

## Expat kids give top votes to local book

The Diary Of Amos Lee by local author Adeline Foo was written with Singaporean children in mind. But it seems that the story of 10-year-old Amos has struck a chord with expatriate children as well.

The book won in the Junior category of the inaugural Red Dot Awards organised by the International Schools' Librarians Network (ISLN), a group of teacher-librarians working in international schools here.

They decided to set up this award because there were no awards for children's books in Singapore. The shortlist of books for each category included popular international bestsellers such as Singing Sensation by Geronimo Stilton.

More than 6,000 votes were cast by children studying in the international schools. They chose four favourite books from the Picture Book, Junior, Middle and Senior categories.

The other winners are Do Not Open This Book! by Michaela Muntean in the Picture Book category, The Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Stewart in the Middle category and The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins in the Senior category.

Foo says: "It's quite a compliment that local books can be appreciated by an international community. But I think that the main appeal is that children are essentially the same.

Amos has a neurotic mother and a pesky younger sister, and a lot of kids can identify with that."

On her school visits, the 39-year-old also finds that children in international schools particularly loved the parts of the book that talked about places in Singapore that were new to them, for example, the fortune-telling parrot in Little India or the Milo dinosaur drink one can order at roti prata stalls.

"These children may not get to eat at these shops and experience our culture first-hand. But it would be great if the book helps them make friends with our country and culture," she adds.

ISLN president Barbara Philip adds: "Adeline's win was not surprising at all. These children live here, so this book is relevant to them in many ways."

Foo says her win is also testament that books on local content can have worldwide appeal. "I think what it means to local writers is that we can write about things we know best and still sell."



**A book about a 10-year-old boy by Adeline Foo helps expatriate children connect with Singapore.**  
PHOTO: ST FILE

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