



LARC Resources of Américas Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

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2017

Winner

The Only Road by Alexandra Diaz

Jaime is sitting on his bed drawing when he hears a scream. Instantly he knows: Miguel, his cousin and best friend, is dead. Everyone in Jaime's small town in Guatemala knows someone who has been killed by the Alphas, a powerful gang that's known for violence and drug trafficking. Anyone who refuses to work for them is hurt or killed. With Miguel gone, Jaime fears that he is next. There is only one choice: accompanied by his cousin Angela, Jaime must flee his home to live with his older brother in the United States.

Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay by Susan Hood and Illustrated by Sally Wern Comport

The Recycled Orchestra comprised children from Cateura, Paraguay playing instruments made from recycled trash, performs concerts all over the world. This is the story of how they began.

2016

Winner

Echo by Pam Muñoz Ryan

By. Pam Munez Ryan. Lost and Alone in a forbidden forest, Otto suddenly meets 3 mysterious sisters and suddenly finds himself entwined in a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica. Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California each become interwoven when the same harmonica lands in their lives.

Out of Darkness by Ashley Hope-Pérez

Author Ashley Hope Perez uses the 1937 New London, TX school explosion - the worst school disaster in American history- as a backdrop for a riveting novel about segregation, love, family, and the forces that destroy people.

Honorable Mention

Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh

Funny Bones tells the story of how calaveras came to be. The amusing figures are the creation of Mexican artist Jose Guadalupe Posada. Lupe learned the art of printing at a young age and soon had his own shop. In a country that was not known for freedom of speech, he drew political cartoons, much to the amusement of the local population but not that of the politicians. He continued to draw cartoons but he is best known today for his calaveras drawings. They have become synonymous with Mexico's Dia de Muertos, Day of the Dead, festival. Calaveras are skeletons performing all sorts of activities, both everyday and festive. They are not intended to be frightening but rather to celebrate the job of living as well as provide humorous observations about people.

Growing up Pedro written and illustrated by Matt Tavares

Before Pedro Martinez pitched the Red Sox to a World Series championship, before he was named to the All-Star team eight times, before he won the Cy Young Award three times, he was a kid from a place called Manoguayabo in the Dominican Republic. Pedro loved baseball more than anything, and his older brother Ramon was the best pitcher he'd ever seen. He dreamed of the day he and his brother could play together in the major leagues. This is the story of how that dream came true.

2015

Honorable mention

Strike!: The Farm Workers' Fight for their Rights by Larry Dane Brimner

On September 8, 1965, in Delano, California, hundreds of Filipino field hands laid down their tools and refused to harvest vines laden with fruit. Led by Larry Itliong and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, the field hands insisted on adequate wages

for their demanding work. Their actions that Wednesday unleashed one of the most important agricultural strikes in US history. Soon Cesar Chavez and his struggling union joined the fight. Over the next five years, tens of thousands of farm workers demanded justice in the fields. Their strikes and boycotts led to unprecedented victories. But this was only the beginning - the farm workers' fight was far from over. In *Strike!* Larry Dane Brimner relies on oral histories, FBI files, personal diaries, letters, and newspapers to tell the dramatic story of the Delano grape strike and the rise (and fall) of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers of America.

2014

Winner

Parrots Over Puerto Rico by Cindy Trumbore

For centuries beautiful, raucous Puerto Rican parrots and the settlers on the island of Puerto Rico hunted for food, survived hurricanes, raised their young, and protected their homes. But then things began to change, and in time the trees in which the parrots nested were destroyed. By 1967 only 24 Puerto Rican parrots were left in the wild. Humans had nearly caused their extinction. Could humans now save the parrots? As they have done in their award winning *The Mangrove Tree-*, Roth and Trumbore tell two intriguing stories. Discover the fascinating history of Puerto Rico.

2013

Winner

The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano by Sonia Manzano

There are two secrets Evelyn Serrano is keeping from her family - her true feelings about growing up in their Spanish Harlem neighborhood, and her attitude about Abuela, her sassy grandmother who's come from Puerto Rico to live with them. Then, like an urgent ticking clock, events erupt that change everything. The Young Lords, a Puerto Rican activist group, sets the street's garbage on fire, igniting a powerful protest. When Abuela steps in to take charge, Evelyn is thrust into the action. Tempers flare, loyalties are tested. Through it all, Evelyn learns important truths about her Latino heritage and the history makers who shaped a cultural identity. Infused with actual news accounts from 1969, award-winning actress and writer Sonia Manzano has crafted a gripping work of fiction based on her own life growing up during a fiery, unforgettable time in America, when young Latinos took control of their destinies.

Honorable Mention

Martin de Porres: The Rose in the Desert by Gary D. Schmidt; illustrated by David Díaz

The illegitimate child of a Spanish nobleman and a former slave, Martin de Porres was born into extreme poverty. Barred from the priesthood, he joined the Dominican Order as a servant instead. Soon he was performing miracles and healing nobles and beggars alike. As a celebration of his selflessness, he was canonized into the sainthood. Journey with this gentle friar as he calmly confronts racial and economic prejudice in 17th century Peru. Award winning author Gary D. Schmidt and Caldecott winning illustrator David Diaz deliver an endearing story of tribulation and triumph, with a message of peace and equality as poignant today as it was in 1639.

2012

Winners

Hurricane Dancer by Margarita Engle

Winner of the 2012 Américas Award. Quebrado has been traded from ship to ship in the Caribbean Sea for as long as he can remember. The sailors he toils under call him el quebrado - half islander, half outsider, a broken one. Now the pirate captain Bernardino de Talavera uses Quebrado as a translator to help navigate the worlds and words between his mother's Taíno Indian and his father's Spanish. But when a hurricane sinks the ship and most of its crew, it is Quebrado who escapes to safety. He befriends the young lovers Naridó, a fisherman, and Caucubú, the village chieftain's daughter. He learns how to live on land again, among people who treat him well. And it is he who must decide the fate of his former captors. In turns suspenseful and evocative, tragic and beautiful, *Hurricane Dancers* is a leap into imaginative new territory.

Pablo Neruda: Poet of the People by Monica Brown and illustrated by Julie Paschkis

Once there was a little boy named Neftalí, who loved wild things wildly and quiet things quietly. From the moment he could talk, he surrounded himself with words. Neftalí discovered the magic between the pages of books. When he was sixteen, he began publishing his poems as Pablo Neruda. Pablo wrote poems about the things he loved - things made by his artist friends, things found at the marketplace, and things he saw in nature. He wrote about the people of Chile and their stories of struggle. Because above all things and above all words, Pablo Neruda loved people.

Honorable Mentions

Under the Mesquite by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Lupita, the oldest of eight siblings, is used to taking the lead - and staying busy behind the scenes to help keep everyone together. But when she discovers Mami has been diagnosed with cancer, Lupita is terrified by the possibility of losing her mother, the anchor of their close-knit Mexican-American family. Suddenly Lupita must face a whole

new set of challenges, with new roles to play, and no one is handing her the script. In the midst of juggling high school classes, finding her voice as an actress, and dealing with friends who don't always understand, Lupita desperately wants to support Mami in whatever way she can. While Papi is preoccupied with caring for Mami, Lupita takes charge of her siblings. As Lupita struggles to keep the family afloat, she escapes the chaos at home by writing in the shade of a mesquite tree. Overwhelmed by change, she seeks refuge in the healing power of words. Told with honest emotion in evocative free verse, Lupita's journey is both heart-wrenching and hopeful. Under the Mesquite is an empowering story about the testing of family bonds, the strength of a teenage girl navigating pain and hardship with surprising resilience, and the kind of love that cannot be uprooted.

The Queen of Water by Laura Resau and María Virginia Farinango

Born in an Andean village in Ecuador, Virginia lives with her large family in a small, earthen-walled dwelling. In her village of indígenas, it is not uncommon to work in the fields all day, even as a child, or to be called a longa tonta - stupid Indian - by members of the ruling class of mestizos, or Spanish descendants. When seven year old Virginia is taken from her village to be a servant to a mestizo couple, she has no idea what the future holds. Virginia quickly grows accustomed to the conveniences and luxuries of mestizo life. But promised pay and visits to her family are quickly forgotten, as is her bosses' pledge to send her to school. Beaten and told that the sole purpose of indigenous girls is to serve, Virginia must fight to hold on to her spirit and humor. She teaches herself to read and write and performs science experiments in secret. When Virginia's only friend betrays her, she must gather her courage and escape. But once she's found her freedom, will Virginia - now a teenager caught between cultures - also find a place where she belongs? In this poignant novel based on a true story, acclaimed author Laura Resau has collaborated with María Virginia Farinnago to recount one girl's unforgettable journey to self-discovery.

2011

Winner

Clemente! by Willie Perdomo; illustrated by Bryan Collier

"A little boy named Clemente learns about his namesake, the great baseball player Roberto Clemente, in this joyful picture-book biography. Born in Puerto Rico, Roberto Clemente was the first Latin American player inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Known not only for his exceptional baseball skills but also for his extensive charity work in Latin America, Clemente was well loved during his eighteen years of playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He died in a plane crash while bringing relief supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua, but his legacy and inspiration live on." Ages 4-8. By

Willie Perdomo with illustrations by Bryan Collier. 2010. Winner of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs Américas Book Award.

The Dreamer by Pam Muñoz Ryan; illustrated by Peter Sís

"Netfalí, to which mystical land does an unfinished staircase lead? From the time he is a young boy, Netfalí hears the call of a mysterious voice. Even when the neighborhood children taunt him, and when his harsh, authoritarian father ridicules him, and when he doubts himself, Netfalí knows he cannot ignore the call. Under the canopy of the lush rain forest, into the vast and fearsome sea, and through the persistent Chilean rain, he listens and he follows... Combining elements of magical realism with biography, poetry, literary fiction, and sensorial, transporting illustrations, Pam Muñoz Ryan and Peter Sís take readers on a rare journey of the heart and imagination."

2009

Winner

Just in Case: A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book by Yuyi Morales

Poor Senor Calavera has a very big problem. It's Grandma Beetle's birthday and he can't decide what gift would please her most. This is a sumptuously illustrated Spanish alphabet book and trickster tale.

2007-2008

Winners

Red Glass by Laura Resau

One night Sophie, her mother, and her stepfather are called to a hospital, where Pablo, a 6 year old Mexican boy, is recovering from dehydration. Pablo was carrying the business card of Sophie's stepfather - but he doesn't recognize the boy. Crossing the border into Arizona with seven other Mexicans and a coyote, or guide, Pablo and his parents faced such harsh conditions that the boy is the only survivor. Pablo comes to live with Sophie, her parents, and Sophie's aunt Dika, a refugee from the war in Bosnia.

Yum! MmMm! Que Rico! by Pat Mora; illustrated by Rafael López

This inventive food haiku celebrates the indigenous foods of the Americas from blueberries to prickly pears to corn.

2006

Winner

Josias, Hold the Book by Jennifer Elvgren; illustrated by Nicole Tadgell

Jennifer Riesmeyer Elvgren tells the story of a young Haitian boy and his journey to learn in school.

2005

Winner

Cinnamon Girl: Letters found inside a Cereal Box by Juan Felipe Herrera

U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera delivers this moving tale of one teen seeking courage amid tragedy. When the towers fall, New York City is blanketed by dust. On the Lower East Side, Yolanda, the cinnamon girl, makes her manda, her promise, to gather as much of it as she can. Maybe returning the dust to Ground Zero can comfort all the voices. Maybe it can help her Uncle DJ open his eyes again. As misfortunes from her past mix in the air of an unthinkable present, Yolanda searches for hope in the silvery dust of Alphabet City.

2004

Winner

My name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz by Monica Brown; illustrated by Rafael López

Cuban born salsa queen, Celia Cruz, leaps of the pages - singing, clapping, and dancing - in this wonderful story of her inspiring life. From her early childhood in Havana to her musical achievement and worldwide acclaim, Celia's story is told in a colorful, storybook style with up-beat rhythms.

2003

Winner

Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book by Yuyi Morales

In this original trickster tale, skeleton Senor Galavera arrives unexpectedly at Grandma beetle's door. Just a minute Grandma Beetle tells him. She cleverly outwits the skeleton to celebrate her birthday.

2002

Winner

Before we were Free by Julia Alvarez

From award-winning author Julia Alvarez comes the story of Anita de la Torre, a 12 year old girl living in the Dominican Republic in 1960. Most of Anita's relatives have emigrated to the United States, her Tio Toni has disappeared, Papi has been getting mysterious phone calls about butterflies and someone named Mr. Smith, and the secret police have started terrorizing her family for their suspected opposition to the country's dictator. While Anita deals with a frightening series of events, she also struggles with her adolescence and her own personal flight to be free.

Commended List

Me in the Middle by Ana Maria Machado

Ten-year-old Isabel (Bel) helps her mother clean out a cluttered closet and in the process discovers an old photo of her grandmother, Bisa Bea, neatly tucked away in an old trunk. Soon Bisa (grandmother) Bea becomes Bel's imaginary friend. Her conversations with her grandmother lead to yet more fantasy when Bel imagines herself as the grandmother of a future granddaughter. As other children begin to have conversations about their ancestors, they soon discover forgotten histories of exile and struggle. Written by one of Brazil's foremost children's writers and recipient of the 2000 Hans Christian Andersen Award, the text is enhanced with expressive black and white watercolor illustrations. Originally published as *Bisa Bia Bisa Bel* by Salamandra, Rio de Janeiro, 1982.

2001

Winners

Breaking Through by Francisco Jiménez

The sequel to *The Circuit*, Francisco Jimenez continues the story of his struggles as a child who lived in migrant workers camps in California. Here he narrates his struggles to stay in school and help support his family while working in the United States.

2000

Winners

The Color of My Words by Lynn Joseph

12 year old Ana Rosa is a blossoming writer growing up in the Dominican Republic, a country where words are feared. Yet there is so much inspiration all around her - watching her brother search for a future, learning to dance and to love, and finding out what it means to be part of a community - that Ana Rosa must write it all down. As she struggles to find her own voice and a way to make it heard, Ana Rosa realizes the

power of her words to transform the world around her - and to transcend the most unthinkable of tragedies.

1999

Commended Titles

Asphalt Angels by Ineke Holtwijk

A gritty, realistic novel about street kids in contemporary Rio de Janeiro is narrated by 13-yearold Alex, the newest member of a group of peers who call themselves the Asphalt Angels. Life on the streets is tough and the Angels do what they have to in order to survive, including stealing, drug-running, and prostituting themselves. Because Alex is a thoughtful kid who agonizes over every act of wrong-doing and flat-out refuses to engage in some criminal behavior, this compelling novel will inspire discussions of ethics and moral decisions on the part of older students. (Grades 8 and up)

1998

Winner

Barrio: Jose's Neighborhood by George Ancona

Welcome to Jose's neighborhood. In his barrio, people speak an easy mix of Spanish and English and sometimes even Chinese. The masked revelry of Halloween leads into the festive remembrances of the Day of the Dead. And murals on the walls and buildings sing out the stories of the people who live here - their backgrounds, heartaches, and hopes for the future. As familiar as any neighborhood yet as strange as a foreign country, Jose's barrio isn't in Argentina or Mexico - it's in San Francisco.

1997

Winners

The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child by Francisco Jiménez

Francisco Jimenez's account of a family's journey to the fields of California - to a life of constant moving, from strawberry fields to cotton fields, from tent cities to one-room shacks, from picking grapes to topping carrots and thinning lettuce. Seen through the eyes of a boy who longs for an education and the right to call one place home, this is a story of survival, faith, and hope. It is a journey that will open reader's hearts and minds.

The Face at the Window by Regina Hanson; illustrated by Linda Saport

Dora learns to overcome her fears of a mentally ill woman who lives in her community in this gentle and compassionate story set in contemporary Jamaica, West Indies.

1996

Winner

In My Family (En mi familia) by Carmen Lomas Garza

The paintings in stories in this book are memories of growing up in Kingsville, Texas near the border with Mexico.

1994

Winner

The Mermaid's Twin Sister: More Stories from Trinidad by Lynn Joseph, illustrated by Donna Perrone.

Amber and her cousins know that if they ask Tantie a question, they'll hear a story. Tantie knows all about things that happened in Trinidad long ago, and about the spirits and other magical beings who play a part in everyday life on the island. Her stories are funny, or sad, or scary, sometimes all three - and always unforgettable. In this book Tantie tells five new stories to Amber and her cousins. And Amber, who is going to be the family storyteller someday, tells one of her own.

1993

Winner

Vejigante (Masquerader) by Lulu Delacre

This book talks about the vejigantes of Ponce - the only masqueraders that celebrate in Puerto Rico for the entire month of February - before and after Carnival. Since 1858 men and boys have been using their time off to dress in traditional costumes and traveling through the streets thrilling children.