

## JEN CULLERTON JOHNSON BIOGRAPHY

Jen Cullerton Johnson is an award-winning children's author, educator, and environmental advocate. She teaches at Chicago Public Schools and is an adjunct writing instructor at Wright College, City Colleges of Chicago. With nearly two decades of teaching experience, Jen has worked to integrate storytelling, critical thinking, and environmental awareness into her teaching. Her educational career has spanned diverse settings, including working with incarcerated youth and urban classrooms, teaching abroad in Japan and Argentina, and leading nature writing workshops in outdoor settings.

She is the founder of Books on Benches, a small nonprofit organization that places children's books in family court waiting areas and related spaces such as community legal centers, lawyers' offices, and judges'; chambers.

A champion for trees and environmental education, Jen is a certified TreeKeeper for the city of Chicago, where she volunteers to care for and advocate for urban trees. Her passion for trees has taken her across the globe—she has planted trees in Kenya and in 2025 begin a Forest Therapy guide training. Her work has been recognized with numerous honors, including grants from the Illinois Arts Council, an ambassador's award to study writing in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and a teacher fellowship from Morton Arboretum (2024–2025) to further her studies on trees and biodiversity.

Jen is the author of *The Story of an Environmentalist* (Lee & Low, 2019) and *Seeds of Change* (Lee & Low, 2011), which has been a bestseller for over a decade and is now available in Spanish (*Semillas de Cambio*, 2024). She is an experienced presenter, sharing her expertise at conferences and professional development workshops across the United States, including ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment), the Children's Literature Association (ChLA), the Green Schools Network, and NAAMEE (North American Association for

Environmental Education).

Jen earned a bachelor's degree in English literature and Spanish language from Indiana University, a master's degree in education from Loyola University Chicago, and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of New Orleans. Jen lives and works in Chicago.