

To: Rising 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders
Fr: Middle School English Department
Re: Required Summer Reading

"The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives." -Sioux Proverb

May 2, 2008

The Middle School English department enthusiastically announces this summer's required novels. This year's required novels all center around encouraging and supporting thoughtful civic involvement and participation.

We are requiring that all rising 6th graders read the poignant novel, Pay It Forward by Catherine Ryan Hyde, rising 7th graders The Misfits by James Howe, and rising 8th graders read The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian. See below for a short synopsis of the books.

These books will be used as a catalyst for discussion in all English classes and students will be assessed on their required novel upon returning from summer break. Each student will need to finish reading their required novel before the first day of the 2008-09 school year and bring their required novel to class.

In addition to the one required novel for each grade level, we have listed recommended supplemental reading (by grade level) for pure enjoyment.

Synopsis of Required Novels

6th-Pay It Forward by Catherine Ryan Hyde: This poignant novel of a young boy's unfailing belief in an individual's power to change the world and the ultimate goodness of the human spirit. This story is a down-to-earth look at the virtue of innocence and of faith- not in a deity, but in humankind.

7th-The Misfits by James Howe. "What do a 12-year-old student who moonlights as a tie salesman, a tall, outspoken girl, a gay middle schooler and a kid branded as a hooligan have in common? Best friends for years, they've all been the target of cruel name-calling and now that they're in seventh grade, they're not about to take it any more. In this hilarious and poignant novel, Howe focuses on the quietest of the bunch, overweight Bobby Goodspeed (the tie salesman), showing how he evolves from nerd to hero when he starts speaking his mind." - Publishers Weekly

8th-The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian. Josh Swensen is not your average 17-year-old. At the age of two, he was figuring out algebraic equations with colored magnetic numbers. He is a prodigy who only wants to make the world a better place. Josh's wish comes true when his virtual alter ego, Larry, becomes a huge media sensation. Larry has his own Web site where he posts sermons on anti-consumerism and has a large following of adults and teens. Meanwhile, Larry's identity is a mystery to everyone. While it seems as if the whole world is trying to figure out Larry's true identity, Josh feels trapped inside his own creation. What will happen to the world, and to Larry, if he is exposed?

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, one finds it attached to the rest of the world." John Muir, author

**Required and Supplemental Reading List
Summer 2008**

	Rising 6 th Grade	Rising 7 th Grade	Rising 8 th Grade
Required Novels "Civic Involvement"	<u>Pay It Forward</u> By Catherine Ryan Hyde	<u>The Misfits</u> by James Howe	<u>The Gospel According to Larry</u> by Janet Tashjian
Supplemental Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bat 6</u> by Virginia Euwer Wolff • <u>Spitting Image</u> by Shutta Crum • <u>Seedfolks</u> by Paul Fleischman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Eagle Song</u> by Joseph Bruchac • <u>Any Small Goodness</u> by Tony Johnston • <u>The Victory Garden</u> by Lee Kochenderfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lottery</u> by Patricia Wood • <u>House of the Scorpion</u> by Nancy Farmer • <u>In the Time of the Butterflies</u> by Julia Alvarez

*All books are available new or used on Amazon.com