

# READING AND TALKING ABOUT RACE

An Introduction to ALA's Great Stories Club

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

# Webinar Agenda

---



[WWW.ALA.ORG/GREATSTORIES](http://WWW.ALA.ORG/GREATSTORIES)

- **Lainie Castle, ALA PPO**  
Program overview and online resources
- **Amber Hayes, ALA ODLOS**  
EDI support for libraries
- **Susana Morris, Georgia Institute of Technology**  
Finding Your Voice series
- **Ann Shilling, Washington County Free Library**  
Leading virtual book clubs
- **Q&A**

## GSC: A Literature-based Library Outreach Program

A Great Stories Club program hosted by the **Seattle Public Library, University Branch** in partnership with the **Interagency Academy Alternative High School at UDYC**



# Advisors and Funders



**Susana Morris**  
Georgia Institute of Technology



**Angelina M. Cortes**  
Sno-Isle Libraries



**Joslyn Bowling Dixon**  
Newark Public Library



**Amira Shabana**  
Proviso East High School



W.K.  
KELLOGG  
FOUNDATION®



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES



## Amber Hayes

Outreach and Communications Program Officer, ALA  
Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services  
(ODLOS)



## ODLOS Mission

- Support libraries in creating responsible and all-inclusive spaces to serve and represent entire community
- Decenter power and privilege
- Facilitate conversations around access and identity
- Use a social justice framework
- Strive to create an association culture where this is everybody's everyday work

---

# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Goals

Establish resources and support so libraries and librarians can be effective advocates for the inclusion of all individuals in the life of their community.

Provide safe, respectful space for diverse voices and perspectives.

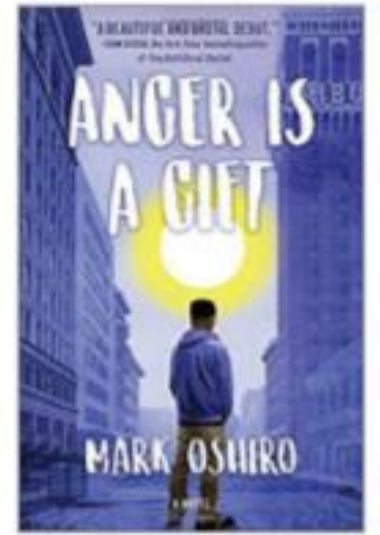
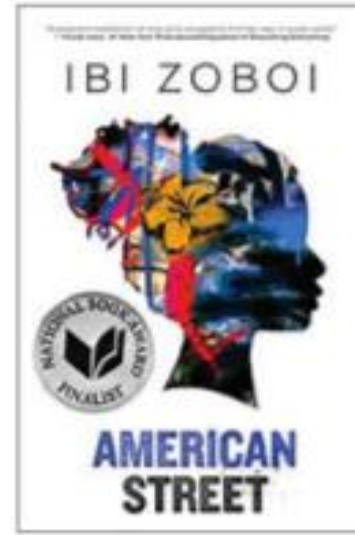
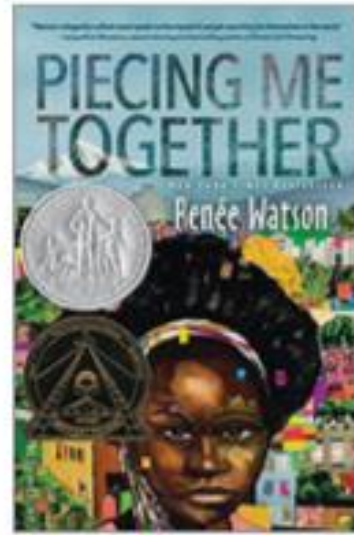
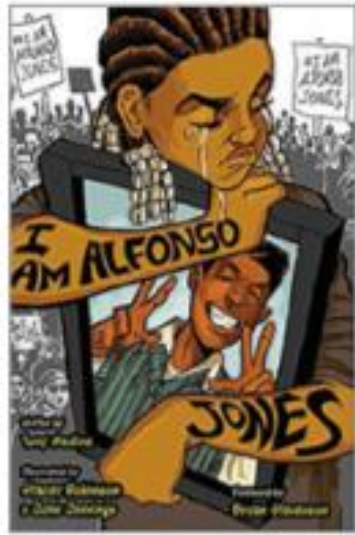
+  
• ○ ALA.ORG/DIVERSITY +  
○ •

**ALA**  
DIVERSITY, LITERACY  
& OUTREACH SERVICES

American  
Library  
Association

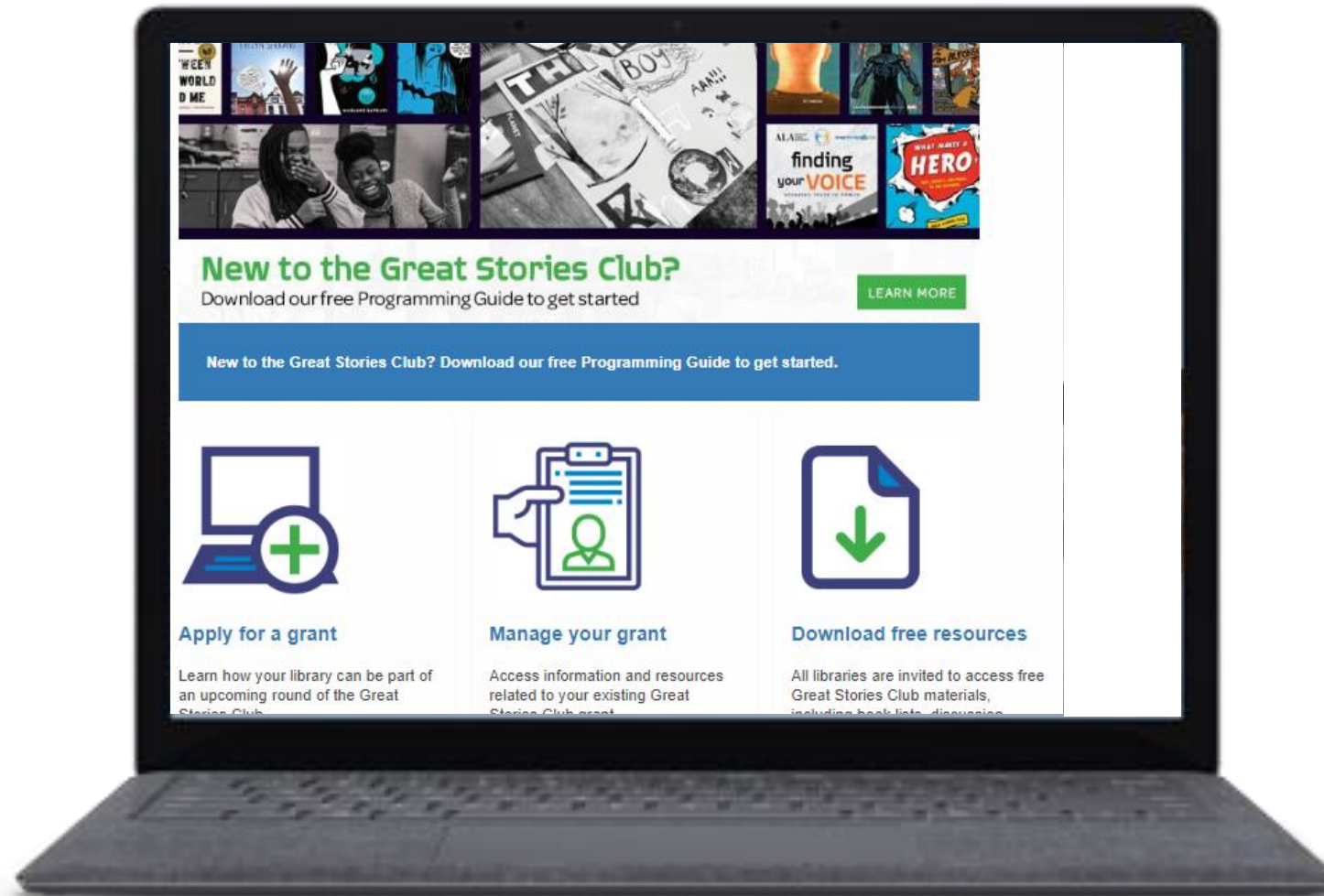


# Finding Your Voice Series



“[These books] highlight the necessity and power of young people speaking up despite challenges, social pressure, and even the threat of bigger dangers. Whether it is finding righteous anger as a superpower or speaking up through poetry and art, *Finding Your Voice* features young people speaking out against racism and other injustices in order to make the world better. There are many ways to find your voice; however, the books in this series focus on a few key ways young speak truth to power.”

# [www.ala.org/greatstories](http://www.ala.org/greatstories)



# Digital / Print-Ready Resources

---

- ✓ Series-framing essay
- ✓ Book-specific discussion questions
- ✓ General discussion questions for ALL books



## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GREAT STORIES CLUB SERIES

**SUSANA M. MORRIS**, Associate Professor of Literature, Media,  
and Communication, Georgia Institute of Technology

### TEXTS

- *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson
- *I Am Alfonso Jones* by Tony Medina, Stacey Robinson, and John Jennings
- *American Street* by Ibi Zoboi
- *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *Anger is a Gift* by Mark Oshiro

**T**he old adage goes “children should be seen and not heard.” That conventional wisdom implies that speaking up and out is the exclusive realm of adults. It also suggests that children and young people don’t have important things to say — that they should stay

# Discussion Questions

*“Gabi’s family immigrated to California from Mexico, and she grows up in a tight-knit Mexican-American community. What aspects of her background and culture does Gabi most relate to? What are the aspects she struggles with? What do you think are the reasons for these feelings?”*

— *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, by Isabel Quintero

# finding your **VOICE**

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER




*The Poet X*  
BY ELIZABETH ACEVEDO



Knowledge is power, get a  
**LIBRARY CARD**

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation



GreatStories  Club

# Resources on Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation

- ✓ WKKF's TRHT Glossary
- ✓ Resources on Structural Racism
- ✓ Reading Lists About Race and Racism
- ✓ About TRHT: [www.healourcommunities.org](http://www.healourcommunities.org)





# Susana Morris

Associate Professor of Literature, Media and  
Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology  
and GSC National Project Scholar

# **Finding Your Voice: Speaking Truth to Power**

An Introduction to ALA's Great Stories Club  
Wednesday, July 29, 2020

PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office



# Finding Your Voice Series

---



“Finding Your Voice includes texts that highlight the necessity and power of young people speaking up despite challenges, social pressure, and even the threat of bigger dangers. Whether it is finding righteous anger as a superpower or speaking up through poetry and art, Finding Your Voice features young people speaking out against racism and other injustices in order to make the world better.”

# Discussion Questions

---

- A whole community comes together to push back against the policies at West Oakland High. Students from across Oakland and concerned community members stand up to unjust policy. How do they organize to make this change? Does their activism remind you of other protest movements? Do you or could you see this sort of community organizing where you live? What might it look like?
  - *Anger is a Gift*

# From Silence to Action

---

- Children should be seen, not heard.

CHILDREN-ALL CHILDREN-ARE THE WORLD.  
CHILDREN ARE HOPE AND LIFE. CHILDREN  
ARE OUR IMMORTALITY. CHILDREN ARE THE  
SEEDS AND THE MOLDERS OF HISTORY AND  
THE TRANSMITTERS OF OUR VALUES- GOOD  
AND BAD.

- MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN -

LIBQUOTES.COM

# Joan of Arc

---



PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# Ruby Bridges

---



PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# Gloria Anzaldua

---



- “Wild tongues can’t be tamed, they can only be cut out.”

# bell hooks

---

- “Sometimes people try to destroy you, precisely because they recognize your power — not because they don’t see it, but because they see it and they don’t want it to exist.”



# The Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham

---



PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office



# Police Brutality and Young People

---

Rekia Boyd



Tamir Rice



# Black Lives Matter Movement

---



PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# Immigration Fight



PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# Street Harassment



## PROGRAMMING **Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# Youth Activists

---

**Mari Copeny**



**Greta Thunberg**



PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

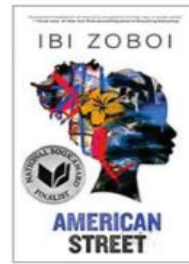
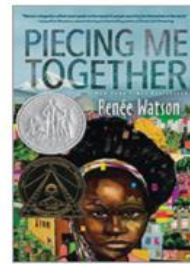
An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

GreatStories  Club

# finding your VOICE

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

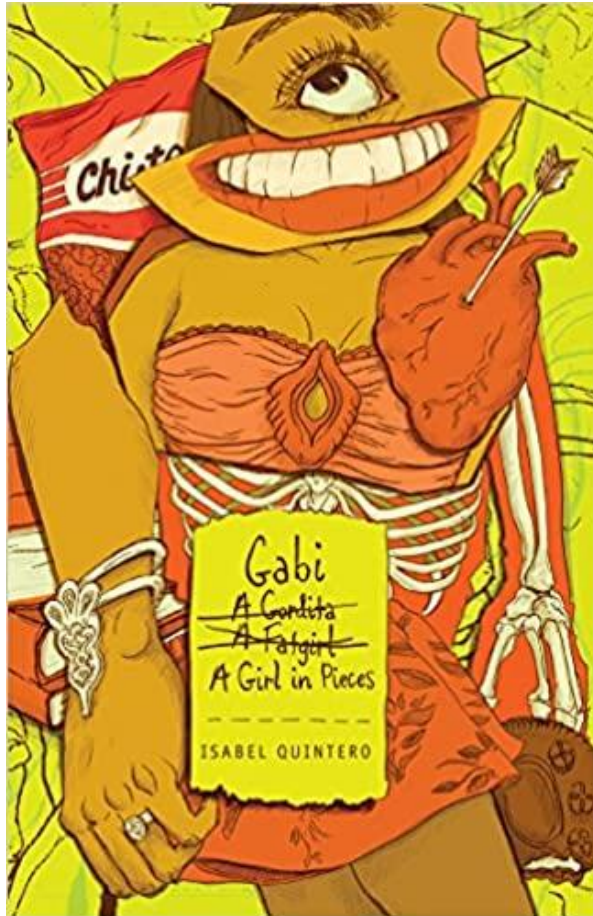
ALA American Library Association



## PROGRAMMING **Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# Gabi, A Girl in Pieces



- “What I like about zines is that they give immediate power to the writer. You don’t have to wait to traditionally publish. You have an idea and you can put it out immediately. You can pass it to as many people as you want. However many copies you make, is however many you can pass out or sell. I like that it’s subversive.”

# Feminist Zines

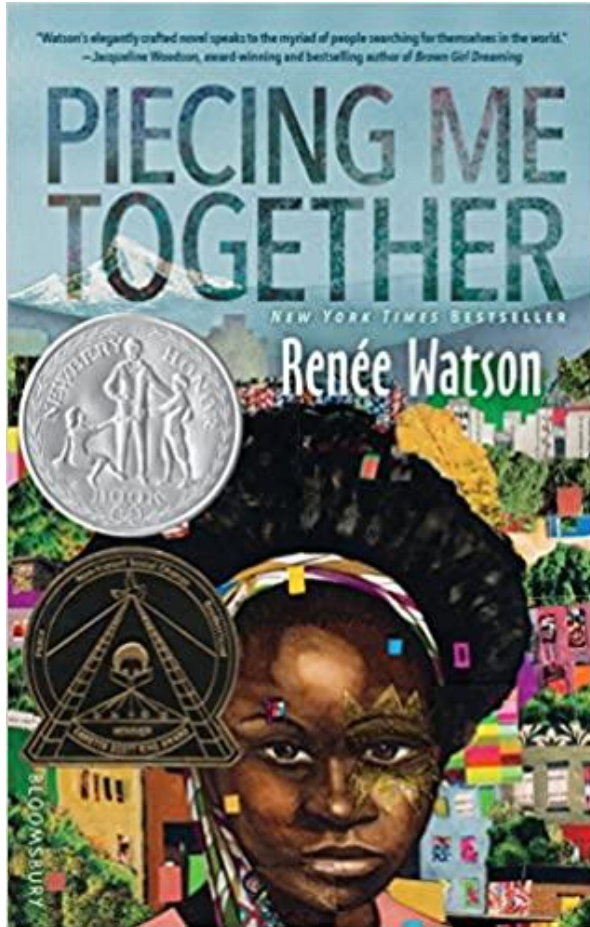


PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office



# Piecing Me Together



- “And I know from personal experience that, you know, when you're a child, it's not that you don't know stuff is happening. A lot of times, adults are just not talking with you about it. And so, you can feel very strange, feeling this tension in your city or your community, but no one is saying anything. And so I hope that my books provide space for young people to explore, and say, ‘Yeah, I feel seen.’ That's what I want young people to do — to talk to each other and to the adults in their lives.”

# Mickalene Thomas, Collage Artist

---

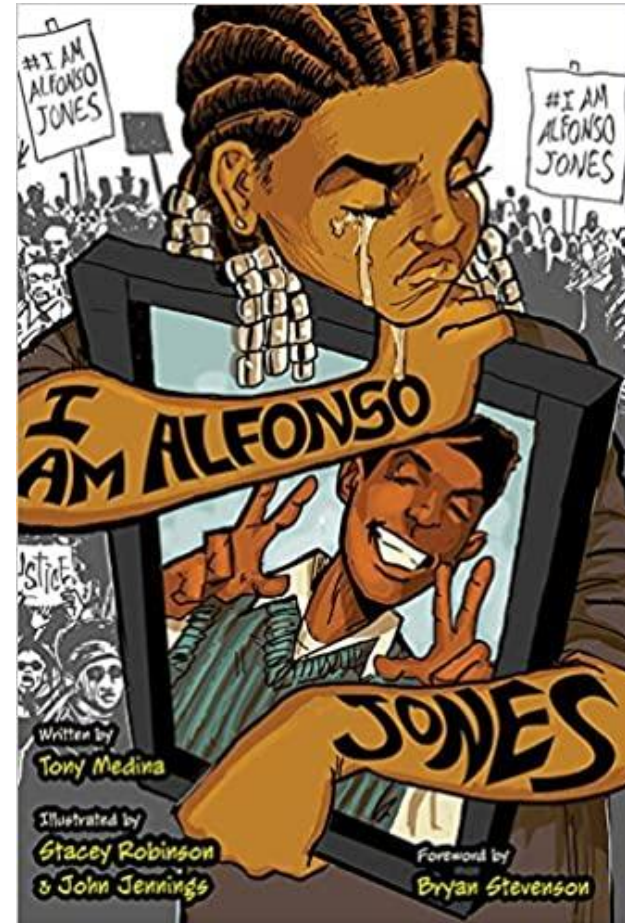


PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# *I Am Alfonso Jones*

- “I wanted to create a Black Lives Matter book for young people without ever having to write the words, ‘Black Lives Matter,’ but to show the beauty, the three-dimensionality, interiority and the emotional lives of Black boys, who have been and continue to be so targeted and maligned in America...I wanted to simply show Black boys the way we want them: alive and thriving and being and breathing.”



# Eleanor Bumpers, Latasha Harlins, Amadou Diallo

---

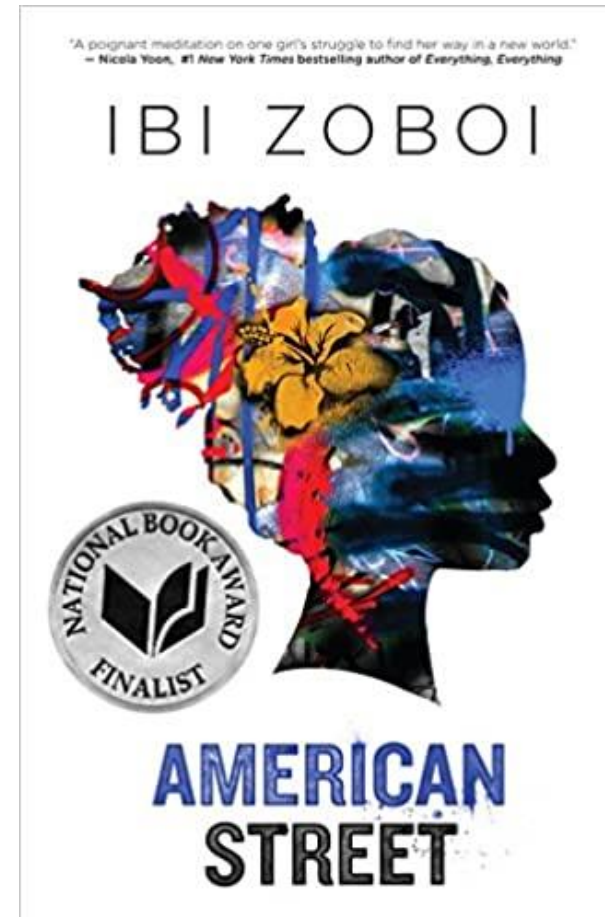


PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# American Street

- “I’m writing about Haitians and Haitian-Americans in ways I haven’t seen before. I was careful about perpetuating stereotypes. But I know for a fact that we all have experienced immigration and assimilation in different ways. I tried to remedy that by literally giving each of my characters a voice. I had step into their shoes for a moment in order to humanize them. I have a responsibility as a writer to provide context for the violence and trauma so that my characters are not one-dimensional.”



# Immigration in the ICE Era

---

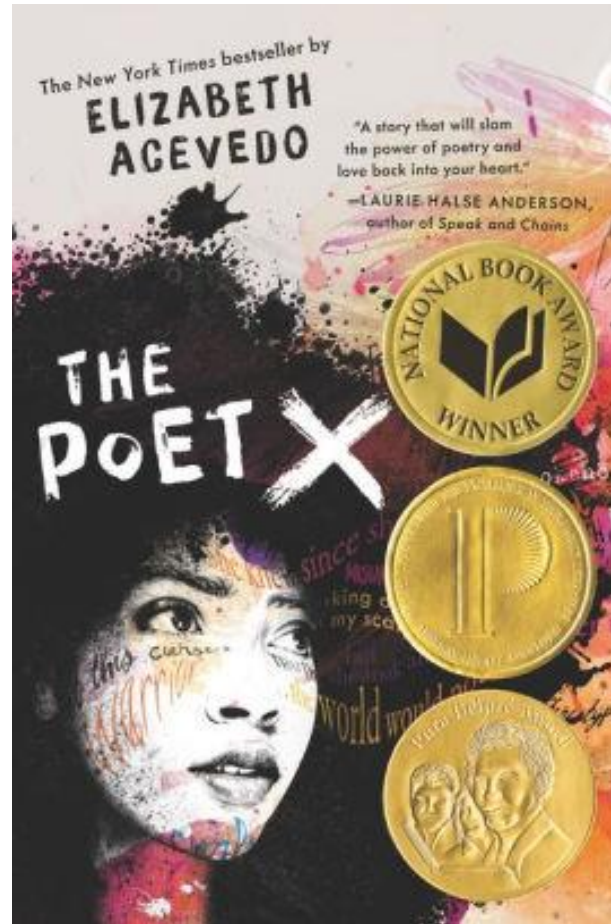


Credit: ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

# The Poet X



- “The first poem I wrote for this novel was the one about ants, which I think is one of the most climactic points in the story. It was about this conflict with [Xiomara’s mother] and religion and what it means to want to make yourself so small that you could fit between the floorboards. This is a story about taking up space and being a young woman who takes up space with both her body and her voice. The weight of the story is in that moment.”

# Combating Street Harassment Through Art



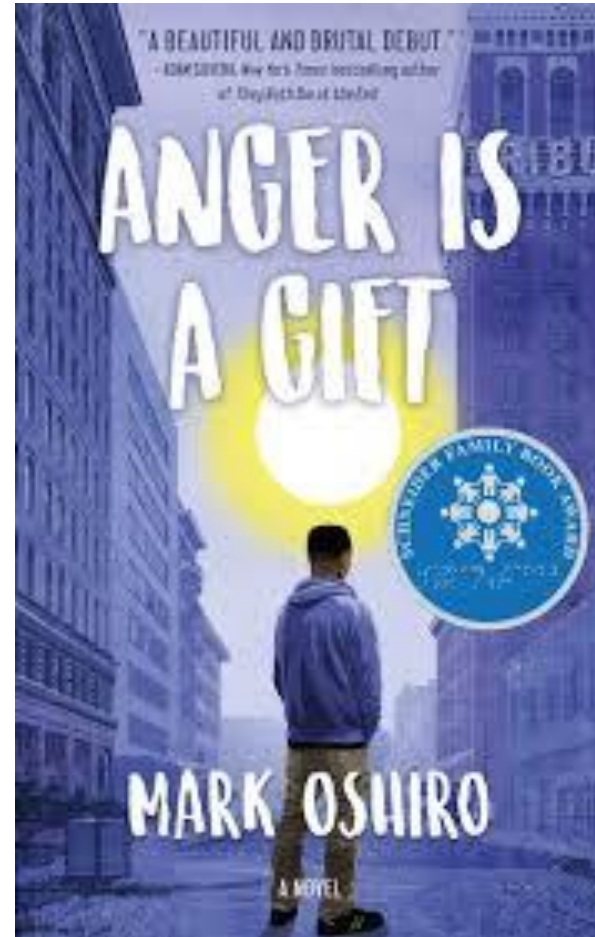
PROGRAMMING  
**Librarian**

An initiative of the American Library Association Public Programs Office

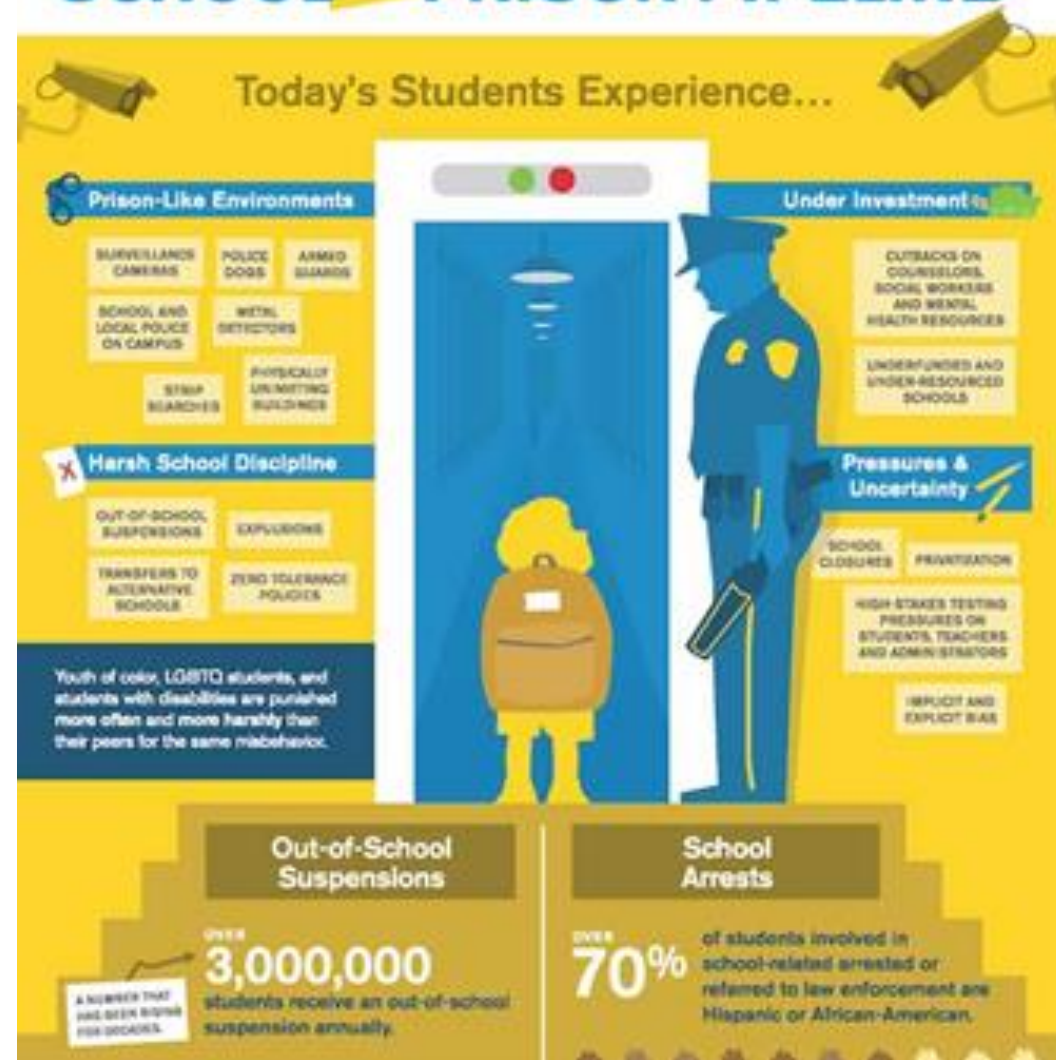


# Anger is a Gift

- “It wasn’t until I got to college that I discovered that having a resource officer stationed on campus was abnormal. I also didn’t know that it was uncommon to watch your peers get arrested at school, to be funneled through the juvenile system for fairly minor offenses. I knew it was wrong, but I assumed it was the standard. Once I left the insular community I grew up in, I had to rethink what was normal. And this is the case for tons of kids across the US...I wanted to write a book about that and how for many communities—usually ones that are disproportionately poor and Black/brown—our schools don’t look like the others.”

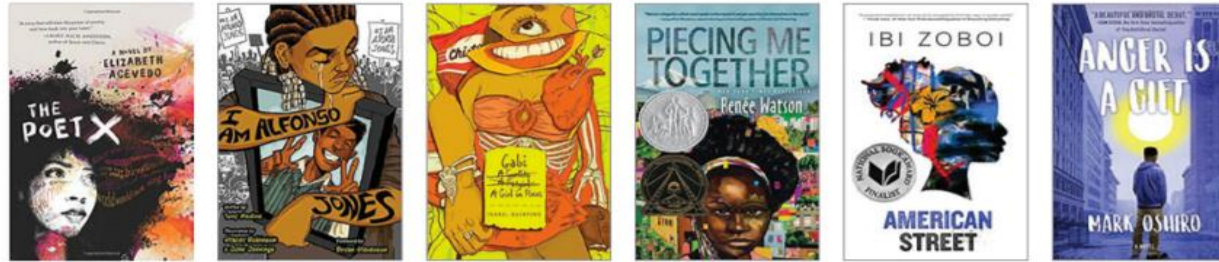


# SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE



<https://www.publichealthpost.org/databyte/school-prison-pipeline/>

# Finding Your Voice



- Books in this theme:
  - Underscore the significance of one's individual voice, no matter how seemingly small or powerless that voice is.
  - Emphasize standing up for oneself; this could mean standing up to a sexist bully, calling out an adult who misjudges you, or speaking out against racial profiling.
  - Illustrate young people empowering others to use their voices through writing, art, and community organizing to advocate for institutional change and social justice.



## Ann Shilling

Young Adult Librarian, Washington County Free Library (MD) and GSC project director/book club leader

# ALA Great Stories and Virtual Book Clubs

Growing up Brave on the Margins, What  
Makes a Hero?, Empathy – the Cost of  
Switching Sides, Deeper than our Skins,  
Finding Your Voice...

## Choose your meeting format; Find your partners

---

- Zoom, Skype, Google Meet Up, Discord, WebRoom, Facebook Live, etc...
- Boys and Girls clubs, Schools, Alternative Schools, After-School Programs, Treatment Centers, Detention Centers, Community Centers, Established library program groups,

## One more note about partners

---

- Partner with an adult who is already connected to the teens and who will champion the reading and discussion. (Teacher, Parent, Counselor, Librarian etc...)
- With virtual programming, involve a third adult to monitor and/or trouble-shoot the technology during the club meeting.

# ALA Great Stories Club Resources

---

- Select your partner organization
- Select your theme
- Read everything from the ALA GSC resource page
- Select your stories. Make the sure the books are available in both print and eResource.  
*(look for grants and awards to buy the books so the participants can keep them)*



W.K. Kellogg Foundation – [healourcommunities.org](http://healourcommunities.org)

*Jettisoning the Belief*

**IN A HIERARCHY OF HUMAN  
VALUE**

# Virtually - from Challenge to Insight

---

- Plan well in advance
  - Promote weeks in advance through all avenues.
  - Leave time for the books to arrive and reading to begin.
  - Contact participants frequently.
  - Stay consistent, build momentum.

# Virtually – from Challenge to Insight

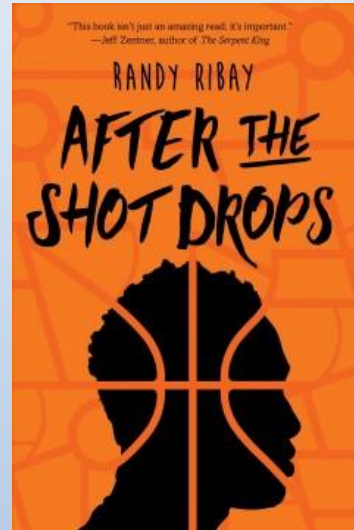
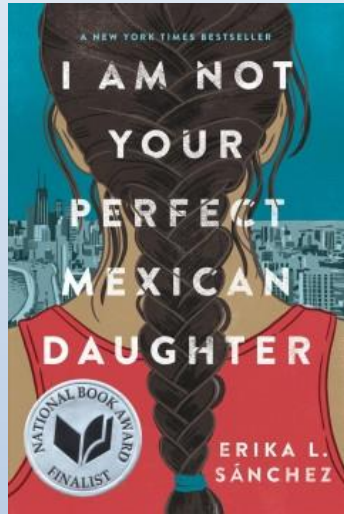
---

- When the group is in progress
  - Set expectations
  - Encourage independent reading and plan to read together.
  - Use brief images, power-point presentations, or videos. Share the screen. Alert participants if you are recording.
  - Silence is necessary.
  - Adults offer to remain available after the session.

# In conclusion

---

- What will your next great read be?



- Survey participants...Google forms
- Fall virtual planning: lunch groups and after school clubs

# Questions & Answers

Please submit your questions using Zoom's Q&A feature.

If your question is not answered in the time available, please contact the ALA Public Programs Office staff ([publicprograms@ala.org](mailto:publicprograms@ala.org)) for assistance.

Thank you!