



Visiting Author and Illustrator Information

ALL AROUND US

by Xelena González · illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

“Life-affirming in its quiet splendor.”

— Kirkus Reviews

“A girl and her grandfather contemplate circles, both physical and metaphorical, in this thought-provoking tale of family, community, and interconnection.”

— Publishers Weekly

“An evocative picture book...about life and death, traditions, respect, and growth.”

— School Library Connection

“*All Around Us* is all about connections, graced by ethereal images—the perfect children’s book for this season of celebrating endings and new beginnings.”

— Lone Star Book Reviews



Xelena González

is the author of *All Around Us*, a picture book that deftly depicts her Mestiza culture in the U.S. Xelena is an accomplished journalist and dancer who has led various workshops in creative writing, world dance, and interdisciplinary arts.

xelenag@gmail.com



Adriana Garcia

is a Texas-based visual artist, muralist, and scenic designer who has exhibited nationally and presented her culturally-relevant work at various conferences. She has created murals with many community organizations and schools in Texas and beyond.

www.allaroundus.info

Publisher: CINCO PUNTOS PRESS
(Consortium, dist.), Picture Book, 32pages

10-digit ISBN: 1-941026-76-2

13-digit ISBN: 978-1-941026-76-2



ALL AROUND US

by Xelena González · illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia



Visiting Author and Illustrator Program Offerings

For large groups, we can offer a standard reading with a possible slide presentation, illustration demo, Q & A, and book signings. For smaller groups, we can offer the following specialized programs:



Tai Chi Storytelling

In this unique and dynamic program Xelena will follow a reading of her book *All Around Us* with a movement-based retelling of the tale. Drawing upon her experience living in China, she will introduce participants to the basics of tai chi in a way that will make the story

meaningful and unforgettable. Time permitting, participants will then engage in a group story circle that will involve their own ideas and movements inspired by tai chi, yoga, or other forms of expression. This program is appropriate for ages 5 to adult, and can be modified for younger audiences with parent participation.

30 minutes minimum, with the option to extend exercise up to 90 minutes



Writing & Sketching in Nature

Take a nature walk with *All Around Us* creators Xelena & Adriana, as we guide participants in new ways of observing their environment and re-envisioning their findings on the page. As writers,

we will play with personification and other poetic tricks. As artists, we will discover ways to add life to objects that only appear to be inanimate. All ages and levels are welcome to take the nature walk, but participants ages 8 and up will benefit the most from this experience.

*45 minutes minimum, with the option to extend exercise up to 2 hours
Open access to nature is essential. Parks, gardens, and even yards are ideal.*



Story Walk: An Interactive Way to Experience Story

All Around Us can also be presented in the form of a Story Walk, which can be considered an art installation or set up in the form of a scavenger hunt. This unique way of sharing stories promotes family literacy, healthy living, and nature appreciation. Please contact the creators to discuss the space and cost considerations involved in replicating this exhibition in your space or city. Indoor or outdoor displays are possible.





ALL AROUND US

by Xelena González · illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia



The Rainbow Within: Playing with Poetry

This workshop asks participants to go within and reflect upon their own unique gifts. We will connect with images from nature as we build a poem that may play with metaphor, simile, or personification. Adding illustrations to our creations will enhance the experience and the final piece can be designed on a single page or in “mini book” form. If time allows we will extend the poem into expressive movement with a focus on mindfulness and positive affirmations.

45 minutes minimum, with the option to extend exercise up to 2 hours



Colorful Arcs of Imagination

Add a splash of color to your walls as participants create a group mural that combines images and words relevant to agreed-upon themes and intentions. Everyone will have the chance to contribute ideas in the form of sketches and creative writing,

which Adriana and Xelena will help refine during the workshop. The final piece can be a stand-alone art piece for the space or the initial sketch for an eventual mural. (Adriana, an experienced muralist, can advise interested parties on mural development plans.) This program can be modified for early/pre-writers.

2 hours minimum is optimal, with the option to extend exercise up to 4 hours

The Seeds of Personal Story: Educator Workshop ●●

Open to teachers, parents, and lifelong learners, this workshop asks us to go to our roots to find the stories that shape us. We will begin to explore culture, family traditions, and belief systems through reflective writing exercises and guided discussion. Educators will learn simple techniques for eliciting similar writing from their students through engaging exercises that align with curriculum goals. This offering can be paired with demonstrated activities involving seeding and/or paper-making with seeds.

*1 hour minimum, with option to extend to 4 hours
Other program offerings can be modified for adults & educators.*

Program Notes & Fees

● All program offerings may be modified according to preference or time/space/participant size. Although programs are designed to be co-led by both author and illustrator, it is possible to hire one artist.

● A general guideline for program fees is to plan for \$1,000 per day. One day means providing 4-6 programs, depending on the length of each session. Cost of supplies, travel, and accommodations can affect this quote. Please be in touch to discuss details. We can adjust depending on your needs.

● If your school's budget does not allow for visiting authors/artists, consider teaming up with the PTA or with outside community organizations. Adding professional workshops to the visit may also allow your school to find other sources of funding.

To schedule a school visit, please contact Xelena González directly at 210.995.4599 xelenag@gmail.com



ALL AROUND US

by Xelena González · illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

All Around Us Early Literacy Stations



Rainbow Art Collage

Use the back-side of a clear contact paper to create a group mural. Define lines of a rainbow and encourage students to stick various materials onto proper color groupings (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet). Art collage materials can include scrap/recycled paper, circle cut-outs, tissue paper, construction paper, pipe cleaners, pom-poms, metallic cut-outs, etc.

Art collage materials can include scrap/recycled paper, circle cut-outs, tissue paper, construction paper, pipe cleaners, pom-poms, metallic cut-outs, etc.

Food Stampers

This can be a variation on above-mentioned activity, if designed in a rainbow shape....Use cut vegetables as stampers. Ideas include: apples, potatoes, celery, carrots, radishes, oranges, zucchini, bok choy, and okra. Non-toxic acrylic paint works best. Try multiple colors!

Tips: Allow "drying time" for wet vegetables/fruit. Design more intricate stampers by sculpting designs into sturdy veggies like potatoes.

Circles Circles

Provide glue, paper, writing materials, and pre-cut circles of various sizes. Allow free expression in what participants create using only circles....If possible, use die-cut circular book pages to create circular books, binding with yarn and freely filling the pages inside.

Little Gardeners

Fill sensory bins with non-toxic gardening soil. Bury plastic fruits and vegetables inside. Provide a variety of "little diggers" such as hoes, shovels, and rakes. To add another early literacy component, make it into a matching game where dug-up fruits and vegetables can be placed into a bin or near a paper that says food name. For example: Broccoli, Apples, Potatoes, and perhaps a photo of each can be printed/pictured on a paper or on boxes for sorting.



Eat a Rainbow

This is always a favorite song that calls upon listeners/singers to name food of various colors. The lyrics are simple and sung to the tune of the song "Pop Goes the Weasel":

I eat a rainbow everyday

Foods of many colors

Can you name a red food?

...and can you name another?

Orange

Yellow

Green

Blue

Purple



ALL AROUND US

by Xelena González · illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

Sensory Bottles

Turn recycled plastic bottles into sensory bottles by filling it with objects from nature. Not all items will fit, and this makes for a good “talk exercise.” It is also a good pre-STEM activity to observe how the organic matter inside changes over time (sometimes there is breakage, color change, or even mold!). And of course, seeds, rocks, and nuts always make nice shakers!

Tracing Nature

Make nature rubbings using crayons, chalk, and other writing materials. Tracing paper works best. Leaves with thick veins always show beautifully. Please help little ones hold paper steady, or team up students to work together. Accentuate by allowing student to add his/her own name and maybe making the nature rubbing into a new creature.

Seeding Activity

There are lots of seeding activities suggested online for various age groups. Here is one simple version:



Create a plastic bag “greenhouse”

- 1) Wet a folded paper towel. It should hold a fair amount of water, but not be dripping wet.
- 2) Slip the paper towel into a plastic baggie.
- 3) Place one bean seed between the towel and the bag and zip it closed.
- 4) After a few days (about five), the seeds will begin to sprout!
- 5) After a few more days, you should be able to see the roots spreading out and the leaves beginning to peek out of the seed coat.
- 6) These seeds are just starting to grow. Since they are not growing in nutritious soil, they will eventually wither. Plant your sprout in soil to continue growing.



ALL AROUND US

by Xelena González · illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

Prompts for Writing & Discussion

For older readers, the book provides rich opportunities to explore, research, and discuss important topics.

- 1) *What are some of the other circles--both literal and figurative--that you notice in your world?*
- 2) *What circles and cycles are you a part of? Do you enjoy being a part of these? What do you add to the circle?*
- 3) *The book characters use the process of mulching in their garden. What are the benefits of mulching? How does it work?*
- 4) *The narrator notices that sometimes her grandfather seems sad remembering his ancestors. Though she does not remember them the way he does, she still appears to be sitting quietly by his side. Can you relate to this feeling or situation? What are some things you can do when others experience sadness that you don't necessarily feel yourself?*
- 5) *What are the death rituals referenced in the book? Where in the world are some of these customs practiced? What are some other practices and rituals different cultures express during times of death?*
- 6) *What exactly is buried at the roots of the apple tree? Discuss this custom and other rituals/practices different cultures express during times of birth.*
- 7) *What are your favorite things to do with your grandparents?*
- 8) *Share some life lessons or advice your grandparents have shared with you.*
- 9) *The book's illustrator is a muralist. Have you seen any murals in your neighborhood? Where does this tradition come from? Discuss the themes you notice in different murals.*
- 10) *The grandfather says the unseen half of a rainbow is "...down below, in the earth, where water and light feed new life." What does he mean by this? Discuss this in both a figurative and a literal way.*

Book Themes

Death / Life Cycles

Family / Traditions

Nature / Gardening

Recycling / Mulching

The story has several relevant themes that can be explored in a variety of ways, including discussion, book pairing, and activities.