

NCTE Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children

Charge: To select the recipient of the annual Charlotte Huck Award® and up to five honor books, and to promote the use of children's fiction books in the classroom.

The Charlotte Huck Award® was established in 2014 to promote and recognize excellence in the writing of fiction for children. In particular the award recognizes fiction that has the potential for transforming children's lives by inviting compassion, imagination, and wonder. The award is presented at the Children's Book Awards Luncheon at the NCTE Annual Convention.

For more information on the Charlotte Huck Award, please go to: <http://www2.ncte.org/awards/ncte-childrens-book-awards/charlotte-huck-award/>.

Major activities: What major actions, projects, initiatives, or studies in your charge have been completed by your group since July 1, 2018? In each activity describe the more important features of the work, and connect your work to the [NCTE Vision Statement](#), if applicable.

1. What actions, projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

Members of the committee are engaged in the extensive and intensive process of reading and culling books in hopes of identifying outstanding works of fiction that meet the criteria of the Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children. On the first Sunday of every month, the committee meets on ZOOM (video conferencing) to discuss books received from publishers and titles that members have located independently. Members also communicate daily/weekly via a private chat group on WhatsApp to share new titles or to highlight books that meet the award criteria. Final deliberations for this award are scheduled on Thursday, November 22 at the annual conference in Baltimore Maryland. In addition to selecting and announcing this year's winner, honor and recommended books at the Children's Book Award Luncheon, members are responsible for collecting data on children's responses to last year's selections. The committee is preparing to participate in two conference presentations: *Inviting Compassion, Imagination and Wonder with the 2019 Charlotte Huck Award Winners* and *The 2019 Orbis Pictus and Charlotte Huck Honor Book Award-Winning Authors and Illustrators Share Their Stories and Insights*

2. What have you accomplished so far, and what is your timeline for future work?

Shortly after last year's annual conference, Denise Davila (Chair of Orbis Pictus) and I sent out broad requests to publishers via email and snail mail to invite submissions. These invitations included a cover letter explaining the award criteria and a committee member contact list. In the months that followed, I have sent broad reminders via email, and also called and emailed publishers to request specific titles on behalf of the committee. Members of the committee have continuously read nominated books, and tirelessly searched for additional books that meet the criteria. Following a process established last year, each committee member has taken responsibility for locating and suggesting outstanding books within different sub-genres of fiction: contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, graphic novels, poetry, and fantasy. Individual members have also contributed to a book request form using Google docs, and searched their local libraries, bookstores and databases for promising works of fiction. Additionally, committee members have submitted monthly(KEEP/WITHDRAW) spreadsheets to indicate whether titles should remain under consideration based on the award criteria, and (for the past three months) have submitted top 20 lists. Our ongoing conference calls, chats and postings serve as a record of the group's responses to books as well as any concerns members have raised about a particular book. We are charting all of this data to help to guide the conversation and selection process during our final deliberation session. In the end, we hope to contribute to NCTE's broader mission related to access (sharing resources and state-of-the art practices related to children's literature) and affiliation (strengthening cross-community connections, information sharing, and organizing to collaborate more powerfully).

3. How has the work of your group contributed to NCTE's role in shaping the profession of teaching and/or the understanding of literacy in educational contexts?

Our work aligns closely with NCTE's vision of having its members, "apply the power of language and literacy to actively pursue justice and equity for all students and the educators who serve them." The Charlotte Huck Award, in particular, with its focus on recognizing books that, "have the potential for transforming children's lives by inviting compassion, imagination, and wonder," lends itself to work for social justice. Members of the committee take this work seriously, and seek to promote literature that challenges the status quo and demands that the voices of marginalized groups are recognized. Each year, we search for new authors and smaller presses along with those who are more prominent and well-known. We also consider stories that have not often been told as well as those that cause us to think differently about the familiar. Our aim is always to tap into the transformative power of story and to share and promote those works that guide us toward a more just and equitable world.

Desiree Cueto, Chair