

A Thanks From Katherine Applegate

Dear Pennsylvania young readers, and teachers and librarians (of all ages!),

I am so thrilled that you have chosen **THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN** for the 2013-14 Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Award, Grades 3-6 Division!

Being a writer is a pretty swell job. (I get paid to make things up all day while I wear my pajamas: what's not to like?) There's nothing quite like connecting with another person by sharing a story. Which is why receiving this honor, voted on by readers, is especially lovely.

It makes me hopeful to see how eagerly young people have embraced Ivan's story. The fact that my book was inspired by a real gorilla — one who spent 27 years caged in a Tacoma shopping mall — makes this reception even more moving. Despite Ivan's sad beginnings, we humans came through in the end and tried to give him the life he'd long deserved. It's remarkable when you think about it, how one lonely Western Lowland gorilla managed to change so many human lives.

Thank you so much for this wonderful honor.

Gratefully,

Katherine Applegate