



# The American Indian Youth Literature Awards

Discussion and Reflection  
Naomi Bishop, MLIS, AHIP

# What are the AILA Youth Literature Awards?

The American Indian Youth Literature Awards (AIYLA) identify and honor the best writing and illustrations by Native Americans and Indigenous peoples of North America. Books selected to receive the award present Indigenous North American peoples in the fullness of their humanity.



**American Indian  
Library Association**

# About the Award



Presented every two years in three categories:

Best Picture Book

Best Middle Grade Book

Best Young Adult Book

54 Books  
Recognized

43 Publishers

50+ Creators

# Diversity in Children's Books 2015

Percentages of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds  
Based on the 2015 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:  
[ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)



**0.9%**  
American  
Indians/  
First Nations

**2.4%**  
Latinx

**3.3%**  
Asian Pacifics/  
Asian Pacific  
Americans

**7.6%**  
African/  
African  
Americans

**12.5%\***  
Animals, Trucks, etc.

**73.3%\*\***  
White

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen & Molly Beth Griffin  
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\* About a quarter of the total children's books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, like animals & trucks.

\*\* The remainder depict white characters.

**2015 Infographic citation :** Huyck, David, Sarah Park Dahlen, Molly Beth Griffin. (2016 September 14). Diversity in Children's Books 2015 infographic. [sarahpark.com](http://sarahpark.com) blog. Retrieved from [readingspark.wordpress.com/2016/09/14/picture-this-reflecting-diversity-in-childrens-book-publishing](http://readingspark.wordpress.com/2016/09/14/picture-this-reflecting-diversity-in-childrens-book-publishing)

Statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:  
[ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)

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# Children's Books By and/or About First/Native Nations Received by the CCBC\*--US Publishers Only- 2015 -

Year	By	About
2018	22	34
2017	18	44
2016	8	35
2015	9	28

Data on books by and about people of color and from First/Native Nations published for children and teens compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

[https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/p\\_cstats.asp](https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/p_cstats.asp)

# DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: [ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)



**1%**  
23 BOOKS  
**American Indians/  
First Nations**

**5%**  
170 BOOKS  
**Latinx**

**7%**  
218 BOOKS  
**Asian Pacific  
Islander/Asian  
Pacific American**

**10%**  
301 BOOKS  
**African/  
African  
American**

**27%**  
864 BOOKS  
**Animals/Other**

**50%**  
1,558 BOOKS  
**White**

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen

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Huyck, David and Sarah Park Dahlen. (2019 June 19). Diversity in Children's Books 2018.

[sarahpark.com](http://sarahpark.com) blog. Created in consultation with Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner, with statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:

[ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp). Retrieved from [readingspark.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/picture-this-diversity-in-childrens-books-2018-infographic](http://readingspark.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/picture-this-diversity-in-childrens-books-2018-infographic).

The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.

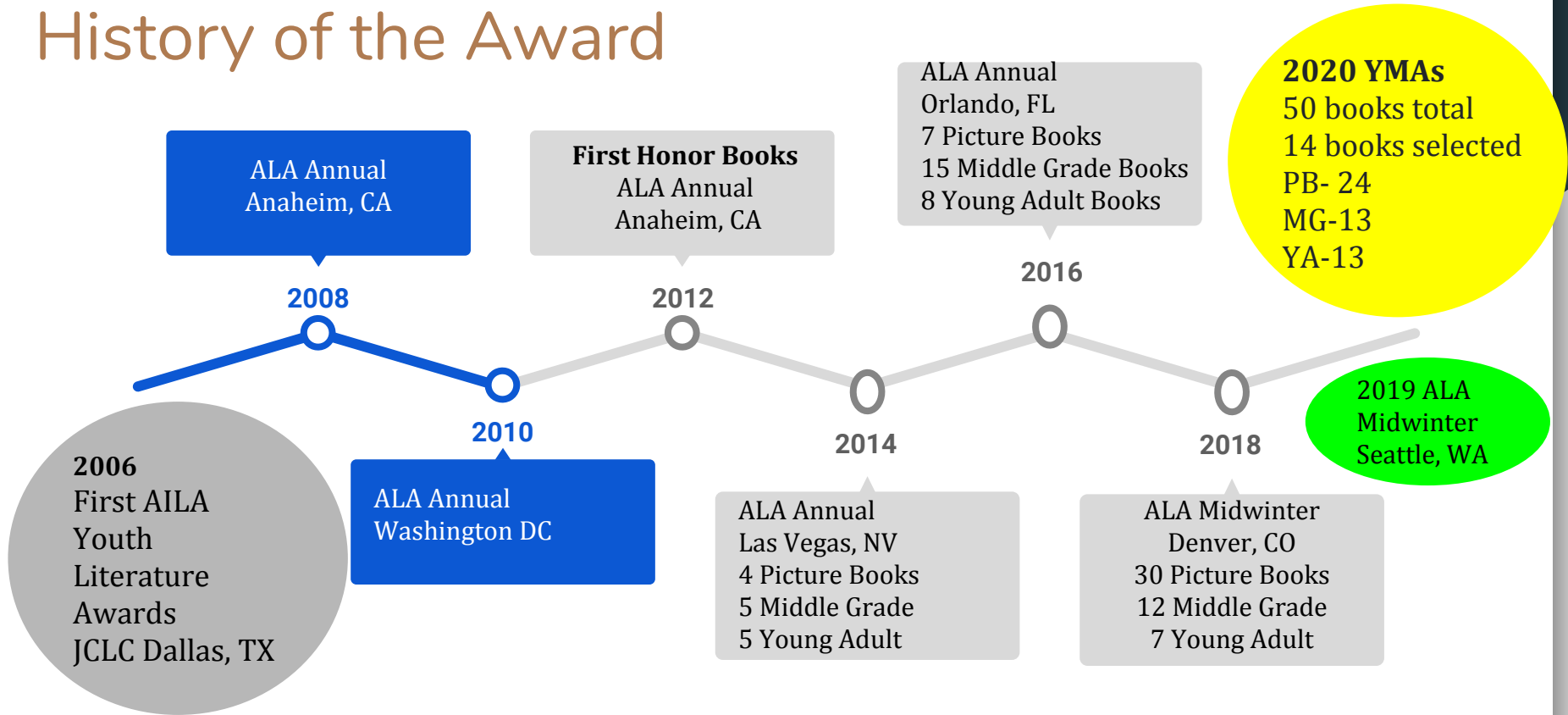
## Children's Books By and/or About First/Native Nations Received by the CCBC\* 2002 - 2018

Year	By	About
2018	38	55
2017	38	72
2016	23	55
2015	19	42
2014	20	38
2013	18	34
2012	6	22
2011	12	28
2010	9	22

Data on books by and about people of color and from First/Native Nations published for children and teens compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

<https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>

# History of the Award



## Criteria for Nominations

Award Nominations: Books published from October 2019- October 2022. Books published in 2019, 2020, 2021 not previously submitted for the awards

Author and or illustrator must be recognized by the Indian community of which they claim to be a part and be connected to the people

Books should be published within three years since the last awards were given.

Books may be nominated for consideration by the AIYLA Jury, publishers, librarians, authors, illustrators, or others

# Timeline of Awards Cycle

**October 2020- 2022 Awards Cycle Open**

**November 2020- Letter to publishers**

**Nominations open till October 2021**

**Awards Ceremony for 2020 Award**

**Books will be online January 2021**

**Deadline for 2022 submissions October 31, 2021**

**Announcement at ALA Midwinter 2022**

- Winners are notified days before the ALA Youth Media Awards.
- Awards ceremony is in odd years when no winners are announced.
- New criteria for 2020 awards required the committee to be U.S. AILA members.

# AILA Youth Literature Awards Committee

Committee Appointment	Committee requirement	Committee membership composition	Committee members duties	Terms limits
7 members minimum and 10 member maximum with chair and co-chair.	AILA Member Live in the U.S. Experience working with Native children and youth	Majority ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) representation of recognized members of nation/tribe. Geographic on/near U.S. rez, villages, and rural, suburban, and urban communities	1) Nominate titles in each category 2) Commit to four virtual meetings 3) Assist with AILA awards ceremony	Indigenous Jury members may serve an unlimited number of years as needed. Non-Native Jury members may serve for two award cycles or four years.

# What are we looking for in Award winning books?

- Meets all the awards criteria
- Honors communities and cultures
- Book brings joy to children, youth, and families
- Something Native children/youth would want to read over and over again

“The Awards go beyond merely naming the best creator of a particular art form in a certain year to representing the ideals of our multiple communities. Native authors and illustrators are role models for young people. For that reason, AILA does not endorse authors who appropriate other cultures or who behave in ways that dishonor others.”

# CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

- Authors (for illustrated books, both author AND illustrator) must be recognized by the Native community of which they claim to be a part and be connected to the people of that community.
- For anthologies, at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the authors must be recognized members of the community to which they claim affiliation.
- Books must have been published after October of the year before the last awards were given (i.e., the odd-numbered year preceding the previous award cycle; after October 2019 for the 2022 awards.)

# CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

<https://ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award/>

- Books may be nominated for consideration by the AIYLA Jury, publishers, librarians, authors, illustrators, and others.
- The Awards go beyond merely naming the best creator of a particular art form in a certain year to representing the ideals of our multiple communities. Native authors and illustrators are role models for young people. For that reason, AILA does not endorse authors who appropriate other cultures or who behave in ways that dishonor others.

# Discussions and Reflections

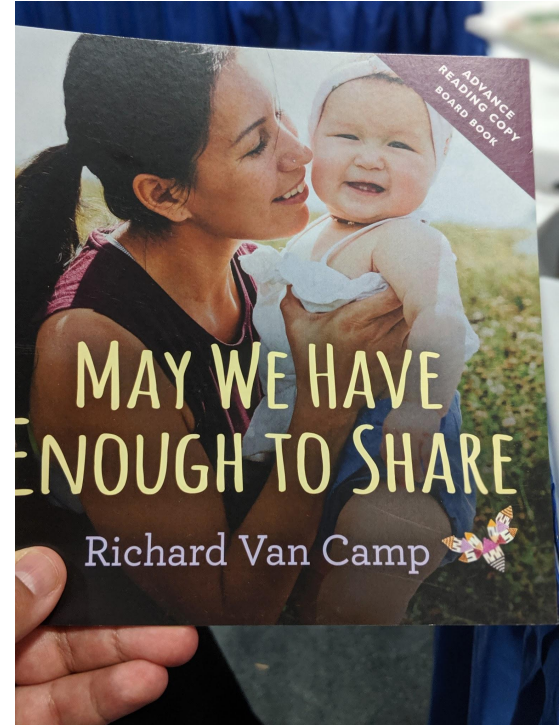
What are some things that you notice about ALA award winning books?

Why do you think there are so few books published in the USA vs. Canada?

What will bring change to the publishing industry in the US?

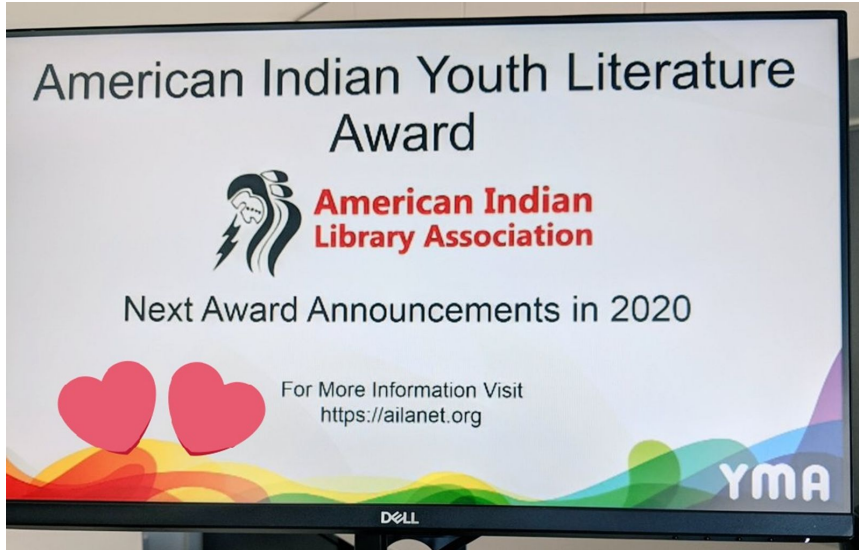
Who publishes Native authors and illustrators?

# Empowering Youth and Families to Read



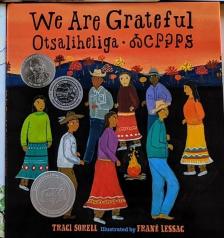
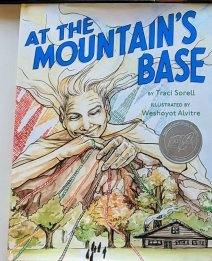
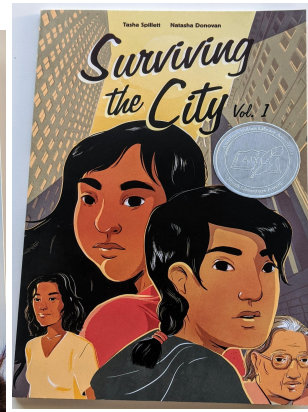
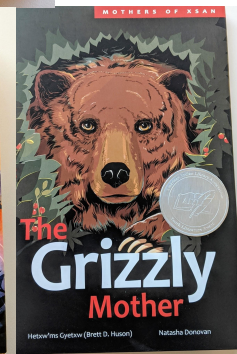
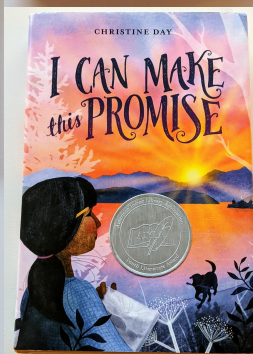
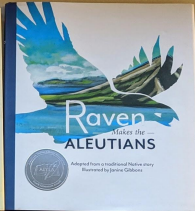
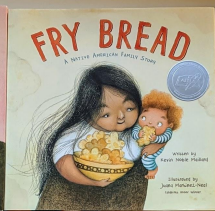
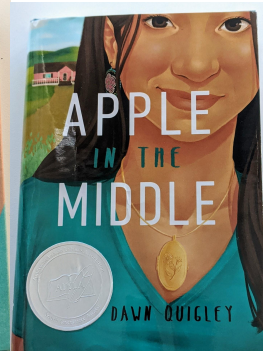
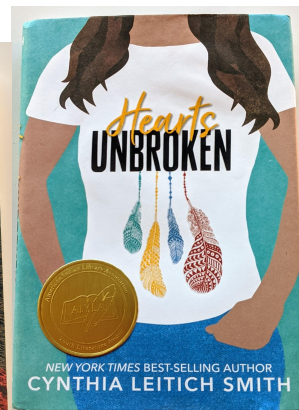
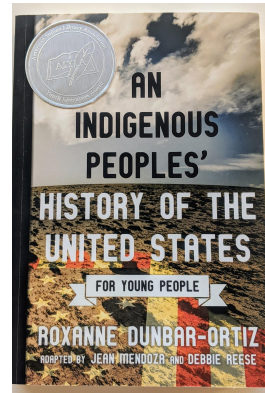
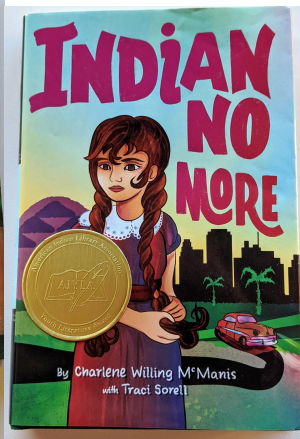
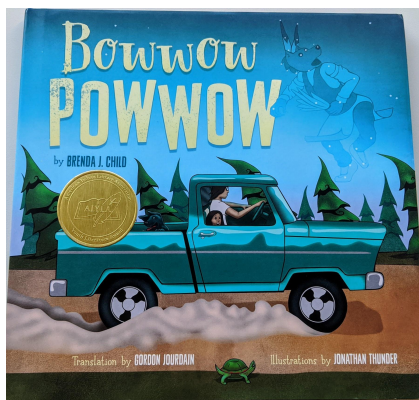
<https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/empower-native-kids-to-read-jiT3qWspQU2tzubYAKiXtQ>

# Significance of ALA Youth Media Awards



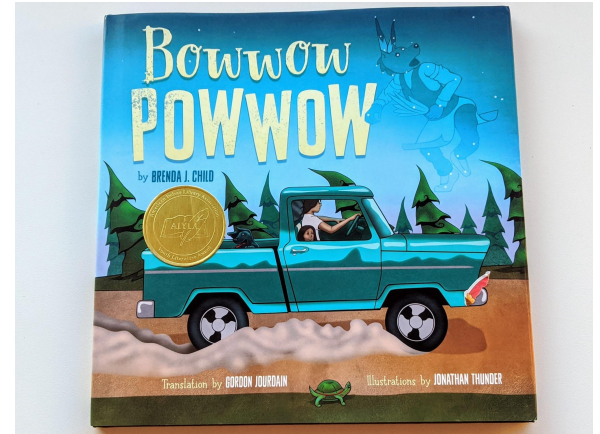
<https://youtu.be/CM3njHKbwv4?t=910>

# AILA Youth Literature 2020 Award Winners & Honors



# How to order/buy AILA awards books?

- Direct from Publishers Websites
- Native Bookstores
- From distributors
- Online from that place with an A



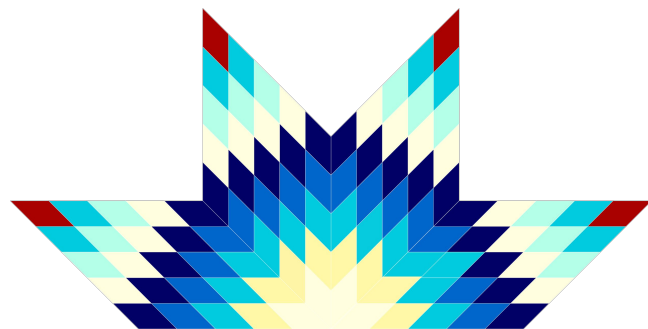
# Teaching with Books

Every local educational agency (LEA) must teach a balanced curriculum adhering to State adopted standards and mandates for the content areas, **using complementary materials that address the contributions of diverse cultures.**

Schools must **consciously build educational environments which value the rich heritage of all communities and cultures, fostering appreciation for all, so that all students and their families are treated equitably and with respect.**

While planning lessons across all subjects, **integrate culturally inclusive instruction that takes into account the unique stories, accomplishments, and struggles of all of people, especially Indigenous Peoples.**

<http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/culturally-inclusive-practices/>



# Contemporary Native Kids

## Native Children and Youth today

Cultural Appropriation and misrepresentations of their identity

Stereotypes in children's literature and media, school and sports mascots

Tribal Sovereignty and telling our stories

Health disparities and environmental social justice

Language and cultural revitalization projects

## How Libraries can help

Collection Development policy that reviews books for stereotypes and misrepresentations

Buy Books from Native authors and illustrators

Invite local tribal communities to be guest speakers

Discuss, display, and learn about Indigenous health and environments.

Buy books in Native Languages

# Promoting AILA Awards



# Celebrate with AILA

AILA Youth Literature Awards  
Virtual Ceremony

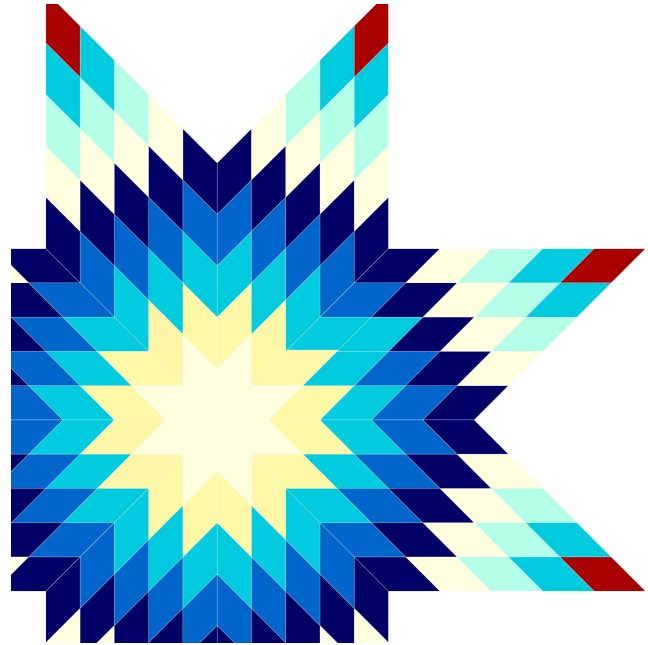
January 2021

More information coming soon!

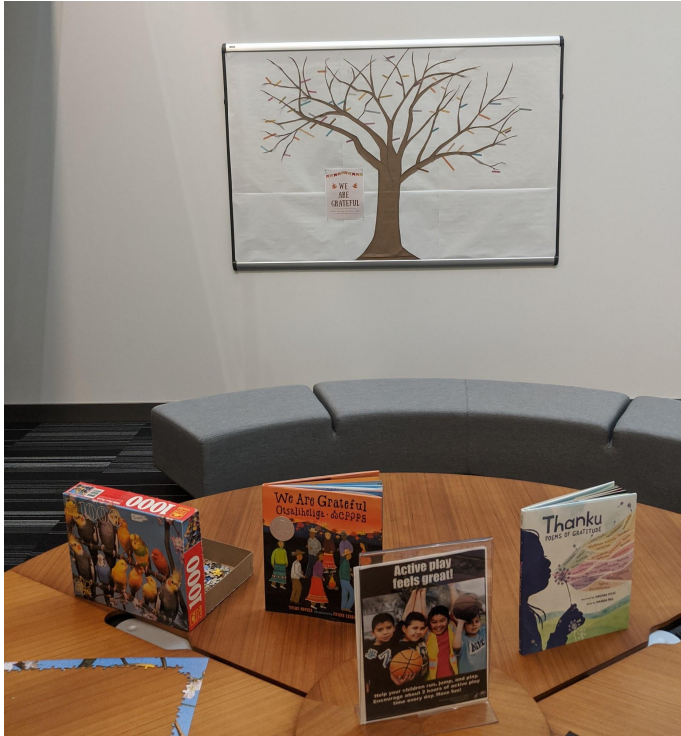


# Nominate a Book

Vanessa Centeno (Vigil)  
AILA 2022 Youth Literature  
Awards Chair  
[Ailaawards2022@gmail.com](mailto:Ailaawards2022@gmail.com)



# Questions?



# References

AILA Youth Literature Awards

<https://ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award/>

Cooperative Children's Book Center Publishers List

<https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pclist.asp>

Burt Award for First Nations, Metis and Inuit Literature (CODE)

<https://www.burtaward.org/burt-award-canada>

Native Change Makers At-Home Learning

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f-7g27H6JdvA\\_yApTahFGKiMY5YMd6-q/view?fbclid=IwAR3-\\_phW-rkfqjATqNzCccbedpROnJz8pO-ViO9-ilbJon2\\_Sdxc6DOgdo](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f-7g27H6JdvA_yApTahFGKiMY5YMd6-q/view?fbclid=IwAR3-_phW-rkfqjATqNzCccbedpROnJz8pO-ViO9-ilbJon2_Sdxc6DOgdo)

Teaching Books Net <https://TeachingBooks.net/AIYLA2020>