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





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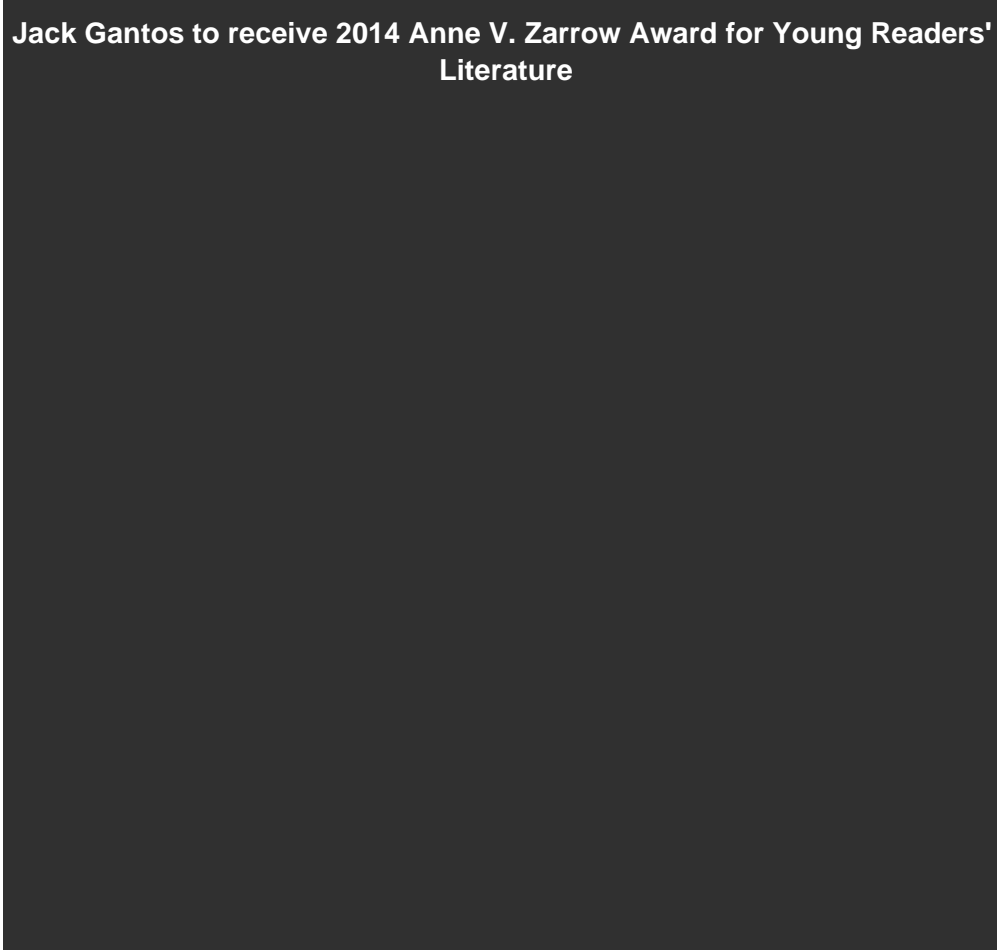
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Jack Gantos to receive 2014 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature

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Jack Gantos will receive the 2014 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature during a ceremony Aug. 22 at the Hardesty Regional Library. Courtesy

Posted: Sunday, December 15, 2013 12:00 am | Updated: 8:56 am, Sun Dec 15, 2013.

By JAMES D. WATTS JR. World Scene Writer | 0 comments

Prolific author Jack Gantos, whose books range from the adventures of a thoroughly rotten cat named Ralph to a series about a young boy navigating the treacherous worlds of family and fifth grade, is the recipient of the 2014 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature.

The award, sponsored by the Tulsa Library Trust, will be presented at a ceremony Aug.

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22 at the Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St. The prize includes a \$7,500 cash award and an engraved crystal book.

Gantos has won numerous awards including the Newbery Medal for his 2012 novel, "Dead End in Norvelt," a novel whose protagonist is a young man named Jack Gantos, living in a small Pennsylvania town similar to the one in which the real Gantos lived.

"Dead End in Norvelt" and its recently published sequel, "From Norvelt to Nowhere," draw in part of events in Gantos' own life which is true for many of his books, such as the series about Jack Henry.

Humor is a big part of his stories, but Gantos' best work contains a bit of a dark edge. In an interview on the website "Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast," Gantos said of his writing, "When I write a book that I think everyone is just going to love, then I know I'm on the wrong track."

Gantos grew up in Norvelt, Pa.; when he was 7, the family moved to Barbados, where Gantos developed a love of reading.

When Gantos was in the sixth grade, he came across his sister's diary and decided he could write something better than that. Those journals would become the source of many incidents in his later work.

Once out of high school, Gantos got caught up in an ill-fated scheme to smuggle drugs recounted in his memoir, "Hole in My Life." He spent 18 months in prison, an experience that made him determined to be a writer. He entered college to study creative writing.

It was in college that made his first professional sale, collaborating with artist Nicole Rubel on the first of the "Rotten Ralph" picture books.

Gantos' work also includes two stand-alone novels for young adults: "Desire Lines," about a teenager whose knowledge of a relationship between two fellow students puts him in a moral quandry, and "The Love Curse of the Rumbaughs," a dark, quirky story about the inhabitants of a small Pennsylvania town.

The Tulsa Library will hold a workshop for Tulsa County teachers wanting to incorporate Gantos' work into their curricula. The workshop will be Feb. 22 at the Hardesty Regional Library.

For more information, call the library at 918-549-7323, or visit tulsalibrary.org

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