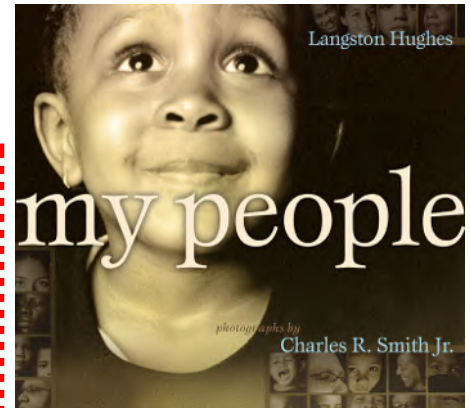


**February 2012** From the Pierce County  
Library System

## Book of the Month

My People by Langston Hughes, Photographs by Charles R. Smith Jr.

Charles R. Smith Jr.'s gorgeous photographs are the perfect accompaniment to a Langston Hughes poem about the beauty of African American people. A Coretta Scott King Award winner from 2010, this book is a celebration and deserves to be shared with all children. All ages.



### Other fun books featuring African Americans

Honey Baby Sugar Child by Alice Faye Duncan – gentle poem about a mother's love for her young child.

Yo, Jo! by Rachel Isadora – Two brothers try out the slang of the neighborhood, but still remember how best to speak to their Grandpa. Preschool and young school age.

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats – classic story of a little boy enjoying the snow. Preschool.

Please, Puppy, Please by Spike Lee – two children have adventures just trying to keep up with their energetic puppy. All ages.

Lola at the Library by Anna McQuinn – we follow a little girl as she visits to the library. Toddlers.

Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold – a quilt story of a young girl drifting over NYC on a hot summer night. Young school age.

Before John Was a Jazz Giant by Carole Boston Weatherford – simple picture book biography of John Coltrane. Preschool and young school age.

Jazz Baby by Lisa Wheeler – A family celebrate jazz music in this wonderful rhythmic romp! Preschool.

## Rhyme of the Month

I have ten little fingers and they all belong to me  
(*hold up fingers*).

I can make them do things, would you like to see?  
I can shut them tight (*make a fist*),  
Or open them wide (*open them*).

I can put them together or make them all hide  
(*interlace fingers*).

I can make them jump high  
(*put hands above head*).

I can make them go low  
(*put hands on the floor*).

I can fold them up quietly and hold them just so!  
(*fold hands together and place on lap*).

## Poem of the Month

Gather out of star-dust  
Earth-dust  
Could-dust  
Storm-dust  
And splinters of hail,  
One handful of dream-dust  
Not for sale.

Langston Hughes



Free STARS trainings are listed at [www.piercecountylibrary.org](http://www.piercecountylibrary.org)  
In the Child Care section of the Parents/Caregivers menu

## Learning Ideas for February:



*We focus a lot of our newsletters on the development of early literacy skills with an occasional math or science skill thrown in. But as early childhood professionals, we understand that in order for children to be in a state where real learning can occur, they must feel safe, free, and loved. So as an activity this month, we have a private activity for teachers.*

*Make a list of all the children in your care. Write down as many loveable and positive thoughts you can for each child: their talents, outlooks, perseverance, determination, observations, habits, etc. Over the month of February, through Valentines Day and beyond, add to each child's list. This is an exercise that works to reveal each child's positive attributes. Think of them as secret Valentines to the children.*

### Reading

Bring in non-book items that have writing on them: cereal boxes, cans of food, phone books, newspapers, magazines, manuals, cookbooks, calendars, junk mail etc. Engage the children in a discussion about 'reading'. Spend some time reading the words on the different objects. Talk together about what the words tell us about that object. See if the children have ideas of other objects that use writing to convey a message.

### Playing

Play is not a waste of time! You might say that play has sort of been kidnapped by toy companies. Not that toy companies don't make some excellent play objects, but our society in general has practically lost sight of the importance and purpose of play. Yes, play is really fun. And healthy children all over the world engage in it whenever possible. But contained in play are some essential components of learning how to be human.

When children play, they use many cognitive skills—thinking about what they are doing, what they need, where they want the play to go, what items in the environment would work in their play etc. (And here—the less elaborate the tool or toy, the better!) Children also use gross motor skills and small motor skills when they play. But children also use many social skills when they play. When they engage in play with other children, they must compromise to adapt to the other children's wishes. There is give and take, listening, planning, problem solving, and cooperation. Indeed, these extremely important skills are **best** developed during free unstructured, child initiated play.

And since research is now indicating that these social skills are not only the best predictors of success in school, but also the best predictors of success in life, we say **PLAY ON!**

*Have Fun!*

If you have questions about this newsletter or if you would like to register for STARS trainings, call 253-548-3424 or email [susana@piercecountylibrary.org](mailto:susana@piercecountylibrary.org) for details.