

Meeting the Needs of Urban Non-Readers

Kathryn Tharrington
Dillard Middle School

Dillard Middle School

- ❖ Grades 5-8, ~650 students
- ❖ In the city limits of Goldsboro
- ❖ Serve 9 housing projects
- ❖ ~92% free and reduced lunch
- ❖ ~95% African-American
- ❖ Title 1 School



The Environment

- ❖ Students must feel welcome and safe
- ❖ Make the area comfortable for them



The Environment

- ❖ Make them want to come to your area!
- ❖ Get them in the door!
 - Displays, activities, drawings



The Power of a Little Jar and a Bookmark!

It's All About the Kids!

- ❖ Give them ownership
- ❖ Ask their opinion
- ❖ Warn them about my likes! :-)



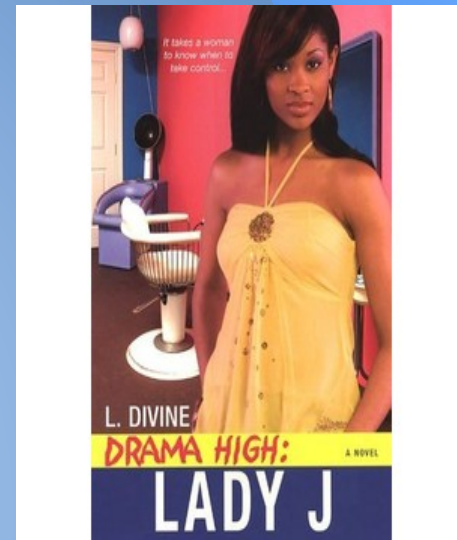
Their Favorite Titles

- ❖ Bluford Series by Langan, Kern, Schraff, Folan
 - Order from Townsend Press!
 - 20 titles in the series
 - Each book is less than 200 pages.
 - High interest level, geared towards low level readers.
 - Follows the lives of students that attend Bluford High School.
 - Mostly African-American, some Hispanic characters.
 - Themes include romance, mystery, suspense, even a little of the supernatural!



The Favorite Titles

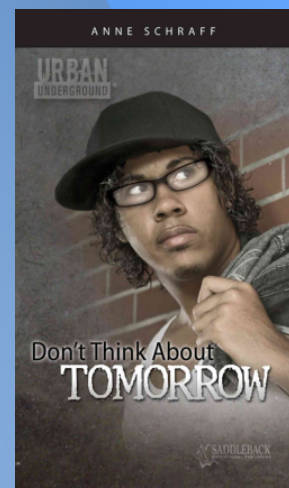
- ❖ Drama High Series by L. Divine
 - Written by a former high school teacher to inspire her kids to read.
 - Follow the life of Jayd, an African-American high school student from Compton, now living in Southern California
 - 14 titles (some “adult” language and themes)



Their Favorite Titles

Urban Underground by Anne Schraff

- ❖ Schraff also wrote Bluford High books
- ❖ Many of the same themes of Bluford such as friendship, relationships, gangs, drugs, abuse
- ❖ Characters from all races
- ❖ About 30 titles
- ❖ Low level, high interest reads; each book is about 200 pages



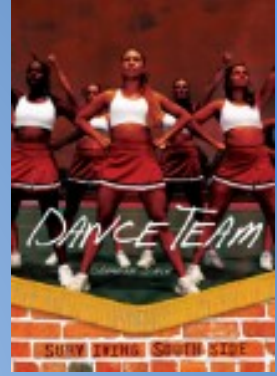
Their Favorite Titles

- ❖ Kimani Tru (multiple authors)
 - Geared towards African-American girls
 - Many different subjects including drama at home, relationships, drugs, music, parents
 - Storylines don't seem to be as “gritty” as Bluford or Drama High.



New Series

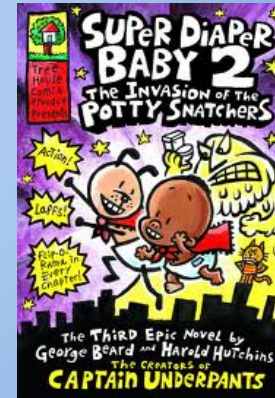
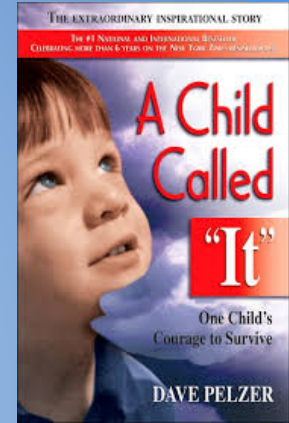
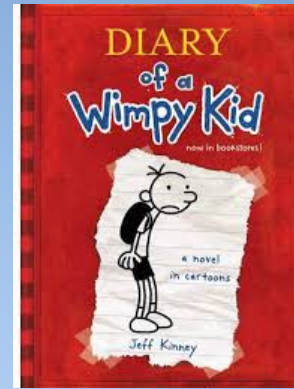
Surviving Southside (Multiple authors)



- ❖ Current themes that teens face such as drug abuse, bullying, friendships, relationships, and school cliques
- ❖ Bluford like with face paced chapters and appeal to reluctant readers
- ❖ 10+ titles

Other Popular Titles

- ❖ Diary of A Wimpy Kid
- ❖ Amulet
- ❖ Wrestling Biographies
- ❖ Music/Actor Biographies
- ❖ Dragon Ballz and Naurto
- ❖ Super Diaper Baby
- ❖ Sharon Draper books
- ❖ “A Child Called It”



New Book Open House

- ❖ Showcases all the new books that have been purchased
- ❖ Include displays with pictures and info about the books
- ❖ Drawings and activities
- ❖ No check-outs so everyone can have a chance to see what's new!

New Book Open House



Thank you!!!!

kathryntharrington@wcps.org