



June 2017

Dear middle school students and parents,

Summer is almost here! It's time for sunshine, beaches, fireflies...and summer reading! As we have done for many years, the middle school English and Humanities teachers have selected summer reading books required for students entering grades 5-8. These books will form the foundations of our English discussions in the first few days of school and will introduce themes that will be addressed throughout the year. While students are not required to annotate their texts or write any sort of book review, they should read the required summer reading book attentively and be ready to discuss it in the fall.

Once again, we are happy to be able to provide copies of the required summer reading books to all students. We are also including some guiding questions that students can consider as they read (enclosed.) We hope the students enjoy their summer reading books, and we encourage parents to read along with their children, too!

Of course, the fun doesn't have to stop with the required reading books; MS Librarians Angie Ungaro and Emily Valente have put together a terrific list of recommended summer reading to keep you entertained on lazy afternoons, long flights, late nights in the bunk, or wherever you find yourself this summer! Happy reading!

In friendship,
the MS English teachers



Guiding Questions for Middle School Summer Reading

Rising fifth graders **and parents**: You will read R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*, a novel that explores kindness and friendship from multiple points of view. August Pullman was born with Treacher-Collins Syndrome, which has resulted in a facial deformity he has experienced all his life. Entering middle school for the first time, he learns about accepting himself and teaches others what it means to be a true friend. Friendship and community are major themes throughout the book. **We encourage you to read this book with your parents and discuss: How do the characters in the book learn about equality? What does this book have to say about friendship, kindness, and courage? How does the story of Augie and his friends reflect the Quaker concept of seeing the Light in everyone?**

Rising sixth graders: You will read Paul Fleischman's short story collection, *Seedfolks*, which tells the story of the many different people whose lives are touched by a community garden. In addition, rising sixth graders are asked to select one independent reading book from the BFS library's list of recommended books for sixth graders; this list will be available on the BFS website starting on June 1st.

As you read *Seedfolks*, ask yourself: How do people's histories, identities, and personalities affect the way they see themselves and their environment? How does nature change people's lives? How do these stories relate to the Quaker testimonies of stewardship and community?

Rising seventh graders: You will read S. E. Hinton's classic coming-of-age novel, *The Outsiders*. Ponyboy and Johnny are two "greasers" who never seem to get a break. When they get caught up in a gang-related killing they didn't see coming, they run away and learn that their lives will never be the same again...

As you read *The Outsiders*, ask yourself: Who are the outsiders in this story and who are the insiders? Who determines what "in" or "out" even means? How does this story connect to Quaker testimonies of peace and equality?

Rising eighth graders: You will read Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, a beloved American classic about a young girl growing up at the turn of the century. Set in a squalid Williamsburg that is very different from the hipster haven it is today, the story of Francie Nolan is one of love and survival.

As you read, ask yourself: How does Francie use stories and storytelling to survive and thrive under challenging circumstances? How does Francie's dreams and goals connect to the Quaker testimony of simplicity?