even if some people don’t believe that the ghosts exist. Does your ghost tell a true story? Does your ghost tell a story you made up? Where does your ghost live and has anyone ever seen him or her? If you don’t want to write a ghost story, you can make up a story about the history of your town or city. Or if you know a true story, you can tell it!

Kerry MacGregor has worked in news and current affairs at the CBC, and as a journalist with the *Toronto Star*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, and many other publications.

Her columns on parenting, written with a unique, modern perspective on the issues and interests of today's parents, have appeared in such publications as *Parenting Times Magazine*.

Kerry MacGregor is co-author of the latest work in the Screech Owls series as well as co-author on the Ice Chips series. She is originally from Ottawa, but lives in Poitiers, France with her husband and two young kids.



Roy MacGregor, who was the media inductee into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2012, has been described by the Washington Post as “the closest thing there is to a poet laureate of Canadian hockey.”

He is the author of the internationally successful Screech Owls hockey mystery series for young readers, which has sold more than two million copies and is also published in French, Chinese, Swedish, Finnish, and Czech. It is the most successful hockey series in history—and is second only to *Anne of Green Gables* as a Canadian book series for young readers—and, for two seasons, was a live-action hit on YTV.

MacGregor has twice won the ACTRA Award for best television screenwriting and has written many books for adults, including *Canoe Country*, *A Life in the Bush*, *Original Highways*, and *Home Game*.



Selected Awards for Roy MacGregor:

Screech Owls, *Power Play in Washington* – Willow Award, Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Award, 2002

A Life in the Bush – Rutstrum Award, U.S.A., for best non-fiction book on the environment or wilderness written between 1995-2000, winner

A Life in the Bush – Canadian Authors' Association Award, non-fiction, 2000.

A Life in the Bush – Ottawa-Carleton Book Award, 2000

Screech Owls, Mystery at Lake Placid – Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award, 1998

Home Team – Governor General's Award, non-fiction: finalist, 1995

Chief – Ottawa-Carleton Book Award, 1990

Other Books by Kerry MacGregor and Roy MacGregor:

The Ice Chips series, books 1-3 (Harper Collins, 2018-19)

Reality Check in Detroit (Screech Owls series) (Tundra, 2015)

Other Books by Roy MacGregor:

Original Highways: Travelling the Great Rivers of Canada (Random House, 2017)

Canoe Country: The Making of Canada (Random House, 2015)

Wayne Gretzky's Ghost: And Other Tales from a Lifetime in Hockey (Random House, 2011)

Northern Light: The Enduring Mystery of Tom Thomson and the Woman who Loved Him,
(Random House, 2010)

Canadians: A Portrait of a Country and Its People (Viking, 2007)

The Screech Owls mystery series for young readers (vols 1-29, 1995-2015)

No Fixed Address by Susin Nielsen

12-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia, and his favorite game show is *Who What Where When*; he's even named his gerbil after the host. His mom Astrid is loving, but can't hold onto a job.

When they get evicted from their latest apartment, they move into a Westfalia van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and placed into foster care.

As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for a junior edition of *Who What Where When*. He is determined to get a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But what happens isn't what he expects . . .

Susin Nielsen deftly combines humor, heartbreak and hope in this moving story about people who slip through the cracks in society; and about the power of friendship and community in making all the difference.



Thematic Links:

Hidden homeless

Friendship

Compassion and Empathy

Mental Health

"It takes a village to raise a child"

Activity Ideas:

Write an imaginary diary entry: you and your family have lost your home and are living in a van, or with a relative, or in a shelter. What is a typical day like? What are the small struggles you encounter, things that we take for granted when we have a safe place to live?

Felix is excellent at trivia. Have fun designing your own trivia game. In a classroom setting, each person could come up with five questions, based on different categories; when it's your category, you can take your turn as host.

Felix keeps a big secret from his best friends for a long time. Have you ever kept a secret from a friend? Is it ever okay to reveal a friend's secret? Have a debate or a discussion about this, and come up with some examples.

Please note, there is also a discussion guide at the end of the book to spark more conversation.

Susin Nielsen is the award-winning author of *Word Nerd*, *Dear George Clooney: Please Marry My Mom*, *The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*, *We Are All Made of Molecules* and *Optimists Die First*. She got her start writing for the original hit TV series *Degrassi Junior High*, and has written for over 20 Canadian TV series.

Her books have won critical acclaim and multiple awards both at home and around the world, and they've been translated into many languages. Her new novel, *No Fixed Address*, came out in September 2018.

She's been described as "the John Green of Canada," and had a dream once that John Green was described as "the Susin Nielsen of the U.S." She lives in Vancouver with her family and two naughty cats.



Selected Awards:

Nielsen's novels have won many awards over the years, including The OLA's Red Maple (*Word Nerd* and *Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*), the CLA (*The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*), the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Award (*We Are All Made of Molecules* and *The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*), the Prix des Libraires in Quebec (*We Are All Made of Molecules*) and the Governor General's Literary Award, Children's Text (*The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*). Her books have also been nominated for many international awards, including the Carnegie Medal (*We Are All Made of Molecules* and *Optimists Die First*), and the Texas Lone Star and Georgia Peach awards (*We Are All Made of Molecules*). *The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen* also won the UK Librarian Association award, and *We Are All Made of Molecules* won Belgium's Prix Farniente.

Other Books by Susin Nielsen:

Princess Puffybottom ... and Darryl (Tundra, 2019)

Optimists Die First (Tundra, 2017)

We Are All Made of Molecules (Tundra, 2015)

The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen (Tundra, 2012)

Dear George Clooney, Please Marry My Mom (Tundra, 2010)

Word Nerd (Tundra, 2008)

Countdown to Danger: Canadian Survival by Jeff Szpirglas

You begin your quest for survival stranded in the Rockies with an injured guide. You quickly find out she's not who she appears to be. Is she a friend or foe? And what's with that secret compound in the dam? The danger escalates . . . the dam is sabotaged . . . what should you do?

Choose wrongly and be beaten by mutant beavers, roiled by raging rapids, squashed by a sasquatch, razed by a rockslide or worse!

Choose well — help the mutant animals, trust your instincts with the bomb, grab that extra paddle — and make it out of the woods alive. Now the Countdown to Danger is on! You've got 30 minutes to get yourself out of danger, or die trying!



Thematic links:

Problem solving and decoding, decision making

Activity Ideas:

Because the action of this story takes place in a 30-minute time window, it was important to think of a location that could be used for various storylines and sub-plots. Have students brainstorm a series of places that might be used as the setting for a story (e.g., a volcanic island about to erupt, a spaceship, a ghostly mansion). Use this as a springboard for pre-writing: what possible scenarios might occur in such an environment?

Create a multi-step adventure, Jeff Szpirglas-style! This involves using sticky notes to map out the various story strands by sticking them on a piece of mural paper (or wall). From an initial premise involving danger and potential catastrophe, what are the possible branches for the story? Which ones end in survival? Or certain doom?

Jeff Szpirglas has written over 20 books for young readers, ranging from gross science to terrifying tales about disembodied eyeballs. He used to work at CTV Television, was an editor and Chirp, chickaDEE, and Owl Magazines, and currently writes reviews about scary movies and film soundtracks for Rue Morgue Magazine, which is probably waaaaaay to scary for you to be reading.

He has twin children and two cats (the cats are not twins), and is married to the amazing Danielle Saint-Onge, who also writes books with him.

When he's not busy writing or watching scary movies, he can be found going jogging, rocking out to heavy metal, or teaching grade 2.



Selected Nominations and Awards:

Sheldon Unger Vs. The Dentures of Doom was longlisted for the Sunburst Award, YA category (2017)

Something's Fishy (co-written with Danielle Saint-Onge) was a SYRCA Shining Willow Nominee (2013)

Previous Hackmatack nominations were for *Fear This Book* (2008), and *They Did What?!* (2006).

Gross Universe: Your Guide To All Disgusting Things Under The Sun was a finalist for the 2005 IPPY and the 2005 Science In Society Award from the Canadian Science Writers' Association.

Some Other Books by Jeff Szpirglas:

Tales From Beyond The Brain (Orca, 2019)

Train Your Brain: How Your Brain Learns Best (Crabtree Publishing, 2018)

Wild Cards (Orca, 2017)

Sheldon Unger Vs. The Dentures of Doom (Star Crossed Press, 2016)

Evil Eye (Star Crossed Press, 2012)

Something's Fishy (Orca, 2011)

Just A Minute: A Crazy Adventure In Time (Maple Tree Press, 2009)

Tour of the Planets (Scholastic Education, 2009)

Fear This Book (Maple Tree Press, 2006)

They Did What?! (Maple Tree Press, 2005)

Gross Universe (Maple Tree Press, 2004)