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Spectacular Things Happen Along The Way: Lessons From An Urban Classroom (Teaching For Social Justice)



Synopsis

"Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way renewed my belief that it is possible to write authentic narratives about urban schools.... I plan to make this book required reading for my teacher education students..."--From the Foreword by Carl A. Grant, University of Wisconsin, Madison

"Once I began reading, I couldn't put it down. The power here is in the details. It is a marvelous, important book and is badly needed at a moment when the values it upholds are under an unrelenting assault from forces of reactionary ignorance."--Jonathan Kozol, author of *Amazing Grace*

"In a time of ever more testing and standardization, Brian Schultz demonstrates in powerful ways what the critically democratic alternative looks like. Anyone who wants to make a difference in urban education needs to read this book."--Michael W. Apple, author of *Educating the "Right" Way*

"An amazing tale of incredible fifth-grade citizen activists that reveals what education in America's inner cities could and should be."--Jeannie Oakes, Presidential Professor in Education Equity, UCLA

"The lessons about curriculum and teaching are powerful and the story is absolutely inspiring."--James A. Beane, author of *A Reason to Teach: Creating Classrooms of Dignity and Hope*

"Carr Community Academy is a crumbling elementary school in Chicago next to one of the largest and most perilous public housing projects-Cabrini Green. It also is the location of one of the more spectacular fifth-grade classes in the country."--Ralph Nader, consumer advocate, author, and founder, Public Citizen research group

"This fifth-grade class illustrates some important lessons about America: The neglect of the inner-city poor, the virtues of creative public service, of teaching to educate-not just to pass a test-and of perseverance."--Robert Siegel, *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio

"When city kids are thought to be nothing more than a tangle of pathologies and deficits who must be 'saved' by crusading, missionary teachers the result is always some form of colonization. In this extraordinary book, Brian Schultz, a courageous teacher writing here with clarity and passion, performs a radical reversal and provides an alternative."--William Ayers, Distinguished Professor of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago, and author of *To Teach*

"Through their compelling school improvement efforts, Schultz and his fifth graders clearly counter the colonizing policy that says only the privileged can be educated through freedom to pursue personal interests and collective commitments."--William H. Schubert, University Scholar, University of Illinois at Chicago

What happens when a teacher resists the pressures of "teaching to the test" and creates a curriculum based on student needs, wants, and desires? Brian Schultz did just that when he challenged his students from a housing project in Chicago to name a problem in their community that they wanted to solve. When the students unanimously focus on replacing their dilapidated school building, an unforgettable journey is put into motion. As his students examine the

conditions of their blighted school and research the deeper causes of decay, they set off on a mission of remedy and repair. It is finally their own questions and activities that power their profound self-transformations. This moving story is a tribute to what determined teachers are able to achieve in the current stifling environment of high-stakes testing and standardization. Anyone who has faith in creativity, commitment, and the deep potential of inner-city children and youth will want to read this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In his book, *Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way*, author Brian D. Schultz, narrates the astonishing efforts of his class of fifth grade students who fight for basic resources in their school, William D. Carr Community Academy, in Cabrini Green neighborhood, located on the near North-side of the city of Chicago. Schultz' narrative account of this urban school is a teacher's voice echoed in the actions of his students who struggle to revive the empty promise made to them of a new school building by city officials. The students along with the teacher tap into the real life issues of politics and race. They voice their concerns and stand up for what they believe. *Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way* is a journey of these children along with their mentor from their classroom walls into the practical world of reality. Together, they move every nook and cranny of political reform that is in their reach to work towards their goal and discover that amazing things have happened along the way of constant pursuit. This book is a celebration of all those spectacular

things. From the countless stories that can be told from this experience, Schultz had authentically captured in a beautiful narration an example of democratic education in a real-life account. This book takes the readers on an emotional roller coaster of astonishment, a virtual struggle, and unbelievable exhilaration. This real-life story is the voice of an inner struggle of a teacher with his teaching philosophy juxtaposed with the outer struggle of the students trying to understand their situation, concluded with a celebration of the efforts and lessons learned.

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