

Black Authors for Young Readers  
Aurora Ropp and Kris Wiley for The News-Review

February is Black History Month, and we are highlighting recent reads from Black authors. You can find a booklist on our library catalog titled "Black History Month & Beyond" that has these books and more written by Black authors.

### **Picture Books**

Author of "The Me I Choose to Be" and "I Love My Hair!" Natasha Anastasia Tarpley has begun a new series of picture books about a girl named Keyana. The first in the series, "Keyana Loves Her Family," shares the joy of family movie night where things do not go according to plan.

Keyana has a big idea to host a backyard movie experience for her whole family. She works hard with her parents to set up an outdoor movie, but once all the uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents arrive, the evening goes awry. Family saves the day by having a great time together making a movie of their own!

This story is a fun depiction of family having a good time getting together no matter what happens.

### **Middle Grades**

Mature tween readers will have much to consider after reading "Holler of the Fireflies" by David Barclay Moore.

The first thing I recommend is reading the end. That's where the author's note explains the inspiration for some of the characters and scenes from Moore's semi-autobiographical novel about a boy from New York City who experiences culture shock when he attends STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) camp in West Virginia.

It is a summer of discovery for Javari, who deals with several heavy topics - race, class and sexual identity. Through it all, Javari learns a lot about what he is capable of accomplishing in the classroom and in life.

The beauty of "Holler of the Fireflies" is that it does not wrap up in a neat bow. A couple of weeks after reading the book, I still think about Javari and his confusing relationship with Cricket, the local boy who introduces Javari to the community outside the STEM campus; the characters who populate this corner of Appalachia; and the ways in which Javari analyzes his conversations and experiences with his family in New York and those with the people in West Virginia.

### **Teens**

"We Deserve Monuments" by Jas Hammonds features Avery, a high school senior who has moved from Washington, D.C., to Georgia with her parents to care for her ailing grandmother.

Avery is a driven student who always planned to attend Georgetown with her friends. Her worldview begins to change when she spends time with two new girls, including Simone, for whom she develops feelings.

Avery also begins to understand more about her family's experiences with racism and violence through her conversations with Mama Letty, a tough-as-nails woman with a biting tongue and a legacy of trauma and resilience.

With romance, family history and a mystery, "We Deserve Monuments" is an engaging read for mature teens.

All of these books are available at the library. Place holds at [roseburg.bibliionix.com](http://roseburg.bibliionix.com), or contact library staff at [library@cityofroseburg.org](mailto:library@cityofroseburg.org) or 541-492-7050 for assistance.

### This Month's Youth Programs

10:30 a.m. every Wednesday – Storytime with Aurora

10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7 – Grab-and-go craft kits while supplies last

4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8 - Club de Idioma Español | Spanish Club for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders

3-4:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9 – Teen Drop-In Hangout

3:30-4:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16 – Children's Drop-In Activity

10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 18 – Read with Astra Teens

10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21 – Grab-and-go craft kits while supplies last

4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22 - Club de Idioma Español | Spanish Club for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders

3:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28 – STEM program for elementary-age youth