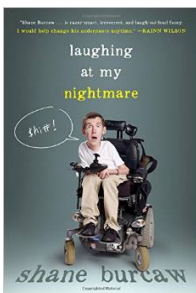


YA BOOKLIST: EXPLORING IDENTITY, ADVERSITY & PERSEVERANCE

By: Jennie Thompson & Heather Campbell

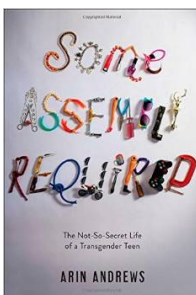
Books can be a safe place for identity exploration and discovery. This booklist offers an opportunity to explore various human identities and experiences of adversity and perseverance through non-fiction and fiction Young Adult titles. Young people often use the library and library catalogue to seek out information that not only portrays their identities, but also confirms that what they are experiencing is normal and similarly experienced by others. Incorporating a booklist such as this into a library catalogue can be invaluable to young patrons as they search for information that speaks to their struggles and experiences.

NON-FICTION:



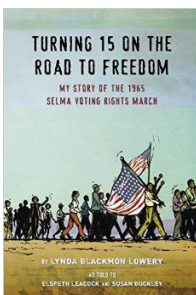
Laughing at My Nightmare, by Shane Burcaw, 2014

Shane Burcaw's humorous memoir about life with spinal muscular atrophy is a story about life as a male teen, exploring the dating world, dealing with school, making mistakes, and growing up. He takes his life in stride and jokes about his challenges along the way.



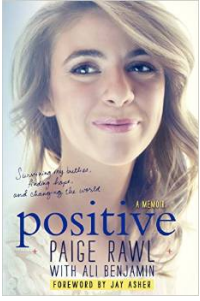
Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen, by Arin Andrews, 2014

In the 11th grade, Arin Andrews decided to take steps to begin the process of gender reassignment. Having been born with a female body, but identifying as male, Arin faced obstacles and prejudice on his road to self-acceptance. This is the story of his journey, of high school life, family, and of one's first love.



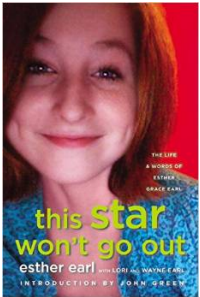
Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March, by Lynda Blackmon Leacock & Susan Buckley, 2015

At 15 years of age, Lynda Blackmon Lowery was the youngest participant in the marches from Selma to Montgomery for equality. During this time, she marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr. and was jailed 11 times before she turned 15. This illustrated memoir will bring alive this pivotal event in history and educate readers about the civil rights movement.



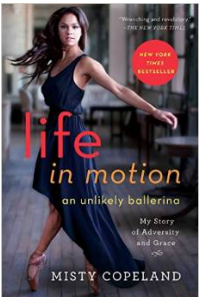
Positive: A Memoir, by Paige Rawl with Ali Benjamin, 2014

After learning that she had been HIV positive since birth, Paige Rawl disclosed her status to her best friend. This led to her facing the stigma of the disease and relentless bullying from her middle school classmates, which the school administration refused to stop. After surviving a suicide attempt, Paige soon blossomed into an HIV/AIDS activist, educating her peers on the disease and bullying, and pursuing university education to become an HIV/AIDS researcher.



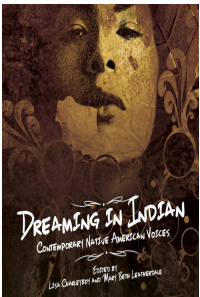
This Star Won't Go Out, by Esther Earl with Lori & Wayne Earl, 2014

Esther Earl, the inspiration behind John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, succumbed to cancer at the age of sixteen. However, living with her diagnosis in the four years prior to that, Esther became a shining light in the Nerdfighter community and was a humorous and thoughtful teenager. This is a collection of her writings, chat transcripts, and contributions from her family and friends, which capture both her struggle to be identified as more than a youth with cancer and her resilient spirit.



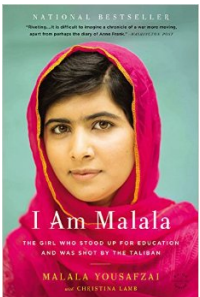
Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina, by Misty Copeland, 2014

Misty Copeland, American Ballet Theatre's only African American soloist, has been breaking boundaries within the the restrictive world of classical ballet. After beginning ballet late at the age of 13, Misty was heralded as a prodigy. Her story is one of triumph, overcoming socio-economic obstacles as a child, family struggles, and racial barriers within the dance community.



Dreaming in Indian, compiled by Lisa Charleyboy & Mary Leatherdale, 2014

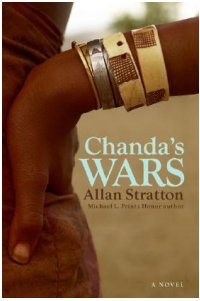
A collection of stories from innovative Native American and Canadian artists, including a visual artist, stand-up comedian, and acclaimed author. These stories provide glimpses and insight into an often underrepresented, misunderstood community. The topics are sometimes difficult, but always unabashedly honest, and entirely captivating.



I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban, by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, 2013

When 16 year old Malala Yousafzai chose to speak out for the right to be educated in the Taliban ruled Swat Valley in Pakistan, she almost lost her life. In October, 2012, Malala was shot point-blank while taking the bus home from school. Doctors predicted she wouldn't survive. However, Malala proved them wrong, recovering and continuing the fight for women's education all the way to the United Nations in New York. Read *I Am Malala* and follow the story of a brave young woman and her family who chose to stand up against the Taliban, for gender equality and the right to an education.

FICTION:



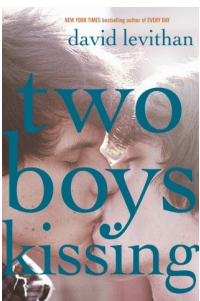
Chanda's Wars, by Allan Stratton, 2008

Winner of the 2009 CLA Young Adult Book Award, *Chanda's Wars* is a story about a resilient teenage girl living in Africa. Tasked with responsibility of raising her younger siblings following their mother's death from AIDS, Chanda sets out to mend family ties at a time during which her country is under threat of civil war. This follow up to Stratton's Printz Award winning *Chanda's Secrets* provides a thoughtful discussion about the horrors faced by child soldiers and is a touching story about adversities being faced by some of those living within Africa.



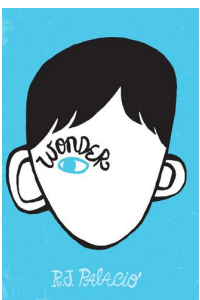
Gabi: A Girl in Pieces, by Isabel Quintero, 2014

Written in a diary style, we meet Gabi, a Mexican-American teenager in her final year of high school. We follow Gabi as she explores her sexuality, forms an identity for herself centered between her Mexican heritage and American culture, and comes to accept and embrace her body. During this self-exploration Gabi experiences a messy, crisis filled senior year with a drug addicted father and struggling best friends. This book is empowering, gripping, and a bit of a roller coaster.



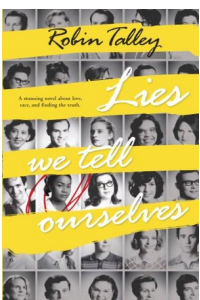
Two Boys Kissing, by David Levithan, 2013

Based on true events, in *Two Boys Kissing*, two seventeen year old boys set out on a 32 hour kissing marathon to set a Guinness World Record. Narrated by a "Greek Chorus of the generation of gay men lost to AIDS," the two teenage boys become the focus of other teenagers struggling with sexual identity, gender identity, love, relationships and sex. Tough emotions, identity conflicts, and a community of support make this book a must-read.



Wonder, by R. J. Palacio, 2012

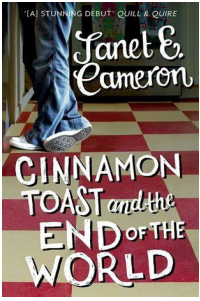
In *Wonder*, a young boy, Auggie, has been home schooled his entire life. But now he is about to start at a real school - and he is terrified. Auggie is scared for more than the normal reasons every kid experiences when starting a new school with new classmates and teachers. He was born with a facial deformity - one that has caused him to be the center of much unwanted attention in public. All Auggie wants is to have friends and to belong. Will he be able to create a place for himself at his new school? Find out in this funny and touching story.



Lies We Tell Ourselves, by Robin Talley, 2014

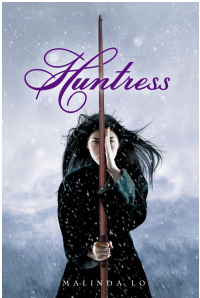
Lies We Tell Ourselves, is set in 1959, when schools were still segregated by race. This story explores the experiences of two young women - one white, one black - during one school's integration. Sarah is one of the first black students to attend Jefferson High School. At her old school, Sarah was an honours student, but has been placed in remedial classes at Jefferson, and is tormented daily. Linda, daughter of a vocal opponent to school integration, is placed into

a group with Sarah. Can they overcome the prejudices and hate that separate them? Find out by reading *Lies We Tell Ourselves*.



Cinnamon Toast and the End of the World, by Janet Cameron, 2014

Stephen has fallen in love, but with the wrong person - with someone who won't love him back, not as more than a "best buddy." This is the moment where life as Stephen knows it ends. Things will never be the same again as he struggles with his sexual identity and has to decide if he can (or will) face the end of the world. Set in Riverside, Nova Scotia, this is a tough but humorous coming-of-age story that is highly relatable.



Huntress, by Malinda Lo, 2011

Huntress is a fantasy young adult novel that follows the journey of two seventeen year old girls, Kaede and Taisin, to Tanlili, the city of the Fairy Queen. Their journey is dangerous but important -- their natural world is failing and it is up to Kaede and Taisin to try and save it. The young girls grow close as they fight and travel to Tanlili, and begin to fall in love. However, their journey is set to tear them apart as only one Huntress is needed to save the Kingdom. Can Kaede and Taisin rescue their world? Will obligations of family and Kingdom keep them apart

forever? Read *Huntress* to find out.