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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION'S (ILA) 2019 CHOICES READING LISTS HIGHLIGHT "OWN VOICES" TEXTS

Newark, Del. (May 1, 2019) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) released today the 2019 Choices Reading Lists, an annual best-of selection of children's and young adults' books, handpicked by students and educators themselves.

Each year, Choices empowers 25,000 children and young adults across the United States to enjoy newly published children's and young adults' trade books and vote for the ones they like best and that had an impact on them as readers. Teachers, in turn, identify high-quality books that enrich the curriculum and, most important, excite and interest students.

This year's lists exemplify the project's continued commitment to diversity and representation in children's literature. Books such as *Finding Langston*, *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice* and *Sewing the Rainbow: The Story of Gilbert Baker and the Rainbow Flag* offer powerful launch points for discussion around the social justice issues of racial bias, police violence and the LGBTQ rights movement.

The 2019 lists also include "own voices" texts—those in which the author shares the marginalized identity of a book's protagonist. Authors such as Lesa Cline-Ransome, Duncan Tonatiuh and Aisha Saeed challenge dominant media narratives and provide more authentic perspectives.

Educators can use the Choices lists to conscientiously expand their libraries, supporting children's rights to choose what they read and to access window, mirror and sliding glass door texts.

"No one better understands the tastes and preferences of children than students themselves and the teachers who observe their responses firsthand," says ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. "These lists help educators connect students with books they can't put down, books in which they can see themselves represented and books that instill in them a lifelong hunger for reading and learning."

The Choices projects are run by ILA members who volunteer as team leaders to recruit participants, distribute books and oversee the reviewing and voting process. The number of book submissions continues to grow annually across the three Choices projects.

Several Choices authors, including Kate Messner, Gayle E. Pitman and Veera Hiranandani, will be featured at the ILA 2019 Conference in New Orleans, LA, in October.

Download the annotated 2019 Choices reading lists and find more information on these projects at literacyworldwide.org/choices.

About the Choices Project

Each year, thousands of children, young adults, and educators around the United States select their favorite recently published books for the International Literacy Association's Choices reading lists. These lists are used in classrooms, libraries, and homes to help readers of all ages find books they

will enjoy. The annotated lists for the current year are posted online in May, aligning with Children's Book Week, and are available for free download at literacyworldwide.org/choices.

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers and experts across 146 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated. ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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