



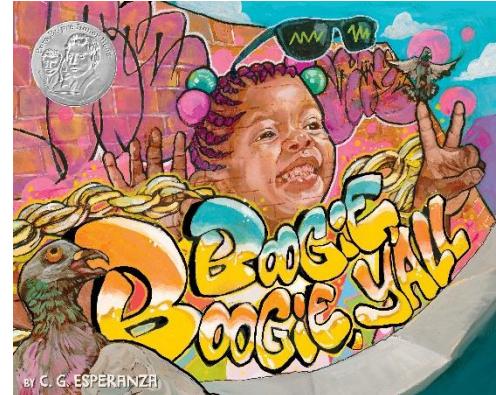
Pura Belpré Youth Illustrator Honor Acceptance Speech



C. G. Esperanza received a 2022 (Pura) Belpré Youth Illustrator Honor for *Boogie Boogie, Y'all* (Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers). He delivered his acceptance remarks at the Pura Belpré Award Celebración held Sunday, June 26, 2022, during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

First of all, I'd like to thank my incredible agent, Marietta Zacker. My amazing editor Mabel Hsu, my wonderful designer Rachel Zegar, my publicist Aubrey Churchward, and everyone at Katherine Tegen Books and HarperCollins!

Pura Belpré's legacy has undoubtedly inspired many Latinos and people of color in the Bronx to bring books to spaces and streets that need them the most. In many ways, these book people remind me a lot of graffiti artists actually.



A graffiti artist spray paints giant psychedelic letters on a wall that everyone can see no matter who they are, similar to how Saraciea Fennell of The Bronx Is Reading organization adorns books in the middle of Fordham Plaza for the whole block to see.

A graffiti artist is mobile and will hit as many spots in the city as possible, so that everyone can enjoy their work. This is similar to Latanya DeVaughn and her mobile bookstore, Bronx Bound Books, which travels the streets of the Bronx to bring literature to the people.

A graffiti artist brings their art directly to the spaces that need color and inspiration the most, even in places where graffiti may be banned. Just like Rina Madhani and Concetta Gleason of Start Lighthouse, an amazing organization that brings new, FREE books directly into Bronx school libraries

and book fairs. Amazing and enlightening books that many politicians and people with authority may not want you to see.

A graffiti artist leaves their mark on their hometown and makes sure the city knows they will persist despite gentrification. Similar to Noëlle Santos at The Lit. Bar, who opened up the only brick-and-mortar bookstore in the Bronx to serve the local community, despite all of the decisions being made by developers against the community.

To all of these amazing book people carrying on Pura's legacy, I say keep spraying the blocks of the Bronx and our minds with the beautiful colors and words that will inspire us to be our best selves. And of course, Keep Boogiein', Y'all!

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