**8th Grade**

**Summer 2019 Reading Program**

**Exploring Human Potential**

**Concept:** In 8th grade, we will be focusing on our transformation from middle school students into high school students. These summer reading books have been selected to inspire students by allowing them to experience stories that explore human achievement. Students will be incorporating themes and ideas from their summer reading into their first quarter work in 8th grade English.

**Assignment:** The assignment has two parts:

1. All students are expected to read **No Summit Out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits** by Jordan Romero (with Linda LeBlanc).
2. Additionally, all students will read one (or more) of the books from the following list:

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| The Benefits of Being an Octopus  Braden, Ann | The Forbidden Schoolhouse: The True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and Her Students  Jurmain, Suzanne |
| Ghost  Reynolds, Jason | The Gospel According to Larry  Tashijian, Janet |
| The Last Best Days of Summer  Hobbs, Valerie | Okay for Now  Schmidt, Gary |
| Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team that Changed a Town  St. John, Warren | Ruth Bader Ginsburg: U.S. Supreme Court Justice  McCaffrey, Paul |
| The Seventh Most Important Thing  Pearsall, Shelley | Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different – A Biography  Blumenthal, Karen |

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**Summer 2019 Summer Reading Program**

**Exploring Human Potential**

**The Benefits of Being an Octopus**

**Braden, Ann**

Seventh-grader Zoey doesn’t think she’s as good as other kids at school who have nice things. She also doesn’t have the inclination to do homework because she’s too busy taking care of her siblings—Bryce (four), Aurora (three), and baby Hector—all offspring of different fathers. They and their mother live in a trailer with Mom’s fussy, bully of a boyfriend, Lenny, and his cantankerous father. When Zoey’s social-studies teacher makes her join the school debate club, she begins to see situations with fresh eyes and from both sides—an ability she courageously applies to the gun debate after a school lockdown occurs. She also comes to understand that instead of succumbing to Lenny’s intimidation, Zoey’s mother has choices, including moving out and getting a protection order. This engrossing debut novel, narrated by the resourceful Zoey, takes the reader on her journey from the dire side of the class divide to a life of cautious hope as she learns the world is big enough for choices, actions, and results.

**The Forbidden Schoolhouse: The True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and Her Students**

**Jurmain, Suzanne**

 Chronicles the life and struggles of Prudence Crandall who, in the 1830s closed her all-white boarding school for girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, and began admitting African-American students; and describes the intense opposition from the townspeople.

**Ghost**

**Reynolds, Jason**

Castle “Ghost” Cranshaw has been running for three years, ever since the night his father shot a gun at him and his mother. When he gets recruited by a local track coach for a championship team, they strike a deal: if Ghost can stop getting into fights at school, he can run for the Defenders, but one altercation and he’s gone. Despite Ghost’s best intentions, everyone always has something to say about his raggedy shoes, homemade haircut, ratty clothes, or his neighborhood, and he doesn’t last 24 hours without a brawl. Will Coach and his mom give him another chance to be part of something bigger than himself, or is he simply destined to explode? With this fantastic middle-grade novel, the ferociously talented Reynolds perfectly captures both the pain and earnest longing of a young boy. The first in the four-book Track series, this is raw and lyrical, and as funny as it is heartbreaking. It tackles issues such as theft, bullying, and domestic violence with candor and bravery, while opening a door for empathy and discussion. An absolute must-read for anyone who has ever wondered how fast you must be to run away from yourself.

**The Gospel According to Larry**

**Tashijian, Janet**

Seventeen-year-old Josh wants to make a difference in the world, and he chooses to do so anonymously through a Web site entitled www.thegospelaccordingtolarry.com. Little does Josh know that his brief but passionate sermons about the dangers of consumerism and other big issues will find thousands of teen and adult advocates. Nor does he expect that his best friend, Beth, will be chief among the fans that try their best to discover Larry's true identity. When Josh is finally found out, he discovers himself hopelessly entangled in a web of his own making. He contemplates "pseudocide", his word for a method of starting over as someone completely new. Tashjian has created a likable character that, with the best of intentions, imprisons himself in his own creation. Young adults will identify with Josh's need to comment on such issues as tolerance and consumerism without the risk of self-revelation. The danger of his plan and the resulting suspense will keep readers interested to the very end.

**The Last Best Days of Summer**

**Hobbs, Valerie**

Lucy and her best friend Megan plan to follow Seventeen magazine’s tips on how to join the popular crowd when they start middle school at the end of summer. Lucy has spent the last few months as a caregiver for Eddie, a classmate with special needs. What if Eddie tries to hang out with her at school? Will it hurt her chances with the “in” group?

During summer vacation, Lucy is happy to leave Eddie and spend some time with her beloved Grams at the lake, but Grams requires supervision too: she is becoming forgetful. Then Eddie turns up at Grams after a long, difficult bus ride to bring Lucy a token of friendship. In the end, kindhearted Lucy refuses to reject Eddie in favor of the superficial, glamorous crowd.

**No Summit Out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits**

**Romero, Jordan**

On May 22, 2010, at the age of 13, American teenager Jordan Romero became the youngest person to climb to the summit of Mount Everest. At 15, he became the youngest person to reach the summits of the tallest mountains on each of the seven continents.

**Okay for Now**

**Schmidt, Gary**

As a fourteen-year-old who just moved to a new town, with no friends and a louse for an older brother, Doug Swieteck has all the stats stacked against him. So begins a coming-of-age masterwork full of equal parts comedy and tragedy from Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt. As Doug struggles to be more than the "skinny thug" that his teachers and the police think him to be, he finds an unlikely ally in Lil Spicer--a fiery young lady who "smelled like daisies would smell if they were growing in a big field under a clearing sky after a rain." In Lil, Doug finds the strength to endure an abusive father, the suspicions of a whole town, and the return of his oldest brother, forever scarred, from Vietnam. Together, they find a safe haven in the local library, inspiration in learning about the plates of John James Audubon's birds, and a hilarious adventure on a Broadway stage. In this stunning novel, Schmidt expertly weaves multiple themes of loss and recovery in a story teeming with distinctive, unusual characters and invaluable lessons about love, creativity, and survival.

**Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team that Changed a Town**

**St. John Warren**

Exciting youth soccer action blends with politics in this story of refugee kids from across the world, including Kosovo, Mozambique, Liberia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Sudan, who find a home in the small town of Clarkston, Georgia. There, a tough volunteer coach, Luma Mufleh from Jordan, organizes three youth soccer teams that take on other local players and sometimes win. The account is filled with fast kicks, scrimmages, dribbles, crosses, corners, shots, and misses on the field that will grab kids, as will the harrowing stories of what the families fled from and their continuing struggle. Unlike the home teams, with their benches of supporters, the refugee teams have parents who are too busy holding multiple jobs to attend games.

**Ruth Bader Ginsburg: U.S. Supreme Court Justice**

**McCaffrey, Paul**

Ruth Bader Ginsburg overcame discrimination and tragedy to become the second female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Raised in a working-class family in Brooklyn, New York, she graduated with a law degree from Columbia University. Despite her accomplishments, she found many doors of opportunity closed to her as a Jewish woman. Undaunted, she became one of the nation's first female law professors. Later, as head of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project, Ginsburg argued and won numerous cases before the Supreme Court.

Appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 1980, Ginsburg served there for 13 years before President Bill Clinton nominated her to the nation's highest court in 1993. During her years on the Supreme Court, Ginsburg has cemented her legacy as one of the most influential figures in American legal history. In Ruth Bader Ginsburg: U.S. Supreme Court Justice, learn how this trailblazing woman overcame obstacles to secure her position on the highest court in the United States.

**The Seventh Most Important Thing**

**Pearsall, Shelley**

When Arthur T. Owens hurls a brick at the local trash picker, James Hampton, whom he spies wearing his recently deceased father’s hat, he receives a most unusual sentence: 120 hours of community service with the Junk Man himself. Toting Hampton’s list of the seven most important things, Arthur reluctantly scavenges, unsure of the purpose of wood, lightbulbs, coffee cans, foil, mirrors, glass bottles, and cardboard, until he discovers what James does with them. In the garage is the Junk Man’s shiny, throne like masterpiece, which he calls The Throne of the Third Heaven. Readers will be moved by Arthur’s growth, as he forms an attachment to the man to whom he initially gave so little thought, as well as by his dedication to saving the folk artist’s prized work after his death.

**Steve Jobs – The Man Who Thought Different: A Biography**

**Blumenthal, Karen**

A riveting biography of the groundbreaking innovator who was a giant in the worlds of computing, music, filmmaking, design, smart phones and more. A finalist for the YALSA Excellence in Non-fiction Award.