PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: June
Theme: LGBTQ+

Book Title: Julián Is a Mermaid
                   By Jessica Love

Grade Level: 2nd / 3rd

Book Summary:
After seeing three women spectacularly dressed up as mermaids, Julián makes his own mermaid costume from Abuela's curtain and potted fern. What will she think of the mess—and of Julián the mermaid?

It is important not to make assumptions about how Julián identifies because we do not know. This is an important teachable moment for community members because we cannot know how someone identifies (transgender, non-binary, cisgender, etc.) unless they or the author specifically share that with us. We do know that we can encourage people to be respectful and open to all the ways young people may express their genders and pursue their interests with or without labels.

Discussion Questions:
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? After reading, revisit your answer to this question. Were your predictions correct?
- There is not a lot of text in the book, take time to look at the illustrations and notice the expressions on the characters' faces. What clues do you get from the illustrations as to what is happening and how that makes the characters feel?
- How does Julián feel when he is a mermaid? If you could dress any way you wanted, what would you wear? Who or what would you want to be?
- How does Abuela react when she first sees Julián dressing as a mermaid. How does that seem to make Julián feel? How can you tell? How would it make you feel?
- How does Abuela's response change? How does Abuela demonstrate that she is affirming of Julián? Where did she take him? How do you think this made Julián feel?
- How do you feel when you can express yourself without wondering what others will say or think?
- Do you think Julián would be teased by other children for being a mermaid if he went to your school or lived in your neighborhood? If you saw that happening, what could you do to be a friend, an ally? What could an adult do?