

# LEARNING CURVE



FORSYTH COUNTY PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

**WINTER READING FUN ISSUE!**

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## Letter from the Director

Welcome to the first edition of Learning Curve, the educator's guide to unlocking all services from Forsyth County Public Library. Learning Curve introduces you to resources for literacy and learning in preschool, elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.

You might already know that students enrolled in Forsyth County Schools can use their FCS student ID as a free, virtual library card at FCPL. Did you know that all employees of any public or private educational institution in Forsyth County are also eligible for a free Forsyth County Public Library card?

If you need a library card, learn more and [apply online at forsythpl.org](https://forsythpl.org).

Winter break is coming up fast and we know how important it is to encourage students to keep reading. Be sure to check out our story on Winter Reading Fun so you can talk with your classes about earning points and winning prizes for reading!

On behalf of all the staff at FCPL, I'd like to thank you for the work you're doing to encourage literacy and learning. We love having your students come into the library or join an online program and mention that their teacher encouraged them to visit or participate.

We're here for you and your students. If you have questions about book recommendations, research databases, accessing WiFi, or joining programs offered by the library, please call 770-781-9840 or [email a librarian](mailto:librarian@forsythpl.org).

Wishing you a safe and healthy holiday season,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Lyle". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Anna Lyle, Director  
Forsyth County Public Library**



# WINTER 2021



## Take a break for Winter Reading Fun

### Register online

Between December 23, 2020 and January 5, 2021, readers can register for Winter Reading Fun at [forsythpl.beanstack.org](https://forsythpl.beanstack.org).

### Track reading time

Your students can track the time they spend reading during winter break at [forsythpl.beanstack.org](https://forsythpl.beanstack.org). Participants who log at least three hours of reading will earn a prize, as well as an entry in grand prize raffle drawings!

### Claim a prize

Participants who earn a prize for logging three hours or more of reading time, or those who win a grand prize raffle drawing, may pick up their prize inside a library branch or by using Contact-Free Curbside Pickup.

### Need help finding a book?

If your students need help finding something to read during winter break, get help at the library! Stop by the Ask Us desk inside any FCPL branch, check out book lists for *kids* and *teens*, or use *NovelList K-8* or *NovelList Plus* to get new book recommendations based on books you like, or *request personalized reading suggestions online*.



**Beanstack**



## Teen Writer's Club

Students who love to write – whether they write poetry, comics, nonfiction, or novels – are invited to join FCPL's online writing club for teens. Teen Writer's Club participants can share their work and receive constructive feedback, while also joining in conversation about how to develop ideas, how to craft characters, and how to write dialogue.

Remind your students with a passion for writing that they can connect with like-minded teens at this month's session of the Teen Writer's Club. The group will meet on Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m. using FCPL's GoToMeeting platform. *Advance registration is required and space is limited.*

## Encourage Students to Write Engaging CommonApp Admissions Essays

Students who intend to use The Common Application, or *CommonApp*, to apply to colleges and universities should know that the *admissions essay topics* from 2019-2020 will carry over to the 2020-2021 admissions cycle.

*The Princeton Review* says that essays are "well-known to be a 'tip factor' in admissions decisions and scholarship reviews." So, what advice can counselors and teachers share with students to help them make their applications stand out?

### Take time for brainstorming

Encourage students to sit with the list of essay topics and try brainstorming ways to answer each question. Some students might even find it helpful to ask others for input. For example, students might ask a parent, mentor, or friend about a time that they witnessed the student struggle to overcome a challenge or solve a problem. Sometimes, a problem or situation that seemed small or insignificant to the student could have actually had a big

impact on others. Gaining that additional perspective can spark memories of how certain situations felt for the student and what they learned from the experience that make it easier to craft a unique essay.

### Make it personal

*Writing an admissions essay isn't like writing an academic essay.* Remind students that this essay is an opportunity to tell a story that only they know. Encourage students to choose a topic that is relevant to their life so far, their dreams, or something they hope to achieve and then tell that story from their own perspective and in their own voice.

### Write first, edit later

When students begin writing, encourage them to organize their thoughts in an outline, then capture every detail they can recall in the first draft of the essay. Then, let it sit for a few days before beginning the editing process. That extra thinking time can help students decide what is truly important and unique in their essay

and focus their efforts on polishing those sections first.

### Ask for help with proofreading

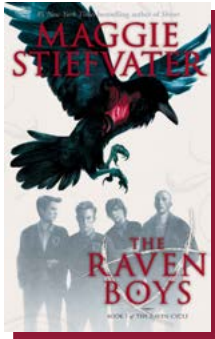
After a few rounds of editing, students may find it helpful to ask a counselor, teacher, friend, or writing partner to proofread their essay. Proofreaders should check that the essay flows like a personal narrative and uses proper grammar and syntax.

When it comes to writing college admissions essays, no two experiences are the same. If your students need more guidance, encourage them to read free how-to articles from *Kahn Academy* and the *Best Colleges* section of *U.S. News & World Report*.



# #WeKnowBooks

Looking for a really wonderful book to recommend to your students? Check out these recommendations from FCPL's Youth Services team:



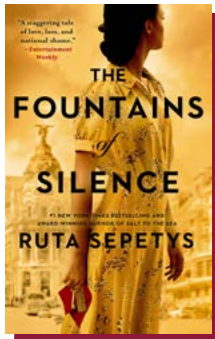
**The Raven Boys**  
by Maggie Stiefvater  
Recommended by Cleo Joyce

Though she is from a family of clairvoyants, Blue Sargent's only gift seems to be that she makes other people's talents stronger, and when she meets Gansey, one of the Raven Boys from the expensive Aglionby Academy, she discovers that he has talents of his own--and that together their talents are a dangerous mix.



**The Edge (Peak #2)**  
by Roland Smith  
Recommended by Steph Gardner

Fifteen-year-old Peak Marcello is invited to participate in an International Peace Ascent in the Hindu Kush Mountains with a team made up of under-eighteen-year-old climbers from around the world. But the group is attacked, and most of the climbers are either killed or kidnapped. Peak finds himself caught up in a struggle to survive, shadowed by the Shen, a mysterious snow leopard.



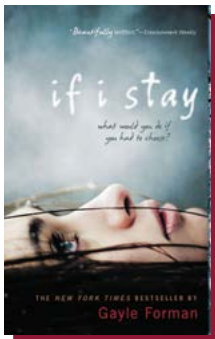
**The Fountains of Silence**  
by Rita Sepetys  
Recommended by LeAnne Craig

At the Castellana Hilton in 1957 Madrid, eighteen-year-old Daniel Matheson connects with Ana Moreno through photography and fate as Daniel discovers the incredibly dark side of the city under Generalissimo Franco's rule.



**Again, but Better**  
by Christine Riccio  
Recommended by Stephani Lindsey

Shane has been doing college all wrong: pre-med, stellar grades, happy parents -- sounds ideal, but Shane's made zero friends and goes home every weekend. As for romance...what's that? Her life has been dorm, dining hall, class, repeat. Time's a ticking, and she needs a change -- there's nothing like moving to a new country to really mix things up.



**If I Stay**  
by Gale Forman  
Recommended by Page James

While in a coma following an automobile accident that killed her parents and younger brother, seventeen-year-old Mia, a gifted cellist, weighs whether to live with her grief or join her family in death.

Follow [@forsythpubliclibrary on Instagram](#) for more teen reading suggestions to share with your students.



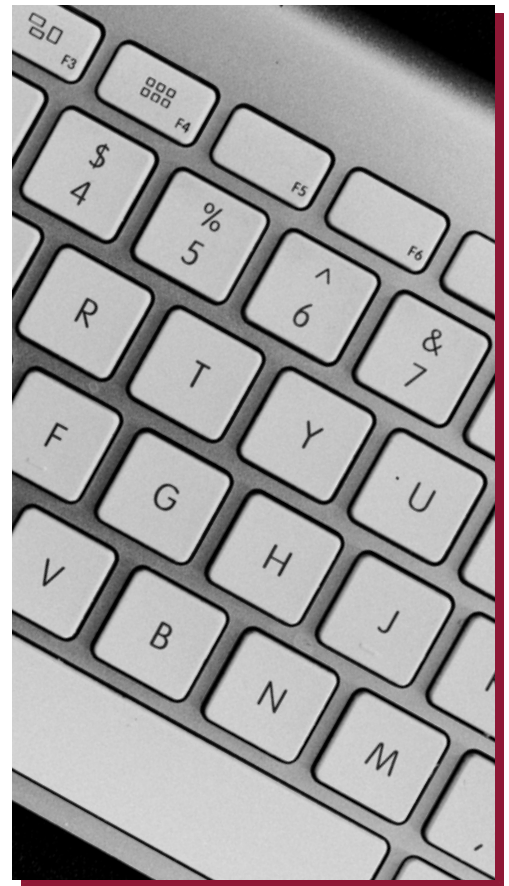
## Submit a Paper for Free Review on Tutor.com

If your students have ever had a question about their math or science homework, they might already know that free, online tutoring is available through the library. But, do they know they can drop off essays, research papers, and other writing assignments for free review by a professional tutor?

### Get feedback about writing assignments online

Students can visit the library's website to [access Tutor.com](#) with their Forsyth

County Public Library card account or with their **Forsyth County Schools student ID and PIN**. Then, click the Submit a Paper link and follow the prompts to create a user account on Tutor.com (this is required for using drop-off services and for saving tutoring sessions or test prep progress) or log in to an existing account. Finally, upload the document. Students can expect a tutor to review and provide feedback regarding the structure, grammar, style, and citations in the assignment within 24 hours.



## It's All Greek To Me

Shared reading experiences, such as reading the same book with your class, create common bonds in communities and provide context for many English phrases that don't translate well to other languages.

Melodie Jett, a veteran teacher from Cedar City, Utah, offers techniques for leading shared reading experiences with your students to help them view reading and discussion as more than just another assignment at [PerspectivesOnReading.com](http://PerspectivesOnReading.com). Here are the highlights:

### Slang from Greek Mythology

Jett encourages educators to share how Greek myths and fables contributed to English slang phrases we still use today. "Do you have an Achilles' heel? Are you an Adonis? Or a Narcissus? Are you trying to solve a Gordian Knot? Did you date a gal with the face of a Gorgon? Did you spill the beans? Eat sour grapes? Perform a Herculean task? Are you between a rock and a hard place?" Jett asks.

Talk about these phrases with your students as they appear in your reading. Explore how reading as a group contributes to "inside jokes" or a shared under-

standing of a certain phrase. This topic might also make for an interesting segue into culture and how language evolves as a representation of the shared experiences in a society.

### Shakespeare and Seuss Made It All Up

The English language was quite a bit *smaller during Elizabethan times*, perhaps containing only 50,000 to 60,000 words. Shakespeare often needed to make up a new word for his characters to convey their feelings, motivations, and intent to the audience. Some of Jett's favorite Shakespearean words are, "arch-villain, auspicious, batty, beachy, bedroom, cold-hearted, dauntless, hostile, hurly, leapfrog, lament, rascally, revolting, slug-a-bed, yelping and zany."

More modern writers also found the English language lacking and made up words to more accurately convey meaning in their work. For example, Theodore Seuss Geisel gave us the term "nerd," Lewis Carroll gave us "chortle," and a bevy of other writers gave us words like robot, namby-pamby, catch 22, blatant, utopia, pandemonium, yahoo and men-

tor. Without shared reading experiences, those terms might not have been adopted into the English lexicon.

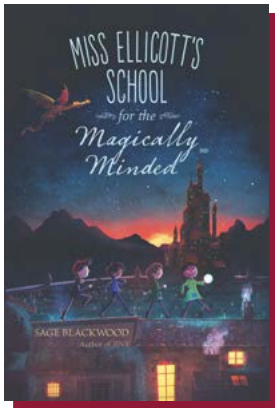
### The Bottom Line

Whether you're reading mythological or Shakespearean texts with your students, Jett says introducing "students to classic literature and its common phrases and idioms will make them more likely to find the value in reading. Shared vocabulary and inside jokes bring joy into the classroom, and joyful readers are more likely to be lifelong readers – lifelong readers that pass that love and skill on to the next generation."



## #WeKnowBooks

Amy Billings from the Sharon Forks Library really gets middle school readers. If your students need a book suggestion, try one of these.

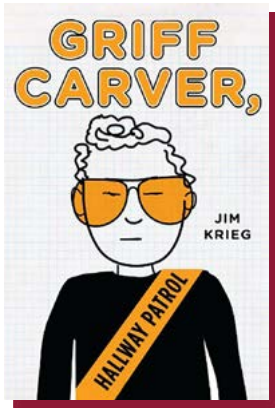


For students who want to escape reality:

*Miss Ellicott's School for the Magically Minded*  
by Sage Blackwood

For students who root for the underdog:

*The First Rule of Punk*  
by Celia C. Perez

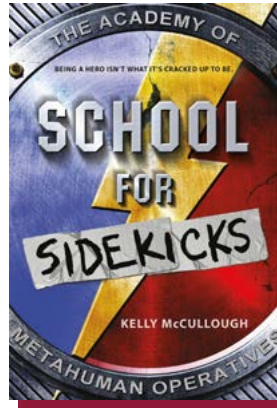


For students who want to keep it real:

*Griff Carver, Hall Monitor*  
by Jim Krieg

For students who love Marvel superheroes:

*School for Sidekicks*  
by Kelly McCullough



Follow [@forsythpubliclibrary on Instagram](#) for more middle grade reading suggestions to share with your students.

## Spend #WritingWednesday with author Chris Negron

Students who love to tell stories are invited to a free online workshop with Chris Negron, author of *Dan Unmasked*, a middle grades novel published last summer by HarperCollins.

Chris Negron will lead *That's My Point (of View)! writing workshop* for kids and teens via FCPL's GoToWebinar platform on Wednesday, December 30 at 11:00 a.m. and *advance registration* is required to participate.

He will explain how writers choose between telling a story in first person ("I went to the store") or third person ("He went to the store") and help students get started on a story of their own.



## Help! My student needs a tutor!

Do your students know that they can access free, online tutoring with their Forsyth County Public Library card? Simply visit the library's website to [access Tutor.com](#) with your Forsyth County Public Library card account or your *Forsyth County Schools student ID and PIN*, and get help.

## Work with a Free Tutor

Live, one-to-one tutoring sessions are available online each day from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Tutors can help with math, writing, science, and social studies topics.

## Drop-off a Math Question or Essay

If your students get stuck on a specific math problem, encourage them to use the Drop Off a Math Question service. Math tutors will review submissions within 24 hours and provide step-by-step explanations to help students solve the problem. Students who need help with writing assignments can use the Submit a Paper for Review service and writing tutors will provide feedback regarding structure, grammar, style, and citations.

## Study and Practice

Students who need help outside of live, online tutoring hours, as well as those who want extra practice on a particular topic, can use the Tutor.com Skills Center. Choose from dozens of topic areas in writing, math, science, and social studies, then practice those skills by watching videos, using flashcards, playing games, or taking practice tests.



## Winter Forecast: It's Pretty STEAM-y

The weather outside might be frightful, but we've got a delightful list of science, technology, engineering, art, and math experiments to fill your classroom with STEAM! Whether your students are exploring the science of ice or the physics of flight, these five activities highlight the spirit of the season:

### Snowflake Salt Painting

Explore how salt absorbs moisture as your students create a glittering piece of snowflake art. Then, extend the lesson and try the same project with sugar to compare the results. Full details on this project are available from [LittleBinsForLittleHands.com](http://LittleBinsForLittleHands.com).

### Flying Reindeer Races

Your students can create their own balloon-powered reindeer using the instructions from [Team-Cartwright.com](http://Team-Cartwright.com). Then, set up a race course by running a few "lanes" of string across the classroom. Inflate the balloons and see which reindeer can fly the fastest, then you can discuss Newton's Third Law of Motion and explore how the air rushing out of the balloon propels the racing reindeer.

### Grow a Grinch Heart

Have your students use a red permanent marker to draw a small heart on an uninflated green balloon. Follow the instructions at [CreativeFamilyFun.net](http://CreativeFamilyFun.net) to explore how baking soda and vinegar combine to create the carbon dioxide that inflates the balloon and "grows" the Grinch's heart.

### Colder or Hotter?

Explore thermal expansion and contraction by making your own thermometer. [ScientificAmerican.com](http://ScientificAmerican.com) offers a complete set of instructions, a detailed supply list, questions regarding student observations, and ways older students can extend the project by calibrating their DIY thermometers to a store-bought thermometer.



Jingles, the Post Road Library Elf on the Shelf is back! Explore holiday games and stories in [Jingles' Holiday Party Room](#) through December 24.

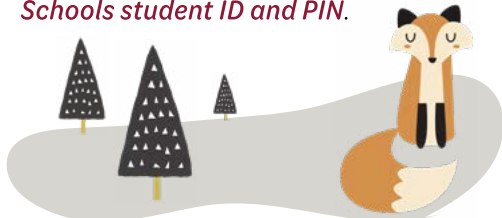




## What is life like for animals at the North Pole?

It's cool to be an arctic fox! Their cat-sized bodies are adapted for survival in the Arctic winter from October to February when the sun never fully rises and the temperature is always below freezing.

How do they do it? Learn how the arctic fox's furry feet help them hunt and how their fluffy tail acts like a warm blanket on *National Geographic Kids*. Invite your students to log in to this free eResource with their Forsyth County Public Library card account or their *Forsyth County Schools student ID and PIN*.



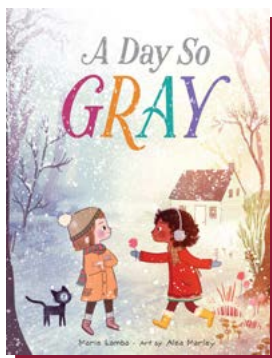
## Welcome back, Jingles!

We wrote a letter to Santa Claus and he replied to say that Jingles, the Post Road Library Elf on the Shelf, will return to visit the library! We're doing our best to keep him safe and healthy this year, so you can visit Jingles in his own virtual holiday party room December 1 – 24.

Jingles' virtual holiday party room offers a photo album of some of his most hilarious pranks, as well as his favorite stories, games, puzzles. Jingles will update his virtual holiday party room each week, so be sure *to visit him often* to see what new mischief he has in store for us!

## #WeKnowBooks

Check out these frosty picture books recommended by children's librarians to welcome winter:



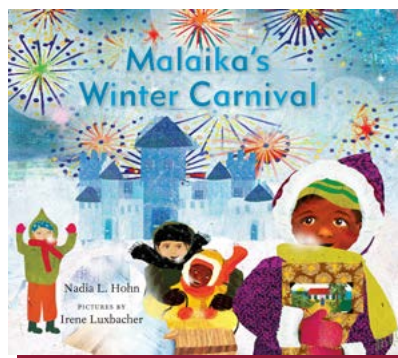
*A Day So Gray*  
by Marie Lamba



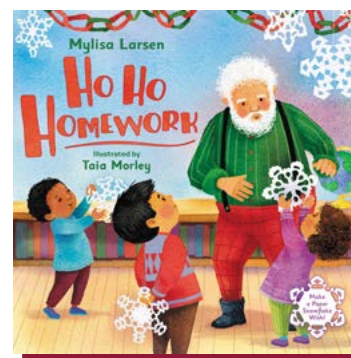
*The Bear Report*  
by Thyra Heder



*The Luckiest Snowball*  
by Elliot Kreloff



*Malaika's Winter Carnival*  
by Nadia L. Hohn



*Ho Ho Homework*  
by Mylisa Larsen

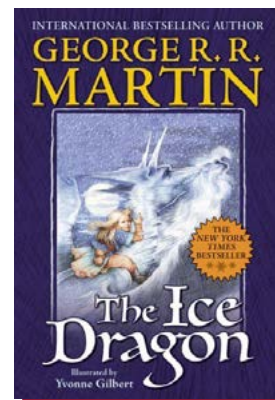
These winter-themed chapter books are most popular with readers in grades 3 to 5:



*Winter of the Ice Wizard (Merlin Missions #4)*  
by Mary Pope Osborne



*Winter Turning (Wings of Fire #7)*  
by Tui T. Sutherland



*The Ice Dragon*  
by George R.R. Martin

Follow [@forsythpubliclibrary](https://www.instagram.com/forsythpubliclibrary) on Instagram for more Winter Reading Fun suggestions!



stuffed animals, or other small props and invite small groups of children to act out a story of their own.

## Talking

Vocal play offers a fun way for toddlers and preschoolers to practice coordinating the lips, teeth, and tongue to make specific sounds. Kelly Hollis, Youth Specialist at the Hampton Park Library, recommends *engaging children in vocal play* by making animal sounds.

While Kelly recommends farm animal sounds as a starting point for vocal play, you might set up an area of your own Santa's Workshop where children can make noises and act like animals from cold climates, such as reindeer, polar bears, wolves, and penguins.

## Writing

Set up a writing station as part of your Santa's Workshop activities and encourage your students to create a greeting card for a friend or family member. You can use a sample holiday or greeting card to explain how the card should have a front and a back, just like a book, and that the main message should go inside the card so it can be read left-to-right and top-to-bottom.

Sarah Punkoney, a former public school teacher who now operates a home-based preschool, says that *simple supplies work best* in allowing children to create their own messages for their loved ones. Your writing station should include blank or simply printed greeting cards or folded cardstock and crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Then, offer a list of common words or phrases that your students might like to try writing on their own and let them decide what message they want to create.

## Reading

Wrap up a day of exploration in Santa's Workshop with a great book! Preschoolers love tales with familiar characters, such as *If You Take a Mouse to the Movies* and *Santa Bruce*, but Forsyth County Public Library offers book lists for preschoolers on a variety of topics, including *winter*, *Hanukkah*, and *Christmas*.

## Santa's Workshop: Make Your Own Fun

Preschool curriculum doesn't have to be complicated. Focusing on five simple early literacy practices – singing, playing, talking, writing, and reading – helps students develop the language skills they need for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Here are a few ideas for creating your own version of Santa's Workshop with five simple centers where young children can learn through exploration:

### Singing

Music helps children develop literacy skills because rhythm accentuates individual sounds and syllables. In some songs, the words are spoken more slowly than in regular speech and that also gives young children a chance to practice forming the words.

Set up a music station with a few different instruments, such as bells, rhythm sticks, or drums. Then, lead children in singing seasonal songs as they tap out the rhythm or ring bells. Karen Cox, a veteran educator in Georgia's Pre-K program and founder of PreKinders.com, offers links to *several bell-ringing songs* for use at home or in the classroom.

### Playing

Playing gives young children a chance to interact cooperatively with others. Games like *"Santa Says"* help preschoolers practice listening and direction following, as well as gross motor skills, says Lauren Drobnjak, pediatric physical therapist and co-author of The Inspired Treehouse blog. Another way to incorporate play into your Santa's Workshop is to set up a puppet theatre with holiday-themed puppets,

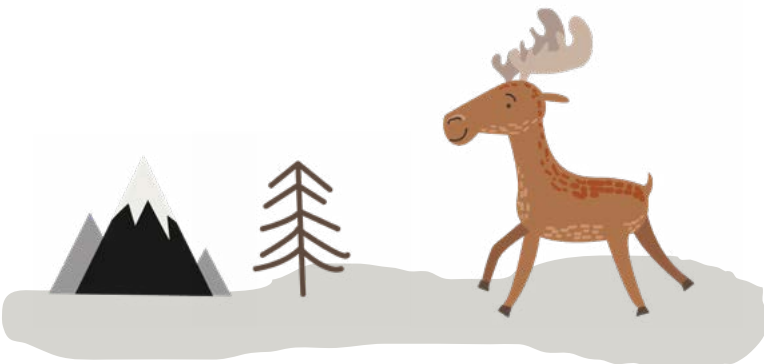




## Should My Students Read 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten?

Yes! Each year, “more than 1 in 3 children enter kindergarten without the language skills they need to learn to read,” according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. As a caregiver, educator, or parent, you can prepare preschoolers for kindergarten by joining the library’s 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program.

Register online at [forsythpl.beanstack.org](http://forsythpl.beanstack.org), then track your reading and earn prizes for reading 1,000 books. Need help? Get tips on meeting your big reading goals and find book recommendations on the library’s [1,000 Books Before Kindergarten blog](#).



## #WeKnowBooks

Check out these recommendations for preschoolers and follow [@forsythpubliclibrary on Instagram](#) for more reading suggestions.



*This is Christmas*  
by Tom Booth  
Recommended by  
Joan Goforth,  
Outreach Specialist



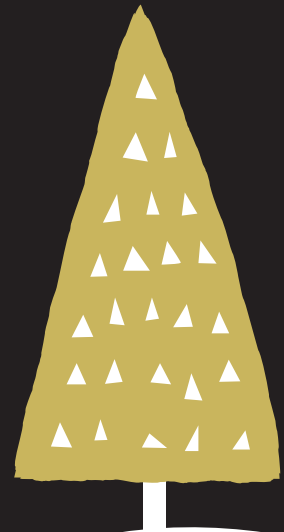
*Pete the Cat Saves Christmas*  
by Eric Litwin,  
Recommended by  
Andrea DelValle,  
Circulation Supervisor



*Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas*  
by Pamela Ehrenberg  
Recommended by  
Janice Anderson,  
Materials Selector



Watch *Puppet Time!* on YouTube  
and see Alien Tomato



# Seasons Readings!

## WINTER READING FUN



**Earn Points & Win Prizes**

**Register, read, and win during Winter Reading Fun  
happening online December 23, 2020 - January 5, 2021.**

**Download the Beanstack app for your Apple or Android device and you can  
easily track minutes read and books completed.**

**Learn more at [forsythpl.beanstack.com](https://forsythpl.beanstack.com).**



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