UPSTANDER BOOKBAG -- BEST OF 2018
The Children's School Library's picks for books about social justice.
Important lives and events. Inspiring stories of compassion

Malala's Magic Pencil by Malala Yousafzai
When Malala was very little she wished for a magical pencil that could create a better world and erase the injustices she observed. She eventually decided “Wishing wasn’t enough. Someone needed to speak out. Why not me?” This book handles the violent experiences in Malala’s life in an age-appropriate way and is a perfect introduction to this inspiring woman’s life.

Stand Up and Sing! Pete Seeger, Folk Music and the Path to Justice by Susanna Reich
One of our country’s most influential musicians, Pete Seeger learned and performed the folk tunes of Kentucky miners, Wisconsin lumberjacks and Texas farmers. Labeled unpatriotic and later blacklisted for singing in support of workers’ rights, he nevertheless sang and taught the songs of the people. Learn the full story of this important activist musician’s life.

Grace Hopper, Queen of Computer Code by Laurie Wallmark
At a very early age Grace Hopper had a knack for machines and math. In college she studied physics and in the Navy she wrote computer code. Learn the surprising reason for the very first computer bug and much more about this pioneering woman.

Steamboat School by Deborah Hopkinson
In 1847 the state of Missouri outlawed schools for African Americans, but Reverend John expects his students to attend classes in their newly located schoolhouse: a steamboat on the Mississippi River, which was federal land. Pair with Malala’s Pencil—two stories of young people who deeply value the privilege of an education.

Dorothea Lange--The Photographer Who Found the Faces of the Depression by Carole Weatherford
You might not know the name Lange, but you surely know her images, in particular Migrant Mother. After beginning her career as a nature photographer, she was sent by the U.S. government to document the experience of migrant workers and sharecroppers. Her stark images created an important testament to the American experience.

A Different Pond by Bao Phi
The author remembers his childhood fishing trips with his father, early in the morning when all was still—not for pleasure but to feed the family. We see a peaceful slice of life for a first generation immigrant family as the father remembers the family fishing pond in Vietnam.

Before She Was Harriet by Lesa Cline-Ransome
A find introduction to the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe--moving backwards in time we learn how she came to her most important work on the Underground Railroad. Kids will be reminded that every great person in history started out as a young person committed to helping.

I Am Not a Number by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer
Just as in the US, Canada removed Native American children from their homes and put them in residential schools—a tragic but important part of history for children to learn about. Separated from their families and abused, First Nation children were purposely disconnected from their culture—their hair was cut short and they were forbidden from speaking their language. I Am Not a Number is a difficult book to read and may be more appropriate for grades 3 and up.
**Voices from the Underground Railroad** by Kay Winters, illustrations by Larry Day
The book conveys the experience of two young runaway slaves as they travel to Massachusetts on the Underground Railroad. Each spread features richly toned illustrations and a poem from the perspective of a different person: the slaves, the folks who sheltered and helped them, the folks who pursued them.

**Write to Me: Letters from Japanese American Children to the Librarian They Left Behind** by Cynthia Grady
This is the true story of a librarian and the Japanese American community she served. As her friends and patrons are sent to internment camps, Clara Breed maintained correspondence, sent books, supplies and penny postcards so they could keep in touch. The little snippets of news they exchanged kept them connected and sustained the detainees through difficult times. The end of the book shows photographs of a reunion of Miss Breed and her friends, many years later.

**Danza!: Amalia Hernández and El Ballet Folklórico de México** by Duncan Tonatiuh
The life story of Mexico’s most famous dancer and choreographer, from her early training to her formation of a world-class ballet company. She fused traditional ballet and modern dance with folk dances that she collected and learned, creating an international sensation.

**Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey** by Margriet Ruurs
The story of a Syrian refugee family includes illustrations made of stones, by Syrian artist Nizar Ali Badr. A family is forced to leave their home because of civil war and eventually finds safe haven in Europe. This book is in English and Arabic.

**Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey** by Doug Kuntz
An excellent pairing with *Stepping Stones*, this true refugee story focuses on a family pet named Kunkush. A heartbroken family can only take him so far on their journey from Iraq to Norway, but a network of volunteers cares for the cat and eventually reunites them all.

**My Night in the Planetarium** by Innosanto Nagara
Another compelling true story, told from the point of view of a young Indonesian boy with an activist-playwright father. When the army shows up at a performance of a protest play, the father and his family must evade being detained. No one thought to look in the nextdoor planetarium, where the boy and his mother spent the night.

**The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist** by Cynthia Levinson
The true story of Hendricks, whose parents were friends to Martin Luther King. Audrey heard them talking at the dinner table and in church and was inspired to join the youth protesters who vowed to “fill the jails”. It was a particularly difficult experience for Hendricks who was a nine-year-old, alone among teenage protesters.