

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

### **Theme: Multiculturalism**

**Book Title:** Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin  
By Duncan Tonatiuh

**Grade Level:** 2nd / 3rd

#### **Book Summary:**

Meet Charlie and Carlitos.

Charlie lives in America.

Carlitos, his primo, lives in Mexico.

Charlie takes the subway to school, plays basketball with his friends, and loves pizza.

Carlitos rides his bicicleta to school and enjoys playing fútbol at recess, and his favorite meal is quesadillas.

Their lives appear different, but do Charlie and Carlitos have more in common than it seems?

Through his artwork and story, award-winning author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh introduces young readers to a very timely idea—that community is larger than just neighborhoods and schools.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Two cousins, Charlie and Carlitos, begin writing to each other and telling about their different lives. Have you ever written letters to someone? If so, who?
- Even though there are many ways to communicate with someone, these cousins choose to write letters. What might be some benefits of writing letters instead of calling or emailing someone? Which form of communication is your favorite? Why?
- How are Charlie and Carlitos' lives different? How are they the same?
- Carlito's world is described in Spanish with pictures illustrating the things he is talking about. How did this help you to understand the book? Did the words get in the way of the illustrations? Why or why not?
- On many of the two page spreads, the author has an illustration of Carlitos on the left and Charlie on the right. What effect does this side by side comparison make? What might you have done differently if you had illustrated the story?
- Do you think Charlie portrays an accurate picture of American life? How is his daily life different than yours? How is it similar?
- In the illustrations, the author adds texture to clothing and other elements in the story. Does this illustration style work for this story? Why or why not?
- What do you think it would be like for either Charlie or Carlitos if he was to go live with his cousin for the summer? How long would it take for him to get used to things? What might he find difficult? What might he find easy?
- Have you ever been to another country? What was it like? If you haven't, what do you imagine that it might be like?
- How would the book have been different if only one of the cousins had been writing letters to the other?
- This book won the Pura Belpré Award which is given to the author whose work best portrays the Latino cultural experience. Why do you think this book won the award?
- If you had written this book, what other things would you have included?