

Books Explore the School Experience
Aurora Ropp and Kris Wiley for The News-Review

As young readers settle into their fall routines, we are here to remind them that Roseburg Public Library has a lot of books with characters who also are navigating school, friends and family.

These are just three of the many titles we recommend to help youth realize they are not alone in dealing with new and sometimes difficult situations.

Picture Books

Beginning school or starting a new school year can make a person anxious about the upcoming unfamiliar experiences. "Back to School, Backpack!" written by Simon Rich and illustrated by Tom Toro is a great book to help ease that anxiety.

Backpack spends the summer relaxing with friends Hamper and Coat, and then is taken out for school. Backpack has new books and binders put in his mouth, is not treated gently and is taken to unfamiliar places. While walking down the hall, Backpack catches on another backpack and falls down. A friendship is started when the two meet someone else going through the same new experiences.

This is a funny story bringing a backpack to life, sharing its experiences from a different point of view. It helps readers to see there are other people having similar feelings and it will be OK in the end. This is a good story for young people experiencing beginning-of-school jitters.

Middle Grades

For readers who like stories about best friends sticking together through thick and thin, try "Falling Short" by Ernesto Cisneros.

Isaac and Marco are next-door neighbors who have been pals since kindergarten. As they begin middle school, both are trying to change their image: Isaac is a basketball star who vows to keep up with his schoolwork, and Marco is an academic who finally tries out for a sport.

On the surface, they are polar opposites. Look beyond that, and we realize they have a lot in common. Their dads aren't great role models, their moms carry their families, and the boys are doing their best to find their way in a new school at a pivotal time in their lives.

"Falling Short" is a sweet story that deals with alcoholism, absent fathers, family obligations and friendship in way that is accessible to all tween readers.

Young Adults

Mature teens interested in a challenging read with themes of mental health and grief may want to check out "Chaos Theory" by Nic Stone.

Shelbi has moved to Atlanta with her parents to finish her high school career. Because it's her last year, she doesn't plan to make friends, and she certainly isn't about to tell them why she transferred.

Andy is numbing the pain of his family's recent tragedy with alcohol. When Shelbi reaches out, Andy is grateful for her friendship, which develops into deeper feelings for both of them.

But their romance doesn't erase their histories, and when events escalate, Shelbi and Andy are forced to re-examine themselves and their relationship.

All of these books are available at the library. Place holds at roseburg.biblionix.com, or contact library staff at library@cityofroseburg.org or 541-492-7050 for assistance.

Youth Programming on Break

Aurora is taking a well-deserved break from public programming. Children's and teen programs will return in October.