Making Sense of Our Community
Places and Spaces Close to the Heart
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By Class 1-111 at P.S. 197
John B. Russwurm School

Behind the Book / New York
Behind the Book’s mission is to develop engaged readers and writers in underserved NYC public schools by designing and delivering programs that are multi-disciplinary, culturally responsive, and promote deeper connections to books and their authors.

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Special Thanks:
Thank you to everyone who helped facilitate and create this amazing virtual program, especially our Fall 2020 interns Lancy, Lindsay, Merav, and Rachel.

Due to COVID all Behind the Book programs were provided virtually. We recognize and appreciate our teachers and students for persevering during this very challenging time.

In the interest of honoring student voice, Behind the Book presents students’ work as received from the teacher.

This book was made possible by a generous grant from The Korein Foundation.

We dedicate this book to every community that we love. They help all of us feel connected and supported. These places help create special moments that stay in our hearts forever. We would also like to thank everyone that supported us during our Behind the Book journey. You are truly appreciated!
About the Program

When we look outside our windows, what we see may not always be pretty, but it’s alive! That’s the message of *Everything Naomi Loved* by Katie Yamasaki, the book read and explored by Ms. Pinkney’s first-grade class in this engaging Behind the Book program.

The students thought about their streets in their community and what places were really special to them. Some places were important because of the people that are there—their schools, places of worship, and even favorite stores.

During Katie’s first visit, she talked about how communities are formed, how they begin at home and then extend to other places. Students created lists of favorite places in their neighborhood and explained their significance.

Katie returned for a second visit to lead students in an art workshop. She described her process of creating the illustrations for *Everything Naomi Loved* and how she designs and creates murals. During this workshop, students again shared their favorite neighborhood places and made 2-D murals that featured their favorite people, places, and things.

Behind the Book drama teacher Karen Butler worked with students to analyze characters and participate in activities that helped the class act out their feelings and thoughts. Students used all the ideas they had explored with Katie to write poems about their favorite places in the community. Through their work, displayed in this book, the class demonstrates the many things they love in their neighborhoods.

We hope that it inspires you to explore your neighborhood and continue to build community!
The Best School
by Truth’ful

At school I touch my pencil
I see what I wrote it looks good. 

I hear my teacher
She asked What is 4 + 10 =? 
A 14    B 20 or C wait
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14...
It’s 14.
The Pool

by Aaron

I go to the pool with my silly friends. I hear bubbly water. I touch the water; it feels wet. Now I go to my red and green house. I see my mom and dad. I am excited!
Park
by Aniyah

I see some rocks at the park.
I touch some rocks.
I wash the rocks.
I want to see the colors.
I see some rocks at the park.
I feel sprinkles and frostin

I see a donut I hold my momma’s hand while we are in Dunkin Donuts the donuts look cool and pretty we ate the donuts
It tasted so good yum!
Last we went home with a big smile!
Me And The Pool
by Tamari

I like to go to the community pool.
I see and smell I like the pool.
I love the pool I touch the pool.
Park Fun
by Allison

At the park I see kids my friends
I touch the swing and play on it
My grandma brings food
I smell it and taste it
I hear Jaiden calling me
Laundry Mat
by Aaron

I go to the laundry mat with my mom.
I see the laundry in the machine. It is getting clean.
I smell the laundry. The soap smells like apples.
I hear and touch the laundry. It rumbles and feels wet.
Now I go to my house.
Supermarket
by Aniyah

I go to the supermarket to get cupcakes for my party. I taste the sugar.
I hear a lot of people.
I see people and food.
I smell a lot of things.
But I smell cupcakes a lot.
My Church

by Jurnee

touching the doors
to get into the church
speaking eating on break
singing with other people
I hear things sitting still crying
a little feeling happy
The Park
by Tamari

I like to go to the park
I see people
I run in the park

I can hear people
I touch marquise
I like to go to the park
The Truth’ful
Supermarket
by Truth’ful

Do you see the sun?
Do you hear the beat
I have $10 bucks
I’m going to the supermarket
I see the bread
I hear the milk
I touch the coke
I put the bread and milk in
The milk is $3 and the bread is $7!
About the Visiting Author

Katie Yamasaki is an artist based in Brooklyn, NY. She works primarily as a muralist, children’s book author, illustrator, and teaching artist. From schools to prisons, Katie sees her art as a vehicle for dialogue and a tool for building platforms for communication. She has painted over 80 murals around the world. She has published various books as both illustrator and author/illustrator: Honda, The Boy Who Dreamed of Cars; Lifelines: the Black Book of Proverbs; Fish for Jimmy; When the Cousins Came; God’s Big Plan; and Everything Naomi Loved (co-author/illustrator). Katie has additional books in the works as author/illustrator, Dad Bakes, a biography of her architect grandfather, Minoru Yamasaki, YAMA, and Place Hand Here.

About the Student Authors

We are a group of vibrant, expressive, and energetic first grade learners in the heart of Harlem. We enjoy writing, technology, and mathematics. We believe our special community places have a great impact on us as inquisitive learners.

About Behind the Book

Behind the Book brings authors and their books into classrooms to build literacy skills and foster a community of lifelong readers and writers. Working with classes from Pre-K through 12th grade, our series of workshops is designed to bring books to life and inspire students to reach their full potential. Behind the Book is embedded in the class curriculum, nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in New York City public school students. All programs meet the Common Core Learning Standards.
Common Core Learning Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3
Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2
Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3
Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
BtB empowers the next generation of readers and writers by nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in our students.

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