

## PowerUP Jax Fall 2016 Grant Winner

15. **Kathleen Poe**  
**Jacksonville Beach Elementary**  
**Subject/Grade: 5<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts (ELA) Classes**  
**Project Title: When given the choice, "Choose Kind."**

### **Summary of Project:**

"When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind." is a quote from the award-winning book "Wonder" by R.J. Palacio. "Wonder" is the story of a 10-year old name Auggie Pullman who longs to be ordinary but his facial anomaly makes him not so ordinary. To have our fifth graders to read this book would serve to spark class discussions on differences and bullying. It is our hope that PowerUP Jax can provide us the funds to purchase the hardcover books that will create opportunities for class discussions on friendship, overcoming challenges, bullying, and betrayal in a more much comfortable setting of one's reading class. The writing style of the author will involve the students in a narrative that engages them into a sensitive theme while providing opportunities for students to explore the literary devices and language study. So not only will the students learn sensitivity to those who are different but to learn to make connections to different ideas and writing styles. The cost of the books would be minimal to the getting the students to "choose kind."

### **How many students will be directly involved? Explain any further impact on other students, teachers, the school as a whole, and/or the community.**

This reading project will involve around 120 fifth graders and their ELA teachers in a small group discussion setting that will eventually create a community of kindness within the school and in the community. We want our students to make connections with their reading text to real life situations. The book is intended to create an atmosphere of kindness and compassion to others who are different. And the students' literary exploration will begin with Auggie's quote "You can't blend in when you were born to stand out." And in that journey we hope our students can see those who are different, differently. To again, quote Auggie in the book "I know I'm not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. I mean, sure, I do ordinary things. The only reason I am not ordinary is that no one sees me that way." We want our students not to look away but to reach out as a kind friend.

### **How will the project specifically increase student learning? Be sure to explain the project's connections to existing learning standards. Be clear about what new skills, knowledge, and/or dispositions the students will acquire.**

With small group discussions, read alouds, and silent reading plus the students' creative writing papers and posters, students will make their school community much more aware of the choices we can make in how we treat those we encounter in life. This book lends itself to the Common Core State Standards, English Language Arts: Reading Standards for Informational Texts K-5, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. So within the ELA curriculum, we will be able to focus on what we have in common with those who are different and NOT on our differences. With the funding from PowerUP Jax, we can buy two class sets of new hardcover books at the Amazon website. In our school there are two Languages Arts teachers that teach all of the fifth graders and with the two class sets, the students can begin to read and discuss such terms as: bullying, acceptance, friendship, responsibilities, and differences.

### **What is your plan for evaluating the success of your project? What artifacts (photographs, samples of student work, testimonials, etc...) would you use to demonstrate the effectiveness of the project?**

Students will be encouraged to show creatively their sensitivity to students who are perceived as different. The student support will be made visible via posters, writing their own precepts, sending precept postcards to students needing the extra motivation, a reflection essay, and a Wonder wall in the main hallway where the students can write about the book. The school will also recognize those students who were nominated as a student who has shown kindness in an extraordinary way. To widen the awareness for the facial anomaly called Treacher Collins Syndrome, the students will be encouraged to see with their families, the movie "Wonder," starring Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson, and Jacob Tremblays when it opens in the theaters, April 7, 2017.