



September 19, 2023

We received your Request for Reconsideration forms for several books in the children and teen collections. I appreciate your taking an interest in the library and expressing your concern about these items. We reviewed each item and will be retaining them in the library. Please see below for an explanation of the decision for each item.

***Cheer Up! Love and Pompoms* by Crystal Frasier**

This book is currently cataloged in our Young Adult (teen) Comic Book section. It has been in the CCL collection since August 2021, and has been checked out 3 times. According to our book vendor, this item's intended audience is teens grade 7-9 and ages 12-14. The summary on the back cover of the book provides detail about its content, along with subject headings in the online catalog. The title also received many positive reviews from publications like *ForeWord Magazine*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *School Library Journal*.

Review Excerpts:

*ForeWord Magazine* Reviews, July/August 2021

*...The book is appealing in its complexity, showing a variety of relationships with nuance. The squad defends Beatrice, but sometimes treats her like a publicity tool; Beatrice's parents are still adapting to her gender identity. The artwork captures myriad emotions through the teenagers' facial expressions, while its convincing settings and details enhance the storytelling, too ... Showing that everyone has more to learn, and that embracing others is often the best way to do it, Cheer Up is a wonderful graphic novel.*

*Kirkus Reviews*, June 2021

*...The art is cute and expressive, with tons of personality in the characters' faces and bodies. The supporting cast is diverse not only racially, but in body type and gender expression as well. Annie reads as White; Bebe is cued as Latinx. Wholesome and heartwarming.*

***And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson**

This book is currently cataloged in our Children's Picture Book section. It has been in the CCL collection since July 2015, and has been checked out 51 times. According to our book vendor, this item's intended audience is children grades 1-2, ages 6-7. The book jacket indicates this book is recommended for ages 4-8. The online catalog includes subject headings that provide detail about the content. This title was well-reviewed by publications like *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *School Library Journal*.

Review Excerpts:

*School Library Journal* Reviews, July 2005

*This tale based on a true story about a charming penguin family living in New York City's Central Park Zoo will capture the hearts of penguin lovers everywhere... Done in soft watercolors, the illustrations set the tone for this uplifting story, and readers will find it hard to resist the penguins' comical expressions. The well-designed pages perfectly marry words and pictures, allowing readers to savor each illustration. An author's note provides more information about Roy, Silo, Tango, and other chinstrap penguins. This joyful story about the meaning of family is a must for any library.*

Library Media Connection Reviews, January 2006

*Based on a true story, this book tells about Silo and Roy, two male chinstrap penguins who befriend each other in the Central Park Zoo and do everything together that other penguin "couples" do, except have baby penguins. Until one day, the penguin keeper gives them an egg from a penguin couple that couldn't raise it themselves, which Silo and Roy lovingly hatch and raise on their own. Throughout the book, families-both human and animal-are mentioned doing similar things despite their superficial differences. Depending on your community, you may want to brace yourself for some objections, but what makes this story all the better is the fact that it is true. As the author notes, Roy and Silo did adopt Tango and can still be seen at the zoo playing together in the penguin tank. Attractive watercolor illustrations complement the text and playfully show the penguin couple making a nest, trying to hatch a rock, and raising their family together. Overall this is a straightforward story without being overtly about homosexuality, but rather focusing on the familial relationship of Roy and Silo and acceptance of others' differences.*

### **Uncle Bobby's Wedding by Sarah S. Brannen**

This book is currently cataloged in our Children's Picture Book section. It has been in the CCL collection since July 2020 and has checked out 11 times. According to our book vendor, this item's intended audience is ages 5-6, and the book jacket indicates a recommendation for ages 3-6. The online catalog includes subject headings that provide detail about the content. This title received good reviews by publications like *Publishers Weekly*.

Review Excerpt:

*Publishers Weekly*, 2020

*In this reworking of a 2008 title, now published in partnership with GLAAD, everyone in the family is happy that Uncle Bobby and his "friend" Jamie are getting married, with one exception: Chloe worries that the marriage will make her uncle less present in her life. But Uncle Bobby handles this sense of displacement like a pro: he invites Chloe to go on outings with him and Jamie, and soon Chloe realizes that Jamie is a lot of fun-after a trip to the ballet, "Jamie imitated the ballet dancers and Chloe laughed so hard, she got soda up her nose"-and that two uncles might be better than one. From the announcement picnic to the lively wedding (with Chloe as a yellow-clad flower girl), illustrator Soto's inclusive cartooned characters are attentive and affectionate in a way that feels genuine. Those we love, she and Brannen show, needn't change just because they love someone else, too-there's plenty of room in the human heart.*

### **A Tale of Two Daddies by Vanita Oelschlager**

This book is currently cataloged in our Children's Picture Book section. It has been in the CCL collection since July 15 and has checked out 19 times. According to our book vendor, this item's intended audience is grades 1-2, ages 6-7. The online catalog includes subject headings that provide detail about the content. This title received good reviews by publications like *Booklist*.

Review Excerpt:

*Booklist*, June 2010

*In an affectionate story of adoption in a gay family, a small girl answers a friend's questions about what it is like to have two fathers. The boy asks: Which dad would build your home in a tree? And which dad helps when you skin your knee? And the girl answers: Poppa's the one who builds in a tree. /Daddy's the one who fixes my knee. The simple, immediate rhymes are illustrated with digitally touched linoleum prints in bright colors and thick black lines that show the friends at play, as well as cozy scenarios of the girl in her nurturing home; in one particularly warm scene, Poppa serves a plate of eggs and bacon that looks like a smiley face. Strangely, the adults' faces are never shown, just distant views of their legs and arms: one daddy is formally dressed, the other is in jeans and sneakers. The story's message is clear in her answer to the question, Who is your dad when you're sad and need some love? Both, of course.*

### **In our Mothers' House by Patricia Polacco**

This book is currently cataloged in our Children's Picture Book section. It has been in the CCL

collection since December 2022 and has checked out 1 time. According to our book vendor, this item's intended audience is grades 1-2, ages 6-7. The online catalog includes subject headings that provide detail about the content. This title received good reviews from publications like *School Library Journal* and *Library Media Connection Reviews*.

Review Excerpts:

*School Library Journal Reviews*, May 2009

*This gem of a book illustrates how love makes a family, even if it's not a traditional one. The narrator, a black girl, describes how her two Caucasian mothers, Marmee and Meema, adopted her, her Asian brother, and her red-headed sister. She tells about the wonderful times they have growing up in Berkeley, CA...Is this an idealized vision of how a gay couple can be accepted by their family and community? Absolutely. But the story serves as a model of inclusiveness for children who have same-sex parents, as well as for children who may have questions about a "different" family in their neighborhood. A lovely book that can help youngsters better understand their world.*

*Library Media Connection Reviews*, October 2009

*Over the years Patricia Polacco has graced us with many delightful stories of family relationships and special friendships. This title is just such a story, but with a twist. Three children from different parts of the world are adopted by two married women. Although words such as gay, lesbian, sexuality, or same-sex marriage are never used, the reader will make the connection as the story unfolds. The mothers are always there for special moments in the lives of their children, and readers see glimpses of a nurturing extended family and friends. One mother in the community is not so friendly, but Polacco handles this moment in a careful, studied, and easy way, as if hatred and bigotry do not exist. The three children celebrate many happy moments in their family home, and all three return regularly after they are grown. After the death of both mothers, the son and his family move into the house. The writing style is truly Polacco and the colorful illustrations are warm and loving. This is a strong and memorable story of a peaceful, devoted family unit. Highly Recommended.*

### **Two Boys Kissing by David Levithan**

This book is currently cataloged in our Young Adult (teen) Fiction section. It has been in the CCL collection since June 2017 and has checked out 7 times. According to our book vendor, this item's intended audience is ages 12-14, grades 7-9. The online catalog includes subject headings that provide detail about the content and the spine label indicates the title is in the romance genre. This title was well-reviewed by *Publishers Weekly*.

Review Excerpt:

*Publishers Weekly*, June 2013

*...As Craig and Henry's kiss approaches record-setting territory, and Cooper approaches becoming a statistic, the novel builds into something triumphant. Many will read the final pages with their hearts in their throats. Levithan makes it clear that loving and living are as imperfect as those who practice them, but no less precious for their flaws. A landmark achievement from a writer and editor who has helped create, in literature, a haven for queer youth.*

### **Queer Ducks (And Other Animals) by Eliot Schrefer**

This book is currently cataloged in our Young Adult (teen) Nonfiction section. It has been in the CCL collection since May 2022 and has checked out 3 times. According to our book vendor, the item's intended audience is ages 15-18, grades 10-12. The publisher recommendation is ages 14 and up. The title includes content on scientific studies over 20+ years, notes, a bibliography, and educational resources. The online catalog includes subject headings that provide detail about the content. This title received good reviews by publications like *Publisher's Weekly* and *Kirkus Reviews*.

Review Excerpts:

*Publishers Weekly*, June 2022

*Employing conversational humor and personal anecdotes, interviews with a variety of scientists, and detailed information about the intersections of human bias and animal research, Schrefer deconstructs commonly held beliefs to reveal the world of queer animal behavior...Together, the*

*creators deliver punch lines while revealing little-known animal facts about avian asexuality and polyamory, bisexual bonobos, and intersex deer, all supporting the argument that exclusionary takes on the natural world are a breakable human habit—and that, as science shows, queer behavior has never been “unnatural.” Substantial back matter includes suggestions for further reading, a glossary, and an index.*

*Kirkus Reviews, March 2023*

*An entertaining, informative tour through the sexual diversity of animal life... Schrefer takes seriously the desires and pleasures of animals' lives, revealing how gender and sexuality are experienced as social and not just biological constructs...While the book uses a human identity-based framework to understand animals whose consciousnesses we can't possibly understand, it will help queer kids feel less alone as it highlights the filtered lens through which the animal kingdom has for too long been presented. A thoughtful, thought-provoking, and incredibly fun study of queerness across the animal kingdom.*

I understand some individuals may find the content of these books uncomfortable and parts objectionable, but the books are well-reviewed, popular in our collection, and located where one would expect to find them. Christian County consists of individuals and families with diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and interests and the library makes every effort to provide a broad selection of materials to meet their information and reading needs. Parents and guardians should determine what is or is not suitable for their own households.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Renee Brumett, Executive Director  
Christian County Library