

## West Boylston High School Summer Reading

We invite all 9-12 students and faculty to participate in our summer reading program. Every year we choose a theme that promotes a positive, safe and comfortable environment for students and staff. Select 1 book from a selection of 19 made by teachers and public library staff. Our theme for the 2013-14 school year as selected by our students is: **Courage: the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear ; bravery.**

**All Souls: A Family Story from Southie by Michael Patrick MacDonald** A breakaway bestseller since it first appeared in 1999, All Souls takes us deep into Michael Patrick MacDonald's Southie, the proudly insular neighborhood with the highest concentration of white poverty in America. Rocked by Whitey Bulger's drug schemes and school busing riots, MacDonald's Southie is populated by sharply hewn characters like his Ma, a miniskirted accordion-playing single mother who endures the deaths of four of her eleven children. Nearly suffocated by his grief and Southie's code of silence, MacDonald tells his family story with gritty honesty and radiant insight. By turns explosive and touching, All Souls ultimately shares a powerful message of hope, renewal, and redemption.

***Warning: This book contains violence and is intended for older students. Parents are advised to use their own discretion.***

**The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins** Could you survive on your own, in the wild, with everyone fighting against you?

Twenty-four are forced to enter. Only the winner survives. In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Each year, the districts are forced by the Capitol to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the Hunger Games, a brutal and terrifying fight to the death – televised for all of Panem to see.

Survival is second nature for sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who struggles to feed her mother and younger sister by secretly hunting and gathering beyond the fences of District 12. When Katniss steps in to take the place of her sister in the Hunger Games, she knows it may be her death sentence. If she is to survive, she must weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

**The Help by Kathryn Stockett is another favorite.** Twenty-two-year-old Skeeter has just returned home after graduating from Ole Miss. She may have a degree, but it is 1962, Mississippi, and her mother will not be happy till Skeeter has a ring on her finger. Skeeter would normally find solace with her beloved maid Constantine, the woman who raised her, but Constantine has disappeared and no one will tell Skeeter where she has gone.

Aibileen is a black maid, a wise, regal woman raising her seventeenth white child. Something has shifted inside her after the loss of her own son, who died while his bosses looked the other way. She is devoted to the little girl she looks after, though she knows both their hearts may be broken.

Minnie, Aibileen's best friend, is short, fat, and perhaps the sassiest woman in Mississippi. She can cook like nobody's business, but she can't mind her tongue, so she's lost yet another job. Minny finally finds a position working for someone too new to town to know her reputation. But her new boss has secrets of her own.

Seemingly as different from one another as can be, these women will nonetheless come together for a clandestine project that will put them all at risk. And why? Because they are suffocating within the lines that define their town and their times. And sometimes lines are made to be crossed.

**The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind William Kamkwamba** was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger, and a place where hope and opportunity were hard to find. But William had read about windmills in a book called *Using Energy*, and he dreamed of building one that would bring electricity and water to his village and change his life and the lives of those around him. His neighbors may have mocked him and called him misala--crazy--but William was determined to show them what a little grit and ingenuity could do.

Enchanted by the workings of electricity as a boy, William had a goal to study science in Malawi's top boarding schools. But in 2002, his country was stricken with a famine that left his family's farm devastated and his parents destitute. Unable to pay the eighty-dollar-a-year tuition for his education, William was forced to drop out and help his family forage for food as thousands across the country starved and died.

Yet William refused to let go of his dreams. With nothing more than a fistful of cornmeal in his stomach, a small pile of once-forgotten science textbooks, and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to bring his family a set of luxuries that only two percent of Malawians could afford and what the West considers a necessity--electricity and running water. Using scrap metal, tractor parts, and bicycle halves, William forged a crude yet operable windmill, an unlikely contraption and small miracle that eventually powered four lights, complete with homemade switches and a circuit breaker made from nails and wire. A second machine turned a water pump that could battle the drought and famine that loomed with every season.

Soon, news of William's magetsi a mphepo--his "electric wind"--spread beyond the borders of his home, and the boy who was once called crazy became an inspiration to those around the world. Here is the remarkable story about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity. **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind** will inspire anyone who doubts the power of one individual's ability to change his community and better the lives of those around him.

**Sorta Like a Rock Star Amber Appleton** lives in a bus. Ever since her mom's boyfriend kicked them out, Amber, her mom, and her totally loyal dog, Bobby Big Boy (aka Thrice B) have been camped out in the back of Hello Yellow (the school bus her mom drives). But Amber, the self-proclaimed princess of hope and girl of unyielding optimism, refuses to sweat the bad stuff. Instead, she focuses on bettering the lives of her alcoholic mother and her quirky circle of friends: a glass-ceiling-breaking single mother raising a son diagnosed with autism; Father Chee and The Korean Divas for Christ (soul-singing ESL students); a nihilist octogenarian; a video-game-playing gang of outcasts; and a haiku-writing war vet. But then a fatal tragedy threatens Amber's optimism—and her way of life. Can Amber continue to be the princess of hope?

With his zany cast of characters and a heartwarming, inspiring story, debut YA author Matthew Quick builds a beautifully beaten-up world of laughs, loyalty, and hard-earned hope. This world is Amber's stage, and Amber is, well...she's sorta like a rock star.

When choosing and reading your book, remember the theme... **Courage: the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear ; bravery.** Parents are advised to use their discretion in supporting the student's selection of a book. the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear ; bravery.

*The Hunger Games by Susan Collins*

*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba*

*All Souls: A Family from Southie by Michael Patrick MacDonald*

*Sorta Like a Rock Star by Matthew Quick*

*The Help by Kathryn Stockett*

*This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women by Jay Allison 127*

*Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place by Aron Ralston*

*It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying and Creating a Life Worth Living*

*Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay*

*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah*

*True Compass: A Memoir by Edward M. Kennedy*

*The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them by Zlata Filipovic*

*A Stolen Life: A Memoir by Jaycee Dugard*

*The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini*

*The Glass Castle by Jeanette Wells*

*Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok*

*The Fault in Our Stars by John Green*

*Between Shades of Gray by Ruth Sepetys*

*The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie*