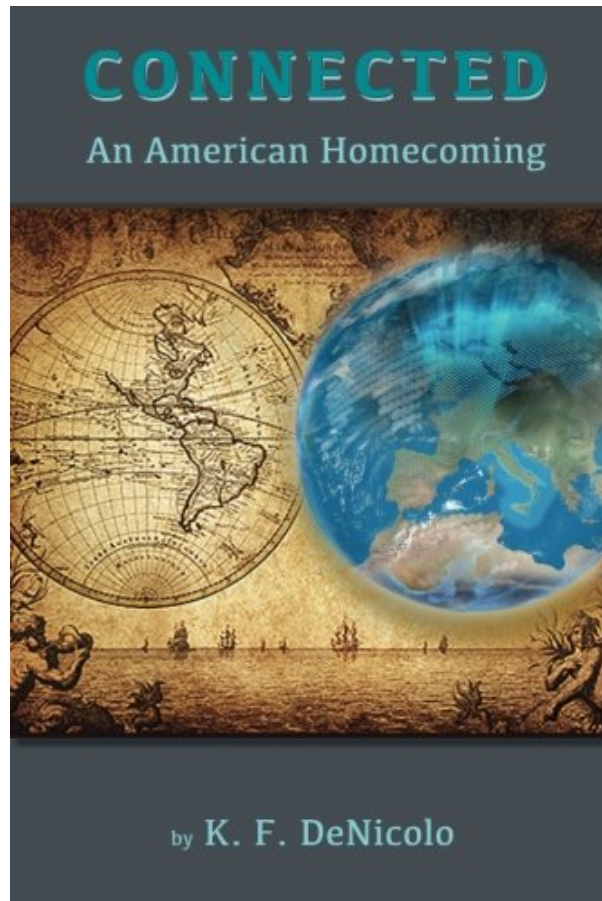


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CONNECTED

An American Homecoming



by K. F. DeNicolo

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About the Author

The author has been involved with some aspect of education and community for over 40 years. More importantly as a teacher, a mother, and grandmother, she draws on a variety of perspectives in crafting this fictional story. Young adults, women's literary clubs, and families will hear a memorable voice in this novel. These stories are about starting over, growing up, and values. Heartwarming characters struggle to tell their stories of diversity, immigration, and acceptance. Enjoy the twists and turns of "living the dream" and welcome this read to your bookshelf.

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Grandma battles for her dream yet again. Who'll stand by her side? Could it be Vincent, her mild mannered 8th grade grandson? Together, they assume the mission of living the dream and the personal journeys attached. What started in Italy, and moved to America is tested by the next generation. A simple plot, where a young boy runs to his grandmother for help on a school assignment, turns into a more complicated story. Does he get the powerful life-changing lessons of another time? Can he unravel a mystery? Who is he? Where is the moral compass of his life? What does it take to walk down life's road? One thing's for sure. Grandma is not going to take him down easy street for the answers. Will she be able to rally her life forces? Can she bridge the generation gap between history and time? Who has the real power to keep the dream alive? The answers may surprise you.

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Shared Problem Solving

By Richard Davidson, author of the five-volume Lord's Prayer Mystery Series, and the Imp Mysteries Connected compares the problems and inadequacies of today's youth with the difficulties prior-generation immigrant families faced, trying to fit into the culturally strange American social structure. It uses an old-country grandmother's anecdotal memories and previously overcome problems as guideposts for a thirteen year old boy trying to face the difficulties of school, bullying, and a dangerous circle of friends.

How many of today's youth learn from history and the past experiences of connected family to face their own obstacles and challenges? Most young people think that they face greater problems than their parents did and that they have to work things out on their own. This book challenges that notion and tries to guide youth toward leaning on lessons learned by their elders. The author's experiences of raising a family and working

as a teacher serve her well to grasp the contrasting viewpoints of family matriarch, perplexed youth, and educational staff within two different generations of the same family. Their experiences are indeed connected.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

She beautifully tells us about the immigrant's dream

By Betty Mac Kune-Karrer

"Connected: An American Homecoming"

By Cathy F. de Nicolo

This book is refreshing, especially when you contrast it with our daily news, which are full of reports on violence and terrorism.

Ms. De Nicolo takes a systemic view of relationships, describing various levels of interaction, i.e., the child, within the family, the family within the community, and the school, within the larger sociocultural context. She beautifully tells us about the immigrant's dream, but she goes beyond the dream to acknowledge the reciprocal nature of the immigrant's adaptation--what they receive from the larger culture as well as their contribution to the host society. This book also values the notion that bicultural lives are enriched both, because of the values they learned in their original country, as well as the new values they experience in the adoptive country.

The Family in her book is a strong family, who nurtures the children, but also teaches them to think by themselves. The grandmother's style of helping Vincent, who is dealing with bullying at school, is very positive, she first, asks him to think about what he wants to do with his problems, and what solutions come to mind. Her positive style of helping values the potential in Vincent to think about solutions by himself.

This book is very current, because it discusses acculturation and adaptation to the country of origin. --A current theme, especially for refugees, who are currently experiencing the dislocation of leaving their country for a new one. Immigrants have an advantage over refugees, in that they have been part of the decision to immigrate, and tend to hold in their mind the benevolent views of their country of origin, Refugees don't have that luxury, they leave in the middle of a crisis, and end up in emergent communities that vary in the degree of support they can provide.

Ms De Nicolo is a creative writer, she uses metaphor, inviting the reader to participate in defining the events, and emotions that the family encounters. I recommend this book because it presents many healing themes, within family relationships, and within children and schools. Books like this help children and families face the violence in the schools, not only bullying, but one would hope that it also helps to reduce the series of attacks that schools have faced in the last years.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A Passion for Being An American

By Judith

This miniature epic follows an Italian family who immigrated to the United States soon after the twentieth century to pursue their American dream. The story unfolds through the monologues and conversations of the original immigrants and their progeny in the next three generations.

The grandmother is the story's most compelling character. She is the one who encourages and inspires her daughter and grandson to embrace the American dream that beats in her own heart. She understands her children's youthful impatience for a self-determination that does not come easily. She raises subjects children do not like talking about, such as feelings of being outcast, bullied and misunderstood. She resists the easier path of complying with her grandson as he struggles with his Italian American identity and exerts herself, instead, to guide him towards the self-assertion that America makes possible. The feeling of not being understood comes out in the characters' speech patterns, sometimes broken English, elliptical teen talk, allegory, and metaphor.

"Connected: An American Homecoming" carries the strong theme that self-realization can only be achieved by confronting the challenges and difficulties of growing up and of being human. The monologues and conversations are intimate and laced with passion. ##

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