

Books

*Indicates we have this book available at the CASA office! Stop by the office or contact staff to borrow the book.

- Spilled Milk by K.L. Randis *
Brooke Nolan is a battered child who makes an anonymous phone call about the escalating brutality in her home. When social services jeopardize her safety condemning her to keep her father's secret, it's a glass of spilled milk at the dinner table that forces her to speak about the cruelty she's been hiding. In her pursuit for safety and justice Brooke battles a broken system that pushes to keep her father in the home. When jury members and a love interest congregate to inspire her to fight, she risks losing the support of family and comes to the realization that some people simply do not want to be saved. Spilled Milk is a novel of shocking narrative, triumph and resiliency.
- Evicted by Matthew Desmond *
In this brilliant, heartbreaking book, Matthew Desmond takes us into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee to tell the story of eight families on the edge. Arleen is a single mother trying to raise her two sons on the \$20 a month she has left after paying for their rundown apartment. Scott is a gentle nurse consumed by a heroin addiction. Lamar, a man with no legs and a neighborhood full of boys to look after, tries to work his way out of debt. Vanetta participates in a botched stickup after her hours are cut. All are spending almost everything they have on rent, and all have fallen behind. The fates of these families are in the hands of two landlords: Sherrena Tarver, a former schoolteacher turned inner-city entrepreneur, and Tobin Charney, who runs one of the worst trailer parks in Milwaukee. They loathe some of their tenants and are fond of others, but as Sherrena puts it, "Love don't pay the bills." She moves to evict Arleen and her boys a few days before Christmas.
- Three Little Words by Ashley Rhodes-Courter *
"Sunshine, you're my baby and I'm your only mother. You must mind the one taking care of you, but she's not your mama." Ashley Rhodes-Courter spent nine years of her life in fourteen different foster homes, living by those words. As her mother spirals out of control, Ashley is left clinging to an unpredictable, dissolving relationship, all the while getting pulled deeper and deeper into the foster care system. Painful memories of being taken away from her home quickly become consumed by real-life horrors, where Ashley is juggled between caseworkers, shuffled from school to school, and forced to endure manipulative, humiliating treatment from a very abusive foster family. In this inspiring, unforgettable memoir, Ashley finds the courage to succeed - and in doing so, discovers the power of her own voice.

- A Child Called "It" by Dave Pelzer *

This book chronicles the unforgettable account of one of the most severe child abuse cases in California history. It is the story of Dave Pelzer, who was brutally beaten and starved by his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother: a mother who played tortuous, unpredictable games-- games that left him nearly dead. He had to learn how to play his mother's games in order to survive because she no longer considered him a son, but a slave; and no longer a boy, but an "it." Dave's bed was an old army cot in the basement, and his clothes were torn and raunchy. When his mother allowed him the luxury of food, it was nothing more than spoiled scraps that even the dogs refused to eat. The outside world knew nothing of his living nightmare. He had nothing or no one to turn to, but his dreams kept him alive--dreams of someone taking care of him, loving him and calling him their son.
- "When the Welfare People Come" by Don Lash

In this groundbreaking look at the history and politics of the US child welfare system, "When the Welfare People Come" exposes the system in its totality, from child protective investigation to foster care and mandated services, arguing that it constitutes a mechanism of control exerted over poor and working class parents and children. Applying the Marxist framework of social reproduction theory to the child welfare system, the author reveals the system's role in the regulation of family life under capitalism.
- The Boy Who Was Raised as A Dog by Bruce D Perry and Maia Szalavitz *

What happens when a young brain is traumatized? How does terror, abuse, or disaster affect a child's mind -- and how can that mind recover? Child psychiatrist Dr. Bruce D. Perry has helped children faced with unimaginable horror: genocide survivors, murder witnesses, kidnapped teenagers, and victims of family violence.

In The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog, Dr. Perry tells their stories of trauma and transformation through the lens of science, revealing the brain's astonishing capacity for healing. Deftly combining unforgettable case histories with his own compassionate, insightful strategies for rehabilitation, Perry explains what exactly happens to the brain when a child is exposed to extreme stress -- and reveals the unexpected measures that can be taken to ease a child's pain and help him grow into a healthy adult.
- Out of Harm's Way by Richard J Gelles *

Despite many well-intentioned efforts to create, revise, reform, and establish an effective child welfare system in the United States, the system continues to fail to ensure the safety and well-being of maltreated children. Out of Harm's Way explores the following four critical aspects of the system and presents a specific change in each that would lead to lasting improvements. Deciding who is the client, decisions, the perverse incentive, and aging out.
- Another Place at the Table by Kathy Harrison

The startling and ultimately uplifting narrative of one woman's thirteen-year experience as a foster parent.

For more than a decade, Kathy Harrison has sheltered a shifting cast of troubled youngsters--the offspring of prostitutes and addicts; the sons and daughters of abusers; and teenage parents

who aren't equipped for parenthood. All this, in addition to raising her three biological sons and two adopted daughters. What would motivate someone to give herself over to constant, largely uncompensated chaos? For Harrison, the answer is easy.

- Hope's Boy by Andrew Bridge *

From the moment he was born, Andrew Bridge and his mother Hope shared a love so deep that it felt like nothing else mattered. Trapped in desperate poverty and confronted with unthinkable tragedies, all Andrew ever wanted was to be with his mom. But as her mental health steadily declined, and with no one else left to care for him, authorities arrived and tore Andrew from his screaming mother's arms. In that moment, the life he knew came crashing down around him. He was only seven years old.

Hope was institutionalized, and Andrew was placed in what would be his devastating reality for the next eleven years--foster care. After surviving one of our country's most notorious children's facilities, Andrew was thrust into a savagely loveless foster family that refused to accept him as one of their own. Deprived of the nurturing he needed, Andrew clung to academics and the kindness of teachers. All the while, he refused to surrender the love he held for his mother in his heart. Ultimately, Andrew earned a scholarship to Wesleyan, went on to Harvard Law School, and became a Fulbright Scholar.

- I Speak for this Child by Gay Courter

This is the true story of Gay Courter's experiences as a court-appointed guardian for children--of her first tentative approach to her local program after learning about it in a Parade magazine cover story, of learning the duties and responsibilities of her position, and of her efforts to ensure that, at least in the cases assigned to her, American's most vulnerable citizens are treated with care and respect.

- A Child's Journey Through Placement by Vera I. Fahlberg, M.D. *

Children who are cared for in an out of home placement are in need of support and stability. This classic text offers information and advice for professionals and carers on how to help these children, who will often have attachment difficulties. Vera I. Fahlberg, M.D. shares her experience and expertise, outlining the significance of attachment and separation, the developmental stages specific to adoptive children and providing guidance on minimizing the trauma of moves. The book also features practical advice on case planning, managing behavior and direct work with children, and throughout are case studies and exercises which provide opportunities for further learning. A readable, compassionate and practical text, A Child's Journey Through Placement provides the foundation, the resources, and the tools to help students, professionals, parents and others who care to support children on their journey through placement to adulthood.

- The Center of Winter by Marya Hornbacher *

At the center of winter, in Motley, Minnesota, Arnold Schiller gives in to the oppressive season that reigns outside and also to his own inner demons -- he commits suicide, leaving a devastated family in his wake.

Claire Schiller, wife and mother, takes shelter from the emotional storm with her husband's parents but must ultimately emerge from her grief and help her two young children to recover. Esau, her oldest, is haunted by the same darkness that plagued his father. At twelve years old, he has already been in and out of state psychiatric hospitals, and now, with the help of his mother and sister, he must overcome the forces that drive him deep into himself. But as the youngest, perhaps it is Katie who carries the heaviest burden. A precocious six-year-old who desperately wants to help her mother hold the family together, she will have to come to terms with the memory of her father, who was at once loving and cruel.

- **The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down** by Anne Fadiman *

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures is a 1997 book by Anne Fadiman that chronicles the struggles of a Hmong refugee family from Houaysouy, Sainyabuli Province, Laos,[1] the Lees, and their interactions with the health care system in Merced, California. In 2005 Robert Entenmann, of St. Olaf College wrote that the book is "certainly the most widely read book on the Hmong experience in America." [2]

On the most basic level, the book tells the story of the family's second youngest and favored daughter, Lia Lee, who was diagnosed with a severe form of epilepsy named Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome and the culture conflict that obstructs her treatment.

Through miscommunications about medical dosages and parental refusal to give certain medicines due to mistrust, misunderstandings, and behavioral side effects, and the inability of the doctors to develop more empathy with the traditional Hmong lifestyle or try to learn more about the Hmong culture, Lia's condition worsens. The dichotomy between the Hmong's perceived spiritual factors and the Americans' perceived scientific factors comprises the overall theme of the book.

- **The Heart Knows Something Different** by Youth Communication *

There are more than 450,000 children living in foster care. The Heart Knows Something Different collects over three dozen personal narratives by young writers, ages 15 to 20, and provides an insider's account of growing up in "the system." It takes us into a world largely hidden from public view, and attests to the mix of pain and fear, and sometimes hope, and sometimes even happiness that the foster care experience involves.

- **Fist Stick Knife Gun Fist Stick Knife Gun** by Geoffrey Canada *

Long before President Barack Obama praised his work as "an all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck anti-poverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children," and First Lady Michelle Obama called him "one of my heroes," Geoffrey Canada was a small and scared boy growing up in the South Bronx. His childhood world was one where "sidewalk boys" learned the codes of the block and were ranked through the rituals of fist, stick, knife, and, finally, gun. In a stunning pairing, acclaimed comics creator Jamar Nicholas presents Canada's raw and riveting account, one of the most authentic and important true stories of urban violence ever told.

- Why Gender Matters by Leonard Sax, M.D., Ph.D. *

Eleven years ago, Why Gender Matters broke ground in illuminating the differences between boys and girls--how they perceive the world differently, how they learn differently, how they process emotions and take risks differently. Dr. Sax argued that in failing to recognize these hardwired differences between boys and girls, we ended up reinforcing damaging stereotypes, medicalizing normal behavior (see: the rising rates of ADHD diagnosis), and failing to support kids to reach their full potential. In the intervening decade, the world has changed drastically, with an avalanche of new research which supports, deepens, and expands Dr. Sax's work. This revised and updated edition includes new findings about how boys and girls interact differently with social media and video games; a completely new discussion of research on gender non-conforming, LGB, and transgender kids, new findings about how girls and boys see differently, hear differently, and even smell differently; and new material about the medicalization of bad behavior.
- Push by Sapphire *

Relentless, remorseless, and inspirational, this "horrific, hope-filled story" (Newsday) is certain to haunt a generation of readers. Precious Jones, 16 years old and pregnant by her father with her second child, meets a determined and highly radical teacher who takes her on a journey of transformation and redemption.
- The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd *

Set in South Carolina in 1964, The Secret Life of Bees tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sister, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon *

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.
- One Kid at a Time by Jake Decker *

This true, heartwarming story reveals that miracles occur in everyday life. Enjoyable and uplifting, One Kid at a Time will empower--and encourage--everyone who reads it. Danny had no chance. His mother abandoned him. His father in prison didn't know him. His grandmother beat him so badly that the doctors couldn't count the bruises. He lived nonstop

days of unending anxiety, loneliness and terror. Ordered into foster care, the system isolated, drugged and betrayed him.

Jake lived the good life. Warm friendships, plenty of money and freedom to do what he enjoyed. From the outside he had the perfect existence. But inside he longed for a child.

- **The Lost Boy by Dave Pelzer ***

Imagine a young boy who has never had a loving home. His only possessions are the old, torn clothes he carries in a paper bag. The only world he knows is one of isolation and fear. Although others had rescued this boy from his abusive alcoholic mother, his real hurt is just beginning -- he has no place to call home.

- **The Deepest Well by Nadine Burke Harris, M.D. ***

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris was already known as a crusading physician delivering targeted care to vulnerable children. But it was Diego—a boy who had stopped growing after a sexual assault—who galvanized her journey to uncover the connections between toxic stress and lifelong illnesses.

*The stunning news of Burke Harris's research is just how deeply our bodies can be imprinted by ACEs—adverse childhood experiences like abuse, neglect, parental addiction, mental illness, and divorce. Childhood adversity changes our biological systems and lasts a lifetime. For anyone who has faced a difficult childhood, or who cares about the millions of children who do, the fascinating scientific insight and innovative, acclaimed health interventions in *The Deepest Well* represent vitally important hope for preventing lifelong illness for those we love and for generations to come.*

- **Born on a Blue Day by Daniel Tammet ***

*Bestselling author Daniel Tammet (*Thinking in Numbers*) is virtually unique among people who have severe autistic disorders in that he is capable of living a fully independent life and able to explain what is happening inside his head.*

*He sees numbers as shapes, colors, and textures, and he can perform extraordinary calculations in his head. He can learn to speak new languages fluently, from scratch, in a week. In 2004, he memorized and recited more than 22,000 digits of pi, setting a record. He has savant syndrome, an extremely rare condition that gives him the most unimaginable mental powers, much like those portrayed by Dustin Hoffman in the film *Rain Man*.*

- **Claiming Georgia Tate by Gigi Amateau ***

Twelve-year-old Georgia Tate wishes she could stay home forever with her no-nonsense nana, her preacher granddaddy, and her sassy friend Ginger, celebrating church revivals and the Fourth of July with icy cold watermelon and all the deep-fried fish she can eat. She wishes her deadbeat daddy had never reappeared on the scene, and that Ginger hadn't blurted out the awful truth about Mama. But most of all, when Georgia Tate loses her nana to a sudden heart attack, she desperately wishes she could find a way to tell Granddaddy why she can't possibly leave Mississippi to move in with Daddy — about the things he does that make her feel so ashamed her mind takes her off to a faraway, made-up place.

- The Struggle to be Strong by Desetta and Wolin *

*Jamel loses his friends to marijuana; Artiqua dates a boy of another race despite her family's opposition. Younique was abandoned by her mother; Charlene is raising her brothers and sisters because their mother is addicted to drugs; Craig is gay and worried about coming out. All of these teens have more than their share of troubles. And all have the resiliency needed to face them, live through them, and move forward with courage, confidence, and hope. In 30 first-person accounts, teens tell how they overcame major life obstacles. Many aren't the everyday problems most kids encounter, which makes their stories especially compelling—and their successes especially inspiring. As teens read *The Struggle to Be Strong*, they discover they're not alone in facing life's difficulties. They learn about seven resiliencies—insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and morality—that everyone needs to survive and thrive in even the toughest times.*
- Hey, Kiddo by Krosoczka *

In kindergarten, Jarrett Krosoczka's teacher asks him to draw his family, with a mommy and a daddy. But Jarrett's family is much more complicated than that. His mom is an addict, in and out of rehab, and in and out of Jarrett's life. His father is a mystery -- Jarrett doesn't know where to find him, or even what his name is. Jarrett lives with his grandparents -- two very loud, very loving, very opinionated people who had thought they were through with raising children until Jarrett came along.

Jarrett goes through his childhood trying to make his non-normal life as normal as possible, finding a way to express himself through drawing even as so little is being said to him about what's going on. Only as a teenager can Jarrett begin to piece together the truth of his family, reckoning with his mother and tracking down his father.
- Kids in the Mix of ADHD, LD, Asperger's, Tourette's, Bipolar, and More by Martin L. Kutscher *

Dr. Kutscher provides accessible information on causes, symptoms, interactions with other conditions, and treatments. He presents effective behavioral strategies for responding to children who display traits of these disorders-whether at home, at school, or in other settings-along with case vignettes and practical tips.
- White Oleander by Janet Fitch *

*Everywhere hailed as a novel of rare beauty and power, *White Oleander* tells the unforgettable story of Ingrid, a brilliant poet imprisoned for murder, and her daughter, Astrid, whose odyssey through a series of Los Angeles foster homes-each its own universe, with its own laws, its own dangers, its own hard lessons to be learned-becomes a redeeming and surprising journey of self-discovery.*