

## **Kids Books Sure To Be a Hit!**

By Denise Marchetti, Children's Librarian

As the summer months approach and baseball season is in full swing, there are plenty of novels to keep young sports fans in the reading game. These baseball themed stories will engage readers as they explore topics of teamwork, loyalty, kindness, perseverance, and acceptance.

*Ballpark Mysteries*, a series of fifteen books by David Kelly is a great choice to lead off the lineup for emerging chapter book readers. They are filled with mystery, action, and adventure as budding sleuths, Mike and Kate visit baseball parks around the league.

For those interested in the game's history, Dan Gutman serves up *Baseball Card Adventures*, a series of twelve fantasy/adventure books in which ten year old Joe Stoshack travels through time whenever he touches an old baseball card. In *Jackie & Me*, Joe's school assignment prompts him to go back and meet Jackie Robinson, one of the greatest baseball players of all time. He learns what it was really like for the man who broke baseball's color barrier. Another book with historical context is *Out of Left Field* by Ellen Klages. It's 1957 when ten year old Katy Gordon decides to try out for Little League baseball disguised as a boy. She easily makes the team, but is told she cannot play when the coach discovers she is a girl. Katy sets out to prove that girls should be allowed to play baseball.

Fans looking for realistic fiction may enjoy *The Contract* series, five books written by former New York Yankees shortstop, Derek Jeter. The stories are inspired by Jeter's own life experiences, in which he searches out good role models and overcomes obstacles as a young player. Former NFL player and kids' sports fiction author, Tim Green, who has written several good baseball stories, teams up with Jeter on *Baseball Genius*. There are currently two books in this series about Jalen DeLuca, a boy who tries to use his unique talent of predicting pitches to help his favorite player get out of a slump. The third title is scheduled for next March. Sports lover, Jake Maddox offers many good fast-paced baseball realistic fiction choices. *Outfield Outcast*, *Caught Stealing*, and *Behind the Plate* deal with topics of competition, trust, and family. Sportswriter, Mike Lupica brings his knowledge of baseball to give readers a behind the scenes look at the major leagues. In *Team Players*, Cassie Bennett, who is getting ready for an all-star softball season, must face the challenge of a new player who has Asperger's Syndrome joining her team. *MadCat* by Kathy Mackel is another story with a female protagonist. Softball catcher, MadCat Campione begins to question her desire

to play the game she loves as her friendships are tested when her team begins an intense national competition.

*Sports Illustrated Kids Graphic Novels* are sure to score with fans of baseball and graphic novels. There are plenty of fast-paced, action packed stories with a glossary of baseball terms. For those looking for humor, *Big Nate, Revenge of the Cream Puffs* delivers as Nate and his team step onto the field determined to prove themselves to their opponents.

Please visit or call the Wyckoff Rizzo Children's Library at 201-891-4866, x3 for suggestions on finding great reads for children of all ages. Ask us about joining one of our book clubs for children in grades 1-5 as well as our Summer Reading Club.

*This article was published in Wyckoff Living. Please note that the author was misattributed to Laura Leonard.*