Dear Families,

The following descriptions are from book review journals that I regularly consult when purchasing new books for the library. I encourage you to read the OBOB books along with your children. OBOB books are regarded with such enthusiasm and hold high appeal, so getting the books into kids’ hands is easily done, but the hope is that students will read and discuss the books with parents so together you can see the depth in the themes, the characters, and the relevance to our world. Additionally, books almost always provoke questions that you will be able to anticipate because you know your child. Please let us know if you would like to borrow any of these books for yourselves from our library. The public library will also have ample copies of each of these books. Additionally, when available, we will purchase e-book and audiobook versions of these books for our district’s *Overdrive* account. All students have access to *Overdrive* through our link on Willamette’s website.

Please let me know if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Riley

Teacher – librarian

**Book Scavenger** by Jennifer Chambliss Bertman

Kirkus Reviews (April 15, 2015)

San Francisco landmarks and their rich literary histories lead two friends on an urban quest to solve clues left behind in an Edgar Allan Poe book by publisher and Book Scavenger mastermind Garrison Griswold. When Emily Crane, a book enthusiast and puzzle-solver, moves into her new apartment, she meets James Lee, a cipher-solving whiz with a cowlick he's named Steve. For years Emily has moved from state to state with her parents and older brother, and she longs for stability. She doesn't allow herself to get attached, unlike James, whose Chinese-American family has lived in the same apartment building for decades. When Griswold is attacked, Emily fears for his life and the future of Book Scavenger, her beloved online geocaching like game for books. After a disappointing book hunt at the Ferry Building, Emily finds an unexpected hardcover, The Gold-Bug, near where Griswold was attacked. Believing the book is Griswold's pre-launched game, she becomes obsessed with solving its hidden messages while dodging two thugs and risking her friendship with James. Puzzling out the clever ciphers fascinates and adds dimension and curiosity to each quest.

**George** by Alex Gino

Booklist starred (August 2015 (Vol. 111, No. 22))

Ten-year-old George has a secret. Everyone thinks she is a boy, but inside she knows that she is really a girl named Melissa. When her fourth-grade class prepares to mount a dramatic production of Charlotte’s Web, George knows that more than anything in the world, she wants to play the part of Charlotte. After all, who cares if she plays a girl’s part? Hasn’t her best friend Kelly told her that, in Shakespeare’s time, men played all the parts, even those of girls and women? But things aren’t that simple, not even when George summons the courage to dramatically show her single-parent mom the truth. Gino’s debut novel is a sensitive, insightful portrayal of a transgender child coming to terms with gender identity.

**Hana’s Suitcase** by Karen Levine

Horn Book Guide (Fall 2016)

This account alternates the story of a Jewish girl who died at Auschwitz with that of a contemporary Japanese museum curator determined to commemorate her.

**The Hero’s Guide to Saving Your Kingdom** by Christopher Healy

Publishers Weekly (April 2, 2012)

Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel-classic stories that share one important character: Prince Charming. But Frederic, Duncan, Liam, and Gustav are four very different princes, and happily ever after isn't working out as well as they'd hoped. Cinderella has walked out on Frederic in search of adventure, oddball Duncan gets lost in the woods after Snow White sends him away, Liam's reputation is in tatters after he refuses to marry the wealthy Sleeping Beauty, and Gustav is the laughingstock of the kingdom because Rapunzel saved him. After Cinderella is captured by a witch, Frederic calls on the other princes for help, but when their quest lands them in the middle of an evil plot against their kingdoms, the four must get past their clashing personalities and save the day.

**In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse** by Joseph Marshall III

Booklist (October 15, 2015 (Vol. 112, No. 4))

Eleven-year-old Jimmy McClean lives on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Unfortunately, though he is three-quarters Lakota and only one-quarter white, he has light brown hair and blue eyes for which he is mercilessly teased at school by two bullies. His life changes, however, when his grandfather, Nyles High Eagle, takes him on a visionary journey in which they visit sites important to the life of the great Indian leader Crazy Horse. At each stop, Grandfather brings history to dramatic life with his stories, and, in time, Jimmy learns much about his heritage and the meaning of courage. Though in an author’s note, Marshall—who himself grew up on the Rosebud Reservation and is an enrolled member of the Sicangu Lakota tribe—claims not to be an expert on Crazy Horse, he writes with insight and authority. His book is a welcome addition to the slender body of work about Native Americans written from within their culture.

**The Infinity Year of Avalon James** by Danna Middleton

Booklist starred (October 15, 2016 (Vol. 113, No. 4))

Now that they’re 10 years old, hot-tempered Avalon and even-keeled Atticus believe that, as longtime best friends entering their “Infinity Year,” each will be granted a special power for a time. Avalon, whose father was incarcerated last year, is hoping for a skill that will help her deal with Elena, a dagger-tongued bully at school. Fifth grade doesn’t start well, but for every negative (enduring a messy, upsetting Halloween prank), there’s a positive (earning a place at the regional spelling bee), and Avalon can always count on Atticus, who helps maintain a delicate emotional balance. When she inadvertently hurts him and he withdraws, though, Avalon feels wretched and knows that she can’t count on magic to put things right. Revealing her negative traits as well as more admirable qualities, Avalon’s first-person narrative is forthright and engaging.

**Nightbird** by Alice Hoffman

Kirkus Reviews (January 1, 2015)

There's a monster in Sidwell, Massachusetts, that can only be seen at night or, as Twig reveals, if passersby are near her house. It's her older brother, James, born with wings just like every male in the Fowler line for the last 200 years. They were cursed by the Witch of Sidwell, left brokenhearted by their forebear Lowell Fowler. Twig and James are tired of the secret and self-imposed isolation. Lonely Twig narrates, bringing the small town and its characters to life, intertwining events present and past, and describing the effects of the spell on her fractured family's daily life. Longing for some normalcy and companionship, she befriends new-neighbor Julia while James falls in love with Julia's sister, Agate--only to learn they are descendants of the Witch. James and Agate seem as star-crossed as their ancestors, especially when the townspeople attribute a spate of petty thefts and graffiti protesting the development of the woods to the monster and launch a hunt. The mix of romance and magic is irresistible and the tension, compelling. With the help of friends and through a series of self-realizations and discoveries, Twig grows more self-assured. She is certain she knows how to change the curse. In so doing, Twig not only changes James' fate, but her own, for the first time feeling the fullness of family, friends and hope for the future.

**Pip Bartlett’s Guide to Magical Creatures** by Jackson Pearce & Maggie Stiefvater

Booklist (April 15, 2015 (Vol. 111, No. 16))

Grades 2-4. Nine-year-old Pip Bartlett is crazy about animals, particularly of the magical variety, and she can’t wait to spend the summer with her aunt, a magical-animal vet. When Pip arrives at the clinic, however, life soon turns chaotic: the town is infested with combustible pests (fuzzles), and a ruthless government inspector keeps threatening her aunt. Pip teams up with the neighbor boy and an anxious unicorn named Regent Maximus to save the town from a fiery end and to save the fuzzles from an untimely death. Pearce and Stiefvater perk up the “real” world considerably with the addition of miniature silky griffins, Pegasi, and lilac-horned Pomeranians to an otherwise realistic setting. Illustrated pages from Pip’s beloved Jeffrey Higgleston’s Guide to Magical Creatures are included, offering magical animal stats with ample annotations made by Pip. Through conversations with Pip—yes, she can talk to the animals—these creatures prove themselves to be memorable characters in their own rights.

**Real Friends** by Shannon Hale

School Library Journal (February 1, 2017)

Hale revisits her elementary school years in this insightful exploration of the ups and downs of friendship. Young Shannon meets her BFF Adrienne in kindergarten, and the two bond until Adrienne moves away. When Adrienne returns, Shannon is thrilled-until Adrienne joins a clique. In over her head, Shannon copes with feelings of inadequacy as she compares herself to pretty and seemingly perfect ringleader Jen, as well as resentment and intense anxiety as callous Jenny throws barbs her way. There's trouble at home, too: middle child Shannon often feels lost and is bullied by older sister Wendy. The author reflects on her life from the vantage point of adulthood, displaying a mature awareness of her own flaws and an understanding of the behavior of unsympathetic kids such as Wendy and Jenny, and her accessible writing and hopeful tone will speak to readers.

**Roller Girl** by Victoria Jamieson

Kirkus Reviews starred (December 15, 2014)

One summer changes everything for two 12-year-old girls whose friendship is tested when their interests--and attitudes--diverge.Astrid and Nicole have been BFFs truly forever. When the girls go to the roller derby one night, Astrid is immediately hooked and jumps at the chance to attend a roller-derby camp, skating alongside the tough, dyed girls. Nicole, however, who's passionate about ballet, decides not to follow along with Astrid, creating the first real rift the girls have known. The two quickly make new friends in their new circles: Astrid with her roller-derby cohorts and Nicole with the popular ballet crowd. As Astrid navigates the rough-and-tumble sport she's fallen in love with (and the bumps and bruises that come with it), she must also deal with what happens when friends just stop being friends and grow apart.

**Ugly** by Robert Hoge

Booklist (July 2016 (Vol. 112, No. 21))

From the first sentence (“I’m the ugliest person you’ve never met”), this memoir is guaranteed to grab attention. Native Australian Hoge, now 44, writes of his struggles and triumphs after being born with misshapen legs and a tennis-ball-sized tumor on his face. Though surgery shortly after his birth removed the tumor, he still had abnormally wide-set eyes and no nose at all, only nostrils. Before Hoge was five, he’d had both legs amputated and endured life-threatening surgery to make his face “more acceptable for others to see.” His most-hated nickname in middle school was “toe nose”—cartilage from his amputated right foot was used to build a new nose. Despite all this, his family’s unconditional support helped him cope with the surgeries, stares, and teasing he endured, and he reflects humorously on his attempts to ride a bike or woo his dream girl in fourth grade. In this honest, painful, and often funny memoir, readers will identify with Hoge’s realization that everyone is different, and his are just “different differences.”

**Waylon! One Awesome Thing** by Sara Pennypacker

Booklist starred (December 15, 2015 (Vol. 112, No. 8))

Waylon, a science-obsessed boy with a good heart, initially feels troubled when a charismatic classmate divides all the boys into two competing teams, separating friends and creating discord. Worse, he doesn’t assign Waylon to either team. Meanwhile, Baxter Boylen, a student who left last fall and was rumored to have spent time in prison, returns to their third-grade classroom looking bigger, older, and tougher than ever—and on a class visit to the police station, the officers know him suspiciously well. But when Baxter reaches out for help, Waylon knows exactly how to respond. Soon they are planning an unusual jailbreak, while unexpectedly bringing their classmates back together again. (Clementine fans will be happy to find her in Waylon’s class.)

**When the Sea Turned to Silver** by Grace Lin

Booklist starred (August 2016 (Vol. 112, No. 22))

Lin’s third book in her fantasy cycle set in ancient China once again takes traditional folklore and beautifully reimagines it for a new audience. Pinmei lives with her wise, storytelling grandmother, Amah, up on a mountain where her nearest neighbor is the mischievous orphan Yishan. Timid Pinmei must reach deep inside herself when her grandmother is taken by the emperor and his soldiers. After learning that the emperor might trade Amah for the Luminous Stone That Lights the Night, Pinmei and Yishan set off on a perilous journey, periodically interspersed with fantastical stories that cleverly capture human nature as the girl assumes Amah’s mantle of “the Storyteller.” The book jumps between Pinmei and Yishan’s adventures, Amah’s stay in a prison, and the distress of the Black Tortoise of Winter, who has been captured for nefarious purposes. Each of these plotlines weave with the folktales Pinmei and Amah are telling, each containing bright threads that embroider the final, fuller picture.

**The Great BallGame** by Phil Bildner

School Library Journal (March 1, 2016)

Fifth graders Rip and his best friend Red, who has high spectrum autism, deal with an unusual new teacher plus an unconventional basketball coach and in the process learn a great deal about teamwork and friendship and about meeting challenges in school. Upbeat drawings add a positive dimension. Readers will also enjoy the outstanding sequel, Rookie of the Year (2016).

**The Wild Robot** by Peter Brown

Kirkus Reviews starred (February 1, 2016)

A sophisticated robot--with the capacity to use senses of sight, hearing, and smell--is washed to shore on an island, the only robot survivor of a cargo of 500. When otters play with her protective packaging, the robot is accidently activated. Roz, though without emotions, is intelligent and versatile. She can observe and learn in service of both her survival and her principle function: to help. Brown links these basic functions to the kind of evolution Roz undergoes as she figures out how to stay dry and intact in her wild environment--not easy, with pine cones and poop dropping from above, stormy weather, and a family of cranky bears. She learns to understand and eventually speak the language of the wild creatures (each species with its different "accent"). An accident leaves her the sole protector of a baby goose, and Roz must ask other creatures for help to shelter and feed the gosling.

**Wish** by Barbara O’Connor

Booklist (October 1, 2016 (Online))

With her father in jail and her unstable mother incapable of caring for her, 10-year-old Charlie is sent to live with an aunt and uncle she didn’t know she had. Defensive and pugnacious, she resists their efforts to make her feel at home, as she has no intention of staying in this small town in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The one thing she loves here is the stray dog she takes in and cares for. Gradually, though, she comes to value the steady support of a boy who befriends her, and the unconditional love that her relatives offer. Every day, she makes the same unspoken wish, revealed only on the last page. In this first-person narrative, Charlie’s emotions are as evident as the events she records and her occasional misreading of other people’s lives and intentions. At school, at home, and in the community, the characters and settings are well drawn, but it’s the narrator’s convincing, compelling voice that will draw readers into the novel and keep them there until her wish finally comes true.