

The Golden Pathway

Book Reviews

Title: *The Golden Pathway*

Written by: Donna McDine

Illustrated by: K.C. Snider

Ages: 8-12

Publisher: Guardian Angel Publishing, Inc.

Hardcover: ISBN: 978-1-61633-081-1; 1616330813

Soft cover: ISBN: 978-1-61633-088-0; 1616330880

eBook: ISBN: 978-1-61633-082-8; 1616330821

Published: August 2010

September 17, 2014

The Golden Pathway by Donna McDine is a beautiful little children's book with a very important message of compassion, caring, and bravery. The story takes us back in time when slavery existed and introduces us to one very courageous young boy. As the story unfolds there are lovely full page color illustrations by K.C. Snider that help tell the story as well and I must say I was captivated by them as I'm sure children will be too.

David lives with his Pa and Ma on their homestead and tries very hard each day not to anger his father who seldom has a kind word for him. Worse still are the screams that come from the barn when David's father beats their teenage slave Jenkins. Later when David should be asleep in bed he sneaks out to the barn to clean the wounds that his father has inflicted on Jenkins. David hates the unfairness of it all and can't understand this horrible treatment. So despite his abusive father and the danger to himself David not only befriends Jenkins but also helps him escape his circumstances by leading him to safety.

This book is a wonderful teaching tool introducing children to the horrors of slavery. A parent and child can read this together and then discuss the various topics that arise throughout this book that will lead them to a better understanding of a time long past and the Underground Railway that led many to freedom. I really enjoyed the book, for despite the sobering topic there is also the hope and inspiration that comes through on every page because of the courage of this one little boy. Highly recommended!

Reviewed by: Darlene ~ Peeking Between the Pages ~

<http://www.peekingbetweenthepages.com/2014/09/the-golden-pathway-by-donna-mcdine-giveaway-us-print-intl-ebook.html>

September 12, 2014

I will not recap what this book is about I think the synopsis does a fine job of that. There are so many positive things that I love about this book.

The Golden Pathway is the perfect book to read to any 8-12 year old. It shows a side of American history from a child's POV and that is rarely done. This book can open the door to questions and discussions about the Underground Railroad and other aspects of this time period. David's compassion for Jenkins' is heartfelt, he knows what is right and his desire to help (even though he knows the consequences if he is caught) is admirable. He is brave and determined to get Jenkins' away, David has a plan and figures out how to make it work.

This is a powerful book that is further enhanced with the colorful and moving illustrations. Not just a historical story but educational as well. A must have for classrooms and home libraries.

Reviewed by: Margaret ~ Just One More Chapter ~

<http://www.justonemorechapter.com/2014/09/the-golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine.html>

September 11, 2014

As with Ms. McDine's story Powder Monkey, my 9 year-old son, and I read *The Golden Pathway* in one sitting, drawn into the story from the very first page. The bravery and kindness displayed by David is remarkable and I was happy to find the main character doing what he felt was right in such a horrible situation and being such an inspiring example for my son. We had quite the conversation when the story was over, discussing the difference between doing what your parents tell you (which is what my son has been taught) and doing what is right when a parent just so happens to be doing something very bad. I always enjoy when a book prompts these sorts of discussion and between this and the discussion of slavery we spent a while talking about David and Jenkins and their journey as well as the historic context of slavery, the underground railroad, etc.

I enjoyed the illustrations very much and found that they very accurately depict the high emotion and drama going on in the story. The colors are bright and draw the eye to them, and having a picture on every other page makes for a visual adventure as much as the story lead us on a written one.

After finishing this story as well as Powder Monkey my son's biggest complaint was that they were both very sad and, at times, scary (he did not like hearing about the slaves or David getting beaten!). While we talked about the fact that many aspects of life and history are not happy I think in the future I will intersperse heavy stories such as these with some more light-hearted fare. Even so, we both enjoyed the story and I especially enjoyed the long discussions that came after!

So What Did I Think About The Cover?: I enjoyed it, although given the tension running throughout the short story I would probably have preferred a more anxious picture...maybe David whispering the Jenkins with a shadow cast over them!

My Rating: 4.0/5.0

Reviewed by: Colleen Turner – Historical Tapestry

~ <http://historicaltapestry.blogspot.com/2014/09/the-golden-pathway-blog-tour-review.html>

September 11, 2014

I love stories where the protagonist rises above mediocrity, or status-quo, or standard culture, and takes a stand for justice. David is a youth, and it takes courage to help those who have no voice, in order rescue an individual and even an entire race of people. David's heart is kind and thoughtful, he is respectful of people, but does not hesitate despite fear to do the right thing. *The Golden Pathway* is both a historical story and a teaching story. It teaches a child they can make a difference and not just when they become a grown-up. Further, it teaches the importance of character, wisdom, and the kind of legacy we leave.

I loved the illustrations. Once again, as in the previous book by the author/illustrator, the facial expressions and postures of the people tell the story (without using words).

Reviewed by Annette: Impressions in Ink ~ <http://impressionsinink.blogspot.com/2014/09/the-golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine.html>

September 8, 2014

Okay, so the synopsis above does a great job in describing the story but it doesn't convey the intensity of the read you're embarking on. For a book intended for 8-12 year olds, I was a tad surprised...not in the offended sense, just in the reality of what's presented. The author isn't explicit but they do not sugar coat the threat of abuse hanging over David's head, the daily beatings that Jenkins has to endure, or the lack of happy endings found for anyone discovered to be assisting those viewed as property to escape. In a little over 20 pages, we meet David, watch as he nurtures a friendship of sorts with Jenkins, see him discover his inner strength and put his good intentions into actions that saves the life of one, and assumedly many more if David's story was to continue. That's a lot of story, a lot of knowledge and a lot of emotion in a few pages. Well done indeed.

In conclusion, my verdict lies in the camp of the fans. I'm not a huge history buff but I did delve into this time period for a high school project once upon a time and feel quite strongly about the slavery issue. I appreciate the light shed by the author in a realistic and mostly age appropriate way...especially when you consider the FREE Educator Guides available to explore the topic further. If you're looking for a book to help explain the events that transpired during this time in

history or to satisfy curious minds on the topic, this is definitely a book to put on your "to read" list.

Reviewed by Gina: Insatiable Readers: <http://insatiablereaders.blogspot.com/2014/09/blog-tour-golden-pathway-by-donna-m.html#.VA2MoksdopE>

September 8, 2014

This story is written for children and is about a young boy's experience during the Civil War. Young David lives in a violent home, and he befriends his family's slave, Jenkins. One night he gets a chance to help Jenkins escape on the Underground Railroad. Will he take the risk to help his friend?

This is a very short story — picture book style and less than 20 pages. The copy I read was a hardcover library-binding edition. I kept thinking how this would be a wonderful edition to the classroom: David's story is a great jumping off point to start to discuss the Civil War, slavery, the Underground Railroad, and basic human rights. It is aimed at younger elementary-aged readers, and I plan to have my children read it as a way to start a discussion on slavery and the Civil War (which they've learned about some in school, but still find puzzling and highly disturbing).

Reviewed by Beth: Beth's Book Nook Blog: <http://drbethnolan.wordpress.com/2014/09/08/review-the-golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine>

September 5, 2014

Since I read "Powder Monkey" by Donna M. McDine I had an idea of what to expect. I knew that the subject covered would be a serious one. Since this is my second book by McDine I can appreciate the magical way that she incorporates very serious topics in a very courageous way. David is a young boy that defies his father, befriends his father's slave and ultimately helps him. David was incredibly courageous and strong. I plan to keep this book on my bookshelf for my children to read. The courage of the main characters is very educational and an excellent example of courage. I highly enjoyed and recommend Donna M. McDine's books "Powder Monkey" and "The Golden Pathway" as both character-building books and as educational tools. Great book and great illustrations.

Reviewed by Diana ~ Silva of Book Nerd: <http://booknerdleotodo.blogspot.com/2014/09/the-golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine.html>

September 5, 2014

A topic that is usually introduced in the 3rd grade, The Golden Pathway is a nice addition to historical literature on the subject of the slavery. The main character knows that slavery is

wrong and secretly helps a slave. Although suggested for age 8 and up, I think there are a couple of scenes that an 8 year old will need some guidance and/or clarification in understanding, but overall an informative historical read.

Reviewed by Deitre: A Leisure Moment: <http://www.aleisuremoment.com/2014/09/05/blog-tour-book-review-the-golden-pathway-by-donna-mcdine/>

August 31, 2014

Meaningful, inspiring and moving, *The Golden Pathway* is a beautiful historical book for children ages 8-12. It's an important addition to every child's bookshelf, as it will help teach your kid about diversity, courage, compassion and doing the right thing.

The book is about two boys - two very different boys - and their unlikely friendship. David is the son of a cruel and mean drunk. Jenkins is an African American teenage boy who is owned by David's father (in other words, he is a slave). Though often mistreated and called "a sissy" by his father, David knows the difference between right and wrong, and is brave enough to stand up for his beliefs. Appalled by his father's cruel behavior and violence towards his young slaves, he's determined to help Jenkins escape to safety. He's willing to risk his father's wrath and his own safety, to help his friend. His compassion and understanding of social injustice, as well as his determination to fight against it, is something truly remarkable and inspiring, especially considering his very young age. This book made a huge impression on me, making *The Golden Pathway* an essential part of my daughter's book collection. It's a story that I'm sure will inspire and affect her just as much as it inspired and affected me.

Historically accurate, *The Golden Pathway* mentions the famous Underground Railway that helped many African Americans escape to freedom. It also mentions Quakers who firmly believed that no one should ever be able to claim another human being as property, and who - thanks to their persistence and fierce dedication to the cause - helped make a difference.

Through Donna McDine's accessible writing and K.C. Snider's gorgeous illustrations, *The Golden Pathway* tells a powerful tale of finding strength to help those in need, even if it means risking our own safety. A story about doing what is right and making a difference. A story of bravery and dedication that is sure to inspire kids all around the world and help shape them into courageous, admirable people.

Reviewed by Evie Seo: Amazon Top 1000 Reviewer

August 29, 2014

A courageous and inspiring children's book. David does not like that his father owns or mistreats their slave, Jenkins. Even though David's father can be mean, David risks the consequences to try and help his friend escape on the Underground Railroad.

This book is written with honesty and with the reality of the subject matter at the time. There is not a lot of sugarcoating, a slave is whipped and David's father is an alcoholic. With this in mind, it is most appropriate for children in fourth grade. The message of the book is clear and the illustrations are appropriate and truthful to the situation. I actually wish that the book was a little longer and that the situations presented were elaborated on.

Reviewed by: 100 Pages a Day, Stephanie's Book Reviews -
<http://stephaniesbookreviews.weebly.com/blog-tours/the-golden-pathway>

August 25, 2014

It seems like a rarity that we have books now that incorporate significant events in American history for kids. Mainly due to our PC culture diverting from moments that might have been horrible, it's so important to educate our children of the past to understand where we came from to progress forward for a better future. Not only that but there is so much that has happened in our history that seems like they don't learn about anymore.

Even though slavery is a tough subject, it's still a part of history that has so many stories that can be told. As horrible as we have learned about the bad part of it, when you read a story like *The Golden Pathway*, it teaches children about the Underground Railroad, which was a significant part that tried to free slaves and the people who risked their lives to help them.

Being told from the perspective of a child I thought had more of an impact that really made this book inspiring. Beautifully written as well complemented with its illustrations, I thought not only was this a wonderful story being told but the lessons of character and humility of what one person would sacrifice for another really deserves praise. For such a serious topic, I felt it was written eloquently capturing that childlike innocence but comprehensive for their age range.

The recommended age for this book is 8-12, which I agree with. I would definitely recommend this book. Her ability to blend history storytelling makes this a great read that not only kids will like but adults as well.

Reviewed by: Michelle Bowles, What is that Book About -
<http://www.whatisthatbookabout.com/kidsreviews/2014/8/25/review-the-golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine>

June 23, 2014

The Golden Pathway is a well-done book that would make a great addition to a classroom or home-school library or to be used by any parent who wants to help teach their child about compassion, prejudice and right versus wrong.

Slavery is not an enjoyable subject to read about but this book shows that one person can make a difference by choosing to help instead of turning a blind eye. The lesson of this book can easily be applied to situations facing our children today where it takes courage to help others who are struggling or suffering.

Reviewed by: Kathy, I am a Reader – Amazon Top 500 Reviewer

June 17, 2012

The Golden Pathway is about a young boy, David, in a time when having slaves was commonplace. Almost every night, David hears the screams of Jenkins' coming from the barn, as his Pa in another drunken stupor beats the poor sixteen-year-old slave boy. While David knows he could catch a beating from his alcoholic father, he takes the risk and sneaks into the barn to help treat Jenkins' wounds. But just trying to heal wounds doesn't feel enough to David, he knows that being beaten every night is no way for a person to live - black or white- and sets out to help Jenkins' be free.

To say this was a touching story wouldn't do it justice. It brings back to life part of America's shameful past, and the heroes within it. You're on edge as the two boys journey toward freedom for Jenkins, hoping every second that they're not caught by David's hateful Pa. But through determination, strength they didn't know they had, and compassion, they press on to The Underground Railroad; the golden pathway to Jenkins' freedom.

The author was masterful at touching upon an era that should not be forgotten, yet in a simple enough manner for kids to not only understand, but feel. Through this book they can learn what true compassion means, and that anyone can be a hero if they have the courage to stand up for what's right.

The water-color illustrations in this book are beautiful, mirroring the essence of the scenes impeccably.

Overall this was a fantastic read. It amazed me how a children's book could bring so many emotions to the surface as I read; fear, anger, shame, hope, strength, compassion. The author did a superb job handling such a dark subject on a level for both kids and adults alike - instilling the memories of our past into you, showing you what a true hero looks like, and that those traits can be found in anyone. I would recommend this to anyone with children over 8, and I would recommend that the parents read it as well. It's a beautiful, touching story sure to hold onto your heart and breath through every page.

Reviewed by Darian Wilk ~

https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/281169687?book_show_action=true&page=1

February 2012

This book takes children back to a dark time in American History. It is the story of a very brave young boy and a sixteen-year-old slave boy, named Jenkins.

David lives in the Southern US with his Mother and Alcoholic Father. He loves his parents, but doesn't understand the abuse. David somehow finds the strength to help Jenkins, he risks a beating by sneaking out to the barn and tending to Jenkins wounds. They were inflicted by his father. He has to find a way to help...he can't bare this cruelty.

The book also gives a look into the Underground Railroad, *The Golden Pathway*. There were some people who were willing to sacrifice their lives to help, called "Quakers".

The book is beautifully illustrated, and written for a child to glimpse some of the injustice in our Country. It should be a must have book in all libraries.

Reviewed by: Maureen Timmerman, Book Blogger at Maureen's Musings ~

<http://musingsbymaureen.blogspot.com/2012/02/golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine.html>

February 2012

Nearly every day, *David* hears the screams coming from the barn as his pa beats his sixteen – year – old slave, *Jenkins*. He knows this is wrong and wants to help *Jenkins* but all he can do is to sneak out of his bedroom window when the screams stop. He then hides in the shadows, goes to the barn to clean *Jenkins* wounds...again. But is this all he can do?

The Golden Pathway is a story of courage, determination, inner strength, compassion, and doing the right thing when wrong is being done all around you. This is also a story of the darkest times in American history that shouldn't be forgotten and shows that anyone can help someone else out of a bad situation in spite of the consequences to themselves. The watercolor illustrations are brilliantly drawn by K.C. Snider. They add to the action and atmosphere of the book.

Reviewed by: Deb Hockenberry ~

<http://thebumpyroadtopublishing.blogspot.com/2012/02/golden-pathway.html>

February 2012

The Golden Pathway is a historical fiction which transports you to the times of the Underground Railroad and there you meet a boy called David, who is courageous enough to befriend his cruel father's, sixteen year old slave, Jenkins. David is a compassionate boy in spite of growing up in a hostile environment. He helps out at home by doing various chores. But he defies his father though not openly and helps Jenkins howsoever he can. He secretly tends to Jenkins wounds after his father's beatings and feels strongly about Jenkins circumstances.

Do read on to find out how does David plan to save his slave friend from his father's merciless abuse and how does he go about it? Is David successful in saving Jenkins or does he get caught?

At the end of the book the author has provided a bibliography for reference and there is an author's note which explains the terms used in story, which I found very helpful.

The illustrations done by K.C. Snider, an award winning artist, are really beautiful. I especially liked her illustrations of the farmstead.

Donna M. McDine, is an award winning children's author and it comes through in the book. The way she has handled such a delicate and emotional subject is really good. She has given a good twist to the tale in the end. The story imparts an important message to the children, of being courageous and yet compassionate towards fellow human beings. At the same time the story makes the children realize the plight people went through in those times.

The Golden Pathway definitely makes a good read for the children.

Reviewed by: Benu Bali ~ <http://zealotreaders.blogspot.com/2012/02/golden-pathway.html>

February 2012

The Golden Pathway, by Donna M. McDine, with artwork by K.C. Snider, is a captivating book about a sore subject in American history – the anguish of slavery. This moving story shows young readers the courage of one slave owner's son, David, who rescues the slave Jenkins from a life of beatings.

David helps Jenkins after each beating, but knows he must do more than cleanse wounds. He has to help Jenkins escape or suffer a slow death at his father's hands. The story grabs your heart. You hold your breath, hoping David won't be caught by his mean Pa. You don't breathe until the end, when Jenkins gains freedom through the underground railway. David's compassion and bravery will inspire others to do the right thing in difficult situations.

K.C. Snider's sensitive artwork is the perfect vehicle to convey Jenkins' pain, David's courage, and the threat they live under. K.C. Snider exposes the reader to the unvarnished truth, the reality of that horrid past in her artwork, but also shows us conviction and hope shining in David's face.

Donna McDine has bared a shameful legacy for us to deal with. She's done it with tenderness and care, brought us face to face with that ugliness and made it personal. Then she's given us high purpose and bravery in David and the shopkeeper Mr. Stump. Their quiet determination to right this wrong, at great personal risk, inspires and uplifts us all. This award winning story is not to be missed.

Reviewed by: Penelope Anne Cole ~ <http://penelopeannecole.blogspot.com/>

July 15, 2011

I was interested in reading a children's book that dealt with slavery and was happy when Mrs. McDine was able to send me a copy for review.

I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was drawn into the story within the first few paragraphs. Mrs. McDine has so vividly portrayed the characters, (both good and bad); at first I was reluctant to read this story with my 8 year old daughter. Not because of the subjects of slavery or the underground railroad, topics both my daughters have learned about in school. My reluctance was over the very real ugliness found in the Father or Pa. I struggled with wanting my youngest to know that some fathers can and do live in such a manner.

After re-reading *The Golden Pathway*, I decided that it was a great teaching tool with lessons in history yes, but more than that, this short story contained powerful life lessons in: bravery, kindness, making the right choices, which isn't always easy, sometimes parents/adults make bad choices, and that kids have power to change things too.

This finely illustrated book will have you rooting for two boys thrown together by circumstances beyond their control, until one brave boy decides to help the other. I did wish for one more chapter in which we could take at least part of the journey to freedom with Jenkins.

Their Review:

Since this book was written for 8-12 year olds, I found it serendipitous that I am the proud Mom of 8 and 12 year old daughters. I thought I'd ask them to do a mini review.

They both liked the book, because it had a happy ending and because the son was really brave to help the slave. They both felt the book conveyed the special lesson that you should always treat others the way you want to be treated and that owning another person is wrong.

Their favorite part of the book was when David helped Jenkins get away. And, like me, they both would have liked to see the story continue for at least a little while longer, just to make sure Jenkins got to safety.

I would gladly recommend this story to parents and kids just learning about slavery. I would recommend that parents read the story with younger kids as I did so that you can help them better understand not only slavery, but the very real ugliness that can reside in some people.

Reviewed by: Linda Kinsman, WAHM ~ <http://mywahmplan.blogspot.com/2011/07/golden-pathway-book-review.html>

July 11, 2011

As a homeschool mom – especially given our heavy use of unit studies and “living books” – I am always on the lookout for good historical fiction for children. (Historical fiction is easy to find.

Historical fiction for children isn't always.) As a result, I was happy to be given the opportunity to read and review [*The Golden Pathway*](#), by Donna M. McDine.

The Golden Pathway addresses a tough subject – slavery and the Underground Railroad. The suggested audience is readers aged 8-12, but I will probably include my 4-year-old when we read it as part of our study of that time period.

I would probably not use this as my children's *only* exposure to the time, as I'm concerned it might give them a unrealistically one-dimensional view of the place and the people. To put it plainly, I wouldn't want them to draw the conclusion that *every* white southerner was cruel, based on one story of one (fictional) family. In context, though, I found it to be an excellent introduction to a difficult period of history.

The only thing I dislike about the book is that the story centers around a young man who defies his father in order to care for and free the family's slave. I would have preferred to read my children a story about a family working *together* to end injustice rather than one about a son going behind his father's back. The reality, however, is that, that sort of thing happened. (When it really comes down it, I would *rather* not have to read my children books about racial slavery in the first place! But it happened, and those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. So we read about the ugly truth.)

All in all, I think this is a good introduction to the topic, with a story centered around a young person so that young people can readily identify with it. I will probably be reading it with/to my children, rather than handing it over – but maybe that's a better idea, anyway, given the nature of the subject.

After reading the book and the author's note about code words, you might want to sing "Get On Board" and/or "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

Disclosure: I was provided with this book, free of charge, by the author to facilitate this review. All opinions expressed are strictly my own.

Reviewed by Rachel Ramey ~ <http://www.titus2homemaker.com/2011/07/the-golden-pathway-review/>

July 3, 2011

I had the privilege of reading and reviewing Donna M. McDine's children's book *The Golden Pathway*. This picture book is about southern slaves and the underground rail road.

More specifically, it is about a young boy who's father owns a plantation. While on the plantation he befriends a slave who is the target of his father's drunken rages.

I did enjoy the story and the knowledge that the story brought. The pictures are beautiful and Jenkins (the slave) make the story seem more real than the actual main character, David. I could

honestly see myself using this book in my middle school classroom. I would not recommend it for younger children due to the presentation of the subject matter. However, for struggling readers in upper elementary and middle school this is a great resource that I can't recommend enough.

I look forward to having my 8th grade students read this during the upcoming school year.

Reviewed by Sara Cart ~ <http://carts3bears.blogspot.com/2011/07/book-review-golden-pathway.html>

June 24, 2011

The Golden Pathway by Donna M. McDine is set in the times of slavery in America. It tells a poignant story of a boy that sees how his father treats his slaves. He tries to help one of the slaves. His father is a difficult taskmaster for his slaves and his family. After hearing his father beat one of the slaves he shows courage and compassion by slipping out to take care of the beaten slave. The young man figures out a way to help this slave boy escape to freedom. He has heard of the freedom trail and helps to send his friend to freedom and a new life.

Even though this story is set in another time in history, it still speaks to children of our generation. It teaches love, compassion and courage. Many children of today see difficult things growing up. They go through painful things. I feel this story speaks to them in a special way. It gives hope and shows the almost forgotten art of kindness.

I believe our children need to learn about history. This book teaches a lesson in history and also teaches good character traits at the same time. It is written for children ages 8 to 12. It is beautifully illustrated by K. C. Snider.

I was given this book to read and review and give my honest opinion. I have not been paid to do this. I have written an honest review of this book.

Reviewed by Karen Dobson ~ <http://grannysperspective.blogspot.com/2011/06/golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine-book.html>

June 4, 2011

The Golden Pathway by award winning author Donna McDine is a book written for children ages 8-12, but I think this is a must read for all ages. The book is about a young boy, David the son of a slave owner, his father, and a young slave boy named Jenkins. The book shows the battle between wrong and right even within families. David witnesses the brutal beating of Jenkins everyday and wants to help him out. Despite enormous risk to himself David searching for a way to get Jenkins out. The use of period language really helps immerse the reader into the book. The illustrations are beautifully done, showing you the struggle David and Jenkins go

through together. It helps to remind you what an important part in history that the Underground Railroad played!

Reviewed by Rebecca Fry ~ <http://momof-3boys.blogspot.com/2011/06/golden-pathway-by-donna-mcdine.html>

May 13, 2011

Raised in a hostile environment where abuse occurs daily, David attempts to break the mold and befriends the slave, Jenkins, owned by his Pa. Fighting against extraordinary times and beliefs, David leads Jenkins to freedom with no regard for his own safety and possible consequences dealt out by his Pa.

My Review: What a powerful story of good will by Award winning children's author, Donna McDine. She takes you back in time showing us that slavery did exist and how the Underground Railroad helped slaves escape to the north where they gained their freedom.

The message we should take from this story is that there are good and faithful people willing to make a wrong right by satisfying anything to help others. What a wonderful illustration by K.C. Snider bringing the story to life. I highly recommend *The Golden Pathway* to History teachers, parents, and children.

Reviewed by Ella Johnson ~ <http://mymcbooks.wordpress.com/2011/05/13/book-review-the-golden-pathway-by-donna-m-mcdine>

February 4, 2011

Award winning children's author, Donna M. McDine, has written a book targeted to kids from 8 to 12 years old that teaches about our American history during the turbulent time of slavery. *The Golden Pathway* is a beautiful example of what children's literature can be when presented in an interesting and artistic manner.

Illustrations in *The Golden Pathway* are especially thought provoking and will no doubt encourage visual thinking, conversation and a desire to find out more about this riveting time in history. McDine tells the story beautifully about the Underground Railroad and a young boy who overcomes his abusive past to help a slave flee to freedom.

The courage that David, and the slave, Jenkins, display will serve to give courage to all preteens, especially those who must deal with bullies at school every day or an abusive situation at home. Children will understand David's agony as he clamps his hands over his ears to cover the screams that shattered the silence of the night.

The screams continue as a result of David's father using his belt to whip slaves into submission. One night, David vows to overcome his fears of what his own father might do to him and defy the times in which he lives to help a man escape the bonds of slavery for a new life. As the white child of a slave owner, David puts himself in horrible jeopardy by helping Jenkins to escape from a hostile environment and escape to freedom through the Underground Railroad's network of assistance.

In the author's note at the end of *The Golden Pathway*, McDine explains to her readers how various code words were used to help slaves reach freedom. For example, "conductors" were used to describe individuals who helped slaves reach freedom by giving them shelter along the way.

Donna M. McDine has won many awards for her writing in the children's literature genre. Her love and interest in American history led her to pen *The Golden Pathway* and chronicle the Black experience and the Underground Railroad.

McDine also wrote "The Hockey Agony" and "Powder Monkey," which are currently on contract with Guardian Angel Publishing Company. She's currently a Publicist Intern for The National Writing for Children Center and the Children's Writers' Coaching Club.

The Golden Pathway, by Donna M. McDine will teach children how people can come together and overcome seemingly impossible odds and learn a bit about American history and how to deal with a situation of bullying and abuse.

Lauren Smith is editor for the Virtual Book Review Network - reviews books by well known bestselling authors and books by soon to be recognized names. For more information, visit: <http://www.VirtualBookReviewNetwork.com>. This review covers, *The Golden Pathway* by Donna M. McDine.

Reviewed by Lauren S. Smith, SheWrites.com ~ <http://www.shewrites.com/profiles/blogs/the-golden-pathway-a-kids>

September 24, 2010

My 10 and 12 year old children read this book and thought it was a good book... They told me they felt sorry for the slave in the story Jenkins because of the beatings that David's father would do to him. But they were very happy and glad that David would go help Jenkins at night after his beatings and even help him escape. They thought it would be a great book for kids their ages to understand how hard it was on the slaves back then.

I also read this book and I agree with my two children it is a very good story. I also felt sorry for Jenkins in this story for all he had to endure while being a slave. This book did make my children think and ask questions about slavery and made them more aware of what some slaves had to go through and they understand more why slavery was wrong. They learn about this in school but to read this story made them more aware of things.

I thought this was a very well written story for children to understand. The author did a wonderful job with a hard topic to write about. The illustrator did a good job with the pictures in the book capturing what was going on and kept my kids attention on the story as well as the pictures. If I had to give this book a rating I would give it 5 stars.

Reviewed by: Chrissy's World of Books ~ <http://chrissysworldofbooks.blogspot.com>

September 10, 2010

The Golden Pathway is the story of a young boy's daily struggle with the abuse and injustice of slavery on his own homestead. Day after day, David is horrified by his father's treatment of their teenage slave, Jenkins, and longs to ease his suffering and help him find freedom. Is David brave enough to risk Pa's wrath and help Jenkins escape?

Despite the heavy themes of bullying and suffering, David's story is incredibly empowering. The illustrations show the characters' raw emotions in a way that draws you in, pulls at your gut and touches your heart. After finishing *The Golden Pathway*, readers may be inspired to make a difference in the world by reaching out to help someone.

I highly recommend this book for parents to read with their children. The emotion and suspense build throughout the story and may naturally lead to parent-child discussions about topics such as fear, courage, abuse, alcoholism and freedom. *The Golden Pathway* would make a terrific addition to any American history curriculum or classroom library.

Reviewed by: Beth Bence Reinke ~ <http://blogs.bethbencereinke.com/bethsbooksbasket/?p=115>

September 7, 2010

The Golden Pathway, Donna M. McDine's debut book, is an historical fiction story that takes young readers back in time to the era when the Underground Railroad was active in America. Children will discover a most unlikely hero when they meet David, the boy whose father calls him a sissy, but who proves how brave he really is.

David listens to the screams coming from the barn as his pa beats a slave. After the screams stop, he sneaks to the barn to tend Jenkins' wounds. David has treated the welts on his back before, and he knows his pa is wrong. David promises Jenkins he'll help him escape. And he has a plan.

Using vivid language and descriptions, the author gives readers a glimpse of life during the days of slavery, placing the reader in the setting of the story, feeling the pain and fear the slave feels, and the sadness mixed with determination that David feels. K. C. Snider's illustrations further bring the story to life, portraying David's emotions and the landscape perfectly.

Once children have read about David and the part he played in the Underground Railroad, they'll be eager to find other stories to enhance what they've learned in *The Golden Pathway*. I know

Ms. McDine's story has aroused my interest in this time period. A bibliography of the author's research is provided for additional reading, and an author's note explains how "codes" were used to help the slaves to freedom. This short book would make a nice addition to elementary school classrooms to supplement history lessons. I also recommend it not only for young readers, but their parents and grandparents as well, who might learn some surprising facts themselves the way I did. A very nice debut book.

Reviewed by: Beverly Stowe McClure ~ <http://beverlystowemcclure.wordpress.com>

September 7, 2010

The Golden Pathway is the touching story of one boy who is willing to take great risks to help someone in need.

Every night David listens to his pa mete out his punishments on the slaves working their farm. He smells the alcohol on his breath. He watches as Ma is never treated with respect. He never expects his pa to be nice to him.

One night after Pa whips their teenage slave, Jenkins, David sneaks out of the house and promises to help him escape to a better life.

The Underground Railroad, also considered the "golden path to freedom", helped numerous slaves escape the hardships foisted upon them by their owners. In this inspiring story, McDine has brought this portion of history to life for readers ages 9 to 12. ***The Golden Pathway*** shows how just one person who cares can make a difference in this world. It is a moving story that will educate readers and encourage them to be a person who makes a difference.

I've been a fan of K.C. Snider's artwork for some time, but she has truly outdone herself with ***The Golden Pathway***. From the cover art to the interior illustrations, each brings David's and Jenkins' story to life in a visual way. From the tears running down David's cheeks to a bent over Jenkins who has just endured another beating, and from chore time to a trip into town, Snider has captured every emotion, every tiny detail, right there on the page.

The Golden Pathway nearly moved me to tears. As someone who has spent a great deal of time studying this period of American history, I'm certain this book has the ability to make a great impression on its readers. I highly recommend it. I hope it finds its way into schools and homes everywhere, as this is a message, you won't want your kids to miss.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Malandrinos ~ <http://childrensandteensbookconnection.wordpress.com>

September 2, 2010

Donna McDine's book *The Golden Pathway* is a poignant tale of sorrow and abuse and how one boy rises above it all to stay true to his humanity. Set in the time of slavery in the South, young

David witnesses cruelty on a daily basis. Despite enormous risk to himself, he feels compelled to help a young slave named Jenkins. Learning of a secret society that helps slaves to escape, David sets his plan in motion. But will it be in time? *The Golden Pathway* is a wonderfully-written children's book that accurately reflects the thoughts and actions of the time period. A must read for any student of history.

Reviewed by: Jennifer Swanson, Award-winning Author of the *Penny and Rio* series ~
www.pennyandrio.com

August 31, 2010

Many children learn about Harriet Tubman and The Underground Railroad, but how many stop to really think about the severity of a time clouded with violence and abuse? If you were a slave, would you risk an escape to freedom? Or also riskier, if you watched your abusive father conduct slave beatings, would you attempt to make it stop? *The Golden Pathway* is an inspirational tale about The Underground Railroad and one boy's courage to help a slave escape.

No matter how hard he tries, David can't block the high-pitched screams that regularly come from the barn. Even though they always stop, David knows Pa will seek a new victim next time. David loves his Pa, but he must put an end to it--the slave beatings, that is. David conducts his usual routine that consists of sneaking out of his bedroom and cleaning up the wounds of his Pa's slave, Jenkins, after each beating.

With no regard for his own safety, David promises to help Jenkins escape. Finally able to convince his father to let him go into town with him, David confronts the general store keeper, a Quaker. The storekeeper slips David a piece of paper and tells him to follow the directions. That night, David wakes Jenkins and tells him what to do. Knowing his dad would never figure out he helped Jenkins escape, David climbs into bed with the biggest smile he ever had.

Many clever and creative ideas helped slaves during their escape and *The Golden Pathway* reminds us all about the importance of the cloaked gateway to freedom and those who were sympathetic to many enslaved in their flights to freedom. This daring escape puts you right in David's shoes as he risks his life to outrun slavery. A tale sure to inspire anyone who doubts their own courage.

Source of review copy: Publicist

Reviewed by: Lori Calabrese, award-winning author and National Children's Books Examiner ~
<http://www.loricalabrese.com>

August 31, 2010

Do you like reading books based on historical truths? Are you one who is fascinated with understanding what happened at a particular time in American history? If you answered yes to the aforementioned questions, you must read Donna McDine's *The Golden Pathway*.

The book is about a dark period in American history. The story is about David, a young boy who attempts to free Jenkins, a slave owned by his Pa.

David's Pa is a mean-spirited drunkard who has very little regard for his own flesh and blood. He often verbally abuses David by calling him a sissy every chance he gets.

David is the complete opposite of his Pa. He is a kind-hearted and compassionate boy. He risks his own life in an attempt to lead Jenkins to freedom. The daily beatings that his Pa subject Jenkins to, compelled David to action. David is certain if something is not done Jenkins will end up dead.

Will David get caught? Can he safely lead Jenkins to freedom?

I was held captive wondering how in the world David could accomplish such a dangerous mission. The story has a very interesting twist that kept me guessing until the very end.

This book shows that for every evil deed committed, there is always many individuals willing to make a wrong right; this is the part of the story I found to be very inspiring. The dad represents evil, but the son represents all that is good.

It took many cold-hearted people to make slavery continue, but we must never forget that if it were not for people like David, slavery would have taken a lot longer to be abolished.

The fine illustrations by K.C Snider made the story come alive. The expressions on David's face exemplified the compassion he showed toward Jenkins. I am especially fond of the picture of David trying to comfort Jenkins after being beaten to a pulp by his Pa. Ms. Snider's illustrations captured the true essence of the story and that is why the story jumps off the page.

Reading *The Golden Pathway* made me stop to think about all the kind-hearted people who helped many slaves and made it possible for them to escape.

Reviewed by: Nicole Weaver ~ Article first published as [Book Review: *The Golden Pathway* by Donna McDine](#) on Blogcritics.
