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CLARION REVIEW ★★☆☆☆ PICTURE BOOKS

A Camp Carrot Cheer for Good Nutrition

Patsy E. Thomas
Trafford Publishing
Unknown $0.00 (pp)
978-1-4269-6200-4

A Camp Carrot Cheer for Good Nutrition utilizes colorful illustrations and rhyme to inspire young children to make good nutritional choices. In light of recent studies regarding the long-term detrimental effects of childhood obesity, as well as First Lady Michelle Obama's focus on nutritional education, the topic is timely.

Patsy E. Thomas strives to set a tone of excitement and enthusiasm in her effort to direct kids toward healthy eating. She employs simple language and vibrant pictures to engage and inform her audience. However, the book falters in several essential areas.

While the illustrations are appealing, their artistic style differs from one page to the next. An illustrator is not credited, and the pictures have a stock-art feel. Typos and questionable grammar reduce the book's editorial quality.

Young children often respond to catchy rhythms, and some of Thomas' rhymes do work well. However, many of them miss the mark in either content or cadence—and sometimes both—with the result seeming forced: "Eating bananas is good and funky / They're a great food source even for a monkey."

While the book contains an important message, it would prove more effective if the information relied on modern standards of nutrition. For instance, parents may question the inclusion of both butter and ice cream in the author's list of good sources of calcium and vitamins. Additionally, USDA guidelines have recently been updated, including the change from a food pyramid to "My Plate," a more straightforward guide to healthy eating. Thomas' book would have more current relevance had she incorporated the government's new guidelines into her content.

A Camp Carrot Cheer for Good Nutrition is Thomas' first book, though she has since published another and currently has a third in the works. Thomas credits her grandchildren and the lessons she tries to teach them as her inspiration.

While the subject matter is worthy, parents and caregivers are more likely to seek out books that include current information and approachable, memorable rhymes. *A Camp Carrot Cheer for Good Nutrition* simply lacks the polish and content necessary to compete with other children's publications about healthy eating habits.
JEANNINE CHARTIER HANSCOM (February 13, 2012)

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