ChLA 2019 Abstract Submission
Paper Title: Great Books for Girls: ALA's Amelia Bloomer Project and Feminism

Award and recommended title lists are one of the many ways in which parents, librarians, and teachers choose books for children to read. Beyond canon formation, these lists can also promote social change and politics through their emphasis on certain issues such as diversity, race, and gender. This paper will explore the American Libraries Association's (ALA) Amelia Bloomer Project lists, which span the past 12 years, to illustrate how children's literature is used to advocate for equal rights between the genders. As the only professionally recognized annual list of recommended feminist titles, the Amelia Bloomer Project plays an important role in how children's literature engages with the redefinition of gender roles and education about the important achievements of women throughout history.

Despite many women writing children's books, the amount of feminist content in children's literature is surprisingly rare. The Amelia Bloomer Project highlights important titles with significant feminist content. My paper will begin with a discussion of the history of the list and how books are selected before moving to an analysis of recommended titles. This paper will answer questions such as: What message do these titles send to girls and young women? Are there favored genres? How does the list balance historical topics about women rights? How does the list handle other issues facing women today such as gender issues, sexual identity and race? By analyzing the Amelia Bloomer project, I hope to address one aspect of advocacy in children's literature and how librarians, teachers, and parents can engage with social justice by using and promoting these titles.