



The Magic Suitcase News

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Celebrate Earth Day!

On April 22 the world celebrates Earth Day. What are your plans? Here is a list of ideas that take little preparation and celebrate the wonders of nature.

Ideas for Primary classes:

- Make animal 'restaurants' (pine cones covered in vegetable shortening and seeds, hung in trees for the birds, or left hidden under low-lying shrubs for the mice and squirrels).
- Insect Safari – take your students on an observation safari in the front lawn of the school yard. Hide some plastic bugs and creatures on the front lawn of the school before the school day begins (realistic ones available at dollar stores). Since children do not play here during recess they will still be there when you're ready for your safari. By having children search for these toys their 'detective' eyes will have been sharpened. Now, look for real creatures that may inhabit your school garden as well. Allow children to gently collect these creatures in jars and/or plastic PET bottles. Be sure to return them to the same habitat before the day is through.
- Use sidewalk chalk to create beautiful pictures of the Earth and nature on your playground or tarmac.
- Use a strong smelling scent (like peppermint extract or garlic) to create a sniffing trail throughout the playground or school yard for your students to follow. See if they can sniff their way to success.
- Have an Earth Day birthday party! Do similar activities as you would at a birthday party but make the guest of honour the Earth! Loot 'bags' can be a cup with soil and seeds to plant!

Ideas for Junior classes:

- Read the story *The Empty Lot* by Dale Fife. Survey various habitats in your school yard to discover signs of life. Have one group survey the lawn at the front of the school, one group survey the flower beds, and one group survey any shrubberies. Compare results and come up with a plan to protect these areas.
- Read the story *The Wartville Wizard* by Don Madden. Scan the school yard for trash – after the snow melts there always seems to be more litter in the school yard than usual. After a yard clean up challenge your students to design a 'space age' 'litter lifter' or modern 'trash handler' for the school yard.
- Find a satellite image of your school yard at www.ibegin.com. Once you have the satellite image have students draw a map of the school yard, going outdoors to check on and add details. Allow students to name the places on the map and plan places where wildlife may be encouraged to visit. Create a bird feeding or squirrel feeding station or a butterfly garden.

Take advantage of our April special!

No shipping on orders over \$100.00 anywhere in Canada!

Dual Purpose Picture Books

Encouraging children to use picture books as potential sources of information means teaching them to look at this genre beyond its apparent face value. Within the picture book genre we can classify books by sub genres. Here are four sub genres that we can teach children to recognize. Then, when searching for books to read, children can challenge themselves to recognize and examine these books closer.

The four genre types are: *fictional storybooks*, *(non-narrative) informational books*, *(narrative) informational storybooks*, and *dual purpose books*. The definitions for each of these sub genres are as follows: Fictional storybooks are defined as stories that serve to entertain and do not pretend to be factual - although they can be. (Non-narrative) informational books are books that introduce a topic and describe the attributes of that topic (they usually are more text-heavy and contain photographs, instead of drawings). (Narrative) informational books are storybooks that contain factual information or relate to factual events over time and include text which describe sequence. Dual purpose storybooks are books that serve to present facts as well as a story- these stories use sidebars and additional text (almost always in a different font) to provide additional information outside the story line.

Dual purpose storybooks usually contain information about science or social studies (history or geography), and sometimes even math concepts. The information is loosely presented in the story line and illustrations but then additional text, as mentioned above, provides information that is accurate and more detailed. By presenting facts within the context of a story students are given tools to help them remember, relate to and ultimately retell the information given. Most children will be familiar with **Ms. Frizzle's *Magic Schoolbus*** series. These books are excellent examples of the dual purpose genre. Challenge your students to find other examples in their next picture book search. (Hint: Look for books by Nicola Davies.)

Hot Off the Press!

The following books are recently published and/or particularly noteworthy quality children's picture books. For more detailed or additional information, or to purchase these titles, click on them below.

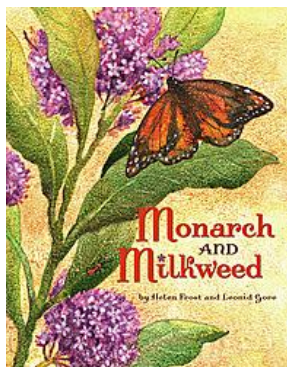
I Will Make Miracles written by Susie Morgenstern, illustrated by Stefano Vitale



SUMMARY: How will you change the world? Children everywhere know that our world needs fixing, but it is the rare author who can put herself in children's shoes, and capture their complicated feelings in words. Susie Morgenstern has a gift for taking serious subjects and making sure they're clever, touching, and never too heavy. In this striking new picture book, she tackles the penetrating question Who is taking care of our world?

When a little boy is asked: What do you want to do when you grow up? he dreams of improving the world in wonderful ways—but realizes in the end that even the biggest dreams need to start small.

Price: \$20.95



Monarch and Milkweed written by Helen Frost, illustrated by Leonid Gore.

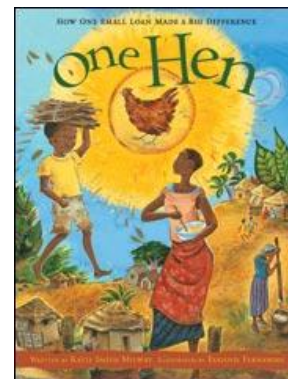
SUMMARY: Every spring the monarch butterfly migrates thousands of miles in search of the ideal milkweed plant. When she finds it, she lays her eggs on the plant, so when each egg hatches, the baby caterpillar can feed on the milkweed leaves. The milkweed plant then provides the perfect protection as the caterpillar turns into one of nature's wonders, a chrysalis, before transforming into an even greater wonder: a monarch butterfly. And once the newborn butterfly soars away, the milkweed seeds

fly away on the wind and start this cycle over again.

Price: \$21.99

One Hen written by Katie Smith Milway, illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes.

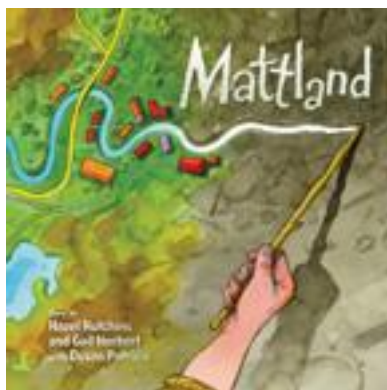
SUMMARY: Inspired by true events, *One Hen* tells the story of Kojo, a boy from Ghana who turns a small loan into a thriving farm and a livelihood for many. After his father died, Kojo had to quit school to help his mother collect firewood to sell at the market. When his mother receives a loan from some village families, she gives a little money to her son. With this tiny loan, Kojo buys a hen. A year later, Kojo has built up a flock of 25 hens. With his earnings Kojo is able to return to school. Soon



Kojo's farm grows to become the largest in the region. Kojo's story is inspired by the life of Kwabena Darko, who as a boy started a tiny poultry farm just like Kojo's, which later grew to be the largest in east Africa. Kwabena also started a trust that gives out small loans to people who cannot get a loan from a bank.

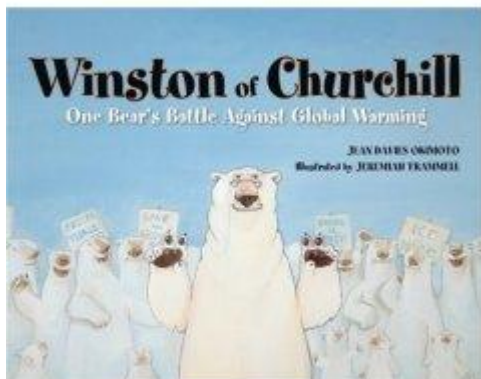
Price: \$19.95

Mattland written by Hazel Hutchins and Gail Herbert, illustrated by Dusan Petricic



SUMMARY: Matt is miserable. The subdivision where he now lives is surrounded by nothing but muddy fields of rocks and sticks. But when Matt ventures out, his imagination kicks in. He draws a muddy, winding line and names it Snake River. A pile of rocks becomes the Dog Tooth Mountains. Just like that, Mattland is born. Soon a little girl shows up with a handful of helpful odds and ends. Piece by piece, she and Matt expand their new world with popsicle-stick bridges and scrap-paper boats. And when a rainstorm finally threatens to wash everything away, all the neighbourhood kids appear and help stave off the flood.

Price: \$8.95



Winston of Churchill written by Jean Davies Okimoto, illustrated by Jeremiah Trammell

SUMMARY: Churchill, Manitoba. It's the Polar Bear Capitol of the World, and the tourists are in for a big surprise...Winston! Winston of Churchill, a fierce, brave bear teaches the other bears about why the ice is melting. Using the words of his famous namesake, Winston rallies the bears to convince humans to save the bears' arctic home. "Ice is Nice!" shout the bears, but on the way to the protest march Winston learns an unexpected lesson and comes to realize he must change his ways, too. In *Winston of Churchill*, Jean Davies Okimoto and illustrator

Jeremiah Trammell deliver a timely, heart-warming, and funny story about a serious topic, and show us all that in the face of global warming, everyone must do their part, no matter how small.

Price: \$18.50

White Owl, Barn Owl written by Nicole Davies, illustrated by Michael Foreman

SUMMARY: A young girl and her grandfather look for a barn owl night after night. Will a distinctive heart-shaped face appear at the window? Michael Foreman's lush, intimate paintings are a perfect companion to Nicola Davies's lyrical text featuring intriguing facts about a rare bird indeed.

Price: \$21.00



Calendar of Events

- ☐ April 4th 2008 – Toronto Reading Council Spring Conference: A Place for Children's and Young Adult Literature in New Literacies Classrooms. OISE, Toronto ON. For more details, e-mail Agnes Kieltyka at akieltyka@oise.utoronto.ca
- ☐ April 5th 2008 – For the Love of Literacy. Notre Dame High School, Burlington ON. For more details, email Mary-Jane Ritchie at ritchiem@hdsb.ca
- ☐ April 24th 2008 – Toronto French School Earth Day Festival, Toronto.
- ☐ April 28th 2008 – "Packed for Adventure" workshop in York Region. Contact Arnis Pukitis, Principal, Whitchurch Highlands PS and Vivian Outdoor Resource Centre, email Arnis Pukitis at arnis.pukitis@yrdsb.edu.on.ca
- ☐ April 29th – May 20th 2008 – Depart for Kathmandu, Nepal to deliver book kits to **Dhauleshowary Primary School** and **Yangrima School** both in the Helambu Region.