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Kids, Cancer and a New Green Leaf

Leah Christopher

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Book Review

Title: Kids, Cancer and a New Green Leaf

Author: Dianne McKee Williams

Illustrator: Bonnie Oswald

Reviewer: Leah Christopher

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent

Publishing Platform

Publication Year: 2011

ISBN: 9781463645755

Number of Pages: 112

Interest Level: Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Review



Soon after Ms. Hansen runs a 5K race to fundraise for cancer research, she discovers that she has breast cancer. Instead of hiding the news, Ms. Hansen, a teacher, tells her fifth-grade class. They learn about cancer as they support her through the operations, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. One troublemaker, Jamon, learns to look outside his own problems to care about his teacher, and he gives more effort at school. As Ms. Hansen explains, he is turning a new leaf. By the end of school, her cancer treatments are over and Jamon is a more committed student. Ms. Hansen and many students run the same annual 5K to celebrate.

Based on the true experiences of the author, this book teaches basic information about cancer treatments and rehabilitation. While the main theme is learning to start over and make changes after a difficult experience, the book also includes other themes such as divorce, single parenting, and immigrant education. Since it is written in third person and told in brief snapshots over the school year, the reader at times has trouble connecting personally with the characters, whose feelings are less accessible. However, with a positive and informative tone, the book would be a great introduction for both kids who know someone who has cancer and those who have never encountered it.