

BEST

of the

BEST

Books for Teens

AGES 14 AND OLDER

The Chicago Public Library recommends the following fiction titles as some of the best published in 2007 for teens in high school. To find more outstanding books at your neighborhood library, please check our web site at chicagopubliclibrary.org, browse our Teen Volume collections or ask your librarian for assistance. Best of the Best is made possible by a generous grant from Kraft Foods.

Read, Learn, Discover!

2008 Award Winner

MICHAEL L. PRINTZ AWARD

The White Darkness

By Geraldine McCaughrean
HarperTempest, Ages 14 and up

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

By Sherman Alexie

Little, Brown; Ages 13 and up
What brings me joy in life? How can I not lose hope? Surrounded by poverty, drunks and bullies, Junior sets out to answer these questions by leaving his reservation, a pretty unheard of thing to do, to attend the 99% Caucasian Rearden High School. Junior's humor and determination see him through many obstacles and losses.

Before I Die

By Jenny Downham

Random House/David Fickling, Ages 14 and up
Sixteen year old Tessa Scott has been terminally ill for so long, she barely feels like she's lived before she's told her cancer is progressing aggressively. There are ten things she'd like to do before dying—many of which have nothing to do with her overprotected and dull life at home. Angry and fearful, she sometimes takes actions she regrets, but every one ultimately helps her to find more meaning in her life and to better understand the people in it.

Deadline

By Chris Crutcher

Greenwillow, Ages 14 and up
Life in Idaho is turned upside-down when Ben finds out he's dying and has only his senior year left to live. His intentions are to keep it quiet and live a "normal" life, but he soon discovers that's a hard thing to do.

Does My Head Look Big In This?

By Randa Abdel-Fattah

Scholastic/Orchard, Ages 13 and up
Amal's decision to wear a hijab, the Muslim head scarf, full-time causes her no shortage of grief from the students at her hoity-toity prep school in Australia. But she uses her wits, smarts, friends and family to get through this landmark year in her life.

Grief Girl: My True Story

By Erin Vincent

Delacorte, Ages 14 and up
When Erin's parents die within a month of each other, she wonders if it's her fault—can thinking something make it happen? This powerful memoir is funny and sassy all at once.

Harmless

By Dana Reinhardt

Random House/Wendy Lamb, Ages 12 and up
Anna, Emma and Mariah tell one little, harmless lie that becomes larger than any of them can handle and soon their lives are spiraling out of control.

Hero

By Perry Moore

Hyperion, Ages 13 and up
Thom's dad was revered as the hero Major Might until an unavoidable tragedy made him a pariah. Now Thom is discovering his own powers and learning things about his family—and himself—that leave him with important decisions to make.

In the Name of God

By Paula Jolin

Roaring Brook, Ages 14 and up
After her cousin is arrested, 17-year old Muslim Nadia contemplates making the ultimate sacrifice for her religion and her country.

Miner's Daughter

By Gretchen Moran Laskas

Simon & Schuster, Ages 13 and up
Willa Lowell has a passion for literature and knowledge, strength, hope and love... all of which come in handy when her family struggles to cope with the poverty, discrimination and illness facing the coal-mining community during the Great Depression.

Mistik Lake

By Martha Brooks

FSG/Melanie Kroupa, Ages 14 and up
The stories of three generations of women, whose lives are overshadowed by secrets, finally come together just when everything falls apart.

Opposite of Love: Half Black, Half White in a Black-and-White World

By Helen Benedict

Viking, Ages 13 and up
Biracial Madge has dealt with racism in her small Pennsylvania town all her life. When she rescues an abandoned foster child in New York City and brings him home, she must deal with the even harsher reality of caring for an abused child and find a safe place between love and the opposite of love.

Right Behind You

By Gail Giles

Little, Brown; Ages 14 and up
Kip McFarland did a really *really* bad thing when he was nine years old. Now he's paid his dues for the heinous crime he committed, but nobody will forgive him or let him forget what he's done, including himself.

The Secret Life of Sparrow Delaney

By Suzanne Harper

HarperTeen, Ages 12 and up
As the 7th daughter of a 7th daughter, Sparrow Delaney is expected to be the best in a family of talented mediums. She hides her talents, though, determined to be "normal" until she's sought by a ghost for help only she can give.

Skin Hunger

By Kathleen Duey

Atheneum, Ages 13 and up
Dual plot lines and voices converge on one event that twisted Magic's resurrection in the world in this believable, rich and evocative novel. Sadima's story opens with the betrayal of a fake and deceitful magician and death of her mother – a loss which causes great grief for her family and forces Sadima to hide her ability to understand animals. In the alternating story, Hahp is a young boy attending a grueling academy for wizards, founded long ago by Somiss and Franklin, friends of Sadima, and things are not going well.

Slam

By Nick Hornby

Putnam, Ages 14 and up
Sam, age fifteen, is a skater—on a board, not the ice. He talks to his Tony Hawk poster and, after reading Hawk's book about 129 times, thinks he knows what Hawk would say. But the poster can't help Sam, the son of a teen mother, when he's suddenly faced with becoming a teen father. What would Hawk say and what will Sam do? In this fresh perspective

on teen pregnancy, there's no sugar-coating, no romantic notions, just real life.

Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico

By Malin Alegria

Simon & Schuster, Ages 16 and up
Sofi is tired of the rules and nagging of her strict parents, immigrants from Mexico. Her friends convince her to sneak across the border for a spring break party in Tijuana, but she's not permitted to return to the United States and, as a result, is forced to learn more about her identity, family and home in two places.

Spud

By Jon van de Ruit

Razorbill, Ages 13 and up
With wit and unsparing judgment, thirteen year-old John "Spud" Milton describes his hard-to-bear parents, senile grandmother and his new life in a South African boarding school in diary entries, which are filled with the hilarious details of daily life, including mischievous pranks and dreams of Amanda.

Story of a Girl

By Sara Zarr

Little, Brown; Ages 13 and up
Deanna was thirteen when she was caught by her dad having sex with her brother's supposed best-friend. The rumors and distrust that follow this incident drive her to escape, but she discovers the hard way that there's no escaping herself or her past.

A Swift Pure Cry

By Siobhan Dowd

Random House/David Fickling, Ages 14 and up
After her mother's death and her father's alcoholic depression, Shell Talent becomes the sole caregiver for her two siblings. When a new, young, priest comes to town, everything seems to change, for awhile at least. Now Shell is the center of a controversy that will shake the core of her small town and her life. Set in Ireland in 1984 and inspired by true events.

Tamar: A Novel of Espionage, Passion, and Betrayal

By Mal Peet

Candlewick, Ages 14 and up
Love, war and desperation consume the world in which Tamar, Marijke and Dart live, leaving one betrayed, one dead and one a murderer.

Thirteen Reasons Why
By Jay Asher

Razorbill, Ages 13 and up
How can a first kiss and the rumors that follow change the perceptions of a girl and the actions taken toward her? Through her left-behind recorded story on cassette tapes, Hannah Baker tells thirteen people how they betrayed her trust, security and privacy and, ultimately, influenced her decision to end her life.

What They Found: Love on 145th Street
By Walter Dean Myers

Random House/Wendy Lamb, Ages 14 and up
Love can be found in all places between a child and its parents, Mama Evans' salon clients, siblings and strangers. A variety of short stories set in the Curl-E-que salon and around Harlem weave together the weakness, fragility, hope and promise of love.

Touching Snow
By M. Cindy Felin

Atheneum, Ages 14 and up
Karina has killed her father and it's through her recollection of why and how that readers are compelled to learn about her isolation, strength and humor as she copes with abuse while trying to make friends and manage school while falling in love. This is a tough, yet heartwarming, look at the difficulties faced by one Haitian American family struggling to survive.



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor



Call for accommodation:
312-747-4252 (voice)
312-747-4066 (TTY)



Great Kids Read, generously sponsored by Kraft Foods, through the Chicago Public Library Foundation, is a collaboration created by the Chicago Public Library and the Chicago Park District to emphasize the importance of reading and family literacy at an early age.