



SPRUCE RUN'S 2009 LIBRARY CAMPAIGN BOOKS

***Two Homes* by Claire Masurel**

Young Alex introduces himself and his parents, then announces that he has two homes: sometimes he lives with Daddy (in a suburban house) and sometimes with Mommy (in a city apartment). Each spread includes pictures that show the boy engaged in similar activities at both locales. The ending affirms that his parents love Alex, no matter where he is and no matter where they are. Parents looking for a book about separation or divorce will find few offerings as positive, matter-of-fact, or child-centered as this one.

-Adapted from www.amazon.com

***What Jamie Saw* by Carolyn Coman**

With wrenching simplicity and mesmerizing imagery, Coman articulates nine-year-old Jamie's baffled, stream-of-consciousness observations of a violent act that robs him of his security, but not his innocence. Awakened in the middle of the night by some primal sense of alarm, the sleep-disoriented boy watches his stepfather reach into his baby sister's crib and throw her across the room. And then he watches his mother step into the bedroom doorway and catch her flying baby. Patty deposits her pajama-clad children into the safety of her rusty old Buick, collects the bare necessities, and leaves. With the help of her friend Earl, Jamie's teacher, and even her mother-in-law, Patty finds her way back to work and into a support group for battered wives. In a trailer out in the middle of nowhere, she and Jamie tough it out, slowly reinventing their lives. Revealed through the boy's clear, unprejudiced eye, characters, though rough and uneducated, are not stereotyped. It is Jamie who is most delicately and lovingly wrought. His love of magic tricks, illusion, and sleight of hand sustains him through the bad times. Shocking in its simple narration and child's-eye view, *What Jamie Saw* is a bittersweet miracle in understated language and forthright hopefulness. This book is set in New Hampshire. -Adapted from www.amazon.com

***Praying at the Sweetwater Motel* by April Young Fritz**

In a story that rings emotionally true, 12-year-old Sarah Jane, her younger sister, and her mother flee Georgia to escape Sarah Jane's abusive father. Through a first-person narrative and short prayers to God, Sarah Jane vividly describes the trip and her feelings of being torn between love and fear of her father, and between the safety of escape and fear of the unknown. The three travelers end up in a small Ohio town, at the Sweetwater Motel, where the friendly owner helps them and Sarah Jane face the challenge of creating a new life. The relationship between Sarah Jane and her mother is strong and loving but not without strain, and Sarah Jane eventually reacts to her problems with an understandable fantasy of reuniting her family. This engaging novel successfully addresses a problem all too many children face.

-Adapted from www.amazon.com

***The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* Roddy Doyle**

Roddy Doyle takes an unflinching look at the life of Paula Spencer as she struggles to regain her dignity after marriage to an abusive husband and a worsening drinking problem. Capturing both her vulnerability and her strength, Doyle gives Paula a voice that is real and unforgettable.

-Adapted from www.amazon.com

***Surviving Domestic Violence: Voices of Women Who Broke Free* by Elaine Weiss**

This book tells the stories of twelve women. Each was a victim of domestic violence, escaped from her abuser, reclaimed her dignity, reconstructed her life, and rediscovered peace. Domestic violence doesn't just happen "out there" somewhere. It happens in our town, in our neighborhood, on our street. It happens to women we see at work, the supermarket, the movie theater, the ballet and the PTA board meeting. Every woman who has left an abusive man – every woman who has yet to leave – will find encouragement and hope in the voices of these women who broke free. -Adapted from www.amazon.com