

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**



## **2016 Mathical Youth Book Prize Winners Announced**

Second annual prize highlights books and graphic novels that let kids explore math in the world around them

**Berkeley, California – January 20, 2016** — The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) and the Children’s Book Council (CBC) announced today the winners of the second annual Mathical: Books for Kids from Tots to Teens prize, honoring a diverse selection of fiction and literary nonfiction which aim to foster curiosity and cultivate a love of mathematics. Winners were selected by a national committee of distinguished children’s literary figures and math educators.

“Kids often have a fascination with numbers in the world around them that is a foundation for seeing math as part of daily life,” said David Eisenbud, director of MSRI. “Mathical focuses on stories that are not only entertaining, but which also assist in developing skills that are integral to young people’s education and explorations.”

“We are delighted to partner with MSRI to create this much-needed resource, connecting kids with wonderful, accessible books that will get them excited about math,” said Jon Colman, executive director of CBC. “We believe this list will help kids who don’t already see themselves as being ‘good at math’ discover they just might enjoy math after all!”

Gene Luen Yang, co-creator of Mathical winner *Secret Coders*, has been named the fifth National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature by the Children’s Book Council, Every Child a Reader, and the Library of Congress. Yang has shared in interviews that promoting books about STEM topics to kids is a part of his platform as ambassador. “Mike [Holmes] and I are so honored to win a Mathical award for our graphic novel *Secret Coders!*” said Yang. “I’ve always believed that words and numbers belong together like peanut butter and jelly, and it seems that plenty of folks agree!”

The Pre-K winner, *8: An Animal Alphabet* by Elisha Cooper, features a parade of animal illustrations and sight puzzles. The book centers around the author’s favorite number, 8, which he says is “round and adorable” and “not too big, not too small, but just right.”

*Max’s Math*, the K-2 winner by Kate Banks, follows young Max and his brothers on their quest for fun problems to solve using numbers, simple addition, and shapes. The bold and colorful brushstrokes of illustrator Boris Kulikov draw children into the boys’ adventures.

For grades 3-5, *Secret Coders*, Gene Luen Yang and Mike Holmes’s comic adventure took the prize. The tale of a trio of middle schoolers who stumble onto a coding mystery at creepy Stately

Academy weaves an introduction to computer programming principles into the action. The series will continue in a second volume in 2016.

Mathical continues to partner with First Book, a nonprofit organization which provides books and educational resources to schools and programs serving children in low-income communities. In 2015, over 2,500 copies of the inaugural Mathical award winners were distributed through First Book's programs.

**The Mathical Prize winners (published in 2015) are:**

**Pre-K:**

- *8: An Animal Alphabet*, written and illustrated by Elisha Cooper

**Grades K-2:**

- *Max's Math*, by Kate Banks (author) and Boris Kulikov (illustrator)

**Grades 3-5:**

- *Secret Coders*, by Gene Luen Yang and Mike Holmes

**The Mathical Honor books (published from 2004-2015) are:**

**Pre-K:**

- *Count with Maisy, Cheep, Cheep, Cheep!*, by Lucy Cousins

**Grades K-2:**

- *The Boy Who Loved Math*, by Deborah Heiligman (author) and LeUyen Pham (illustrator)

**Grades 3-5:**

- *Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer*, by Kelly Jones (author) and Katie Kath (illustrator)
- *Just the Right Size: Why Big Animals are Big and Little Animals are Little*, by Nicola Davies (author) and Neal Layton (illustrator)

**Grades 6-8:**

- *Innovators in Action: Leonardo da Vinci Gets A Do-Over*, by Mark P. Friedlander, Jr. (author) and Worachet Boon Sakprayoonpong (illustrator)
- *The Great Trouble: A Mystery of London, the Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel*, by Deborah Hopkinson

**The following was selected as a Hall of Fame book:**

- *The Phantom Tollbooth*, by Norton Juster (author) and Jules Feiffer (illustrator)

The winners of the Mathical Book Prize were selected by a nationwide selection committee comprised of authors, math educators, and librarians:

- **Jordan Ellenberg (co-chair)**, professor of mathematics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of *How Not To Be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking*
- **Rebecca Goldin (co-chair)**, professor of mathematical sciences, George Mason University and director, STATS.org
- **Jon Scieszka (co-chair)**, creator of guysread.org, inaugural National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and author of many beloved children's books including *Math Curse* and *The Time Warp Trio* series
- **Robin Adelson**, managing director, Jefferson Awards Foundation, and former executive director, Children's Book Council and Every Child A Reader
- **Betsy Bird**, collection development manager, Evanston Public Library system, youth materials specialist, New York Public Library, and reviewer for Kirkus and the *New York Times*
- **Jon Colman**, director, Children's Book Council (CBC)
- **Dr. David Eisenbud**, director, Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) and professor of mathematics, University of California, Berkeley
- **Dr. John Ewing**, president, Math for America
- **Dr. Herbert Ginsburg**, professor of psychology and education, Teachers College, Columbia University
- **Jeff Goodby**, co-chairman, Goodby, Silverstein & Partners
- **Katie Hendrickson**, teacher, Athens Middle School, and 2014-2015 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow
- **Jeanne Petarra-Weeks**, teacher, Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- **Dr. Candice Price**, assistant professor of mathematical sciences, United States Military Academy West Point
- **Dr. Ivelisse Rubio**, professor of computer science, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras
- **Dr. Joel Spencer**, professor of mathematics and computer science, New York University
- **Dr. Kara Stern**, head of school at Woodstock Day School in Woodstock, New York
- **Roger Strauch**, chair, MSRI Board of Trustees, and chairman, The Roda Group
- **Eleanor Terry Vierling**, math teacher and college advisor, High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology in Brooklyn, New York

For more information about Mathical: Books for Kids from Tots to Teens selections, including previous winners, online events, and educational resources for teachers, parents, and librarians, visit [mathicalbooks.org](http://mathicalbooks.org). The Mathical Prize is made possible through the support of the Simons Foundation.

### **About the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI)**

The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) in Berkeley, California, is one of the world's preeminent centers for collaborative research in the mathematical sciences. MSRI advances mathematical research through workshops and conferences since its founding in 1982, and over 1,700 mathematicians are hosted by MSRI each year. The Institute has been funded primarily by the National Science Foundation with additional support from other government agencies, private foundations, corporations, individual donors, and nearly 100 academic institutions. MSRI also serves a wider community through the development of human scientific capital, providing postdoctoral training to extraordinary young scientists and increasing the diversity of the research workforce. The Institute advances the education of young people with conferences on critical issues in mathematics education. MSRI has created a national "math circles" movement of small organizations teaching and engaging children in math as a hobby, beyond the standard curricula. MSRI strives to make mathematics accessible and exciting to those outside the field through film production and public programs, including the National Math Festival in Washington, D.C. and the Mathical: Books for Kids from Tots to Teens youth book prize. For more information, visit [msri.org](http://msri.org).

### **About the Children's Book Council (CBC)**

The Children's Book Council (CBC), established in 1945, is the nonprofit trade association of children's book publishers in North America, dedicated to supporting the industry and promoting children's books and reading. The CBC offers children's publishers the opportunity to work together on issues of importance to the industry at large, including educational programming, literacy advocacy, and collaborations with other national organizations. The Children's Book Council works annually on reading lists and round-ups to help teachers, librarians, parents, caregivers, and booksellers discover wonderful books for the kids and teens in their lives. Please visit [cbcbooks.org](http://cbcbooks.org) for more information.

### **Mathical Supporters Kit**

Resources for media, educators, and librarians to use to promote and feature Mathical award winners in children's reading programs can be found on the Mathical website at [mathicalbooks.org](http://mathicalbooks.org).

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