



# FOCAL Points ~ ~



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Summer 2013

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

For more news, go to [www.focalonline.org](http://www.focalonline.org)

## The Library, My Favorite Place

By

Jolene Comenat

### Author's Note

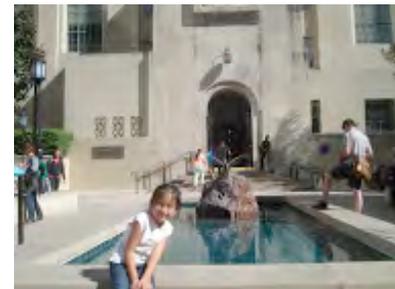
Jolene is nine years old. She lives with her mom, dad, sister, and fish in Los Angeles. Jolene has always loved books and going to the library. She is active and creative. Jolene loves school and can't wait to write another book.

### Introduction

"Ohhh! Look at all those books!" I exclaim as I walk into the library. "I could never run out of books to read here! It has just about all the books I could ever want." I love reading books. If you love books, I guarantee you'll love the library.

### Looking Outside

Wow! The front of the library really makes you want to come in. There are fountains with things on them like an eagle on a rock or a lizard on a rock. There are flowers neatly lined up in rows. The flowers smell so good. There are also statues by the front. The front of the library has different things carved into the wall where the entrance is. It has long steps and a gate-like door. There are also black metal benches to sit on. Everything is very neat and tidy. Looking at the front of the Central Library will definitely make you want to come in.



## Where Imagination Begins

The theater goes dark. The theater is one of the most imaginative places in the Central Library. Bright lights flash and actors fill the stage. There can be music, or plays in the theater. Some plays are based on books, others based on the occasion. If it was Science Day there would probably be a scientific play. There are so many different plays in the theater!

In the theater there are lots of lights. Most of the time, the stage is filled with things. There could be instruments, a book, or even an ELMO. In the theater there are many seats. The fabric has pictures of wild animals stitched on it. There is also a little theater in the Children's library room. In both theaters, imagination begins!

**More from Jolene next issue...**

## Reading Was So Delicious in 2013

by Mara Alpert, Children's Literature

The 2013 Summer Reading Club, Reading is So Delicious, offered a varied and tasty menu of activities to the 1184 participants who joined in the Children's Literature Department this year.

The big news for 2013 was Book Café, a book discussion group for kids in grades 4-6. Historically it's been difficult to get older kids to come to programs here at Central Library, so we decided to really concentrate on this group this year. Our goal was to get 20 kids to participate in a one-hour book discussion group each week... and we not only met that goal, but exceeded it.

We focused on two titles for the summer. The first half of the summer we read and discussed historical fiction/mystery **Pie** by Sarah Weeks; the second half it was the comedic fantasy **Cold Cereal** by Adam Rex. We not only talked about those books, but other titles that tied in thematically.

We also provided special activities, crafts, and snacks. Activities included making butter, creating a book trailer, writing jingles, making food out of (supposedly) edible play-doh, and listening to a real food scientist talk about what she does, then sampling a non-dairy frozen dessert she is currently working on. The kids had a blast, and so did the librarians!

We also had our traditional Summer Reading Club craft program, which was called Craft Buffet. Among other things, we made pop-up cards, cereal jewelry, marshmallow creatures, chef's hats and place mats. We also shared songs, stories, and games, including a rousing game of Spaghetti and Meatball Toss (yarn and rubber balls, respectively).



FOCAL was particularly important to the Children's Literature Department during this year's Summer Reading Club. They provided paperback copies of *Pie* and *Cold Cereal* so that participants in Book Café each got a copy to keep; plus the prizes for the end-of-summer drawing: a family membership at the California Science Center for one year was the big prize, as well as two smaller prizes of gift certificates for the Library Store.

The Children's Literature Department appreciates all the hard work and enthusiastic support of FOCAL. Our summer would have been far less yummy without them!

## One Crazy Summer

Calling all writers in grades 4-8 who have ever had a crazy summer! FOCAL (the Friends group for the LAPL Central Library Children's Literature Department) is sponsoring their annual writing contest. This year students are reading the book *One Crazy Summer*, by **Rita Williams-Garcia** and traveling back in time to the summer of 1968 in Oakland. This exciting, emotional work of historical fiction (winner of the Newbery honor, Coretta Scott King Author Award, Scott O'Dell Historical Fiction Award and the FOCAL award) is the story of three sisters, sent from Brooklyn to spend the summer getting to know their mother in California. The girls have dreams of Disneyland which are immediately replaced by summer camp with the Black Panthers. This is indeed a crazy summer!

The writing contest is an opportunity for students to respond to award-winning literature for an authentic reason: winning a contest! Standards will be met! History will come alive! Students will have fun while they learn! And, three lucky winners will have lunch with the author, get an autographed book, and read their essay aloud at our annual awards luncheon. Will you be submitting the best three essays from your class by November 2, 2013?

For all the details, go to [focalonline.org](http://focalonline.org) and download the guidelines and application, and/or call Carol Raby at 310-578-5364 for contest ideas and inspiration.

Reprinted from **United Teacher**, Aug 23, 2013, p. 27, as submitted by:  
Carol Raby, FOCAL Publicity and Caroline Gill, FOCAL President

**SAVE THE DATE !!!! SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2013**

### **FOCAL AWARD LUNCHEON**

**Ed. Note:** We always knew they were the best, but now, all of Los Angeles does !!

The **Downtown News** has picked as its "Best Children's Activity: Storytime at the Central Library". Amid an increasing array downtown of kids' offerings, this is indeed an honor. **Los Angeles Magazine** in its annual "Best of LA" issue gave its "Best Children's Library" award to Children's Literature. Check Facebook for more photos on the Children's Literature page, and don't forget to "like" them!!!

# FOCAL

## Essay Contest

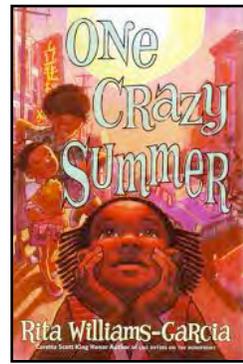


### Enter the FOCAL Essay Contest!

Sponsored by FOCAL (Friends of Children and Literature) Los Angeles Public Library, this contest gives you a chance to have lunch with a real live author and receive a signed copy of the award-winning book.

**The 2013 FOCAL Award winner is:**

***One Crazy Summer*** Written by Rita Williams-Garcia  
LAPL Call #x



### How to Enter

1. Read the book. (Copies are available at your school or public library.)
2. Think about what you read.
3. Write no more than 300 words to tell the judges—
  - a. your reactions to the book.
  - b. about a character or scene that stuck with you.
  - c. what it would mean for you to meet the author/illustrator.

### Hints—

- Start with a sentence that makes us want to read more.
- Describe any personal connections you have with the story and help us to learn more about you as well as the book.
- Make sure your words are typed and spelled correctly.
- Turn in your entry to FOCAL on time. Send by November 2, 2013, to:

**Caroline Gill, 4335 Marina City Drive #534, Marina del Rey, CA 90292**

***Contest Rules and Entry Form on back***

# CONTEST RULES

- The contest is open to kids grades 4-8.
- Three winners will be selected, grades 4 through 8.
- Entries are due November 2, 2013, and must be postmarked by then. *Late entries will not be accepted.*
- No more than 300 words (fewer than 300 is fine).
- Submit typed entries on clean, white 8.5"x11" paper only.
- Put the child's name on the back of the essay and on the entry form.
- Check spelling, punctuation and grammar CAREFULLY. Mistakes will disqualify the entry.
- No more than 3 entries per classroom.
- Winners will be notified by November 23, 2013, and will be asked to read their essays at the FOCAL Award luncheon on Saturday, December 7, 2013.

## ENTRY FORM

Student's First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED. Entry forms also available at [http://www.wapl.org/kidspath/focal\\_entry](http://www.wapl.org/kidspath/focal_entry)

**\*\*\*\*\* MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION \*\*\*\*\***

**Please send renewals to Renny Day / 15221 Via de las Olas / Pacific Palisades, CA 90272**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership is for calendar year, January through December.**

**New** \_\_\_\_\_ **Renewal** \_\_\_\_\_ **Basic \$20** \_\_\_\_\_ **Associate \$30** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributing \$60** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sustaining \$100** \_\_\_\_\_ **Lifetime \$1,000** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Free autographed book)**    **(Seat at Head Table)**                      **(Book and Head Table)**

**Selena Terrazas, Department Manager**  
**Madeline Bryant, Senior Librarian, Children's Literature**  
**Helene Mochedlover, FOCAL Points Editor**

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