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MEDIA RELEASE  
2016 Sydney Taylor Book Awards Announced by AJL

Lesléa Newman and Amy June Bates, author and illustrator of **Ketzel, the Cat who Composed**, Aharon Appelfeld, Philippe Dumas and Jeffrey M. Green, author, illustrator and translator of **Adam and Thomas**, and Laura Amy Schlitz, author of **The Hired Girl**, are the 2016 winners of the Sydney Taylor Book Award.

The Sydney Taylor Book Award honors new books for children and teens that exemplify the highest literary standards while authentically portraying the Jewish experience. The award memorializes Sydney Taylor, author of the classic *All-of-a-Kind Family* series. The winners will receive their awards at the Association of Jewish Libraries Conference in Charleston, South Carolina this June.

Newman and Bates will receive the 2016 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Younger Reader category for **Ketzel, the Cat Who Composed**, published by Candlewick Press. This delightful picture book tells the true story of musician Morris Moshe Cotel, whose cat helped him compose a one-minute composition that received an honorable mention in the *Paris New Music Review* competition. The illustrations are heartwarming and add much charm to the story. Appelfeld, Dumas and Green will receive the 2016 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Older Readers category for **Adam and Thomas**, published by Seven Stories Press. This sweet story tells of two nine-year-old Jewish boys who survive the last winter of World War II, helping each other so that one grows physically stronger and braver and the other grows spiritually. Laura Amy Schlitz will receive the 2016 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Teen category for **The Hired Girl**, published by Candlewick Press. This sensitive story tells how fourteen-year-old Catholic Joan Skraggs becomes a hired girl to a Jewish family where she learns and grows in unexpected ways.

Five Sydney Taylor Honor Books were named for 2016. For Younger Readers, the Honor Books are **Everybody Says Shalom** written by Leslie Kimmelman and illustrated by Talitha Shipman, published by Random House, and **Shanghai Sukkah** written by Heidi Smith Hyde and illustrated by Jing Jing Tsong, published by Kar-Ben Publishing. **Hereville: How Mirka Caught a Fish** by Barry Deutsch, published by Amulet Books, is the Honor book in the Older Reader category. For Teen Readers, the Honor books are **Serendipity's Footsteps** by Suzanne Nelson, published by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, and **Stones on a Grave** by Kathy Kacer, published by Orca Book Publishers.

Winners and Honor recipients will be participating in a blog tour from February 7-12, 2016. For more information about the blog please visit [www.jewishlibraries.org/blog](http://www.jewishlibraries.org/blog).

In addition to the medal winners, the Award Committee designated twelve Notable Books of Jewish Content for 2016. More information about the Sydney Taylor Book Award can be found at [www.SydneyTaylorBookAward.org](http://www.SydneyTaylorBookAward.org).

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