

# Inclusion & Disability Awareness Presentations by Maryann Cocca-Leffler



**A**ward winning Author & Illustrator Maryann Cocca-Leffler has been a disability rights advocate since her daughter, Janine Leffler, was born with Cerebral Palsy in 1985. Maryann offers both virtual and in-person presentations which focus on inclusion, diversity and the history of disability rights through the below mentioned books;

—*Fighting For YES! The Story of Disability Rights Activist Judith Heumann*

—*We Want to Go to School! The Fight for Disability Rights* (co-authored with Janine Leffler)

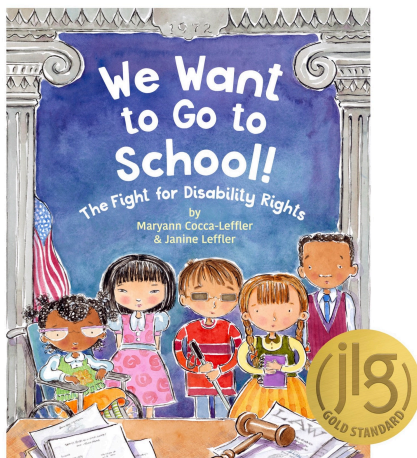
—*Janine* (Picture book inspired by Janine)

A biography of Judith Heumann who spent her entire life fighting for disability rights. She was instrumental in the passing of 504, which guaranteed accessibility for people with disabilities, which led to the passing of the ADA in 1990. (Includes a note to readers written by Judy.)

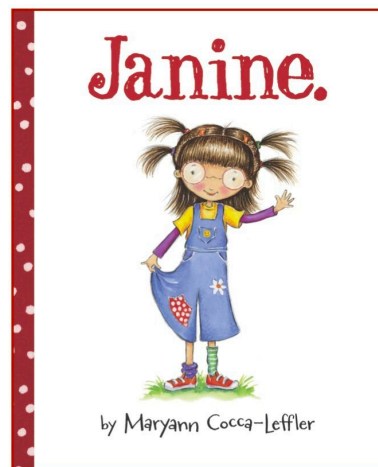
**AWARDS:** National Council of Teachers of English (NETE) 2023 Orbis Pictus Award Honor Book, Junior Library Guild Gold, 2023 Maine Literary Award, RI 2024 Children's Book Award Nominee.

Her presentation is tailored toward her audience from K-1 to upper middle school. (Janine will join in when possible.) Maryann also offers Community/Educators Professional Development, and Book Talks.

"Maryann's visit was the perfect ending to our week of learning on disability awareness and inclusion! She did a fantastic job of maintaining the attention and interest of our students (K-8) over the course of 3 sessions, each specifically tailored to the age group attending. Her talk tied US history and personal experience together beautifully, in an engaging and empathy-filled conversation with our students." — Madeleine Mackenzie, M. Ed  
The Brandeis School, San Francisco, CA



The true story about the people behind the "Quiet Revolution", a 1972 landmark case which ensured a public education for all. "Recommended for all libraries" — SJJ, Junior Library Guild Gold.



Janine is a differently abled spunky girl who loves her "spectacular" self and proves to the doubting group that she IS the COOL one! "This gentle portrayal of difference is powerful." Booklist.

Interested in an in-person or virtual School Visit or Professional Development event?

**Contact:**

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Fees and more info on website:  
[www.maryanncoccaleffler.com](http://www.maryanncoccaleffler.com)

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Reviews & recommendations available upon request.

# Author -Illustrator Maryann Cocca-Leffler Reviews & Recommendations

## SCHOOL VISITS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

*"Maryann's visit was the perfect ending to our week of learning on disability awareness and inclusion! She did a fantastic job of maintaining the attention and interest of our students (K-8) over the course of 3 sessions, each specifically tailored to the age group attending. Her talk tied US history and personal experience together beautifully, in an engaging and empathy-filled conversation with our students."*

Madeleine Mackenzie, M. Ed  
5th Grade Humanities Advisory Coordinator  
The Brandeis School San Francisco. CA

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*"Maryann is a pioneer in telling the stories of heroes from the Disability Rights Movement. Her books are well researched and the illustrations increase the impact of the stories. Maryann combines her long professional career of being an author with her personal experience of raising a child with a disability to connect with students, parents and educational staff. As moms of children with disabilities, we are grateful that Maryann has advocated to tell the history of people with disabilities."*

Allison Huffstutler and Amy Hibbs - Co-Founders  
BRIDGED INC. Bringing Disability Awareness into classrooms  
South Carolina  
[www.bridgedsc.org](http://www.bridgedsc.org) IG- @bridgednonproft

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*"Maryann's presentation regarding her book; We Want to go to School! The Fight for Disability Rights, "The Quiet Revolution", is sure to open eyes to educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators alike. Sessions targeted for students are equally amazing! By far, the most engaging and informational professional growth in my career."*

Karen McCloud, M.Ed  
Plymouth State University Supervisor  
Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation  
Plymouth, NH

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*"I am always looking for unique ways to engage colleagues on topics related to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the workplace and beyond. Maryann curated an excellent virtual event that drew from her own experiences as a parent, artist, illustrator, author, and advocate. She shared her personal experience advocating on behalf of her child and how that had inspired her most recent work documenting the fight for disability rights in the United States via children's books. It was impactful to the audience and helped reframe the conversation around disability."*

Laura Shen Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer  
WEX. Portland, ME [www.wexinc.com](http://www.wexinc.com)

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*"We had the honor of having Maryann and her daughter, Janine, as recent virtual guest speakers to Vertical Harvest Farms. Vertical Harvest is an inclusive, indoor, hydroponic farm where we aim to employ at least 40% persons with disabilities, so hearing firsthand from Maryann and Janine about their path and the history of disability rights mean so much to many. During their presentation, there was laughter and tears and a huge sense of empowerment."*

Cindy Hannon Grow-Well Manager / Vertical Harvest Farms Jackson Hole, WY

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