

## **PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: May**

### **Theme: Immigration and Migration**

**Book Title:** Undocumented: A Worker's Fight  
By Duncan Tonatiuh

**Grade Level:** 4th / 5th

#### **Book Summary:**

*Undocumented* is the story of immigrant workers who have come to the United States without papers. Every day, these men and women join the workforce and contribute positively to society. The story is told via the ancient Mixtec codex—accordion fold—format. Juan grew up in Mexico working in the fields to help provide for his family. Struggling for money, Juan crosses over into the United States and becomes an undocumented worker, living in a poor neighborhood, working hard to survive. Though he is able to get a job as a busboy at a restaurant, he is severely undercompensated—he receives less than half of the minimum wage! Risking his boss reporting him to the authorities for not having proper resident papers, Juan risks everything and stands up for himself and the rest of the community.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Were you surprised at the format of this book—told via ancient Mixtec codex—accordion fold? Why do you think the Author chose a graphic novel format for this story? What are the advantages of using this format rather than a standard book format?
- What happens to Juan, the narrator and main character, when he crosses the border the first time? What do you think that was like for him?
- Have you ever known anyone who had to leave their home, city, or country to find work?
- What are the different types of work Juan and his cousins do in the U.S.? Do you know anyone who works in similar jobs?
- Why do you think the restaurant where Juan works doesn't pay him well?
- Do you know what minimum wage is?
- Why do you think Juan gets his coworkers involved in trying to get minimum wage?
- Why are the workers scared to file a legal complaint against their boss?
- Have you ever heard, read about or been in a situation where people joined together to fight for something important? What happened?
- What do you think Juan means when he says, "what matters is that we face the same problems"? How can you relate to that statement?
- How did you feel when the book ended? What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think of when you hear the words immigration, undocumented immigrant and worker's rights? Read the Author's note at the end of the book to explore these terms and their meaning in more detail.
- What is the overall theme and message of the book? How does this apply to what's happening currently in our country? In the world?