



Children's Literature Association 2019 Conference



Call for Papers: Theme: Activism and Empathy

Deadline: October 15, 2018

46th Annual Children's Literature Association Conference
Hosted by IUPUI & IU East
June 13 - 15, 2019
Indianapolis, Indiana

[Submit your 2019 proposal today!](#)

In 1960, Ruby Bridges broke the color line in a segregated Louisiana school system. In Indiana in the 1980s, Ryan White challenged cultural stigmas against individuals living with AIDS. In 2012, Malala Yusefzai survived an assassination attempt in Pakistan to become a global voice for young women's access to education. In 2018, American high school students are active contributors to Black Lives Matter and other movements for social change, and are organizing nationwide protests against gun violence in their schools and communities. Children around the world today live at the front lines of battles created by adults. In a world divided by war, political tensions and environmental crises, ChLA invites you to reflect on the role of children and children's literature in engaging with political concerns, promoting activism and/or cultivating empathy. How can we as scholars of children's literature and culture listen to and amplify voices that have historically been silenced or ignored due to marginalization in its many forms?

We are delighted to host the 2019 conference in Indianapolis, where you can explore exhibits on the child-activists mentioned above at the world-renowned Indianapolis Children's Museum. We are especially proud to announce that our Francelia Butler Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Michelle H. Martin, a leader in promoting children's literacy, activism, and political power throughout her career as a teacher and scholar of children's literature.

We open this call for papers to an expansive array of topics covering the cultural and political impact of children's literature and culture of the past and present. We encourage interdisciplinary approaches, including the visual and performing arts. We welcome a variety of formats, including individual papers, composed panels, or roundtables. Presentations might address questions like the following:

- How are activism and empathy represented in or created by children's literature and culture?
- How are political, social, or environmental struggles portrayed in children's literature from classics to twenty-first century books?
- How does children's literature and culture raise awareness and promote advocacy for people who have been silenced or ignored? How does it encourage readers to empathize with those who have been marginalized due to their race, ethnicity, nationality, class, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, age, and/or ability?
- How is activism presented as protest, disruption, and resistance? Conversely, how does activism create community?
- What literary figures emerge from the past and present to serve as models of activism and empathy for readers today?
- How do reading and writing function as forms of activism or empathy? What is the role of empathy in cultivating discourse and communication?
- What literary genres have been successful, or less successful, in raising global awareness—picture books, graphic texts, historical fiction, realistic fiction, dystopian or speculative fiction, or other?
- What other media have allowed children to address world problems, both in fiction and in real life — music? graphic art? film? journalism? performance? social media?
- What is the role of digital culture in promoting or disrupting activism and empathy-building?
- How have children made an impact as participants or leaders in social, political, or environmental movements of the past or present?
- How are children and children's literature and culture used across the historical and political spectrum for a variety of political purposes?

Come to Indianapolis, the Crossroads of America, to consider where our ideas might meet at the crossroads of open conversation and common goals. We hope to see you in 2019.

The Francelia Butler Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Michelle H. Martin, Beverly Cleary Professor for Children and Youth Services at the University of Washington. Martin's work on social justice as a librarian, educator, and scholar is changing our perceptions of the role of children's literature in our field and in the world.

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