

# Children's Book Guild News



CHILDREN'S  
BOOK GUILD  
of WASHINGTON, DC

## Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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Friday, January 24, 2020

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**SUPERHERO! TELLING T'CHALLA'S STORY**

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About Me

### Monthly News



The Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC is a professional organization of authors, illustrators and children's literature specialists promoting high standards in children's literature since 1945. Visit us at

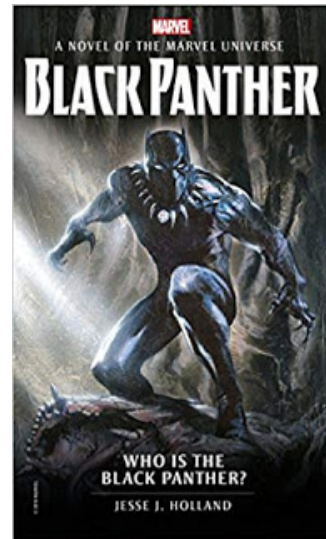
<https://childrensbookguild.org/>

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On February 20, at Busboys and Poets, authors Jesse Holland (*The Black Panther: Who Is the Black Panther?*) and Ronald Smith (*Black Panther: The Young Prince*) will join in conversation with educator Jabari Sellars to talk about (among other things) writing the superhero narrative from their perspectives as chroniclers of the Marvel Comics hero T'Challa, the Black Panther.

Award-winning writer and journalist Jesse J. Holland currently serves as distinguished visiting scholar in residence at the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress and weekend host for *C-SPAN Washington Journal*. In addition to *The Black Panther: Who Is The Black Panther?*, a prose novel, which was nominated for an NAACP Image Award in 2019, he has



Jesse Holland

written *The Invisibles: The Untold Story of African American Slavery Inside The White House*, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens--Finn's Story* and *Black Men Built the Capitol: Discovering African American History In and Around Washington, D.C.*

Ronald L. Smith is the award-winning author of the middle grade novels *Black Panther: The Young Prince*, *The Mesmerist* and *The Owls Have Come to Take Us Away*, a Junior Library Guild Selection. His first novel, *Hoodoo*, won the 2016 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award. His latest novel for middle grade readers is *Gloomtown*. Before becoming a full-time writer, Smith worked in advertising, helping to sell everything from cheeseburgers to automobiles to airlines.

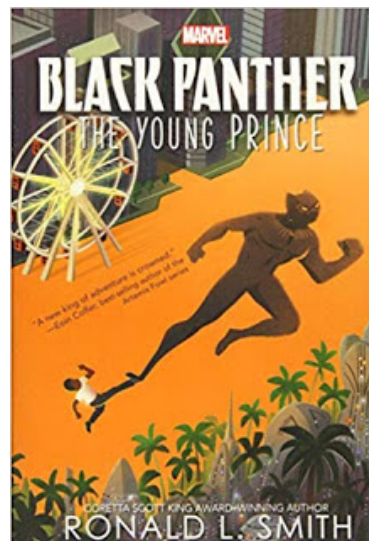


Ronald L. Smith



Jabari Sellars

Jabari Sellars teaches English at the Siena School, an independent school for students with diagnosed language-based learning differences. He also facilitates book clubs and panel discussions at Fantom Comics in Washington, DC. He has moderated conversations with such creators and professors as Ta-Nehisi Coates, Dr. Greg Carr and Jason Reynolds.



**Time: 11:30 a.m. "social hour"; noon luncheon**

**Place: [Busboys and Poets](#), 450 K Street NW**

**Menu: All choices \$25 (\$26 when paid online via PayPal)**

**:: CHOICE OF SANDWICH (served with a salad of baby greens and house-made kettle chips) ::**

- Falafel sandwich (vegetarian/vegan) with house-made hummus, cucumbers, lettuce, tomato and onion on whole-wheat pita, served with tahini sauce (vegan without tahini sauce)
- Honey-roasted turkey sandwich with Havarti cheese, chipotle mayo, lettuce, tomato and onion on white bread
- Grilled-chicken panini with chipotle mayo, caramelized onions, pepper jack, lettuce and tomato on ciabatta
- Avocado panini with roasted red peppers and vegan mozzarella on multigrain bread

**[RSVP Now!](#)**

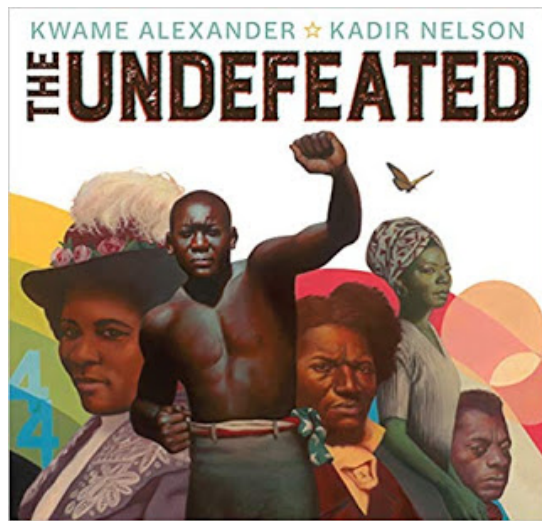
**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- 1. Guild Members Recognized with Youth Media Awards**
- 2. Suggestions Needed for Youth Literacy Grants**
- 3. The Brooks, Short-Term Family Housing Facility to Which Members Donated Books, to Open in March**
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**☆ THE CHILDREN'S BOOK GUILD ☆**  
**☆ CONGRATULATES ☆**

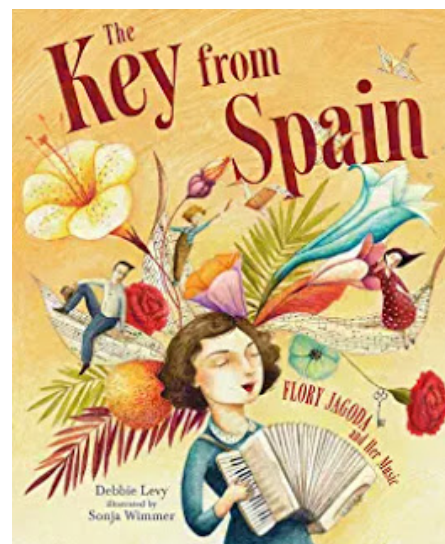
**[KWAME ALEXANDER...](#)**

**AWARDED A NEWBERY HONOR FOR  
*THE UNDEFEATED***



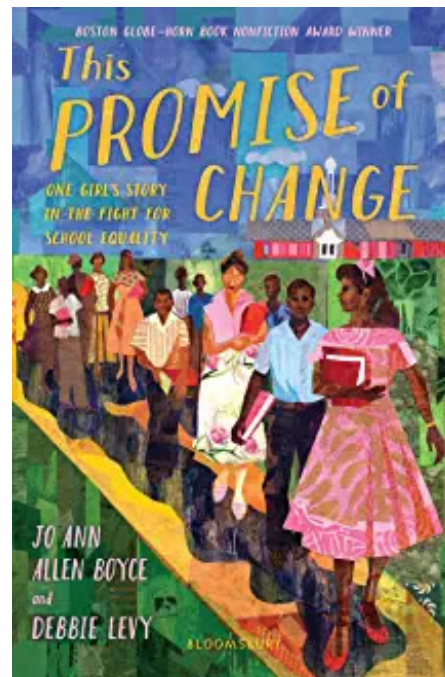
Illustrated by Kadir Nelson, *The Undeclared* is the 2020 Caldecott Medal winner and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book for Illustration.

...and **DEBBIE LEVY**



*The Key from Spain* received a Sydney Taylor Picture Book Honor

**AND**



*This Promise of Change*, co-written with Jo Ann Allen Boyce, is a Sibert Honor Book.

## THE GUILD SEEKS SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS DC-METRO YOUTH LITERACY GRANTS

This year, the Children's Book Guild will be making \$500 grants to as many as six schools in the DC area. Schools will receive these funds to acquire books for their libraries, media centers or classrooms. Purchases will be made through First Book Marketplace.

The Guild would like to widen its pool and not give repeat grants. To suggest a deserving school, please contact Kem Sawyer at [kemsawyer@gmail.com](mailto:kemsawyer@gmail.com).

Schools that have received grants from the Guild include:

2018-2019: TraRon Center, Fox Chapel Elementary School and Garrison Elementary School

2017-2018: Dunbar High School, Anacostia High School, Brookland Middle School, Kramer Middle School, Thomson Elementary School and Brightwood Elementary School

2016-2017: Patterson Elementary School, Plummer Elementary School, Cleveland Elementary School, Anne Beers Elementary School, Garfield Elementary School and Langdon Elementary School

2014-2015: Kimball Elementary School, Ketcham Elementary School and Whittier Elementary School

When suggesting a school to receive a grant, please include the name and email address of a school representative who can act as a liaison.

Thank you for your help!

## THE BROOKS, A SHORT-TERM FAMILY HOUSING FACILITY IN NORTHWEST DC, TO OPEN IN MARCH



Guild members contributed nearly 40 new books to DC's Ward 3 Democrats' recent book drive for a young people's library in the soon-to-be-completed and newly named The Brooks, Ward 3's short-term family housing facility on Idaho Avenue, in Northwest DC's Cleveland Park neighborhood. Phil Thomas, chair of the Ward 3 Democrats, will present the full collection to Mayor Muriel Bowser at the ribbon cutting in late March.

The Brooks, which is on track to begin serving families in March, will be operated by [Friendship Place](#), which began its work in the District in 1991, providing shelter services in upper Northwest DC. Friendship Place operates a number of programs in DC's Continuum of Care and throughout the region, including street outreach, a drop-in center, a free medical and psychiatric clinic, shelters and transitional housing facilities, permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing, and specialized programs for veterans and youth.

Heartfelt thanks to Guild members for their generous participation in this library-building effort!

## ELLEN OH PROMOTES EMPATHY AND FURTHERS OPPORTUNITY THROUGH WE NEED DIVERSE BOOKS

*by Fred Bowen*

Ellen Oh, a cofounder of We Need Diverse Books (WNDB), gave a freewheeling and far-ranging talk at the Children's Book Guild's January meeting. The passionate writer-activist even threw in an f-bomb for good measure.

Oh, who lives in Bethesda, traced the genesis of the idea for WNDB to the Halloween when her three-year-old Korean-American daughter wanted to dress as Cinderella. The little girl's great Disney ambition fell apart when a classmate told her that girls "who look like you" couldn't be Cinderella.

Oh had a similar experience herself while growing up in New York City, where, she said, “there was a lot of racism.” Despite having a father who taught her to be proud of her Korean heritage, Oh internalized the message she received from the dominant culture (including such “racist” books as *The Five Chinese Brothers*) that being white was better.

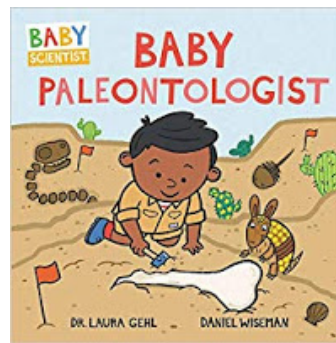
Still, books and specifically library books saved Oh, she said, by allowing her to escape the difficulties of her situation. Reading one book in particular—*The Joy Luck Club*—Oh described as a “life-transforming experience.” She recognized her own Asian-American immigrant experience in Amy Tan’s modern classic. Through the book she realized she was as “American” as anyone.

Oh showed the crowd at *Busboys and Poets* the familiar graph from a 2012 review of 3,600 children’s books that indicated only 7 percent of the books were about minorities such as African, Asian, Native and Hispanic Americans. In the last few years, however, groups such as WNDB have had a measurable effect on the children’s book industry. A similar 2018 graph indicates that 23 percent of the children’s books surveyed were about minority groups. Seven percent of the books were about Asian-American characters, up from 2 percent in 2012. Oh noted that even Disney, the great popularizer of Cinderella and countless other characters from fairy tales and myths, has recognized that diversity pays.

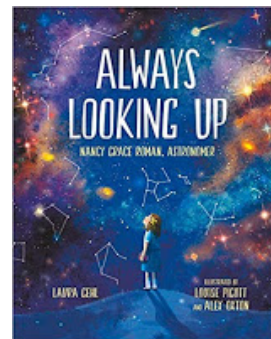
Oh insists there is still plenty of work to do. WNDB wants to bring the stories of all marginalized communities to life. WNDB also sponsors internship and mentoring programs so that members of historically marginalized communities will get such jobs as editors and agents and become permanent parts of the publishing industry. In addition, WNDB sponsors the Walter Dean Meyers Award (“the Walter Award”) to honor and celebrate diverse books written by diverse authors.

Oh encourages all kids to read “widely and diversely,” because reading develops empathy and helps prepare young readers for the diverse, multicultural world they will live in. And she brings this diversity-embracing approach to her writing. Her fantasy books inevitably reflect her love of Korean culture. Her next book, *The Dragon Egg Princess*, will be published in March.

## **MEMBER NEWS**



***Baby Paleontologist*, the fourth book in the *Baby Scientist* series, by LAURA GEHL and Daniel Wiseman, will be released on February 4.**



**Laura's books *Always Looking Up: Nancy Grace Roman, Astronomer* and *Baby Astronaut* were both selected for A Mighty Girl's best of 2019 list.**



## ***BRANCHING PATHS...***

**AN OCCASIONAL SERIES ON HOW GUILD MEMBERS' WORK LEADS TO OPPORTUNITIES**





## **BUILDING CULTURAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE UNITED STATES**

*By Karen Leggett Abouraya*

The publication in 2012 of my first children's book, *Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books*, was and continues to be life-changing and life-affirming. One opportunity has led to another and then another and another. Because of the book's focus on the great library in Alexandria, Egypt—the *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* (BA)—my husband, Tharwat Abouraya, and I joined the Friends of the BA in Maryland and its umbrella organization, Baltimore Luxor Alexandria Sister City Committee, which Tharwat now chairs.

Each year, one or both of us visit Alexandria, Egypt (Tharwat's hometown), to meet with nearly two dozen chapters of the International Friends of the BA. And each year, we donate children's books to the BA, often signed books by Guild members. In 2015, illustrator Susan Roth and I presented our own treasured book on the stage of the Alexandria library itself during a conference we helped organize on informal education (education through libraries, museums and after-school programs). With librarians and book lovers from Egypt, France and the United States, we ate Chinese food on a rooftop overlooking the Alexandria corniche and the Mediterranean!



Karen, Tharwat and their daughter, Nadia Abouraya, donate children's books to the *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* during the 22nd annual meeting of the International Friends of the BA.

Through the BA's Dialogues for Peace program, I facilitate Skype conversations between schoolchildren in Alexandria and the United States, including students at St. Thomas More Cathedral School in Arlington, VA (which was featured in a display of student artwork at the BA). During one such conversation, a fourth-grade boy asked children in Egypt for their favorite food. A young girl in hijab exclaimed,

“hamburgers and pizza!” and suddenly the physical and cultural distance between the United States and Egypt evaporated.



Student art displayed at the BA for Dialogues for Peace, the online exchanges between Egyptian and American children

When my next book, *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words*, came along, I invited young people from School Girls Unite, Youth Activism Project and the Giving Square to join my presentations and share their own efforts to change the world and their communities

Now, as soon as I think I can set aside time to begin work on a new book, a call or email entices me to explore yet another fork in the road.

(tree-branch image above from clipart.email)

## WHEN YOU TWEET, KEEP THE GUILD IN MIND!

Deborah Kalb has been running the Guild's Twitter feed. She would appreciate it if members on Twitter would include the Guild's Twitter handle (@BOOKGUILDDC) in any book-related tweets they'd like the Guild to retweet. Thanks so much!

LITERARY EVENTS SPONSORED BY POLITICS AND PROSE: The literary calendar at Politics and Prose lists many upcoming programs that may be of interest to Children's Book Guild members: <http://www.politics-prose.com/events>.

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