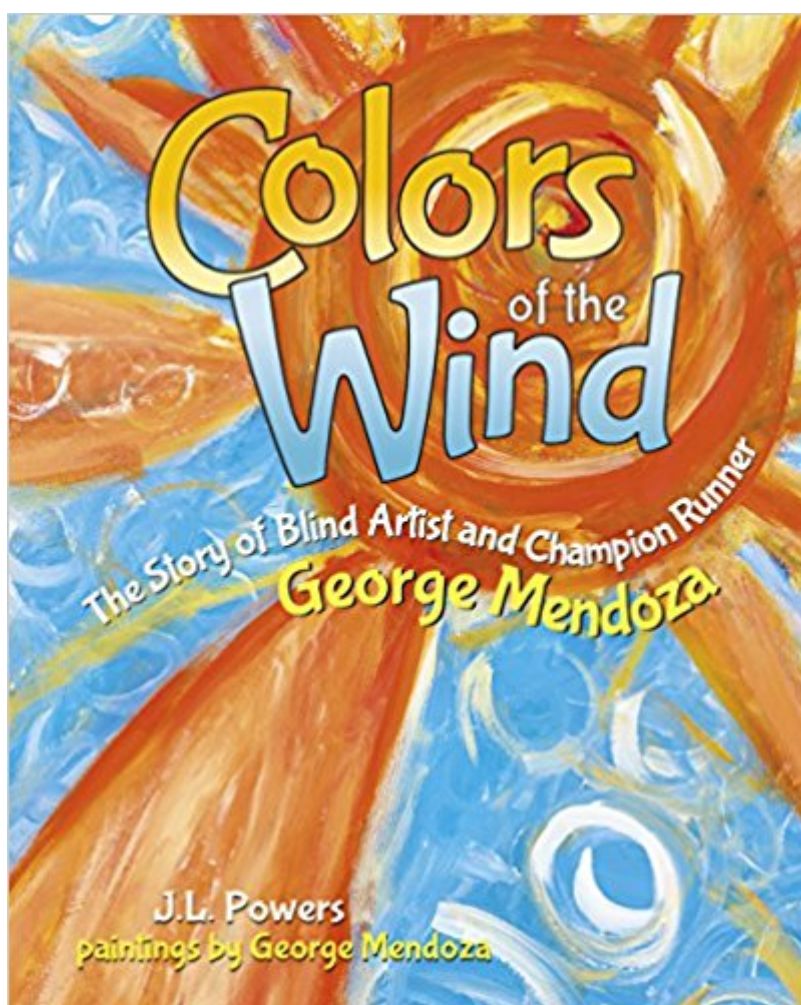


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# Colors Of The Wind: The Story Of Blind Artist And Champion Runner George Mendoza



## Synopsis

George was one of those kids. You know, the kind that never stays still. And then one day, the doctor said he was going blind. Did that slow George down? Not for a single second. In fact, he was so fast, he went on to break a world record for blind runners. And now he is breaking more barriers because ironically, George Mendoza, blind painter, paints what he sees. George Mendoza started going blind at age 15 from a degenerative eye disease. It wasn't the sudden onset of blindness that many people experience. George lost his central vision and started seeing things that weren't there--eyes floating in the air, extraordinary colors, objects multiplied and reflected back. George describes this condition as having "kaleidoscope eyes." He triumphed over his blindness by setting the world record in the mile for blind runners, and later competing in both the 1980 and 1984 Olympics for the Disabled. Now a full-time artist, Mendoza's collection of paintings, also titled Colors of the Wind, is a National Smithsonian Affiliates traveling exhibit.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Gr 2-4 • This picture book tells the story of Mendoza, a blind runner who became a painter. The narrative starts off with Mendoza as an active young boy who aspired to play basketball but encountered obstacles when his vision began to fail. Instead of seeing people and objects, he saw bright and vivid colors. Mendoza channeled his energies into athletics and became a runner,

attending the Olympics for the Disabled twice, and then turned his talents to painting.

Morgan-Sanders's straightforward sketches and Powers's simple, accessible text describe Mendoza's transition, accompanied by Mendoza's vibrant, abstract artwork. Mendoza's illustrations convey what the artist called his "kaleidoscope eyes" and provide testament to his considerable talent. Though additional information is included in the back matter, along with thumbnail examples of more paintings, the narrative itself is on the sparse side: the text contains no explanation for the condition that caused Mendoza's blindness and doesn't provide much information on how old Mendoza was when he experienced various events. Those seeking stories about contemporary artists or inspirational works about overcoming challenges will be sufficiently served by this intriguing tale.

—Joanna K. Fabicon, Los Angeles Public Library

"The story of George Mendoza, told in J.L. Powers' beautiful, poetic language, is an illumination of the persistent power of art. Colors of the Wind reminds us all that our biggest burdens are often our greatest gifts." --Kathi Appelt, author of *The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp* and *The Underneath*

"So many of us are tempted to crumble under what we perceive to be unbearable burdens. It's an inspiration and a challenge to read about George Mendoza who has triumphed over that, and so much more." --Jane Seymour, actress

Mendoza's paintings...extraordinary creations of color, reflecting the dazzling kaleidoscope inside his own head. Colors of the Wind is an uplifting and inspiring picturebook biography, highly recommended especially for public and elementary school library children's collections. --Midwest Book Review, January 2015

Despite losing most of his vision by 15, George Mendoza followed his passion for running, competing in the Olympics for the Disabled and setting a world record for blind runners. Later, he turned his energy to painting and his vibrant art conveys his kaleidoscopic perception. Parents' Press, July, 2015. "May everyone who sees George Mendoza's art understand the lessons of determination and fortitude." --Former First Lady, Laura Bush

Love this book - love the story and pics (want more pics!) - very inspirational. And especially love his fabrics!

Great Purchase

Colors of the Wind is one of those inspiring books that will take your breath away. Written for young readers and excellent for read-alouds in the classroom and the home, Colors of the Wind tells the

story of George Mendoza, Olympic runner and painter. As a child, George was always in motion. He was that kid that never stayed still; he wanted to be a basketball player when he got older. But his vision began to deteriorate, and he saw bursts of color. Suffering from a rare form of blindness called fundus flavimaculatus, his central vision has been destroyed, but he retains peripheral vision, which he refers to as "kaleidoscope eyes" because of the way objects reflect and are multiplied in his vision. To take his mind off his blindness, George started running and ended up competing in two Olympics. He later began painting, remembering a priest who told him to paint what he saw. He uses fingerpaints, brushes anything that will communicate to others the unique and beautiful way George sees the world. This book is gorgeous. Illustrated with Mr. Mendoza's paintings, this is a truly inspiring story of a man who literally changed his point of view. The text is enhanced with drawings by Hayley Morgan-Sanders. J.L. Powers presents Mr. Mendoza's story with short sentences that are perfect for allowing young listeners to grasp the concepts presented and allows for deeper discussion on overcoming challenges and celebrating what gifts we have to work with. The book includes a short biography on George Mendoza, and a list of paintings featured in the book.

"J.L. Powers! I love that guy! Kiddo shouts when she hears me telling my husband that we got a new picture book to review in the mail today. Never mind that J.L. Powers is a woman and that we've never read her work before. Kiddo just loves getting new books in the mail, love discovering new authors as much as I do. Colors of the Wind is the story of George Mendoza, two time blind Olympian runner who sees the world like a kaleidoscope and has become a painter. The picture book is visually stimulating and intentionally motivational to do your best and pursue your dreams, no matter what trials you may face. "That book is beautiful, like Grandmother's Cabin," she says when we're done. Artistically speaking, Grandmother's Cabin is the picture book by which all others are now measured in my three year old's eyes. Colors of the Wind gets her art stamp of approval and she was particularly intrigued by the tribute to other paintings at the back that were not included in the story. She's officially asking when we can meet George and we can't wait to share this story with the cousins, our friends, and the homeschooling groups we are a part of. "An illumination of the persistent power of art. Colors of the Wind reminds us all that our biggest burdens are often our greatest gifts," Kathi Appelt is quoted on the marketing packet. I couldn't say it better.

COLORS OF THE WIND  
COLORS OF THE WIND is a picture-book biography that tells the true story about George Mendoza, an Olympic champion runner and award-winning artist who is blind. The startling illustrations are paintings created by this blind artist, George Mendoza. J.L. Powers, the author of this book, tells us: "To me, it's an amazing story of someone who has persisted and found such an incredible gift in his weakness. He broke a world record as a blind runner and went to the Olympics twice, and later started painting these bold paintings that he cannot see." "COLORS OF THE WIND is illustrated with Mendoza's paintings as well as simple line drawings by Hayley Morgan-Saunders. Besides being a champion athlete and artist, Mendoza is also the founder of Wise Tree Foundation, a nonprofit corporation that promotes the arts. A collection of Mendoza's colorful and unusual paintings is a National Smithsonian Affiliates traveling exhibition. Mendoza, a Las Cruces native, started going blind at age 15 from a degenerative eye disease. He often describes his condition as "kaleidoscope eyes," losing his central vision but seeing things that were not there, extraordinary colors or objects multiplied and reflected back. But as a child, George did not want to be an artist or runner; he wanted to be a basketball player. He was good, until as a teen-ager, he "tried shooting baskets, but he kept missing. Instead of a basket, he saw an enormous eye floating in the air." As George lost more of his sight, he became discouraged. "Whenever he tripped over something that everybody else could see, he yelled at himself. When a priest suggested, 'Nobody else sees the way you do,' You should paint what you see." But George did not want to paint. He wanted to be a basketball star. He thought, "I'll never be able to do what everybody else can do." That's when George started to run. Even blind, he could run faster than almost everyone. George discovered that "everybody was good at something." George faced his blindness and discovered amazing gifts; one was a unique and different imagination a different way of seeing the world. He thought about the little girl, blind from birth, who asked, "What color is the wind?" and the blind singer who described his backyard tree as reaching up into the sky more than 35 miles. A tree more than 35 miles tall? Who would imagine such a thing! Kathi Appelt, author of "The True Blue Scouts," "Sugar Man" and "The Underneath," describes the book as "an illumination of the persistent power of art." The book "reminds us all that our biggest burdens are often our greatest gifts." "COLORS OF THE WIND is a

gift to give yourself and to share with readers of all ages. And imagine ãfÂçÃ â ãÃ Â| what colors would you paint the wind?Published 2014 by Purple House PressNancy Bo Flood, author of several award-winning books, most recently, COWBOY UP! RIDE THE NAVAJO RODEO.

Colors of the Wind is a stunningly beautiful picture book written about George Mendoza, a blind artist and athlete who also illustrated the book. I read this book to my 12, 11, 8, 6, and 4 year old's and they were mesmerized. The story is visually arresting and the pictures fit seamlessly into the narrative. The story of George is inspiring and motivating...if a blind man can win Olympic medals and paint, than anything is possible. The message to work hard and persist in following your dreams is an important one and this book share that message very well. We'll be reading this story over and over again for the story, the words and the breathtaking paintings. Well done, J.L. Powers and George Mendoza!

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