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If more information is needed before a decision can be made, contact Andrew Woodrow-Butcher at The Beguiling in Toronto where his expertise, especially about diversity in comics and age appropriateness, will not disappoint you. The other and better source, especially for final decision-making must be you, the teacher-librarian, and your knowledge and understanding of the content, gained by reading the titles yourself.

In order to promote diverse comics and graphic novels to teachers, an awareness of possible applications is important. Supplementing traditional resources with graphic novels can engage more learners and can offer learners a text that may reflect an image they recognize as “me”. By becoming familiar with the basic mechanics of comics creation, we can help students to read the combination of text, dialogue and images and improve comprehension. English Language Learners (ELL) can put spoken language in a context that will be more easily understood (Derrick, 2008, para.4) and possibly

experience a sense of inclusion. Students can be encouraged to evaluate the accuracy of the portrayal of diversity in the book, identify social issues or disproportionate representation of groups. Krashen (2011) identifies voluntary reading of comics as benefitting readers. By encouraging more reading in general of both comics and books he has found links to an improved interest in reading. Finally, the popularity of comics and graphic novels, whether read voluntarily or as part of a program, will expose readers to the experiences of diverse characters in diverse communities.

As the number and variety of titles available in this format become more available, our shelves should overflow with graphic novels and comics representing diversity.

Our students deserve to know their world in all its diversity. Whether your school is monochromatic or multicoloured, whether it is an elite sports school or a school with a differently abled population, the library must reflect every possible facet of humanity in order to be inclusive and representative of the global community. ■



Students from Lougheed Middle School show their love for diverse comics.