The following titles were selected by Anna Cvitkovic, Teen Librarian at the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) and Log Cabin Ranch, to offer additional support for the “Growing Up Brave on the Margins” series. Great Stories Club program hosts are encouraged to recommend these titles for additional thematic exploration, plan supplemental programs using the list, or seek local funding to expand the series to include discussion of one or more additional titles.

All-American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

When Rashad Butler went to the store for chips, he had no idea he would end up being assaulted by a police officer, surrounded by witnesses. After all, he is a responsible teen, a good son and an ROTC member (reluctantly, but still), but he is also black. When one witness, Rashad's white classmate Quinn, sees the attack, he is horrified at the violence. He can barely believe that the cop responsible is his own brother’s best friend Paul, who has become his mentor since his dad was killed in Afghanistan. In the wake of the attack, Quinn starts to learn things that Rashad already knows: that racism is everywhere, that police brutality is real and that people will need to step up in order to make change. But what does it mean to step up? How do you choose sides when you have empathy for both? Quinn knows what happened to Rashad is wrong, but Paul is like family and his version of the events seem to point to a different story entirely. On top of that, what can he actually do to help? It seems unrealistic that one single high school student could make a difference, but if he remains silent, nothing will change. Faced with a series of bad options and with a system stacked against them, both Rashad and Quinn will need to summon the courage it takes to confront a broken community and take steps toward making it better.

American Street by Ibi Zoboi

Fabiola Toussaint doesn’t seem to belong anywhere. Not in Haiti where she grew up, and not in the U.S. where she was born and where she now lives with her Americanized aunt and cousins in Detroit. Her mother, and the only connection to her roots in Port-au-Prince, was detained by immigration officials at the airport and Fabiola was left to go on alone to face a country that seems unfamiliar and dangerous, in a city where crime and violence rule the streets. Speaking Creole is discouraged at home, and adjusting to her new school is challenging, but Fab’s life gets much more complicated when she learns that the family business is illegal and that her auntie could be in trouble. Torn between loyalty and conscience, Fabiola must choose her actions wisely. Is it worth betraying one person in hopes it might help another? What if helping at all puts her own life in danger? Fab’s strong faith in Haitian Voudou helps her bravely navigate these challenges and her new relationships, including a romance, and fuels her belief that she and her mother will one day be reunited.
**Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation**
*by Octavia Butler (author), Damian Duffy (adaptation) and John Jennings (illustrator)*

The last thing Dana expected is that she would disappear from her 1970s life in California and be plunged back in time to a plantation in the Antebellum South, where slavery is alive and well and where the color of her dark skin means that she is no longer free. Witnessing atrocities and violence on the plantation shows Dana the explicit racism, imbalances of power structures and sexual abuse rooted in slavery. She experiences the impossible cruelty humans can demonstrate towards other humans and does what she can to improve the situation, including taking the great risk of educating the plantation’s children. After saving a white boy named Rufus from drowning, Dana learns that he is a distant relative of hers and that their fates are inextricably linked. The days and months she spends in the past occupy mere moments in the present, and Dana sees Rufus grow, and eventually inherit the plantation from his father. As Dana inexplicably travels back and forth through time, her life becomes intertwined with the other people on the plantation, and her relationship with Rufus becomes more difficult and dangerous. She realizes that her life depends on Rufus’ survival, and she must protect him to ensure that he eventually becomes a father to a baby girl, Dana’s great-grandmother. The magnitude of her task mirrors Dana’s own challenges, both past and present, for independence and freedom in a world that even today can come at a great price.

**Labyrinth Lost**
*by Zoraida Cordova*

Alejandra Mortiz is a witch. A bruja. Not only that, she happens to be the most powerful witch in her family, which sounds great, except that she hates magic. As a child, she witnessed a forbidden ritual that left her traumatized and caused her to avoid magic at all costs, even hiding her own powers when she felt them begin to develop. Terrified of the pain that her abilities might bring, Alex tries to wish her magic away during her Deathday celebration, a ritual where young witches come into their full power through the blessings of their family members, both living and dead. Instead, her incantation accidentally traps her family in Los Lagos, a creepy, twisted wonderland that is nearly impossible to navigate. She hires a brujo named Nova, who claims to know the way, and as they travel deeper into the uncertain darkness of Los Lagos, their obstacles become more fantastic and powerful, and they learn that there is much more at stake than they ever could have imagined. Now, Alex is forced to confront her true identity, embrace her family’s magic and rely on the very same powers she tried to wish away, in order to bring her family home and avoid losing them to the darkness.

**A Long Way Gone**
*by Ishmael Beah*

Imagine soldiers show up at your doorstep and within hours your family is gone, your home has been destroyed, and you are left alone to survive. This happened to Ishmael Beah when he was 12 years old in Sierra Leone, Africa. He and his friends grew up loving hip hop music and creating dance routines together,
even traveling to participate in a competition in a nearby town, but all of that ended with the war. With nowhere to go, he spent months travelling by foot before he was captured by the government army and forced to become a child soldier. He and other kidnapped boys were brainwashed to become emotionless killers and to forget about their old lives and families. Their training as soldiers suppressed all happy memories, and the boys were made to endure all-night sessions watching violent movies to prepare for war. After three years of this, by chance, Ishmael met an aid worker who encouraged his love of music and dance. She told him about an opportunity to speak at the United Nations in NYC, which changed the trajectory of his life completely. Finally away from the killing fields, Ishmael had to summon the courage to trust people again, and work hard to heal the deep wounds left by the war, the loss of his family and the loss of his innocence. His powerful story is a reminder that lives can change in an instant, and that even in the darkest of times, there is hope.

**Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25** by Richard Paul Evans

Michael Vey has the power to shock people. First through his words, because Michael has Tourette’s Syndrome and tends to blurt things out unintentionally. Second, because he is electric. An experiment gone wrong at the hospital where he was born left Michael with a current running through his body, a secret only his mother knows. The Tourette’s makes him a target for bullies, but he can’t defend himself for fear that his secret power might be revealed, so he and his best friend Ostin stay under the radar. That changes one day when he is pushed too far at lunchtime and ends up zapping a table full of his tormentors, right in front his crush, Taylor. At first Michael is horrified and embarrassed that other people witnessed the scene, but he soon learns that Taylor has powers too. The two of them, plus megabrain Ostin, begin to unravel a conspiracy more powerful than they could have imagined. Michael wasn’t the only baby born with superpowers that day, and a group of evil power-brokers have been steadily hunting each person, with the intent of capturing and using them to extort wealth and create global chaos. Suddenly, Michael’s mother is kidnapped and the group finds themselves hurtling through a terrifying adventure, with danger escalating at every turn. With each new challenge, Michael gains the confidence and courage to harness his superpower, and he is willing to risk everything to find his mother, fight off the hunters and keep everyone safe in the process.

**Ship Breaker** by Paolo Bacigalupi

In a future where superstorms are called city killers, the Gulf Coast of the United States is mostly underwater, and people live in shacks on beaches, scavenging metal from shipwrecks in order to survive. Fifteen-year old Nailer risks his life daily, scavenging dangerous wrecks for a few coils of wire to put food on the table, then comes home to a father who may or not be passed out on any given evening. His mom died when he was young and his nickname, “Lucky
Boy,” given when he nearly drowned in a pool of oil as a baby, seems to be the only lucky thing about him. That is, until a raging storm washes a luxury clipper ship up on his local beach, and Nailer joins the rest of his crew in celebrating the treasures that surely await within. Instead, they find the body of a teenage girl, the ship’s only survivor. Excitement turns to fear when Nailer learns that she is the daughter of a wealthy and powerful man and was fleeing her enemies when her ship wrecked. Knowing that this information puts a target on her back, Nailer follows his instincts and helps her escape, only to discover that his own father has hatched a plan to kidnap Nita and seek a large ransom. Faced with no good options, Nailer must make a choice: stay loyal to his father and become a criminal, or fight as hard as he can to save Nita and do what is right. A whirlwind of action on sea and land follows Nailer and Nita on a thrilling chase where the prize is freedom and the consequences may be deadly.

Rani Patel In Full Effect by Sonia Patel

As if being Indian in the suburbs wasn’t bad enough, Rani Patel’s father decides on a whim to pack up and move Rani and her mother with him to the tiny Hawaiian island of Moloka’i, where Rani is the only Indian girl there. She goes to school, dreamily crushes on guys and works in her family’s two businesses: a convenience store and a restaurant where she avoids advances from drunken tourists. At home, things are bad. Rani’s father teaches the family that “husband is God,” yet heaps abuse on Rani’s mom and, worse, has been molesting Rani since she was young. Now, he has decided that his new girlfriend, barely older than Rani, should move in with the three of them and that it is Rani’s job to convince her mother to let him. Yeah right. So how does Rani cope with her nightmare of a life? She shaves off all her hair (a tradition for widows in India) and channels her emotions into the white-hot lyrics of her secret rap star alter-ego, MC Sutra. Despite all odds, Rani finds other friends on Moloka’i who understand her struggles at home and nurture her talents on the mic. Finally realizing that she can’t rely on her parents, she begins to follow her heart and pursue her own dreams, even at the risk of losing her family forever.

The Rock and The River by Kekla Magoon

After his brother and best friend, Stick, starts to drift away from him, thirteen-year old Sam discovers a secret that changes everything. As the son of Roland Childs, civil rights activist and friend of Martin Luther King Jr., Sam has always been taught that change can come without the use of violence. When riots break out during the tumultuous summer of 1968 in Chicago, the question of nonviolent resistance becomes more important than ever, and when Sam finds information on the Black Panther Party hidden under Stick’s bed, he isn’t sure what to believe anymore. Sam wants to embrace his dad’s message of nonviolence, but can’t help but question its effectiveness when he continually experiences racism and injustice. Curious about the Panthers and skeptical of his father’s stubbornness, Sam follows Stick as he gets more involved in the
Panther party. Before long, Sam finds himself embroiled in a situation more risky and dangerous than he ever expected. He is on the verge of making a choice that could divide his family: will he choose the peaceful path, or follow Stick and the Panthers away from his father and into uncertainty?

_Tyrell_ by Coe Booth

When his father was incarcerated, Tyrell became the man of the house overnight. His little brother Troy is sweet, but high maintenance and his mom is more interested in partying with her friends than getting the family out of the roach-filled shelter they’ve been staying in since they were evicted. Tyrell already has enough to deal with since he dropped out of school and his girlfriend Novisha started acting funny, but when he meets a beautiful Latina staying in the shelter with her sister, things get even more complicated. Working every connection he has, Tyrell decides to borrow his father’s DJ equipment and throw a massive party in the Bronx to raise money and move his family back home. Problem is, he has to track down the equipment first, which means getting in touch with his father’s friends, who may be the reason his father is in jail in the first place. It doesn’t help that it’s the middle of winter and Tyrell is flat broke. His mom and his friends think he should just give up and sell drugs, but Tyrell refuses to follow in his father’s footsteps and risk his little brother’s future, even if it means going against the people closest to him.