

Dear Librarians,

As you decide which books will serve your readers, thank you for considering *Miracle Children*. Our book tells the story of Louisiana students who sacrificed their safety and integrity, at the hands of a ruthless teacher, to escape their positions in America's racial and social hierarchy. The children hoped that their mistreatment would contribute to the chronicle of education in America, helping others to understand how powerful institutions have used exceptional Black people to uphold, fight against, and even mask the persistent belief that skin color determines a person's worthiness.

When we started writing five years ago, we could not have known that the country would soon face urgent questions about what it means to be a citizen, to fight for opportunity and to redefine the very idea of America. The library plays an essential role in this debate. It's the rare institution that encourages all community members to feed their curiosity, their intellect and their imagination. The country's ability to live up to its founding ideals has often fallen short—as we explore in our pages—but its efforts at times exceeded all hopes, thanks largely to the important ideas and dreams found in books. We hope to contribute to that inquiry.

Growing up, we both understood that libraries provided sanctuary and opportunity. We spent countless hours at the Springfield Public Library in Vermont and the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore. Today, Erica's children have also grown up at the library, attending children's story hours and learning to love books. As an adult, Katie still spends weekends working and reading at libraries because it is where she feels at peace.

Miracle Children wouldn't exist without the support and care that we received from the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, ME and the Cleveland Park branch of the D.C. Public Library. Their resources helped us understand the threads that bind education to justice, and the ways that race and class broke those bonds. Their quiet sanctuaries gave us space to write and edit large portions of the draft. And we were always encouraged by the murmured sounds of people of all ages inhabiting new worlds and exploring fresh ideas – thanks to the careful curation of their librarians.

We would be honored to be among the authors who enrich your communities.

With gratitude,

Katie Benner and Erica Green

