



**CMS Community Social Justice Read
October 6, 2020
By Ananya Holland**

Chatham Education Foundation is honored to award a grant for the CMS Community Social Justice Read submitted by Mr. George Iannuzzi, Mrs. Gina Bakaj, Miss Sarah Pasternak, and Ms. Kristine Quintero.

This grant supports the reading of *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes as part of the “One Book, One Community” initiative, which is sponsored by the American Library Association and has been adopted by city councils and school districts across the country. The grant calls for a multi-faceted approach to the reading of *Ghost Boys* by CMS students and parents, faculty, administrators, and staff. In addition to the 1200 copies of *Ghost Boys*, the grant includes 120 copies of two other non-fiction texts that will be explored in ELA classrooms to help support this work. The grant also includes three Professional Development workshops with Ms. Rhodes. ELA teachers at CMS and CHS will be trained by Dr. Kim Parker on how to expose their ELA students to diverse texts that address fair and equitable relations between individuals and society in a meaningful and intentional way.

In her book *Ghost Boys*, Rhodes explores the fallout of a tragedy after a twelve-year-old black boy is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real gun. The story offers intimate perspectives of those affected by this tragedy – the victim, the victim’s family and friends, the police officer’s family – while also weaving in historical lessons. *Ghost Boys* delves into critical questions of conscious and unconscious bias and how society must change, together, for the survival of our communities and the sake of our collective humanity.

Ms. Heather Rocco, SDOC ELA Supervisor, has shared that the CMS Community Social Justice Read grant includes professional training that “will support teachers as they implement community read best practices and have thoughtful conversations around equity issues in English Language Arts classrooms. Dr. Parker will also help us develop literacy lessons that are inclusive of diverse voices and experiences so that Chatham students read and study literature that reflects the world in which we live.”

Chatham Education Foundation is committed to advancing the SDOC’s diversity and social justice initiatives and is pleased to be a part of the work that lies ahead through this “One Book, One Community” reading of *Ghost Boys*.